

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 199

“REFLECTIONS ON BENEDICT XVI's VISIT TO THE USA”

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**EXCITING NEWS: *POPULAR BELIEFS: ARE THEY BIBLICAL?*
IS OUT!!! WE ARE PROCESSING YOUR ORDERS!!!**

On Friday, April 25, my long-awaited baby (book) *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* was born. On the same evening we had a special dedication service attended by about 30 persons, including three medical doctors, a few faculty members, and our immediate family members. It was a simple but moving ceremony. I shared the story behind the book and Cristina Piccardi, the outstanding soprano who joined my ministry 6 months ago, blessed us with two sacred songs. Then each of us invoked God's blessings on this book, asking the Lord to use it in a mighty way to lead many sincere persons to understand why some of their popular beliefs are unbiblical and why some of the less popular Adventist beliefs are biblical.

The printed page played a most important role in the origin of our Adventist Church. James White published in 1849 the first eight-pages paper *Present Truth* at great personal sacrifices. It was folded by hand and addressed to potential readers. From that humble beginning the Advent message went out, people responded, and eventually our Adventist church was established.

Over the years I have seen tangible evidences of the power of the printed page. For example, the circulation of my book *The Sabbath Under Crossfire* has led over 200 scholars, pastors, and churches to accept the Sabbath. In recent months I have been invited by former Sundaykeeping congregations that have moved their religious services from Sunday to Saturday after reading this book.

The new book *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* should prove to be a most effective witnessing publication, because it examines not just Sunday sacredness, but ten popular beliefs such as the immortality of the soul, life after death, hell as eternal torment, purgatory, the veneration of Mary, Sunday sacredness, speaking in tongues, once saved always saved, and infant baptism.

If you have ever wished that our Seventh-day Adventist Church had a compelling witnessing book that could help your Christian friends understand why some of their popular beliefs are biblically wrong, while the Adventist beliefs are biblically correct, you will be pleased to know that such book just came off the press.

During the past few months I posted excerpts of several chapters from *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* in our *Endtime Issues Newsletter*. The response has

been most encouraging. Readers have expressed their appreciation by ordering over 6,000 copies, long before the book came off the press. Never before I received so many pre-publication orders. We will spend the rest of this week processing all these orders.

The book consists of 384 pages with a very attractive, laminated colorful cover, with pictures representing seven of the ten popular beliefs examined in the book. Take a look at the cover of *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/pbcover.htm>

Words fail to express my heartfelt gratitude to God and to fellow believers who have contributed to the realization of this project. Without the encouragement and the editorial help I have received from many, the publication of this book would have been delayed for months or even years.

More than once I felt like shelving this manuscript, because I felt overwhelmed by the amount of research still needed to write the ten chapters. But several subscribers to this newsletter, have urged me not to give up, because our Adventist church urgently needs a book to help truth seekers to understand why their popular beliefs are biblical wrong, while our Adventist beliefs are biblically correct.

The Story Behind *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?*

Sometimes the story behind a book is as interesting as the book itself. Let me share with you what compelled me to write *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* Three major factors stand out in my mind.

The first factor is the frequent discussions I have with Christians of different denominations about their beliefs. Participants at my weekend seminars, as well as subscribers to my *Endtime Issues Newsletter*, often ask me: Why are some of my beliefs biblically wrong? How can they be unbiblical, when they are held by the vast majority of Christians?

To answer these questions, I have devoted the past thirty years of my life researching and writing 18 books which examine some of today's popular beliefs from a biblical perspective. Furthermore, a large number of the 200 *Endtime Issues Newsletters* which I have emailed during the past 10 years to over 35,000 subscribers, examine popular beliefs historically and biblically. This book represents an expansion of several studies I posted in my newsletters. These are readily accessible at www.biblicalperspectives.com/endtimeissues/

My Passion for Biblical and Historical Accuracy

The second factor is my passion for biblical and historical accuracy. An example is the five years I spent at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, investigating for my doctoral dissertation the popular belief that the change from Sabbath to Sunday worship came about by the authority of Christ and the apostles to commemorate the Lord's Resurrection. Incidentally, Pope Benedict XVI made this categorical statement at the 2007 international Eucharist congress.

The findings of my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday* are summarized in chapter 6 of this book, entitled "Sunday Sacredness." My study shows that the popular belief of Sunday sacredness lacks both biblical and historical support. Historically, I found that the origin of Sunday observance began approximately one century after Christ's death, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian (117-138), as a result of an interplay of political, social, pagan, and religious factors.

The conclusions of my investigation were well-accepted by the examining commission made up of five distinguished Jesuit scholars. An indication is the gold medal of Pope Paul VI awarded to me for earning the *summa cum laude* distinction in my school work and dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday*. This experience has greatly encouraged me to re-examine the biblical validity and historical accuracy of other popular beliefs, such as those examined in this book.

The Demand for a Biblical Re-examination of Popular Beliefs

The third factor that has motivated me to write this book is the increasing demand for a study that can help sincere and open-minded Christians to test the validity of their beliefs on the basis of the normative authority of the Bible. More and more Christians today are questioning the biblical validity of some of their denominational beliefs. This is partly due to the new climate of intellectual freedom that encourages people to take a fresh look at social, political, and religious issues. In Western countries most people no longer feel bound to blindly accept the beliefs of their churches. They want to find out for themselves if what they have been taught is based on biblical teachings or on church traditions.

Importance of *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?*

This research project has been very expensive in time and money. During this past year I have invested an average of 15 hours a day on this manuscript, because I believe it is desperately needed to call out of Babylon many sincere people who are sincerely seeking to know and to do the revealed will of God.

There are million of sincere Christians who do not realize that most of their popular beliefs are biblically wrong, while our Adventist beliefs are biblically right. This book *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* is designed to help these sincere Christians to re-examine their beliefs in the light of the normative authority of Scripture.

At this time our Adventist Church has no compelling witnessing book that can help sincere people understand why their popular beliefs are biblically wrong, and our Adventist beliefs are biblically correct. This is what makes *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* so urgently needed. Adventists who have been looking for a book to give their friends with questions about our Adventist beliefs, will be glad to know that finally such book is available. They will be glad to give to their friends this book, because it exposes false teachings and affirms biblical truths in a calm, dispassionate, and objective way.

My Sincere Hope

I have written this book with the earnest desire to help Christians of all persuasions to re-examine their popular beliefs in the light of the normative authority of the Bible. At a time when most Christians still hold to popular beliefs that derive from human traditions rather than from biblical revelation, it is imperative to recover those biblical truths that God has revealed for our eternal salvation.

It is my fervent hope that this book, fruit of many months of dedicated research, will help Christians of all persuasions to “come out” of the Babylonian confusion of popular but unbiblical beliefs, and accept God’s glorious plan for our present life and our future destiny.

Your Help is Needed!

Your help is needed to introduce *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* to your pastor or church leaders. On my part I am offering a free review copy to all our Conference, Union, and General Conference leaders. The problem is that only some of their names are on my mailing list. This means that I need your help.

Would you be so gracious to show and possibly loan your personal copy to your pastor? If he is impressed and wished to own a copy, please email us his postal address and we will mail him a free review copy. After your pastor has read the book, most likely he will encourage his church members to purchase a copy.

To facilitate a massive distribution of *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* we offer the book until May 31, 2008 by the case of 30 copies for only \$5.00 per copy,

postage paid for the USA, instead of the regular price of \$30.00. See below for details.

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Our 2008 calendar is already filled for the next few months, but we still have a few openings in the latter part of the year. We will be glad to email you the list of the open weekends so that you can choose the weekend that best suits your church.

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Who is Cristina Piccardi?

Cristina was born in Brazil 26 years ago and came to Andrews University two years ago to accompany her husband who is studying at the seminary. She has earned degrees in voice performance both in Brazil and at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, where she received full scholarship during the two years of her studies, graduating in December of 2005 with a Master in Voice Performance. In the same year she performed in a leading role with symphonic orchestras in the USA and overseas. At the annual 2005 International Competition for Opera Singers she won the first prize as the best soprano singer of the year.

Cristina left the opera world to dedicate her singing talents to sing sacred music. She is far the best soprano I have ever during the past 30 years of itinerant ministry around the world. You can enjoy a preview of Cristina's outstanding singing by

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“REFLECTIONS ON BENEDICT XVI'S VISIT TO THE USA”

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Retired Professor of Theology and Church History,

Andrews University

Several readers of our *Endtime Issues Newsletter* have urged me to comment on the significance of the recent visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States. After reading most of the speeches the Pope delivered during the six days visit from April 15 to 20, I became aware of the complexity of the task.

During his visit Benedict XVI addressed a varied of issues as a pastor, rather than as a stern and rigid theologians who enforced Catholic dogma for nearly quarter-century, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Though less charismatic than his predecessor John Paul II, he also wanted to win the American people with his warm, smiling face.

Prior to his visit, Benedict XVI was an enigma for most Americans. A poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life showed that 80 percent of Americans, including two-thirds of the country's 70 million Catholics, knew “nothing or next to nothing” about the pope. The six days swing afforded an opportunity to the Pope to introduce himself to the American people as a kind man, genuinely concerned about the issues facing the Catholic Church and the world at large.

On Sunday evening, April 20, at 8:30 p. m., Benedict XVI boarded the Alitalia jet *Shepherd One* returning safely to the Vatican. Most reporters describe the trip as an “enormous success.”

Newsweek notes that Benedict XVI “successfully combined showmanship and quiet spirituality. Leading Masses for more than 100,000 people and offering

blessings to faithful crowds that lined street routes for a glimpse of the pontiff and his Popemobile clearly had an invigorating effect on both the man and the crowds” (*Newsweek*, April 21, 2008). I would add, his visit revitalized especially the Catholic Church in America, which has been badly shaken financially and morally by the sexual abuse scandal, that erupted in 2002 when the then archbishop of Boston admitted to have shielded a priest who had sexually abused youngsters.

For the sake of brevity, I will limit my comments to three major accomplishments of Benedict XVI's visit. My ultimate intent is to reflect on what his visit means from the Adventist understanding of the endtime prophetic role of the papacy.

First, the pope brought some closure to the priestly sex abuse scandal that has badly shaken the Catholic church for more than six years.

Second, he promoted religious unity both in the Catholic church and among Christians in general. Such unity, as we shall see, is to be achieved under the moral and spiritual leadership of the papacy.

Third, he sounded the alarm about the danger of the secularism that threaten to undermine the moral and religious fabric of our society.

BENEDICT ATTEMPTED TO BRING CLOSURE TO THE PRIESTLY SEX ABUSE SCANDAL

During his trip on five different occasions the pope addressed the sexual abuse scandal. Already aboard his plane from Rome, he spoke from his heart to reporters about the shame, the damage to the church, and the suffering to the victims caused by pedophile priests.

The official numbers put forward by the US Catholic church show there have been 14,000 victims of some 4,000 to 5,000 clerics since the 1960s. Victim support groups and activists believe the actual numbers are 10 times higher than the official figure.

Much of victims' outrage has been directed at bishops who covered up the crime of the priests, often by simply transferring them from one diocese to another. The US Catholic church has paid out an estimated US\$2 billion to settle abuse cases in recent years.

On Wednesday evening, April 16, the Benedict XVI met with US bishops in the lower chapel of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

– which is the largest Catholic Church in the United States, located in Washington, D. C. He addressed the bishops about sexual abuse by the clergy, which he said made him “deeply ashamed.”

The Pope told the gathered bishops that the sex abuse scandal had at times been mishandled and urged them to reach out to the victims. “It is your God-given responsibility as pastors to bind up the wounds caused by every breach of trust to foster healing, to promote reconciliation and to reach out with loving concern to those so seriously wronged.”

Some victims had hoped the Pope would rebuke those bishops who transferred pedophile priests from parish to parish. Instead, Benedict XVI praised the training programs established for priests and lay people who deal with children. “In this regard your efforts to heal and protect are bearing great fruit not only for those directly under your pastoral care, but for all of society.”

As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict headed the doctrinal congregation, which took over the handling of sex abuse cases. At one point, he mentioned that when he read the case histories of the victims, he found it hard to believe how a priest could betray his mission to be an agent of God's love.

On Thursday, April 17, the Pope held an unprecedented meeting with US victims abused by priests, offering them his support after he acknowledged the pain and damage caused by the Church's sex scandal as they prayed together in Washington, the first stop on the two-city papal visit.

One can legitimately ask, Why didn't Benedict speak out five years ago against the scandal that erupted in Boston, though his office in Rome had the responsibility to examine the files and deal the crisis? One wonder if his expressions of pain and regret reflect the urgent need to do some damage control and restore credibility to the battered American Catholic Church!

At any rate Benedict must be credited from departing from the old stereotyped method of denying or minimizing problems and of reacting defensively. He set a worthy example to Catholic officials on how to deal with future crises by openly admitting the mistakes and dealing with their problems. Many see the Pope's dealing with the sexual scandal as the defining moment of his trip.

Sexual scandals that have plagued the Catholic church, including notorious immoral popes like Alexander VI, underlines the problems the Catholic church has created by imposing the vow of celibacy on priests, monks, and nuns, in order to ensure their exclusive commitment to the church.

POPE BENEDICT'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE CHURCH UNITY

A second significant goal of Benedict's visit to the United States, has been to promote unity, both in the Catholic Church and in the Christian community at large. He is deeply concerned about the division and fragmentation that exists in Christian churches. In his address to leaders of various Christian Churches and communities delivered in New York on April 18, 2008, at St. Joseph Church, he lamented that while on the one hand humanity is experiencing today a growing sense of globalization and interdependence, on the other hand, Christian churches are experiencing "fragmentation and a retreat into individualism."

The pope said that the unity of the early Christian community and the cohesion of its members "was based on the sound integrity of their doctrinal confession." But now some Christians are taking the same "relativistic approach" to doctrine that many modern people take to moral and ethical values in general. Christians pretend that there is no such a thing as revealed truth. They treat the Christian faith as a matter of picking and choosing what they want to believe, instead of being faithful to the apostolic faith and church traditions.

The problem is, as we shall see, that for the Pope doctrinal integrity is based, not on the normative authority of the Bible, but on the apostolic faith allegedly transmitted through the apostolic succession to the present pope. He expects Catholics and non-Catholics to accept and live by Catholic teachings, which, as I have shown in my newly released book *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* mostly derive from pagan influences, rather than from the normative authority of the Bible.

Benedict notes that when Christians think they only need to follow their own consciences and find a church that suits their individual tastes, the result is a "continual proliferation of communities which often eschew institutional structures and minimize the importance of doctrinal content for Christian living." The Pope is correct in pointing out the danger of choosing beliefs and churches in a cafeteria style, but he is incorrect in assuming that the "doctrinal content for Christian living" is to be found in Catholic traditional teachings.

Benedict's Struggle to Maintain Doctrinal Unity in the Catholic Church

The problem of doctrinal divisions is not only a Protestant problem, but also a Catholic one. For the past 30 years Benedict has struggled to maintain doctrinal unity in the Catholic Church, through *The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, which he directed for 25 years as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, before he was elected pope. This institution was born in 1542 with the name *Sacred Congrega-*

tion of the Universal Inquisition. For centuries this institution has operated as an extremely conservative force within the Roman Catholic Church, opposing innovation, suppressing dissents, and persecuting those who believed differently.

During his tenure, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger influenced John Paul II to press charges against such theologians as Edward Schillebeeckx of Holland, Jack Pohier of France, Bernard Hasler of Switzerland. Hans Kung was stripped of his post as teacher of Catholic theology at the University of Tübingen for questioning papal infallibility. Prof. Charles Curran was suspended from his teaching post at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C., for advocating that sterilization and contraception were not always wrong. Jesuit priest Terrance Sweeney was forced to resign from his order, because he refused to destroy the results of a survey of American Bishops about celibacy and the ordination of women. A quarter of those surveyed reportedly approved optional celibacy. Examples such as these show that Benedict has attempted to maintain church unity by suppressing any dissenting voice.

When John Paul II was elected pope, the issue that defined the mission of the Catholic church at that time came from the East, namely, the struggle against Soviet dictatorship. John Paul understood that there was a fault line in the Soviet empire that would eventually cause its collapse. The fault line was the clash of values between the concern for social justice and the suppression of personal freedom in order to attain that goal.

Twenty nine years later, when Benedict XVI was elected pope, the issue that defined the mission of the Catholic church came from the West, namely, the threat of the "dictatorship of relativism," that is, the tendency to question the existence of absolute moral and religious truths and to think that everyone has the right to live according to his own values and beliefs. The Pope believes that there is a fault line in the moral and religious relativism of our society, which is found in the tension between personal freedom and the abandonment of objective truth. Such a tension cannot be sustained for a long time. Ultimately, according to the Pope, moral relativism and secularism can only be conquered by reaffirming the objective truths entrusted to the Catholic church.

Address of Pope Benedict to American Catholic Educators

During his brief visit to the United States, the pope did not press charges against liberal Catholic theologians, as he did in the past. Instead, he warned Catholic educators against the danger of promoting positions that contradict Catholic teachings. In his address to Catholic educators delivered on Thursday, April 17, at the Catholic University of America, Benedict challenged presidents to consider

their colleges' distinctive roles in the face of moral relativism, the fragmentation of knowledge, and the pursuit of scientific knowledge without any spiritual consideration.

The Pope said: "I wish to reaffirm the great value of academic freedom. In virtue of this freedom you are called to search for the truth wherever careful analysis of evidence leads you. Yet it is also the case that any appeal to the principle of academic freedom in order to justify positions that contradict *the faith and the teaching of the Church* would obstruct or even betray the university's identity and mission." It is evident that for the Pope the touchstone of Catholic unity and orthodoxy, is not the authority of the Bible, but the *faith and teachings of the Catholic church*.

Benedict appealed to Catholic teachers and administrators "to ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. This requires that public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the Church's Magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. Divergence from this vision weakens Catholic identity and, far from advancing freedom, inevitably leads to confusion, whether moral, intellectual or spiritual."

For Benedict the unifying center of the Catholic is not the authority of the Bible, but the *magisterium ecclesiae*, that is, the teaching authority of the church, which is visible in the person of the pope, the bishops, and the priests. They represent the visible links of what is claimed to be the Apostolic Succession.

At the papal Mass attended by sixty thousand people at Yankee Stadium on April 20, 2008, the Pope pointed to the visible unity of the Church, present there around the altar. He said: "The presence around this altar of the Successor of Peter, his brother bishops and priests, and deacons, men and women religious, and lay faithful from throughout the fifty states of the Union, eloquently manifests our communion in the Catholic faith which comes to us from the Apostles." He stressed that the unity of the Catholic Church is "apostolic," a "visible unity" grounded in the authority Christ bestowed upon Peter and the Apostles – an authority which was transmitted to their successors.

Origin of the Apostolic Succession Theory

The notion that Christ invested Peter with the authority to govern the church and that such an authority has been transmitted in an unbroken succession to his successors, is a pure Catholic fabrication devoid of biblical and historical support. It

first appears in the writing of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (A. 175-195), who used the argument of the apostolic succession to refute gnostic heretics. He argues that the gnostic teachings were heretical because they are rejected by those churches which traced their pedigree to the apostles (*Against the Heresies* book 3).

The argument of the apostolic succession served a useful purpose in the early church when the formation of the New Testament was still in a progress. Church leaders needed an objective authority to refute heretics, and they found it in churches like Antioch, Ephesus, and Alexandria, which could trace their origin to an Apostle. These churches could serve as the touchstone of orthodoxy. But to extend the concept of the apostolic succession to the whole course of Christian history is unwarranted, because of the interruption and apostasy that these churches have experienced. The Moslem invasion of the seventh and eight centuries wiped out completely most of the ancient Eastern churches.

Unity is to Be Maintained by Complying with the Teaching Authority of the Catholic Church

The foundation of Catholic unity rests not on adherence to biblical truths, but on the teaching authority of the Church, governed by the Roman Pontif, as the successor of Peter. Benedict XVI clearly reaffirmed this belief in his document *Dominus Iesus*, first released on September 5, 2000: "Just as there is one Christ, so there exists a single body of Christ, a single bride of Christ: a single Catholic and apostolic Church. . . . There exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him."

The same position was reiterated in document released by the Vatican on July 10, 2007, entitled: "*Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church*." For the sake of brevity we shall refer to this document as *Responses*. The document was written by William Cardinal Levada, head of the Roman Catholic's *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, at the request of Pope Benedict XVI himself, who fully endorsed it.

Responses is essentially a reiteration of the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, issued in 2000 by Cardinal Ratzinger, while he was serving as Prefect of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*. Benedict XVI sensed the urgent need to restate and clarify what he had already declared in *Dominus Iesu*.

Responses is formulated in five questions and answers. The first three restate that the Catholic Church "governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him" is the only true church on earth instituted by Jesus Christ.

The fourth and fifth answers explain why the Eastern Orthodox and the Protestant churches are “ecclesial communities,” rather than true churches. The reason is that they lack the apostolic succession, and therefore they “have not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic Mystery.”

The origin of this traditional Catholic view is traced back to Pope Boniface VIII. In his Bull, *Unam Sanctam* (A. D. 1302) Boniface declared: “There is one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that outside this Church there is neither salvation nor remission of sins.” This traditional Catholic view was substantially modified at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) which formulated the concept, especially in the *Constitution of the Church*, that salvation is found not only inside the Catholic Church but also outside its fold, by all who live according to their conscience.

This broader view of various avenues to salvation fostered a policy of benign tolerance toward non-Catholics. Protestants, for example, were rehabilitated from heretics, to “separate brethren,” and to brothers and sisters in Christ. Similarly, members of world religions have been treated with more openness and respect.

In the thinking of Vatican conservatives like Benedict XVI, the policy of benign tolerance toward non-Catholics inaugurated by Vatican II, may have gone too far. It may have weakened the alleged unicity and primacy of the Catholic Church. This concern is expressed in the new document *Responses* which affirms that “Christian denominations outside the Roman Catholic Church are not full churches of Jesus Christ,” though they may have some elements of truth. The actual text posted on the official Vatican Web site in several languages, says that Protestant Churches are really “ecclesial communities” rather than Churches, because they lack apostolic succession, and therefore they “have not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic Mystery.”

Salvation Derives Only From the Catholic Church

In other words, for Benedict XVI it is a fundamental Roman Catholic belief that there is only one true church that possesses the means of salvation and such church is the Roman Catholic church. Any salvation obtainable through other churches, ultimately derives from “the fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church.”

Benedict XVI is concerned about the rapid spread of the relativistic and pluralistic mentality among liberal Catholic theologians, who believe that “one religion is as good as another.” He expressed his concern in his fiery speech to the cardinals before they withdrew to the Sistine Chapel to elect the new pope. He warned

them that the Catholic Church must not become prey to a modern “dictatorship of relativism.”

To remedy this problem, Benedict XVI reiterates that “there is only a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him.” We noted earlier that at the papal Mass celebrated at Yankee Stadium, the Pope explained that the unity of the Catholic Church was visible in “the presence around the this altar of the successor of Peter, his brother bishops and priests, and deacons . . . [they] eloquently manifest our communion in the Catholic faith which comes to us from the Apostles.”

Benedict's Misconception of the Nature of the Church

By linking the hierarchical structure of the Catholic church with the church that Christ established by calling Peter and the Apostles, Benedict makes salvation a monopoly of the Catholic church. This means, as stated in the *Responses*, that the Catholic Church herself is a “sacrament,” that is, a channel of grace to the world. “The Church is a ‘sacrament’. . . she is the sign and instrument of the kingdom.”

Such a preposterous, presumptuous, and exclusivistic claim, represents an insult to Protestants and Orthodox, and are an embarrassment to open-minded Catholic theologians who have long recognized that the Catholic Church does not have the monopoly of salvation.

Benedict ignores that the New Testament views the church, not as a visible hierarchical organization run by the “Successor of Peter, his brother bishops and priests, and deacons,” but as an invisible community of believers who are united by the same faith in Christ. In the Bible “the church” is not a hierarchical structure, governed by one man, but the “people of God,” united by the common bond of faith and love. Both the Hebrew *qahal* and the Greek *ekklesia*, translated “church,” actually refer to the “congregation” of believers, who have been called out from the world (Deut 7:6; Hos 11:1; 1 Peter 2:9) in order to be a light in the world (Deut 28:10; 1 Pet 2:9).

This means that when Jesus spoke about building His church, He meant, not the establishment of a hierarchical religious organization, but the building up of a community of believers who by faith would accept Him and confess Him before the world. In this context, Peter, by being the first person to confess and accept Jesus as “Christ,” which means “Messiah,” became the first living stone of the

spiritual edifice consisting of a community of believers. The idea of Peter being the foundation of the church as a hierarchical organization identified with the Catholic Church, is foreign to the text, to the teachings of the New Testament, and to the organization of the Apostolic Church.

Benedict Decries the “Splintering” of Christian Churches

On April 18 Benedict met with about 250 representatives of American ecumenical organizations and Christian denominations for evening prayer at St. Joseph's Church in New York. He began by commending the ecumenical dialogues that have resulted in theological agreements later forged by the Vatican and its official dialogue partners. But, he continued deploring the fact that the Christian witness to the world is weakened not only by their divisions, but also by some communities turning their backs on Christian tradition.

The Pope said: “Too often those who are not Christians, as they observe the splintering of Christian communities, are understandably confused about the Gospel message itself. Fundamental Christian beliefs and practices are sometimes changed within communities by so-called ‘prophetic actions’ that are based on a hermeneutic not always consonant with the datum of Scripture and Tradition. Communities consequently give up the attempt to act as a unified body, choosing instead to function according to the idea of ‘local options.’ Somewhere in this process the need for communion with the [Catholic] Church in every age – is lost, just at the time when the world is losing its bearings and needs a persuasive common witness to the saving power of the Gospel.”

The pope expressed his concern that in a world marked by a greater sense of global unity and interdependence, the feeling of “fragmentation and a retreat into individualism” is seen in Christian denominations. The resolution of this problem is to be found, according to Benedict, in accepting the apostolic doctrinal integrity preserved and taught by the Catholic Church. “A clear, convincing testimony to the salvation wrought for us in Christ Jesus has to be based upon the notion of normative apostolic teaching. Christians must hold the faith that Jesus gave to his apostles.”

Is Benedict XVI Really Interested in Ecumenism?

It is evident that for Benedict ecumenical Christian unity can be achieved only by accepting the “normative apostolic teaching” preserved and proclaimed by the Catholic Church. From an ecumenical standpoint, this exclusivistic view of the Catholic Church is a non-starter. The pope is an intelligent and knowledgeable man who has written over 40 books. He knows that discussions with other

Churches will make no progress on the basis of his exclusivistic claim of the Catholic Church. So the only conclusion that can be drawn is that he has no interest in pursuing ecumenism. The ongoing dialogue that he is promoting with all the major denominations, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is designed to persuade other Christians to become Roman Catholics. This is the pope's approach to other Churches, which is not ecumenism, but proselytism.

Furthermore, the Vatican dialogue with various Protestant Churches is designed to soften their anti-Catholic teachings. This is particularly true of the Seventh-day Adventist Church which has long recognized the prophetic role of the Papacy in leading many Christians into apostasy. Our prophetic calling is to invite people in every nation to come out of the of the Babylonian false worship promoted especially by the papacy.

Pope Benedict is Blinded by Tradition

The pope is correct in exposing the danger of moral relativism of our society, but he is wrong in his proposed solution. He intends to resolve the problem of Christian fragmentation and moral relativism by enforcing traditional Catholic teachings as if they were biblical truths. He makes no attempt to examine the biblical legitimacy of historical Catholic teachings, because for him the traditional interpretation supersedes any objective study of Scripture. Like the late John Paul II, he is a devout and sincere man who is blinded by tradition. Such a blindness causes him to accept and enforce Catholic heresies as if they were biblical truths.

Benedict's exclusivistic view of the Catholic Church highlights the Vatican's attempt to make salvation **a dispensation of the church**, rather than **a disposition of the believer**. By claiming to be the only church that has the apostolic succession and consequently the right to dispense salvation through the sacraments, the Catholic church is deceiving million of sincere people into believing that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church (*no salus extra ecclesia*).

Pope Benedict XVI's Views on Protestantism

In the book *Without Roots: Europe, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, Joseph Ratzinger presents his views on Protestantism. He writes: Protestantism as a whole seems to be characterized by a consciousness of its profound intertwining with modern culture. This is both its strength and its weakness, since the fatal tendency to conform to the times – which led Protestantism to the brink of dissolution during the Enlightenment – is alive and well today, as the traditional Protestant churches in the United States demonstrate. Protestantism has thus become, for

the most part, a cultural fact: it is somehow still called Protestant, although no longer connected to any particular denomination.”

“Today, in the old confessional churches of Protestantism, there is a steady, disconcerting loss of vitality. Free churches of an evangelical model are being formed that their enemies call ‘fundamentalist,’ but that are nonetheless able to attract thousands of people in search for a solid foundation in their lives. Statistics tell us that the more churches adapt themselves to the standards of secularization, the more followers they lose. They become attractive, instead, when they indicate a solid point of reference and a clear orientation.”

These comments reveal Benedict's understanding of the problem of mainline Protestant churches, namely, their caving in to the pressure of secularism or what he calls the “dictatorship of relativism.” This climate offers to the Pope an unprecedented opportunity to fill the void of moral and religious relativism created by liberal Protestant churches by presenting himself as the voice of certainty.

BENEDICT SOUNDED THE ALARM ABOUT THE DANGER OF SECULARISM

A third major objective of Benedict XVI's visit was to sound the alarm about the danger of “a new secularism” that threatens to undermine traditional moral values and the voice of religion in public life. He articulated this challenge on several occasions during his visit, especially at a Washington Mass when he told 45,000 people that American society is at a moral crossroads.

The Pope said: “We see clear signs of a disturbing breakdown in the very foundations of society: signs of alienation, anger and polarization on the part of many of our contemporaries; increased violence; a weakening of the moral sense; a coarsening of social relations; and a growing forgetfulness of God.” To counter these trends, he said, people need the church's message of hope and fidelity to the apostolic faith.

Benedict's speech resonated with President Bush who has made his Christianity a central tenet of his life as a politician. The White House hosted a crowd of 13,500 on the South Lawn in the morning, welcoming the pope with a 21-gun salute; a fife-and-drum band; the soprano Kathleen Battle, who sang the Lord's Prayer; and two rounds of “Happy Birthday.”

The crowd burst into applause when President Bush told the Pope that Americans “need your message that all life is sacred,” a reference to the two men's shared opposition to abortion rights.

The president also adopted a trademark of Benedict phrase, when he said that Americans need to hear the pontiff's message about the rejection of the "dictatorship of relativism." This phrase is considered as the defining words of the papal election in 2005, when Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, on the day his fellow cardinals went into the conclave that elected him Pope Benedict XVI, warned them about the danger of the "dictatorship of relativism."

"The content of the president's speech," wrote Jonathan Morris, a Fox News reporter, "could have been written by the pope himself. That's how close these two men are on so many issues. President Bush chose to highlight the sacredness of human life, the rejection of religiously-motivated violence, the complimentary relationship between faith and reason, and the danger of moral and religious relativism. How happy the president must have been to be able to speak with such conviction about his own core values in front of a man with the pope's moral stature. Here is a born-again Methodist speaking to a Roman Catholic pope from the heart."

The happiness of President Bush is shared by many American evangelicals, who have been captivated by the Pope's stand for morality. Richard Mouw, a *New York Times* reporter, wrote: "In many ways and on many subjects, he [Benedict XVI] speaks for me. So I pray for the success of this important visit to the United States. I know that I am not alone as an evangelical admirer of the pope. We evangelicals have a long history of anti-Catholicism. Many of us remember days when we were told that the Catholic pope was 'the anti-Christ.' But our attitudes have been gradually changing since Vatican II — although we still aren't always clear about how to express those changed attitudes in theological terms."

Pope's Stand for Morality

What accounts for the Pope's popularity, especially among evangelicals, is his strong stand for certain fundamental doctrines of Biblical faith. Though evangelicals cannot agree with the Pope on such points as the role of the Virgin Mary, the Mass, the intercession of the saints, Masses for the dead, priestly celibacy and so on, they admire his strong commitment to the sacredness of marriage, to a Biblical sexual ethics, to protect the life of unborn babies, and to discipline the most blatant opponents of evangelical faith.

Instead of attacking Catholicism, evangelicals are choosing to attack liberal Protestantism for undermining the authority of Scripture, for promoting unbiblical moral values, for conforming to the contemporary secular values. To them the Pontiff has become, as Prof. Martin E. Marty puts it, "a walking fortress of faith" (*TV Guide*, Sept 5, 1987, p. 34) in the midst of a godless society.

Unintentionally, perhaps, liberal Protestantism has contributed to enhance the authority of the Pope by eroding confidence in the authority of the Bible. One might say that to the extent that Protestantism weakens the authority of the Bible for defining Christian beliefs and practices, to that same extent it strengthens the authority of the Pope. The reason is simple. Most Christians resent tyranny but welcome the voice of authority, certainty and assurance. They want to hear from their church leaders, "This is the way, walk you in it!" When they fail to hear this voice of authority from the Scripture as proclaimed by their pastors, they become attracted to the Pope who claims to offer the infallible interpretation of Scripture.

The radical Protestant change of attitude that has taken place, from foes to friends of the Pope and of the Catholic Church, do not surprise Seventh-day Adventists, because for 100 years they have announced to the world, on the basis of their interpretation of Biblical prophecy, that American Protestantism would be foremost in bridging the gulf of separation from Roman Catholicism and in cooperating with Rome. A century ago Ellen White, a founder of Adventism, wrote with prophetic foresight: "The Protestants of the United States . . . will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power" (*Great Controversy*, p. 588).

The warm reception and ecstatic admiration of the Pope by the President of the United States and by millions of Protestants, clearly points to an unprecedented acceptance of the religious leadership role of the papacy. The gulf of separation between Catholicism and Protestantism is truly being bridged, but the bridge is being built at Protestant expenses.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

CRISTINA PICCARDI'S NEW DVD RECORDINGS

A brand new recording of Cristina Piccardi's sacred concert and of our **SABBATH SEMINAR with WORDS AND SONGS** was made in Loma Linda few weeks ago. The recording was done with four state-of-the-art high definition cameras that provide an exceptional clear and crispy video images.

We felt the need to make a high quality recording to share our new ministry with fellow believers in different parts of the world. We are happy that at this time we can offer a professional recording both of Cristina's Sacred Concert and of our **SABBATH SEMINAR with WORDS AND SONGS**.

The **SACRED CONCERT** consists of 16 sacred familiar songs that cover the major themes of God's creative and redemptive love. Her marvellous singing will touch your heart and inspire you to devote your life more fully to the Savior. You can see the picture of this new album by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/pic.htm>

The **SABBATH SEMINAR** consists of 3 DVD disks containing a total of 6 hours of recording, that is, the Cristina singing and my preaching done on Friday evening, Sabbath morning, and Sabbath afternoon. Cristina sings a few songs before and after each of my lectures. You can enjoy this informative and inspiring 6 hours seminar in the privacy of your home or church, without having to travel long distances or investing money to fly us in. You can see the picture of this new album by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/sabbathandsong/index.htm>

Who is Cristina Piccardi?

In my view Cristina is by far the best Adventist soprano I have heard in my life. Surprisingly she is a slim, only 118 pounds, 5.6 feet high – not the typical heavy-set soprano. When my wife asked her: “How can you project such a powerful voice when you are so slim?” She replied: “It is God's gift.”

Cristina was born in Brazil 26 years ago and came to Andrews University two years ago to accompany her husband who is studying at the seminary. She has earned degrees in voice performance both in Brazil and at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, where she received full scholarship during the two years of her studies, graduating in December of 2005.

She has performed in a leading role with symphonic orchestras in the USA and overseas. In the year 2005 she won the first price at an International Competition for Opera Singers.

I officially met Cristina on October 6, 2007 at Andrews University Pioneer Memorial Church. I was spellbound by the three sacred songs she sung during the communion service led by Pastor Dwight Nelson. When we met after the communion service, we both immediately felt that the Lord was bringing us together in a providential way to proclaim with words and songs our timely Adventist Message. She told me that after singing for five years in a leading role with various symphonic orchestras, she felt the call of God to leave glitzy opera stage, in order to dedicate the gift of her voice to sing sacred music. This means that now we are presenting together with words and songs my power-

point seminars on the **SABBATH, SECOND ADVENT, and CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE.**

You can enjoy a preview of Cristina's outstanding singing by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cristina/> She sings the first stanza of THE HOLY CITY.

Special Package Offer of Cristina's Recordings.

At this time we wish to offer the complete package of Cristina's three albums, together with the newly recorded SABBATH SEMINAR with WORDS AND SONGS for only \$50.00, instead of the regular price of \$230.00. The package included the following four albums:

1) THE CD ALBUM REJOICE IN THE LORD which consists of 11 sacred songs recorded with Marcelo Caceres, Professor of piano at Andrews University. The regular price of the album is \$30.00.

2) THE DVD ALBUM SING UNTO THE LORD which consists of 10 sacred songs recorded at the Andrews University Pioneer Memorial SDA Church. The regular price of the DVD album is \$50.00.

3) THE DVD ALBUM BY HIS GRACE which consists of 16 sacred songs recorded in Loma Linda with four high-definition cameras. The regular price of the DVD is \$50.00.

4) THE DVD ALBUM OF THE SABBATH WITH WORDS AND SONGS which consists of three DVD disks with 6 hours of recordings of Cristina singing and my preaching done on Friday evening, Sabbath morning, and Sabbath afternoon. The regular price is \$100.00.

The special offer on the above package of 4 albums is only \$50.00, mailing expenses included even overseas, instead of the regular price of \$230.00.

How to Order Cristina's Package of Four Albums

You can order the package of the four albums containing Cristina's Sacred Concerts and the SABBATH SEMINAR in WORDS AND SONGS in four different ways:

(1) ONLINE: By clicking here: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=26&products_id=122

(2) PHONE: By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

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

(4) REGULAR MAIL: By mailing a check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

UPCOMING SEMINARS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY AND JUNE

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the seminars scheduled for the month of May and June 2008. We wish to extend a warm welcome to those of you who live close to the location of our seminars. Our new seminars with Words and Songs will touch your heart and expand your mind.

MAY 16-17: MICHIANA FILIPINO-AMERICAN SDA CHURCH

Location: 8454 Kephard Lane, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

For directions and information call Pastor Roy Castelbuono at (269) 487-7423

MAY 23-24: LOS ANGELES - WHITE MEMORIAL SD CHURCH

Location: 401 N. Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033

For directions and information call Pastor Benjamin del Pozo at (323) 264-2170 or (323) 440-1200

MAY 3-31: NORTH DAKOTA - HARVEY SDA CHURCH

Location: 737 Judy Boulevard, Harvey, ND 58341

For directions and information call Pastor Wayne Easley at (701) 324-2344.

JUNE 6-7: TORONTO: MT. ZION FILIPINO SDA CHURCH

Location: 140 St. Regis Crescent, Downsview, ONT M3J 1Y8

For directions and information call Pastor Edwin Martin at (416) 631-6558

JUNE 13-14: HONOLULU CENTRAL SDA CHURCH

Location: 2313 Nuuanu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96817

For directions and information call Pastor Walter Nelson at (808) 524-1352

JUNE 20-21: HONOLULU - JAPANESE SDA CHURCH

Location: 2655 Manoa Road, Honolulu, HI 96822

For directions and information call Pastor Koji Nishikawa at (808) 988-4343

PROF. JON PAULIEN'S VIDEO SEMINAR ON *SIMPLY REVELATION*

The 2008 Daily Devotional Book *The Gospel from Patmos*, is authored by Prof. Jon Paulien. He has done a masterful job in expanding each verse of the Revelation into a daily devotional thought.

To help you appreciate more fully Paulien's Daily Devotional, we offer you his DVD album on *Simply Revelation* that was released few months ago. We have been airmailing the DVD album to church leaders, pastors, and lay Adventists in different part of the world. Several pastors have already shown the lectures to their congregations. They wrote to me saying that viewing the lectures were truly an enlightening experience for their members.

My wife and I viewed *Simply Revelation* on our TV on a Sabbath afternoon. Though I had already watched Prof. Paulien's lectures during the taping session which I paid for, I was spellbound to hear him again offering so many refreshing insights into the most difficult book of the Bible. For me it is a thrilling experience listening to a scholar like Prof. Paulien, who knows what he is talking about.

Prof. Paulien is rightly regarded as a leading Adventist authority on the book of Revelation which he has taught at the Seminary for the past 25 years. His doctoral dissertation as well as several of his books deal specifically with the Book of Revelation.

The constant demand for Prof. Paulien's CD album with his publications and articles, led me to discuss with him the possibility of producing a live video recording of a mini Revelation Seminar, which he chose to call *Simply Revelation*. As suggested by its title, *Simply Revelation* aims to present simply the message of Revelation-not to read into Revelation sensational, but senseless views.

The preparation of this video recording took several months. The *Simply Revelation* seminar consists of four one-hour live video lectures, which have just been recorded in the studio of Andrews University. An impressive virtual studio provides the background of the lectures. Each lecture is delivered with about

50 powerpoint slides. This mini Revelation seminar will offer you and your congregation fresh insights into the Book of Revelation. Be sure to inform your pastor about the newly released Simply Revelation, if he is not aware of it.

The file with the powerpoint slides is placed on Prof. Paulien's CD album containing all his publications and articles. The reason is that there was no memory left on the DVD disks. In spite of my pleas, Prof. Paulien was so full of the subject that he used the full 60 minutes of each lecture, leaving no space for the slides' file.

This has been a very expensive project, both in time and money. I sponsored it financially because I believe that many will be blessed by Paulien's fresh insights into Revelation. **The regular price of the DVD album is \$100.00, but you can order it now at the SPECIAL PRICE for only \$50.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.**

If you have not ordered before the **CD Album with Prof. Paulien's publications, we will be glad to add it to your DVD order for only \$20.00**, instead of the regular price of \$60.00. This means that you can order both the DVD album with Prof. Paulien's four live video lectures on Simply Revelation and his CD album with all his publications and the powerpoint slides of Simply Revelation, for only \$50.00, instead of the regular price of \$160.00.

As an additional incentive, I am offering you together with Prof. Paulien's DVD/CD albums, also my own popular **DVD album on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, for an additional \$10.00, instead of the regular price of \$100.00.** This means that you can order the DVD and CD albums by Prof. Paulien, together with my DVD album on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, for only \$70.00, instead of the regular price of \$260.00.

This research on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, was commissioned by Prof. Paulien himself. He asked me to trace historically the origin and use of the Pope's title *Vicarius Filii Dei* and of the number 666. I spent five months conducting this investigation which was professionally taped at the Andrews University Towers Auditorium. I use 195 powerpoint slides to deliver this informative two hours lecture which has been warmly received by Adventist church leaders and pastors in many parts of the world. For a detailed description of this DVD album click: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Beast/BeastPromo>

Special Offer on Prof. Paulien and Prof. Bacchiocchi's Albums:

* **ONE DVD Album of Prof. Paulien's four video lectures on *Simply Revelation* at the introductory price of \$50.00, instead of \$100.00.** The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.

* **ONE DVD Album of *Simply Revelation* and ONE CD Album with Prof. Paulien's publications for only \$70.00,** instead of the regular price of \$160.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.

* **ONE DVD Album of *Simply Revelation*, ONE CD Album with Prof. Paulien's publications, and ONE DVD Album with Bacchiocchi's two hours video lecture on *The Mark and Number of the Beast* for only \$80.00,** instead of the regular price of \$260.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.

Four Ways to Order Prof. Paulien and Prof. Bacchiocchi's Albums:

(1) **ONLINE:** By clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/revelation/>

(2) **PHONE:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

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

(4) **REGULAR MAIL:** By mailing a check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

SPECIAL OFFER ON 12 DVD/CD ALBUMS FOR ONLY \$150.00, INSTEAD OF THE REGULAR PRICE OF \$1150.00

This offer may sound too good to be true. At this time we are offering together as a package all the **12 DVD/CD albums we have recorded, for only \$150.00, instead of \$1150.00.** Until now these recordings were sold separately, costing considerably more. To make it possible for many to benefit from all these timely messages, I have decided to offer them together as a package **for only \$150.00, instead of the regular price of \$1150.00.**

The Package Includes the Following 12 Albums:

- 1) **DVD Album with Sabbath Seminar with Words and Songs** recorded at the Avon Park SDA Church on November 16-17, 2007. The album contains three DVD disks with 6 hours of recordings.
- 2) **DVD and CD Album containing Cristina Piccardi's sacred songs.** The CD Album "Rejoice in the Lord" contains 11 songs. The DVD Album "Sing Unto the Lord" contains 10 songs.
- 3) **Prof. Jon Paulien's newly released DVD ALBUM video seminar on *Simply Revelation*.**
- 4) **Prof. Jon Paulien's CD ALBUM with a dozen of his books,** and all his articles.
- 5) **Prof. Graeme Bradford's DVD ALBUM with a two hours video lecture on Ellen White.** He shares the highlights of his book *More than a Prophet*. The album contains also Prof. Bradford's the publications and articles.
- 6) **Prof. Bacchiocchi's newly recorded DVD ALBUM called ABUNDANT LIFE SEMINAR.** The album contains 2 video powerpoint lectures: The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages and How to Build a Happy and Lasting Marriage. These two lectures summarize the highlights of Bacchiocchi's two books *Wine in the Bible* and *The Marriage Covenant*. Two separate files with 225 powerpoint slides are included.
- 7) **Prof. Bacchiocchi's DVD ALBUM containing 10 video powerpoint lectures on the Sabbath and Second Advent.** Some of the lectures show the documents Prof. Bacchiocchi found in Vatican libraries on the role of the papacy in changing the Sabbath to Sunday. This album contains the popular powerpoint SABBATH/ADVENT seminars Prof. Bacchiocchi presents in many countries.
- 8) **Prof. Bacchiocchi's DVD ALBUM on Cracking the Da Vinci Code.** The album contains a two hours video lecture, professionally taped with a virtual studio as a background. A separate file with 200 powerpoint slides is included.
- 9) **Prof. Bacchiocchi's DVD ALBUM on The Mark and the Number of the Beast.** The album contains the two hours video lecture and a separate powerpoint file with the 200 slides used for the lecture.

10) Prof. Bacchiocchi's CD ALBUM with all his books and powerpoint lectures. The album consists of two disks. The first disk has all his 18 books and over 200 articles. The second disk has the slides and script of 25 of Prof. Bacchiocchi's popular PowerPoint presentations.

11) Prof. Bacchiocchi's DVD ALBUM on The Passion of Christ. The album contains the 2 hours live interview conducted by 3ABN on Prof. Bacchiocchi's book The Passion of Christ in Scripture and History.

12) Prof. Bacchiocchi's MP3 AUDIO ALBUM which contains 2 disks with 22 AUDIO lectures on vital biblical beliefs and practices. Ideal for listening in your car while driving.

You can see the picture of all the 12 ALBUMS and read a detailed description of them, just by clicking at this link:<http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/albumoffer.htm>

How to Order the Package of the 12 Albums:

You can order the complete package of 12 DVD/CD Albums for only \$150.00, instead of the regular price of \$1150.00, in four different ways:

(1) ONLINE: By clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/albumoffer.htm>

(2) PHONE: By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

(3) EMAIL: By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date. For security reasons, you can email your credit card number in two separate messages. In the first message you email me the first 8 digits and in the second message the last 8 digits, plus the expiration date. Be sure to include your postal address.

(4) REGULAR MAIL: By mailing a check for \$150.00 to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

HOW TO CONTACT THE CENTER FOR CANCER CARE IN GOSHEN, INDIANA THAT TREATED MY CANCER

Two days following my 69th birthday, I learned that I had advanced-stage colon cancer requiring immediate surgery. Later I was told that the cancer had spread to the liver, infesting 90% of the organ and making its prognosis bleak. Several oncologists that I consulted, confirmed that I had Stage 4 terminal liver cancer, with only a few months to live. All what they could do was to prolong my life with chemotherapy for a few months or a year at best. No Cancer Center, including Loma Linda Cancer Center, had a clinical trial program for liver cancer. The impression I received is that nothing could be done to heal my cancer: I was doomed to die in a few months, at most a year.

Driven by my faith in God and optimistic attitude, I sought another opinion at the Center for Cancer Care in Goshen, Indiana, which is located only one hour away from Andrews University, where I live. Following a two-hour consultation with Dr. Seza Gulec (see the picture at my website by clicking <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/goshen>), a pioneer in the field of nuclear oncology, I learned that my cancer was terminal but treatable with a combined strategy of chemotherapy and microsphere embolization - a treatment unavailable at most cancer centers. Within one month, the innovative treatment reduced the presence of liver cancer by almost 80% and decreased total tumor volume from 2435cc to 680cc. Within two months, two more treatments reduced my cancer by 95%.

Today I feel like a new man with a new lease on life. I feel like an old car with a decent looking body and a brand new motor. I have more energy than I have had earlier in my life. I can only thank God for His providential leading to the right place and for using the latest research to restore my health.

Click here to see the pictures of the various stages of my cancer: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/goshen>

The Goshen Center for Cancer Care is one of the few treatment facilities in the world to offer this breakthrough technology primarily due to the commitment of Dr. Gulec. A world-renowned physician, Dr. Gulec has dedicated years to research and develop the combination therapy, which greatly increases survival rates in those with advanced types of cancer. He has also authored landmark publications in lymphatic mapping, sentinel node biopsy, radioguided surgery and radionuclide therapy. Dr. Gulec currently leads the endocrine surgery, hepatic oncology, molecular imaging and positron emission tomography programs at the Goshen Center for Cancer Care. To learn more about Dr. Seza Gulec click: <http://www.cancermidwest.com/main.asp?id=217>

Truly I can say that I believe that the Lord providentially placed me in contact with Dr. Gulec, who has done for me what appeared to be impossible. The Lord has used Dr. Gulec to give me a new lease on life. He is so proud of my recovery that he uses me as a show case at international nuclear oncological conferences. Now I feel like a new man energized to serve the Lord in a greater way in the sunset years of my life. Somehow I feel that I have more energy now than I had at 25 years of age.

You can contact the CENTER FOR CANCER CARE in Goshen, Indiana in the following ways:

1) PHONE: (888) 491-4673

2) EMAIL: sgulec@goshenhealth.com

3) WEBSITES: <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/goshen> or <http://www.cancermidwest.com/>

INCREDIBLE NEW OFFERS ON HITACHI PROJECTORS

HITACHI has released the new CP-X400 3000 lumens projector, which has an impressive high resolution, low fan noise, and a wealth of connectivity options. The most impressive feature of this projector is the incredible price of **only \$1395.00** to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries. The price includes a three years replacement warranty.

This is the special offer on the following two models:

CP-X400 HIGH RESOLUTION 3000 LUMENS - Only \$1395.00

This is the lowest price for an HITACHI 3000 lumens projector.

CP-X1250 HIGH RESOLUTION 4500 LUMENS Only \$3795.00

Previous SDA price for the 4500 lumens was \$4900.00

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

You can order the HITACHI projectors online by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/cart/catalog/index.php?cPath=24> If you have a problem ordering online, call us at (269) 471-2915. We will take your order by phone and process it immediately.

THE SMALLEST & MOST POWERFUL REMOTE PRESENTER

If you are looking for an outstanding REMOTE for your PowerPoint presentations, you will be pleased to know HONEYWELL has 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 buttons: forward, backward, and laser.

You can order online the new POWERPOINT PRESENTER simply by clicking here: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=27&products_id=67

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.

DOES YOUR CHURCH OR SCHOOL NEED A SCREEN?

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

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 best suits your church, 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.

NEW VIDEO RECORDING ON THE SANCTUARY BY PROF. ROY GANE

Few days ago Roy Gane, Ph. D., Prof. of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages at Andrews University Theological Seminary, made a video recording of four of his popular lectures on the sanctuary. You can see a preview of the recording on line by clicking at this link: <http://www.preludefilms.com/preview.html>

The DVD is distributed through a personal website that Roy Gane has set up. I was unable to sponsor the recording and distribution of this informative and timely DVD, simply because I do not have the time to take on additional responsibilities. But I promised that I would do my best to promote this timely recording. The title of the DVD album is *Altar Call: Sacrifice, Sanctuary, and Salvation*.

Altar Call: Sacrifice, Sanctuary, and Salvation

Altar Call is about God's plan to rescue us, as revealed in the services of His sanctuary. These fascinating services demonstrate His character of love, which includes both justice and mercy. They give us hope by revealing that God wants to dwell with us. They teach us how to interact with Him in order to receive the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. They show us how to get in touch with Jesus where He is working for us right now during the final phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

To many Christians, Christ's prolonged absence since He ascended to heaven is a mystery. But the Bible reveals that He is continuing to save us, and it invites us to get in touch with Him where He is now - in His sanctuary in heaven. By becoming acquainted with what He is doing in the control center of the universe, we can enjoy closer interaction with Him, more fully experience His transforming grace, and have confidence that we are at peace with God.

The DVD contains four 1 hour lectures by Roy E. Gane, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Director of the Ph.D./Th.D. and M.Th. programs at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Born in Sydney, Australia, he graduated from Pacific Union College in 1977 with a B.A. in theology and a B.Mus. in piano performance. He completed his M.A. (1983) and Ph.D. (1992) in Hebrew language and literature at the University of California and taught in the Religion Department of Pacific Union College from 1992-94 before moving to Andrews University.

How to Order Altar Call: Sacrifice, Sanctuary, and Salvation

Simply click: <http://preludefilms.com>

At a time when the sanctuary doctrine is being challenged within and without the Adventist Church, it is refreshing to see an outstanding Adventist scholar showing the biblical validity and relevance of this doctrine. I strongly encourage you to order this DVD album, simply by clicking at this link: <http://www.preludefilms.com/store.html>

In the next newsletter you will read Part 2 of Prof. Roy Gane article on “Legalism and Righteousness by Faith.” The two parts article just appeared in the January and March issue of MINISTRY, An International Journal for Clergy. Many of you have asked for the footnotes of the articles. You can find both the two-parts article and footnotes at this link: <http://www.ministrymagazine.org/>