

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 189

“THE SABBATH AND THE SAVIOR”

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UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Update on the Writing of *POPULAR BELIEFS: ARE THEY BIBLICAL?*

The research and writing of the new book *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* has slowed down during the past two weeks due to the many demands on my time. I did make a good start on the next chapter entitled “Mariology,” but I still need two solid weeks to complete this study.

This chapter on the devotion and worship of Mary is a most important chapter, because as TIME magazine notes in a cover story entitled “The Search for Mary,” “both the adoration and the conflict attending Mary have risen to extraordinary levels. A grass-roots revival of faith in the Virgin is taking place worldwide. Millions of worshippers are flocking to her shrines, many of them young people. Even more remarkable are the number of claimed sightings of the Virgin, from Yugoslavia to Colorado, in the past few years.”

Surprisingly, not only Catholic church leaders but also a growing number of Protestant theologians have come to believe that “*Mary might just be key to the future of ecumenism after all.*”

In view of the growing popularity of the veneration and worship of Mary, it is imperative to thoroughly examine this development from a biblical perspective. This is what I intend to do on this chapter on “Mariology,” which I hope to complete by God’s grace within a couple of weeks.

Financing the Printing of *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?*

In my previous newsletters I told you that some fellow believers have promised to raise funds for the printing a large quantity of the new book ***Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?*** The idea is to offer the book to churches and individual members FREE OF CHARGE.

So far the contributions to this project have been limited. We are still a long way from reaching the goal of \$200,000.00 to cover the cost of printing 100,000 copies. This factor is part of the reason for my slowing down the research and writing of the remaining four chapters. This is the way I look at this project. What is the point of investing so much time and efforts to complete this book in a rush by the end of February as originally planned, if by that time there are no sufficient funds to print the book? If the printing has to be delayed due to lack of sufficient funds, then there is no reason for me to give utmost priority to this project.

If you feel that this book *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* is urgently needed to help many sincere believers to understand why their popular beliefs are unbiblical and why the Adventist beliefs are biblical, you may wish to express your conviction in a tangible way by sending

it your generous contribution to this project. To receive a tax deductible receipt, I will tell you where to send your contribution. Just contact me by email or phone (269-471-2915), and I will gladly supply you the information.

THE SABBATH SEMINAR WITH WORDS AND SONGS

After weeks of preparation, the SABBATH SEMINAR WITH WORDS AND SONGS was presented and recorded on November 16-17, 2007, at the Avon Park SDA Church, a 900 members congregation near Orlando, Florida. The church was packed with visitors from the surrounding churches. The response surpassed our fondest expectations.

In the past I presented my *Sabbath, Advent, and Lifestyle seminars* by myself with my broken Italian accent and my gestures. But, this time I felt impressed to engage the participation of two bright, beautiful, and dedicated Christian young ladies, Loretta Bacchicchi, my daughter, and Cristina Piccardi, an outstanding soprano from Brazil. The response of the congregation was heartwarming.

This is what Pastor Paul Boling, the Senior Pastor of the Avon Park SDA Church, wrote about our SABBATH SEMINAR WITH WORDS AND SONGS, that we presented at his church on November 16-17, 2007.

“November 18-2007

Over the past years I have had the privilege of inviting Dr. Samuele Bacchicchi to speak at 2 churches that I have pastored. So, I was eager to again host his seminar in the Avon Park SDA Church, of Florida Conference.

However, the weekend visit of November 16-17, 2007 was slated to be different, because he was bringing his own guest singer, Cristina Piccardi. This gifted vocalist added immeasurably to Dr. Bacchicchi's timely lectures. *She is extremely well trained, and she graciously brought to our congregation the most beautiful music we have ever heard, coupled with her love for God.* Our congregation was so overjoyed with her concert, and they want the team of Bacchicchi and Piccardi to return soon!”

Pastor Paul Boling
Senior Pastor
Avon Park Seventh-day Adventist Church

Let me briefly introduce you both my daughter Loretta and Cristina, both of whom have committed themselves to work together with me as a team to present our endtime Adventist message in a new refreshing and inspiring way with WORDS and SONGS.

My daughter Loretta Bacchiocchi is a Professor of Nursing and of Health Education at the Florida Hospital College of Health Science. She has been appointed to serve also as the Health Educator for the Florida Hospital. She presents the fundamental principles of healthful living with clarity and conviction. In the video you will see that Loretta speaking with passion and conviction about the health principles designed to ensure our physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, and social well-being. Her lectures fits well with the purpose of the Sabbath, which is to ensure our spiritual, physical, and mental restoration.

Cristina Piccardi who is an outstanding soprano from Brazil. She touches the hearts of people with her powerful and passionate singing. She sings before and after each of my presentations. In addition she presents a sacred concert on Sabbath afternoon, before my final lecture on the latest Sabbath/Sunday developments.

On November 16-17, 2007, Loretta, Cristina, and myself presented together for the first time THE SABBATH SEMINAR WITH WORDS AND SONGS at the Avon Park SDA Church, a 900 members congregation near Orlando, Florida. The reception and the response surpassed our fondest expectations. On Saturday night for the first time I saw people shedding tears of joy after hearing Cristina's sacred concert. Both the Senior Pastor, Paul Boling, and the whole congregation raised their hand to indicate their desire to invite us back next year.

The video editing of the complete six hours SABBATH SEMINAR WITH WORDS AND SONGS has been completed and a nice DVD Album containing three DVD disks on the has been released. We are currently mailing a gift DVD Album to every President and Ministerial Secretary of the North American Division, to offer them an opportunity to evaluate our

ministry. We look forward to present our seminars as a team at campmeeting and special rallies.

We are very eager to send the newly released DVD Album on the **SABBATH SEMINAR WITH WORDS AND SONGS**, to fellow believers and the many smaller Adventist congregations in North America and overseas that cannot afford paying an airline ticket for the three of us. The information on how to order this newly released DVD is given below.

How Did this Ministry Begin?

Let me briefly explain how our ministry began. During the past 30 years I invested much time and efforts to write 17 books and to prepare powerpoint seminars dealing with the fundamental beliefs of our Adventist Faith. The driving force behind these endeavors has been the conviction that our Adventist church faces today an unprecedented challenge to present our timely endtime message in a fresh, attractive, and appealing way to our secularly minded and tension-filled society. We face the challenge to fulfill our mission to call upon sincere believers every where to “Come out of her my people, so that you will not share in her sins” (Rev 18:8). This call includes not only the abandonment of false worship but also of intemperate lifestyle which beclouds the mind and causes sickness.

For many years I have felt that my seminars on the **SABBATH**, **SECOND ADVENT**, and **CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE**, could be greatly enriched through the participation of an outstanding health educator and a powerful singer who could touch the hearts of people with sacred songs. In a providential way the Lord has met this felt need by bringing into my ministry Loretta Bacchiocchi and Cristina Piccardi.

Coming from Italy, the land of great tenors and sopranos, I have been praying that the Lord would help me find an outstanding singer to enhance my seminars. My dream came true on Saturday, October 6, 2007, when I listened spellbound to Cristina Piccardi singing three times with her incredibly powerful soprano voice during the communion service of Andrews University Pioneer Memorial Church (PMC), led by Pastor Dwight Nelson. I was deeply touched by her powerful and passionate singing.

Who is Cristina Piccardi?

Truly I can say that Cristina is by far the best Adventist soprano I have heard in my life. Surprising she is a slim, 118 pounds lady, 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 25 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.

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. Now that Pavarotti has passed away, it is encouraging to know that one of the best soprano in the world belongs to the Adventist Church.

When I approached Cristina 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 world of the opera stage, in order to dedicate the gift of her voice to sing sacred music.

Cristina has accepted enthusiastically my invitation to join my ministry. In an emotional tone she said that my invitation was an answer to her prayers. This means that now we are presenting together with words and songs my powerpoint seminars on the SABBATH, SECOND ADVENT, and CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE.

While you are waiting to receive your copy of the DVD Album on THE SABBATH WITH WORDS AND SONGS that was recorded on November 16-17, 2007 at the Avon Park SDA Church, 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 Offer for the New DVD Album on the SABBATH WITH WORDS AND SONGS

To make it possible for many fellow believers and especially small churches to benefit from the newly released DVD Album on the SABBATH WITH WORDS AND SONGS, **we are pleased to offer it to you for only \$50.00**, instead of the regular price of \$100.00. The price includes the airmail cost to any oversea destination.

The DVD Album consists of 3 DVD disks containing a total of 6 hours of recording, that is, the Friday evening, Sabbath morning, and Sabbath afternoon programs.

The Friday evening program begins with Loretta's lecture on "Health and Spirituality," which is followed first by Cristina's mini Sacred Concert, and then by my testimony entitled "My Search for the Sabbath at a Vatican University.

The Sabbath morning sermon, entitled "The Sabbath as a Time for Service," offers practical principles on how to keep the Sabbath to gain a greater blessing out of it. Before the sermon Cristina leads the Praise Songs and then she sings "The Lord's Prayer."

The Sabbath afternoon program is divided into two parts. In the first part Cristina offers a sacred concert and in the second part I deliver my final lecture entitled "The Sabbath Under Crossfire." This lecture offers an update report on the latest Sabbath/Sunday developments.

You can enjoy this informative and inspiring seminar in the privacy of your home or church, without having to travel long distances or investing money to fly us in.

How to Order the New DVD Album on THE SABBATH WITH WORDS AND SONGS

(1) **Online** by clicking here:

(2) **By calling us** at (269) 471-2915

(3) **By emailing us** your address and credit card information

(4) **By mailing** a check for \$50.00 to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

A THANK YOU NOTE FROM CRISTINA PICCARDI

Cristina wishes to express her heartfelt gratitude to those of you who have ordered her DVD and CD and especially to those who have added a contribution to help her and her husband to pay their debts. She has asked me to post this note of thanks.

“Dear friend:

This week the Lord has been impressing me with the importance of “*Gratitude*” in our ministry of service. I believe that a grateful heart is the abiding place of the peace of Christ.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who have been supporting my music ministry and helping me and my husband to pay our debts by buying my DVD / CD and by sending money gifts.

I am especially mindful of the beautiful words of encouragement that I have been receiving from my brothers and sisters since our seminar with words and songs to Avon Park SDA church on November 16-17, 2007.

Yesterday I received a beautiful letter with a book and some music scores from a dear sister who encouraged me sing these songs in various churches. These are beautiful and inspiring old hymns that I will surely include in my repertoire.

Let me share with you a final thought. While travelling with a pianist last year, he made this remark after we finished talking to the people that came to hear our sacred music: “The most beautiful thing of this ministry is the people.” I fully agree. The greatest joy and satisfaction that comes

from my ministry of music is seeing God's people touched by His Love through our music.

I could sing the Love of the Lord forever because you all are my inspiration for singing praises unto the Lord.

'The Lord is my strength and my song'.

Exodus 15:2

With the Love of Christ,
Cristina Piccardi

In the previous newsletters I explained that Cristina and her husband were forced to borrow a lot of money from four different credit cards in order to pay for their education, rent, and living expenses. As foreign students they cannot apply for students' loan. They can only work for 20 hours a week at minimum wage. The limited income and the 16% interest of the credit cards, caused them to get deeper into debt.

When I became aware of their dire financial situation, I wrote a check to extinguish completely their credit cards' debts. They will repay this interest free loan as funds become available, especially through the sale of Cristina's CD and DVD albums. Though I have spent a few thousand dollars for the taping and editing of Cristina's DVD Album, all the proceeds from the sale of the album will go directly to her.

If the Lord has blessed you financially and you feel impressed to help this worthy and needy couple, feel free to send a check directly to: Cristina Piccardi, 9846 Rosehill Road, Apart. 33, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

While waiting for the completion of chapter 7 of my new book *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* I decided to fill the time gap by sharing with you one of my favorite sermons, "The Sabbath and the Savior." I first delivered this sermon several years ago at a gathering of ministers of different denominations in Seattle. The response was most gratifying. Practically all the ministers went to the lobby to buy some of my Sabbath books and one Nazarine minister invited me to preach the same sermon to his congregation.

The relevance of the sermon is determined by the fact that as Adventists we are often accused of making the Sabbath our Savior. The accusation is not without merit, because some Adventists have developed the misconception that Sabbathkeeping guarantees their salvation. Thus, it is imperative to clarify that we are not saved by the Sabbath Day, but by the Savior.

Surprisingly even the 17 Sabbath hymns found in our Adventist hymn book, tend to extoll more the Sabbath as the Day, than the message and blessings of the Sabbath. I have encouraged Cristina Piccardi to compose some Sabbath Songs that can help us appreciate and celebrate more fully the message and blessings of the Sabbath. I feel that this is a much needed contribution to our worship music.

The function of the Sabbath is to make us receptive and responsive to the Savior's provision of salvation. We stop our work on the Sabbath to allow the Savior to work in us more fully and freely (Heb 4:10). In this sermon I propose seven ways in which the Sabbath enables us to conceptualize, internalize, and experience the Savior's peace and rest in our lives.

In many ways this sermon represents a nutshell summary of my book *Divine rest for Human Restlessness*. If you do not have a copy, you can easily order it online by clicking at this link: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=21&products_id=32 or by calling us at (269) 471-2915.

“THE SABBATH AND THE SAVIOR”

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi

Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University

Our tension-filled and restless lives long for rest. The heart specialist or the high-blood pressure physician often admonish us, saying, “You need to slow down and rest.” Yet, how difficult it is to work off tension, to quiet restlessness! Some join athletic clubs, others meditation groups. Still others seek release from their tension by taking vacations, tranquilizers, drugs or alcohol.

Experience tells us, however, that even fabulous vacations or magic pills provide at best only a temporary evasion but not a permanent quieting of inner tension and restlessness. How then can our restless lives

experience perfect rest and peace? In the opening paragraph of his autobiography entitled *Confessions*, Augustine points to the real solution to the problem of human restlessness, when he says, “Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.”

True rest is to be found not in *places* or through *pills* but rather in a right relationship with a *Person*, the Person of the Savior who says: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28; NIV). Perfect rest and peace are not a human achievement but a divine gift. It is an experience that come to us when we allow Christ to harmonize our lives (“*I will give you rest*”—Matt. 11:28). Why is divine assistance needed to experience true rest and peace in our lives?

The answer is to be found in the fact that perfect rest does not come about accidentally but is the result of an harmonious accord of the physical, mental and spiritual components of our being. Can we by ourselves harmonize these three, that is, our body, mind and soul? We can stretch our tired body on a bed but if our mind and soul are troubled, we have not rest but agitation, tension or even nightmares.

As the various components of an orchestra need the direction of a skilful maestro to blend them into harmonious music, so the physical, mental and spiritual components of our being need the direction of our supreme Master in order for us to experience harmonious rest and peace.¹

How can we enable Christ to harmonize and quiet our restless lives? Our study has shown that God gave mankind before and after the Fall a vital institution, the Sabbath day: a day specifically designed to free us from secular concerns in order to freely find rest in God (Heb. 4:9-10). It is to be regretted that this divine institution has often been neglected, disregarded or even perverted. This occurred in OT times and it is also happening in our materialistic-oriented society. Many people today view God’s Holy Day as a time to seek for personal *profit* and *pleasure* rather than for divine *power* and *presence*.

The story is told of a pastor calling upon a member who had missed church services for several weeks. The pastor asked him, “What keeps you away, friend?” To this the member replied: “I’d rather be in bed on Sunday morning thinking about the church than in the church thinking about my bed. At least my mind is in the right place.” Indeed, for many the right place to be on their “Lord’s Day” is not in God’s sanctuary but rather in the sanctuary of a bed, a boat, a car, a restaurant, a football field,

a cinema, a shopping mall, et cetera. Even those Christians who attend morning church services will often revert in the afternoon to places of business or entertainment. This is hardly reflective of what we have found to be the Biblical notion of Sabbathkeeping, namely, a day set apart to experience God's restful presence in our restless lives.

This prevailing trend raises a crucial question: Is the Sabbath institution a superseded religious tradition no longer relevant to space-age Christians? Or, Is this a divine ordinance still essential to Christian growth and survival? It is hard to believe that at the very time when the tyranny of things enslaves many lives, there should no longer be any need for the Sabbath day—the day whose very function is to free human beings from the bondage of materialism in order for them to experience divine peace and rest in their restless lives.

Our investigation into the Good News of the Sabbath has shown that the Sabbath is indeed a vital divine institution that provides time and opportunities to develop a growing relationship with God and fellow beings. In a special sense the celebration of God's Holy Day enables the Lord of the Sabbath to bring His peace and rest to restless lives. To grasp more fully the latter important function of the Sabbath, we shall briefly review, by way of conclusion, seven of the significant Good News of the Sabbath that have emerged in the course of this study. It is to be hoped that this conclusive summary will help the reader to better appreciate how proper Sabbathkeeping enables the Savior to bring rest and peace to our restlessness.

1. Rest of Creation

A first way in which the Sabbath brings Christ's rest to our souls is by constantly reassuring us that our lives have meaning, value and hope because they are rooted in God from creation to eternity. This message of the Sabbath was seen especially in the first two chapters. We may call it "Christ's creation rest" for the human soul. It is the rest that Christ brings to those thinking persons who search for life's meaning and value in their ancestral roots; to those who wonder if their existence as well as that of the whole cosmos is the result of *chance* or of *choice*, that is, of a *merciless fate* or of a *merciful God*. To these persons through the Sabbath Christ offers His restful assurance that their ancestral roots are good because they are rooted in God Himself (Gen. 1:26-27); that their existence has value because it is not the product of chance but of a personal creation and redemption of a loving God.

We have found this reassuring message of the Sabbath in the creation story where the number seven, emphatic terms and the imagery of God's rest are used to proclaim the Good News that originally God created this world and all its creatures in a perfect and complete way. The believer who celebrates this Good News on the Sabbath by renewing his or her faith in the perfect Creator, and by delighting in the beauty of God's creation, experiences Christ's rest of creation.

To experience this rest on the Sabbath means to rejoice in the divine assurance that human existence, in spite of its apparent futility and tragedy, has value because it proceeds from God and moves toward a glorious divine destiny. As eloquently expressed by Augustine, "Thy resting on the seventh day after the completion of Thy works foretells us through the voice of Thy Book, that we also, after completing our works through Thy generosity, in the Sabbath of eternal life shall rest in Thee."² To celebrate the Sabbath in this restless present means to experience a foretaste of the future rest and peace that awaits God's people; it means to rest in the assurance that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1 :6).

2. Rest of Divine Presence

A second way in which proper Sabbathkeeping brings Christ's rest to our lives is by enabling us to experience His divine presence. It is Christ's presence that brought stillness to the stormy lake of Galilee (Matt. 8 :23-27) and it is also the assurance of His presence that can bring peace and stillness to troubled lives. This is basically the meaning of the holiness of the Sabbath which is frequently stated in the Bible.

We have shown in chapter 3 that the holiness of the Sabbath consists in the special manifestation of God's presence through this day in the life of His people. The believer who on the Sabbath lays aside his secular concerns, turning off his receiver to the many distracting voices in order to tune in and listen to the voice of God, experiences in a real sense the spiritual presence of Christ. The heightened sense of the nearness of Christ's presence experienced on the Sabbath fills the soul with joy, peace and rest.

Relationship, if they are to survive, need to be cultivated. This is true both at a human and human-divine level. I vividly recall the A, B, C privilege-system that governed the social relationships among students of the opposite sex at Newbold College, in England, where I received my college training. A couple with an "A" status was entitled to a weekly

encounter of about one hour in a designated lounge. However, those couples who qualified for a “B” or a “C” privilege could officially meet only biweekly or monthly.

Frankly, I did my best to maintain the “A” status because I viewed those brief weekly encounters with my fiancée as indispensable for the survival of our relationship. The Sabbath is in a sense a special weekly encounter with our Creator-Redeemer. This encounter, however, lasts not merely *one hour* but a *whole day*. It is a sobering thought that to enter into the holy Sabbath day means, as we have seen, to enter in a special sense into the spiritual presence and communion of the Lord. Believers who cultivate Christ’s presence during the Sabbath time and activities experience His rest and peace every day of their lives.

3. Rest from Competition

A third way in which true Sabbathkeeping brings Christ’s rest to our lives is by releasing us from the pressure to produce and achieve. The pressure that our competitive society exerts on us can cause untold frustration. Competition can dishearten, dehumanize and demoralize a person. It can turn friends into foes. We noted in chapter 3 that in order to keep up with the Joneses, some Christians today, like the Israelites of old, choose to moonlight on the Sabbath. But the Scripture points to the senselessness of such greediness when it states with a point of irony, “They found none” (Ex. 16:27). The Sabbath teaches a greedy heart to be grateful, and a grateful heart is the abiding place of Christ’s peace and rest.

By restricting temporarily our productivity, the Sabbath teaches us not to compete but to commune with one another. It teaches us to view fellow beings not *quantitatively* but *qualitatively*, that is, not in terms of their income but in terms of their human values. If Mr. Jones lives on social security, during the week we may be tempted to think of him in terms of his small income.

On the Sabbath, however, as we worship and fellowship with Mr. Jones, we appreciate not the little that he makes but the much that he offers to the church and community through his Christian witness and example. Thus, by releasing us from the pressure of competition and production, the Sabbath enables us to appreciate more fully the human values of people and the beauty of things. This free and fuller appreciation of God, people and things brings joy, harmony and rest to our lives.

4. Rest of Belonging

A fourth way in which genuine Sabbathkeeping brings Christ's rest to our lives is by reassuring us of our belonging to Him. At the root of much human restlessness there is a sense of alienation, estrangement. The sense of not-belonging to anyone or anything will cause a person to feel bitter, insecure and restless. On the contrary, in a relationship of mutual belonging one experiences love, identity, security and rest. To enable human beings to conceptualize and experience a belonging relationship with Him, God has given helpful signs and symbols such as the rainbow, the circumcision, the Passover lamb and blood, the bread and wine.

The Sabbath occupies a unique place among these various God-given covenant signs or symbols, having functioned as the symbol *par excellence* of the divine election and mission of God's people. Being the symbol of divine ownership, the Sabbath constantly reminds the believer who keeps this day of his belonging to God. "The Sabbath," aptly writes Chuck Scriven, "is the insignia of the man of faith, a sort of badge worn at God's request in order to recall God's loyalty to us and our loyalty to God. . . . It is a placard we carry to show the world what we stand for and whom we serve."³

During the week a person may feel frustrated by a sense of anonymity. "Who am I?" he asks, as he lives and moves among the crowd. The answer that often echoes back is, "You are a cog in a machine and a number in the computer." On the Sabbath the answer is different. The Christian who observes God's holy and chosen day hears the Lord saying, "You may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you" (Ex. 31:13). Being the symbol of divine ownership and sanctification, the Sabbath assures the Sabbathkeeper of his own divine election and sanctification. Moreover, as shown in chapter 4, the Sabbath offers not merely an assurance of belonging to God but also a concrete weekly opportunity to express such a commitment by re-enacting the baptismal covenant of self-renouncement and renewal. By renewing the sense of belonging to our Creator-Redeemer, the Sabbath restores a sense of human dignity, identity, peace and rest to our lives.

5. Rest from Social Tensions

A fifth way in which true Sabbathkeeping enables us to experience Christ's rest is by breaking down social, racial and cultural barriers. The inability or unwillingness to appreciate and accept another person's skin-

color, culture, language or social status, is a major cause of much unrest, hate and tension in our contemporary society. After the Fall an important function of the Sabbath has been to teach equality and respect for every member of the human society. Every seven days, seven years (sabbatical year) and seven weeks of years (jubilee year), all persons, beasts and property were to become free before God. And genuine freedom leads to equality.

The uneven divisions of the Hebrew society leveled out as the Sabbath began. Samuel H. Dresner rightly complains that this equalizing function of the Sabbath has seldom been recognized. He goes on by saying, "Although one Jew may have peddled onions and another may have owned great forests of lumber, on the Sabbath all were equal, all were kings: all welcomed the Sabbath Queen, all chanted the *Kiddush*, all basked in the glory of the seventh day. . . . On the Sabbath there were neither banker nor clerk, neither farmer nor hired-hand, neither rich nor poor. There were only Jews hallowing the Sabbath."³

It is noteworthy that Isaiah reassures the outcasts of Israel, specifically the eunuchs and the foreigners of whom the Assyrian and Babylonian wars had produced a great number, that by observing the Sabbath they would share in the blessings of God's covenant people, "for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56:1-7).

Many social injustices could have been avoided in the ancient and modern society if the concern for human rights expressed by the Sabbath (and its sister institutions) had always been understood and practiced. The Sabbath forces upon us the important issues of freedom and humanitarian concern for all, from our son to our servant (Ex. 20:10; 23:12; Deut. 5:14).

By placing such issues before us at the moment of worship—the moment when we are truest to ourselves—the Sabbath cannot leave us insensitive toward the suffering or social injustices experienced by others. It is impossible on the Sabbath to celebrate Creation and Redemption while hating those whom God has created and redeemed through His Son. True Sabbathkeeping demands that we acknowledge the Fatherhood of God by accepting and strengthening the brotherhood of mankind. The bond of brotherhood which the Sabbath establishes through its worship, fellowship and humanitarian services influences by reflex our social relationships during the week.

To accept on the Sabbath those who belong to ethnic minorities or to a lower social status as brothers and sisters in Christ demands that we treat them as such during the weekdays as well. It would be a denial of the human values and experience of the Sabbath, if one were to exploit or detest during the week those whom the Sabbath teaches us to respect and love as God's creatures. By teaching us to accept and respect every person, whether rich or poor, black or white, as human beings created and redeemed by the Lord, the Sabbath breaks down and equalizes those social, racial, and cultural barriers which cause much tension and unrest in our society and consequently it makes it possible for the peace of Christ to dwell in our hearts.

6. Rest of Redemption

A sixth way in which Sabbathkeeping brings Christ's rest to our lives is by enabling us to experience through the physical rest the greater blessings of divine rest and peace of salvation. The relationship between the Sabbath rest and Christ's redemption-rest was examined in chapter 5. There we saw that from the symbol of God's initial entrance into *human time*, the Sabbath became after the Fall the symbol of God's promise to enter *human flesh* to become "Emmanuel—God with us."

The rest and liberation from the hardship of work, and from social inequalities which both the weekly and annual Sabbaths granted to all the members of the Hebrew society, was understood not merely as a commemoration of the past Exodus deliverance (Deut. 5 :15), but also a prefiguration of the future redemption-rest to be brought by the Messiah. Christ fulfilled these OT Messianic expectations typified by the Sabbath (cf. Luke 4:21) by identifying His redemptive mission with the Good News of release and redemption of the Sabbath, thus making the day the fitting vehicle through which to experience His rest of salvation.

It was on a Sabbath day that, according to Luke (4:16-21), Christ inaugurated His public ministry in the synagogue of Nazareth by quoting a passage from Isaiah (61 :1-2) and by claiming emphatically to be the fulfilment of the sabbatical liberation announced in that passage. In His subsequent ministry, we found that Christ substantiated this claim by revealing His redemptive mission especially through His Sabbath healing and teaching ministry (cf. Luke 13 :16; Matt. 12 :5-6; John 5 :17; 7:22-23). Finally, it was on that historic holy Sabbath that Christ completed His redemptive mission ("It is finished"—John 19 :30) by resting in the tomb (Luke 23 :54-56).

Christ's Sabbath rest in the tomb reveals the depth of God's love for His creatures. It tells us that in order to give them life, He was willing to experience not only the limitation of *human time* at creation but also the suffering, agony and death of *human flesh* during the incarnation. In the light of the cross, then, the Sabbath is a time to celebrate not only the Good News of God's perfect creation but also the Glad Tidings of Christ's complete redemption: it is the weekly celebration and jubilation of a liberated people; it is the day when we cease from our work to allow God to work in us, to bring to our lives His rest of forgiveness and salvation.

7. Rest of Service

A seventh way in which the Sabbath brings Christ's rest to our lives is by providing time and opportunities for service. Inner peace and rest are to be found not in *egocentric* (selfish) *relaxation* but rather in *heterocentric* (unselfish) *service*. The various types of service contemplated and made possible by the Sabbath have been considered in chapter 6. The study has shown that the Sabbath provides the time and the reasons for serving God, self, others and our habitat.

We serve God on the Sabbath by resting to acknowledge His claim over our lives and by worshiping to celebrate His marvelous creation, redemption and ultimate restoration. This celebration of God's goodness offers us a fresh experience of divine rest and peace in our lives. We serve our personal needs on the Sabbath by taking time to reorder our lives, to sharpen our moral consciousness, to experience divine forgiveness, presence and rest.

We serve others on the Sabbath by coming closer to loved ones, friends and needy persons, sharing with them our friendship and concern. The service we render unto others on the Sabbath honors God and enriches our lives with a sense of restful satisfaction. We serve our habitat on the Sabbath by learning to act as *curators* rather than *predators* of this earth; by taking time to *admire* rather than to *exploit* God's creation; by experiencing rest and peace through the appreciation of God's creation.

Does the Sabbath bring divine rest to our human restlessness? This study has shown that the Sabbath does enable the Savior to bring perfect rest to our lives by offering us the opportunity to experience the rest of creation, the rest of divine presence, the rest of belonging, the rest from competition, the rest from social tensions, the rest of redemption and the rest of service.

Is the Sabbath, then, Good News or bad news? A day of celebration or of frustration? We have found in the Scriptures that the Sabbath expresses God's Best News to the human family—the Good News that the Lord has created us perfectly, that He has redeemed us completely, that He loves us immensely and that He will restore us ultimately.

In this cosmic age, the Good News of the Sabbath provides the basis for a cosmic faith, a faith which embraces and unites creation, redemption and final restoration; the past, the present and the future; man, nature and God; this world and the world to come; a faith that recognizes God's dominion over the whole creation and human life by consecrating to Him the seventh day; a faith that fulfills the believer's true destiny in time and eternity; a faith that offers *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*.

NOTES

1. For further treatment of this concept, see chapter VI of *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*.
2. Augustine, *Confessions* XIII, 36.
3. Chuck Scriven, "Beyond Arithmetic: A Look at the Meaning of the Sabbath," *Insight* (Sept. 6, 1971): 17.
4. Samuel H. Dresner, *The Sabbath*, 1970, p. 43.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

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, containing the recordings Cristina Piccardi, new *Sabbath Seminar with Words and Songs*, Prof. Jon Paulien, Prof. Graeme Bradford, and my own 9 albums. 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 10 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 Albums 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 power-point 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*.

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THE SECONDDISK is a VIDEO DVD recording entitled SING UNTO THE LORD. It contains 12 sacred familiar songs that were recorded during a live sacred concert at Andrews University Pioneer Memorial Church. This is a video recording that you can enjoy in your living room and play in your church.

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NEW DVD OF PROF. JON PAULIEN'S LIVE SEMINAR ON SIMPLY REVELATION

Prof. Jon Paulien's DVD album on *SIMPLY REVELATION* 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 was 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, 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.

You will be pleased to know that we have placed on a separate file all the powerpoint slides and the script of the live lecture. This means that if you are a pastor or a lay member who want to use Prof. Paulien's Simply Revelation Seminar, you can pick and choose the powerpoint slides that you like.

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. The regular price of the DVD album is \$100.00, but you can order it now **at the introductory price of 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 \$70.00, 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 \$80.00, 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 six months conducting this investigation which was professionally taped at the Andrews University Towers Auditorium. I use 200 powerpoint slides to deliver this informative two hours lecture which is 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>

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* **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.

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UPCOMING SEMINARS FOR THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER

Gradually I am rescheduling some of the invitations I had to cancel because of liver-cancer treatments. Here is a list of the upcoming weekend seminars for the month of December:

NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 1: INLAND EMPIRE FILIPINO SDA CHURCH. NEAR LOMA LINDA

Location: 604 E. State Street, Redlands, CA 92374-3517.

For directions and information call Pastor Elizer Sacay at (909) 796-1898 or (909) 910-6091

DECEMBER 7-8: HINSDALE FIL-AM ADVENTIST CHURCH

Location: 9 East 59th Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60421

For information and directions contact Pastor Ramon Baldovino at (630) 241-9360.

DECEMBER 14-15: VALLEY VIEW SDA CHURCH

Location: 6630 F. M. 1516, Concerse, Texas 78109 (San Antonio)

For information and directions contact Pastor Jerry Bandy at (210) 637-5275.

DECEMBER 21-23: FRIENDS OF THE SABBATH CONFERENCE IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

Location: Griffin Gate Marriott Resort Hotel, 1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40511

For information and directions contact Pastor Jim O'Brien at (513) 755-0040.

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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.

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