

ADVENTISM'S LAST STAND IN THE BATTLE FOR THE "YEAR-DAY FORMULA."

Reflections, the newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute, just issued in April 2007, offers a study written by Gerhard Pfandl on "The Year-Day Principle." Professor Pfandl's eminent scholarship is well known. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on the eschatology (end-time theology) of Daniel and a commentary on the same book. He is familiar with almost all of the recent literature on this book, has reviewed it in the respected journal *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, and shown a breadth of knowledge that enables him to contribute with keenness of insight to the works he analyzes.

However, this recent contribution in support of the year-day formula appears to be born out of despair in presence of mounting, overwhelming evidence of its demise. A professional linguist has shown its irregular use and its arbitrary usage, and questioned its validity as a "principle."¹ The dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:16, 23, 25, 32) is a particular case in point. The seven "times" of alienation predicted for him are never interpreted by historicists in terms of the formula. The ruler only reveals that "at the end of the days," (Dan. 4:34) his understanding was restored. The "times" may be symbolic, but no clue is given as to their duration. What can be said with certainty is that the "seven times" must fit into a lifetime. Assuming with historicism that these "times" stood for the 360 days of a year, the formula "day for a year" could by no means be applied to its 2,520 days. Why is it inconsistently applied to the supposed 1,260 days that are symbolized by the "time, times and a half time" of Dan 7:25? Many theologians have questioned the biblical basis of the formula and shown the irrelevance of texts cited in its favor.²

¹ Eduard Hanganu, "A Linguist examines the 'Year Day Principle'," *Adventist Today*, Sept.-Oct. 2003, www.atoday.com/160.0.html. In his tabulation of time words in Daniel and the Apocalypse, the author includes many passages in which time periods refer to ongoing historical events, and would not normally be subject to the application of the formula. His statistics are therefore less than accurate. Nevertheless, his assertion that the "principle" is not consistently applied to all time periods in Apocalyptic prophecy remains valid (Cf Rev. 9:5, 10, 15; 17:12; 18:8,10,17,19; 20:2-7; 22:2, Daniel 4:16).

² Fred D. Mazzaferri, *As in a Mirror*, "Was Daniel a Historicist?" Ch. 7, pp. 57-84, and "The Seventy "Weeks of Dan.9:24-27: A Solid Foundation for Seventh-day Adventism's Crucial Year-day Principle?" June, 2001, <http://www.ratzlaf.com>. Frank A. Basten, "Essays on Current SDA Prophetic Hermeneutics and Interpretation," Assumptions 16 and 25 <http://www.2300days.com>. George Desnoyer, "The Year-Day Principle for Interpreting Predictive prophecy," 2002 <http://www.goodnewsunlimited.org.au/yrday.htm>. Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement and the Investigative judgment*, Casselberry FL: Euangelion Press, 1980, pp. 294-346. Clarence H. Hewitt, *The Seer of Babylon : Studies in the Book of Daniel*, Boston: Advent Christian Publ. Soc. 1948, Appendix E "The Validity of the Year-Day Theory," pp. 413-420. Eduardo Martinez Rancaño, "Las quince pruebas proféticas de William Miller," http://www.geocities.com/alfil2_1999/profeticasdewilliammillerl.pdf Norman F. Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism*, Grand Rapids, Mich. Baker Book House, 1962, ch. 7, pp. 92-103

Adventism considers it as one of the main pillars of the historicist interpretation of prophecy. Many of the arguments that support the formula derive its validity from historicist assumptions. The circularity of the argument is quite evident: the formula depends on historicist arguments and historicism depends on the validity of the formula.

The following analysis responds to Dr. Pfandl's ten points in support of this formula:

1. Since the visions of Daniel 7 and 8 are largely symbolic with beasts representing historical empires, the time periods should also be seen as symbolic.

There is no reason to disagree with this statement, but this in no way indicates that time periods imply a day-for-a-year principle. Indeed, "time, times and half a time" or "evening-morning" cannot, by their very nature as time measurements, be taken literally. If "time" is symbolic it may represent a year or another unspecified period. It does not establish a rapport between a day and a year. If "evening-morning" is symbolic, it may represent a day. But, according to many, it may allude to a sacrificial rite present in the context (Dan. 8:11). Nothing in the language points to a day-for-a-year formula. Reference to the Genesis nomenclature is irrelevant for it does not measure time with the same terminology (the evening-morning unit), but by setting separated limits to the days of creation. ("there was a morning and there was a morning.")

2. The visions deal with the rise and fall of empires extending over hundreds of years, hence the prophetic time periods must also cover long time periods.

The time periods, 7:25 and 8:14, do not cover the whole duration of each kingdom, nor the entire duration of several kingdoms (four empires + a little horn, or two empires + a little horn). They cover a limited time of oppression by a little horn, or the time of a little horn's desecration of the sanctuary. Hence, there is no a priori reason for assuming long periods of time for these events, unless one dips into the historicist arsenal. In fact, three and half years of oppression and six and half years of desecration are historically more plausible than millennia, even in a context of empires.

- 3. The peculiar expressions of time used indicate they should not be taken literally. If they were to be taken literally, “God would probably have said ‘three years and six months’” (First- and Second-Testament texts referring to historical events are cited as examples of literal usage)**

We agreed above that these time periods cannot be taken literally due to the very form of their expression, but that has nothing to do with a particular principle of interpretation. If “time” (7:25) symbolizes a year, that does not indicate that a day symbolizes a year. Secondly we may find it difficult to adopt any man’s supposition of what divine speech might be, were it to conform to human logic. Thirdly in both time periods involved it is “one standing there,” (7:16) or “a holy one” (8:13) who speaks. The texts cited, Luke 4:25, James 5:1, Acts 18:11. 2 Sam. 2:11 are not relevant since they are not prophetic and obviously deal with time literally in ordinary narrative.

- 4. In Daniel 7 four beasts accounting for at least one thousand years of rule are followed by a little horn power. Three and a half literal years is out of proportion to the comprehensive scope of salvation portrayed in the vision. The same applies to Rev. 12:6 and 14 which cover history between the first and second advent.**

Note again that the “three and half times” concern a *limited* oppression by a little horn that is not identified as an empire, but as part of one, in both visions. It is a horn emerging out of the fourth empire in chapter seven, and out of the second, identified as Greece, in chapter eight. Even if the focus is on opposition to the saints of the Most High, to the Prince of the Host and to his sanctuary, time proportions are not exactly relevant, but it is the enormity of such actions in the eyes of the people that explains the focus. The shorter the oppression the better. Proportions matter only if it is assumed that Daniel is an historicist in spite of himself, and is not dealing with contemporary circumstances. Likewise, using Revelation to explain Daniel may not be the most adequate way to understand him. John of Patmos saw a beast coming out of the sea, (Rev. 13) but it was a composite of various beasts, multiple-headed, -crowned and -horned, that did not correspond to the Danielic model. That John used Daniel and other prophets’ symbolism is not to be denied, but he did so in his own creative way and with reference to different events. As for his time periods, all he did was to equate the “time, times and half a time” with 42 months and 1260 days, but no equivalence in years is ever suggested. Only if we assume that John predicted, without realizing it,

that millennia would pass before the Second Advent, will we also assume that these days reach to our time. The fact is that he expected the parousia imminently as indicated by promises to contemporary churches in Asia (notably Philadelphia) during their lifetime. There is, then, no a priori reason to count days as years. The symbolic woman of Rev. 12, representing the same contemporary church, would not need to be nourished in the wilderness for 1260 years, but for 1260 days, a substantial tribulation.

- 5. In Revelation (11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5) all the time references apply to the same period. Yet a literal “three years and six months” is never used. The variety of expression used is significant if we accept the year-day principle, inexplicable otherwise.**

Forty-two months and 1,260 days are absolutely normal expressions of time requiring no explanation whatsoever. But, using “time” (Rev. 12:14) to represent a longer period is perfectly explicable if it is an endeavor to harmonize symbolic time with symbolic vision. However, none of these time references expressly equates a day to a year

- 6. The prophecies of Daniel 7-8 and 10-12 lead to the time of the end, followed by the resurrection and the setting of God’s everlasting kingdom. The sweep of history they describe extends from Daniel’s sixth century B.C. to our time and beyond. Since 31/2 to 61/2 years can not reach this final end of time, they must be symbolic of considerably longer periods.**

Since the subject of Dr. Pfandl’s dissertation was “The Latter Days and the Time of the End in Daniel,” it may sound terribly presumptuous to point out that some passages in Daniel put into question the notion that Daniel’s concept of end-time reaches to our days. According to Daniel 11:40, Moab, Amon, Egypt with the Lybians and Nubians are part of the nations standing at the time of the end and they cannot be modern nations that happen to occupy the same territories. The “latter part of the wrath” (8:19), linguistically linked with the “latter part of their (the Greek successors of Alexander) reign,” (8:23) also concerns the “appointed time of the end.” The context clearly shows that the persecuting little horn arises out of (8:9) and in the latter part of the four Greek kingdoms that followed Alexander’s empire after his death (8:23) The rise and demise of the little horn to occur in the end did not bring the end of history Moreover, although the vision of chapter eight was for “many days,” or for a “distant future,” (8:26) it

foresaw a restoration of the sanctuary (8:14) and its legitimate ritual. (9:24) All these “astonishing things,” or “wonders” (12: 6) and even the announced resurrection were apparently expected within the predicted time, times and half a time (12:6-7). We are therefore led to conclude that both Daniel and John of Patmos were “Adventists” *avant la lettre*, and so was any earlier prophetic herald of the end of time or of the “day of Lord.” Imminent expectation of the end is a familiar characteristic of messianism and of apocalyptic literature. Daniel’s visions did not envisage the “sweep of history” extending to our time, nor the geographical realms known in our time.

7. The only commonly used measure of time not used in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation is the year. Hence the time unit “year” is symbolized throughout these prophecies

Although numbered years are not found in Daniel, on three occasions, years are part of his predictions, with indefinite qualifications: “after some years,” (11:6) “for some years,” (11:8), “after several years,” (11:13), and in Revelation 9:15 “one year” is part of a larger time prophecy. The millennium (Rev. 20) is also given in numbered years, but is always taken literally because it is linked with an indefinite future. As the year does occur in apocalyptic prophecy, the above deduction has no validity.

8. There are a number of texts in the historical narratives and poetic portions of the Hebrew Bible in which “days” stand for “years.” This provides a ready background for the kind of thought that could be extended to more specific quantitative application of this relationship in apocalyptic (Ten biblical references cited).

Four of the historical texts cited refer to an annual event that occupies one or more days: annual observance of the Passover (Ex. 13:10), annual confection of a priestly robe for young Samuel (1 Sam. 2:19) annual sacrifice for the clan (1 Sam. 20:6), annual four-day commemoration of Jephthah’s daughter’s celibacy (Judges 11:40). From these historical episodes, one or more day *per* year, there is an infinite distance to the hermeneutic concept of one day *standing for* a year in symbolic prophecy.

The poetic texts cited use days (plural) and years (plural) in parallelism as synonyms for the length of human life (Job 10:5; 36:11; Ps. 77:5; 90:9-10). Here again a day does not *stand* for a year, but these synonyms

measure a lifetime indifferently in days or in years. In Hebrew, when the word “day” is used in the plural without a preceding number it refers to a period of indefinite duration,³ hence its use for a variable lifetime. We tend to measure our lives in years, but Hebrew usage allows days for the same purpose. To assert that these idiomatic usages, totally unrelated to prophetic interpretation, are the background for the year-day formula is simply a species of wishful thinking.

9. The judgment prophecies of Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 use the day for a year principle as a teaching device. (Texts cited)

These two texts, often used and more times refuted, as a basis for the formula, are related in their wording, grammar and syntax. The intention is to establish a connection between the length of a transgression and that of its punishment. They refer to the conduct of certain individuals in a historical context, incurring the verdict of a divine judgment. By their clearly circumstantial focus, they do not suggest a pass-key hermeneutic formula applicable to any prophecy, whether literal or symbolic.⁴

In the first text, Joshuah and Caleb’s generation are punished for their infidelity during their reconnaissance tour in Canaan. The punishment multiplies the 40 days of transgression by a year, according to the formula “one year for each of the forty days that you explored the land.” The *historical* cause, 40 days, brings a *symbolic* consequence, 40 years of trial in the wilderness. In the prophet Ezekiel’s symbolic action, the intention is similar and the language almost identical, “I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin.” But the formula reverses the preceding one. The *historical* cause is now measured in years while the *symbolic* consequence will occupy an equal number of days. The prophet is to take upon himself the consequence of the long years of Judah and Israel’s transgressions by lying motionless, bound up with ropes, 390 days on his right side (for Israel) and 40 days on his left (for Judah). Note that in this case there is division rather than multiplication. The years of disobedience are expiated by days. The prophet’s symbolic act is meant to communicate the fate that awaits his generation. The rest of the chapter exemplifies the calamities that will follow.

³ Cf. Johannes Botterweck, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, s.v.yom, Vol. VI, pp. 16-17

⁴ For the following analysis, I am largely indebted to Frank Basten, *Ibid.*

The connection between days and years is not the same in these two passages. The formula in Numbers is "years for days," and in Ezekiel "days for years." Hence, to group them as a base for one hermeneutic formula is only possible by ignoring their context. If they were a master key to interpretation, though there is no indication of this fact, which formula should be chosen? Turning prophetic days into years, or prophetic years (i.e. Jeremiah's 70 years or John's thousand years) into days? Moreover, is it legitimate to apply a formula stemming from a *historical* cause with *symbolic* consequence to a *symbolic* prophecy announcing *historical* consequences? There is also a significant difference between these two passages and apocalyptic prophecy. In Numbers and Ezekiel, we are dealing with two historical events for each announced verdict, whereas Daniel's prophecies refer only to one predicted historical event with its given duration.⁵

The formula cannot be labeled a "hermeneutic principle," since it does not show verifiable regularity, and is sufficiently ambiguous to make its application questionable. As recognized by Eduard Hanganu, it is an arbitrary prescription chosen by the interpreter for theological reasons, and deliberately applied according to his preferences.⁶ It is interesting to note that the most ancient usage of the formula may have come from a Karaite scholar writing in the 8th or 9th century, Benjamin Ben Moses Nahawendi, for whom the 2,300 evening-mornings as well as the 70 weeks of years were to reach the messianic era in 1,358.⁷ If we continue perusing the honor roll of the interpreters that followed him, up to William Miller, we discover without surprise that each generation applying the same formula reached different dates for the same event. This simple fact utterly discredits the historicist thesis and its formula, which would deprive the prophets' contemporaries of a message that was essentially relevant to them and to their space- and time-frame.⁸

10. In Dan. 9:24-27 the 70-week time prophecy met its fulfillment at the exact time if we use the year-day principle to interpret it. Many interpreters recognize that the 70 weeks are in fact "weeks of years" reaching from the Persian period to the time of Christ.

⁵ This observation was suggested in a personal communication by Fred Mazzaferri

⁶ Eduard Hanganu *Ibid.*

⁷ Cf. Leroy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assoc. 1948, Vol. II, pp.196ff

⁸ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT, Grand Rapids, Mich: W. B. Eerdmans, 1977, p. 42

Fulfillment of this prophecy “at the exact time” depends on historical, textual and exegetical choices that have been questioned even by conservative interpreters. Such precision must be demonstrated unequivocally if the messianic interpretation is to be maintained. The dates of the beginning, development and end of the period cannot be established with absolute certainty, whatever be the interpretation adopted. The messianic interpretation of the prophecy is itself invalid if Massoretic punctuation and syntax which was accepted by major early Christian church fathers, is respected as trustworthy.⁹

That Gabriel responds to Daniel’s preoccupation with Jeremiah’s prophecy of the years of exile (25:8-14; 29:10) is evident since his timing, seventy weeks (*shavou’ im shiv’ im*), has its basis in the predicted seventy years (*shiv’ im shana*). It clearly finds its source in the figure of the original prophecy. Moreover, Daniel’s prayer shows repeated references to Jeremiah’s prophecies.¹⁰ Gabriel did not exactly reinterpret the 70 year prophecy, which originally referred to the exile in Babylon, but he brought an answer to Daniel’s prayer about the future of Jerusalem and its sanctuary (Dan. 9:16-18). It was the logical consequence of the end of the exile. The timing structure of the new prophecy is not built in terms of the evening-mornings of chapter eight, but as a modification of the seventy years. Only its concerns with the sanctuary’s desolation add something to the depredations of chapter eight, but the arithmetic is founded in Jeremiah. In Zechariah’s time, it was believed that the seventy years of exile were already accomplished (Zech. 1:12, 7:5). Daniel’s similar preoccupation (9:2) was for the rebuilding of the city and its desolate sanctuary upon the people’s return from exile.

Levitical legislation of the Jubilee (Lev.25:1-17) has often been taken as the key to the interpretation of this prophecy. It may well have affected the choice of its time elements. But it does not justify a day-for-a-year formula because no specific Sabbath day is recognized in Leviticus as a sabbatical year. The context makes it clear that the Sabbath *concept*, in terms of rest and time proportion, has been applied to the land and therefore, logically understood as a year. Land obviously needs more than a day of rest. Moreover the original text enjoins counting “seven *Sabbaths of years*, seven

⁹ Cf. Thomas, Edward, McComiskey, “The Seventy ‘Weeks’ of Daniel against the Background of Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 47 (1985), pp. 18-45. Any implication of Masoretic anti-messianism is unjustified and certainly unwarranted in the light of its early Christian acceptance.

¹⁰ Dan. 9:6//Jer. 44:21; Dan. 9:7-8//Jer. 7:19; Dan. 9:8//Jer. 44:17; Dan. 9:18; Jer. 36:7; 37:20; 38:26; 42:2-9

times seven years,” so that apparently a jubilee amounts to forty-nine years.¹¹ The Hebrew text can be literally translated “the days (duration) of seven *Sabbaths of years* shall be to you forty nine years” (our translation and emphasis).

In Daniel 9:24, it is still the context which clarifies the nature of the weeks meant. The reason why *shavou’im* (weeks) is in the plural is that it precedes its plural number (21 to 99).¹² It would normally be singular if it followed. Note that in Dan. 9:27, before a singular number, “week” remains singular. Secondly, its unusual masculine gender, also found in Dan.10:2, only occurs in Daniel, which may be an intentional indication of non-literal usage. Are these weeks “weeks of years” because the number seventy (*shiv’im*) that follows clearly alludes to the *years* of Jeremiah’s prophecy? Or are the “weeks” only symbolic numbers referring to indefinite periods of time?¹³ Although most commentators choose the first option, the language does not suggest a precise equivalence in time.

Just as the Sabbath concept can be extended, so can the concept of the week in this context. In reference to the Feast of Weeks, Sabbaths and “weeks” are used as synonyms (Lev. 15:23 and Deut.16-9). Gabriel’s prophecy is not the application of a year-day formula, but an apparent multiplication of the seventy years by seven. This proportion happens to correspond to the sevenfold punishment for disobedience announced in Lev. 26:14, 18, 21, 24, 28. The years of exile in the land of the enemy will be years of sabbatical rest for the land of Israel (Lev. 26:34-35, 43). This is indeed the way the Chronicler interprets the exile in Babylon (2 Chr.36:21).¹⁴

Recognition by many interpreters that this prophecy refers to “weeks of years” does not generally involve an appeal to the year-day formula, for the very reasons given above,¹⁵ nor an application of the formula to other time periods in apocalyptic prophecy.

¹¹ Other readings and calendars consider the fiftieth year as the year of Jubilee.

¹² Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall 1971, pp. 228

¹³ Note that the “Apocalypse of Weeks,” in the Book of Enoch (ch. 91-107) divides biblical history into uneven units of time called “weeks.”

¹⁴ My friend and regretted mentor, the late Jean Zurcher, had already noted the connection of Jeremiah’s prophecy with the Levitical laws and with the Chronicler’s interpretations in his three articles for the *Review and Herald* (Jan. 29, Febr. 5 and 12, 1981) on “The year-day principle.” Note especially “The time prophecies of Daniel 9,” Febr.5, 1981, pp.8-9.

¹⁵ Zurcher admits that the calculation of the 70 weeks of Daniel on the basis of sabbatical years establishes the 490 years “without having recourse to the year-day principle.” *Ibid*, p.10

The astronomical evidence attributed to Jean Philippe Loys de Chézeaux,¹⁶ according to which the 1260 years would correspond to a lunar cycle and the 2300 years to a solar cycle, was shown to be invalid in the light of modern calculations. Its author, a Swiss physician and numerologist, was only an amateur astronomer who eagerly sought confirmation of the biblical figures.¹⁷ Such evidence would have little to do with the year-day formula, were it accurate.

Added references to the year-day principle can be found in Jewish writings of the intertestamental period. The *Book of Jubilees*, for example, uses the word “week” to refer to seven years.

The Book of Jubilees is a pseudepigraphical work¹⁸ originally written in Hebrew between 150 and 105 BCE.¹⁹ It is an amplification of the book of Genesis and shows thorough acquaintance with pentateuchal, and especially, levitical legislation.²⁰ Its author may have been a priest and gave major importance to priestly concerns and to the priesthood. It advocated a 364 day solar calendar. It measured time in terms of days, weeks, months, years, sabbatical years, weeks (of years) and jubilees of 49 years. The same calendar was temporarily adopted by various Jewish communities that produced similar literature and denounced the use of other calendars as based on erroneous reckonings.²¹

To understand the composition of this calendar, it is important to discern how the Sabbatical concept was applied in Biblical times. The following table indicates the possible extent of Sabbath, and week reference:

The Sabbath:	1 day	seventh day of the week	No labor	sanctification
The Sabbaths	1 day	festivals (specified days)	“ “	“
Sabbaths ²²	1 week	seven days (of 7 weeks)	Counting	end of harvest
Sabbath	1 year	seventh (sabbatical) year	Land rest	sanctification
Sabbath	1 year	forty ninth year (jubilee)	Land rest	Release

¹⁶ Jean Philippe Loys de Chézeaux, *Remarques historiques, chronologiques et astronomiques, sur quelques endroits du livre de Daniel*, Lausanne 1754, pp. 22.23, cited by Zurcher, R. & H. Febr. 12. 1981, pp. 10-11

¹⁷ Letter of John A. Eisele in answer to Zurcher’s article in *R. & H.* May 7, 1981, p 6-7

¹⁸ Books spuriously ascribed to various prophets, kings and other figures of Hebrew history.

¹⁹ R. H Charles, “The Book of Jubilees” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913. <http://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/home.html>

²⁰ Book of Jubilees, ch. 50:1-13

²¹ Cf. The Book of Enoch, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, The Qumran Community Rule, The Damascus Covenant, the War Scrolls, The Temple Scroll., The Apocalypse of Weeks, etc.

²² Lev.13:15-16, Deut.16:9

Week	7 days	ending on Sabbath (or other days)
Weeks	7 days	= 7 Sabbaths ending with the Feast of weeks
Week	7 years	= 7 Sabbaths of Years (Cf. Levitical legislation)

Measuring time in Jubilees, weeks of years, or years, is not based on an implied conversion of days to years, but on the existing levitical application of the Sabbatical concept to years. Here again the concept of the Sabbath, or of the week, is merely extended by a logical application to years. Conscious of the existence of Sabbatical years, the Jewish sectarians merely used the system to measure groups of 7 years as “weeks,” without further specifying duration,²³ since they were obviously measuring calendrical periods longer than ordinary weeks. To indicate the lengthy ages of Noah or other patriarchs, or longer periods between major historical events, it was both practical, economical and theologically obvious to use this method of time measurement. No passage of the Book of Jubilees could be found that clearly indicated a conversion process from days to years in a prophetic context. The historicist argument remains therefore unsubstantiated.

Conclusion:

Historicists have not succeeded in anchoring the year-day principle in Scripture. It is not a “principle,” nor a valid rule of hermeneutics. In its origins and its historical use, it is a “paradigm imposed on the text” to substantiate the historicist conviction that apocalyptic prophecy foresaw modern events in their details. It was the result of another predicament. How could a true prophet ignore Rome, Byzantium, Islam, America, and the rest of history? The days, months and years of prophecy had to be lengthened if they were to be relevant to later times. It was the wish of the exegete that became father to the method.

The “end of historicism”²⁴ means that Daniel and John of Patmos saw much less far than its proponents thought. Daniel and John’s “Adventism”

²³ The “weeks” were often listed as part of jubilees years, as in the cases cited by Dr. Pfandl. Sarai married Abraham in the fortieth jubilee, in the second week, in its seventh year (Jubilees 12:9) and Abraham was renamed in the fourth week of that jubilee in the third month (Jubilees 15:1-7). In those contexts there could be no confusion about what kind of weeks were meant

²⁴ This phrase is the title of a book by Kai Arasola, an enlightened, Adventist historian who has recognized the continued limited validity of historicism almost exclusively among movements that emerged from the discredited Millerite revival. (<http://www.thegreatnews.net/Books.htm>)

and their concern for their contemporaries resemble that of all the millenarians that have walked this earth since their time. Like Jesus, his disciples and apostles, they waited for the imminent divine intervention. Historicists are condemned to witness continual confutations of their theory. For tomorrow's historicists will surely find new ways of confounding today's historicists. Fortunately, there are always a few *maskilim* (sages, Dan 12:3) among them whose passion for service, justice and liberty of conscience weighs more than their prophetic musings. They will continue caring for the enlightenment, health and well-being of their neighbors in spite of the demise of their obsolete hermeneutics. Let us recover Daniel as brother in service, humility and human generosity. He deserves wiser interpreters than those of Nostradamus or Jean Dixon.

Fernand Fisel
Professor Emeritus
Indiana University of Penna.
ffisel@auxmail.iup.edu