

The Sabbath Sentinel

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

NOVEMBER 1984



“BE still and know that I am God.”

Sometimes the local Sabbath morning and afternoon church appointments are a schedule of “rush, rush duties.” This is not what the Creator intended. Each of the Ten Commandments was made to be a blessing, not a burden.

If everyone kept the Sabbath, there would be very little need of telephone men, water-department gauge-watchers working on that day. However, we do need emergency policy and firefighters seven days a week because fires and crime continue. If it really needs to be done on God’s holy day, it’s not Sabbathbreaking.

Much routine medical traffic could wait till Monday. After all, we find very few Sunday appointments for eye exams, annual physicals, etc. However, bedpans should be brought in and carried out on the Sabbath. A multitude of other chores are to be done on God’s holy day. It’s not a sin. It is necessary.

However, the end does not justify the means. There are wrong methods of caring for the sick and providing fire and police protection on the Sabbath. Still, to abandon these ministries on the seventh day would be like hurrying by a

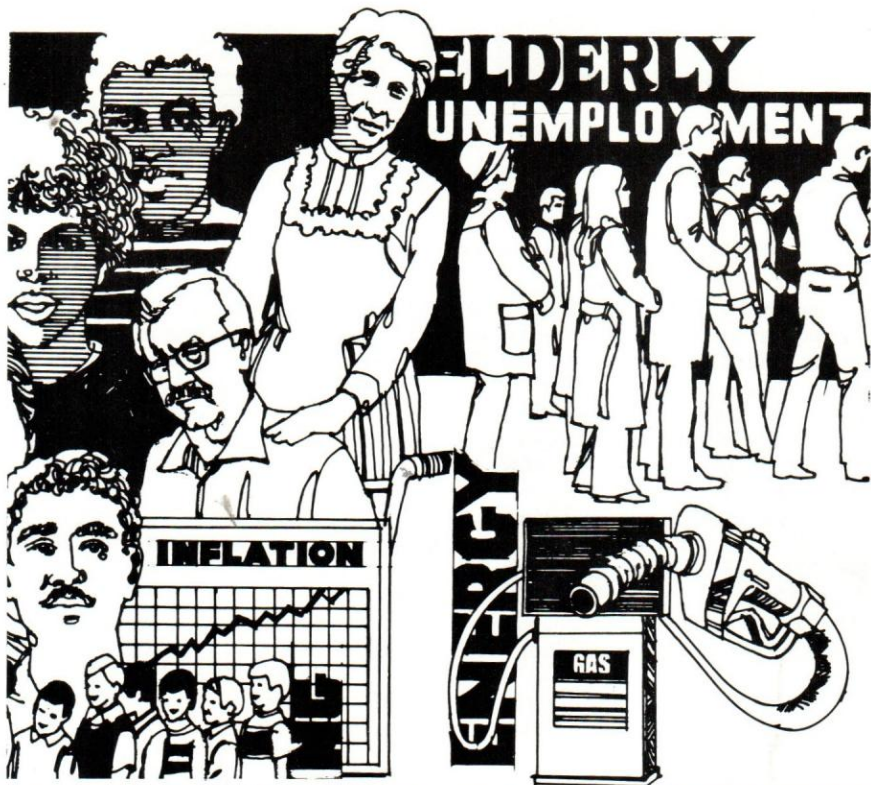
wounded fellow-traveler on the Jericho road. Likely the priest had his “calling” to fulfill in Jerusalem. Jesus condemned it.

I recognize that Jesus healed for love, not fee. My wife worked in a nursing home. We gave to the Lord *all* that she earned on Sabbath and tithed the rest. Money blinds the eyes, so we removed the blinders. Besides, Sabbath is to be a nonprofit day.

Some say, “Let Sunday-keepers do your Sabbath-day duties.” I endorse that. If a neighborly exchange can be made, make it; but otherwise do it yourself.

I worked at a hospital as maintenance engineer (fancy term for handyman). I cheerfully agreed to come in for emergencies Friday nights and Saturday (storm damage, baby incubator failure, etc.), but plainly stated I would not do routine work on the Sabbath. As with my wife’s nursing-home job, all Sabbath-earned pay went to the Lord. I have worked many years in industry. I told my boss, before I ever took the job, “If there’s fire or flood, I’ll be there, any time of day or night, any day of the week, whether or not you pay me. However, if there’s a contract deadline to meet, I won’t come in on Sabbath, even if I

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lose my job over it." They always honored my stand.

Perhaps you think I easily "cave in" to Sabbath desecration when the going gets rough. Think again! Though now retired (and busy), I have been a machinist, electrician, and technician in industrial electronics. In the early 1940's I was interviewed to go overseas to China as a representative for the Philco Corp. The offer was quite attractive, but I turned it down because of Saturday requirements. A little painful. In 1953 I moved my family to Houston. We scratched along, waiting for a good job, but Sabbath work was the snag. We cashed in my insurance policy. One manufacturer urged me to reconsider his attractive offer, but I said no. We didn't go hungry, but we did return to Kansas broke. You

see, I know what financial pressure is; but no sweat, God is faithful.

When I was a young fellow in Salem, West Virginia, my brother Gerald and I were invited to partake Sabbath noon lunch with Mr. and Mrs. James L. Skaggs. He was pastor of the Seventh Day Baptist church there at the time (1940). In five minutes we were called into the dining room, where was spread a well-balanced, tasty meal including cold cuts of meat. She had it all prepared the day before, ready to set out. I was impressed. So often the housewife hurries home in mid-church session to make sure the chicken roast is turning out right. That is unnecessary. Man was not made for the Sabbath. No one needs ever to break the Fourth Commandment, not really.

Powerful Ohio AM Station Carries Dateline Religion

By David R. Manzano

Dateline Religion, a five-minute broadcast of religious news, is still being heard in Ohio over WTVN, Columbus, and WCVO, New Albany, because Mrs. Vivian Dunson, communication secretary for the Columbus Eastwood Seventh-day Adventist church, is the voice of the news broadcast.

Vivian says, "Dateline Religion has been a prayer project since that day in May 1972 when I first took an audition tape of the program to WTVN. The sky was dark and ominous. I knew a storm was going to break and that I should go home, but I asked the Lord not to let the rain fall until I was able to get the tape to the station and return to my car. The station agreed to carry the broadcast, and the torrential rain did not fall until I was well on my way home."

When the SDA General Conference Communication Department decided to stop producing Dateline Religion in the summer of 1979, Vivian asked

Adventist ministers in Columbus if any of them would be interested in producing the tape locally. She did not know that Pastor Fred Kinsey, assistant at Worthington, had experience in radio. He agreed to help but was scheduled to move to another district. She said, "Again, I asked the Lord that, if it was His will to keep Dateline Religion on the air, He would keep Fred here. Almost immediately I learned Fred would not be moved, and he remained for almost two and a half years."

Pastor Kinsey had Mrs. Dunson alternate with him in announcing the news items. This gave her experience as a news announcer.

When Fred Kinsey transferred to the Northern California Conference to be their director of communication, Vivian prayed that the Lord would help her learn to operate the recording equipment in the sound booth at WCVO. Pastor Kinsey showed her how the last two times he recorded. "However, the amazing thing is how the engineer

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Vivian Dunson in station WTVN, the most powerful AM station in Columbus.

at WCVO has so graciously and patiently helped me learn to operate the equipment these past two months," Vivian said.

Gary Figart, director of production and news director of WCVO, had Mrs. Dunson make a 20-second promotion spot for Dateline which is being aired on a continuing basis. Elder Franklin Hudgins of the General Conference Communication Department has supplied copies of stories from the Religious News Service for the past year and a half. Vivian says, "Again, I ask for guidance as I choose the stories to report. From time to time I am able to inform the listeners about Adventist world news, as well as have a chance to witness through news from other sources."

WTVN-AM is the most powerful station in Columbus. Vivian's son, Steve, hears the broadcast in

Cleveland, 100 miles away.

Dateline Religion is broadcast over WTVN Sunday at 6:30 a.m. It is heard over WCVO-FM Wednesday at 8:55 a.m., and Saturday, at 4:55 a.m.

How to Promote the Sabbath in Your Area

If you are interested in sponsoring ads in your local newspaper that will promote the Sabbath and the aims of the Bible Sabbath Association, we can help you. Write to Richard Wiedenheft, public relations coordinator, RD 1, Box 475, Falls, PA 18615 for ideas.

Tertullian Testifies

The following is taken from the writings of Tertullian of North Africa. He was born about A.D. 145 and became one of the Christians about A.D. 185. He was an able leader and writer during the latter part of his life, and the date of his death is thought to be about A.D. 220.

The Creator's Sabbath

He was called "Lord of the Sabbath," because He maintained the Sabbath as His own institution. Now, even if He had annulled the Sabbath, He would have had the right to do so, as being its Lord, [and] still more as He who instituted it. But He did not utterly destroy it, although its Lord, in order that it might henceforth be plain that the Sabbath was not broken by the Creator, even at the time when the ark was carried around Jericho. For that was really God's work, which He commanded Himself, and which He had ordered for that sake of the lives of His servants when exposed to the perils of war. Now, although He was in a certain place expressed an aversion of Sabbaths, by calling them *your Sabbaths*, reckoning them as man's Sabbaths, not His own, because they were celebrated without the fear of God by a people full of iniquities, and loving God "with the lip, not the heart," He has yet put His own Sabbaths (those, that is, which were kept according to His prescription) in a different position; for by the same prophet, in a later passage, He declared them to be "true, and delightful, and inviolable." Thus Christ did not at all rescind the Sabbath: He kept the law thereof, and both in the former case did a work which was beneficial to the life of His disciples,

for He indulged them with the relief of food when they were hungry, and in the present instance cured the withered hand; in each case intimating by facts, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it," although Marcion has gagged his mouth by this word. For even in the case before us He fulfilled the law, while interpreting its condition; moreover, He exhibits in a clear light the different kinds of work, while doing what the law excepts from the sacredness of the Sabbath and while imparting to the Sabbath day itself, which from the beginning had been consecrated by the benediction of the Father, an additional sanctity by His own beneficent action. For He furnished to this day divine safeguards, a course which His adversary would have pursued for some other days, to avoid honouring the Creator's Sabbath, and restoring to the Sabbath the works which were proper for it. Since, in like manner, the prophet Elisha on this day restored to life the dead son of the Shunammite woman, you see, O Pharisee, and you too, O Marcion, how that it was *proper employment* for the Creator's Sabbaths of old to do good, to save life, not to destroy it; how that Christ introduced nothing new, which was not after the example, the gentleness, the mercy, and the prediction also of the Creator. For in this very example He fulfills the prophetic announcement of a specific healing; "The weak hands are strengthened," as we also "the feeble knees" in the sick of the palsy.

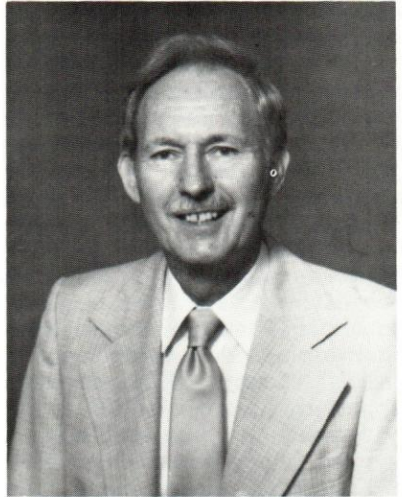
—Tertullian Against Marcion,
chapter 12



President's Perceptions

May I lead you toward a new thought pattern and action response to being solicited by para-church organizations through the mail? Aren't we now entering the season of the year when we become showered with appeals for financial support from all these organizations? My mailbox can be half full of these appeals and newsletters. Many wonderful organizations, too! They send free medicines overseas to mission hospitals; they feed the hungry; they operate a prison ministry; they preach the Word; they care for orphans; they call for support of a child to attend school. What do you do with these appeals? Do you send gift checks to some of these para-church organizations? I do. Marjorie and I provide monthly support for Jatmiko, our Compassion-sponsored boy in Indonesia. We do send an occasional gift for one or another of these organizations, but at home we are trying hard to raise funds to call and support a pastor. And don't we all do this with the love of God in hearts, and in the name, and for the sake of Jesus, who teaches us to be unselfish? You and I have never been able to outgive our God.

I now wish to propose the new thought pattern and action response to all these mailbox appeals. Listen carefully and don't jump to hasty judgments. Think it through carefully, please. With



Leroy Bass, President

every gift check you and I send out from now on to one of these fine para-church organizations, each one of us shall write a brief letter to one individual person of that organization explaining that we also represent a transdenominational organization that has now embarked on a bold new FORWARD THRUST by faith, and this is a critical time needing support.

"I am a happy supporter of your work; now I must ask you for a personal contribution to help support my organization's work—The Bible Sabbath Association International. The BSA is dedicated

to promoting the Bible truths of the holy Ten Commandments, and the Sabbath day in particular because of so much silence in this area. Today's society flagrantly disregards God's basis of holiness and success in life in favor of community-accepted societal standards of behavioral acceptability. This kind of relativity opens the floodgates to moral iniquity, and in a cyclic way, the problems of humanity are compounded. The Bible offers an escape from this dilemma—a turning to God for help, through Jesus Christ, for changed minds, a new attitude, and a new heart. His holy laws of absolute morality are written into our hearts by the Holy Spirit producing a harmony of conformity and obedience to God's holy Ten Commandments. You see, this service and ministry of the Bible Sabbath Association is a tremendous complement to your organization's work for the good of hurting society. Will you help support this work, also? For your convenience I am enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope to me. However, please make your check payable to the Bible Sabbath Association. Your contribution is tax-deductible. The BSA is a nonprofit organization in Fairview, Okla., and I will forward your gift to

them. Thank you, in Jesus' name."

Now, BSA members, if you will write something like the above in your own words to the organizations appropriate for you, you will do more good than you realize. Expect some returns. On the return envelope that you will furnish, address it to yourself so you will know who responds. Upon receiving their gifts, forward them to Fairview, OK 73737. Our treasurer will respond with a receipt. Let me give you a final word of advice. Do not ask for a gift from an organization as such, but from an individual representing that organization, for example, the individual who wrote the appeal letter to you. Make photocopies of your letter for yourself and for sending to more than one organization, but limit these only to those to whom you yourself support. Remember, send these letters with a prayer.

—Leroy Bass

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?????

By all means notify us in advance. Failure to do so will result in a 25¢ charge to our account by the post office and also the chance you will miss an issue of the SENTINEL.

THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION
Fairview, OK. 73737

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THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737

A "Wave" from Cincinnati CGI

Greetings, fellow Sabbatharians:

Did you ever notice how passing motorcyclists wave? They do this not because they like the brand of bike or the color of it. The thing they share with that complete stranger is common knowledge, fears, and joys of traveling a particular way. That is the way it is with Sabbathkeepers. We differ in many ways and, to be sure, we are all wrong in some areas, but we do share the sign our Lord has given to His special people.

I'd like to introduce you to my church—the Church of God International. Our leader, Garner Ted Armstrong, preached nearly 30 years in the Worldwide Church of God. In 1978 he started a "new beginning," preaching basically the same truths but with less church government.

In addition to the seventh-day Sabbath we also enjoy the annual holydays of Leviticus 23. We do separate ourselves from pagan days as Easter, Christmas, Halloween, etc. We use God's law as contained in the Pentateuch to guide us in our everyday life.

Some unique beliefs we hold are: We are actually the true Israelites of the tribe of Manasseh. Most prophecies concern the U.S. and Great Britain. Salvation is to the church now, and others will be taught by us during the millennium on earth. At the end of the millennium, or day of the Lord, there will be a general resurrection of all who weren't called before for their chance for salvation.

We don't build churches, but have small groups scattered around the world, meeting in rented halls. This way we can better use our funds to provide a witness and a warning to the world.

Garner Ted Armstrong can be seen nationwide in the U.S. on SPN cable Sabbath morning and on NASH cable Sundays. We print many booklets on a variety of subjects and *Watch* magazine quarterly. All literature is free for the asking. Taped sermons are available on cassettes or video. If you ever desire to worship with us, contact The Church of God International, P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710. They will put you in contact with the group nearest you.

—Wayne Schatzle
Cincinnati, Ohio

Pen Pals

I would like to correspond with people who want to use home computers for Christian purposes. Write to John A. Conrod, 2269 Field Street, Lakewood, CO 80215.

I would like to correspond with single Christian women or widows. I am 44 years old, in good health, and active in Christian endeavor. I am lonely. Elder Imeh Akpan, P.O. Box 76—Abak City, Nigeria, West Africa.

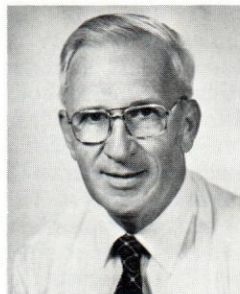
“Thanks Be Unto God”

NOVEMBER is the month for people in the United States to remember to give thanks for our blessings. The Canadians must be more thankful, for they do not wait until November; they have their Thanksgiving, on the first Monday of October.

The first Friday of October was my sixty-first birthday. As I consider this milestone I ask myself: Can it really be true? What has happened to all the years since, at the age of 36, I began as editor of this publication? My hair is not quite the same color, and when I have been sitting down, I find that “up” is a mite higher than it used to be.

But as I look over the past 61 years I am thankful to the Lord for all He has done for me, not the least of which has been the privilege of editing this magazine and of meeting many wonderful folks who are connected with the Bible Sabbath Association. I am thankful for my wife, who has stood behind me in many endeavors, including my work with the BSA.

But most of all, to use the words of the apostle Paul: “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift,” my Savior, the Lord of the Sabbath and of my life.



Eugene Lincoln

THE SABBATH SENTINEL (USPS 474-580)



EDITOR Eugene Lincoln
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS 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.

Coordinator's Column

By Richard A. Wiedenheft

It was with much thanksgiving and enthusiasm—and a certain amount of apprehension—that I began working for BSA in July. But during the weeks that have elapsed since then I have been greatly encouraged by the love, warmth, understanding, and respect of the many individuals involved in this work, particularly the board members.

This has been a time of discussing ideas, considering options, establishing priorities, working out lines of communication. In this and future issues of THE SABBATH SENTINEL, and in separate mailings, you will be hearing about some of our ideas and plans as they are developed. All of us associated with BSA have a tremendous challenge—of sharing the truth of God's Sabbath in a world that gives lip service to all the commandments but the Fourth.

As I see it, the mission of BSA is basically two-fold:

1. To minister to the needs of Sabbathkeepers: to provide information and services, to promote communication, fellowship, understanding, and respect among those who observe the seventh day.
2. To share the good news of God's Sabbath with those who don't know it.

It is my perception that the first of these will be much more easily accomplished. Through the pages of THE SABBATH SENTINEL and other publications, we can get to know more about one another, we can be educated, inspired, and encouraged. However, sharing the Sabbath with others will be much more difficult because we are asking people to go against the basic norms of our society. And yet, in proclaiming the Sabbath, we are offering them what they so desperately need—the opportunity to rest, to pause, to be refreshed, to get to know themselves, one another, and their Creator. You'd think more people would be "beating at our doors" to receive such a blessing; but such is not the case. Hence we have our work cut out for us—and with God's guidance and direction, with all of us working together in unity of spirit, we will succeed.

My wife and I are very thankful for, and awed by, the opportunity to serve God in cooperation with all of you who are part of BSA. I welcome your suggestions, your comments, your criticisms—so that all of us, in cooperation can learn to do the will of God more perfectly.

Please pray for God's guidance for all of us as we seek to do the work of The Bible Sabbath Association.

Christian Comma

By Richard

THEY'VE been considered the greatest moral code ever known on earth; they've been called the "terrible ten"! They've been hung on the walls of Christian homes for centuries; they've also been called "Old Covenant," "Mosaic," and part of a "ministration of death."

What is the truth about the Ten Commandments? What role should they play in a Christian's life?

As usual, the truth is *plain and simple*, once we understand a few basic principles that most Christians have overlooked.

The most important principle we must understand is this: There is a difference between a law and the formal codification of a law!

For centuries the law of many western countries was called "common law," defined as "the body of unwritten principles . . . recognized and enforced by the courts." You undoubtedly enforce certain rules around your house; yet I dare say few if any of them are written down and numbered 1,2,3,4, etc. They exist, they're enforced, but they are not codified. They are taught and understood, but nothing is ever written down.

As far as the Biblical record is concerned, it was the same way with God and Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Only one specific instruction is recorded (about eating of the tree), but we can be sure that He did give them many other instructions—other laws. And He and/or they passed these laws on to their children.

How do we know?

Notice Paul's words: "But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses . . ." (Romans 5:14, NIV).^{*} Death reigned because there was sin! And sin existed because there were laws! *There were laws before the Ten Commandments!*

There is evidence that virtually all of the Ten Commandments were in effect before Mount Sinai. They were understood, they were enforced (to some degree—just like in your home), they must have been taught (though there's little record of such teaching), but they were not codified! Here's the evidence:

Cain sinned in murdering Abel (Genesis 4:6-15).

Jacob knew that stealing was wrong (chapter 30.33).

Joseph considered adultery to be sin against God as did Abimelech (chapter 39.7-9; 20.1-7).

God rebuked the Israelites for seeking manna instead of resting on the Sabbath (Exodus 16.24-30).

The point is this: Just because there's no codification of a law doesn't prove that there is no law. For obviously there were laws before Exodus 20! In fact, God even said of Abraham, "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars . . . because [you] obeyed me and—kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees, and my laws" (Genesis 26.5, NIV).

Yes, indeed there were laws before the codification of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. And although the patriarchs may not have had God's laws in writing,

ns and the ndments

A. Wiedenheft

and although they probably didn't have them numbered 1 through 10, they knew and followed *the spiritual moral principles that God designed for all mankind from the very beginning*. And ever since Creation those spiritual laws have been given in effect; they have continued to be in effect to this day; and the fact that God chose to codify them in ten cardinal commandments for the nation of Israel is not what put them into effect—it's not what keeps them in effect in the Twentieth Century!

Of course, when God began dealing with a physical nation, He knew they would need a system of laws—just as every physical nation today has its laws. He chose, with great care and thought, ten major spiritual principles to be codified as Ten Commandments—to be the legal foundation, the constitution, for His nation.

There is significance in which ones He chose to be included in those Ten—they are undoubtedly the ones He considered most important. There is also significance in the fact, that He gave them directly to Israel (Exodus 20:1,18-21); He wrote them with His own finger (chap. 31.18); He mediated them through no one (Galatians 3.17-20). In that sense, the Ten Commandments are divine, not Mosaic. Of course, in their codified form, they were meant for Israel. They reflect the culture of that nation (e.g., man and maidservants, oxen, donkeys, gates). They were an integral part, indeed, they were the legal and moral foundation of the covenant God made with Israel! The Ten

Commandments were very much a part of the Old Covenant.

Are Christians to enter into the Old Covenant relationship with God? No!

Well then, are the Ten Commandments for Christians?

If by that you mean the exact, legal, codified words of Exodus 20, the answer is that they were given to the physical nation of Israel. But the living, spiritual principles embodied in those Ten Commandments are indeed for Christians. *Remember: the codification of a law is not the law!* Men may dispute about the importance of the codified form for Christians. But there is no question that Christians are to live by every one of the spiritual laws contained in the Ten Commandments (including the Fourth—the Sabbath command). Christians are to live by the divine spiritual laws that were: designed by God for all humanity; put into effect at Creation; chosen to be the foundation of the Old Covenant and codified as the Ten Commandments; reiterated and amplified by Jesus Christ and the Apostles as part of the Christian's way of life—every one of the Ten, including the Fourth (Mark 2.27,28).

As spiritual laws, the Ten are for Christians. They are to be written in Christian hearts and minds; they're to become our way of living, our way of thinking, because they emanate from and are an expression of the divine mind of our Spiritual Father.

*From The Holy Bible: New International Version. Copyright © 1978 by International Bible Society.

Three Approaches to the Law

Spiritual Approach— the law is written in the heart	Carnal Approach— excuses for not keeping the law—it is not written in the heart	Legalistic Approach— righteousness seen as complying with a set of rules
Fifth Commandment Wants to honor parents; finds many ways to do so.	It's good to honor parents if they're honorable, but mine were terrible. I honor my spiritual family, so I just don't have time for my physical parents; I give my money to the church; my parents will get by.	Send Mother's Day cards; Visit once a week; pray for them every day; give anniversary pre- sents.
Fourth Command- ment Wants to remember the Sabbath day to rest and worship God; looks forward to day of spiritual fellowship; seeks ways to use the day to enhance relationship with God.	How can we be sure which day is the seventh day? You can't keep it the way it's supposed to be kept anyway; law was done away; sabbath is a burden; my job requires me to work; most Christians don't keep the Sabbath.	Don't drive more than one hour on Sabbath; don't listen to pop music; don't watch TV; don't do dishes on Sabbath; don't visit non-Christian friends.
Seventh Commandment Wants to be faithful to mate; seeks ways to develop marriage re- lationship—to grow closer and closer to mate; avoids tempting situa- tions.	God put sex drive in me, so it must be OK to use it; experts say an affair can help my marriage; pornography isn't actually committing adultery; it's OK to look—as long as you don't touch; I read the magazines for the articles, not the pictures; look at David and other men of God.	Don't go to movies, don't watch TV; skirts must be below the knee; don't dance; don't wear bikinis.
If the law is written in your heart, you will seek ways to live in accord- ance with God's will; however different people may express it different- ly, so you have to be careful not to judge others on superficial appearances. With law in heart, you may do some, or many, of the things in column 3—but doing so will be from the inside.	This approach is strictly carnal—though many of these excuses can be heard among Christ- tians. Those who use this approach want to be thought of as <i>good</i> <i>people</i> , but God's law isn't written in their hearts.	This approach is used by many Christians—as it was by the Pharisees of Jesus' day. It seeks to have everyone doing things in exactly the same way; leads to self- righteousness and judging. You can do all these dos and don'ts and still not obey the law from your heart.

The Sabbath In The New Testament

(Second part of a series)

By Samuele Bacchiocchi,
Professor of religion and church history,
Andrews University

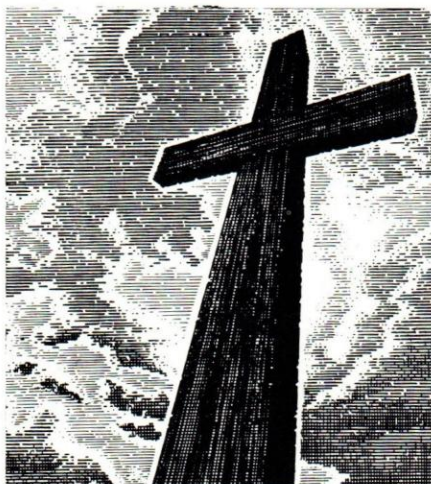
Part Two Four Reasons for the Permanence of the Sabbath

I. The Marked Continuity Between Judaism and Christi- anity

1. Alleged Discontinuity

MY FIRST reason for believing in the permanence of Sabbathkeeping is the marked continuity between Judaism and Christianity that I perceive in the New Testament. Historically the abrogation and the substitution views of the Sabbath have been largely based on the assumption that the coming of Christ brought about a radical discontinuity between Judaism and Christianity. The earliest believers allegedly perceived themselves as "the New Israel" and felt the necessity to give expression to their new faith by adopting immediately a new place and time of worship.

This conception of Christian origins is, in our view, inaccurate and misleading. The New Testament recognizes that Christ's coming brought about a certain discontinuity by fulfilling Old Testament promises, but this discontinuity is never interpreted in terms of abrogation of the Mosaic law in general or of Sabbathkeeping in particular. The meaning of the



discontinuity must be defined in the light of the sense of continuity that is evident in the New Testament. To illustrate the latter, brief reference will now be made to the sense of continuity present in Luke, Matthew, and Hebrews.

2. The Sense of Continuity in Luke

In his book *Luke and the People of God*, Jacob Jervell offers an extensive and perceptive analysis of how Luke emphasizes the Christian continuity with Judaism.¹ The mass conversion of thousands of Jews (see Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 9:42; 12:24; 13:43; 14:1; 17:10-12; 21:20) results

for Luke not in a break away from Judaism and in the formation of a new religion, but rather in the restoration of old Israel (see Acts 15:16-18), consisting of believing Jews who are described as "zealous of the law" (Acts 21:20). At the Jerusalem council, James sees Amos' prophecy (9:11) about the Gentiles who would flock to a restored Israel as being fulfilled in the mass conversion of the Jews through whom salvation is extended to the Gentiles (Acts 15:16-18). "Thus," as Jervell writes, "the continuity of salvation history has been also insured; Luke is unaware of a break in salvation history."²

The sense of continuity is also evident in Luke's view of "the law of Moses" (Luke 2:22; 24:44; Acts 13:39; 28:23), which he calls "the living oracles" (Acts 7:38, RSV). In the disputes about the Sabbath, for example, as Jervell points out, Luke "is concerned to show that Jesus acted in complete accordance with the law, and that the Jewish believers were not able to raise any objections."³

Similarly, in Luke's account of the Jerusalem council, James appeals to the authority of Moses to defend his proposal regarding the four conditions to be observed by the Gentiles: "'For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every sabbath in the synagogues'" (Acts 15:21). Jervell rightly observes that "no matter how the complicated passage Acts 15:21 is to be interpreted in detail, the function of the verse is to validate the decree, and to call upon Moses as witness. Everyone who truly hears Moses knows that the decree expresses what Moses demands from the Gentiles in order that they may live among the Israelites."⁴

Respect for the authority of

Moses is also indicated by the four ritual laws prescribed by the council for the Gentiles, which apparently derive from the Mosaic legislation regarding the sojourner dwelling in Israel (see Leviticus 17-18).⁵ Other indications of continuity are also evident in Luke's frequent references to the temple, the synagogue, the Sabbath, as places and time of Christian gatherings (see Acts 3:1; 9:2; 13:14,42; 17:2; 18:4).⁶

3. The Sense of Continuity in Matthew

The sense of continuity between Judaism and Christianity is expressed also by Matthew in a variety of ways. Significant teachings of Jesus such as the "golden rule" are presented as being the essence of "the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). The rich young man is specifically told to "keep the commandments" in order to have eternal life (Matthew 19:16-19).

Perhaps the most emphatic affirmation of continuity is found in Matthew 5:17,18, where Jesus affirms to have come not "to abolish" but "to fulfill" the law and the prophets, who are to be valid "till heaven and earth pass away." The latter expression clearly goes beyond the earthly ministry of Christ. In the light of the antithesis of the following verses (21-48) "to fulfill" appears to mean "to clarify," "to explain" the meaning of the law and the prophets.⁷ Thus Matthew sees in Christ not the termination, but the continuation and realization, of the law and the prophets. The latter live on in Christ, who clarifies and, in some cases, intensifies their teaching (Matthew 5:21,22,27,28).

4. Continuity and Discontinuity in Hebrews

Hebrews suggests that the

awareness of continuity with the Old Testament was so profound with some Christians that they actually returned to the practice of the Jewish sacrificial cultus. To counteract this problem the author explains the effect of Christ's coming as setting aside (Hebrews 7:18), making "obsolete" (Hebrews 8:13), abolishing (Hebrews 10:9) all the levitical services associated with the temple. This discontinuity, however, should not obscure the continuity that is expressed in a variety of ways. There is continuity between the revelation given by God "of old . . . by the prophets" and that communicated "in these last days" through Christ (Hebrews 1:1). There is continuity in the redemptive ministry offered typologically in the earthly sanctuary by the priests and antitypically in the heavenly sanctuary by Christ (chapters 7,8,9,10). There is continuity in the faith and hope which New Testament believers share together with Old Testament worthies (chapters 11,12).

More specifically, there is continuity in the *sabbatismos*—a term used in a technical way by Plutarch, Justin, Epiphanius, and *Apostolic Constitutions* to designate Sabbath observance—which "remains" (*apoleipetai*) or literally "is left behind for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9).⁸ It is noteworthy that while the author declares the levitical priesthood and services as abolished (Hebrews 10:9), "obsolete," and "ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13), he explicitly teaches that a "Sabbathkeeping is left behind for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9).

5. Conclusion

The representative writings we have examined reveal the existence in New Testament believers of a strong perception of continuity with the Old Testament revelation. While they gradually recognized that certain aspects of the Mosaic law, such as those relating to the levitical ministry, had become obsolete by the coming of Christ, this recognition did not lead them to doubt or to negate the value and

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validity of moral aspects of the law such as the principle of Sabbathkeeping. This conclusion is not negated but rather, as we shall see, confirmed by the writings of Paul where the tension between continuity and discontinuity is particularly present.

II. New Testament Allusions to Creation Sabbath

1. Mark 2:27

The first New Testament reference to the Creation origin of the Sabbath is found in Mark 2:27, where Jesus refutes the charge of Sabbathbreaking leveled against His disciples because they were relieving their hunger by plucking raw ears of grain, saying: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). It is noteworthy that Christ refuted the charge of Sabbathbreaking by asserting the fundamental human function of the Sabbath as protector of human physical and spiritual well-being, which are derived by the original purpose of the day: in other words, "The Sabbath was made on account of man and not man on account of the Sabbath."

Our Lord's choice of words is significant. The verb "made" (*ginomai*) alludes to the original "making" of the Sabbath and the word for man (*anthropos*) suggest its human function. Thus to establish the human and universal value of the Sabbath, Christ reverts to its very origin right after the creation of man. Why? Because for the Lord the law of the beginning stands supreme. This is exemplified in another instance when in reproving the corruption of the institution of marriage, which occurred under the Mosaic code, He reverted to its Edenic origin, saying: "From the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8). Christ then traces both marriage and the Sabbath to

their Creation origin in order to clarify their fundamental value and function for mankind.

2. John 5:17

A second allusion to the Creation origin of the Sabbath is found indirectly in John 5:17. Charged for healing a paralytic on the Sabbath, Christ defended Himself, saying: "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5:17). In earlier studies of this passage I have shown how God's "working" has been traditionally interpreted as constant care (*cura continua*) or continuous creation (*creatio continua*), and the adverb "until now" has been understood as "continually," "always."⁹ The conclusion resulting from such an interpretation has generally been that the *continuous* working of God, whether in Creation or preservation, overrides and rescinds the Sabbath law.

Such a conclusion is unwarranted for at least two reasons. First, because in the Gospel of John the "working" and the "works" of God are repeatedly and explicitly identified not with Creation or preservation, but with the redemptive mission of Christ (cf. John 4:34; 6:29; 10:37,38; 14:11; 15:24; 9:3). Second, because the adverb "until now" presupposes not constancy but a "beginning" and an "end." The beginning is the Creation Sabbath when God completed creation and the end is the final Sabbath when redemption will be consummated. The Sabbaths in between the first and the final Sabbath are for God and His creatures (John 9:4) not a time of listless resting but of concerned "working for the salvation of human beings." We conclude, therefore, that in this pronouncement Christ implicitly alludes to the Creation origin of the Sabbath by means of the adverb "until now."

3. Hebrews 4:4

A third and more explicit reference to the Creation Sabbath is found in Hebrews 4:4 where the author establishes the universal and spiritual nature of the Sabbath rest by welding together two Old Testament texts, namely Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 95:11. Through the former he traces the origin of the Sabbath rest back to Creation when "God rested on the seventh day from all His works" (Hebrews 4:4; cf. Genesis 2:2,3). By the latter (Psalm 95:11) he explains that the scope of this divine rest includes the blessings of salvation to be found by entering personally into "God's rest" (Hebrews 4:3,5,10).

It is noteworthy that Hebrews traces the origin of the Sabbath not to the time of the settlement (Hebrews 4:8), as held by Willy Rordorf,¹⁰ but back to the time of Creation, when "God rested on the seventh day from all his works" (Hebrews 4:4). The probative value of this statement is heightened by the fact that the author is not arguing for the creation origin of the Sabbath, but rather he takes it for granted to explain God's ultimate purpose for His people.

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4. Conclusion

The three texts we have briefly considered clearly indicate that the New Testament takes for granted the Old Testament account of the Creation origin of the Sabbath (Genesis 2:2,3; Exodus 20:11). Thus the notion of a Mosaic origin and exclusive Jewish nature of the Sabbath, is totally absent in the New Testament.

(To be continued)

Footnotes

¹Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God*, 1972, pp. 41-74, 133-152.

²Jacob Jervell, note 17, p. 53.

³Jacob Jervell, note 17, p. 140

⁴Jacob Jervell, note 17, p. 144.

⁵This view is expressed by H. Waitz, "Das problem des sogenannten Aposteldekrets," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 55 (1936):277.

⁶My discussion of Luke's reference to the places and time of Christian gathering is found in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp. 135-142.

⁷"To fulfill" could also mean the prophetic realization of the law and the prophets in the life and ministry of Christ. Such a realization, however, does not invalidate and replace them, because verse 18 explicitly states: "I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished."

⁸Plutarch, *De Superstitione* 3 (*Moralia* 166A); Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho* 23,3; Epiphanius, *Adversus Hæreses* 30,2,2; *Apostolic Constitutions* 2,36,7. A. T. Lincoln admits that "in each of these places the term denotes the observance or celebration of the Sabbath. This usage corresponds to the Septuagint usage of the cognate verb *sabbatizo* (cf. Ex. 16:30; Lev. 23:32; 26:34f.; 2 Chron. 36:21), which also has reference to Sabbath observance. Thus the writer to the Hebrews is saying that since the time of Joshua an observance of Sabbath rest has been outstanding" ("Sabbath Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament" in *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*, 1982, p. 213.

⁹For my extensive analysis of this logion, see *From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp. 38-48; also, "John 5:17: Negation or Clarification of the Sabbath?" *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 19 (Spring 1981):3-19.

¹⁰Willy Rordorf argues that the Sabbath was first introduced after the occupation of Canaan because of socio-economic considerations (n. 8), pp. 12-13.

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