

## Understanding the Heavenly Calendar

Shinyoung Chang  
January 29, 2014



*Here is a brief explanation of the lunar calendar as it concerns the new Heavenly Calendar. To have a more in-depth understanding of the lunar calendar read last year's UC magazine installment of *Blind Men & the Elephant: Faith Perspectives: How to Ring in 2013* below.*

While the rest of the Western world celebrated New Year's Day with fireworks and celebrations almost a month ago, those following the lunar calendar, such as China, and many countries in the East, will ring in the New Year on Friday.

Since 1968, Unificationists have celebrated their Holy Day, True God's Day—or True Heavenly Parents' Day—on the first day of the New Year based on the solar calendar, however, in 2011, for the first time, Unificationists around the world celebrated this Holy Day based on the lunar calendar, or the Korean *Cheon-gi*, that is, the "Heavenly Calendar." This year, True Heavenly Parent Day will be held on January 31, 2014 by the solar Calendar.

For Unificationists, the celebration is a deeply meaningful and spiritual celebration. On the stroke of midnight, heads will bow in prayer as Unificationists all around the world offer the first words and their first moments of the New Year, up to our Heavenly Parent. The offering tables will be bountiful with fruit and candy, and members will make determinations for the year ahead, surrounded by friends and family. These traditions, no matter the date, remain the same. Honoring our traditions is a moment to pause, in the midst of our hurried lives, to connect to our roots and to the invisible world of our Heavenly Parent.

So what is the significance of this new "Heavenly Calendar"? How do we relate to it on a day-to-day basis, especially if most of the world follows a different one?

Though it may feel finite to us in this moment, the way in which we as humans mark the passage of time has actually evolved and changed over centuries. Different cultures and religions have developed and followed their own calendars. The Mayan, Chinese, Muslims, and Hindus are examples of cultures and faiths that observe the lunar calendar. Judaism, too, has a lunar-based calendar, the first day of which is believed to be the day Adam and Eve were created. Even Christians, who in Western cultures use the solar calendar, celebrate Easter each year based on the lunar cycle.

The lunar calendar brings a deeper meaning symbolically. Marking the passage of time by milestones of the moon's "life" in the sky, preserves the various meanings that the moon holds spiritually. The different phases of the moon—from new to full, and back to new again—signify a cleansing and rebirth. We can further appreciate the more feminine aspect of this heavenly body, in contrast to the masculine sun. Because the woman's womb aligns with the moon's cycle, a lunar view seems to truly represent rebirth and the feminine aspect of our Heavenly Parent.

For us as Unificationists, the conversion to the "Heavenly Calendar" is one that has less to do with how we measure dates, and more with the spiritual significance of entering a new age. The fact that we are now living in the third year of Cheon il Guk (God's Heavenly Kingdom) according to the new Heavenly Calendar, means that the world has entered a new age spiritually. We reside in a time of great blessing, where new things are possible. The "Heavenly Calendar" is not just a different way to measure dates, but it is a way to signify the movement of our Heavenly Parent's providence.

As we enter this New Year, may the blessings of our Heavenly Parent be with you.

## THE BLIND MEN & THE ELEPHANT

Once upon a time, there were four blind men who happened upon an elephant. Each touched a different part of the elephant. The man who only touched the trunk claimed it was a plough. Others said it was a pillar, a brush or a wall, depending on what they felt. They began to quarrel and fight until a wise man passed by and said, "You are all right. Each of you touched a different part of the elephant, and that is why you are in disagreement. Each held a part of the truth, but only by coming together could you understand what an elephant really is."

# FAITH Perspectives

*How to Ring in 2013*

BY JEANNE CARON & LETTI KITTEL



*We all hold a piece of truth. The New Year, across time and culture, represents the end of a cycle and an opportunity to start fresh—with renewed inspiration and hope for the future. Some celebrate the New Year every January 1st with grand festivities, whereas others observe this time on a different date each year, and spend the day in solemn prayer. What can we learn about the different New Year traditions? Here is what is happening around the world...*

## JUDAISM



The first day of the lunar-based Hebrew calendar is believed to be the day that the first human ancestors were created—the sixth day of Creation. The Hebrew New Year, Rosh Hashanah, occurs on the first day of the month—“Tishrei”. It is believed to be the day that God created Adam and Eve and is celebrated with customary foods and the greeting of “Shanah Tovah,” which means, “Have a good year.”

## HINDUISM



The Hindu calendar is a general name for the different lunisolar calendars used around the Indian subcontinent. One of the more commonly used calendars is the Vikram Samvat, which is the official calendar of Nepal and is widely used in India as well. The new year celebration, Diwali, lasts five days, during which oil lamps are traditionally set up all around the house and the Goddess of wealth, Lakshmi, visits the most brightly lit houses. Fireworks are also commonly used with the belief that they scare off evil spirits that bring misfortune.

## BUDDHISM



Originally based on a Hindu calendar, Buddhism’s lunisolar calendar began after Buddha’s passing. This calendar has been adopted mainly in Southeast Asian countries, such as Tibet and Thailand, but varies from country to country. The Buddhist New Year is at the end of the planting season around the middle of April. In many Buddhist cultures, a cleansing theme is a major part of the holiday. Statues, temples and even respected elders are reverently washed, while people on streets throw water onto each other.



## SOLAR VS. LUNAR CALENDAR

The solar, or Gregorian calendar measures a solar year—the cycle of the sun’s position relative to the Earth. A lunar calendar is based on the phases of the moon. Lunar calendars have been used since ancient times, and many religions today use lunar calendars to track recurring religious holidays and derive meaning in the different phases of the moon. Across faiths, people often also use the solar calendar for general everyday purposes.

## ISLAM

The Islamic calendar is a lunar-based system consisting of a 354-day year, with each day beginning at sunset. The Muslim New Year, Muharram, is celebrated on the first day of the first month. New Year's Day centers on the story of the Hijra, or migration, of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in AD 622, which is the first Islamic year. Muslims observe the New Year by gathering in mosques to offer special prayers and readings from the Quran and reflecting on how they have been leading their lives.



## UNIFICATIONISM

The Unification Church New Year's Day, known as God's Day, falls on the first day of the Korean lunar year. The current Heavenly Calendar—*Cheong Gi*—began in the year 2010. Though Unificationism is new in comparison to other faiths, there are several New Year traditions in place. Members prepare offering tables of food and pray at midnight, and Reverend Sun Myung Moon would perform midnight calligraphy as he wrote the new motto of the year.



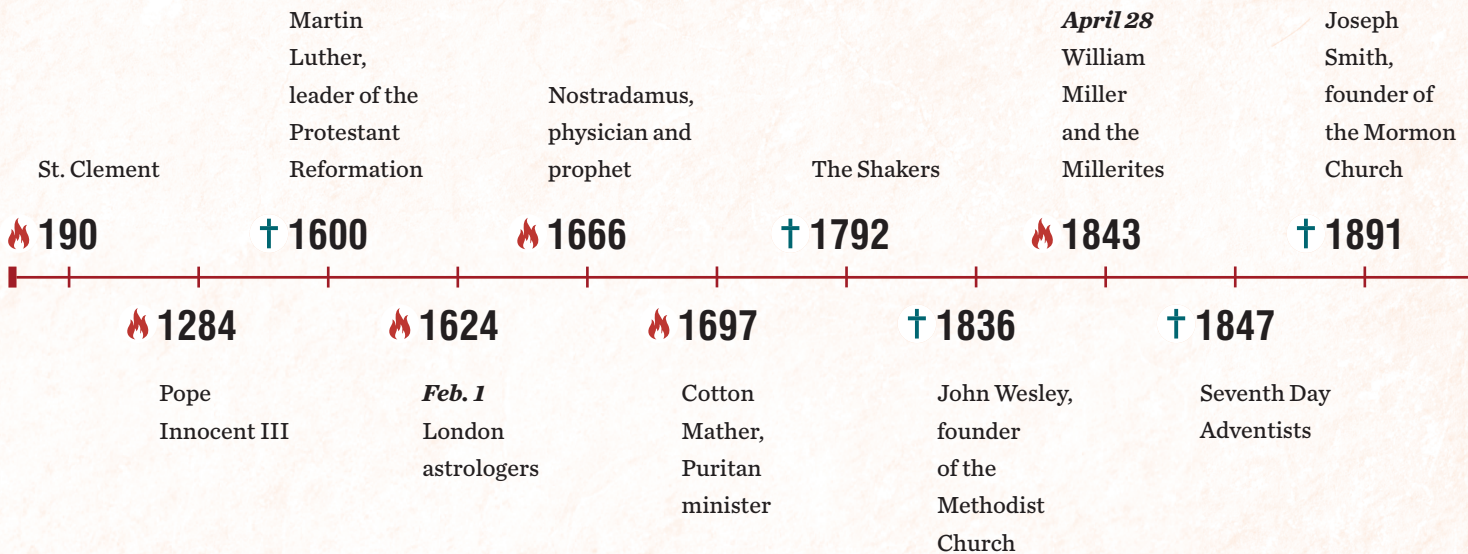
## IT'S NOT 2013 EVERYWHERE...

Depending on the type of calendar used, and when this calendar originated, people around the world are observing entirely different years!

- Gregorian calendar* .....2013
- Jewish calendar* .....5773
- Hindu calendars*.....2069
- Buddhist calendar* ..... 2557
- Islamic calendar* .....1433
- Unificationism Heavenly Calendar* .....3

# TIMELINE OF PROPHECIES

## *Solar Calendar dates*



## *So you say it's the end of the world...*

Depending on faith and culture, people have different expectations for the 2012–2013 transition. From natural disasters and epic battles to a new age of enlightenment, people have been anticipating some great event for centuries. Many theories have come and gone that, according to all the apocalyptic prophecies made throughout history, the world would have already ended many times over! **uc**

## MAYAN



Many know the Mayan calendar as an ancient Mesoamerican system foretelling the end of-the-world, but few are aware that it is still used today in modern Guatemalan and Mexican communities. Unlike most calendars of fixed lengths, the Mayan calendar has several series of varying length that includes lunar, solar, linear and cyclical components. The cyclical nature of the calendar led to the apocalyptic prophecy for 2012; the Mayans believed in recurring events—such as the birth of new worlds after old worlds were destroyed. Similarly, Unificationists believe that Foundation Day, February 22, 2013 (January 13, 2013 Lunar calendar), is the end of the old world and the beginning of the new world. In Mayan culture, rituals and sacrifice were periodically performed to maintain the existence of an impermanent world. The Mayan New Year falls in July of the Gregorian calendar, and each year a different Mayan god is celebrated. Mayans also had renewal rituals such as destroying old pottery and wearing new clothes.

## NEW YEAR'S OBSERVATIONS

- Jewish New Year** .....Sept. 16
- Hindu New Year** .....Nov. 13
- Islamic New Year** .....Nov. 4
- Unificationism New Year** .....Feb. 10
- Foundation Day** ..... Feb. 22
- Buddhist New Year** .....April 25

This timeline is made with reference to the magazine, *Apocalyptic Prophecies: Doomsday Storie from the Dawn of Time*

*The prophecies on this timeline predict an epic turning point for the world. Throughout history, these predictions have usually fallen into one of two categories:*

-  **End of the World**
-  **2nd Coming of Christ**

