

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 159

“Bacchiocchi Responds to False Allegations”

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Most readers of this newsletter may not be aware of the on-going controversy about my academic achievements at the Pontifical Gregorian University. If you go to GOOGLE and enter “Bacchiocchi’s Gregorian Controversy,” you will find several hundred websites and discussion groups questioning my academic credentials. Simply stated, the allegations are that I made false claims about graduating with *magna* and *summa cum laude*, receiving a gold medal from Pope Paul VI for earning the academic distinction of *summa cum laude*, and publishing my dissertation in part and in full at the Gregorian Press with the *imprimatur*—Catholic approval.

The controversy was ignited especially by a letter sent by Dr. Barbara Bergami, the General Secretary of the Pontifical Gregorian University, to Bishop James Murray of Kalamazoo. The complete text of the letter is cited below. In her letter, Dr. Bergami asked Bishop Murray to investigate my alleged false claims just mentioned.

The text of Dr. Bergami’s letter has circulated far and wide in cyberspace, offering my detractors ammunition to launch a defamation campaign against me. Many people are raising serious questions about my moral integrity and the credibility of my research. Lately, I have received numerous messages, even from trusted friends, asking me if there is any truth in the false allegations against me.

It has become evident that I can no longer ignore the false allegations against me, because the controversy is becoming like a fire that is burning out of control. Thus, I have decided to take time to respond to the major false allegations by submitting the pertinent documents issued by the Gregoriana—documents that will show beyond the shadow of doubt that my claims are absolutely correct.

In view of the fact that I cannot post the pictures of the documents in this newsletters, because they would create problems for many

subscribers who have limited internet privileges, I would recommend downloading this newsletters from my website. There you will find the complete version with text and pictures. To access it, simply click here: <http://biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/>

Some readers may find the second part of this newsletter tedious because it presents and discusses important Gregorian University's documents in my possession, which prove the absolute accuracy of my claims. I beg to bear with me this time. Keep in mind that this newsletter is prepared primarily to respond to false allegations against me. This calls for a thorough response. My Jesuit professors in Rome taught me that it is better to overkill than to leave half-dead.

Before dealing with the tedious task of proving the falsity of the allegations against me, I decided to share with you what led me to study at the Gregoriana in the first place. This is a gripping story of God's providential leading in my life, which for many readers may prove to be more enjoyable than the second part. It will help you to understand why I developed such a passionate interest for the Sabbath. By introducing this newsletter with the story of how God led me to the Gregoriana in my search for a fuller understanding of the Sabbath, I hope to provide a helpful context to the current controversy.

FORTHCOMING VISIT TO SYDNEY AND BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Our Australian subscribers living in Sydney or Brisbane, will be pleased to learn about my forthcoming visit to their cities. The details of my itinerary are as follows:

:November 17-18: PARRAMATTA SDA CHURCH, SYDNEY

Location: 77-81 Hammers Road, Old Toongabbie, Sydney NSW 2146
For information feel free to contact Pastor Rein Muhlberg at (02) 9620 5382 or (02) 9896 3158. I look forward to a great rally. Pastor Muhlberg is a fine pastor who invited me many years ago in Auckland, NZ.

November 19 (Sunday): SYDNEY CHINESE SDA CHURCH

Location: 14a Jersey Road, Strathfield, NSW 2135. For information call Pastor Daniel Chong at 02 9745 4035. I will present a mini version of my Sabbath Seminar from 7:00 to 9:00 p. m.

November 20: Monday 9:00 a. m. – SYDNEY WORKERS' MEETING

Location: Parramatta SDA Church, 77-81 Hammers Road, Old Toongabbie, Sydney NSW 2146. For information call the Ministerial Secretary, Pastor Garth Bainbridge at (02) 9868 6522. The meeting is primarily for our GSC workers, but Pastor Bainbridge may be willing to grant you admission, if you first make public confession of all your past sins (Please laugh!).

The plan is for me to present two lectures. The first is entitled "From Sabbath to Sunday: How It Came About." In this powerpoint presentation I will share the highlights of my research on the change of the Sabbath, done in Rome at the Pontifical Gregorian University. The second lecture is entitled "The Mark and Number of the Beast." This powerpoint study examines the various past and present interpretations of the mark and number of the Beast. It is designed to help our pastors and members understand why our Adventist church has moved from the numeric to the symbolic interpretation of 666.

November 24-26: BRISBANE: SABBATH CONFERENCE

Location: Brisbane Adventist College, 303A Broadwater Road, Mansfield, QLD 4122. The Sabbath Conference is co-sponsored by the South Queensland Conference and several sabbatarian churches in the Brisbane area. For information feel free to contact Pastor Mark Pierce at 0417625884.

November 27: Monday 9:00 a. m. – BRISBANE WORKERS' MEETING

Location: 19 Eagle Terrace, Brisbane, QLD 4000. For information call the Conference office at (07) 3218-7777. If you are not a pastor, ask the Conference office for permission to attend. There should be no problem.

UPDATE REPORT ON *CRACKING THE DA VINCI CODE*

The release of the DVD Album *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, is generating considerable interest and enthusiastic responses from viewers in different parts of the world. At the last two weekend seminars, I have shown part of the DVD lecture *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, before my

afternoon presentation. The response was most encouraging. Many members queued up to purchase the album after the close of the Sabbath.

Three things you will appreciate about the newly released DVD album on *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*:

1) You will appreciate the clarity of the lecture which is delivered with the help of 140 appealing slides in the setting of an impressive virtual studio. The slides are professionally designed to vividly illustrate the concepts discussed.

2) You will appreciate the compelling refutation of Dan Brown's blatant attacks against the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. To avoid confusing the viewer with technical scholarly arguments, I have focused on the major false claims of *The Da Vinci Code*, showing how they are totally devoid of biblical and historical support.

3) You will appreciate most of all the insights into the prophetic significance of Dan Brown's neo-pagan false worship of the "sacred feminine" with ritual sex. You will see how this false worship is part of the endtime showdown between the true and false worship of God, portrayed dramatically especially in the book of Revelation.

To facilitate the sharing of the *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* to friends and neighbors, many have requested for a special discount on quantity orders of 10 albums or more. In response to these requests, we decided to offer until November 30, 2006, the DVD album *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* at an unprecedented introductory offer:

ONE DVD ALBUM for \$35.00 instead of regular price of \$100.00.

This represents 65% discount.

THREE DVD ALBUMS for \$50.00 instead of \$300.00.

This represents about 80% discount.

TEN DVD ALBUMS for \$100.00 instead of \$1000.00.

This represents 90% discount.

The quoted prices include the AIRMAIL expenses to any overseas destination. You can order the DVD albums on *CRACKING THE DA VINCI CODE* in four different ways:

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

(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 your check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

IS YOUR CHURCH INTERESTED TO INVITE ME TO PRESENT A WEEKEND SEMINAR?

If your church is interested to invite me next year (2007) to present one of my three powerpoint seminars (Sabbath, Second Advent, and Christian Lifestyle), feel free to contact me at this time. I will be glad to email you the outline of each seminar and the cost, which is basically the refund of my travel expenses.

My calendar of speaking engagements for 2007 has still several open weekends, and I would be glad to reserve one weekend for your church. Feel free to contact me by email or phone: (269) 471-2915.

FREE CD/DVD ALBUM OF PROF. GRAEME BRADFORD

Several pastors have reported to me that after showing to their congregation Prof. Bradford's live DVD lecture on Ellen White, most members were very eager to purchase a copy of the book *MORE THAN A PROPHET* at the special offer of \$5.00 per copy, instead of the regular price of \$25.00.

To make it possible for every Adventist family to benefit from Prof. Bradford's timely book *MORE THAN A PROPHET*, I decided to offer until November 30, 2006, one FREE CD/DVD album of Prof. Bradford, with any order of 2 or more copies of the book *MORE THAN A PROPHET*. The regular price of the CD/DVD album is \$100.00, but you will receive this album free with your order of 2 or more copies of the

book. The reason for this offer is the conviction that when your church members and friends view Prof. Bradford's DVD lecture, they will be eager to purchase a copy of his book. For more details and order information, click here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/BradfordOffer/offer.htm> If you have problems to order the book on line, feel free to call us at (269) 471-2915.

More than a Prophet is the fruit of twenty years of Prof. Bradford's painstaking research on the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. It is a long-overdue book that clears the air of prevailing misconceptions about Ellen White which have caused thousands of Adventists to leave church. It has been encouraging to receive messages from former Adventists who after reading *More than a Prophet*, express the desire to come back to the church.

A dozen of Conferences have already donated a copy of *More than a Prophet* to each of their workers. For example, the Texas Conference ordered 200 copies. Other conferences have ordered fewer copies because of their smaller number of workers. Overseas conferences like the South African Union, ordered 300 copies. Your personal effort to promote this timely book in your church is greatly appreciated.

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. Here 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 November and December 2006. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

2. DR. BACCHIOCCHI'S DVD ALBUM ON *THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST*. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

3. DR. BACCHIOCCHI'S PACKAGE OF ALL HIS RECORDINGS. The package consists of 6 albums (including the latest on *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*), which are offered for only \$150.00, instead of the regular price of \$700.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

4. PROF. JON PAULIEN PUBLICATIONS IN ONE CD ALBUM.

The album 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.

5. TAGNET SPECIAL NEW WEB HOSTING OFFER for Adventist churches and members. TAGnet provides an incredible number of web-hosting services to our churches and members. This newsletter comes to you through their gracious and efficient service. For detail information, visit their website at <http://www.netadventist.org> or <http://home.tagnet.org/> You may also call their office 800 - 9TAGNET. They are ready and eager to help you.

6. SPECIAL OFFER ON HITACHI PROJECTORS: HITACHI has offered an additional discount to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries. For examples, the special offer for the new 2500 LUMENS PROJECTOR CP-X260 IS ONLY \$1195.00, instead of the previous SDA price of \$2595.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter or call me at 269-471-2915

7. SPECIAL OFFER ON NEWLY RELEASED TOSHIBA LAPTOP TECRA A8 with dual processor and finger-print security. See details at the end.

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

9. BED & BREAKFAST FACILITIES IN LONDON, ENGLAND

If your travel plans call for a stop in London, you will be pleased to learn about a most gracious Adventist couple that offer the best accommodation and breakfast I have ever enjoyed. It has become my home away from home when in London. See details at: <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/Promotions/BED&BREAKFAST.htm>

“Bacchiocchi Responds to False Allegations”**Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.****Retired Professor of Church History and Theology****Andrews University**

In preparing this response to the false allegations made against my academic achievements at the Pontifical Gregorian University, I found comfort and reassurance in the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 6:26: “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.” The point of this warning is clear: Christ’s true followers who live and teach the truth, will sometimes be unpopular, at least with some people. As our Master, sometimes we will have to face false accusations, rejection, defamation, and persecution for standing for Bible truths.

Christ’s warning resonates with me because from my early youth I have faced ridicule, rejection, and persecution for taking a stand for what I believe to be fundamental Bible truths, especially the observance of God’s Holy Sabbath Day. Before addressing the controversy raging about the truthfulness of my claims regarding my earning the academic distinction of *summa cum laude*, receiving the gold and silver medals from Pope Paul VI, and publishing my dissertation first in part and then in full by the Gregorian Press, I would like to share some background information about myself. The intent is to help the reader understand why I have developed such a passionate interest for the study of the Sabbath/Sunday question—an interest that eventually led me to enroll in the doctoral program of the Pontifical Gregorian University, in my search for a fuller understanding of the Sabbath.

THE SABBATH IN MY LIFE**My Parent’s Discovery of the Sabbath**

I was born in a godly Catholic family that lived close to the Vatican wall. For the first 18 years of my life I lived under the shadow of the Vatican. My parents attended Sunday Mass regularly and recited the rosary faithfully every night. This continued until my father was introduced for the first time to the study of the Bible by a fellow carpenter

who belonged to the Waldensian Church. In their earnest desire to become better acquainted with the teachings of the Scriptures, my parents joined the Waldensian Church when I was a year old baby. They attended with keen interest also the mid-week Bible study conducted by students of the Waldensian School of Theology in Rome.

One Wednesday evening, a theology student presented a Bible study on the origin and significance of the Sabbath. Basing his meditation on Genesis 2:2-23, the young man explained how the Sabbath is a creation ordinance for mankind. The presentation sparked a lively debate between those students who defended the Biblical origin and validity of Sunday observance and the few who refuted such a view by arguing for the continuity of the Sabbath. That animated discussion left my father astonished and perplexed, because he firmly believed that Sundaykeeping was a biblical institution, established by Christ and the apostles. That experience ignited my father's interest for the study of the Biblical basis and historical origin of Sundaykeeping.

Months of intense study led father to the conclusion that the seventh-day Sabbath had not been nullified but rather clarified and magnified by Christ's teaching and example. In fact, he became convinced that the Sabbath is a divine institution that enables the believer to express and experience commitment to the Savior.

Unable to find in Rome a Christian Church that observed the seventh-day Sabbath, for several months my parents chose to worship privately in their home on the Sabbath, thus disconnecting their affiliation with the Waldensian Church. An invitation to attend a Bible study held in the home of a friend, introduced father and mother to a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which they soon joined.

Honoring the Savior on His Sabbath day, became a test for our family. My father lost his job for refusing to work on Saturday. For six months he went out every day seeking for a job at various building sites, but consistently the builders refused to hire him because he would not work on Saturday. After six months are family was starving.

One morning my parents prayed the prayer of desperation, asking the Lord to touch the heart of a builder who would give father a job.

After prayer, my father went out to a building site where he had not been before. He broke down in tears before the builder while explaining that his family was starving because for six months builders had refused to hire him on account of his Sabbath convictions. The builder was moved by father's sincerity and hired him. For the next 50 years father never lost a day of work in the city of Rome. It is evident that the Lord was testing his faith.

The Sabbath: A Testing Truth in My Youth

Sabbathkeeping became a test in my youth. Those were the days when the shortened work-week did not yet exist, thus Saturday was a working day for most people, including teachers and students. The principal of the secondary school told my mother that I would be expelled from school if I missed school for three consecutive Saturday without a medical excuse. Our family doctor helped us by writing a funny medical excuse saying that I missed school on a certain Saturday because I was “psicologicamente incapacitato—psychologically incapacitated.”

Twice a week a Catholic priest came to our classroom to teach us “Il Catechismo Cattolico—The Catholic Catechism.” When the Priest learned that I was a “Protestante Avventista—an Adventist Protestant,” he told to the whole class that they should stay away from me because I was a “Protestante eretico—a heretical Protestant.” And this is exactly what they did. When I approached them to talk with them, often they would tell me to stay away from them because I was a “Jew” and a “heretic.” Such a rejection hurted me deeply, because I wanted to be accepted by my peers.

The ridicule and rejection I faced from principals, priests, classmates, and relatives, instilled within me the desire to investigate the history, theology, and relevance of the Sabbath. I felt that if I had to suffer to honor the Savior on the Sabbath, I wanted to be sure that I was suffering for biblical truth, not for a denominational tradition.

During the 12 years I spent studying in Adventist schools, first at our Adventist Academy in Florence, then at Newbold College in England, and finally at Andrews University in Michigan, I presented at least a dozen of research projects dealing with the Sabbath/Sunday question. The Sabbath

has been such a testing truth in my life, that I was most eager to deepen my understanding of this biblical institution. My dream was to eventually one day to write a doctoral dissertation on this controversial subject. But I would have never imagined that I would be privileged to conduct such an investigation at the prestigious Pontifical Gregorian University. In those days it was unthinkable for a non-Catholic to be accepted at any Pontifical University in Rome.

The Choice of the Pontifical Gregorian University

My acceptance at the Gregoriana in the Fall of 1969 marked the admission of the first “separated brother” into a regular study program in over 400 years of history of the University. I hasten to acknowledge that I was treated not as a “separated brother,” but as a genuine Christian brother. The climate of cordiality and respect was exemplified especially in the freedom and guidance I received while researching and writing my doctoral dissertation on the controversial question of the origin of Sunday observance in early Christianity.

Fellow believers often ask me this question: “Why did you, Dr. Bacchiocchi, a Seventh-day Adventist, choose to go to study at the Pontifical Gregorian University, which is a Jesuit university founded by Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order?” The answer may be surprising to some, but the idea was first suggested to me by a most congenial Catholic Priest, Giovanni Ravasio, who was the director of a Catholic Mission School in Ethiopia, located close to the Ethiopian Adventist College, where my wife and I were teaching. Ravasio visited us in our home on several occasions and we developed a cordial friendship.

One day I had a pleasant conversation with Ravasio while delivering some school furniture produced on our campus to his mission school. During the course of the conversation, I informed him that I had been accepted at Yale University and we were planning to return to the USA upon completing our 5 years mission service. Smilingly, Ravasio exclaimed: “Samuele, you a Roman, not a Yankee. You should go back to Rome and study at the Gregoriana!” I replied, “Surely, they will never accept a heretic like me!” He retorted: “Sam, after Vatican II you are no

longer a heretic, but a ‘separated brother.’ If you apply at the Gregoriana, you stand a good chance to be accepted.”

My Admission at the Gregoriana

Initially, I dismissed the idea of applying to the Gregoriana, because I was not prepared to spend 5 years in a Jesuit university. I thought that it might be detrimental to my faith. But after thinking and praying about it, the conviction developed within my heart that perhaps I should apply at the Gregoriana. We felt that if the Lord would open the door for me to study there, that would offer me a unique opportunity to conduct my investigation on the change from Sabbath to Sunday in Vatican libraries.

I sent an inquiring letter to the Gregoriana doubting that my request would ever be considered seriously. Surprisingly, I did receive a reply, indicating that my application would have to be examined by the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity—a Vatican committee that deals with relations with Protestant churches. After several months of correspondence, I was invited to present myself for an oral interview upon our return to Rome from our mission service in Ethiopia.

In the meantime I contacted Dr. Earl Hilgert, the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Andrews University, to find out if the university would be interested to sponsor me for my doctoral studies at the Gregoriana. Dr. Hilgert, who remembered me as one of his good students, showed interest for my proposal and arranged for me to receive a call and some financial assistance.

Still, I had serious reservations about studying five long years at the Gregoriana while trying to support my wife and children. In fact, the first thing that I did when we arrived in Rome, was to visit the Pontificia Universita Lateranense, a historical institution located behind the Basilica of St. John Lateran. I had a pleasant visit with the Dean who reassured that I could complete my doctorate in Church History at their university in only three years.

Excited about the possibility of completing my doctorate in only three years at the Lateranense, I contacted Dr. Hilgert seeking for his approval. His reply was that I should stick to the original plan. He told me that though the doctoral program at the Gregoriana was longer and more demanding, I should go for it because ultimately I would receive a better education. Since he earned his doctorate at the University of Basel, studying under Karl Barth, Dr. Hilgert had become acquainted with some scholars of the Gregoriana while studying in Europe.

My Experience at the Gregoriana

My admission at the Gregoriana posed some concerns for the administrators. During the two hours interview the Dean, Frederick Kempf and his associate, asked me specific questions about my reasons for wanting to study at the Gregoriana. They reminded me that, being a non-Catholic, the degree granted by the Gregoriana would not allow me to teach in a Catholic seminary. I reassured them that I had no interest to teach in a Catholic Seminar, because I was sponsored by Andrews University where our family was planning to return upon the completion of my studies.

They expressed their concern over possible attempts on my part to propagate my Adventist faith among classmates. To prevent this from happening, they made it clear that while I was within the premises of the university I should not do any form of proselytism. I ask them if I could answer questions fellow students may ask me about my faith. They saw no problem with that, as long as I was interrogated. The fact is that I was interrogated all the time because I did not wear a monastic or priestly robe. Often my classmates would ask me: "To which religious order do you belong?" Jokingly, I would reply: "I belong to the Adventist order." Obviously, this offered a unique opportunity for me to explain what are the distinctive beliefs of our Adventist church.

Truly, I can say that I was well accepted by my classmates who belonged to different religious orders and nationalities. I vividly recall preparing for the comprehensive exams with Gerardo, a fine Capuccino Monk who came to our home with his monastic robe. We would walk together on the Appian Way, interrogating one another. I came to appre-

ciate their deep sense of calling to devote their life to serve their church and society within their monastic orders.

The Farewell Party Held at Our Home

A revealing example of the friendship that developed, is the farewell party we had at our home for our graduating class completing the three years *Licentia's* program. At the completion of the *Licentia* practically all the students return to their homelands to teach at their seminaries. The *Licentia* is most important diploma because it gives the license to teach. Very few students pursue the *Doctoratus* while staying at the Gregoriana, because there are no course requirements after the *Licentia*. The *Doctoratus* is seen mostly as the privilege of the few who can find the time to fine tune their dissertation and raise the money to have it published by the Gregorian Press. The publication of a part or of the whole dissertation is the major requirement to obtain the diploma.

One morning we were discussing where we could have a farewell party for those of us who had completed the *Licentia*. Right after graduation most students would be returning to their respective countries. Several convents and religious houses were proposed for the party. I told them that if they were not afraid of being excommunicated they were all welcomed to come to our home. I reassured them that my wife would prepare for them some good food.

After some hesitation my proposal was accepted. I alerted my classmates that in our home we do not consume or serve alcoholic beverages. "That is not a problem," someone replied. "We will bring along ourselves some bottles of wine and champaign." They kept their word. About 20 of them came well-equipped with their bottle of wine in one hand and their guitar or mandolin in the other. After some eating and drinking, they got into the mood for singing some of the popular Italian romantic songs. I could not help but tease them: "How can you sing about a beloved when you are not supposed to have one?" "That is the way we sublimate our love," somebody replied.

The most moving moment came at the end when my wife, myself, our three children and mother-in-law line up by the door to bid farewell to

each of them. A few had a tear in their eyes. When I asked them why they felt so emotional, one of them replied: “Sam, you have been very warm toward us, but we have not shown the same warmth toward you. Forgive us. You must remember that we are monks. We live a life of *clausura*, that is, silence and isolation.” That night in our devotion, I told my wife: “Thank God that God is not a monk! He lives in the eternal fellowship of the Trinity.” This reminds of Augustine’s famous words: *ubi amor, ibi trinitas*—where there is love, there is trinity,” that is, a lover, a beloved, and a spirit of love.

The Research into the Origin of Sunday Observance

Earlier I explained that my passionate interest for the study of the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity, goes back to my youth. The ridicule and rejection I faced for observing the Sabbath instilled within me the desire to investigate this testing truth. But, the factor that clinched my decision to undertake this research, was the discovery at the Gregoriana of a newly published doctoral dissertation by Corrado Mosna, a Jesuit who graduated just before my arrival. The title of Mosna’s dissertation is *Storia della Domenica dalle Origini Fino agli Inizi del V Secolo* (Pontifical Gregorian University, 1969). Translated into English, the title reads: *History of Sunday from its Origin until the Beginning of the Fifth Century*. The dissertation was supervised by Prof. Vincenzo Monachino, the same professor who later directed my dissertation.

I immediately bought a copy of the dissertation and I spent several months examining it analytically. What surprised me was Mosna’s determined effort to prove that the change from Sabbath to Sunday came about by apostolic authority in order to celebrate Christ’s resurrection by means of the eucharistic celebration. He writes: “We can conclude with certainty that the event of the Resurrection determined the choice of Sunday as a day of worship in the first Christian communities” (p. 44).

This explanation surprised me because historically the adoption of Sunday observance in place of the seventh-day Sabbath, has been attributed to the authority of the Catholic Church, rather than to the initiative of Christ or the Apostles. For example, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), the most influential Catholic theologian, states categorically: “In the New

Law the observance of the Lord's day took the place of the observance of the Sabbath, not by virtue of the precept [Fourth Commandment] but by the institution of the Church" (*Summa Theologica*, 1947, Q. 122, Art. 4, II, p. 1702).

The same view was reiterated three centuries later in *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* (1566), which states, "It pleased the Church of God that the religious celebration of the Sabbath day should be transferred to 'the Lord's day'" (J. Donovan, ed., *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 1908, p. 347).

During the theological controversies of the sixteenth century, Catholic theologians often appealed to the ecclesiastical origin of Sunday in order to prove the power of the Catholic Church to introduce new Holy Days and ceremonies. This is evident by looking at a Catholic liturgical calendar which lists not only Sunday, but several major annual Holy Days, such as Easter, the Immaculate Conception of Mary on March 25, the Assumption of Mary on August 25, and all Saints Day on November 2. All of these annual Holy Days were introduced by ecclesiastical, not biblical authority.

When I became aware of the attempt to attribute to the Apostles the responsibility for changing the Sabbath to Sunday, I asked myself the question: It is possible that the Lord brought me here at such a time as this, in order for me to undertake a research that will help to clarify the time, the place, the causes, and the consequences of the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity?

Prof. Monachino's Permission to Investigate the Origin of Sunday

After praying about this matter, I approached my adviser, Prof. Vincenzo Monachino, to ask him permission to undertake this research. Without saying a word, he went to the shelf of his library, pulled out the dissertation of Mosna, placed it in front of me, saying: "We have just published a major study on this subject, and it is not our policy to allow another student to write a dissertation on an area that has already been amply exhausted." Click here to see the photo of Prof. Monachino <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/monachino.html>

I did not take the “No” for an answer. I opened my brief case and I showed to Prof. Monachino all the books I had been reading, including Mosna’s dissertation. Then I said: “My feeling is that the final word has not yet been spoken. I believe that if you would allow me to reexamine all the biblical and patristic texts, we can come closer to the truth. Will you give me the permission?” When he noted my conviction, he said: “If you feel so strongly about this subject, go down to the ‘Segreteria—Academic Dean office,’ take a petition blank, state your proposal. I will recommend your proposal for approval.” And this is exactly what Prof. Monachino did as you can see from the copy of the Petition Blank called “*Argumentum Dissertationis ad Lauream*.” Click here to see the Petition <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/argumentum.html>

Working under the supervision of Prof. Monachino was a most pleasant experience, because he was open-minded and willing to encourage the inquiry into truth rather than protecting a new popular view. My strategy was to discuss with him any biblical and patristic text relevant to the investigation. I wanted to receive a gradual approval at every stage of the research, rather than overwhelming him at the end.

Truly I can thank God for making it possible for me to work under the supervision of Prof. Monachino—a man whom I came to respect for his openness and honesty. Not all the professors were as open minded like him. An indication of his academic honesty is the opening comments that he made on the day of the defense of my dissertation, on June 14, 1974. He was one of the 5 examiners who interrogated me. About 100 Adventists were present that Friday afternoon to witness my defence.

Prof. Monachino’s Acceptance of the Post-apostolic Origin of Sunday

After I summarized in about one hour the methodology and conclusions of my research, it was the turn of my adviser, Prof. Monachino, to evaluate my dissertation. In his opening remarks he said that after spending two years with his previous alumnus, Corrado Mosna, directing his dissertation, he thought that Mosna had established conclusively the apostolic origin of Sunday. But, he continued admitting that after spending another two years with me, he had to change his mind. He came to the

realization that Sundaykeeping is a post-apostolic development, influenced by several factors mentioned in my presentation.

To hear my professor admitting publicly that he changed his mind, was sweet music to my ears. Scholars tend to defend their thesis to the bitter end, no matter what. Essentially, the same admission is found in the PREFACE to my doctoral dissertation. Prof. Monachino acknowledges the validity of my thesis that “Sunday worship . . . arose most probably, not in the primitive Church of Jerusalem, well-known for its profound attachment to Jewish religious traditions, but rather in the Church of Rome. The abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday as the Lord’s Day, are the result of an interplay of Christian, Jewish, and pagan factors” (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp. 7-8). These are the factors that I discuss at length in my dissertation.

Prof. Monachino’s PREFACE to *From Sabbath to Sunday*, dated June 29th, 1977, compellingly refutes the popular charges that the whole dissertation was not published by the Gregorian Press with the official approval. Had my critics taken time to read Prof. Monachino’s PREFACE, they would have immediately recognize the falsity of their accusations. If the dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday* was not approved by Prof. Monachino for publication, he would not have written a PREFACE for it, saying: “It is a work that recommends itself because of its rich content, the rigorous scientific method, and the vast horizon with which it has been conceived and executed. This is indicative of the author’s singular ability to encompass various fields in order to capture those aspects and elements related to the theme under investigation.”

Prof. Monachino even recommended to the editorial board of the scientific collection called “*Analecta Gregriana*,” to consider the inclusion of *From Sabbath to Sunday* in their collection. The proposal was declined because *From Sabbath to Sunday* had already been published before consulting the board. In the letter to be posted in the next newsletter, Angelo Damboriena, S. J., Director of the *University Gregoriana Editrice*, explains: “This decision does not represent any negative evaluation of its scientific merits or of other aspects of the study. In fact, they [editorial board] regret that there was not sufficient information and interest [to consult them] before the publication of the book — no one is at fault.”

In the same letter Damboriena affirms that he and Prof. Monachino wished that their request had been “favorably received.” This is an important document that will be posted in the next newsletter where I will deal specifically with the allegation regarding the publication of the dissertation and the reception of the *imprimatur*—approval.

The Conclusion of *From Sabbath to Sunday*

Simply stated, my analysis of the biblical and historical texts indicate that the change from Sabbath to Sunday did not come about at the beginning of Christianity by the authority of Christ or the Apostles. Rather the change began about a century after Christ’s death during the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (about A. D. 135), as a result of an interplay of political, social, pagan and religious factors.

Essentially, it was the necessity to avoid the repressive anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation promulgated in A. D. 135 by Emperor Hadrian that influenced the change from Sabbath to Sunday and from Passover to Easter-Sunday. These changes were designed to show the Christian separation and differentiation from the Jews at a time when Jewish religious practices were outlawed by the Roman government.

Who Ignited the “Bacchiocchi’s Gregorian Controversy”?

You may wonder, Who ignited the “Bacchiocchi’s Gregorian Controversy,” as it is often called in numerous websites? The person who is largely responsible for it, is Stephen Korsman, MD, a medical doctor living in South Africa, currently specializing in medical virology. Over the years I have learned to respect Dr. Korsman for his passion for truth. In his website <http://www.theotokos.co.za/adventism/bio.html>, Korsman presents himself as a devout Catholic who became interested in studying the “strange doctrines” taught by such religious movements as the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Dr. Korsman writes: “In the course of my investigations, I discovered the unpleasant world of anti-Catholicism. I encountered a lot of people who told me I was going to hell because I was Catholic, who claimed I worshipped the pope or Mary, that we believe we earn our way

into heaven, and other such nonsense. Adventism, being one of the most vocal groups in the anti-Catholic community, became the initial starting point for a website effort, after an eye-opening discussion with an Adventist about the little horn of Daniel 7. I felt that I could help a lot of people by publishing information on issues related to Adventism and Catholicism” (<http://www.theotokos.co.za/adventism/bio.html>).

When Dr. Korsman came across the story of my studies at the Gregoriana, he found it hard to believe that as an Adventist I would be allowed to study at the Gregoriana, earn a Doctorate with academic distinction, receive a silver and gold medal donated by Pope Paul VI, and publish my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday* with the *imprimatur*, that is the approval of the Catholic Church. The story sounded to him too nice to be true and he felt that it needed to be investigated.

The same suspicion has been expressed by Adventist sources like *Spectrum Magazine*, *National Enquirer: Adventist Edition*, Adventist blogs, and countless of Adventists. Some Adventists have gone as far as fabricating the rumor that I am a Jesuit spy, paid by the Vatican to do subversive activities in the Adventist. The latest example is the cancellation of my speaking engagement in Toronto, Canada, for December 8-9, 2006. In spite of the repeated efforts of Pastor Clarence Baptiste, a former student of mine, to reassure the board members, that I am a genuine Adventist with no Jesuit connections of any kind, church board members were brainwashed by an elder, and they succeeded in pressuring the pastor to cancel the invitation.

The reaction of Dr. Korsman has been different. Rather than giving heed to gossip, he decided to learn the truth about me by contacting directly the Pontifical Gregorian University. He asked if all my claims regarding the *summa cum laude*, the medals, the *imprimatur*, and the printing of my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday* at the Gregorian Press were true or false.

Dr. Korsman informs me that the response came from three different sources. The first was “an e-mail from the rector (Franco Imoda; his signature called him the rector) saying that the matter would be investigated. I never heard from him again.”

The second source was an email that he received sometimes later from a priest, who apparently was asked to investigate my academic records at the Gregoriana. Unfortunately,” writes Dr. Korsman, “I can’t give you that name/address, as I can’t find that e-mail.” The same is true for me. I did receive from Dr. Korsman the email of this priest, but I failed to save that message. Fortunately, however, I have the response that I prepared to the priest message which I sent to Dr. Korsman. In my response I quote the most significant statements made by the priest against me, refuting them one by one. These allegations are essentially the same to the ones found in the third sources mentioned below.

The third source is the official letter written by Dr. Barbara Bergami, the General Secretary of the Pontifical Gregorian University, and addressed to Bishop James Murray of Kalamazoo, Since Berrien Springs, Michigan, where I live, falls under the jurisdiction of the Dioceses of Kalamazoo, Dr. Bergami asked Bishop Murray to investigate my claims. Click here to view a scanned copy of the letter <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/marrayletter.html>

Since Dr. Bergami’s letter represents the most official document of the Gregoriana, which negates the validity of my academic claims, my response examines primarily the four false allegations contained in her letter. A few statements will be included from the letter of the priest who conducted the investigation. Henceforth I shall refer to him as the “priest investigator.” This is the complete text Dr. Barbara Bergami’s letter:

June 11, 2004

Most Reverent James A Murray
Dioceses of Kalamazoo
213 N. Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3760

Dear Bishop Murray, the Peace of Christ.

I am writing in regard to Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, who resides in Berrien Springs, Michigan. My understanding is that this city is within the geographical territory of the Kalamazoo Diocese. It has recently come to

our attention that Dr. Bacchiocchi is presenting himself and his degree from the Pontifical Gregorian University in a less than accurate way. Both his publicity and web site indicate several errors about his degree and awards he claims to have received here. Further, our information . . . [a line has been deleted] indicates that Dr. Bacchiocchi is actively engaged in anti-Catholic teaching.

Dr. Bacchiocchi did indeed graduate with a doctoral degree from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and was the first non-Catholic to do so. However, other claims he makes do not match those in our records. Those include:

1. He did not receive a summa from the Gregorian as he maintains.
2. He did not receive the Pope's Gold Medal (this is presented each year in a public ceremony to only a handful of students who have achieved the highest quality of work in their dissertations).
3. He was not allowed to publish his dissertation in whole. Due to extensive problems with the text, he was only allowed to publish one chapter of his work and this only after extensive revision. The publication of one chapter signifies the minimum requirement to receive the doctoral degree at the Gregorian. His publicity and web site indicate that the whole dissertation has been published in book form with surrounding claims about its quality as a Gregorian publication. He has also used the official signature of the Gregorian University Press on the cover page of a book published by Biblical Perspectives.
4. At one time an imprimatur was claimed by Dr. Bacchiocchi, though we understand he later said this had been rescinded. As you know, this does not happen, nor does the Church find a need to give an imprimatur to non-Catholics who write on a variety of topics.

I hope that this information will be of service to you, Bishop Murray. If I can be of any further help in elaborating on any particular point in this letter, please to not hesitate to write to me. I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ
Dott.ssa Barbara Bergami
Segretaria Generale della Pontificia Università Gregoriana

Cc. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

This is an important document because it was written by the General Secretary of the Pontifical Gregorian University. A copy of it was sent also to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. If the four allegations listed in this letter were true, they would represent a devastating indictment of my honesty and integrity. But, as my response will demonstrate, all the four allegations are totally false. This becomes evident as we look at the documents still in my possession.

The reason for submitting a lengthy response to Dr. Bergami's letter, is because during the past two years this document has been circulating among various discussion groups and countless people have concluded that I made false claims regarding my earning *summa* and *magna cum laude* academic distinctions, my receiving a gold and silver medals, and the publishing by the Gregorian Press of the abridged and unabridged dissertation with the *imprimatur*—approval.

For example, the *National Enquirer: Adventist Edition* writes: "Samuel Bacchiocchi has been less than honest about his studies at the Vatican. Reports indicate he DIDN'T receive a *summa*, Pope's gold medal, *imprimatur*, nor publish his entire dissertation as he has claimed. Maybe he'll defend himself in his next newsletter . . . Of course, he could also take the Danny Shelton's approach and in the mist of overwhelming evidence, go on the attack, but not answer any of the allegations with his own evidence" (October 20, 2006).

Reasons for the Delay in Responding Publicly to the False Allegations.

Rest assured that I am not Danny Shelton. I do take time to answer any allegation against me. You may wonder then, why have I waited for two years to refute the above allegations, if I can prove that they are totally false. The reason for the delay is twofold. First, I sent a copy of my response with all the relevant documents to the Academic Office of the Gregoriana. I asked for the opportunity to show the originals to an official Catholic representative in the USA.

When I was told that Bishop Murray of Kalamazoo would eventually arrange for an appointment for me to show him my original documents,

I decided to wait for this meeting to take place. Unfortunately, in spite of repeated attempts to contact Bishop Murray's office, I never received a response or an appointment. Had I received an apology for the false allegations against me from Bishop Murray on behalf of the Gregoriana, then it would have been wiser for me NOT to publicize the mistake done by uninformed officers of the Gregoriana. After all the Gregoriana is my alma mater where I spent 5 fruitful years. I still like to believe that the false accusations of Dr. Barbara Bergami and of the "priest investigator," are based on their biased personal feelings, rather than on the findings of my academic records. Most likely they were unable to locate the file with my academic records. Their failure should not be used to discredit the reputation of the Gregoriana as a whole.

Second, I thought that the allegations are so ridiculous, that hardly anybody would believe them. But this has not been the case. Some of my detractors have been eager to use these false allegations to discredit my credibility as a scholar and Christian leader. Thus an official response has become urgent and imperative.

Because of time limitations I will respond in this newsletter to the first two false allegations regarding the *summa cum laude* and the gold medal. The response to the last two allegations about the publishing of my dissertation and the reception of the *imprimatur*, will be posted in the next newsletter, hopefully by the end of November when I return from Australia.

Dr. Bergami's first false allegation reads:

"He did not receive a *summa* from the Gregorian as he maintains." On a similar vein, the "priest investigator" wrote: "He never received a *summa cum laude*. . . . Also, FYI, his grades were not very good here."

Bacchiocchi Responds to the First False Allegation

It is incomprehensible how Dr. Bergami and the "priest investigator" could deny that I received the academic distinction of *summa cum laude*, when this is clearly shown in the following three documents issued by the Gregoriana and still in my possession:

1. The diploma of the *Licentia* clearly states that I have successfully completed all the requirements and passed all the exams with the distinction of *summa cum laude*. Click here to see the picture of the *Licentia* diploma. <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/licentia.html>

2. The GRADE BOOKLET unmistakably shows that I received the academic distinction of *summa cum laude* for the *Licentia* and the distinction of *magna cum laude* for the *Lauream*. The picture of the GRADE BOOKLET will be shown shortly, together with a brief explanation of its importance.

3. The 1971-1972 annual Academic Report of the Gregoriana, entitled *Relazione Accademica dell'Anno 1971-72*. The Report lists my name “*Bacchiocchi Samuele, Laicus” as the only student who earned the “*Summa Cum Laude*” distinction among the *Licentiati* of the *Facultate Historiae Ecclesisticae*, that is, in “The School of Church History.” My name is preceded by an asterisk “*” which means that I received a gold medal donated by Pope Paul VI. The picture of the Academic Report and the relevant page with my name are shown and discussed below.

Let me give more information about each of the three documents, since they show beyond the shadow of doubt that the Gregoriana did indeed grant me the academic distinctions of *summa cum laude* for the *Licentia* and *magna cum laude* for both the *Baccalaureatus* and *Doctoratus*.

An Explanation About the Three Diplomas

A word of explanation is in order to understand why I received three diplomas. The doctoral program in Church History at the Gregoriana consists of three phases, called *Baccalaureatus*, *Licentiatu*s, and *Doctoratus*. At the conclusion of each phase I received an artistically designed parchment diploma, clearly stating the academic distinction that I earned.

The Diploma of the *Baccalaureatus*. The first phase is called *Baccalaureatus* which lasts two years. During this time I had to take courses covering Ancient, Medieval, and Modern church history. This

phase is designed to acquaint the student with the sweep of the history of Christianity from its origin to our times. At the end of the two years program a student receives a diploma called *Baccalaureatus*.

Since I refused to accept the regular diploma because its opening statement stated that I had subscribed to the Catholic profession of faith, the Academic Dean instructed a Vatican scribe to prepare a special diploma for me omitting the “*professio fidei*” statement. As shown in the picture, the diploma is a beautiful work of art, illuminated and written by hand on parchment. Click here to see the picture of the *Baccalaureatus* diploma: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/baccalaureatus.html>

The *Baccalaureatus* diploma clearly states that I have successfully completed the requirements, passed the exams, and received the distinction of *magna cum laude*, which qualified me for a “silver medal.” To receive the *magna cum laude* distinction, a student must have a grade point average between 86 to 95 per cent.

Since we were five students who earned the *magna cum laude* distinction in the *Baccalaureatus* program, a lot was cast to decide who would receive the one silver medal donated by the Pope. Only one medal is donated for the students who earn academic distinctions. The assignment of the medal is determined by casting a lot. I was the lucky one. The lot fell upon me.

The reception of the silver medal is indicated also in *Relazione Accademica dell’Anno 1970-1971*, where my name is misspelled “*Bacchiocchi Samuele, Laicus.” The asterick “*” before my name indicates that I was awarded the papal silver medal by lot. Click here to see the pictures the silver medal and the report of the *Relazione Accademica* <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/silvermedal.html>

The Diploma of the *Licentia*. The second phase of the program is called *Licentia* and lasts one year. During this time I took a few research oriented classes and I wrote a major portion of my dissertation. The *Licentia* program is designed to sharpen the research skills of a student. To fulfill the requirement of the *Licentia*, I submitted a Thesis of 117 pages, which

are essentially the first two chapters of my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday*. No *imprimatur* was needed to publish this thesis.

The Title of the *Licentia*'s thesis is: *Un Esame dei Testi Neo Testamentari e dei Padri Apostolici circa L'Origine della Domenica come Giorno del Signore*. In English the title would read: *An Examination of the Texts of the New Testament and of the Apostolic Fathers Regarding the Origin of Sunday as the Lord's Day*. Click here to see the picture of the cover of the thesis presented for the *Licentia*: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/licentiacover.html>

The GRADE BOOKLET shows that for the *Licentia* I received the following grades:

9,5 = 95 per cent for the *Dissertatio ad Licentiam* (Thesis).

9,6 = 96 per cent for the written comprehensive exams.

10= 100 per cent for the oral defence.

Click here to see the page of the *Licentia* Grades: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/licentiagrades.html>

These grades average out at over 98 per cent, which qualified me for the *summa cum laude* distinction. One gold medal was donated by Pope Paul VI for the students who earned *summa cum laude*. The assignment of the medal was done by casting a lot among the names of the students who earned *summa cum laude*. In this instance, no lots were cast, because I was the only student to earn the *summa cum laude*. This is clearly shown in the *Relazione Academica* to be mentioned shortly.

In the light of these academic achievements, I cannot understand how Dr. Barbara Bergami could write "He did not receive a summa from the Gregorian as he maintains," and how the "priest investigator" could even state: "Also, FYI, his grades were not very good." My only explanation for these false statements, is that both Dr. Bergami and the "priest investigator" could not find my file. Most likely the Gregoriana may be still operating (like most Italian government offices) with the old, inefficient *piling* system, rather than a modern computerized *filig* system. Unable to locate my academic records, they wrote false allegations based on their biased assumptions.

The fact that I received the *summa cum laude* is clearly shown in the diploma of the *Licentia*, which states that I have successfully completed the requirements, passed the exams, and received the distinction of *summa cum laude*. Click here to see the picture of the *Licentia's* diploma <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/licentia.html>

Another irrefutable proof that I received the *summa cum laude*, is found in the annual Academic Report entitled: *Relazione Accademica dell'Anno 1971-1972*. On page 25 the *Relazione Accademica* shows that I was the only student to earn the *summa cum laude* distinction among the *Licentiati* in Church History. An asterick precedes my name “*Bacchiocchi Samuele, laicus,” to indicate that I received the gold medal from Pope Paul VI. This time no lot was cast, because I was the only student among the *Licentiati* who qualified for the gold medal. Click here to see the picture of the *Academic Report* dated October 16, 1972: <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/Licentiati72.html>

The Importance of the *Licentia*. The *Licentia* is considered by most students as the most important diploma of the Gregoriana, because, as suggested by the title, it gives them the license or authorization to teach in Catholic seminaries. Very few students stay on for the *Doctoratus* at the Gregoriana which consists primarily in completing the dissertation and raising the money to publish it at the Gregorian Press. No class work is prescribed for the *Doctoratus*.

Monks and priests who have taken the vow of poverty, often have difficulty to raise the money to pay for the printing of their dissertation, or at least a portion of it, in order to fulfill the requirement of the *Doctoratus*. They depend largely upon the ability of their religious order to raise money for publishing their dissertation, which easily runs into several thousand dollars. I estimate that less than 10 per cent of the *Licentiati* are financially able to publish their dissertation.

The Probative Value of the GRADE BOOKLET

The GRADE BOOKLET offer an unmistakably proof that I received the academic distinction of *summa cum laude* for the *Licentia*

and the distinction of *magna cum laude* for the *Lauream*. Its official Latin name is *Libellus Inscriptionis*, which can be translated as “The Registration Booklet.” The importance of the GRADE BOOKLET lies in the fact that it documents all the courses that I have taken, the grades I received for each course, and the academic distinctions I earned.

At the time of registration each student receives the *Libellus Inscriptionis* where all the future courses and grades are to be recorded. The procedure is simple. At the end of each oral or written exam, a student is expected to hand over the GRADE BOOKLET to the professor who enters the grade. Then the student must bring immediately the GRADE BOOKLET to the Academic Dean office where a secretary will stamp the grade in the BOOKLET and transcribe it in the records of the university. The advantage of this old-fashion system is that a student never needs to ask for a transcript. Any question about a grade can be answered immediately by checking the GRADE BOOKLET

On the last two pages of the GRADE BOOKLET are posted the academic results for the *Lauream*, that is, the *Doctoratus* and for the *Licentia*. The academic distinction for the *Licentia* is given as *summa cum laude*, because, as noted earlier, the total grade point average for the class work, thesis, written and oral comprehensive exams, was over 98 per cent.

According to the GRADE BOOKLET the grades I received for the *Experimenta ultima ad Lauream*, that is, for the completion of the *Doctoratus* are as follows:

Dissertation scripta—Written dissertation:
suffragium=grade “9”= 90 per cent

Dissertationis defensio—Oral defense of the Dissertation:
date: June 14, 1974 – *suffragium*=grade “10” = 100 per cent.

Suffragium resultans ex omnibus experimentis superatus—
The resulting grade for passing the above requirements is:
“*Magna cum laude*”

Check here to see this page and the diploma: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/ImagePages/doctoratus.html>

The reason I received “*Magna cum laude*” instead of *Summa cum laude*,” is simply because the average between the “9” received for the written dissertation and the “10” for the oral defense, is “9,5”– that is, I was one point short of the “9,6” required for “*summa cum laude*.” The fact that I missed the *summa cum laude* by one point, hardly supports the allegation of the “priest investigator” “FYI, his grades were not very good here.” Earning a 95 per cent grade point average for the *Doctoratus* is a commendable achievement. The criteria for determining the academic distinctions, is explained at the bottom page of the BOOKLET. Click here to see the picture of this page: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/Imagepages/bottompage.html>

The Probative Value of the Annual Academic Report

Mention has already been made of the annual Academic Report published by the Gregoriana. This 30 pages booklet consists of two parts. In the first part the Rector of the Gregoriana reports on the significant developments and achievements of the university during the past academic year. In the second part the Academic Report, gives a list of the students who graduated with academic distinction in the various *Facultate* — Schools of the Gregoriana. Student who received no academic distinction are not listed in the annual academic report.

The probative values of the annual Academic Report lies in the fact that this an official published document of the Pontifical Gregorian University. While some could insinuate that I have altered the GRADE BOOKLET to prove my claims, nobody can dispute the authenticity and credibility of the annual Academic Report because it is an official publication of the Gregoriana.

I have in my possession the three Academic Reports for the years 1971, 1972, and 1974. These are the years on which I received the *Baccalaureatus*, the *Licentia*, and the *Doctoratus*. As shown earlier these official documents of the Gregoriana clearly show that I received *magna cum laude* with the silver medal for the *Baccalaureatus*, *summa cum laude* with the gold medal for the *Licentia*, and *magna cum laude* for the *doctoratus*.

Conclusion. The three set of documents I have been submitted and discussed above compellingly refute Dr. Bergami’s allegation “He

did not receive a *summa* from the Gregorian as he maintains,” as well as the accusation of the “priest investigator” who wrote: “He never received a *summa cum laude*. . . . Also, FYI, his grades were not very good here.”

We have seen that the three parchment diplomas, the GRADE BOOLET, and the Academic Reports published by the Gregoriana, show beyond the shadow of doubt that during the five years of study at the Gregoriana, I have earned two *magna cum laude*, and one *summa cum laude*. For these I received a silver and a gold medals donated by Pope Paul VI.

These academic achievements clearly disprove the allegations that I “ never received a *summa cum laude*,” and that my “grades were not very good here.” In my view these false allegations represent a malignant intent to discredit my academic achievements at the Gregoriana, in order to undermine the credibility of my research on the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity.

Bacchiocchi Responds to the Second False Allegation

The second false accusation is the denial of my receiving a the gold medal donated by Pope Paul VI for my academic distinction of *summa cum laude*. The denial is presented in two slightly different versions. Dr. Bergami categorically denies that I received “the Pope’s gold medal,” while the “priest investigator” allows for the possibility that I may have received a postcard saying: “Thank you for your work.” But, he concurs with Dr. Bergami in saying: “Certainly he did not receive the Papal award that his given here during the Mass of the Robert Bellarime.” The proper spelling of the name is “Bellarmine.”

This is the text of Dr. Bergami’s second allegation: “He did not receive the Pope’s Gold Medal (this is presented each year in a public ceremony to only a handful of students who have achieved the highest quality of work in their dissertations).”

On a similar vein the “priest investigator” wrote: “As to the award from the Holy Father. Possibly he received something in the sense that you can pro forma present yourself to a Vatican office with a letter saying:

I've published this work, what do you think? It is an office in the Vatican with stamped postcard type things that some secretary sends you with a pre-written card saying: Thank you for your work. Certainly he did not receive the Papal award that has been given here during the Mass of the Robert Bellarmine in May at which the Holy Father recognizes two students for their academic success with their dissertation. (This does not mean He attends; however he sends the formal letter and a gold medal)."

Both statements categorically deny that I received a gold medal donated by Pope Paul VI for my academic distinction of *summa cum laude*. The "priest investigator" allows for the possibility that I may have received a thank you "postcard." This suggestion is ridiculous because I never received a "postcard." What I received is a real gold medal donated by Pope Paul VI.

The Assignment of the Gold Medal

Both Dr. Bergami and the "priest investigator" are correct in saying that "only a handful of students" receive a gold medal during the graduation Mass in honor of Cardinal "Robert Bellarmine." The correct spelling of the name is "Bellarmine." According to the Academic Report published in October 1972, the actual number of students who received the gold medal for the *Licentia* is 5, not "two students" as stated by the "priest investigator." Their names are marked with an asterick "*", indicating that they were awarded a gold medal by lot.

The Academic Report lists all the students who earned *summa cum laude* in the various "*Facultate*," that is, Schools of the Gregoriana. For example, in the *Facultate Iuris Canonici* — Canon Law, there were 3 students who earned *summa cum laude*, but only one who was awarded the gold medal by lot.

In the *Facultate Historia Ecclesiasticae*, only my name is given for the *summa cum laude*: "*Samuele Bacchiocchi, laicus." As explained earlier, the asterick before my name indicates that I was awarded the gold medal. In this case no lot was cast because I happen to be the only student among the *Licentiati* who earned *summa cum laude*. Click here to see the document and the medal <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Gregoriana/goldmedal.html>

Why Was I Absent at the Graduation Award Ceremony?

Dr. Bergami and the “priest investigator” are correct in saying that the Papal medals are given during the graduation Mass in honor of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. Unfortunately, I was not present at the award ceremony for two reasons. First, I was not obligated to attend religious ceremonies which included a lengthy celebration of the Mass. I did not feel comfortable attending a Mass which for Catholic is a re-enactment of Christ’s sacrifice. The Bible clearly teaches that we have no right or need to sacrifice Christ afresh.

Second, I missed the award ceremony because I could have never imagined that I qualified for the Papal gold medal in a class of about 40 *Licentiati*. When I went to the *Segreteria*—Academic Dean’s Office, to receive my *Licentia*’s diploma, they informed me that they had tried without success to contact me about the gold medal I was to receive at the graduation award ceremony. The problem was that our family had moved to a new location and we failed to give our new phone number to the *Segreteria*.

The Academic Dean was very gracious to arrange for a private ceremony in the office of the Rector of the University, R. P. Herve Carrier, S. J. Before handing me the gold medal, the Rector and a few university officials took few moments to express their appreciation on behalf of the Gregoriana for my academic performance and wished me God’s richest blessings in my future ministry.

The arrangement of a private ceremony in the Rector’s office to hand me the gold medal, reminds me constantly of the warm reception and respect I enjoyed at the Gregoriana. I was admitted as a “separated brother,” but I was treated as a *real brother in Christ*. In the light of the past pleasant memories, it is hard to understand and accept the recent attempt of the General Secretary of the Gregoriana to discredit my academic achievements by negating that I received *summa cum laude* distinction, a gold medal donated by Pope Paul VI, and the *imprimatur*—approval for the publication of a portion and my whole dissertation.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that my response to the false allegations, amply documented with the original diplomas, the medals, the GRADE BOOKLET, the published Academic Reports, and the correspondence to be submitted in the next newsletter, will lead the Gregoriana to retract and apologize for the false allegations contrived by the Secretary General and the “priest investigator” against me. We all make mistakes and I have no problem to forgive them for the false accusations levelled against me. May God give them the wisdom and grace to do what is right.

P. S. I plan to submit again to the Pontifical Gregorian University and to Bishop James Murray of Kalamazoo, this latest and more comprehensive response, as soon as the response is completed. PLEASE PRAY FOR ME.

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 November and December 2006. I wish to extend my personal, warm invitation to all who are able to attend one of the followings rallies.

NOVEMBER 3-4: CALGARY: GARDEN ROAD SDA CHURCH

Location: RR7, Site 17, Box 5, Calgary T2P 2G7, Canada. For information call Pastor Ishmael Ali at (403) 532-2932.

NOVEMBER 10-11: MINNEAPOLIS: SOUTHVIEW SDA CHURCH

Location: 5750 Wentworth Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55419. For information call Pastor Jim Hiner at (218) 841-0353 or Elder Tim Denniston at (952) 888-8160

NOVEMBER 17 TO 28: AUSTRALIA, See above.

DECEMBER 8-9: LOS ANGELES: SPANISH-AMERICAN SDA CHURCH

Location: 1815 Bridge Street, Los Angeles, California 90033. For information call Pastor Guillermo Quiroz at (714) 522-0296

DECEMBER 15-16: HAMILTON MOUNTAIN SDA CHURCH

Location: 284 Concession Street, Hamilton, ON L9C 7N7, Canada.

For information call Pastor Wesley Torres at (905) 304-9024. :

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SERVICES AND PRODUCTS**SPECIAL OFFER ON THE NEW DVD ALBUM ON *THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST***

The DVD album consists of two disks which contain the live recording recently done at the Andrews University Towers Auditorium. 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 in the final showdown: 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.

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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.

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

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NEW TOSHIBA LAPTOP TECRA A8-EZ8312

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