



The Sabbath Sentinel

"Go, set a watchman,
Let him declare what he seeth."
ISAIAH 21:6

MAY 1984

MAY 1984

American Reports on Sabbathkeepers in Beijing

If you're ever in Beijing (formerly Peking), capital of the People's Republic of China, you might want to know this address: 57 Xsi Street. According to Ed Christian, that is the Gang Wa Shi church, the place where a few people meet every Sabbath afternoon at two o'clock for worship. Services of the Three-Self Church (self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating) draw mainly older Seventh-day Adventist members and workers and other worshippers who cannot come on Sunday.

Mr. Christian and his wife, Margaret, have been attending this church while he is teaching at the Beijing Languages Institute as an exchange professor from Union College, Lincoln, Neb. He says, "The few who speak English like to be called brother or sister, terms no longer used as frequently in America." He added that the faith and morale of these Chinese Sabbathkeepers is inspiring.

The building, built by the London Missionary Society in the early 1900's, is constructed of gray brick. It is located at the back of a little courtyard and is not visible from the street. Inside, it is neat and clean, though paint on the walls is peeling in

some places. Brown wooden theater seats provide for 500 worshippers. Four charcoal heaters warm the sanctuary in cold weather, and on hot days large ceiling fans cool it. A pump organ and piano furnish music accompaniment.

Strictly speaking, Mr. Christian explains, these are not specifically Sabbatarian services, though one of the four ministers was a Seventh-day Adventist preacher before the Communist government gained control. The Chinese people have had more religious freedom in the past few years. Preachers and priests receive training in three seminaries in China. Those who wish to purchase Bibles may do so for about five yuan (US \$2.50).

Because Sabbath is a workday in Beijing, only 30 to 50 people usually attend services. Most of them are older folks, though a few young folks attend when they can. No Sabbath School is held. A typical service, Mr. Christian says, begins with a text (Luke 14:25-35) on the need to forsake all and follow Jesus. The congregation sings such hymns as "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" and "What A Friend We Have in Jesus," sung, of course, in Chinese. The sermon is filled with scripture

THE SABBATH SENTINEL is published monthly by the Bible Sabbath Association, Route 1, Box 197, Fairview, Oklahoma 73737. USPS 474-580. Single copy, \$1.00; year subscription (in the U.S.), \$10.00. Bible Sabbath Association members receive this magazine as part of their annual membership dues. Second class postage paid in Cleveland, Tennessee 37311. **Postal Employees:** Send forms 3579 to Route 1, Box 222, Fairview, Oklahoma 73737. Vol. 36, No. 5, Issue No. 325.



Only a few older people attend Sabbath worship services.

texts and practical examples on Christian living. More than half of the people present have Bibles and use them. After the service, members usually linger a few moments to talk with one another before going home. Mr. Christian mentions an estimate that for every person who comes to church, at least six stay home and worship there.

He concludes: "If you visit

Beijing, you will be welcome at the Gang Wa Shi church. Such visits cheer the believers greatly. I asked one brother if there is anything Americans can do for those in China. 'We do not need your money,' he said, 'and now we can buy our own Bibles. What we need most are your prayers.' "

Adapted from an article in the March 22, 1984, *Adventist Review*. Used by permission.

Have You Read It Yet?

A History of the Sabbath & Sunday

By John Kiesz

A concise, but authoritative, study of Sabbatarians
63 pages — \$2.95

THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737

U.S. Supreme Court Will Rule On Sabbath Law

The U.S. Supreme Court will rule on a Connecticut law that requires employers to give workers off for religious observances, deciding whether or not it is constitutional. The request, made in a petition filed on behalf of a Connecticut chain store manager, asks that the U.S. high court review a Connecticut Supreme Court ruling that the state's Sabbath observance employee protection statute is unconstitutional.

The state court had declared that any law requiring employers to allow employees to take time off for religious purposes violated the principle of separation between church and state. The petitioner argues that this is not so. He maintains that the decision conflicts with numerous federal and state court decisions that protecting employees in the free exercise of religion is constitutional.

Nathan Lewis, vice-president of the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs filed the petition on behalf of Donald E. Thornton, manager of a retail store in the Caldor chain. Thornton had asked to be excused from working on Sundays because he observes the day as Sabbath. The chain then offered to transfer him to a store that was closed on Sundays or to demote him. Mr. Thornton refused the out-of-state transfer and sued Calder under a 1976 revision of the state's Sunday laws, which specifies that no employee may be required to work on his or her Sabbath.

New Church of God 7th Day

We are happy to announce a new meeting place in Springfield, Mo., for Sabbath observers. At the present time the Springfield brethren are meeting in the Boys Club Chapel, 1300 Boonville, in Springfield. Services are conducted on the second, third, and fourth Sabbaths of each month. Eventually plans are to meet every Sabbath at 1:30 p.m. Evangelist H. D. Carlson, the pastor for the services in Springfield, is also broadcasting sermons of Love—Truth—Spirit over KTXR-FM in Springfield each Sunday at 7:30 a.m. and over KBFL-FM station in Buffalo, Mo.

We are trusting in the Eternal Father to supply our needs for this venture of faith. We invite all who may be visiting in this area to worship with us. For more information call or write: Evangelist H. D. Carlson, Route 3, Box 262A, Buffalo, Mo. 65622, or call (417) 345-2461.

Adventist Church Reports Growth

Washington—The 120th Annual Statistical Report of Seventh-Day Adventists shows 3,897,814 members. The number was said to have gone over four million by June 1983, with the total Adventist population estimated at 10 to 12 million.

Third-world churches reported a growth rate of from 6 to 10 per cent. Baptized membership for Europe was 190,571, *Bulletin d'Information Adventiste* reported from Paris.

Does Love Annul Obedience?

By Joseph M. Wilson
Editor, The Baptist Examiner

“Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). Please note what this verse really says, for there is much misunderstanding, and some willful perversion thereof. There are many antinomians abroad in the land. Under the guise of “magnifying the grace of God,” they are really disgracing the truth of God’s Word. There are many kinds of antinomians, some much worse than others. In this article I refer to those who teach that the law of God has nothing to do with the believer; that the believer has nothing at all to do with the Ten Commandments.

These men say that love is the rule of life for the believer. They err greatly in this and deceive the souls of men. They may not mean to do so, but they greatly lessen the claims of God upon the believer, and their doctrine tends to a lowering of moral standards among those who fall victim to such teaching. They misuse the above Scripture. They expound it as though it meant that if one has true love, he need pay no attention to God’s law—that having this love is all he needs—that this love will be all the guide he needs in living a proper Christian life. These men miss the true meaning of love as to its role in the believer’s life, and they confound terribly the relationship between “love” and “law.”

Love is the motive of true obedience to the Lord. There will be no true obedience that does not

come forth from true love. Without love one cannot even begin to obey. When one is saved, God works in that heart a genuine love for God and (hear this, you antinomians) for the law of God. God’s commandments are not grievous to the truly saved soul. (1 John 5:3). The saved person in the Old Testament said, “O how love I thy law . . .” (Psalm 119:97). The saved person in the New Testament says, “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Romans 7:22). There is no conflict between and no difference in proper attitude towards the law of God in the Old or the New Testaments. The man who hates the law of God is unsaved. The man who makes light of the law of God, who wants nothing to do with the law of God, who teaches men that they have nothing to do with the law of God, is in a very dangerous and unenviable position. He shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19). Mr. Antinomian, explain this verse to your hearers.

Love is the motive of all true obedience, but—hear this—law is the rule thereof. Love is motive. Love is power. But love is no guide. Law is the guide and rule. Love moves one to be obedient, but law guides that one in the path of true obedience. Love would not know what to do without law to guide it. Here comes the engine of obedience. Love is the power which moves it

along. But law is the tracks upon which it runs. The engine cannot move down the tracks without the power of love. But the empowered engine will run wild without the tracks of law to guide it along, and keep it in its proper bounds.

Now, this is the proper interpretation of Romans 13:10. Love is the power that enables one to fulfill the law. Love does not make the law useless. Love does not take the place of the law. Love does not negate the law. Love leads, moves, and empowers one to obey the law.

There are two varieties of antinomians who outwardly seem to oppose one another, but who wind up in agreement in their opposition to the law of God. There is the hyper-dispensationalist, who says that the law was given only to a certain people for a certain period of time; therefore it has nothing to do with the believer. There is the hyper-graceite who says that, since men are saved by grace, they have no responsibility to obey the law of God. Like Pilate and Herod, these enemies become friends in their mutual hatred to the law of God. I would say to both of these varieties of antinomians who tell me that the Ten Commandments have nothing to do with the believer: Which one can we break? I have yet to receive

?

**What is a
FAITH-PROMISE?
Read the president's
column and find out!**

an answer to this question. I suppose that no man, in his right mind, would say that we have the right to break any one of the Ten Commandments, so I guess we will all agree that we are obligated to keep them all. But will the antinomian say this? How will he answer question?

“IN FOR LIFE”

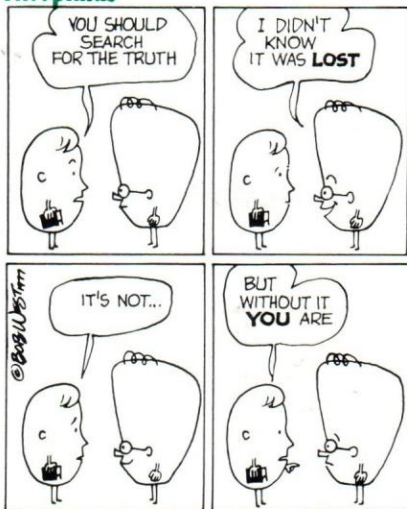
Did you know that you can become a lifetime member of the Bible Sabbath Association for a contribution of \$500 within a one-year period?

Several folks have taken advantage of these lifetime memberships. What about you?

For further information, write to:

**The Bible Sabbath
Association
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737**

Theophilus



Fire Helps New Zealand Church

By Stephan Kube

The Christchurch, New Zealand, Seventh Day Baptist chapel was devastated beyond repair by fire in the fall of 1983.

Although nobody was charged with arson, it is now clear that the fire was started by vandals, who piled up song books and pieces of other literature to start it. However, we believe that our Lord is in control of every situation and has used the fire to become a blessing in more ways than one.

The incident received wide publicity on radio, television, and in the press. People who never heard of Seventh Day Baptists suddenly became aware of their existence. It compelled the Christchurch members to take action. After carefully evaluating the possibilities, they decided to rebuild on the same spot. It seemed the most convenient place because of its central position in the city, but this time the building would be bigger and better.

The original wooden chapel (now demolished), about a century old, was first used as a church, then a residence. When the building was purchased by Seventh Day Baptists in 1947, all the internal additions were removed and the structure was rennovated and restored to its original purpose as a house of worship.

The Christchurch Seventh Day Baptist church was organized in



Al and Marjorie Withrow stand at the entrance to the old Christchurch, which was devastated by fire last fall.

1943 with Edward Barrar as its pastor. Members gathered for worship in an upstairs room. A small portable organ supplied the music, a sister played a zither and a brother a violin. The church has never been large, but the earnest prayers and dedication of its handful of members and the vision of its dedicated pastor opened a new chapter in Seventh Day Baptist history of missions. From here in 1949 Ronald, the eldest son of the pastor, set course for Africa to become the first of the

modern Seventh Day Baptist missionaries in Nyasaland (now Malawi).

Some years ago the old chapel needed repainting. Imagine the surprise of its pastor and the congregation when they arrived at the church one Sabbath to find it restored with a bright, fresh coat of paint! The "culprits" were an enthusiastic group of SDB young people from Auckland. Unfortunately, some three years ago another group of youngsters, with a more sinister purpose in their minds, set part of the old wooden chapel on fire, destroying the vestry and the toilet section. These were soon rebuilt in concrete blocks.

Possibly the highlight in the life of the old chapel was the memorable

Sabbath service on the 15th of January, 1983, during the Australasian Conference, when it was filled with local members and delegates from other parts of New Zealand and from Australia.

Daniel Barrar writes from Christchurch that construction of the new chapel is well under way. It will be slightly larger than the original one. The concrete floor has already been poured and walls are also up. The Auckland church has sent three competent volunteers; Pastor Ron Barrar, his son Ian, and Andrew Goulding, to erect the roof. This job has also been completed and the builders returned to Auckland. But much still needs to be done and much money needs to be spent before the chapel is ready for use.

Will You Volunteer to Become a **FAITH PARTNER?**

We are hoping to have a full-time paid public relations director/coordinator to help the Bible Sabbath Association grow. But we need your regular help to provide the funds.

Will you become a faith partner? Please let us know how much you can contribute, the Lord helping you.

*Bible Sabbath Association
Fairview, OK 73737*

Yes! I want to help. With the Lord's help I hope to contribute \$_____ each _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State/Province** _____ **Postal Code** _____



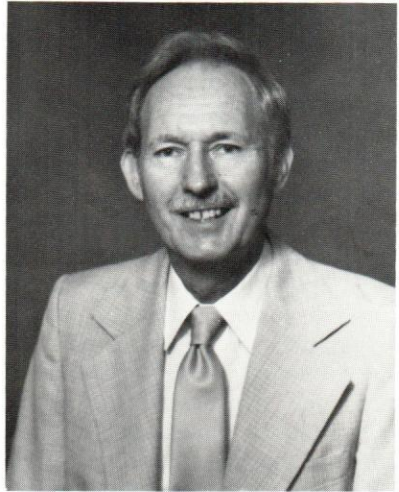
President's Perceptions

As a result of our advertisement in previous issues for our new employed position of public relations director/coordinator of the Bible Sabbath Association, we have received at least six applications. To each of these we have replied, in part, as follows:

"We have received your application . . . and have not forgotten you Let me familiarize you with the process. We will be contacting one or more of your references I will also be calling you personally The BSA officers and directors will confer and vote on the applicants to determine who will be first asked to fill the position.

"We must also be honest with you in that we do not know what month in 1984 we can begin to employ a salaried person; so much depends on response to our appeals by our Sentinel readers to catch the vision and pledge support with faith-promises for the position. Nevertheless, we are trusting and believing by faith that our prayer-answering God will supply all our needs for funds I am excited about 1984, and I hope you are, too. We all do love you and are thankful for your application."

This gives you an update on this important matter. By the time you



read this we may have selected our man. We will be announcing the results in the next issue possible.

You are wonderful, Sentinel readers; thank you for your caring, your praying, your witnessing, and loving others for Him, our wonderful God. Thank you also for your concern in what you believe the Lord is leading you to "faith-promise" toward our salaried BSA representative. I know you want to see results, and I believe you will. He is a prayer-answering God, and to Him we shall always look for guidance and answers in the spirit of trust.

A Note From the Editor

You Help Make the Sabbath What It Is



WHAT is the weekly Sabbath to you? Is it a twenty-four-hour period in which you feel that you are in a cage, barred in by a multitude of restrictions? Are you (and you may not want to admit this even to yourself) secretly glad when the sun sets to signal the close of the sacred day?

If this is what the Sabbath means to you, you are not really a Sabbathkeeper. On the contrary, the Sabbath—or rather your concept of it—is keeping you from a joyful, fulfilling Christian experience.

Cheer up! Yahweh has good news for you. He says that the Sabbath was made for you (see Mark

2:27). He wants you to consider it as "a delight," not as a burden (Isaiah 58:13).

Let His Spirit flood your heart to overflowing; then see what happens to your Sabbath hours.

Eugene Lincoln

THE SABBATH SENTINEL

(USPS 474-580)



EDITOR Eugene Lincoln
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS .. Janyce Gidley, Gilbert Sanford
George Dellinger

The object of this non-sectarian, nondenominational association is to bring together into one strong organization all believers in the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) regardless of sect, creed, or denomination, for the sole purpose of spreading knowledge of, belief in, and observance of the Creator's Holy Day. The only qualification is belief in the seventh-day Sabbath.

Annual member contribution: Regular or subscribing members, \$20.00; family membership, \$25.00 (individual certificates issued but only one set of records maintained and only one copy of the Sentinel and other mailings sent); life members \$500.00 or more during any one year.

WRITERS: Please type manuscripts double spaced and leave wide margins on all sides. Use only one side of paper. If you wish your manuscripts returned, include stamped, addressed envelope. Address to editor, 1228 Wayne Avenue, Hagerstown, Md. 21740. We invite manuscripts on various aspects of the Sabbath, but cannot pay for them.

Opinions in articles are those of the writers and not necessarily endorsed by the Bible Sabbath Association.

Love Feast Is Held at Ephrata

A love feast service was held in the Saal in Ephrata Cloister, Ephrata, Penn., on April 28. Buildings were closed to the public at 5 p.m. in the state-operated historical park, and tables were set up for a picnic-style fellowship meal, which was followed by the ordinance of footwashing and the celebration of communion. Pastor Edward Rosenberry, of the Snow Hill congregation, officiated.

The fellowship meal consisted of the traditional beef barley soup, prepared by Viola Kachel, and covered dish brought by the worshippers.

The Saal was dedicated in December, 1741, at a similar love feast conducted by Conrad Beissel. At the same time it was consecrated as a house of worship primarily for the householder members (married couples and their children). Up to this time they did not have a place of their own in which to worship, but depended on use of the meeting rooms of the Solitary Sisters and

Brethren of the Cloister. This was not always a satisfactory arrangement.

Beissel established this ascetic community on the banks of the Cocalico Creek in Lancaster County, Penn., in the years preceding the American Revolution. After his death the colony gradually diminished in size and importance. In 1930 the remnant of the believers deeded the property to the state of Pennsylvania, and it became a historical park. The physical structures were thus preserved, but the spiritual life was nearly extinguished.

But in recent years congregations at Snow Hill and Salemville have held semiannual love feasts at Ephrata Cloisters. In many ways the old spirit of Beissel still pervades these love feasts. Though much has changed, much remains the same. No longer does the congregation wear white robes; now they wear contemporary clothes. The cloister is now a tourist mecca, but through it many visitors are learning of the part Sabbathkeepers played in the early history of the United States.

They Are Wise

Tomorrow is an artful word that proves
A stumbling block in the paths of men—
Tomorrow is the day on which they mean
To seek the magic "Land of Start Again."

Yet they are wise who do not wait until
Tomorrow's sun shall rise and shed its ray,
But with a song of faith they journey forth
To seek the "Land of Start Again" today!

—Inez Clark Thorson.

- 1st** **Romans 4:15; 1 John 2:4**
 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4
 1 John 3:22-24
 1 John 4:20, 21
 Revelation 22:15
 Revelation 13:1-3
 Matthew 6:21
- 2nd** **Romans 4:15; 2 Peter 2:16-22**
 Romans 1:21-25
 (a) Psalm 115:4-9
 Matthew 6:24
 Acts 15:20
 Romans 12:2
 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4
 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12
 2 Corinthians 6:14-16
 1 John 5:17 (1st part)
 1 John 5:21
 Revelation 9:20, 21
 Revelation 21:8
 Revelation 22:15
 1 Peter 4:3
- 3rd** **Romans 4:15; James 2:6, 7**
 Matthew 12:34-37
 Revelation 17:3
 2 Timothy 3:2, 5
 2 Timothy 2:16
 1 Timothy 6:20
 Matthew 6:7
 Revelation 13:1
 1 Timothy 1:20
- 4th** **Romans 4:15; Luke 23:56**
 Matthew 12:1-8
 Luke 6:1-11
 Matthew 24:20
 Mark 2:27, 28
 Mark 6:2
 Mark 16:1
 Luke 6:6
 Luke 13:10-17
 Luke 14:1-6
 Luke 23:54-56
 (b) Luke 24:35-37
 John 5:5-13
 John 7:21-24
 John 19:31
 (c) John 20:1-10
 (d), (e) John 20:19
 Acts 13:14, 15
 Acts 13:27, 42, 44
 Acts 15:21
 Acts 16:13
 Acts 17:2
 Hebrews 4:4
 Acts 18:4
 (a) Genesis 2:1-3 Mark 10:19
 Mark 1:32
 (a) Genesis 1:5
 (a) Isaiah 58:13, 14
 (a) Isaiah 66:22-24
 Mark 2:27, 28
 Revelation 1:10
 Note: Luke 24:10-12
 Luke 24:24-27

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All of
the Ten
Commandments
repeated
in the New
Testament.

- 5th **Romans 4:15; Romans 7:12**
Matthew 22:39, 40
Ephesians 6:1-3
Colossians 3:20
Romans 13:7
Hebrews 13:17
2 Timothy 3:2
Mark 7:10-13
2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12
1 Timothy 1:9
1 Timothy 5:1
Mark 10:19
- 6th **Romans 4:15; 1 Timothy 6:11-14**
Romans 13:9
1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
1 Timothy 1:9
Revelation 13:10
1 John 3:15
Revelation 9:20, 21
2 Timothy 3:3
Revelation 21:8
Revelation 22:15
Luke 13:34
Luke 20:14
Acts 3:15
Revelation 13:15
- 7th **Romans 4:15; James 2:11**
(a) Job 31:9-12
Romans 13:9
Romans 13:13
"Chambering means illicit
intercourse; illicit sex:
immorality."
2 Peter 2:14, 18
2 Timothy 3:6
Mark 10:19
1 Corinthians 5:1
1 Timothy 1:10
Revelation 17:2, 4, 5
Revelation 18:3-5, 9
Romans 4:15
Revelation 22:15
Matthew 19:9
- 8th **Romans 4:15; 1 John 3:4**
Romans 13:9
Mark 10:19
1 Timothy 1:10
Romans 2:21
Ephesians 4:28
- 9th **Romans 4:15; Acts 6:11-13**
Romans 13:9
2 Timothy 3:3, 4, 13
Matthew 15:14
1 Timothy 1:10
Revelation 22:15
Revelation 21:8
- 10th **Romans 4:15; Romans 7:7**
1 Corinthians 6:8-11
Romans 13:9
2 Peter 2:14
2 Timothy 3:2
Ephesians 5:5
Mark 10:19
1 Timothy 2:10

The Sabbath Day Forever

By Ralph Charron

THE SABBATH was hallowed at Creation; as ordained for man, it had its origin when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). Peace brooded over the world; for the earth was in harmony with heaven. "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31); and He rested in the joy of His completed work.

Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it"—set it apart to a holy use (Genesis 2:3). He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of Creation and thus a sign of God's power and His love. The scriptures say, "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered" (Psalms 111:4). "The things that are made" declare "the invisible things of him" since the creation of the world, even His everlasting power and divinity (Romans 1:20). All things were created by the Son of God. "In the beginning was the Word, . . . and the Word was God . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3), and since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of Creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ.

The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked

with Adam in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the Word that created all things is that light that speaks life to the soul. He "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

It was this thought that awoke the song:

"Thou, Lord, hast made me
glad through thy work;
I will triumph in the works of
thy hands.
O Lord, how great are thy
works!
And thy thoughts are very
deep" (Psalms 92:4,5).

And the Holy Spirit through the prophet Isaiah declares: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? . . . have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in . . . To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by

names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth . . . Why sayeth thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? . . . He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isaiah 4:18-29). "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: . . . yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (41:10). "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (45:22). This is the message written in nature, which the Sabbath is appointed to keep in memory. When the Lord made Israel hallow His sabbaths, He said, "They shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God" (Ezekiel 20:20).

The Sabbath was embodied in

the law given from Sinai. The people of Israel had a knowledge of it before they came to Sinai. On the way thither the Sabbath was kept. When some profaned it, the Lord reproved them, saying, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" (Exodus 16:28).

The Sabbath was not merely for Israel, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and like the other precepts of the decalog, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the Fourth Commandment forms a part, Christ declares, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18). So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. "From one sabbath to another" the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up "to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 66:23).

●=Sabbath Promotional Aids=●

Attractive pens, printed with

"The Seventh Day is the Sabbath"	\$3.00 per doz.
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Sabbath Stamps	100 for \$1.00
Home Bible Study Series (13-lesson book)	\$1.50 each or \$12.00 per doz.

Book, <i>History of the Sabbath & Sunday</i> (Kiesz)	\$2.95
Book, <i>From Sabbath to Sunday</i> (Bacchiocchi)	\$8.00
Book, <i>Divine Rest For Human Restlessness</i> (Bacchiocchi)	\$8.00
SABBATH DIRECTORY	\$4.95
Back issues of <i>Sabbath Sentinel</i> (1980-1981)	50 for \$5.00
Bible on Cassette (loan - postage only)	
Book, <i>Right Face</i> (Lincoln)	2 for \$1.00
Tracts and leaflets (some 20 titles)	Samples free

(Note: Cost of literature is so uncertain because of continuing inflation that we have discontinued pricing the tracts and leaflets. A contribution in the amount of FIVE DOLLARS or more per pound of literature desired would be most appropriate and deeply appreciated.)

THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737

Apostles and Early Church Observed Sabbath

By Dick Wiedenhaft

FOLLOWING His death and resurrection, Jesus gave not so much as a hint that the Fourth Commandment was no longer necessary or that the day of rest was changed to Sunday. In fact, it is obvious from the New Testament record that the apostles and early Christians continued to keep the seventh day of the week according to the Fourth Commandment. There is no evidence they abandoned the Sabbath for Sunday!

Women Rested on the Sabbath

Luke 23:56 describes what the women did after Jesus died, after the veil in the temple was rent in two, after anything that was "nailed to the cross" was nailed there:

"Then they [the women] went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."*

While it would not be surprising that the women observed the Sabbath after Jesus' crucifixion, the way Luke records this fact is quite significant. Luke was undoubtedly a Gentile writing to another Gentile long after the Resurrection. Yet in no way did he qualify his reference to the commandment as having been "old" or "Jewish" or "done away." It was still "the commandment," part of God's spiritual law and will for mankind (See also Romans 3:20,31;

7:7-14,22; 1 John 5:3; James 2:8).

There is much more evidence that both Jewish and Gentile Christians kept the Sabbath during the New Testament period. The key to understanding this evidence is the apostles' and early Christians' *attitude toward God's relationship with Israel.*

Early Disciples Saw Gospel for Israel Only

At the time of Christ the Jews believed that God was concerned with only one nation on earth—Israel. The *promises* were for Israel; *God's blessings* were for Israel; the *Messiah* would come to save Israel. All other people were simply heathen Gentiles—they were dogs whom God would begin dealing with only if they were circumcised and became Jewish proselytes.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), the apostles began to realize the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God; but they still saw Jesus as the Savior of God's people, Israel. They understood their commission basically in terms of preaching salvation to Israel. Those who repented and accepted Jesus had no thoughts of abandoning the law of Moses. They continued to meet in the synagogues and worship in the Temple. In fact, when Paul went to Damascus to look for Christians to persecute, he went to

the synagogues (Acts 9:2). Even the Romans, at first, considered the Christians a sect of the Jews, like the Pharisees or Sadducees.

The early church viewed salvation strictly within the context of God's dealings with Israel.

Gospel Preached to Gentiles

Only after God sent a special revelation did one of the apostles first conceive of the idea that the gospel might be for the Gentiles too (Acts 10). Through a vision Peter was instructed by God to preach to Cornelius, a Roman centurion.

Peter was shocked by God's revelation—but he went and preached to Cornelius' household. The opening words of his discourse reveal both his attitude about associating with Gentiles and the message he received from God:

"You are well aware that it is against our law for Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean" (verse 28).

Peter's acceptance of the Gentiles was the first major break with the "Israel only" concept—and it came about only as a result of a supernatural vision. Up until that time, and even long afterward, the

prevailing Jewish attitude was that salvation was for Jews only. In fact, when Peter returned to Jerusalem after preaching to Cornelius, he was severely criticized for having gone into a Gentile home (Acts 11:3).

How does all this relate to the Sabbath?

Simply this! In view of the strong attachment of the apostles and first Christians to Judaism, can we possibly believe that they had already abandoned the Sabbath for Sunday? Unthinkable!

Controversy Arose

As the years went by, Paul and others began to preach to more and more Gentiles, hundreds of whom believed. However, many, if not most, of the Jewish Christians just assumed that these Gentiles would be circumcised and become proselytes. They could not conceive of anyone coming into a relationship with God without becoming an Israelite. They continued to discriminate against Gentiles—even against Gentile Christians.

On one occasion, at Antioch, Peter was eating with Gentiles—until certain men from Jerusalem showed up. He was intimidated by their presence and withdrew from the Gentiles, as did Barnabas and others

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(Galatians 2:11-13). Paul was incensed and corrected Peter publicly; but the incident showed how great their attachment to the law of Moses was. Can we possibly assume that they had already abandoned the Sabbath almost 15 years prior to these events? Hardly! It was not just a man-made custom or Pharisaical tradition. It was the commandment of God!

Paul continued to insist that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised and come under the national (Old) covenant with Israel. However, he did uphold very strongly the spiritual laws of God (Romans 3:20,31; 7:7-14,22).

The controversy over whether or not the Gentiles had to become Israelite proselytes grew to such proportions that a major conference was held at Jerusalem around A.D. 49 to settle the question (Acts 15).

The conclusion reached at this meeting was that Paul was correct: Circumcision was unnecessary for the Gentiles. However, the leaders did write letters instructing the Gentile Christians to abstain from fornication, from blood, from things strangled, and from foods polluted by idols; these were laws from the Old Testament that were apparently considered of particular importance to the Gentiles (Acts 15:20).

Remember, the whole conference had to do with Gentiles. At that time there was no thought of the Jews forsaking the law of Moses. And in that context, it is obvious that they were not keeping Sunday instead of the Sabbath. It should also be noted that the decision of this conference in no way excused the Gentiles from the moral and spiritual laws of God, including the Sabbath. The issue was whether or not

Gentiles had to become proselytes, symbolized by circumcision.

Paul Participated in a Temple Ceremony

As Paul and others continued to preach to Gentiles, more and more turned to God without becoming Jews. At the same time, however, thousands of Jews continued to be "zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20,21). And many of them kept on harassing the Gentiles about being circumcised.

Rumors began to spread at Jerusalem that Paul was even beginning to teach the scattered Jews to abandon Moses (Acts 21:21). So when Paul returned to Jerusalem, the apostles there asked him to cooperate with them in proving that these rumors were false. He was to go into the Temple and join in a purification ceremony. "Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law" (Acts 21:23,24).

Of course the plan backfired, and Paul ended up in prison. But the incident demonstrates clearly that the apostles—and even Paul—were still very much in tune with their Jewish heritage. There is simply no way they were keeping Sunday instead of the Sabbath!

But what about the Gentiles? Were they taught to worship on Sunday?

Paul Worshiped With Jews and Gentiles on Sabbath

Throughout the book of Acts, Paul consistently used the Sabbath for teaching both Jews and Gentiles "as was his custom" (Acts 17:2; also 18:4). In Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue on the

Sabbath where they were asked to speak (Acts 13:14,15). When they had finished, some of the listeners asked them to return *the next Sabbath*, at which time “almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord” (verses 42-44).

Notice that Paul waited a whole week for another meeting. If Christians had been observing Sunday, there would have been no reason to wait; they could have met the very next day. This passage shows clearly the orientation of both Jews and Gentiles, yes, even “the whole city,” to the Sabbath.

Acts 18:4 describes Paul’s stay in Corinth, where he worked as a tentmaker during the week. And when did he rest from his physical labor to teach Jews and Greeks? *On the Sabbath, not on Sunday.*

Another indication of Sabbath observance by both Jews and Gentiles is the fact that the churches in many cities were mixtures of both groups. They met regularly, often in private homes, often in Jewish homes (Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19). Now, given the conclusive evidence that the Jewish Christians continued to rest on the Sabbath according to the Commandments, it is also quite obvious that Gentile Christians did so too.

For the apostles and early Christians—Jews and Gentiles alike—the Sabbath was part of God’s will for mankind. They continued to observe the seventh day of the week—not just because it was a Jewish tradition—but because it was made at Creation for all men. It was one of God’s commandments. It was observed and taught by their Savior. And while the Gentiles and even the Jews, eventually, did not

abide by all the civil and ceremonial laws and traditions handed down from the time of Moses, they did continue to live by the spiritual and moral laws, including the Sabbath.

Sabbath Observed Into Second Century

Following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the death or scattering of many of the apostles, the churches of Judea continued to be administered by Jewish Christians. Post-Biblical church writers Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) and Epiphanius (A.D. 315-403) record that the church at Jerusalem was led by 15 bishops “of the circumcision” until A.D. 135, when Emperor Hadrian besieged the city. Strong Jewish leadership and influence continued at least until then; and in that context, there is simply no way that Sundaykeeping could have arisen among Christians there during the first century.

Of course, Sundaykeeping did arise in the church—but not because of apostolic teaching. Rather it began in post-Biblical times. It began because of severe anti-Jewish attitudes in the Roman world, because of strong pagan influences, and because of political pressures under the godless emperors. Those pressures caused the early postapostolic church leaders to move as far away as possible from anything that could be considered Jewish—to move toward the customs and traditions of the pagan Roman world. In the process the teachings of the Word of God, of Jesus and the apostles, were severely compromised.

—Focus on Truth

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In the February, 1984, *Sentinel*, page 14, relative to the Seventh Day Baptists, is the statement: "Seventh Day Baptists have no binding creed to which members must subscribe."

This is an entirely wrong statement. As a Seventh Day Baptist for some time—also my wife—we subscribed to the binding creed that is printed on our literature when we were accepted into membership: Seventh Day Baptists subscribe to the love to, and of, God and Christ and to keeping God's Ten Commandment Law, including the seventh-day Sabbath, God's Christian baptism by immersion in water, Holy Communion, and all righteousness in Christ and love for all people, and we believe in God's infallible Scriptures only.

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