"Objections to the Use of the Wandering Lunar Day Lines as Basis in Determining Jewish Feasts and the Beginning of the Jewish New Year"

Undated Letter from M. L. Andreasen to Grace Amadon

Collection 154, Box 2, Folder 4

Obvious spelling and punctuation errors have been corrected but everything else is as appears in the above listed resource.

The original instruction of the Lord to Israel concerning the beginning of the New Year was admittedly designed only for the Jews occupying a comparatively small area. Of this territory Jerusalem was the recognized center. Here was located the temple, the dwelling place of the Most High. Here appointed men supervised the necessary observations, and the computations were made that determined the yearly feasts. Under these circumstances there was, of course, no problem of any lunar day line, nor could there be as long as the Jews remained in Palestine.

Definite problems occur, however, when attempts are made to apply to the world that which was designed for a small, compact country. These problems are greatly magnified when determination of New Year and feast days is based upon local observations and computations. According to this plan each community decides for itself when the phasis of the moon occurs, and adjusts its New Year and feasts accordingly. It thus becomes not only possible, but inevitable, that a community located some distance west of the preceding lunar day line would – should the new lunar day line fall between it and the former line – observe the coming feasts a day earlier than the community located east of the line. To be specific: if the lunar day line should be changed from a point east of Jerusalem to some point west of Jerusalem – as for instance the middle of the Atlantic – New York would henceforth observe a designated feast <u>before</u> the same feast would be observed in Jerusalem, contrary to the ordinary movement of a day from the east to the west. Should the next lunar day line happen to be located on a point still farther west, added confusion would result.

In course of time every meridian on earth would become the point of first appearance of the phasis. When the Nisan phasis occurred at a certain point, that point would become the starting point of the New Year, and of a new calendrical scheme. The lunar day line would at times fall in the midst of the American continent. This would cause certain difficulties of a very practical nature. If the preceding lunar day line had been located somewhere in Europe, but now moved to some place between Chicago and Omaha, these two cities would not henceforth observe the same day as they had formerly done. One would observe the same feast twenty-four hours before the other, and Omaha would be first in its observation. The same would occur, of course, however near the cities were together if the lunar day line should fall between them. Closely located cities would doubtless make some adjustment so as to keep together, but to that extent they would violate the rules of the new calendar, and very little would be gained by it. For wherever such a line be located there would be places close together who would have to observe different days where before they were together and united. It would not be easy to explain to the people that the God who advocated and instituted such an arrangement would be very concerned about the exact seventh day.

If an explanation were possible, and the people were at last adjusted to the shift in the feast day and the stability of the seventh day, it might be supposed that in time they would get used to the arrangement. But they would no sooner have become accustomed to this, till another shift is made. Now they shift back to where they were before. But neither is this settled or stationary. Another shift comes, and another and another. Now Denver observes the day before Omaha does, then it observes the same day. Now Omaha and Chicago observe the same day, but at another time a different day. There is no uniformity, and just as the people get used to a certain arrangement, the day is changed again. Such is more than the common people can understand, and if we go to the people now with such a proposition, we must expect that confusion will result. And our enemies will not be slow to point out the difficulties and ring the changes on them.

The truth of course is that it is not possible to make regulations that were designed for a small country to fit world conditions. As applied to the Day of Atonement it should be noted that this was more than the keeping of a day. There was a certain ritual connected with that day that could be performed only at one place, Jerusalem. To attempt to transpose that day to the ends of the earth, and to have that day subject to local conditions

observed by each local community, only makes for confusion. As God originally ordained it, and as conditions were at the beginning of the 2300 day period, is doubtless, as far as any chronology is concerned, the way God would have them end. To begin a certain period on one kind of computation and to end it on another is not consistent.

If in the new calendar scheme we are considering adopting it should be admitted that local communities have the right of making their own observations that would determine the New Year, it would yet remain a question if the proper men competent for such observation would be available. It would doubtless be necessary to appoint a body of men competent to make the needed astronomical computations, and as these men could not make the journeys necessary for local observation, the dependence would be entirely on computation rather than on observation. This would doubtless be more exact, and would be imperative if consideration were to be given to other phases than the Nisan one, in order that the proposed scheme become a workable one. Hence some central body of scientists would become necessary and the biblical observation fall into discard. The work that our committee has done gives a little insight into the magnitude of such a task. And this all comes about when it is decided to apply to world conditions what was never so intended. The seventh-day Sabbath is clear and distinct. A child can understand its computation. Let not the people observing God's holy day sponsor a calendar that means confusion, and make our work unnecessarily hard. For while the proposed scheme does not in any way affect the succession of the days of the week, and hence does not affect the Sabbath, nevertheless if the people observing the sabbath also advocates the new scheme of calendation, the resulting confusion will not be of any help to us.

It seems inconsistent to use a barley harvest in Jerusalem as the basis for calculating the beginning of a new year in California or South Africa. Consistency would demand that the barley harvest to be used would be the one where the computation is made. If a Jerusalem barley harvest is used, a Jerusalem computation should also be used. To apply a Boston computation on a Jerusalem barley harvest basis, does not sound consistent.

Under the proposed wandering lunar day line computation, the southern hemisphere would need special consideration. In fact, the existence of a southern hemisphere emphasizes the difficulty of making a local Jewish calendar fit world conditions. If the local computation were used in South

Africa, for instance, the results obtained from a South African barley harvest basis differ six months from a Northern hemisphere computation. And if a Jerusalem barley harvest were used, Pentecost would come in Mid winter. The results would then be comparable to those now obtaining with reverence to Christmas. The latter case might be admissible; the first would be awkward.

It is not denied, of course, that there is a constant shift in the meridian where the phasis is first observed, and that this point can be astronomically determined. But the right to use such a wandering lunar day line as the basis for determining a religious feast is challenged. This the more so as it is not now possible to observe such a ritual as was demanded for the observance of the day. This the more so that while the Jerusalem reckoning is abandoned, the Jerusalem barley harvest as a basis of computation id retained. This the more so as the proposed reckoning will apply to Boston only, and even then it cannot be used for the determination of the Passover moon, at least not on the same method as applies in Jerusalem. This the more so as such a calendar as is proposed has never been in use before, and apparently cannot be constructed so as to apply to the world as a whole. In its present form it appears like special pleading, constructed to fit a certain situation, and inapplicable to world conditions. The 2300 began in Jerusalem; they were confirmed at the same place by the events of the seventieth week. 457, 27, 31, 34 form a straight line, all centering in Jerusalem. It would seem that 1844 should also terminate there.

The committee has done a most excellent piece of work. The endorsing, unreservedly, of the plan now before us seems to me appears in its implications so loaded with dynamite, with TNT, that we might well beware. I would most earnestly warn the committee in this matter. I am afraid that the repercussions of such endorsement at this time will be felt in wide circles.

The confusion that will result and that is inherent in the plan proposed is illustrated in the accompanying diagram. The adoption of the plan provides for a year of unequal length in the eastern and western hemispheres. The shifting of the lunar day line demands this.

From the diagram it appears that whenever the lunar day line is shifted from east to west, the intervening territory between the two lines will have an extra day in that particular year. If the line is shifted back, this difference

adjusts itself. However, should the line be shifted still farther west, other complications would result. While the whole matter would ultimately become adjusted, it would certainly make for confusion. Seventh-day Adventists will soon have enough matters on their hands so that it will not be necessary to make trouble for ourselves before the time. The blank day may yet confront us. We cannot afford to start trouble of our own. To the world it will look that the present proposed calendar is advanced for a specific purpose – not for the purpose of adoption, for we will find that it is impossible of universal application – not for the purpose of supporting the 1844 date. I do not believe that we are under that necessity. It must be possible to establish October 22 1844 without resorting to such devices.

A possible solution: I suggest that we make a report to Brother McElhaney of what the Millerites believed and how they arrived at their conclusions, without, at this time, committing ourselves upon the correctness of their method. Let Brother McElhaney publish this report in any way it may be thought best, and let us await the reaction. Thos, of course, would be only a preliminary report, and would be so designated. We will soon what fire it will draw. In the mean time let us study further on the final report. The reaction to the preliminary report may determine the form of the final. By that time my fears may all be dispelled. By that time the committee will see light in my light, or I may be converted to their view. In any event, I hope that at this time there will not be made any attempt to present a report upon which we are not all united. God will yet help us.

M.L.A.

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The third paragraph of section 6 deals with "the specific instance of the October conjunction in 1844." If the first seven months of the Jewish year must alternately consist of 29 and 30 days, and no variation can be permitted, then the conditions obtaining in the seventh month, namely that the new moon day first appeared in the western hemisphere, must also be true of the first month. If this is not the case, then somewhere a day is missing, and the 172days are not a fact. Whatever adjustment is to be made must be made before the beginning of the year; after that no change is possible if the 29-30 day arrangement is to hold. The real point therefore is concerned with the first month, and the relation between the time of conjunction in Jerusalem and Boston. It must be shown that at the beginning

of the Jewish sacred year the moon was visible in Boston the first [*text has "first" crossed and "*[it was the second]" *inserted*] sunset after conjunction, and that it was not visible in Jerusalem until the second [*text inserts:* "[the third]"] sunset. This is necessary to assure the continuation of 29-30 days, and also necessary to the 172 days. If any adjustment has to be made after the first month, or in any month up to the seventh, it will affect what is said to be a staple cycle of 29-30. The proof concerning the conjunction Tisri1/October 13 has no weight apart from corroboration of the Nisan new moon. It is Nisan that counts, not Tisri. If Nisan conditions show the new moon day beginning in the western hemisphere before it began in Jerusalem, all is well. Then the Tisri condition will substantiate what has been proved from Nisan. But Tisri alone will not do. There must not, there cannot be, any adjustment between Nisan and Tisri. Any such adjustment must be made before the beginning of the year. Hence it is necessary to know exactly what were the conditions Nisan 1, and upon the argument must be built.

M.L.Andreasen

I nearly forgot. The last statement in par.1, section 6: "The Jewish New Year does not have a constant meridian", is unsupported. The proof hangs on that. That which is to be proved must not be taken for granted. This assertion must be amply documented.