

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER NUMBER 146

“The Saga of the Adventist Papal Tiara: Part 2”

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The short introductory essay I posted in the last newsletter No. 145 about “The Saga of the Adventist Papal Tiara,” has generated an unusual number of responses. The vast majority of the comments have been very positive. In fact, some Conference Presidents have invited me to present this new research at their workers’ meeting. Elder Marvin Moore, the Editor of *Signs*, ordered 15 DVD albums for himself and for the chief officers of Pacific Press.

But a few concerned fellow believers, expressed their deep disappointment over what they perceive to be a serious abandonment of a major Adventist teaching. Some evangelists are especially upset, because this study raises questions about their preaching on the Mark and Number of the Beast. Confidently they have preached for years that the number of the Beast (666) is clearly found in the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, inscribed in his golden tiara. Now they are learning that recent Adventist studies raise serious questions about this popular teaching. Obviously this development is upsetting them.

One could be tempted to ignore the negative reactions of a few concerned Adventists. After all, some will always disagree with any new interpretation of the Mark and Number of the Beast, no matter how true it is to the text, context, and historical setting of Revelation 13. But to totally ignore the critical arguments, would reveal a lack of pastoral concern on my part for the struggle of some fellow believers to come to terms with a new interpretation. Thus, I decided to devote this newsletter to respond to the major arguments presented in defence of the traditional application of 666 to the Pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, supposedly inscribed in the papal tiara.

Much time and effort has gone into preparing this lengthy newsletter, which some may dismiss as tedious because it deals with critical arguments that they deem irrelevant. But before you decide to ignore

this essay, I would warn you that this discussion of our past and present Adventist interpretation of the Mark and Number of the Beast, has many ramifications. Ultimately it affects the method we use to interpret the book of Revelation. Thus, my recommendation is to be sure to store this lengthy study for future reading and use. You may need it more often than you think in future discussion of this subject.

Before proceeding with our study, there are several important announcements that need to be made.

DUPLICATIONS PROBLEMS WITH THE LAST NEWSLETTER

A good number of subscribers received multiple copies of the last newsletter no. 145. Several mailing experts have examined the problem, but no definite diagnosis has been reached. At any rate, to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem, I am engaging the services of TAGnet, which is the leading Adventist networking company, hosting thousands of websites of churches and institutions from around the world.

Few days ago, I met the President of TAGnet, Dan Houghton, at the Fallbrook SDA Church (near San Diego), where I was speaking. Dan and his team have been most gracious to offer me their services to improve the delivery of my newsletter as well as to enable people to subscribe or unsubscribe automatically. From now on our ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER will be mailed directly by TAGnet. I trust that this service will improve the delivery of the newsletter and facilitate the subscribe/unsubscribe procedure.

If you or your church needs to design or host a website, be sure to contact TAGnet. The officers are among the most courteous and helpful people you will ever meet. For a detailed description of their services visit their website at <http://home.TAGnet.org/> or <http://www.netadventist.org> You can reach TAGNET also by phone at (800) 9 tagnet.

Hundreds of people did not receive the last newsletter because the returned message says: "User is over quota." If you are one of them, please do not contact me. Just click here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives>.

com/endtimeissues/et_145.htm You can download any of the previous 145 newsletters in a PDF or HTML format.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTERS

A detailed description of the special offers on goods and services is provided at the end of this newsletter. This is a brief listing of the announcements that are expanded at the end of this newsletter.

1. CALENDAR OF FORTHCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS for the months of May and June 2006. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

2. NEWLY RELEASED (MAY 1, 2006) CD-ROM WITH ALL OF PROF. JON PAULIEN PUBLICATIONS. It contains more than a dozen of books and scores of articles written during the past 20 years of research. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

3. SPECIAL “TEN COMMANDMENT DAY” OFFER ON THE NEW DVD ALBUM on *The Number and Mark of the Beast*. **Two DVD albums for only \$50.00 (\$25.00 each) during the month of May.** See the details at the end of this newsletter.

4. “TEN COMMANDMENT DAY” ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DEPARTMENT. Read the important message by Attorney Alan J. Reinach, Director of Public Affairs & Religious Liberty at the website: <http://www.WrittenInTheHeart.org> The website offers valuable information on how to promote the *Ten Commandment Day* at your church.

5. TAGNET SPECIAL NEW WEB HOSTING OFFER for Adventist churches and members. TAGnet provides an incredible number of services to our churches and members. For detail information, visit their website at <http://www.netadventist.org> or <http://home.tagnet.org/> You may also call their office 800 - 9TAGNET

6. SPECIAL OFFER ON THE PACKAGE OF ALL MY RECORDINGS CONSISTING OF 5 ALBUMS, including the newly released DVD album on *The Mark and the Number of the Beast*. The **special offer is only \$100.00 for the 5 albums**, instead of the regular price of \$500.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

7. SPECIAL OFFER ON PROF. JON PAULIEN'S 5 ALBUMS with 60 CD DISKS, containing 120 lectures that explain verse by verse the book of Revelation. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

8. HITACHI PROJECTORS: Few days ago HITACHI offered an additional discount to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries. For examples, the special offer for **the new 2000 LUMENS PROJECTOR CP-X250 IS ONLY \$1095.00**, instead of the previous SDA price of \$1995.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter or call me at 269-471-2915

9. USED APPLE G4 LAP TOP AND DESK TOP for sale at a bargain price. I have just upgraded them. For details call me at (269) 471-2915.

10. NEW TOSHIBA TECRA A4 LAPTOP: TOSHIBA is offering to our Adventist churches and schools the new **TECRA A4** at 35% discount. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

11. BED AND BREAKFAST IN LONDON offered by a most gracious Adventist couple. For pictures and details visit my website: <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/Promotions/BED&BREAKFAST.htm>

12. REMOTE PRESENTER: Special offer on the smallest and most powerful REMOTE powerpoint presenter by Honeywell. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

13. DA-LITE SCREENS for your church at 30% discount. You can locate the screen your church needs and calculate the 30% discount at the DA-LITE website: <http://www.da-lite.com>. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

“The Saga of the Adventist Papal Tiara: Part 2”**Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.,****Retired Professor of Church History and Theology,****Andrews University**

The brief, 21 bullet-points outline of my essay on “The Saga of the Adventist Papal Tiara” posted in the previous newsletter (no. 145), hardly offered all the documentation and explanation needed to understand the subject. This may explain why some subscribers reacted negatively to the essay. Most likely, they would have reacted differently, had they been given the opportunity to view the newly released DVD album containing the live two hours and twenty minutes lecture recorded at the Andrews University Towers Auditorium.

In fact, some critics who later viewed the DVD recording, have written to me apologizing for their premature negative judgements. After viewing the DVD and reading the script attached to the 200 powerpoint slides, some concerned fellow-believers have become convinced that the traditional Adventist application of the number 666 to the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei* of the tiara, can no longer be legitimately defended exegetically and historically.

For the sake of those who have not had the chance yet to view the two hours DVD live lecture or to examine the powerpoint slide version of the lecture, I will attempt to respond to the major arguments used to discredit the new symbolic interpretation of 666 presented in the DVD recording and in recent Adventist studies.

Reasons for Responding to Critical Messages

The reason for taking time to respond to some critical messages, is that they are circulating via email far and wide in many countries. For example, a retired Australian Pastor, Bruce Price, a personal friend and author of the well-known book *Our Friends: The Jehovah’s Witnesses*, emailed to a selected group of people a message with an attached article from the Catholic magazine *Our Sunday Visitor*, November 15, 1914. The article states: “The title of the Pope of Rome is *Vicarius Filii Dei*. This is inscribed on his mitre.” The problems related to this statement will be discussed later. The intent of Price’s message was to show that *Vicarius*

Filii Dei is indeed found in the papal tiara. He added this comment: “I listened to and worked with most of the great evangelists this [South Pacific] Division has known. They did not teach, ‘cunningly devised fables’!”

Within a few days Pastor Price’s message was relayed to a countless number of people in many parts of the world. For example, someone emailed Pastor Price’s message to Elder Loren Nelson, Ministerial Secretary of the Michigan Conference. In turn, Elder Nelson forwarded Elder Price’s message with a brief personal note, where he associates me with Jesuits, to the pastors of the Michigan Conference. Some pastors forwarded the expanded message to some of their members. Eventually, dozen of individuals emailed me various expanded versions of this message with their own personal comments. In today’s instant communications, no one can tell how far and wide will go a message that was originally emailed to a selected group of friends.

In view of the wide circulation of some critical messages, it is imperative for me to respond to a few arguments. Failing to do so, would leave many readers confused, if not critical, of the new symbolic interpretation of the number of the Beast, presented in recent Adventist studies. For the sake of brevity, I will respond to five major sets of critical arguments. Thus, the response is divided in five parts:

Part 1

A response to the accusation that the latest newsletters reveal that Bacchiocchi is part of a Jesuit conspiracy attempting to destabilize the Adventist church.

Part 2

A response to the claim that the application of the number of the Beast (666) to the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei* is an official Adventist teaching that no scholar or church leaders has the right to change without an official vote taken at the General Conference session.

Part 3

A response to imaginative arguments used to defend the existence of *Vicarius Filii Dei* on the papal tiara or inside the mitre.

Part 4

A response to arguments used to defend the traditional numeric interpretation of the number of the Beast (666).

Part 5

A response to charge that Adventist scholars are abandoning the *historicist* method of prophetic interpretation, and adopting the *preteristic* method instead.

Part 1

**IS BACCHIOCCHI PART OF A JESUIT
CONSPIRACY?**

During the past 30 years time and again I have been accused by some “concerned” Adventists of being part of a Jesuit conspiracy to destabilize the Adventist church. Usually the accusation stems from disagreements with some aspects of my research. While other Adventist leaders have also been suspected to be “Jesuits,” I have been the primary target because I studied and graduated from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome—the leading Jesuit university in the world founded by Ignatius of Loyola.

The latest research on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, has rekindled the “Jesuit” accusation, because some feel that I clears the papacy of any connection with the Beast of Revelation 13. By questioning the application of 666 to the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, supposedly I am rejecting the prophetic role of the papacy in promoting the endtime idolatrous worship.

These accusations are blatantly false. They are fabricated by people who prefer to spend their time trying to assassinate my character, instead

of seeking to understand what I wrote and what I preach every weekend across North America and overseas. Jesus said: “By their fruits you shall know them” (Matt 7:20). The fruits of my ministry speak for themselves. Thousand of people around the world have accepted the Sabbath and joined our church after reading my books and attending my seminars. Such ministry could hardly be the fruits of a “Jesuit Infiltrator.”

For the sake of brevity, I will limit my response to three observations:

1. I have never had any formal or informal contacts with Jesuits since my graduation at the Pontifical Gregorian University on July 14, 1974.

2. At this time the Jesuits have too many problems of their own to find time to infiltrate in the Adventist church.

3. Numerous Adventist scholars have defended the symbolic interpretation of 666 long before me.

No Contact with Jesuits since my Graduation in 1974

Since my graduation on July 14, 1974, I have not had any formal or informal contacts with Jesuits. The controversy generated by my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday* in dominant Catholic countries, eventually led Pedro Arrupe, the General of the Jesuit Order, to instruct my beloved adviser, Prof. Vincenzo Monachino, not to receive me any more at his office at the Gregorian University. Prof. Monachino supervised my dissertation and thus, he was largely blamed for approving it and helping me to obtain the *imprimatur*—approval for its publication.

Over a year ago I received a document issued by the Academic Dean office of the Gregoriana, which negates my academic achievements, such as the reception of the gold medal donated by Pope Paul VI for earning the *summa cum laude* distinction. I have asked the Dean for an opportunity to show the original documents, including the gold medal, to Bishop Murray of Kalamazoo, whose jurisdiction includes Berrien Springs, where we live. But such meeting has not yet taken place and I doubt that it will ever take place. These facts suffice to dispel the rumor of any contact or cooperation on my part with Jesuits.

Jesuits Have too Many Problems of their Own

Adventists who indulge in the “Jesuit” conspiracy speculations, ignore that Jesuits at this time have too many problems of their own to conspire to infiltrate in the Adventist church. The very existence of the Jesuit order has been threaten in recent times by their spirit of insubordination. The editor of *Mensajero*, the official Jesuit publication in Spain, recently wrote: “The Jesuits went from being the defenders of the Roman Pontiff, to the object of suspicion because of progressivism, sympathy for Communism, and excessive concern for human justice, thus down playing eternal salvation.” (<http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=42011>).

Some Jesuits have been known for questioning papal pronouncements on birth control, abortion, homosexuality, priestly celibacy and the ban on female priests. Their outspoken criticism of Vatican policies, has placed the existence of their order in jeopardy. In a highly publicized incident, Pope John Paul II in 1981 named a temporary replacement to lead the Jesuit order.

Even Pope Benedict XVI few days ago on April 22, 2006, reminded members of the Jesuit order of their vow of obedience to the pontiff. Following a Mass celebrated in St. Peter to honor Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of their order, Benedict XVI reminded the Jesuit prelates to follow the example of Loyola, who was a faithful servant of the church (*Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 2006).

At a time when the Catholic church is facing her greatest losses in membership in South America and an alarming decline in church attendance in Western Europe, Jesuits can hardly afford to destabilize other churches. Their hand are full just to salvage their own church. In my native country of Italy, it is estimated that 95% of Catholics go to church three times in their lives, when they are *hatched*, *matched*, and *dispatched*. At this critical time the Jesuits need to use all their resources to revive their own Catholic church.

Adventist Scholars Have Defended the Symbolic Interpretation of 666 Long Before Me

Detractors who accuse me of originating the new symbolic interpretation of the number of the Beast in order to clear the papacy of any connection with the Beast of Revelation 13, ignore two things. First, I firmly believe that the papacy fulfills today the prophetic role of the Beast of Revelation 13 by promoting endtime idolatrous worship. But, I propose that the unholy trinity of the Dragon, Sea-Beast, and Land-Beast of Rev 13, is using other agencies besides the papacy, to lead the whole world away from the true worship of God into idolatrous forms of worship.

Second, numerous Adventist scholars have presented the symbolic interpretation of 666 long before me. Already in 1992, contributors to the *Symposium on Revelation* sponsored by the General Conference, proposed the symbolic interpretation. Some of their statements will be cited shortly. More recently the Adventist church at large was informed of the new symbolic interpretation of the number 666, by the Sabbath School Lesson of June 1-7, 2002, which dealt explicitly with “The Mark and Number of the Beast.” The author of the lesson, Dr. Angel Rodriguez, has been serving for the past 5 years as Director of the Biblical Institute. In many ways, my study popularizes and expands what Dr. Rodriguez and other Adventist scholars have written in recent years.

The reason I accepted Prof. Jon Paulien’s invitation to investigate the historic interpretation of the number of the Beast, is because I felt protected by the studies of respected Adventist scholars. Having suffered great pain in the past for attempting to break some new ground on our prophetic understanding of the Antichrist, I promised my wife that I would never again venture into a controversial subject. I feel that at this late stage of my life (68 years old), the time has come to enjoy some peace. But, I accepted Prof. Paulien’s invitation, because I felt that my investigation would simply build upon and possibly expand the new symbolic interpretation of 666 presented in recent Adventist studies.

Unfortunately, a few Adventists are reacting negatively because they are unfamiliar with recent Adventist studies. They even missed the June 1-7, 2002 Sabbath School Lesson, where Dr. Angel Rodriguez presents

three brief, but compelling reasons for rejecting the *Vicarius Filii Dei* interpretation. The DVD recording offers a defense and expansion of the three reasons mentioned in the Sabbath School Lesson.

I would recommend to interested readers, especially the writings of Jon Paulien, Ph. D., Chairman of the New Testament Department of Andrews University Theological Seminary and of Ranko Stefanovich, Ph. D., Professor of New Testament at Andrews University. Both men are rightly regarded as the foremost authorities on the book of Revelation.

Paulien has written his doctoral dissertation as well as several books related to the book of Revelation. On May 1, 2006 was released a new CD-ROM containing a dozen of the books and scores of the articles Paulien wrote during his past 20 years of research. You will find this collection a priceless resource to enrich your understanding and experience of biblical truths. Paulien examines fundamental biblical beliefs in a profound and yet popular way. To order this newly released CD album, see the information at the end of this newsletter.

Stefanovich has authored the *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (over 700 page), which was recently published by Andrews University Press. This monumental book is by far the most authoritative commentary on Revelation produced by our Adventist church. It represents many years of dedicated research. It has been adopted worldwide as a textbook by practically all our College Religion Departments and Theological Seminaries. It is one of the best selling books of the Andrews University Press. You can order your copy directly from Andrews University Press at <https://secure.andrews.edu/universitypress/cart.cgi> or by calling their office at 269-471-6915.

The unfamiliarity with these and other major studies prepared by dedicated and competent Adventist scholars, has led some well-meaning, but uninformed Adventists, to accuse me of denying the Three Angels Messages, at the very time when “we are preparing for the final push.” The truth is that recent Adventist research affirms the Three Angels Messages by helping our believers to understand, experience, and proclaim more fully these timely messages.

The fact is that most Adventist today do not have the faintest idea of what the Three Angels Messages are all about. Part of the reason is that traditionally these messages have been associated primarily with the prophetic role of the papacy in promoting endtime false worship. There is no question that the papacy has and is playing a major prophetic role in leading the mankind into apostasy, but thinking Adventists today recognize that the warning of the Third Angel Message against “the worship of the beast and its image” (Rev 14:9), extends beyond the idolatrous worship promoted by the Catholic Church. It is a warning against the global false worship promoted today by a variety of satanic agencies, including the papacy. By putting all our eggs in the basket of the papacy, we fail to see the global nature of End-time false worship.

Part 2

THE APPLICATION OF 666 TO *VICARIUS FILII DEI* IS AN OFFICIAL ADVENTIST TEACHING

Some Adventists firmly believe that the application of 666 to the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* of the papal tiara, is a long-standing and official Adventist teaching, that no scholar or church leader has the right to change it, without first putting it to a vote at a General Conference session.

This view is best expressed by an English Adventist attorney (Barrister), Philip Moore. He sent me several lengthy messages, where he articulates his convictions with clarity and persuasion. He writes: “If the G.C. Leadership believe that they have such a cast-iron argument against the SDA Church’s continued application of the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* to the Pope’s Mitre then why are they so coy of putting it to a vote at a General Conference Session? . . .

“The G.C.’s apparent attempt to alter long standing church teaching/doctrine by the backdoor— via your Newsletters and by a sneaky paragraph in the June 2002 Adult Sabbath School Lesson, is not a responsible, open or fair way of dealing with such an important matter. This approach is very Catholic! —i.e. doctrinal changes from the top to the laity, without debate, consultation or given them the opportunity to have any say in the matter.”

“If they [G. C. leaders] wish to change the Church’s stance on this matter, to be transparent, and courageous and [they should] do this the proper way. That is, [they should] bring the matter before the World Church at a General Conference Session, and have an open and fully informed debate and then vote on it. Rather than this back-door attempt at changing our major teachings—rightly or wrongly. To put it to the World Church at a G.C. Session would be good and accountable leadership.”

This argument appears very logical, but it has two major flaws. First, it mistakenly assumes that the application of 666 to *Vicarius Filii Dei*, has been an official teaching of the Adventist church. Second, it ignores the repeated warning issued by church leaders against this interpretation.

A Popular but Not an Official Teaching

The Adventist church has never officially taught that the number of the Beast (666) is to be found in the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, inscribed in the papal tiara. Unfortunately, this teaching has become popular in spite of several warnings issued against it by the General Conference, *Ministry*, the *Symposium on Revelation* published by the GC Biblical Research Institute, and even the recent Sabbath School Lesson of June 1-7, 2002. Shortly we shall refer to these warnings.

For example, in the *Symposium on Revelation*, sponsored by the Biblical Research Institute of the GC, William G. Johnsson, our current Editor of *Adventist Review*, cautiously warns: “It is possible that the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* of the papal tiara is the name indicated by the prophecy, as many Seventh-day Adventist expositors have taught. But in my view the text suggests that 666 is the code for the name of the sea monster, which is blasphemy. It points to a parody of perfection: imperfection upon imperfection, despite the beast’s monstrous claims” (vol. 2, p. 31).

In the same *Symposium on Revelation*, Prof. Kenneth Strand, my seminary Church History professor, presents a similar symbolic interpretation of 666. He writes: “There is obviously an intentional play on the number 6, heightened by the triple repetition of it. It is a ‘human number.’ The phrase *arithmos anthropou* can properly be translated, ‘a human number,’ and thus represents incompleteness and inadequacy. This contrasts with

the number 7 that is used frequently throughout the book of Revelation and elsewhere in Scripture to designate totality, fullness, and complete adequacy. The number 7 may thus be considered as a ‘divine number,’ and the number 6 a ‘human number’” (vol 2, pp.202-203).

Is the Inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* on the Papal Tiara?

Johnsson’s reference to “the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* of the papal tiara,” reflects a popular Adventist view that title is inscribed in the “papal tiara.” In fact, many subscribers expressed their total dismay when they learned for the first time through our newsletter that no tiara has even been found bearing the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei*. An Adventist sister wrote to me in an email that she could not believe that what she has taught for many years in *Revelation Seminars* about the number of the Beast found in the papal title *Vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed in the papal tiara, may not be true after all. She wrote: “This came as a shock to me!” It is reassuring to know that God can use even our mistaken interpretations, to lead people to salvation.

Most Adventists ignore that this teaching was first introduced to our church, not by Ellen White, but by Uriah Smith. Surprisingly, in all her voluminous writings, Ellen G. White makes only one brief statement on the number 666 of the Beast. The statement is found in her vision of 1847, which was printed on one sheet under the title “A Word to the Little Flock.” The statement reads: “*I saw that the number (666) of the Image Beast was made up; and that it was the beast that changed the Sabbath, and the Image Beast had followed on after, and kept the Pope’s, and not God’s Sabbath.*” (Emphasis supplied. First printed by Joseph Bates on April 7, 1847).

We do not know for sure what Ellen White meant by the phrase “*I saw that the number (666) of the Image Beast was made up.*” Some of the pioneers, including John N. Andrews initially believed that the number 666 was made up by the number of Protestant sects influenced by the Catholic Church.

The Role of Uriah Smith

The view that the number of the Beast (666) is to be found in the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, inscribed in the papal tiara, was first pre-

sented and promoted by Uriah Smith. In his book *The United States in the Light of Prophecy* (published in 1884), Smith affirms unequivocally that “The number over which the saints are also to get the victory, is the number of the papal beast, called also the number of his name, and the number of a man, and said to be six hundred three scores and six. The pope wears upon his pontifical crown in jeweled letters, this title, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, vicegerent of the Son of God. The most plausible supposition we have seen on this point is that here we find the number in question. It is the number of the beast, the papacy; it is the number of a man, for he adopts it as his distinctive title; it is the number of a man, for he who bears it is the ‘man of sin’” (4th edition, 1884, p. 224).

Smith’s interpretation was accepted and promoted even by John N. Andrews, a leading Adventist scholar. In his book *The Three Messages of Revelation 14:6-12*, Andrews wrote: “The number of the name of the beast is also to be enforced as a test of submission to him. This number, which is said to be that of a man, is seen, without doubt, in the title of ‘*Vicar of the Son of God*’ which the pope has caused to be inscribed upon his mitre. It is written in Latin, and the numeral letters employed make the sum of 666. The design of this test is to cause men to acknowledge the authority of the papacy” (pp. 108-109).

Andrews believed that the number 666 was visible “without doubt” in the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* found in the MITRE, while Smith placed the inscription on the TIARA. Most likely Andrews did not know the difference between the two, because the oral testimonies used to support the inscription always speak of the TIARA, not of the MITRE.

Uriah Smith and John N. Andrews played a major role in leading the whole Adventist church to accept the application of the number of the Beast to the papal title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, allegedly inscribed in the papal tiara. The wide circulation of Smith’s book *Daniel and the Revelation* contributed significantly to popularize this teaching.

Unfortunately, in spite of the painstaking efforts by private and official Adventist investigators commissioned by the GC, no tiara has ever been found with the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Of the 13 existing

papal tiara, only two of them have inscriptions, but these inscriptions are considerably different from *Vicarius Filii Dei*. You can see the stunning pictures of the inscribed tiaras in the DVD recording. This factor as well as other compelling exegetical reasons to be mentioned shortly, have led respected Adventist scholars to abandon the traditional numeric interpretation in favor of a symbolic interpretation of the number 666.

Part 3

A RESPONSE TO ARGUMENTS THAT DEFEND THE EXISTENCE OF *VICARIUS FILII DEI* ON PAPAL TIARAS OR INSIDE THE MITRE

To salvage the traditional Adventist view that the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei* is inscribed in the tiara, some Adventists have emailed me some imaginative arguments. Let me briefly respond to three of them:

1. Documents and Tiaras with the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* may have been destroyed to prevent the identification of the Papacy with the number of the Beast (666).

2. The Vatican has hidden away the tiaras with the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* to prevent Adventists from photographing them.

3. The inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* is found inside the MITRE, not in the TIARA.

I shall respond to these three arguments in their respective orders.

1. Documents and Tiaras with the Inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* May have Been Destroyed

Some Adventists argue that the Catholic church may have destroyed the documents and the tiaras with the inscription "*Vicarius Filii Dei*," in order to prevent the identification of the Papacy with the Antichrist of Revelation 13. In other words, the Catholic Church allegedly tried to suppress the incriminating evidences in order to prevent any attempt to identify the Papacy with the number 666 of the Beast.

This claim has two major flaws. First, there are at least 7 important Catholic historical documents shown in the live DVD lecture and slides, that refer to the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei*—*Vicar of the Son of God*. Even the world-renowned Catholic Patrologist, Prof. Johannes Quasten has admitted in writings: “The title *Vicarius Christi*, as well as the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* is [sic] very common as the title of the Pope.”

This means that the allegation of the Catholic destruction of documents mentioning *Vicarius Filii Dei* is totally false. There has been no destruction of documents because documents with the notorious inscription still exist. This argument is based on ignorance and ignorance breeds arrogance.

The second claim, is similar to the first. It contends that the incriminating tiaras with the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei*, may have been destroyed to suppress the possible identification of the papacy with the number of 666 of the Beast.

This is an argument from silence. What we know is that the only tiaras that have been destroyed are those that existed prior to 1800. They were destroyed, dismantled, or seized by invaders, most notably by Napoleon's General Berthier's army in 1798. Even some popes dismantled tiaras to meet financial obligations. For example, Pope Clement VII had all the tiaras and papal regalia melted down in 1527 to raise the 400,000 ducats ransom demanded by the occupying army of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. However, the destruction of the pre-1800 tiaras was motivated by financial concerns, not theological considerations.

Since 1800 a total of 13 tiaras has been produced and donated to the pope by various Catholic countries or cities. Of the 13 existing tiaras, only two of them have inscriptions, but their inscriptions are substantially different from *Vicarius Filii Dei*. You can see these stunning tiaras in the DVD recording and the powerpoint slides.

Tiaras Inscribed with *Vicarius Filii Dei* have been Hidden Away

The failure of private and official Adventist investigators to document the existence of any papal tiara with the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei*, is being explained by some Adventists as a proof of a Vatican scheme to

remove from public sight any incriminating evidence. A reader writes that only a person with a gullible mind would think that the pope is so naive to have his crown displayed publicly “to be photographed by a SDA delegation.”

There are four major problems with this argument. First, tiaras are made to be worn publicly, not to be hidden away. If the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* was considered risky by the Vatican, it would not have been placed on any tiara in the first place. Second, the 13 tiaras that have been made since 1800, have been photographed and published. Two of them have an inscription, but the inscriptions are substantially different. You can see the pictures and the inscriptions in the DVD recording.

Third, if the Vatican considered the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* incriminating, they would have removed it from their official documents, especially the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, which is their official church manual. The fact that *Vicarius Filii Dei* is still used on rare occasions, goes to show that the Vatican attaches no special significance to such title. It is simply one of lesser used papal titles. The more frequently used titles are: Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Christ, Most Holy Father, Successor of St Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Primate of Italy, Pontifex Maximus, Patriarch of the West (recently abandoned), Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of Vatican City and Servant of the Servants of God (a commonly used salutation in papal correspondence).

Fourth, no Adventist delegation was ever sent to Rome by the GC to look for the inscribed tiara. To my knowledge only two men were officially commissioned by the GC to search for such tiara. The first one was Chas T. Everson, an Adventist missionary serving in Italy, and the second was LeRoy Edwin Froom, Editor of *Ministry*. A brief report of the efforts of these two men is instructive.

Chas T. Everson's Investigation

At the request of several General Conference leaders, especially Prof. William Prescott, a leading Adventist educator, Elder Chas T. Everson, an American missionary serving in Italy, conducted a thorough investigation of papal tiaras in Rome in the early 1900s. The search providentially

led him into the very dressing room of the pope, where some tiaras were kept. His fascinating report was published in the July 27, 1905, issue of the *Advent Review*, under the title “The Inscription on the Pope’s Tiara.” In his informative report Everson does not divulge the secret of how he managed to enter into the very dressing room of the pope—a permission that was denied him by Vatican officials. Coming from Rome, Italy, where money talks, I have reasons to believe that Everson offered a generous gift to the pope’s housekeepers to sneak him into the pope’s dressing room to take some stunning pictures of the tiaras.

In spite of his unique opportunity to view several tiaras at close range in St. Peter’s Treasury, to watch Pope Leo XIII coronation, and to examine the tiaras in the very dressing room of the pope, Everson was disappointed in not finding the notorious inscribed tiara. He wrote: “But while we were pleased to see this brilliant crown [1836 Tiara used for coronation], yet we were disappointed in not finding the object of our search; for the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* was nowhere to be found inscribed upon the tiara, as the accompanying photographs show very plainly.” Everson concludes his report, saying: “to be perfectly correct in our statements, we cannot say that there is an inscription of this nature on the tiara at present” (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 27, 1905, p. 10).

A Fraudulent Adventist Tiara

One of the stunning pictures of the papal tiara sent by Everson to the General Conference, was modified by an Adventist artist who added the words *Vicarius Filii Dei* to the picture. The Southern Publishing Association used this “doctored” picture of the tiara in the revised edition of Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and the Revelation*. When Prof. Prescott received the book and noted the plate with the fraudulent tiara, he immediately presented to the General Conference the incriminating evidence. The GC Committee took immediate action to stop the printing of the book until the manipulated picture was removed.

Prof. Prescott, our leading Adventist educator, had a passion for truth that did not dim to the end of his career. Twice he presented to the GC committee the facts about the application of 666 to the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei*. The first time was shortly after 1910 and the second

time on April 16, 1936, after the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor* challenged Francis D. Nichol to prove what he published in *Present Truth* regarding the application of 666 to the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei*. We shall return to this episode shortly.

Prescott labelled as completely false the claim that *Vicarius Filii Dei* was inscribed in the papal tiara. He argued that the Adventist claim was just as much fraud and forgery as anything the Catholic church had done. He added: "When we are driven to such a conduct as this to prove some of our theology, we had better stop" (A full transcript of Prescott's presentation was made. See "Meeting with Elder W. W. Prescott," April 16, 1936, RG p. 14. Correspondence Prescott Fld 1936 II, GCar).

Most leaders of the General Conference acknowledge the weight of the evidence, but they decided to shelve the matter for further study. In the meantime, they recommended that "the interpretation should not be repeated." Apparently the recommendation was largely ignored because until his retirement Prescott had to deal with persistent claims that 666 applied to the title in the pope's tiara. (See, Gilbert Valentine's dissertation, "William Warren Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator," Andrews University, 1982, vol 2, p. 602)

William W. Prescott's Intervention

Prof. Prescott, our leading Adventist educator who served as president of four colleges, including Battle Creek, had a passion for truth that did not dim to the end of his career. His unwillingness to compromise truth, sometimes resulted in criticism and loss of support from some church leaders. He serves as a worthy example for all of us to follow. An Australian scholar, Gilbert Valentine has captured the spirit of Prescott in a masterful 650 pages doctoral dissertation presented at Andrews University (1982) on "William Warren Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator."

The *Review and Herald* recently published Valentine's abbreviated version of his dissertation, under the title *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation*. Reading this book has been of great encouragement to me, because it has reassured me that our Adventist

church has been blessed by men like Prescott who have suffered for daring to expose some of the doctrinal problems of our church.

Twice Prescott presented to the GC committee the facts about the application of 666 to the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, allegedly inscribed in the papal tiara. The first time was shortly after 1910 and the second time on April 16, 1936, after the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor* challenged Francis D. Nichol to document what he published in *Present Truth* regarding the application of 666 to the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei*. We shall return to this shortly.

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Most leaders of the General Conference acknowledged the weight of Prescott's evidences and recommended that "the interpretation should not be repeated." But the recommendation was largely ignored and "right up to his last days Prescott was still corresponding with authors who advocated it" (Gilbert Valentine, *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation*, p. 319).

Valentine notes that the GC Brethren "wished that Prescott would not respond so vigorously to such problems." But Prescott did not share their viewpoint. "As he saw it, if no one spoke up, the denomination would go backward, and he could not allow his church to do that, even if it was on a minor point of prophetic interpretation" (Ibid. p. 319). Personally, I share Prescott's conviction, because over the years I have felt the same burden to help our Adventist church strengthen its teachings.

LeRoy Froom's Investigation

The second man sent to Rome by the GC to investigate the use of the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei* on tiaras, was LeRoy Froom, who served for several years as Editor of *Ministry*. What precipitated Froom's investigative trip to Rome, was an article published in 1935 by Francis Nichols, editor of *Present Truth*. Nichols was a leading Adventist apologist, author of several books including *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*. He served also as the Editor of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*.

In his article published in *Present Truth*, he repeats the popular Adventist application of 666 to the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed in the tiara. No sooner the article appeared, that the Editor of the popular Catholic magazine, *Our Sunday Visitor*, challenged Nichols to produce the evidence for his claim or to stop using biased and dishonest anti-Catholic sources.

The challenge took Nichol by surprise, because he believed that Uriah Smith's interpretation was based on reliable sources. To respond to the challenge, he appealed for help to Adventist scholars around the world, asking them to provide him any information they could find to substantiate the Adventist claim. But no information was ever provided. Prof. Prescott informed Nichols that he had conducted a thorough investigation and found no evidence that *Vicarius Filii Dei* was ever inscribed on papal tiaras.

Eventually a special study group was set up by the General Conference chaired by Elder Howell, hoping to find reliable information on the use of the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei*. LeRoy Edwin Froom, a respected church historian and Editor of *Ministry*, was sent on a special research assignment to the Vatican to seek information on the use of the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, especially on tiaras, but he found nothing of significance.

The investigation led LeRoy Froom to issue a strong warning in *Ministry* against the use of fraudulently inscribed tiaras in evangelistic meetings. He wrote: "In the name of truth and honesty this journal protests any such use by any member of the Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventist denomination (our worker body), of which *The Ministry*

is the official organ. Truth does not need fabrication to aid or suppress it. Its very nature precludes any manipulation or duplicity. We cannot afford to be party to any fraud.” (*The Ministry*, November 1948, p. 35).

The warnings given over the years by the General Conference, *Ministry*, and more recent by the Sabbath School Lesson (June 1-7, 2002), have not stopped the application of the number 666 to *Vicarius Filii Dei*, claimed to be inscribed in the pope’s tiara. The reason it has been hard to abandon this interpretation is because it fits too neatly to Revelation 13:18.

The repeated warning mentioned above, should dispel the myth that the application of 666 to the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei* of the papal tiara, has been the official Adventist teaching, which is being challenged today for the first time by “liberal scholars.” The fact is that during this past century, several times our Church leaders have disapproved this interpretation, even by means of the recent Sabbath School Lesson of June 1-7, 2002. But the success has been limited, partly because legends that capture popular imagination do not easily die.

The Inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* May Be found inside the Mitre, not on the Tiara

An unusual argument presented by several Adventists is that our church has been looking for the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei* in the wrong place, namely *on* the TIARA, when they should have been searching for it *inside* the MITRE. This argument is based on the two different set of statements published in the popular Catholic magazine *Our Sunday Visitor*.

Briefly stated these are the facts. In the November 15, 1914 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*, the editor stated: “The title of the Pope in Rome is *Vicarius Filii Dei*. *This is inscribed on his mitre*; and if you take the letters of his title which represent Latin numerals and add them together they come to 666” (Emphasis supplied). The same statement appears almost verbatim in the April 18, 1915 issues of *Our Sunday Visitor*.

The Recantations of *Our Sunday Visitor*

Years later, however, the same magazine twice published a recantation. The first recantation occurred in the September 16, 1917 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*. The Editor writes: “if present-day writers are so anxious to see the fulfillment [of 666] in the person of the Pope, why not be consistent? Such interpreters have never shown that the title ‘*Vicarius Filii Dei*’ is really inscribed upon the Pope’s tiara. Moreover, the passage states that the number refers to a man, in other words the numerals represented by the letters in his name, which total the sum 666. The words *Vicarius Filii Dei* are not the name of the Pope, they do not even constitute his official title” (*Our Sunday Visitor*, September 16, 1917).”

The same denial appeared in the August 3, 1941, issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*: “It is too bad that the Seventh Day Adventists, who are so sensitive to criticism themselves, should circulate a pamphlet so antagonistic to the Catholic Church. . . . To give color to their accusation, enemies of the Church publicize something that is not at all true, namely that the Pope’s tiara is inscribed with the words ‘*Vicarius Filii Dei*,’ and that if letters in that title were translated into Roman numerals, the sum would equal 666. . . . As a matter of fact, the tiara of the Pope bears no inscription whatsoever. . . . It is very strange that people can regard themselves as religious and still engage in an apostolate of vituperation and slander.”

The accusation that our Adventist church is engaged “in an apostolate of vituperation and slander,” by claiming that 666 applies to the pope’s title ‘*Vicarius Filii Dei*’ inscribed in the papal tiara, deserves serious consideration. The intent of our message is to proclaim truth and expose error, but not to slander other religious organizations. If we cannot prove the existence of the notorious inscription on the tiara or inside the mitre, then we better stop making such a claim. We can focus instead on the blasphemous papal claims of divine attributes and authority, which amply exemplify the “proud words and blasphemies” of the Beast (Rev 13:5).

But the issue we are addressing here is the denials of *Our Sunday Visitor* of the absence of any inscription on the TIARA, but not on the MITRE. This subtle distinction is interpreted by some Adventists as a veiled Catholic admission of the presence of the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* inside the MITRE, but not inside the TIARA.

Is the Notorious Inscription Inside the Mitre?

The most eloquent presenter of this view, is an English Adventist lawyer (Barrister), Phil Moore. As a professional lawyer, Moore makes what appears to be a very convincing case for the inscription being inside the MITRE, rather than inside the TIARA. This would mean that our Adventist church has been looking for the notorious inscription in the wrong place. Moore writes: “There was never any retraction or denial in the September 16, 1914 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor* (as regards *Vicarius Filii Dei* being inscribed on the inside of the pope’s Miter [English spelling])’!! The statement . . . merely states that *Vicarius Filii Dei* was never inscribed inside the Pope’s Tiara, (not that it was never inscribed on the inside the pope’s Miter)!”

“This as you must realize is hugely significant, as the Tiara and the Miter are completely different head pieces. As you know the pope’s Tiara is a triple jewel-studded crown, worn usually at Coronation or other very special occasions. While the Miter on the other hand, is a open-top pointed hat, that the pope wears more commonly on official business.”

Moore believes that this is an “entirely new evidence in this important debate.” For him, this proves that “The Papacy did not retract the admission of [*Our Sunday Visitor*] 1914 about the Pope’s mitre (miter) having the inscription, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, it merely issued a new and different statement denying that the Pope’s Tiara (not Miter) had the said inscription!!” What all of this means, according to Moore, is that our Adventist church has been searching for the inscription in the wrong place. If they were allowed to examine the INSIDE of the papal MITRES, chances are that they will likely find the notorious inscription.

Problems with the “Mitre Arguments”

Moore must be credited for noting a detail that has escaped most readers. But in my view there are three major problems with his arguments. First, none of the four issues of *Our Sunday Visitor* speak of the notorious inscription being located INSIDE the MITRE or INSIDE the TIARA. They speak of the “letters inscribed IN the Pope’s mitre,” and that Adventists “have never shown that the title ‘*Vicarius Filii Dei*’ is re-

ally inscribed UPON the Pope's tiara." The terms IN and UPON hardly suggest that the inscription is found INSIDE the Mitre or INSIDE the Tiara. It makes no sense for the pope to hide such title inside his hats. If it is not meant to be seen, then there is no reason to inscribe it inside any head piece in the first place.

Second, I doubt that the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor* intended to differentiate between the MITRE and the TIARA. He was simply responding to the Adventist claim about the notorious inscription on the Tiara, and consequently mention the Tiara, rather than the mitre.

Third, the two statements published in the 1914 and 1915 issues of *Our Sunday Visitor*, about *Vicarius Filii Dei* being inscribed on the Mitre, reflect in my view the ignorance of the editors. The fact is that there are no inscriptions on papal Mitres, which are tall cloth folding caps, consisting of two similar parts (the front and back) rising to a peak and sewn together at the sides.

While the Tiara was worn primarily for the coronation—a practice that has been discontinued by the last three popes—the Mitre is worn by the pope practically every day for all his public appearances. He wears different designs of Mitres, but they are all pointed cloth hats, without inscriptions. During the 25 years I lived in Rome, I have seen the Pope on numerous occasions wearing Mitres. They are all artistically designed, but they have no inscription.

Editors and writers of magazines are not always well-informed. For example, in the same September 16, 1917 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor* cited earlier, the editor writes: "The words *Vicarius Filii Dei* are not the name of the Pope, they *do not even constitute his official title.*" The last statement shows that the Editor ignores that the pope has *NO official title.* He uses a dozen of titles mentioned earlier and *Vicarius Filii Dei* is one of them.

A similar example of ignorance is found in the cover article of the Catholic *Envoy* magazine, entitled "Pope Fiction," — an article especially aimed against Adventists. Patrick Madrid, the editor of the Catholic magazine, writes: "*Vicarius Filii Dei*, or 'Vicar of the Son of God,' is not now, nor has it ever been, a title of the bishop of Rome" (March/April 1998).

Madrid's denial is absolutely false. We noted earlier that the papal claim to be the *Vicarius Filii Dei*, is found in major Catholic historical documents and is acknowledged even by Prof. Johannes Quasten, the leading Catholic Patrologist in the world. The above examples suffice to show that statements from Catholic editors and writers can be inaccurate at times and do not always reflect the official teachings of their church.

Part 4

A RESPONSE TO ARGUMENTS THAT DEFEND THE NUMERIC INTERPRETATION OF THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST (666)

A few concerned Adventists emailed me lengthy messages that attempt to defend the traditional Adventist numeric interpretation of the number of the Beast (666). Their arguments are largely based on the assumption that numbers in Revelation are used in a literal, not a symbolic way.

The most articulated defence of the numeric interpretation was sent to me by Dr. Alberto Treiyer, who is currently serving as a pastor in North Carolina, Atlantic Conference. He earned his Ph. D. at the University of Strassbourg and has written half a dozen of books dealing with the sanctuary and Revelation. You can read about them at his website: www.TAGnet.org/distinctivemessages.

In my view Treiyer represents the most articulated "ultra-conservative" wing of Adventism that is determined to defend traditional Adventist interpretations, even if it means using sometimes a questionable methodology. He accuses our foremost Adventist eschatologists of departing from the legacy "received from the Protestant Reformation and our pioneer." The fact is, as we shall see, that most Adventist scholars today are examining traditional Adventist interpretations in the light of Scripture, and not viceversa. They want to ensure that our prophetic interpretations are biblically sound.

The strength of Adventism is to be found in its commitment to Scripture, not tradition. This commitment has led to a gradual abandonment of unbiblical teachings. An example is the adoption of the doctrine

of the Trinity that led the General Conference in 1929 to take out those statements denying Christ's divinity from Uriah Smith's commentary on *Daniel and the Revelation*.

Though Treiyer's books are hardly known and very seldom used in our college or seminary Bible classes, his lengthy response to my newsletters on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, has been circulating via email far and wide. Thus, it is imperative for me to respond to a few of his critical arguments. For the sake of brevity I will respond to the following three arguments, which I am listing as questions:

- 1. Does Rev 13:18 says that the Number 666 is the Added Numerical Value of the Letters of a Name?**
- 2. Are Numbers in Revelation Used in a Literal Way?**
- 3. Are the Measurements of the Holy City to be taken Literally?**
- 4. Does the Adventist Interpretation of 666 Come from the Protestant Reformers?**

Let me respond to the above arguments in the order they are listed.

- 1. Does Rev 13:18 Says that the Number 666 is the Added Numerical Value of the Letters of a Name?**

Some Adventists firmly believe that the number of the Beast (666) is the added numerical value of the letters of a name, specifically, the pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei*. For example, Treiyer emphatically states: "The Bible says that the number is the added numerical value of the letters of a name, according to the way in which the same expression was used in John's days. For example, an inscription appears upon a wall in Pompey that states: 'I love the lady whose name is 545.' Let us pay attention to the fact that this inscription of the first century does not say that the lady has a symbolic number or an ideology concealed in the number, or that the name means 545. It says simply, 'whose name is 545.' This is equivalent to what we find in Rev 13:18."

There are two major problems with this argument. First, it is based on a faulty reading of Rev 13:18. Contrary to Treiyer's claim, the text does not say that "the number [666] is the added numerical value of the letters of a name." Instead, it says: "the number of the beast . . . is a human number" (Rev 13:18; RSV). The phrase suggests, as stated in the Sabbath School, that "'it is the number of humanity;' that is, of humans separated from God." In other words, the meaning of the cryptic number must be found, not in the numerical value of a name, but in the human significance of 666, that is, the human refusal to proceed to seven, to give glory to God and find rest in Him. Incidentally, *Vicarius Filii Dei* is NOT A NAME, but one of the many TITLES ascribed to the pope.

The second problem is the faulty correlation. The riddle from Pompei's wall "I love the lady whose name is 545," differs radically from the statement that the number of the Beast "is a human number" (Rev 13:18). The text does not say: "The beast is the person whose name is 666." Rather, it says: "the number of the beast . . . is a human number." The number is applied to a human condition, not to a specific name.

The key phrase is "it is a human number—*arithmos anthropou*" —" (Rev 13:18), suggests that it is not the number of a name, but of a human condition of rebellion against God. The triple six suggests a determined effort of the beast to promote the worship of himself, rather than of God. Yet such efforts will ultimately fail because the remnant will triumph over the Beast (Rev 15:2).

Incidentally, it is interesting to learn how *Vicarius Filii Dei* was first proposed in 1612 by a German Greek scholar, Andreas Helwig or Helwich (c. 1572-1643). In his book *Antichristus Romanus—The Roman Antichrist*, Helwig explains that he tried to solve the riddle of the 666 by computing 15 different papal titles in three different languages. Since he could not find a matching title, he took the liberty of modifying the common title *Vicarius Christi*, into *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Surprisingly, he believed that the latter title did not even exist. Helwig's interpretation remained largely unnoticed for the next two centuries until the French Revolution, when computation on this and other titles of the pope became increasingly common. (See L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2, 605-608).

The call for wisdom in Revelation 13:8, is NOT a challenge to solve the riddle of 666 like Helwig did, by trying to find a matching papal title for that number, but to seek for spiritual discernment to recognize the wicked nature of the beast represented by 666. As Ranko Stefanovich rightly explains, “John urges readers here not to exercise brilliant intellectual ability or mathematical skills, but rather to seek divine discernment in order to perceive the character of the beast and to protect themselves from the deception (cf. Rev 17:9). John’s reference to the beast’s number will help faith Christians recognize ‘the true character and identity’ of this end-time anti-Christ power” (*Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pp. 427-428).

Counting the numerical value of the letters of a name (gematria) to define the meaning of numbers, is not a method used in the Bible. Revelation 13:18 gives no hint that the meaning of the number 666 is to be found in the numerical value of *Vicarius Filii Dei*—a pope’s title that came into existence eight century later in a language (Latin) largely unknown to John and his readers.

2. Are Numbers in Revelation Used in a Literal Way?

To defend the literal numeric interpretation of 666, Treiyer argues that numbers in Revelation are used in a literal way. Thus, he challenges my suggestion that John uses numbers as human analogies to help readers grasp concepts that sometimes transcend human definition.

In the live DVD recording and in the powerpoint slides version, I explain why John describes the redeemed as a “countless multitude” (Rev 7:9) and as 144,000 (Rev 7:4). The reason John uses the code number of 144,000, with 12,000 from each tribe, is because for the human mind it is difficult to comprehend “a countless multitude.” So John gives a code number easier to understand, because people were familiar with the twelve tribes and with the twelve apostles.

Treiyer responds to my symbolic interpretation of the 144,000 saying: “Bacchiocchi mixes here two different groups. We have to keep in mind, from an exegetical viewpoint, that the 144,000 are counted, but the great multitude could not be counted (Rev 7:4-8, 9). The 144,000 may be included within the great multitude, but the great multitude is not

within the 144,000.” By the phrase “the 144,000 are counted,” Treiyer suggests that the number 144,000 is a literal number of saved people actually counted by God, while the “countless multitude” was not counted by God.

This traditional view has largely been abandoned by Adventist scholars who recognize the organic unity that exists between the two visions. They also see the problems posed by a literal interpretation of 144,000. How could the 144,000 be the literal number of believers from the twelve tribes of Israel who come out of the great tribulation? Will God restore the twelve tribes at the end of time? Why would God choose the same exact number of redeemed from each of the 12 tribes, irrespective of the size of the tribe? Percentage wise this would mean that far more people will be saved from the small tribe of Benjamin than from the large tribe of Judah? Does God save people arbitrarily using a lottery system?

Treiyer differentiation between the 144,000 and the countless multitude is no longer supported by Adventist scholars. For example, in the *Symposium on Revelation*, a 10 years research project sponsored by the General Conference, Prof. Beatrice S. Neal writes: “Although Adventists have generally separated the 144,000 from the great multitude seen before the throne in the interlude’s closing scene, evidence supports the belief that they are one and the same group. That is, the sealed 144,000 *symbolize* the great multitude from every nation, kindred, and tongue who will remain loyal to God in the closing conflict of the great controversy between God and Satan” (vol 1, p. 245).

Beatrice Neal continues explaining that the 144,000 and the countless multitude are the same people seen by John from two different perspectives: “the former [144,000] being the end-time church militant engaged in the struggle on earth, while the great multitude are the same group triumphant after they safely reach heaven. . . . The number 144,000 is symbolic of the vastness of the innumerable multitude” (vol 1, p. 269).

Treiyer ignores that twelve is the number that represents the totality of the people of God. It represents not only ancient Israel, but also the church built upon the foundation of the twelve apostles (Eph 2:20). In the New Jerusalem the twelve gates are named after the twelve tribes and

the twelve foundations after the apostles, thus representing the totality of God's people from both the Old and New Testaments.

The multiples uses of 12 in its various combinations, still retaining the symbolic meaning of the totality of God's people, helps us understand the number 6 REV 13:18. In a well-documented essay just received as this newsletter was ready to be sent out, Wendell Slattery argues that the number 666 in Revelation 13:18 is not written in Arabic numeral as triple six (6 6 6), but in the Greek numeral value of three letters of the alphabet CHI=600, XI=60, and SIGMA=6.

Slattery feels that such a combination does not support the symbolic interpretation of the number 6, since the number of the beast does not consist of a triple 6, but of 600+60+6. The weakness of the argument is the failure to recognize that 6 like 12 can be used in a variety of combinations and still retain its symbolic meaning. Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide, that is to say, it was built on the religious meaning of the number 6, though it was used in different combinations. The same is true of measurements of the Holy City. They are given in multiple of 12, because of its symbolic representation of God's people. The same is true for the number 6.

3. Are the Measurements of the Holy City to be taken Literally?

Surprisingly Treiyer uses my comments on the symbolic measurements of the Holy City, to defend the traditional Adventist numeric interpretation of 666. I wrote: "The walls rest on 12 foundations, are 144 cubits thick, and have 12 gates. Furthermore the city is a perfect cube, like the most Holy Place. It consisting of 12,000 stadia in length, breath, and height. It is evident that this is a human measurement, because the dimensions of the heavenly Jerusalem cannot be computed in human terms. This means that a human measurement is given to help us imagine something that surpasses our imagination.

"Why twelve and multiples of twelve? Simply because twelve is the symbolic number of God's people. It represents Israel, the 12 tribes, and the Church, resting on the foundation of the twelve apostles. This means that the Holy City is the dwelling place of God's people of all ages."

Treiyaer challenges my symbolic interpretation, saying: “This interpretation cannot be supported exegetically, because John does not say that it is an abstract ‘human measurement,’ but that the angel was using a ‘human measurement,’ and specify them in human ‘cubit’ terms (Rev 21:17). As already seen, a symbol does not necessarily deny a literal measurement.”

Treiyaer believes that the measurements of the Holy City are literal because they were given by an angel in human “cubit” terms. Can this be true? There is no question that the measurements of the Holy City are given in literal human cubits. After all, this is the only kind of measurement that John’s readers could understand. But does this mean that the measurements represent the literal, actual size of the New Jerusalem?

If one takes the measurements and the description of the Holy City literally, then one must envision that the New Jerusalem as a city protected by walls and gates. It will have 12 foundations, 12 gates, and walls that are about 1,500 miles high (12,000 stadia—Rev 21:16). This means that the height of the walls will be approximately the distance from Chicago to Las Vegas.

Why would God place the redeemed within a boxed city with exceedingly high walls that prevent any view of the magnificent panorama outside the city? Will we need gates and walls in the world to come to protect us from thieves and criminals? It is evident that the description and the measurements of the Holy City are symbolic—they are designed to reassure us of the perfect safety and security that will exist in the new earth.

4. Does the Adventist Interpretation of 666 Come from the Protestant Reformers?

To give credibility and respectability to the traditional Adventist interpretation, Treiyaer claims that the pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei* “which contains at the same time the number 666 in its letters,” is a “well founded interpretation that comes from the Protestant Reformation [and it] has been adopted by Seventh-day Adventist interpreters from 1884.”

This statement is inaccurate because the Protestant Reformers were unanimous in identifying the papacy with the Antichrist, but none of them ever applied the number 666 of Revelation 13:18 to the numeric value of the papal title *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Furthermore, none of them ever mention the inscription of this title on the papal Tiara. Thus, it is inaccurate to say that the traditional Adventist numeric interpretation “comes from the Protestant Reformation.” The Reformers never heard of the application of 666 to *Vicarius Filii Dei*, because this interpretation, as mentioned earlier, was introduced later in 1612 by Andreas Helwig.

For Martin Luther the number 666 represented the years of papal domination from the time of Gregory I (590-604) to the thirteenth century. Luther’s interpretation of the number 666 was reposed by Matthias Flacius (1520-1575), who was one of the greatest Lutheran scholar of his time, known especially for his epochal *Magdeburg Centuries*. It is the first Protestant church history that was published in 13 volumes. (For sources see the DVD recording).

Even John Wesley’s (1703-1791) interpreted the mark and number of the Beast according to the teachings of the Reformers. He identified the name of the Beast with the name “Papa,” or “Pope,” commonly used to refer to the Pontifs, and the number 666 with the years of domination of the papacy.

Unfortunately the Reformers failed to show how their application of the number 666 to the years of the temporal domination of the papacy could be legitimately defended historically. The pontificate of Pope Gregory I (590-604) could mark a legitimate starting point for the emergence of the papacy as a dominant secular power, but Reformers did not propose any termination date in the thirteenth century. Most likely because there was no termination of the political power of the papacy in the thirteenth century. On the contrary, at that time the papacy reached the zenith of its power, with such popes as Innocent III (1198-1216), who determined both the election and deposition of the German Emperor Otto IV.

Part 5**A RESPONSE TO THE CHARGE THAT ADVENTIST SCHOLARS ARE ABANDONING THE *HISTORICIST* METHOD OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION AND ADOPTING THE *PRETERIST* METHOD INSTEAD.**

The adoption of the symbolic interpretation of 666 by Adventist scholars, is seen by Treiyer and a few other Adventists, as reflecting the abandonment of the *historicist* method of interpretation and adoption instead the *preterist* method. Treiyer writes: “In recent times, some Adventist theologians, who are abandoning the *historicist* method of interpretation, challenged this interpretation [of *Vicarius Filii Dei*] based on several assumptions taken, in some respects, from Protestant and Catholic theologians.”

For the sake of those unfamiliar with the terms *historicist* and *preterist*, a word of explanation is in order. These terms are used to explain the different methods of prophetic interpretation. *Preterist* interpreters view all the apocalyptic prophecies as having a contemporary or near contemporary fulfillment. For them the prophecies of the book of Revelation were fulfilled in John’s time or soon afterward.

The *futurist* interpreters, as the name implies, do the reverse of the preterists. They project most of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to the future final crisis. The *idealist* interpreters view the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation as symbolic expressions of eternal truths about good and evil.

The *historicist* interpreters emphasize the *continuity* of the apocalyptic prophecies. Thus, they interpret the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation as unfolding throughout history until the establishment of God’s kingdom. We Adventists are the major representatives of the *historicist* interpretation.

Adventists view prophecies as history written in advance and consequently largely removed in time from their authors. This means that the symbols used by John (dragon, beasts, image, mark of the beast,

number of the beast, seal of God, harlot, Babylon, etc.) were not readily understood by the original readers, because they were a puzzle to be solved 2000 years later by the end-time generation.

Treiyaer is a strict *historicist*. Thus, he accuses me and other Adventist scholars of departing from “the historicist legacy.” He writes: “This new methodology is being taken from modern theologians, in different degrees, by Paulien, Stefanovic, Bacchiocchi, and others who are loosening, like them, more and more the historicist legacy we received from Protestant Reformation and our pioneers.”

I will respond to Treiyaer charge by addressing the following three questions:

- 1. Are Adventist Scholars Abandoning the *Historicist* Method of Interpretation and Adopting instead the *Preterist* Method?**
- 2. Does the Prophecy of the Mark of the Beast has only a Future Fulfilment?**
- 3. Does the Symbolic Interpretation of 666 Weaken the Role of the Sabbath in the Endtime Showdown Over Worship?**

I will respond to these questions in their respective order.

- 1. Are Adventist Scholars Abandoning the *Historicist* Method of Interpretation and Adopting instead the *Preterist* Method?**

Treiyaer’s accusation that Adventist scholars are abandoning the *historicist* method of prophetic interpretation, reflects his exclusivistic mentality which allows for only ONE interpretation of the book of Revelation. He is not willing to consider the possibility that its prophecies can sometimes be three-dimensional in their perspective, with an *immediate*, *continuous*, and *future* applications.

Treiyaer ignores that John wrote to seven real congregations in seven real cities of the Roman province of Asia Minor. They are expected to read, to listen, and to practice the words of the prophecy. “Blessed is

he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near” (Rev 1:3). The Greek verb for “reads—*anaginoskon*” literally means “reading with understanding.” The reader (preacher) and the listeners (the congregation) were expected to understand the prophetic messages. This text promises a special blessing to the reader in the church and the listeners of the book of Revelation.

But the prophecies of Revelation reach beyond John’s day to the consummation of redemption with the establishment of a new world. They describe the unfolding of the great controversy from its inception in heaven to its various manifestations and termination on earth.

The fact that the book of Revelation speaks powerfully, not only to its original audience, but also to future generations of believers, calls for spiritual discernment in interpreting its prophetic messages. Contrary to Treyier’s claims, no single method (*Preterists, Futurist, Historicist, Idealist*) can be used as a template to interpret the whole of Revelation. Instead, we need to examine each passage, asking, as Jon Paulien points out, “What is the approach called for in this passage?” As we go through the book of Revelation, we will want to be sensitive to the evidence of the text. We will let the biblical text govern what we see in the passage” (Jon Paulien, *The Deep Things of God*, p. 30).

2. Does the Prophecy of the Mark of the Beast has only a Future Fulfilment?

Applying the above principle to the prophecy regarding the mark and number of the beast, it means that we need to be sensitive to the evidence of the text. Does the text suggest that the enforcement of false worship by the beast will take place exclusively at the End? Or was there an initial fulfilment already in John’s time? The answer to this question becomes evident when we understand the challenge of emperor worship that John is addressing. This point is discussed at length both in the DVD recording and the powerpoint version of the lecture.

By the time John put pen to paper the emperor cult had so penetrated the political and economic institutions of the Roman Empire, that it had

become increasingly difficult for conscientious Christians to remain loyal to Christ. During John's time, the Emperor Domitian (81-96), posed the greatest threat to the Christian church. The Roman historian Suetonius informs us that Domitian had statues of himself set up of gold and silver and wanted all the people to worship him as *Dominus et Deus—Lord and God* (Suetonius, *Domitian* xiii).

As the emperor worship was spreading in the Roman Empire, especially in the Province Asia, the prophet John could see the signs of the coming crisis when “all the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb” (Rev 13:8, NIV). John recognized that Christians would soon have to choose their allegiance between Caesar or Christ as their Lord.

John himself made the choice to be loyal to Christ and paid the price by being exiled to the tiny island of Patmos. He tells us that he was in that island, not on an evangelistic tour, but “on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 1:9). Most likely “the testimony of Jesus” refers to John's choice to worship Christ as *Dominus and Deus*, instead of the Emperor Domitian.

At that critical time when some Christians were compromising their allegiance to Christ in order to fit into a pagan world, John, from his exile in Patmos, calls upon them to wake up and recognize the demonic nature of the Emperor Cult. Rome is a beast empowered by Satan to demand the worship that belongs to God. The central thrust of Revelation is a call to faithfulness in the context of the beguiling influence of the idolatrous worship of the Roman society.

The threat of the emperor cult to the Christian faith explains why in the Pauline Epistle the central issue is faith versus works, but in Revelation the central issue is true worship versus false worship. The term “worship—*proskuneo*” occurs 24 times in Revelation, which is half of the occurrences in the NT. What is the reason for such emphasis? The answer is found in the threat of the emperor cult Christian were facing.

John's warning against false worship reaches beyond his time to the very end of time. This is indicated by the fact that the final attempts of the beast to enforce false worship, are followed immediately by the announcement of the fall of Babylon and the judgment upon the beast and her followers at the coming of the Son of Man in the cloud (Rev 14:14).

In John's time false worship was promoted especially through the emperor cult which forced Christians to choose between Christ or Caesar. Today false worship is promoted by a variety of satanic agencies, especially by the papacy. This makes the prophecy of the mark and number of the beast especially relevant to our time. (For a discussion of the endtime fulfilment of the Mark and Number of the Beast, see the DVD recording and the powerpoint slides version).

Contrary to Treiyer's accusation, Adventist scholars are not abandoning the traditional *historicist* method of interpretation, but they are simply recognizing that some texts demands both a contemporary and future fulfilment. Writing for the *Symposium on Revelation* sponsored by the General Conference, Prof. Kenneth Strand writes: "Christians suffering under the persecutions of imperial cult would have seen in the certificate of conformity an application of the 'mark' of Revelation 13. The setting of the 'mark,' however—just prior to the Second Advent—shows that its full meaning is yet future" (vol 2, p. 30). It is this dual fulfillment, contemporary and future, that Adventist scholars recognize while Treiyer unfortunately ignores.

3. Does the Symbolic Interpretation of 666 Weaken the Role of the Sabbath in the Endtime Showdown Over Worship?

A fear expressed by a few Adventists, including Dr. Alberto Treiyer, is that the symbolic interpretation of 666, will ultimately weaken the role of the Sabbath in the endtime showdown over worship. This fear has been triggered by my statement quoted by Treiyer: "The endtime showdown is not about names or numbers per se, that is, Sunday versus Sabbath, First day versus Seventh-day, but about what these two days represent: *Self-centered worship* versus *God-centered worship*. It is within this context that THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST must be understood."

Treyer responds to my comment, saying: “Do we have to conclude that the endtime showdown will not have to do with the two days of worship (First day versus Seventh-day), because they are symbols of ‘the self-centered worship versus God-centered worship’ and, therefore, the controversy will be diluted to ideas instead of concrete issues? . . . Is Bacchiocchi now intending to stop observing the seventh-day (Saturday) in order to keep his new ideologist method of interpretation, just to worship the idea of that day disconnected from a literal understanding and concerning the specific day determined by God to keep it holy?”

Let me respond to Treyer’s criticism by making three basic observations. First, if we reduce the endtime showdown over worship to the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath versus First-day Sunday, then we will be hard-pressed to explain how the conflict is playing out in Western “Christian” countries where over 90 per cent of the people observe NO DAY at all.

In a couple of weeks I will be back in London, England, to speak at three Adventist rallies, plus a conference in Gloucester sponsored by a non-SDA organization called, FRIENDS OF THE SABBATH. (See the details at the end). Last time I was in London, I asked a question to my regular taxi driver, Brian, a decent man who has picked me up over 20 times from Heathrow airport and taken me to the lovely home where I always stay. (See details of the Bed & Breakfast at the end of the newsletter for your next trip to London). I asked Brian: “What does Sunday observance means to you?” He replied: “Nothing! I have not been to church on Sunday for many years now. Sunday is the day when I watch my soccer game, and sometimes I visit my local pub. Mind you, I drink with moderation.”

Brian’s answer reflects the tragic condition of Western Christianity where religion and Sunday observance are a thing of the past. People live in what analysts call “the post-Christian era.” It is in this context that I say that the conflict between Sabbath versus Sunday, is not about names or numbers, but about what these two days represent: *Self-centered worship* versus *God-centered worship*. The observance of the Sabbath or of Sunday or of no-day, must be seen in the context of true worship versus false worship.

Our traditional interpretation tends to reduce the final conflict over worship to simply a controversy between two different days: Sabbath versus Sunday. But, there is more to worship than observing the right day. One can observe the right day, but for the wrong reason. Moreover even some Sabbathkeepers sometimes reduce their Sabbathkeeping to one hour of church attendance followed by secular activities.

My second comment is that I have devoted much of my life and ministry to help people understand the fundamental difference between Sabbathkeeping and Sundaykeeping. Simply stated, *the difference is to be found in the act of resting unto the Lord as an act of worship*. The essence of Sabbathkeeping is the consecration of the 24 hours of the seventh day unto the Lord, by giving priority to Him in our thinking and living. By contrast, the essence of Sundaykeeping is attending church for *one hour*, and then be free to seek for pleasure or profit.

This is how Sunday started in the early part of the second century and this is what Sunday has remained. In spite of the Constantinian Sunday Law of 321 and the later efforts of church councils, popes, and Puritan to make Sunday into a DAY of rest and worship, the historical reality is that Sunday began as an HOUR and has largely remained the HOUR of church attendance followed by secular activities.

The historical understanding of Sunday as the HOUR OF WORSHIP, led the Vatican while I was studying at the Gregoriana, to anticipate the first Sunday Mass to Saturday afternoon, for those Catholics who are too busy to go to church on Sunday. According to the *Sunday* magazine of the Lord's Day Alliance of the USA, over 10,000 Protestant churches have adopted also the Saturday evening service as an option for those who have other things to do on Sunday. Eventually, even the one weekly hour of church attendance is squeezed out of the busy life of many people. It is in this context that I define Sunday as *self-centered worship*, and the Sabbath as *God-centered worship*.

In the final analysis, observing the Sabbath as a *Holy Day*, challenges the believer to be a *Holy Person* in a secularly minded and perverse generation. *Holy Day* for a *Holy People*. A Jewish scholar wrote that the Sabbath has preserved the Jews more than the Jews have preserved the

Sabbath. I believe that the same is true for our Adventist Church. The Sabbath can help us retain our *Remnant* sense of identity and mission.

My third and final comment, is that I firmly believe that the Sabbath plays a vital role in the final showdown, because the focus of the final conflict between the divine Trinity and the diabolic trinity, centers over worship. “Worship” is the single word that appears 8 times in Revelation 13 and 14. “Men *worshipped* the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also *worshipped* the beast” (Rev 13:4). “All the inhabitants of the earth will *worship* the beast” (Rev 13:8). Again we are told in verses 12 and 15 that all the people are forced to *worship* the sea beast and her image.

The Sabbath will play a critical role in the final conflict, because it is the commandment that summons people to the true worship of God. Note that after warning seven times against the false worship of the beast, Revelation calls upon the worship of the true God in the context of the Sabbath commandment (14:7).

John Paulien brings out this point clearly saying: “Seven times in Revelation 13-14 the word ‘worship’ is applied to the unholy trinity. ‘They worshipped the dragon.’ ‘Worship the beast.’ ‘Worship the image of the beast.’ Only one time in this whole section is there a call to worship the true God. If true versus false worship is the central issue at the End, this passage (Rev 14:7) is the central text of the section, perhaps of the entire book. When Revelation finally gets around to calling on people to worship the true God, it does so in the context of the fourth commandment, the Sabbath command. In a special sense, therefore, the author of Revelation understood the Sabbath to be THE crucial issue in the final crisis.

“In both texts (Rev 14:7 and Ex 20:8-11) the call to worship takes place in the context of creation. One of the best reasons to worship God is the fact that He created us (this is also the theme of Rev 4:9-11). As the memorial of creation, the Sabbath points continually to God as the object of worship. The issue in the final crisis, therefore, is not limited to the Sabbath, but the Sabbath is an integral part of the issue” (Jon Paulien, *What the Bible Says About the End Time*, p. 126).

The Sabbath is and will be a testing truth in the final hour of world history, because it summons us to consecrating our time to Him. Most people are touchy about the use of their time. They want to use their time to seek for pleasure or profit, not for divine peace and rest in their lives. We live today in a *self-centered* society, and the Sabbath challenges us to be *God centered*, not only on the seventh day, but through the seventh day, every day of the week. *When we consecrate the Sabbath time to God we show in a tangible way that God really counts in our lives.*

What a marvellous opportunity on the TEN COMMANDMENTS DAY (May 7, 2006) to call upon the Christian world to REMEMBER the commandment which most people have forgotten: REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. We need to help people understand the importance to “Remember the Sabbath,” not by going to church for one hour at a convenient time, but by giving priority to God in our thinking and living for 24 hours. It means stopping our work on the seventh day to allow our Savior to work in us more fully and freely. It means to experience in a fuller way the awareness of the presence, peace, and rest of Christ in our lives. This is the essence of true worship expressed by the Sabbath Commandment! This is the message that the world need to hear loud and clear on TEN COMMANDMENTS DAY. This is the message that concludes the DVD recording of *The Mark and Number of the Beast*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the upcoming seminars for the months of May and June 2006. I wish to extend my personal, warm invitation to all who are able to attend one of the followings rallies.

MAY 5-6: ALBANY SDA CHURCH - NEW YORK

Location: 298 st. Agnes Highway, Cohoes, New York 12047.
For information call Pastor Don Bozarth at (607) 397-1848.

MAY 12-13: CHICAGO: HINSDALE SDA CHURCH

Location: 201 N. Oak Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521.

For information call Pastor Ante Geroncic at (630) 730-3075 or (630) 323-0182.

MAY 19-20: LONDON - HOLCOMBE ROAD SDA CHURCH

Location: John Loughborough School, Holcombe Road, Tottenham, London, England. For information call Pastor Augustus Lawrence at 01923 894355.

MAY 26-27: LONDON -PLAISTOW SDA CHURCH

Location: 97 St. Anthonys Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9QB, England
For information call Pastor Felix McPherson at 020 8524 9402

MAY 28-29: GLOUCHESTER - FRIENDS OF THE SABBATH

Location: The Conference will take place at the Quedgeley Community Centre, School Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 4PJ, England.

For directions, registration, and general information visit the website: <http://www.friendsofsabbath.org.uk/taylor.pdf> or call Robert Taylor at 01452 417116

JUNE 2-3: LONDON- BRIXTON SDA CHURCH

Location: Santley Street, Clapham, London SW4 7QG, England
For information call Pastor Hamilton Williams at 020 8670 5255

JUNE 9-10: NEW YORK CITY - PATCHOGUE SDA CHURCH

Location: 184 North Ocean Avenue, Patchogue, NY 11772

For information call Pastor Daniel Zabaleta at (914) 681 1842.

JUNE 16-17: LOS ANGELES - TEMPLE CITY SDA CHURCH

Location: 9664 East Broadway, Temple City, CA 91780.

For information call Pastor Benjamin Del Pozo at (626) 374-9984 or (626) 292-1305.

NEWLY RELEASED (MAY 1, 2006) CD-ROM WITH ALL OF PROF. JON PAULIEN PUBLICATIONS.

Prof. Jon Paulien is one of the most respected Adventist scholars. Besides serving as the chairman of the New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary, he writes and lectures extensively in many parts of the world.

Until now Prof. Paulien books and articles were available only in a printed form, often unavailable at local ABC stores. In view of my indebtedness to Prof. Paulien's scholarship, I have offered to help him to place all of his books and articles on a CD disk. This makes it possible with the ACROBAT global search, to locate immediately what he has written on biblical texts or current topics.

The new CD-ROM, released on May 1, 2006, contains more than a dozen of books and scores of articles written by Prof. Paulien during the past 20 years of research. This new CD-ROM supersedes the previous one that contained less than half of his publications. The reason for this delay is the time it took to obtain permission from the publishers to use Prof. Paulien's publications for this recording.

You will find in this collection a priceless resource to enrich your understanding and experience of biblical truths. Prof. Paulien examines fundamental biblical beliefs in a profound and yet popular way. He is a recognized expert on the book of Revelation. Several of his books will help you to unlock the secrets of Revelation.

The special introductory offer of the newly released CD-ROM ALBUM with all of Prof. Paulien books and articles is only \$35.00 instead of the regular price of \$50.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination. If you purchased the previous limited version of his publications, your special price is only \$20.00, mailing expenses included. Call us at (269) 471-2915 for your special price or contact us by email at <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>

To order the newly released CD ALBUM with all of Prof. Paulien books and articles, simply click here: <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/PaulienAD/>

If you have a problem ordering online, email us your order at <sbacchiocchi@biblicalpherspectives.com>, giving us your address, credit card number, and expiration date. You can also order by phone, calling us at (269) 471-2915. We will take your order by phone.

SPECIAL *TEN COMMANDMENTS DAY* OFFER ON THE NEW DVD ALBUM ON *THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST*

In occasion of *TEN COMMANDMENTS DAY* I decided to offer **TWO DVD albums on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, for only \$50.00, (that is \$25.00 each), airmailing expenses included**, instead of the regular price of \$200.00 (that is \$100.00 each). This special offer will last the whole month of May 2006.

The reason for offering **TWO DVD albums for only \$50.00**, is to provide you with one album for your personal use and one for witnessing. At a time when Christian leaders are promoting the Ten Commandments, while claiming at the same time that the Sabbath Commandment is part of the OT Jewish laws nailed to the Cross, it is imperative for them to understand that Sabbath will play a critical role in the final conflict. The DVD will help them to see how God in Revelation makes the final appeal to mankind to worship Him in the context of the Sabbath commandment (Rev 14:7). Your efforts to share this timely study is greatly appreciated.

The DVD album consists of two disks which contain the live recording that was done at the Andrews University Towers Auditorium on Wednesday, February 1, 2006. The marathon lecture lasted over two hours and was delivered with the help of 175 powerpoint slides. The lecture was introduced by Prof. Jon Paulien and Prof. Ranko Stefanovich, two foremost Adventist experts on the book of Revelation.

You will be thrilled by this passionate lecture that will help you understand what the mark and number of the beast are all about. This prophecy is not about external markings, barcodes, biochips, or pope's titles, but rather about the internal control of the mind of every human

being. It is a battle over who will people worship: the true God or Satan. This visual presentation will help you to see the role of the Sabbath in the battle over worship in the endtime showdown.

At the end of the second DVD disk, there is a separate powerpoint file with all the 195 slides and accompanying script. This should prove to be a valuable resource for evangelists, pastors, and anyone engaged in sharing the prophetic message of Revelation. They can use some of the stunning pictures for their own presentation.

How to Order the TWO DVD Albums

The special **Ten Commandment Day** offer for **TWO DVD Albums** on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, is **only \$50.00**, instead of \$200.00. The airmailing expenses to any foreign country are included in the special price. This special offer in **only for the month of May**.

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(3) **Email:** By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalpherspectives.com>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date.

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In occasion of the release of the new DVD album on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, I am pleased to offer you the complete package of all my DVD and CD recordings, consisting of **5 Albums for only \$100.00, instead of the regular price of \$500.00**. This is a one-time incredible offer.

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SPECIAL OFFER ON PROF. JON PAULIEN'S 5 CD-ROM ALBUMS, called *The Bible Explorer Series on Revelation*.

The book of *Revelation* has both delighted and frustrated readers ever since it was written. Sensational but senseless interpretations of the book abound. In this unique package consisting of 120 lectures professionally recorded in 60 CD disks, Prof. Jon Paulien guides you through a verse by verse study of the intriguing messages of Revelation.

Prof. Paulien is rightly regarded inside and outside the Adventist community, as a foremost authority in Johannine literature, especially the book of *Revelation*. Students have told me that listening to his lectures, is a mind-opening experience. Personally I esteem Prof. Paulien as the leading Adventist authority on the prophetic books of the Bible.

If you wish that you could go back to school and seat in Prof. Paulien classes, I have good news for you. You do not need to worry about your age or your financial limitations. You do not even need to enroll at Andrews University and spend thousands of dollars of tuition to benefit from Prof. Paulien's instruction.

All what you need to do is simply to order his 120 lectures which have been professionally recorded and packaged in FIVE ALBUMS, EACH CONTAINING 12 CD-ROMs, for a total of 60 CD-ROMs. The set is called *The Bible Explorer Series on Revelation* and takes you verse by verse through the whole book of *Revelation*. These lectures are the equivalent of four Seminary courses (about \$2000.00 of tuition), yet they are presented in a way that lay people can understand. Each lecture concludes with spiritual lessons for everyday life.

To express my appreciation for the contribution that Prof. Paulien has made to the understanding of Revelation, I am promoting and distributing his *The Bible Explorer Series on Revelation* consisting of 5 albums with a total of 60 CD-ROMS, as a free service without any commission. I have offered my service to facilitate the purchase of this timely set of 120 lectures through the shopping cart at my website: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/paulien/>

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(3) Email: By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>.

(4) Regular Mail: By mailing a check for \$175.00 to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

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CP-X1250 HIGH RESOLUTION 4500 LUMENS – Only \$3995.00

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WARRANTY: The above prices include a 3 years 24/7 warranty package that is worth about \$285.00.

These special offers are not listed at my website, because the prices change all the time, depending on the deal that HITACHI gives us. Feel free to call us at 269-471-2915 or email us a message at <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com> I will email you all the details of each projector.

TOSHIBA LAPTOPS COMPUTERS FOR ADVENTISTS

TOSHIBA has agreed to offer to Adventists the new TECRA A4 for only \$1195.00, instead of the regular price of \$1650.00. This is a outstanding business model with a very fast processor, extra bright screen, double memory, CD/DVD burner, wireless, etc. The new model arrived from China on February 13, 2006. If you are looking for an outstanding TOSHIBA laptop at a bargain price, visit my website at <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Toshiba/Notebooks.html>

If you cannot surf the web, feel free to call us at 269-471-2915 or email us a message at <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>. We will email you immediately all the information about the TECRA laptops. Call me for details at 269-471-2915.

DOES YOUR CHURCH OR SCHOOL NEED A SCREEN?

If your church/school is looking for a screen, the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY, the largest manufacture of screens in the world, has agreed to offer their line of screens to our Adventist churches and schools at a about 30% discount.

To order a screen the procedure is very simple. Visit the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY website at <http://www.da-lite.com>. You will see hundreds of models of screens with their respective prices. Once you find the screen that you need, give us the model number by phone (269) 471-2915 or email your request <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com> We will forward your order immediately to DA-LITE that will ship the screen directly to your address. You will receive the screen at about 30% discount.

THE SMALLEST AND MOST POWERFUL REMOTE PRESENTER

If you are looking for an outstanding REMOTE for your Power-Point presentations, you will be pleased to know HONEYWELL has just come out with the smallest and most powerful remote in the market.

The size of the transmitter is smaller than a credit card. You can stick it inside the palm of your hand and nobody can see it. I tested the remote in an open environment, and the radio signal can go up to 400 feet of distance. IT IS INCREDIBLE! The transmitter has three button: forward, backward, and laser.

You can order online the new POWERPOINT PRESENTER simply by clicking here: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=bookstore&Category_Code=RP

If you have a problem ordering online, simply call us at (269) 471-2915. We will take your order by phone.

You can also email us your order at <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>, giving us your address, credit card number, and expiration date.

Christian regards

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