

The SABBATH SENTINEL

Serving the Seventh-day Christian Community

January, 1990



EDITORIAL



If Abortion Were Outlawed

While The Bible Sabbath Association does not take an official position on the issue of abortion, the majority of our membership is against abortion on demand. Many support the prolife movement in its effort to curtail abortion through legislation; for them the issue is very simple: abortion is wrong; and it is the duty of government to outlaw wrong, to take our nation back to its godly roots and Biblical morality.

While I am personally against abortion on demand and support (with some reservations regarding methods) various prolife causes and the local crisis pregnancy center, I submit that should this movement succeed in its goals, there will be very little change in the basic moral fabric of our nation. For the unborn, abortion is a matter of life and death, and for their sakes I'm engaged in the battle. But the legal prohibition of abortion on demand will not make us a God-fearing, upright people. The reason is this: abortion is a symptom of a much greater problem.

Abortion is man's attempt to eliminate the natural consequences of a natural relationship, which is sometimes sinful (the Bible calls it fornication or adultery). Even if abortion is eliminated through legislation, public pressure, birth control, etc., that won't eliminate illicit sex and all the physical and emotional problems that accompany it. Illicit sex has been around since before the Flood; but in our day it has become socially acceptable; human passions are inflamed and romanticized by the media; the consequences of these passions are ignored or trivialized. Everywhere young people look they see everything they ever wanted linked to sex. Beyond that there is a lack of affection at home, a pleasure-crazed world, poor self esteem, the desire for fun without responsibility, the lust for instant gratification—in a word: sin.

Only when we solve the sin problem will we really solve the abortion problem. Only when we as a nation learn to stand in awe of human life, only when we learn to stand in awe of sex as a precious, God-given gift will we be dealing with the real problems.

Legislation, while it certainly has its place, has never resulted in making a people virtuous. Moral people can write good legislation but good legislation won't result in a moral people. The only way to make a moral people is through individual transformation—through individuals learning that sins can be forgiven through Jesus Christ and that life is better when lived in harmony with His commandments. In the long run, the best solution to the abortion problem is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Whether we're engaged in the prolife movement or not, whether we believe abortion is murder or not, let us proclaim the good news of eternal life as the gift of God and of the blessings of living in harmony with His will.

—Richard A. Wiedenheft

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the liberty of His Sabbath!

IN THIS ISSUE

If Abortion Were Outlawed	2
The Sabbath in Early Church-Part 4	4
Sermon on the West Bank	9
Testimonies From China	12
Do Not Enforce Dogma	23

Plus.....

News from the BSA	15
News from the Seventh-day Community	17
To Repeat	20
Letters From Our Readers	21

And now abide
FAITH,
HOPE, LOVE,
these three, but the
greatest of these is
LOVE.

From Sabbath to Lord's Day

A Critical Review — Part 4 of 4

The Sabbath in Early Church

by Desmond Ford

*In the final portion of this review, Dr. Ford examines the arguments for a first-day Sabbath as put forth by A. T. Lincoln in the last chapter of the book *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* (D. A. Carson, editor, Zondervan, 1982).*

Lincoln has a section on the Sabbath commandment in the Decalogue in the post-apostolic church. He points out the writers of this period take one attitude toward the Decalogue but a different one toward the Sabbath. He says that in the early church the Decalogue was isolated as important because it was natural law and therefore was of permanent value. Lincoln says "the eternal moral law was held by the fathers to have been contained in the Decalogue and then embodied in Christ" (page 379). We would suggest the reason they took a different attitude to the largest commandment in the body they endorsed as a whole, that is the body of the Decalogue, was their antagonism to the Jews.

On page 381, Lincoln speaks of Gentile Christian Sabbath observance in the third and fourth centuries, though not in a legalistic manner.

The observance of the Sabbath among some Gentile Christians, for which there is evidence in the third and fourth centuries but which appears to have ceased in the fifth century, should be noted here. Respect for the Sabbath found expression in the prohibition of fast-

ing on Saturday and especially in public worship on that day as well as on the Lord's day (page 381).

From page 382 on Dr. Lincoln discusses the theme of the Lord's day. We think that which is most significant in his discussion is his refusal to authenticate the Lord's day in any manner as a Sabbath or even mandatory.

On page 383 Dr. Lincoln admits the New Testament evidence for the prominence of the first day in connection with Christian worship is scanty. Scanty indeed for he has to draw on Acts 20:7 to constitute the scanty sum. Lincoln suggests that the first day of the week of Acts 20:7 has to mean Sunday. We point out that many scholars disagree as is made clear by such translations as the New English Bible and Today's English Version, both of which apply the meaning to a Saturday night. Biblical days began at sundown and the first day of the week commenced at sunset on Saturday night.

As regards 1 Corinthians 16:1 Carson says:

The putting aside of funds for the collection for the Jerusalem Church, which Paul requires 'on the first day of every week'

(1 Corinthians 16:2) is not directly connected with public worship for this was to be done privately. . . .

Lincoln still hopes that the text might have some relationship to habitual Sunday worship by the Corinthians but he's hard put to find any support for that position. He is similarly poverty stricken when he applies Revelation 1:10 to Sunday. There is just no evidence for this. See, for example, the *Anchor Bible* and *Milligans Commentary on Revelation*, Lincoln admits that unambiguous evidence for Sunday being called the Lord's day dates from the second half of the second century (page 383).

Raising the question as to whether Sunday keeping came in during the time of Paul's Gentile mission Lincoln says "It is unlikely, however, that Sunday observance was an innovation in the Pauline Churches, otherwise this would have met the disapproval of the apostles Judaizing opponents and of this there is no trace in the correspondence." Lincoln also guesses in the following way: "The majority of Jewish Christians in Palestine and many in the Diaspora will have kept the Sabbath and also met with their fellow believers in Christ for worship at some time on the following day" (page 384).

On the same page Lincoln admits that the only hope of finding a text for indicating theological significance for Sunday is Revelation 1:10. In other words there is no evidence for Sunday having theological significance.

On page 385 we read:

Mention of the Sabbath as part of the significance of the first day is conspicuous by its absence from both the New Testament and second century literature. Not only is there no

hint of Sabbath significance about the New Testament references that suggest first day worship, but it is also inconceivable either that Jewish Christians already participating fully in Israel Sabbath observance should or could set aside the first day of the week to observe in the same way or that they simply transferred their Sabbath practice to the first day. . . . Besides, the Jewish Sabbath was such a central institution that any major change in its observance, such as this, would have attracted wide scale attention and persecution for those who perpetrated it, and yet there's no trace of this. Nor does it appear at all plausible that Gentile churches would have introduced the notion that the first day was to be treated as the Sabbath. They would know the Jewish believers were observing the seventh day, and that such a move would be the cause of great disunity. If Paul had taught such a thing in his Gentile churches it is inexplicable that in his discussion of keeping Sabbaths he did not use the trump card that such days had been replaced by the Christian Sabbath, the first day. If his churches understood at all the teaching he did give about days or Sabbaths, it is hardly likely that they would have transferred the concept of the distinctive sanctity of a day to the first day of the week. It cannot be argued that the New Testament itself provides warrant for the belief that since the Resurrection God appointed the first day to be observed as the Sabbath. (Emphasis ours).

On the same page we read, "The New Testament foundations for the church's practice of Sunday worship are not as numerous or as detailed as might be desired. . . ."

On page 388, Lincoln sees the Sabbath as included in the days mentioned by Paul in Romans 14. There is no evidence whatever for this position and many recent commentators including Kasemann reject it. See in particular the recent volume *The Romans Debate*.

On page 389, Dr. Lincoln gives a salutary warning: "The notion that all of one's time is devoted to the Lord does not detract from the necessity of specific worship at specific times." We would like to add that if worship is as important as the whole Bible makes it to be it is inconceivable that God was sloppy and careless in the matter of giving a specific time in which believers could unite together for that most important of all duties. We would expect such a time to be listed with the fundamental duties of Christians, being even of greater importance than warnings not to kill, steal, or commit adultery. It is in just such company that we do find the information we seek. The following pages in Lincoln's chapter stress that natural law requires the setting apart of a regular time for divine worship. Lincoln suggests that this time need not necessarily be a whole day but in answer we would say that all church meetings appointed for other than a sabbatical day failed to bring the community together. The Wednesday night prayer meeting is an example. People are not willing to disturb their worldly practices by bathing and dressing anew for the sake of a single meeting of an hour. Again we agree with Lincoln when he says "to become a seventh-day sabbatarian is the only consistent course of action for anyone who holds that the whole Decalogue is

binding as moral law" (page 392).

And on the following page is a very important statement:

. . . .The Jewish Sabbath was so distinctive and central to Judaism that any attempts in the early church to tamper with the day on which it was observed would have led to great controversy, and it would be strange indeed that none of the literature of the first and second centuries reflects any such controversy. Further, such a change of day would have caused not only religious but also social and economical turmoil if Jewish Christians had taken the day of rest on a different day and Gentile believers had started to take a day of rest on the first day of the week. Again, of such turmoil there's not a hint.

A most interesting comment is found on the following page where Lincoln says "We do, however, need to insist on some sort of continuity of force for the fourth commandment, since this commandment is not simply left in abeyance." Is it not significant that very few if any professed Christians want to get rid of all the fourth commandment? All want some time for worship even if it's only an hour. Others want a day of rest, even if they wish to make it Sunday. Inasmuch as the commandment talks about work, rest and worship, it would be very difficult indeed to find someone on earth who doesn't have to do one of the three, indeed, two of the three, at least. Why tear asunder what God has joined together?

An interesting concession again is found on page 398:

Gentiles, however, would not necessarily have found the sabbatical division of time either natural or convenient and need

not have adopted it, and yet they did. Part of the Christian church's inheritance from Judaism was the concept that in the weekly cycle God had stamped a seven-day patent on history. Acts 20:7—"the first day of the week"—and 1 Corinthians 16:2—"the first day of the week"—reflects the terminology of Gentile Christian churches for Sunday as the first day in the sequence determined by the Sabbath.

Lincoln in that context quotes the original Greek which shows that first day of the week literally means first day from the Sabbath.

On page 401, Dr. Lincoln refers to Barth's theology in connection with the fourth commandment. We would recommend that all should read the whole of Barth's commentary in his church dogmatics on this subject. As Carson points out, Barth believed in the notion of a holy day that was established at creation and always obligatory on believers.

On page 404, Lincoln sums up by saying:

... This essay is not advocating that Christians should not rest on Sunday. Rather its position suggests that they should take regular rest, that this rest can be any day or extended part of a day, including Sunday, but there's no biblical or compelling theological reason why it has to be Sunday...

On the same page, the writer speaks of the mad rush of work and play. We would suggest that it is just this mad rush that makes the need of the Sabbath more important than ever. Similarly, the further one gets from creation the greater the necessity for memorializing that event. But when we find in Scripture that the account of our Lord's death is so

written as to reflect the Edenic original then it becomes crystal clear that the Sabbath keeper in the Christian era is one who finds in that Holy Day a memorial of both creation and redemption. It is hardly by chance that our Lord is pictured as finishing His new work on the sixth day of the week in time to rest on the seventh. It is hardly coincidence that again we have a naked Adam on a Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil having his side opened that he might have a bride on the eve of the Holy Day. It is hardly coincidence that the one whole day our Lord spent in the tomb resting from His work of new creation was the seventh day.

We would point out that circumcision is mentioned approximately as many times in the New Testament as is the Sabbath, but there is this great difference—approximately half the passages referring to circumcision make it quite clear that it has no longer any binding significance for Christians. But on the contrary, 59 out of the 60 New Testament references to seventh-day Sabbath are positive. The only negative one is in the context of a discussion not about law (which term does not occur in the book of Colossians) but human gentile philosophy mixed with syncretistic practices from Judaism and elsewhere. The only warning against any type of sabbatarian practice in the New Testament is connected with a warning against "the commandments and precepts of men," "will worship" which is not any honor in the battle against the flesh. To suggest that a special day of worship, of thinking about God and working for him, does not help to subdue the flesh, is nonsense. We can think of no better habit.

It is quite clear that Christians should take their first and last words from Him who was the Alpha and Omega. The witness from Christ

about the Sabbath is quite clear. Everything that was to be in the New Covenant had to come in before His death for His death sealed and ratified that covenant. He is always and ever positive regarding the Sabbath of the fourth commandment and risks His life to teach how it should be observed. The very first comments in the New Testament about men seeking to destroy Christ are in connection with these reforms on the Sabbath commandment. One does not scrape off the barnacles from a ship no longer to be used, nor polish its brass. The fact that the four Gospels have so much to say about the seventh-day Sabbath, though written a generation or more after our Lord's death, makes it clear that the Sabbath was still relevant to the first readers of the New Testament. Furthermore those references make it clear that Christ's best friends are being protected by the Gospel writers from any possible charge of Sabbath breaking. Read the reference to the Sabbath in connection with the resurrection narrative. Notice how carefully the Gospel writers have protected the reputation of the Lord's friends from the accusation of Sabbath breaking. His friends returned after the cross and "rested according to the commandment." It will never be an ill thing for us to follow their example and His.

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Thoughts on Evangelism

In a recent article on reaching North America with the Gospel, Monte Sahlin, Seventh Day Adventist coordinator of adult ministries made the observation that more and more witnessing has to be done in the workplace. This is because the average workweek has increased from 40 to 49 hours and available free time has decreased from 27 to 17 hours per week. That means the focus of lay witnessing must move from the neighborhood to the workplace, where "friendship evangelism" skills must be used to effectively share the Gospel with coworkers.

Sermon on the West Bank

by D. N. Griffin

As a missionary in the little Arab village of Bethphage on the back side of the Mount of Olives in what the residents call the "West Bank," we have many conversations with the young men of military age.

During one such talk around a checkerboard outside a little Arab store, the conversation was about the retaliatory acts that had not yet erupted into the scale of the current bloodshed.

We took that opportunity to mention Jesus' teaching about turning the other cheek.

One of the young men grew rather indignant and stood to his feet challenging us, "Dan-el, do you say if I hit you, you not hit back?"

Anticipating a demonstration of that sentiment if our words were not appropriate, we prayed under our breath for wisdom, walked over to the young man, looked him square in the eyes and slapped our hands very hard down on his shoulders and said, "Hammad, if you would do this thing, I would want to knock your block off, but that is not what Jesus would want me to do."

As our hands slid to his arms and the intensity in our voice lessened, we said, "Jesus would say to you, 'Why did you hit me? . . . I'm your brother.' "

Hammad thought for a fraction of a second and with a laugh said, "Naaagh."

Before another word was spoken, a car drove up in front of the little

store and from the passenger side jumped a big, burly Arab whom we had never seen in the neighborhood. He walked over to Hammad and struck him very hard on his left shoulder. The blow betrayed a hint of horseplay but we could also see that it was retaliation for something Hammad had instigated.

Knocked almost to the ground, Hammad recovered with his fist reared and although he was slight of build compared to his assailant, began to run at him.

We are not sure what possessed us, but we grabbed his fist on the backswing and yelled in Hebrew, "*Regah*," which means "wait a minute."

Hammad, surprised, looked up at us, looked over at his assailant who had a "go-ahead, make my day" look on his face, glanced back at us and dropped his fist. Then this smirk came over him as he said to the Arab in one rapid-fire sentence, "Why did you hit me; I'm your brother?"

As the other half dozen Arabs who were gathered around our checkerboard pulpit roared in laughter, some falling out of their seats, the burly Arab retreated to his car without a word, but glanced back over his shoulder several times and shook his head even as the car drove out of sight.

Then came the sermon, that in this case, Hammad had saved himself from a beating by "turning the

other cheek." What we did not expect was the words that followed. . . that "trouble was coming . . . perhaps even a war." That the Arabs must decide whether to align with Israel or with the Arab block. "If you choose Israel, you will be greatly persecuted, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will honor your decision. But if you choose the Arab block, it will be like spitting into the wind."

A few weeks later, television evangelist Lester Sumerall was in Jerusalem and although it was *Shabbat*, we were led to walk several miles to the Hilton Hotel to hear him speak. Upon arrival, we learned there would be no speaker that night because it was forbidden to use the sound equipment on *Shabbat*.

As we were about to leave, figuring on this occasion we had missed

God, a friend of Sumerall who said he had been watching us for some time, came up to us and asked why we were there. We mentioned that we just wanted to hear Brother Sumerall and that we had been trying to minister to Arabs on the West Bank. The friend escorted us to Sumerall's table.

Asked by Sumerall what God was doing in the West Bank, we related the same story about Hammad and the choice confronting the Arab world . . . but added that the Church, too, has a choice to make as it concerns Israel in this hour. . . that public opinion throughout the world may turn against Israel, but that. . . all politics aside . . . the Church must not.

—Reprinted from *The Mount Zion Reporter*, June '88.

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SABBATH SYMPOSIUM

by Victor Novak

In May of this year the Center for Judaic Studies of the University of Denver and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists co-sponsored a Symposium on the Sabbath in Jewish and Christian traditions. The symposium was held at the University of Denver and attracted a number of fine speakers.

Among the Jewish speakers were Walter S. Wurzbarger of Yeshiva University, who spoke on "Loving the Sabbath Day as a Jew: Jewish Theology and Philosophy of the Sabbath;" and Lawrence Hoffman of Hebrew Union College, who spoke on "Upholding the Sabbath Day: The Jewish Sabbath Faces Modernity."

The Christian speakers represented both Sabbatarian and Sunday-keeping traditions. Among those representing the Sabbatarian tradition were Jacques Doukhan of Andrews University, who spoke on "Loving the Sabbath Day as a Christian: A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective;" Samuel Bacchiocchi of Andrews University, who spoke on "Remembering the Sabbath Day: A History of the Sabbath;" and Mitchell Tyner of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, who spoke on "The Sabbath and the State: Legal Implications of Sabbatarianism."

There were also some interesting speakers representing the Sunday-keeping tradition. Especially noteworthy were the presentations made by Daniel Harrington S.J. of Weston School of Theology on "Sabbath Tensions: Matthew 12:1-14 and Other New Testament Texts;" Harold Weiss of St. Mary's College on "The

Sabbath in the Fourth Gospel"; John H. Primus of Calvin College on "Sunday: The Lord's Day as a Sabbath-Protestant perspectives on the Sabbath"; and John Baldovin, of Jesuit School of Theology and Graduate Theological Union on "Sabbath Liturgy: Celebrating on the Sabbath Day as a Christian."

Needless to say not all of the speakers agreed on everything; in fact, a wide variety of opinions were expressed on the Bible Sabbath, the nature of Sabbath-keeping, the change from Sabbath to Lord's Day, and the appropriateness of Christians celebrating the Sabbath Day. Despite the varying views, the symposium was positive, respectful of differences in opinion, loving, and helpful. While there were disagreements, everyone seemed to agree to disagree agreeably.

The highlight of the symposium was a traditional Sabbath evening meal and worship held at BMH (Jewish) Congregation, a large traditional synagogue in Denver. Christians and Jews, Sabbatharians and Sunday-keepers, gathered together to worship the Lord our God, and to feast on the eve of His holy day.

The Judaic Studies Department at the University of Denver is considering additional symposiums on the Sabbath issue in the future; and will soon be publishing the manuscripts presented in the May Symposium. For more information, write the Judaic Studies Department at Univ. of Denver, Denver, CO 80208-0292 or call (303) 871-3020.

—The author is a church growth specialist for the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day).

Testimonies from China

Editor's note: The following, written by a member of the True Jesus Church, was excerpted from an article translated from *New Wine Magazine*, Asian Outreach Ltd, Hong Kong, June 1978. It should be noted that some of the conditions described may have changed significantly in the last ten years.

The Church in China

We do not have church buildings in Mainland China. However, informal meetings are held in many places. We really have suffered persecutions: those who believe in Jesus have been criticized and mocked everywhere. When I was in the school, I was abused by schoolmates until I cried. However, the control and persecution in the rural area is less strict as compared with the control in the city. In the rural area, in general, the houses are larger than in the city. So the family services usually have 40 to 50 people, sometimes even more than 100. When the government started the movement of religious suppression, our activity slowed somewhat, but it did not completely stop. After the high tide of the movement was over, our divine works immediately became active again.

The detailed conditions of our service are as follows: when the service started, those who came early always prayed first, then copied the Bible (in Mainland China, the only way to read the Words of God was to copy the Bible and accumulate it little by little to make one's own Bible). When all the members came, the leader started to lead hymn singing, which was followed by a sermon. Then all the congregation sang hymns and prayed again.

There are very few senior leaders in our church, particularly in our home town. Therefore, the senior leaders can only come to the country

to deliver a sermon once or twice a month. At other services, we were only able to review what the leader had last preached. Recently, however, the church began to train young Christians to be preachers and provided us with carbon-copied commentaries and records of sermons. Before the youth were trained, most of the preachers were old, but now there are many young preachers in the church. In our home town, the old preachers take care of the services in remote places. I myself had gone to some remote rural areas to lead the services.

During the time we were in Mainland China, we could clearly see the mighty power of God. In 1976, during a severe cold winter, I had seen a most marvelous water baptism. On that day there were more than one hundred members of the True Jesus Church participating. Before the baptism, we all sang the hymns and prayed together without any fear; on the contrary, we all felt full of happiness and peace. Those who were being baptized ranged in age from a 72-year old man to teenagers, including a longterm paralyzed woman and a demoniac (mental disease). All of them, without exception, had been completely healed after coming up from the water baptism. It is noteworthy that some unbelievers told us they had seen the water of the river at the site of the water baptism become blood red. This indicates our sins have been completely washed away by the pre-

cious blood of Jesus, in addition to the divine healing and the miracle of water baptism.

Whole Family Leaves China

The following witness illustrates the miracle that our family was able to leave China. We had applied to go abroad for about 2 years. Regularly the government allows only two to three members in each family to leave the country. Nevertheless, thanks to the grace of God, our whole family with seven members was approved to leave the country.

One night, about a year after we filed the application, a sister came to stay with us. While we were lying in bed, suddenly she told me that she saw two bright lights flashing through the window. At first, I thought she was confused by the flashing light outside the window. However, a few minutes later, another five bright lights flashed through the window again, and this time I saw them too.

Later we asked a preacher about this incident. He explained to us that the two flashing lights might indicate that two members of our family would be approved to leave China. The five flashing lights might indicate that another five members of our family would leave the country.

Ten days later in a prayer service, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a brother translated another brother's unknown tongues and said, "Wong Ling, in the winter your family will go to Hong Kong by train."

At that moment, our application had only been submitted for about a year. I doubted the approval of our application in a short period of time. These two brothers were so afraid of making a mistake. They were not sure whether what they spoke and translated would come true.

It was about winter, yet we had not received the notice of approval

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One day my father was suddenly moved by the Holy Spirit and left home for the office which was about ten miles away to get the approval after he fasted and prayed. When my father got there, the police officers were surprised and asked him, "The notice has not been sent out yet, how do you know to come here and get the approval? How strange!" Of course, my father did not tell them why, but only hesitated to speak. Finally they said to my father, "You are really lucky," and gave the approval to him.

This was indeed a blessing of the Lord for us to go abroad. If the notice had been mailed to us, all our villagers would have known that all seven members of our family were approved to leave the country, and would certainly criticize us and hinder us to go. The Lord also told us to leave in two days. Therefore, in two days we left peacefully and came to the free world. Thank God! Because of this miracle, God also moved many people to believe in Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, do make use of your valuable free environment which God has given you (in the Western world). Although our fellow Christians in China have suffered various restriction in their faith, they have received more spiritual gifts and joy, and they love God more deeply and fervently.

LAW

ON THE LEGAL FRONT

Marriage is a "fictitious legal distinction," said Judge Vito J. Titone of the New York Court of Appeals. In a recent opinion that allowed Miguel Braschi to inherit the apartment of his male lover, the judge found little difference between married couples and domestic partnerships between heterosexuals, gays, and lesbians. Overwhelming evidence that marriage increases longevity and drastically reduces crime doesn't seem to count.

In upholding an anti-porn statute in Prince George's County, Maryland, Judge Robert S. Chapman of the 4th US Court of Appeals said, "As countless cases addressed by. . . courts across the nation will confirm, there are notorious and self-evident conditions attendant to the commercial exploitation of human sexuality. . . ." In plain English, the county has every right to keep "adult" stores away from churches, schools, and homes to prevent moral and physical decay of those places. The good guys still sometimes win.

The only Christian law school in America is suing the American Bar Association for that guild's refusal to grant accreditation. The O.W. Coburn School of Law, originally a part of Oral Roberts University, was recently moved to Pat Robertson's CBN University in Virginia Beach due to Oral Roberts's continuing financial problems. While at Oral Roberts, the law school successfully sued the ABA to force it to grant accreditation. When the school was

moved, problems began again. The suit, actually being brought by 49 graduating students whose privileges to practice law are jeopardized, claims religious discrimination. In one meeting the ABA had questioned Herbert W. Titus, the college's dean, more about religion, homosexuality, and abortion, than about any relevant legal topic. Since the suit's filing, the ABA has granted preliminary accreditation.

God is a liberal. So says F. Forrester Church writing in the November *Church and State* magazine of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, an organization which often sues to remove Christian symbols and speech from public forums. "In my book, if you were to rank the ten most famous liberals. . . God would win hands down. . . . No one is more generous, creative, or misunderstood. Not to mention profligate. . . . There is too much of everything: creatures, cultures, languages, stars. Talk about self-indulgence. . . All I can say is, if you don't like [alternate sexual preferences] you better blame the creator, not the creature. . . . God is a card-carrying liberal. . . ."

During England's blue law debate, in which that nation's Sunday closing laws were upheld, one member of Parliament reportedly quoted the Bible on the 7th-day Sabbath. He was "hooted down."

(Thanks to BSA folks who provide occasional items for this column.)

BSA

NEWS FROM THE BSA

Directory Supplement

As of this writing in late November, the directory supplement is completed. It contains 85 changes to the 188 listings in the 1986 (sixth edition) of the *Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups* plus more than 140 new listings. Forty pages long, the directory will be printed by Bible Advocate Press in Denver during December. See back cover for prices and ordering details.

Sabbath at Sommerhase

Page layouts for *Sabbath at Sommerhase* are virtually finalized and bids are being solicited from several printers. Authored by Lettie Siddens of Missouri, this 128-page book is being copublished by Keith and Lettie Siddens and BSA. It contains 17 stories and 13 Bible lessons—all relating to the Sabbath, all full of ideas for making the Rest Day exciting for children. The activity packet includes some 30 worksheets, games, puzzles, plays, and projects. With all the ideas and materials in this book, no family should ever have to complain about not knowing what to do with children on the Sabbath.

Burrells attend Festivals

Lawrence and Lottie Burrell, BSA treasurer and assistant, visited a couple of Feast of Tabernacles meetings in Oklahoma during October. They reported a warm welcome from friendly folk, including several with whom they'd had correspondence but had never met.

Younger Burrells in Australia

Meanwhile, Bryan and Mary Sue Burrell, son and daughter-in-law of Lawrence and Lottie, were on a trip to Australia. They were guests of the Warrimon Seventh Day Baptist Fellowship on Sabbath, October 14, and were graciously hosted by Stephan and Vicky Kube, who are active in the SDB work in Australia. The Burrells also visited other Sabbathkeeping brethren Down Under. Back home in Fairview, they assist their parents with BSA work, especially with maintaining computer records.

Two New Tracts

Final layout of the Tracts *The Rest of Your Life* and *Whatever Happened to the Sabbath?* (Formerly, *Search the Scriptures*) is completed. All that remains is to make arrangements with a printer. Prices and ordering details should be available next month. Both of these will be inexpensive, two-panel tracts, printed in the same format as our other newer booklets.

Do You Read Seventh-day Periodicals?

If so, perhaps you can help the editor. Reading many different seventh-day publications is one of his major responsibilities. You can help by searching the periodicals you already read for material that would be of interest to *Sentinel* readers. For more information write the editor at RD 1 Box 475, Falls, PA 18615.

Board Member Celebrates 60 Years

John Kiesz, longtime BSA board member, and his wife Katherine celebrated 60 years of marriage on Sunday, October 1 (the real date is Oct. 3). Twenty seven friends and brethren, mostly from the Denver area, come to the Kiesz home in Canon City to be with them. BSA vice-president Calvin Burrell led in a program of singing, poetry reading, testimonies, reminiscences, and special songs. Known as the singing evangelists, John and Katherine still minister locally and elsewhere. Once a month they serve at the Progressive Care Center; once a week they minister at the Odd Fellows Home. On the first Sabbath of each month they have worship services in their home. An evangelistic and revival meeting in Grand Prairie, Texas, was on their calendar for November. We deeply appreciate the dedicated service of John and Katherine Kiesz and congratulate them as they begin their 61st year of marriage.



John & Katherine Kiesz in their younger days; pictured on one of their evangelistic flyers.



Still singing His praises; Elder and Mrs. Kiesz at a BSA meeting in Denver during 1987.



The literature display arranged by Recording Secretary Loroy Bass at the 1989 Seventh Day Baptist General Conference. Elder Bass, along with John Conrod, BSA third vice-president, made BSA materials available to their fellow Seventh Day Baptists at the August conference, which was held in Portland, Oregon.

NEWS

FROM THE SEVENTH DAY COMMUNITY

Worldwide Doctrinal Changes

Because the Worldwide Church does not cooperate with The Sabbath Sentinel, stories about it are necessarily less common and more speculative. This editor has heard of continuing doctrinal change in that group since the death of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, and the ascension of Joseph W. Tkach. Makeup, which was forbidden, allowed, then forbidden again in upheavals of the late 70's, is now okay under the Tkach administration. Birthdays may also be celebrated, though earlier they were considered exercises of vanity and against Biblical example.

Much more seriously, the church's long-standing condemnation of doctors and medicine has apparently faded away. Weakened throughout the years by the legal and health problems of church leaders, the teaching that seeing doctors meant lack of faith was strengthened when the terminally-ill Armstrong apparently wrote a strong anti-medicine booklet. Some speculate the piece was ghostwritten. At that time the reclusive Armstrong was aided by nurses and medical equipment at his Tucson, Arizona, home. Physicians and drugs seem to be acceptable under the Tkach administration.

The idea that the seven churches of Rev. 2 and 3 represent successive ages of the body of Christ, of which the WCG "era" was Philadelphia, seems presently to languish. That teaching was once used to explain Mr. Armstrong's break from the Church of God (Seventh Day). Later he strongly punished or expelled those who disagreed with him, call-

ing them rebels against the "government of God." The belief in church eras provided the justification for his own early rebellion against the leaders of his first church. According to Armstrong, the Church of God (Seventh Day) was the Sardis era of God's Church, and all those who did not leave to join Worldwide have had their salvation taken away. Not all WCG leaders accepted that.

These and other changes have unsettled some. The group's income increase was below inflation for most of 1989, though it may have since improved through greater giving by existing members. For most of its life, Worldwide experienced annual double-digit increases in revenue and membership, punctuated, occasionally, by scandals and membership losses.

The WCG may be thinking of selling its Pasadena headquarters and college complex—if it can get \$200 million for the property. All operations would move to the cheap open spaces near Big Sandy, Texas, where the church runs a junior college. The relocation would place WCG's administration close to archrival (as WCG views it) Church of God, International, of Tyler, headed by Garner Ted Armstrong, Herbert's estranged son. Worldwide members are not allowed to contact or discuss the younger Armstrong; but he is still very popular. Is Garner Ted's charismatic presence one big reason Worldwide has not moved from smoggy, shaky Southern Cal to the Lone Star State?

Trouble in Africa

Pastor K. Agyarkwa-Boansi of Accra, Ghana, reports a government

crackdown on Christian churches which has banned Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and others. The minister, affiliated with the Churches of God, 7th Day, headquartered in Meridian, Idaho, says all religious groups must re-register with Ghana's National Commission on Culture. Much red tape is involved; and some requirements suggest that home churches may be outlawed. That will not hurt most Catholics and Protestants; but the Churches of God, 7th Day, meet mainly in classrooms and houses. In better news, three new COG groups have begun in Belo Horizonte, Cruzeiro, and Colatina, Brazil.

Two New SDA Unions

This summer two new Adventist unions formed within the USSR. The Baltic/Byelorussian Union has 3500 members in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Byelorussia. The Moldavian Union encompasses over 4200 people in 45 churches.

Liberal Adventist Deplores Televised Sex, Violence

In a letter to the Mennen Company, a sponsor of trash television, Dr. Lorenzo H. Grant, pastor of the Breath of Life SDA Church in Ft. Washington, Maryland, gave the reasons that he, a liberal Democrat, is supporting Rev. Don Wildmon's boycott of Mennen. He said in part, "I'm a black. . . '60's civil rights activist and 'pseudo intellectual' with a real doctoral degree. . . I don't even want to know what [Wildmon] was doing while I was marching around the Lincoln Monument [in 1963]. . . The glamorization of illicit sex, crime, and violence is really not necessary

. . . for artistic expression . . . I know this is all debatable. But by the time the jury is in we will have lost another generation, and perhaps something even more precious—our national soul." The letter was published in the *Journal of the American Family Association*. Dr. Grant joins national leaders of many 7th-day groups in urging the boycott of Mennen, Clorox, Holiday Inns, and other firms profiting from moral decay.

COG Forms Ethnic Committees

At last July's General Conference meeting of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Denver, the Women's Agency established a Hispanic Coordinating Committee and an Afro-Heritage Coordinating Committee. To help understand better the needs of the growing black and Latin memberships, the committees have asked for ideas and comments from the whole church. A Spanish-speaking congregation recently began in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; and one for servicemen in the Schweinfurt area of Germany has grown to 40 families.

SDA Tale Cops Kudos

A Cry in the Dark, the film starring Meryl Streep, was voted best picture of 1988 by Religion in Media. It tells the story of an Australian Adventist pastor and his wife who were wrongly convicted of murdering their youngest child. After more than a year of suffering and scorn, including prison, they were vindicated. The true drama may have helped lead more to Christ than some heavy-handed movies by Christian producers.

Resources Available From BSA

Books

<i>History of the Sabbath & Sunday</i> by John Kiest (64 pp.)	\$3
<i>The Sabbath in the New Testament</i> by Samuele Bacchiocchi (275 pp.)	\$10
<i>From Sabbath to Sunday</i> by Samuele Bacchiocchi (372 pp.)	\$10
<i>Divine Rest for Human Restlessness</i> by Samuele Bacchiocchi (320 pp.)	\$10
<i>The Forgotten Day</i> by Desmond Ford (318 pp.)	\$10
<i>The Law, the Gospel and the Sabbath</i> by Frank M. Walker (91 pp.)	\$3
<i>God's Sabbath for Mankind</i> by Richard A. Wiedenhof (64 pp.)	60¢

Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups

Sixth Edition, 1986, only	\$5
Supplement, 1989, only	\$2
Sixth Edition and Supplement	\$7

Back Issues of THE SABBATH SENTINEL (when available) 10 for \$3; 30 for \$5

Booklets

<i>Why the Seventh-day Sabbath</i> (12 pp.)	20¢ ea.; \$17/100
<i>Roman Catholic and Protestant Confessions About Sunday</i> (12 pp.)	20¢ ea.; \$17/100
<i>The Bible Sabbath: Seventh Day or First Day?</i> (6 pp.)	14¢ ea.; \$12/100
<i>Bible Truth About "Salvation by Grace Through Faith"</i> by F. Walker (32 pp.)	50¢ ea.; \$8/20
<i>Questions for Seventh Dayists Answered</i> by T. Littrell (18 pp.)	Out of stock
<i>Has Sabbath Time Been Lost?</i> by Joseph M. McGuire (10 pp.)	15¢ ea.; \$9/60

Tracts

<i>The Rest of Your Life</i> (1 p.)	New Edition in Production
<i>Search the Scriptures</i> (1 p.)	New Edition in Production

Sample copies of tracts are available free if you enclose with your request a self-addressed #10 envelope with 45¢ postage.

Promotional Aids

BSA Brochures	No Charge
Sabbath Calendars	\$1.75 ea.; \$1.50 ea. for 10 or more
Ball point pens with imprint: "The Seventh Day is the Sabbath"	\$5/dozen
Bumper stickers with a Sabbath message	\$1 ea.; \$7/dozen
Sabbath seals	\$1/dozen
Post cards with Sabbath message on one side, space for personal message and address on the other side	\$1/dozen

Cassette Tapes Write for Complete List

Please add \$1 to all orders
for shipping and handling.

Order from:

The Bible Sabbath Association
RD 1 Box 222 • Fairview, OK 73737
Phone (405) 227-3200

Members of BSA may take a 20% discount off the single quantity prices of all items.

TO REPEAT

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS BY OR ABOUT SABBATHKEEPERS

Many false doctrines have been perpetrated by those of us who, though well-meaning, do not have the academic foundation to formulate doctrine in the primary sense. The use of *Strong's* is a case in point. The Hebrew and Greek dictionary sections of *Strong's* are anything but authoritative, and they should never be used. . . to "correct" scholars. Some have even had the temerity to claim "inspiration" as their basis for overruling authoritative lexicons in favor of *Strong's*! . . . But even [Jesus], in his earthly ministry, taught within the confines of traditional. . . scholarship.

"How to Use Strong's Concordance" by Brian W. Knowles
ACD Newsletter, Dec. '87

Adventists have always understood that, according to the 70-week prophecy of Daniel, Israel ceased to be a special nation at the close of that period, when it rejected the gospel in A.D. 34. We therefore cannot expect a mass conversion of the Jews to Christianity.

"1844 Revisited", by Eugene F. Durand, *Adventist Review*, Oct. 27, '88

One who has the "gift of healing" heals every time he speaks the word. . . I really doubt if [anyone] has this gift. And I would lay money, if I were a betting man, that you cannot find one person on this earth. . . that has the gift of speaking in tongues. Acts 2 proves that. . . tongues is. . . speaking in one language and being heard in several legitimate earthly languages. One with the gift of prophecy predicts the future with 100% accuracy. I would really like to find someone with this gift, wouldn't you?

Answers to reader comments by Richard C. Nickels in Study No. 113
Dec. '87, *Giving and Sharing*

Perhaps the most dangerous lies are those with which we con ourselves. Ones we have come to believe to be profound truths on which we can base our lives. . . There are no absolute standards of right and wrong. . . If it feels good it can't be wrong. . . I have a right to get mine. . . It doesn't matter what you do as long as it doesn't hurt anyone. . .

"The World's Fastest Lie" by Dexter Faulkner, *The Plain Truth*, Oct. '89

Unfortunately, many Adventists see the writings of Ellen G. White as an infallible shortcut to scriptural understanding. . . If [Adventists] elevate Ellen White to the position of infallible interpreter, then the dramatic irony of the ages has come true—SDA has a Pope.

"From Controversy to Crisis" by Kenneth R. Samples
Christian Research Journal, Summer '88

Quotes don't necessarily reflect the views of The Bible Sabbath Association.

MAILBOX

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Referrals from *Overcomer* From England

I am writing to you after reading an article "Why the Seventh-day Sabbath" published in Bro. Ralph Stairs' paper, the *Overcomer*. I have come to hold the view that we should keep the seventh-day Sabbath. I use only the KJV Bible, with helps in it by H.M.S. Richards, the Seventh-day Adventist evangelist. His study in the back on the Sabbath is good; however I cannot accept the Adventist teaching on various points so am not one. So what was I to do. But praise the Lord I have come in contact with you. Could you tell me of other groups here in the U.K. as well as in the U.S.?

From Florida

I'm a regular reader of the *Overcomer* magazine, which gave your address. I was always taught the Sabbath was void, but since listening to Brother Stair and Ray Pringle, I realize that God's moral laws aren't void. I'm asking you to send more information on this subject.

From Washington

I am a reader and believer of the *Overcomer* newsletter. I would sincerely be interested in meeting with Christians of this accord. [Editor's note: We put this person in touch with a local church and received the following response.] Thank you so much for referring me to the pastor here. I haven't attended a Sabbath service yet, but hope to this Saturday. We talked on the phone and I do like what he has to say. I am excited. God is so faithful. Enclosed is \$20. I

would consider it an honor to be part of your membership.

No Mail on Sabbath

The enclosed letter to the local post office branch manager from the service center director [excerpted below] shows that it is possible to stop mail delivery on the Sabbath to let the mind more fully rest.

Robert T. Clark
Roanoke, Virginia

Effective with receipt of this letter, please take the actions necessary to withhold mail delivery on Saturdays for Mr. Clark until further notice.

U.S. Post Office
Roanoke, Virginia

Association in Ghana

The new law in Ghana requires all religious bodies to register again. We saw fit to come together to form an association along the lines of the BSA in the U.S. We would like to conduct our association almost the same way you do yours. Please send us a copy of your constitution and by-laws.

K. Aggarkwa-Boansi
Accra-North, Ghana

Wants to Reprint Article

There have been some especially good articles in TSS the past year. One that I would like to reprint in my little paper is "The Curse of the Law" by Brian Jones (June '89). I have many antinomians on my mailing list and this article is so well done that I believe much good could be accomplished with it.

Bob Jantz
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

ADS

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Cleveland, Ohio. BSA Exec. Dir. Richard Wiedenheft will be guest speaker at the Cleveland Church of God, Sabbath, January 13. For information, call Bill Phillips, (216) 228-5631. (1)

Laws to ban tobacco, pornography and overpopulation. Write Tom Sawyer, P. O. Box 472, Durham, NH 03824. (1)

Free subscription to *The Prophetic Word Magazine!* Learn the prophecies now being fulfilled! Learn the prophecies for our future! Write Box 2442, Abilene, TX 79604. (2-1)

The Curse of Perfectionism. A free article for Sabbatarians who wonder if they'll make it into the kingdom. Write Focus On Truth, Box 45A, Lake Winola, PA 18625. (12-2)

Truth for These Last Days. Send stamped envelope for reply to Remnant of Israel, Box 6774-A, Spirit Lake, IA 51360. (8-2)

A bright, new magazine—*YNCA Light*. Good, solid, Biblical articles; insight into prophecy. Free. Write YNCA, P.O. Box 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262. (3-2)

Single Christian Man, age 30, desires to correspond with single, Sabbathkeeping ladies ages 20 to 30. Please write to: Box 850991, Richardson, 75085. (12-3)

Adventist Church of the Promise (Messianic), serving northwest central Florida, invites you to weekly Sabbath services. For information call (904) 795-1750 or write P.O. Box 2426, Crystal River, FL 32629. (9-0)

Good News Unlimited Meetings featuring Dr. Desmond Ford. Hendersonville, NC, Feb. 2-3; local contact: Alvin R. (803) 582-2460. Riverside, CA, Feb. 16; local contact: Margaret N. (619) 749-0471. San Diego, CA, Feb. 17, SDB Church, 3441 Clairemont Blvd.; local contact: Margaret N. (619) 749-0471. For full schedule, write GNU, 11710 Education St., Auburn, CA 95603. (1,2)

Classified ads are available at the rate of 30¢ per word (including each word and each group of numbers in the address). Copy for classified ads should be sent, along with payment, to *The Bible Sabbath Association*, Fairview, OK 73737. Deadline is the 15th of the month for the issue of the second subsequent month (e.g., April 15 for June issue).

BSA reserves the right to reject any copy; publication does not necessarily imply endorsement by The Bible Sabbath Association.

Information and rates for display advertising is available on request.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS????

By all means notify us in advance when you move. If we send a *SENTINEL* to your old address, the post office charges us 30¢ to return it—and you risk missing that issue.

Do Not Enforce Dogma

Editor's note: The following is a letter from a Sabbathkeeper to the editor of a Canadian newspaper. The Ontario government is inclined to enforce Sunday closing laws in that province. Clipping submitted by Edward A. Elstone.

The Highland Herald

Dear Editor: At the risk of being called a heretic, I wish to express my opposition to those who are pressuring the government to exert its political muscles to enforce their religious dogmas and beliefs upon the public, regardless of race, color, or religion, whether it be in regards to a closed Sunday or prayer and Bible reading in the public schools.

Those who use the term that "this is a Christian country" I find very debatable, as I understand the term Christian is one who follows Christ

in all respects.

Christ never sought political authority to back up His teachings and to see that they were carried out. He never resorted to falsehood or cover-up in His dealings with mankind, as we see today that is being carried on.

The church and the home is the place for religious teaching and training, or in a church operated and funded environment, not in a publicly funded institution.

Sincerely
A. E. Hayward,
South River

Advertisement

Spring Vale Academy

Young people in high school are among those most receptive to the gospel message and to the modeling of a Christian lifestyle. Spring Vale Academy is a boarding school for grades 9-12. In its 41st year, SVA provides a quality education with a Christian foundation and perspective.

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Now Available

140 new listings

***Supplement
to the
Directory of
Sabbath-observing Groups***

Now available, a supplement to the sixth edition (1986) of the BSA directory:

- Over 140 new listings
- More than 85 changes to the 188 listings in the sixth edition
- Includes changes of name, address, phone numbers, and in some cases leadership
- New listings include name, address, phone numbers, and in some cases a brief description and leadership information
- Forty pages, same dimensions as the sixth edition

The supplement can be ordered by itself or with the sixth edition.

Supplement only: \$2 per copy
Supplement and sixth edition: \$7

Please add \$1 to order for mailing costs.

The Bible Sabbath Association
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