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#### 19-YEAR CYCLES IN THE HISTORY OF THE TRUE CHURCH

Do 19-year cycles really mean anything?  
This paper is an examination of their  
meaning and occurrence.

Are the supposed 19-year cycles really to be found in the Philadelphia era of the Church? Is the Ephesus era unique? It was certainly 19 years from 31 A.D. to Paul's beginning to preach the gospel in Europe. And to the very day -- the day of Pentecost!

Similarly, it's hard to see how the beginning in Oregon of uninterrupted every week broadcasting of the World Tomorrow on radio the first Sunday in 1934 and the beginning of broadcasting the same true gospel for the first time to Europe exactly 19 years later in the first week of 1953 could be other than an exact parallel to Ephesus.

At least this is enough evidence to make us begin looking in the histories of the other eras for other cycles. And as we do so, we also find significant uses of a period of 7 years, the "perfect" number and a recognized Biblical time cycle even though not based on astronomical data (or is it, in a different way that we simply have not commonly recognized?), and perhaps uses of 12 years (related to the 12 month length of a year?) which together add up to the total of 19.

#### Why 19 Year Intervals Are Significant

Every 19 years the sun, moon and earth return to nearly the same relative position. Who set it that way? Jesus Christ!

This period is His signature, then, specifically for dwellers on this earth. For what purpose? It identifies Him not only as the Creator (which periods of 7 days also do) but as the living active

Sustainer as well -- the One who keeps the laws in motion that regulate the times and orbits of planets and moons.

But what are signatures, used for? For promissory notes, for letters, for identification of property. Do any of these things apply to the 7 eras of the Church? Absolutely, all three! Because what are the messages in Revelation 2 and 3 but letters ("Unto the angel of the church of ... write"), and promises ("I know thy works ... to him that overcometh will I give"). And whose property are these 7 Churches but Christ's?

Certainly we should EXPECT His signature on them!

In looking for cycles, however, we should beware of the error of Ivan Panin. Dr. Panin assumed that God wrote the Bible letter by letter -- word by word. And as he proceeded he became so wrapped up in his figures and so enthralled by his own theory that he further assumed his "science" was predictive -- able to determine punctuation and questionable words. He tried hard to make it do that, but -- in the words of Mr. Jack Elliot -- "Panin peeked" when he looked into the hat!

We should not "peek."

In the examples which follow, I do not postulate that the examples are exact to a date within the indicated year -- at least that much accuracy is not at present provable -- in most cases. You may note also that in some cases not a significant event, but merely a definite turning point or an obvious general separation of periods of different emphasis is indicated.

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In the "Dark Ages"

Let's begin with the fourth, or "Thyatira" era, which covers the latter half of the Middle Ages. Because there seems to be a greater number of presently recognizable cycles in this era than in any other.

The first great name of this era is that of Peter de Bruys of southeastern France. The statement of a contemporary is the only evidence we have of the length of his work. Peter preached "about 20 years." Surely this is practically the same thing as saying plainly, "19 years." For how could the Catholic persecutor be expected to see any significance in 19!

For his absolute Julian beginning date, the books vary widely. The most common is perhaps 1106 and this may have a significance with cycles that follow. (Some 20th century authors are saying 1112. Before 1133, he was certainly dead)

A disciple and colleague, Henry, continued the Work. Henry's first appearance as a popular preacher is stated by recent authorities to have been "most likely" in 1116. It took the region of LeMans by storm. In other places where he later dwelt many were turned to the truth. In 1135 (19 years later) he was imprisoned. Yet that was not the end of the story. He was released and went elsewhere to preach for about 10 more years (Is there a parallel with half a cycle?).

Henry's fate is unknown. It is stated he was captured in 1145, after his disciples were scattered or taken in the preceding months (19 again). The period 1143-1145 was in other ways also a turning point in the story of the "heretics." In 1143 or 1144 a congregation was discovered

by Catholics at Cologne, Germany, which claimed to be the true Church (another, in opposition and having un-Biblical doctrines was discovered at the same time) and persecution began. In 1144, also, some "heretics" were condemned to be burned at Liege, Belgium (today), but were let off. A connection between Henry and those at Cologne has been suspected but cannot be proven. Certainly the doctrines, as well as known, seem to agree. But more likely the group at Cologne represented the last living remnant of the Pergamos Church.

Yet one more mention of and an all-out drive against the "errors" of Henry occurred in 1151-52, just seven years later, and in 1163, after <sup>(Lecani 18),</sup> 12 more, the Council of Tours officially excommunicated both the Petrobrusians (followers of Peter de Bruys) and Henricians. In that year also a major attack was made on the "heretics" at Cologne and several were burned. With that the first works (Rev. 2:19) of the Thyatira era come to an end.

#### Waldensian 19-Year Cycles

It was not long after this, however, that Waldo was found preaching <sup>at</sup> Lyons. Many have assumed that he began shortly after the imposition of Transubstantiation as absolute dogma in 1160. But nothing can be proven until in the 1170's. Information is lacking, and as with the beginning, so with the succeeding. A series of significant turning points, however, mark out cycles.

The 1170's passed with the Waldensians still ostensibly preaching as Catholics. A definitely separate Waldensian work began in Italy in 1181. This is the significant event, rather than the appearance before the Pope in 1179 or the archbishop's sentence of excommunication in

Lyons in 1182, neither of which made any real change in the progress of the work.

Another significant turning point occurred around 1200. Innocent III had become Pope in the preceding year, and energetic efforts were getting under way which continued all through this next cycle and which actually did drag the Waldenses down. Waldo was dead before 1218, the Waldenses divided into several factions, and in that year a conference to reunite those who remained anti-Catholic permanently failed.

Twelve years later, seven years of concentrated persecution began with a bull from Gregory IX. Many died in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy. The Waldensian "college" was razed. In 1138, fire, pillage and murder reached into the heart of the Waldensian refuge, the Val Louise. Total: another 19.

#### Late Thyatira Cycles

For nearly 300 years, the Waldenses and their successors continued, always under persecution, usually compromising with the truth. Then, with a man named Oswald Glait, we find cycles, and truth being restored.

Glait became an "anabaptist" (one who understood and practiced a true baptism as opposed to the infant baptism of Catholics, Lutherans, etc.) in the summer of 1526. In 1527 he began to write booklets expounding the truth. In 1545 he was imprisoned in the summer or early autumn; the following autumn, he was martyred. Here are a pair of 19's. His knowledge of the Sabbath began perhaps as early as 1528; certainly, he published a booklet on it in 1530 or 1531. And from his

work and that of a co-worker Andreas Fischer (12 years from 1528 to 1540 and martyrdom) groups of Sabbatarians were established in Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Austria, who still survived in some places as late as 1600.

About this same time, we find a most unusual set of dates in the life of a man who, while he himself may never have arrived at the full truth or been a member of God's Church, was certainly instrumental in carrying it on. And therefore Christ's Creator-Sustainer "signature" is found in his life.

Francis David was a Catholic priest who became a Lutheran in 1540, a Calvinist in 1559 (one 19!), then a Unitarian (not the same as the Unitarians of today, but a group of Polish Anabaptists) preaching this faith to his church in Transylvania in 1566 (after 7 years!). Continual study led him to ever more understanding. He was branded by his co-religionists in that country as an unscrupulous innovator, and condemned and imprisoned in 1578 when he proved unmoveable in his convictions (12 more years which make another 19). He died the following year.

When Francis David died, a few of his flock refused to give up the light they had received and continued in secret to study and to grow. One of these was an elderly Szekler noble named Eössi, who in 1588 began openly to lead a group of these Sabbathkeepers. He died in 1599, after which they were led by his adopted son, Simon Pechi, under whose guidance they began to put into practice the whole Law, both Old and New Testaments, the Holy Days, etc. In 1600 they began to be well organized and published a hymnbook.

That was the year in which a decree was passed which allowed their property to be confiscated for keeping the Sabbath. But it was also the year which began their second 19-year cycle during which they were destined to have national influence.

Their second cycle? Yes! And here is where, strange to tell, the sequence of cycles became predictive! Call it coincidence if you wish, but here is the story.

I knew of two 19-year cycles (not yet described here -- 1600-1619, 1619-1638) and a 12-year period (1588 to 1600). Laws for suppression, like punctuation marks, further divided these cycles into additional cycles of 7's and 12's in 1595 and 1607. But where were the missing years between David and Eössi? And what had happened in 1581, which should have started a cycle? The only more complete record was in German, which I do not read. I enlisted the help of Dr. Paldi. We searched in the book -- and we found it!

That was the year that Eössi, already with the fully formed understanding that Pechi must become the "apostle" of this faith, had sent him abroad for deliberate, concentrated study, travel and experience! That preparation lasted 18 years. Pechi returned barely in time to see his elderly co-laborer alive.

With that experience and education, Pechi was able to perceive what needed to be done for these people of God, to greatly augment their numbers, to steer them through and out of recurring persecution crises, and even to become Prime Minister of the country.

But this last was perhaps a mistake. In 1618, a decree was passed at Cluj, with the approval of Prince Bethlen, which gave the "Jewish"

Christians one year to come to their senses and rejoin one of the recognized churches. It was Pechi's downfall. He was forced to accompany the prince and his army to war in Austria in 1619. Soon after, the books of the Sabbatarians were burnt.

Pechi was imprisoned 3 1/2 years, then remained in retirement for about six more (total: 9 1/2 or 1/2 of 19). But during the last half of the cycle, the Sabbatarians were at the height of their secular influence. Pechi was again highly honored and in high position. He took the lead in favoring and cooperating with the Jews who now had begun to come into the country. About 6 years elapsed, then a new, severe law against Sabbathkeepers was issued, but remained inoperative for three more (the other 9 1/2 years).

Then suddenly in 1638, many Sabbathkeepers were seized, condemned and executed, Pechi himself was imprisoned again, the work came to an end and Sabbath keeping and other truths survived only in secret.

#### Cycles in Other Eras

The year 1588 was also important for "Sardis." For that was the year (almost immediately following the close of 1260 years in the "wilderness," counting from Constantine's decree, which time included the "little horn" being allowed to "wear out" -- all but exterminate -- the saints, according to the the prophecy of Daniel) that the Spanish Armada was destroyed, opening the way for the Church to develop in a free England.

From 1588, 4 X 19 years brings us to 1664, when Stephen Mumford first brought the Sabbath and the germ of the Church to the New World. It was 7 years later that the first congregation was organized.



There are two or three possible 19-year cycles during the height of the Pergamos era, but Paulician chronological information is too scanty to interpret. Perhaps it is significant that the very earliest known mention of the Paulicians is from 555, which is exactly 31 times 19 to the before-mentioned end of 1144 when the last spiritually-living remnant of that era becomes involved in the same persecutions that were afflicting the then new Thyatira era, which probably resulted in the union of the Pergamos faithful with "Thyatira."

In addition to the well-known two 19-year cycles of "Ephesus," there were probably 2 more -- 69-88 and 88-107 which ended when Simeon, last leader/survivor of the apostolic generation, was martyred.

In the second (American) home of Sardis, it was exactly 10 times 19 from the establishment of the first Sabbath keeping church in this country to <sup>1861,</sup> the organization of the SDA's of themselves out of God's church and the first annual conference in Michigan of what became the Church of God, Seventh Day that we know as "Sardis" today. (It was 3 more 19's to the end of World War I, a fact of unknown significance, if any)

The Sardis Church in America never would keep God's Holy Days. So perhaps it is significant that 14 X 19 from that 1671 beginning brings us to 1937 when the Philadelphia Church Era first published a Holy Day Calendar. I believe that is also the year in which Mr. Armstrong said the last ties were cut with the Sardis organization.

There are many cycles in "Philadelphia." The 1934-1953 radio cycle is familiar. But let's back up 3 years. In 1931, Mr. Armstrong was ordained. He was the only minister of the Philadelphia era.

But 19 years later, in 1950, the first ministerial fruits of Ambassador College began to do temporary pastoral duty during the summer. What happened in 1969? Tomorrow's World began publication -- commencing the gradual development of a new activity in God's Work through the special publications and lectures of the Graduate School of Theology and the scores of ministers that have now been ordained.

Another significant series of 19's began in 1927, the year that Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong were converted. These have a relationship of 7's to the 1934 sequence. Mr. Armstrong struggled on alone or with unreliable ministers through the 1930's and early 40's. Then -- "In the spring of 1946 God revealed to me the need of a college," he wrote in the Aug. 4, 1947, CoWorker Bulletin. But that was just a beginning. One more 19 and Ambassador College, Big Sandy, had graduated its first class. The Good News reported that 100% of the males went directly into the active ministry.

#### Questions Left Unanswered

Are all these things just coincidence? Are there so many possible dates that we can find anything we choose? Have we, after all, "peeked" and taken just what we wanted? I don't believe we have. Examine again the nature of the events cited. In most cases this would rule out the chance of multiple possibilities.

Could we find such cycles elsewhere in history? Catholic history? Profane history? That will have to be left for others to answer -- or later research.

Will the World Tomorrow broadcast end in 1972? Or will it go on Telstar? Time will tell. X