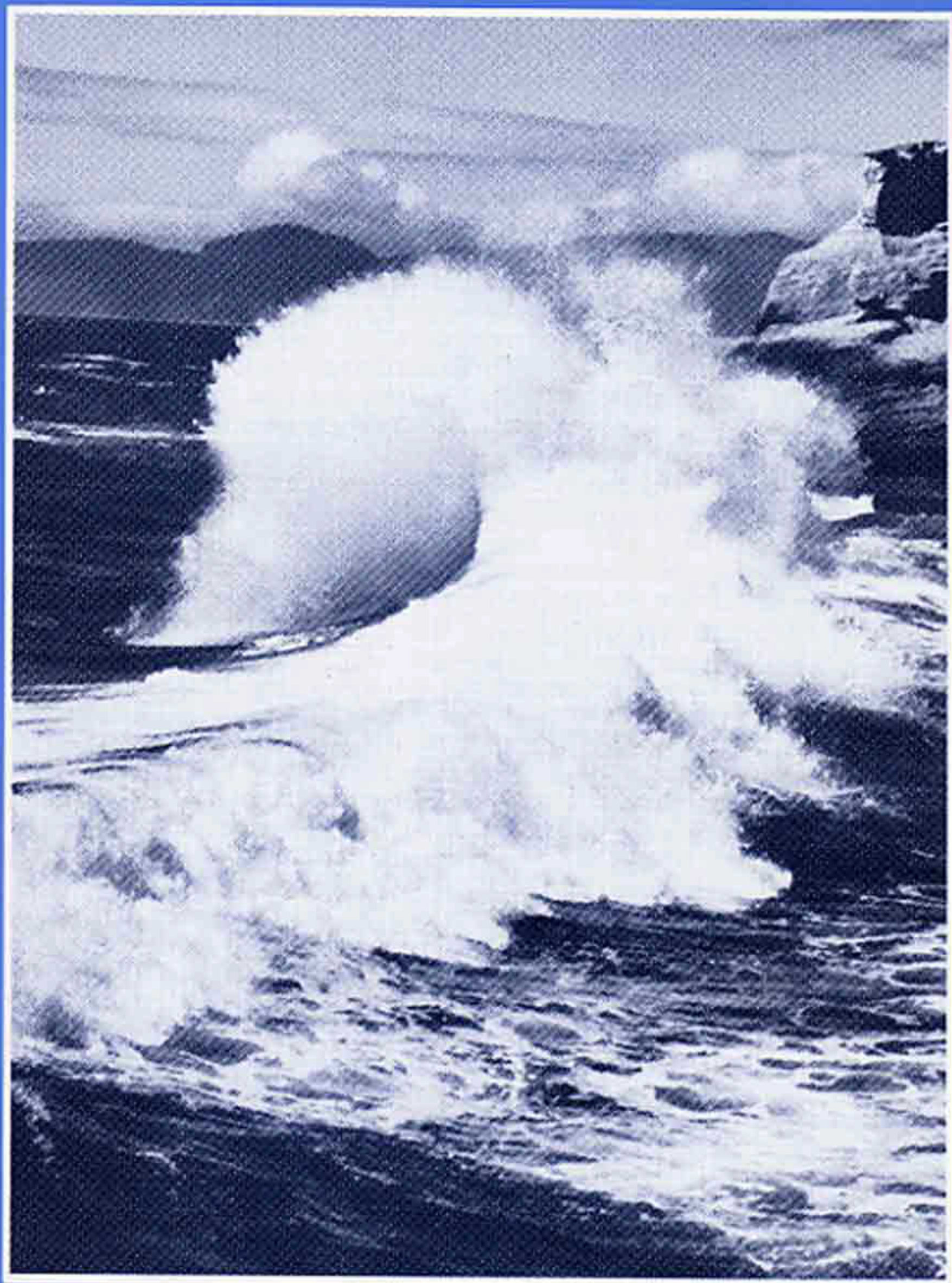


The SABBATH SENTINEL

Serving the Seventh-day Christian Community

March, 1990



EDITORIAL

Truth and Context



As serious students of the Bible, we want truth—especially Biblical truth. But truth, even Biblical truth, is a bit more complex than might initially be apparent.

To be sure, all truths are correct, but not all truths are of equal importance. For example: it is true that there are gypsy moth egg clusters on many of the trees in this part of Pennsylvania; it is also true that it is appointed to all men once to die. Which truth is

greater importance? It is true that Jesus died and rose again; the majority of Sabbathkeepers believe he died on a Friday and rose on a Sunday. Which is more important—the truth that He died and rose again? Or the truth about the time of his dying and rising? And does the time and effort I put into studying, thinking and writing about these two issues reflect their relative importance?

Some truths are mutually exclusive in a specific application. For example: It is true that I should be merciful to my children; it is also true that I should discipline them. But in a given situation I must decide whether to offer mercy or punishment.

Truth must be understood in its context. One passage of the Bible says, "Cry aloud and spare not and show my people their sins." Another says, "Accept him whose faith is weak without passing judgment on disputable matters." Each statement makes excellent sense in its context; taken out of context and used as an absolute rule for one's life, either can create great problems.

Some truths are valid in general—but they are not without exception. For example: "A soft answer turns away wrath." But most of us can think of situations in which a soft answer did not assuage anger. These exceptions don't negate the principle, they only show that it is not an absolute truth.

How does all this add up to? Simply this: truth must be understood in its context. A truth without a context is meaningless at best and dangerous at worst. The Bible provides a wonderful overall context within which to evaluate truth. And in evaluating any point of truth, each of us must personally accept the challenge to ask: What is its context? How do I balance it with other truths? What is its relative importance?

This is a heavy responsibility—one that we can easily avoid by looking to someone else to teach us the truth about every question, by letting someone else provide pat answers for everything. But by relinquishing our duty to think, to search, and to test, we can easily fall into the same trap as the Pharisees of Jesus' day. They were so intent on following "truths" about washing hands, how to keep the Sabbath, and tithing, etc. that they violated greater truths such as mercy, justice, and forgiveness. In their hands truth was dangerous. Let it not be so with us.

—Richard A. Wiedenheft

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greatest of these is
LOVE.

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George Dellinger
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the liberty of His Sabbath!

What the Sabbath Means to Me

by Neils-Erick Andreassen

The Sabbath. The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry, in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:1-12; Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20; Deut. 5:12-15; Heb. 4:1-11; Lev. 23:32; Mark 1:32).

My father used to change his clothes on Friday evening before the Sabbath. Upon seeing him come down the steep staircase from the bedroom—first the black shoes, then the striped trousers, the waistcoat, open jacket, white shirt, and dark tie—I recall asking, "Father, are we going somewhere?"

"No," he replied, "not tonight. But Someone is coming."

This early childhood recollection brings me to the heart of what Sabbath observance means. For on this special day, God comes calling, and I must make ready to meet Him.

The First Sabbath

God instituted the Sabbath when He created the world (Gen. 2:1-3). Although this text does not mention the word *Sabbath*, it does introduce the seventh day as the day when God finished His work. From this I might conclude that the very first Sabbath belonged to God, for only

He had worked six days. The Sabbath essentially is neither a social, humanitarian, nor ethnic practice, but a divine principle belonging to God and to His whole creation.

God did not rest from His work because of tiredness. He could have traveled to other dark corners of His universe to spin moons, fling stars, and breathe life into new creations. But He stopped to bless and sanctify the Sabbath, thereby assuring us that the Sabbath is the day of His holy *presence*. God's presence—is the key to my Sabbathkeeping. Someone is coming, and I must make ready to welcome Him.

The fourth commandment gives me the second great Sabbath text in the Bible: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8). Forget the Sabbath? That would be like forgetting God and His presence with us. Can that be possible?

Exodus 16 tells the story of the newly liberated Hebrew slaves, who

had completely forgotten the Sabbath. They worked extra hard on the sixth day to gather a double portion of manna but did not realize what it meant. Some came to Moses for an explanation (verse 22). Even then, some still went out to gather manna on the Sabbath day, but "they found none" (verse 27). So it is possible to forget the Sabbath, especially for those busily occupied with pursuing personal goals and making profit.

The command to remember the Sabbath, then, calls me to remember my Creator (Ex. 20:11). To remember the Sabbath means to remember the God who created the world in six days and stopped on the seventh to offer His people His holy presence. I respond by being ready to welcome my Divine Guest at the beginning of the Sabbath, on the evening of the sixth day (see Lev. 23:32).

No thought of work, unfinished business, or last-minute profit taking must interfere with this welcome. Clean clothes, a tidy house, festive table, tasty foods, reading and prayer, and music and conversation surround my welcome to my God. As God completed His creative work in six days, so must I.

By means of a covenant, God establishes a special relationship between Himself and His people. The Bible speaks of the Sabbath as a sign of this relationship (Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20). A covenant, like a contract, makes formal the privileges and responsibilities that govern an arrangement, such as a marriage relationship or a business transaction. The Sabbath signifies such a contract, setting out my privileges and responsibilities before God. What are they?

The privilege of assurance. The Sabbath memorial of Creation assures me that God finished His work of Creation and that He will also complete His work of re-creation. Is this world disintegrating, return-

ing to the nothing from which it came? The Sabbath assures me that the God who created it also sustains it.

The privilege of belonging. The Sabbath memorial of Creation reminds me who I am—God's child, shaped in God's image. Moreover, on the Sabbath we are free from all work and stand as equals before one another. No one is boss. The Sabbath reminds us that we belong to God and to one another.

My responsibility toward God. He expects that on this day I give Him full attention, not working for myself or speaking of my own interests (Isa. 58:13). Some find this a heavy burden, but personally I have always found this responsibility pleasant. As a student, I often thanked God for a day in which I could, with a good conscience, leave off studying. Even now I enjoy completing some facet of my work on Friday, then cleaning the desk and leaving it all until next week. This Sabbath responsibility is light, and a pleasure to perform.

My responsibilities toward others. First, the Bible expects us to do all we can to extend the Sabbath to other people within our reach. Never must we keep Sabbath at their expense, but as we have received the Sabbath, so we must share it.

But more than that, the Sabbath requires us to minister to the needy. For that reason, we keep emergency vehicles going, utilities operating, hospitals open, stoves warm, and essential and needed services intact. Whatever we must do to fulfill these Sabbath responsibilities, we do in the interest of God, for the sake of others, not our own.

Sabbathkeeping

Many theologians and some behavioral scientists have recognized the great benefits the Sabbath can bring. Some have pointed to tradi-

tional practices of Jewish Sabbath observance; others have learned from the ways of serious Sunday-keepers. For example, we know the custom of Jewish mothers, who light the Sabbath candles on Friday evening, and the Christian practice of morning church and afternoon potluck.

But however helpful these practices may be, they nevertheless belong to one culture or another. We must not confuse them with the Sabbath itself. For the Sabbath belongs to the whole world, to all its people, and to all time. Its uniqueness rests not so much in the things I do, but in the holiness of its time and the attitude with which I respond to it.

In all of Creation, the Sabbath time is the only thing God made holy. During this holy time, God comes to visit His people. This explains why I remember and anticipate God's creation and my redemption on this day. Whether the Incarnation, or the church, marriage and the family, God's law, or Christ's second coming, the Sabbath touches all aspects of my faith.

Thus the Sabbath stands in the midst of my faith and my life. From this vantage point I look back, remembering God's work of Creation and His plan of redemption. I respond with praise, worship, and Christian service. And I anticipate His completed work of redemption and His new creation.

But more than that. The Sabbath is also a cornerstone of my religious practice. Friday evening at sunset I begin with Sabbath worship—formal or informal, but always spiritual and deeply felt. Then follows Sabbath school and church on Sabbath morning. But the worship service must be neither habitual nor customary. Always new and refreshing, the service, complete with hymns, prayers, and gifts, brings me a message from God for this day. I recognize God's

presence through His Written Word and by His Spirit.

Such a Nice Day

Finally, Sabbath is such a nice day for all God's people. On this day I may share a lively table with family and friends, young and old, eyes gleaming in the candlelight, while we enjoy sparkling drink, tasty food,

***God's presence—not
legalism or
sectarianism—
is the key to my
Sabbathkeeping.***

and stimulating conversation. Or we may spend a quiet afternoon under the shade trees, with books and blankets, sharing bits of wisdom while munching on apples and nuts. Or we may enjoy a casual walk hand in hand through the forest or along the seashore, saying some, seeing more, and thinking most.

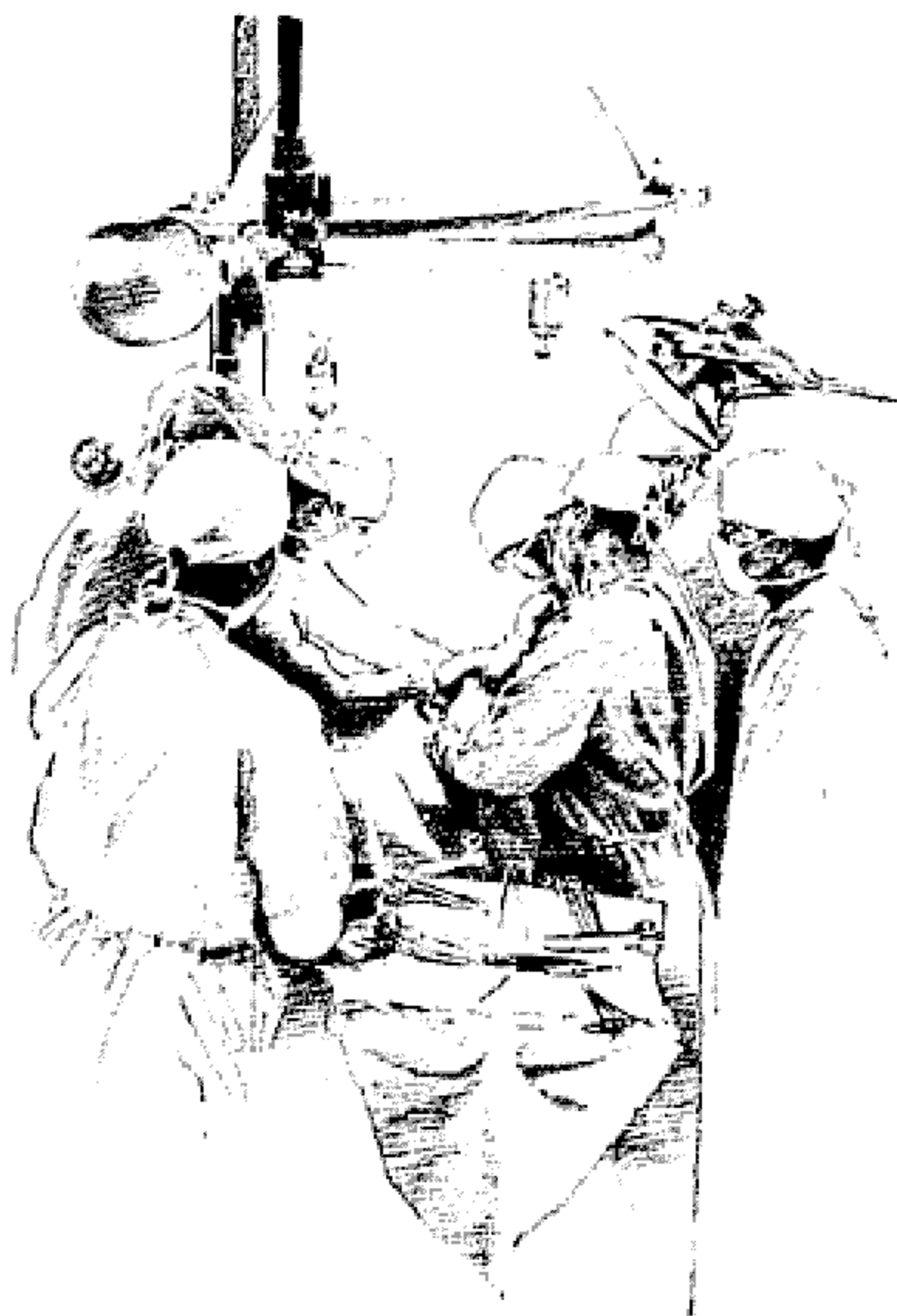
What pleasure God must have taken in making this world, everything in order, nothing missing, not a fin, not a feather, all fitting together, busily interacting, heaven and earth, flower and trees, man and beast. But then, how thoughtful of God to stop and say, "Right. Now let us all take a break—24 hours."

What does the Sabbath mean to me? Memorial of Creation, sign of the covenant, foretaste of eternity, rest and equality, worship and joy, and the sheer pleasure of keeping company with one another and with God.

The author is chairman of the Department of Biblical Studies at Loma Linda University; reprinted by permission from *Adventist Review*, January 22, 1987; © 1987, Review and Herald Publ. Assn.

Yes, God Cares

by Jeannie Cryer



It was Monday, June 6, 1988—a bright and sunny day; the air was fresh from the rains of the previous day. Everyone was busy getting ready for planting crops, feeling on top of the world, so to speak. About 7:30 in the evening, my husband, Vernon, and I drove the 21 miles to our nearest town, Boise City, Oklahoma, to

pick up medicine for some sick calves. We stopped at our favorite restaurant to eat supper, and as we finished, the waitress called me to the phone. This was nothing unusual. Our 27-year old daughter Shirley and her husband, David, who live only a few miles from our farm, would sometimes call if they needed

something from town. They knew we always ate there when we were in town at mealtime.

When I answered the phone David told me our daughter had fallen and was unconscious; he couldn't revive her. He had stopped by the house to see what time supper would be ready before returning to the field. He found Shirley lying on the floor. Stuart and Carrie, their children ages eight and five, were trying to call the ambulance. David asked us to stay in town and meet him at the hospital.

As we rushed to the hospital, I thought about Shirley's miscarriage six months earlier; she had been very upset at losing the much-wanted baby. Now she was pregnant again—fourteen weeks. We feared something might be wrong with this pregnancy. I didn't know if she could handle another disappointment.

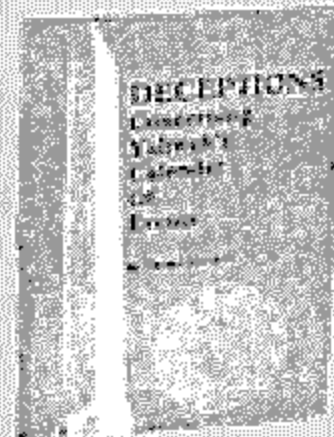
When we got to the hospital, we learned that Shirley had had a seizure. The children, thinking she was dying, had bravely tried to wake her up. They put cool water on her face and let their two new puppies lick her face—nothing helped. Unsuccessful in their attempts to contact both sets of grandparents, they tried calling the ambulance. Of all this Shirley had no memory.

For three days she stayed in the hospital undergoing tests. Everything was negative. But the doctor wasn't satisfied, so he sent her to a specialist in Amarillo for more tests.

Thursday evening David called with the news that they had found a brain tumor and that she was scheduled for surgery on the following Monday afternoon. Our local doctor explained to us that it was the worst kind of malignant tumor, a fast growing type and fairly large. He didn't give us any hope. She might live six weeks at the most. Our world crashed at our feet.

That night we informed family

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and a few close friends and began reading some passages from the Bible and praying to God. By Friday morning, the word had spread through our little community. Family and neighbors were coming in to finish ours and David's planting, to take care of our cattle and 75 steers that were just shipped in the week before. The phone rang so much I could hardly get myself and the two grandchildren ready for the 150-mile trip to Amarillo. We finally were able to leave about an hour and a half later than planned.

The closer we got to Amarillo, about the more uncertain I became. I just couldn't face Shirley. I couldn't stand to see our baby girl like that. Did she know she might have just a little time left? (Later we learned the doctors had told her she had four weeks to live). Vernon was very quiet and looked like he was a mil-

lion miles away. I guess we felt that if we didn't talk about it, maybe it wouldn't be true. But we knew we had to face the situation.

We got to the hospital and located Shirley's room. She was sitting up in bed. Her children were the first to hug and kiss her, then the rest of us. Tears streaming we told her that we had God on our side and she was going to win this battle, with God's help.

She was already receiving flowers and phone calls; soon the visitors came. In the days ahead, we had to unplug the phone and turn visitors away so she could rest. Her room looked like a florist shop.

Shirley remarked one day that she was on prayer lists from Texas to Nebraska. How could God help but hear all the prayers and know how important Shirley was in so many lives. Yet, she and David were scared, and they had cause to be. We felt so helpless when she said to her father, "Daddy, I'm so scared. You used to make the scared feelings go away. I wish you could make this one go away."

But God was working in His own way. David told us that the second night he had met a lady on the hospital elevator. She inquired about Shirley and wanted to visit with her. We refer to this lady as the "mystery lady" because we didn't know anything about her except that her name was Lynn. She told David she'd had a similar experience some years previously and showed him the indentation that was left in her head from her surgery. Her visit gave Shirley encouragement.

Saturday the "mystery lady" was back with a radio for Shirley. About noon I asked her if she would like to be anointed in accordance with James 5:14, 15. Shirley had been raised to keep the Sabbath and had seen God heal others before and had experienced healing of minor illnesses

of her own. After she was grown and married she chose to keep Sunday instead. I told her even with all the prayers being offered in her behalf anointing could be the step God was waiting for her to take. There had been no changes at all in her condition up to this point.

Shirley did want to be anointed, and we called Jerry McClenagen, elder of the Christian Church of God in Amarillo. He had known Shirley since she was a small child and it was hard for him to finish the prayer as he anointed her. He mentioned that tearful and heartfelt prayer had been requested on her behalf that morning at their church.

Our "mystery lady" came back again Saturday night. She was bubbly and happy and sat on Shirley's bed giving cheerful encouragement. Then she stopped and said, "You know I had the strangest feeling when I walked across the parking lot tonight. I looked up and this whole hospital had a bright glow over it and especially at your window." Shortly after she left, we went to our motel room. Before retiring that evening, David (who slept on a cot in her room every night until the surgery) and Shirley had a private prayer together.

The next morning they told us that after their prayer, Shirley lay back on her pillow and said there was a very strange feeling in the top of her head as if something was lifted out of it. She had a very deep and restful sleep that night, her first in several weeks; she was no longer afraid.

Sunday night, the "mystery lady" was back again giving Shirley her "pep" talk. She said she would be checking on her after the surgery, but that was the last time Shirley saw her.

Monday was a tense day for all of us. Although Shirley was anointed and placed in God's hands, we didn't

know what His will was. The doctors told us the surgery could take anywhere from 2-1/2 to 12 hours.

It lasted only 2-1/2 hours, but to us it was a long time. The doctors were surprised and amazed to find the tumor wasn't the type that showed up on an MRI scan, nor was it as large as they originally thought. Though confident he had removed all of the growth, the surgeon wanted her to have radiation therapy just in case there was a live cell or two. Chemotherapy was not considered because of her pregnancy.

About 30 minutes after the surgery, Shirley was alert and could move all her limbs. Only four ounces of blood drained, and there was a minimum of brain swelling. The doctors told her she would be in the intensive care unit four days, but she was there only 36 hours. They told her she would have no solid foods for four days, but the next day she was eating. Wednesday morning, her husband helped her out of bed and by that afternoon she was getting out by herself. The intravenous feedings tubes were to stay in for a week; they were removed on Wednesday afternoon. The staples used to close up the incision were to be left for seven or eight days; they were removed on the sixth day. She was to remain in the hospital ten to fourteen days; she was released on the eighth day.

Before being discharged, our daughter received an unsigned card in the mail that said, "Your guardian angel is watching and praying over you." Was it from the "mystery lady?" No one seemed to know anything about her except that she had been seen around the hospital on other occasions. God said we would entertain angels unawares. Do you suppose???

Another strange thing occurred when David found some money on his dresser in the motel room. He

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was the only one who had a key other than the office and they said no one had been there requesting entry to his room. The money came at time when it was most needed.

A series of radiation treatments, which began on July 5 and ended on August 8, made Shirley feel tired mainly because of the pregnancy. All through the pregnancy we were hoping and praying there would be no complications because of the radiation.

A beautiful and healthy girl, Brittany Regina, came into the world on November 15, 1988, weighing in at 5 lb., 13 oz., 19-1/4 inches long. On the 19th (Shirley's birthday), Brittany and her mother came home after checking out normal and healthy.

In January, Shirley had another scan; everything was fine. Throughout the spring and summer of '89 she was active and radiant, taking care of her three children and helping with the wheat harvest and the ranch. However, in August headaches and subsequent tests resulted in a second operation to remove a cyst and some very early-stage tumor cells at the site of the original tumor. Shirley came through with flying colors and the prognosis is very good. In between follow-up chemotherapy treatments, she is back to her old routine—always busy and on the go. At one year, Brittany is, like her mother,

the picture of health; she is deeply loved by brother and sister and all the rest of her family. She and her mother are referred to as the "miracle girls" by everyone who knew about the difficult times they went through together.

Shirley has set us an example which will be hard to follow should we find ourselves in a serious problem. When she was facing doctors, nurses, friends, and family, she had a courageous attitude and was always cheerful. She would even encourage and cheer her friends when they called to visit and broke into tears.

One lady said she couldn't understand why it had to be Shirley. Why not someone who didn't have a future, no small children to suffer, or someone whose life was almost over. I told her that I had wondered the same thing, wishing that it had been myself instead; but then people wouldn't have been as concerned

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and our light wouldn't have shown as brightly. Shirley has become known far and wide over this. People we hardly knew gave us encouragement and told us they were praying for her.

We ask God each day to continue giving Shirley and Brittany good health. We give all the praise, honor and glory to God in the highest; and yes, folks, there is a God that cares and still performs miracles!

Adapted from *Churchlight*, Sept. '89. Shirley's father Vernon is an elder of the Church of God of Boise City.

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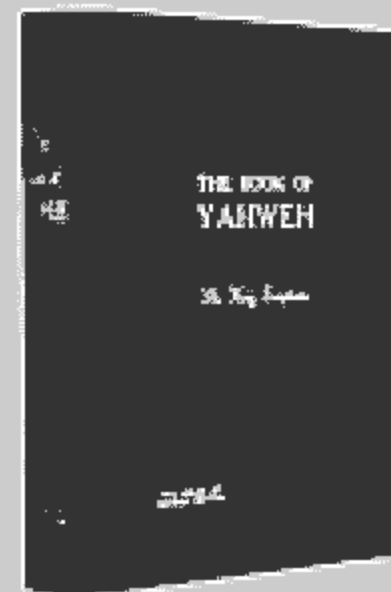
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Sacred Name Unity Conference

Last August about three dozen representatives from various sacred name groups met for a unity conference hosted by the Assembly of Yahveh, Eaton Rapids, Michigan. Conferees from nine states, British Columbia, and Jamaica came for the three days of meetings. On the Sabbath their numbers swelled to fifty or sixty.

Following an opening song service led by John Briggs, Samuel Graham welcomed the assembly, reading passages from Psalms, Ephesians, and Romans—stressing unity of faith, speaking the truth in love, being kindly affectioned, and

preferring one another in love. He was echoing an exhortation written before the conference by a brother who said "There is a great need among believers to overlook differences and work toward a common goal: that of salvation through grace through Yahshua, the Messiah."

The first morning, various attendees expressed their reasons for attending the conference: to praise Yahveh, to share faith, to listen to and take part in discussions, to rejoice together and share experiences, for encouragement, and for the sake of the Word of Yahweh, which is truth.

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Several attendees came to present material they had prepared. George Estey of Garfield, New Jersey, gave a talk about the "House of Prayer" pictured in the prophecy of Ezekiel 40-46 as envisioned in Henry Sulley's book about the temple described in those chapters: that Yahweh will regather His people, that their latter estate will be far more glorious than the former grandeur under David and Solomon, with Jerusalem becoming the Queen City of the world, headquarters of the Kingdom of Yahweh, residence of Yahshua.

Richard Francis, Jr., of Holt, Michigan, presented a prophetic study about the gathering of first-fruits before an end time confrontation between Yahweh and the nations of the earth. Leroy Harmon of Michigan spoke about the development of the United States of Europe by 1992 and the nearness of the time when the Kingdom of Yahweh will be established at Yahshua's return. Voy Wilks of Cisco, Texas, defended the counting of the Sabbath as the seventh day of every week—regardless of when it falls during the lunar month. He also reported on contacts with believers in Part Harcourt, Nigeria, to whom he sent tracts imprinted with their address.

Pete Vacco of Rocheport, Missouri, spoke about keeping unity and avoiding strife and gossip; Winston Hines from Jamaica urged assemblies to work together to spread the message; Brian Graham of Eaton Rapids, Michigan, reported on conditions and problems in Israel today; Arthur Rose of Canada reported on missionary work in India, where he served for some 30 years. He accepted the sacred name truth within the last three years and hopes to return to India in 1990; Jacob Miller of Tampa, Florida, gave a presentation about abortion, presenting the main thoughts from an article published in the July-August issue of *The Faith* magazine.

Samuel Graham concluded the meetings with an exhortation to be ready, to study that we may be approved of Yahweh, and to continue walking in Yahweh's commandments. The group voted to have a meeting every year on the third Sabbath of August. Two states have been suggested for a 1990 conference: Ohio and Arkansas. Eric Gentile and Connie Graham will investigate possible sites and report to participants.

—based on reports by
Ruth Fink and George Estey

Who Gets It?

What becomes of your estate if you die without a will?

The state will decide according to a formula fixed by law. Your loved ones will not necessarily be taken care of as you would want. So regardless of how old you are, you owe it to those you care about to have a valid will. When you make your will, remember that The Bible Sabbath Association deeply appreciates bequests and puts them to careful use.

If you would like further information about making a will, please write:

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

TO REPEAT

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS BY OR ABOUT SABBATHKEEPERS

Seventh-day Adventists regard sexual involvement with persons of the same sex as sin. The church views gender confusion as an aberration amenable to correction surgically, medicinally, or psychologically; and if not, certainly to the control of spiritual force. In any case, the fact that you do not practice homosexuality, in spite of temptation or orientation, is the important thing. Temptation is not sin; yielding is. One does not jeopardize salvation through urgings that by the grace of God are resisted. Such a person becomes an overcomer.

Calvin B. Rock answering a question in *Adventist Review*, Oct. 19, '89

The tendency of prophetic forecasters in recent generations has been toward a shallow alarmism. This alarmism, intended to waken the slumbering, has numbed more spirits than it has quickened. One result is that expectations of the Second Advent are lowered, and a sort of comfortable indifference to this topic has invaded much of the church. Moreover, the decrease in our desire to hear of the Lord's return is fully matched by our increase in earthly goods and comforts—and the affection we set upon them. . . . Because some have erred concerning Christ's coming through misdirected zeal, we dare not "improve" the error by our own lukewarm approach to that same glorious prospect. End-time apathy is not the recommended cure for last-days obsession. . . . Can we also maintain a healthy interest in the signs of the times, without succumbing to the temptation of viewing every headline as a teaser of Christ's immediate arrival? I believe we must.

"Watchman, What of the Nineties?" by Calvin Burrell, *Bible Advocate* Jan. '90

The New Right might be called a political awakening, a resurgence of conservatism, a new inquisition, whatever—but it should not be mistaken for a spiritual revival. Indeed, it might even be the opposite.

"Rumors of Revival" by Clifford Goldstein, *Liberty*, Jul./Aug. '88

Corinthians warns against antinomianism—living as though there were no eternal law of right. Galatians warns against legalism—living as though our own efforts could merit acceptance with God. Antinomianism and legalism are the two thieves flanking and menacing the gospel, as surely as Christ himself was put between two thieves on Calvary.

"The Two Thieves" by Desmond Ford, *Good News Unlimited*, June '88

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

BSA

NEWS FROM THE BSA

Sabbath at Sommerhase

Though not printed yet, *Sabbath at Sommerhase* is close enough to being printed that we are taking prepublication orders. This 128-page Sabbath story book for children can be ordered at \$7; the activity packet is \$3. Please add \$1 to your orders to cover the cost of postage.

Major Mailings Planned

With several publishing projects completed or nearly completed, we are gearing up for promotional mailings to some 3000 Sabbathkeepers who are not BSA members or subscribers. Scheduled for February was a flyer advertising the new directory supplement. A subsequent mailing will announce *Sabbath at Sommerhase*. In addition we will continue to mail out sample back issues of *The Sabbath Sentinel*. These bulk mailings are our primary means of letting the Sabbathkeeping community know about the services available from BSA. If you have Sabbathkeeping friends who don't know about our association, please send us their names and addresses and we'll send them material.

Computer Update

About a year and a half ago, BSA purchased a Macintosh SE Computer for the office in Fairview, Oklahoma. Recently, God blessed us with an opportunity to replace this with the much more powerful Macintosh II. Meanwhile the editor has just

added a 60 mb. hard drive to his system. This additional hardware will enable us to consolidate mailing lists and maintain more accurate records—with less effort. It also gives us lots of capacity for growth. We praise the Eternal as we sit for hours at the keyboards.

TSS Being Evaluated

In an effort to make certain that our association's primary publication, *The Sabbath Sentinel*, is doing the best possible job of serving our Creator, the Sabbathkeeping community, and BSA, we are currently evaluating its focus. The editor has presented four possibilities to the BSA board of directors and others: 1. Make TSS a free periodical and rely on donations and literature orders from a much greater readership to pay for publishing costs; 2. Begin to cover controversial topics—presenting various views without taking sides. An example of this would be the article "To Drive or Not to Drink" in the February issue; 3. Cover a broader range of non-controversial topics without neglecting the Sabbath (family, marriage, children, health, political news, Christian growth, personal testimonials, biblical history, archeology, creation science, etc.); 4. Keep TSS as it is. If any of our readers would like to offer input regarding TSS and how we can make it of greater service to the Sabbathkeeping community, we would welcome it.

LAW

ON THE LEGAL FRONT

Update: Last September this column noted that Barbara Austin lost her job because she moved to be with her husband. She was awarded unemployment benefits in federal court, claiming her religion required her to move and that loss of benefits was discrimination. Now the full panel of the 4th Court of Appeals has overturned the original decision of three of its judges. Since others who moved too far to continue working at a specific place were denied compensation under Virginia law, the court said it would be unconstitutional to favor someone who gave religious reasons for moving. This scribe agrees. Christians can go overboard in alleging bias.

Blue laws in West Germany surprised some East German visitors when the Berlin Wall opened last year. Rainer Himpel and his family got up at 3:00 AM one Saturday to visit West Berlin. After hours of driving he waited in line for "welcome money" equivalent to \$220 given to all first-time visitors from communist Germany. He found that the stores closed at 2:00 PM Saturday and all day Sunday by law. At last ready to shop, he was too late. He and his family enjoyed the sights and people of the West, then went home to return another day. Throughout Europe, laws force most stores to close Sundays.

California wants to close the Institute for Creation Research's graduate school. Although the col-

lege receives no tax funds, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bill Honig, intends to disallow its right to grant science degrees, a coup de grace upon any postgraduate institution. Deathly media silence has greeted this censorship attempt. If California can quash ICR because its professors (most with PhDs in the sciences from distinguished secular universities) teach that God, not chance, created man, then Virginia can close Jerry Falwell's Liberty University for the same reason. An audacious governor in any state might order all parochial schools shut down because their classes don't meet humanistic standards. What's so great about pluralism, anyway, right?

Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop on *CBS This Morning* said, "In order to get *Roe vs Wade* passed, the number of back alley abortion deaths had to be exaggerated by a hundredfold. The greatest number of deaths ever in one year was 373." In 1972, just before *Roe*, there were 39 deaths, fewer than now under legal abortion. The petitioner in *Roe* lied that she had been raped, later admitting she was pregnant by her boyfriend. The case following *Roe* which established the legality of abortion up to the moment of birth was brought on behalf of a girl who ran away from the lawyers "protecting her rights" because she never wanted an abortion. She has appeared on Christian television.

NEWS

FROM THE SEVENTH DAY COMMUNITY

SDA Trademark Update

John Marik, pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Congregational Church in Hawaii, was finally located by US marshals on December 15, imprisoned, and released on bail. The minister, whose trademark fight with the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) has repeatedly been covered in *TSS's* legal column, has, however, gotten another hearing in his bid to use the SDA name. On October 5, 1989, the Ninth US Court of Appeals ruled that the lower court's summary judgment against him was in error, partly because it misinterpreted some of his responses. Marik was not represented by a lawyer. He now is. The case was returned to the district court to decide if the name "Seventh-day Adventist" and the initials "SDA" are indeed the property of the CG. The appeals court did let stand a contempt citation against Marik for disobeying the lower court's injunction to stop using the disputed name, hence his arrest.

SDBs Here and There

The Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society recently noted growth in many areas. In Finland and Estonia church membership has climbed from 6 members just three years ago to about 100. Missionaries scheduled a visit to reported SDB groups in Leningrad and Moscow last fall, while a new missionary family, Ian and Trudy Ingoe with their small children Nichola and David, began service in Malawi. The

Central Africa Conference of SDBs has grown from 24 churches and 1000 members in 1953 to 94 churches and branches and almost 5000 members in 1988. In 1990 the Missionary Society hopes to begin a work in Cameroon, West Africa, and provides Bibles for believers in the USSR.

Last April the Philippine SDB Convention at Campo Uno, Mindanao, saw the ordination of three pastors; but three fellowships on Mindanao island had to disband due to Communist persecution. Last year 86 youths graduated from various programs and 300 people were converted. In Myanmar, formerly Burma, the socialist dictator reopened, for the senior class only, the Myanma Institute of Christian Theology and allowed an SDB student named Kapmanga to finish his studies.

Religious Prisoners Released

Last October this column chronicled the repeated jailing of Karel and Jindriska Korinek of Czechoslovakia to treat their "Adventist Insanity." During a July 13 hearing they were released unconditionally from the mental hospital and now are presumably back with four of their five children. Will they ever regain custody of their youngest, Libor, who was long ago put out to adoption against their wishes? Will the changes in Eastern Europe end the abuse of Christians? The gospel is being preached in Soviet satellite nations with an openness unknown in nearly half a century.

Fairview COG Helps Out

A local church near the home of Lawrence and Lottie Burrell, long-time BSA treasurer and assistant, has found ways to reach its community. Affiliated with the Churches of God, 7th Day, of Meridian Idaho, the Fairview, Oklahoma, congregation works with the County Sheriff's Department, providing Friday lunches for prisoners and sharing the gospel Friday evenings. Two to three nights a month the church holds evangelistic meetings at the Crabtree Correctional Center in Helena, OK. Working with the Social Services Department in Fairview, the group provides food and clothing for the poor, including annual Thanksgiving baskets. Like other local churches that this column has occasionally reported on, the members of the Fairview, Oklahoma, Church of God, 7th Day, seem to receive at least as much blessing as they give, though people who reach out usually aren't the kind who keep books on such things.

Very Impressive Visitor

On October 3, the new SDA world headquarters building in Silver Spring, Maryland, was grandly opened in a ceremony featuring Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Thomas Foley. Congressman Foley, second in line after the Vice President for succession to the US Presidency, praised the Adventist church, especially its far-reaching medical care system and relief agency. He said he knew personally many Adventists and felt very friendly toward them.

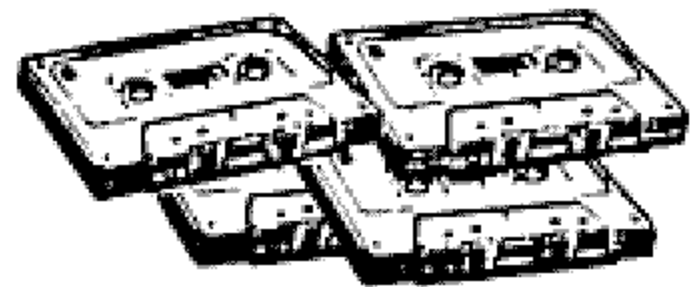
Cuba Relaxes Persecution

The most brutally anti-Christian regime in the Western Hemisphere has grown more moderate, realizing, as does China, that Christians—including 7th-dayers—are the most assiduous and patriotic members of societies debilitated by Communism. An easing of travel restrictions in the early 80's allowed Adventists to occasionally attend foreign conferences. Castro now lets the Cuban Union produce quarterly Sabbath school lessons using an electronic stencil maker and has permitted a copying machine. While hundreds of SDAs have left the island, church membership reached 10,000 in 1989. The church now runs a two-year ministry training program in Havana. From November 3 to 6, General Conference president Neal C. Wilson visited Cuba, meeting with both church members and high government officials. Adventist Luis Rodriguez has been allowed to emigrate to the US after spending 27 years in prison.

On the Road to Helsinki

Of a recent trip to visit SDB Pastor Sorsa in Finland, missionary Thomas McElwain wrote, "I felt impressed to hitch rather than to take the bus. . . . A young man picked me up. . . . He had just returned from Spain where he had been convicted of the Sabbath by a tract in Spanish. He said that he had begun keeping the Sabbath, but needed more knowledge about it. We talked and studied all the way. When he let me out, he said it was clearly providential that he had met me. He promised to keep in touch."

Now available from BSA!
Sabbath Truths on Tape



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Good News of the Sabbath ('84)

Dr. Desmond Ford, Founder, Good News Unlimited
The Sabbath ('86)

Richard A. Wiedenheft, BSA Executive Director
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Tapes are available for a donation of \$3 per tape, \$2.50 each for three or more; please add \$1 to your order to cover postage and handling. Order by speaker and title from:

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The views expressed on these cassettes are those of the speakers, not necessarily of The Bible Sabbath Association. We are interested in adding to our library Sabbath-related messages by other speakers—to provide greater variety and balance, if you know of such, please send us copies for consideration. Thank you.

Aunt Dora's Broken Dish

by Don A. Sanford

It was over 50 years ago that Aunt Dora Maxson gave a children's message in church that I have treasured through these many years. I have even repeated it in other churches when I was one of those little ones who came forward to listen to the stories that the big people gave to the little people, but all the while hoping that the big people in the church would listen with at least one ear.

Aunt Dora (actually my great-aunt, whose real name was Julia) was elected clerk of the Little Genesee, New York, church a year before I was born and served till after I had graduated from high school, so I looked upon her as one of the pillars of the church. She was a fixture in the fifth pew from the front, on the right-hand side of the church, right near the stained glass window given in memory of our shared family. Every Sabbath day, she was there for as long as I can remember. To her, the Sabbath worship was a joy which she would never think of missing. But the Sabbath day I remember most was that Sabbath when she told us a story of a time when she was our age.

One of her chores as a little girl was to help wash the dishes. On one of those occasions, she accidentally dropped a dish, creating a noise which her mother heard in the living room. When asked if she had broken a dish, her reply was, "No, there's no harm done; it didn't break, it's only cracked. It's still useable."

A few weeks passed, and she was again at her assigned chore. Again she dropped that same dish, but this

time shattering it into little pieces. This time her answer to her mother's question was, "There's no harm done; it was just that old cracked dish. It wasn't worth much, anyhow."

Then Aunt Dora explained the moral of that experience as she asked us when we thought the dish had been broken. Was it when she had first cracked it, or when it was smashed? It is the same way with the commandments of God, including the one calling for us to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Often we just crack it a little at first, claiming that there is no harm done. We have not broken the Sabbath; it's still useable. Then later, when we find ourselves in situations where we have not kept the Sabbath as we should, we can excuse ourselves because it was "just that old cracked Sabbath; it had already lost its value."

I am sure that at that tender age when I first heard Aunt Dora tell this story, I did not fully understand the moral of that little parable. But as I reflected on it later, I understood that one of the reasons that the Sabbath held such joy for her was because she treated it with the care one gives to the finest china. Aunt Dora never let it slip from her possession to develop that first crack. She knew that, once weakened, it would be easy to lose completely what God had intended the Sabbath to be: a precious vessel to hold God's spiritual food to sustain us week by week.

—reprinted from *The Sabbath Recorder*, May '88; a former teacher, the author is Seventh Day Baptist historian.

MAILBOX

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Response from *Overcomer*

I wish to extend my thanks to you for the article you had in Brother Stair's *Overcomer* paper (June '89; A reprint of one of our booklets). At the time I read it I was in my first stage of learning about the seventh day. It helped me a great deal, and it was very clear and understandable. I give thanks to God for your ministry, which is leading many searching people to the gospel of Christ. I'm 16 years old and used to go to a Sundaykeeping church, being ignorant of God's Ten Commandments.

England

Appreciation

Please renew by subscription for another year and send 12 calendars. I have enjoyed TSS very much this past year and have made new friends through the mail by sending for their Bible articles advertised in TSS. The recent article "Blessed Are Ye That Sow" by Brian Jones was one of the best articles I have read.

Denver, Colorado

Working Toward Unity

In your [annual letter to supporters and friends of BSA you printed a letter from a writer who] feels something is wrong when various Sabbathkeeping groups can't agree on beliefs—and possibly feels that your work is futile. Yahweh has one group keeping the Sabbath. He calls and He adds to it. It is being in this group of Yahweh's calling that is the main thing. If there were to be no differen-

ces, and all of us totally agreed on everything, why did the Almighty One inspire to be written ". . . forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3). It appears to me that BSA has had a part in this. Unity of faith is something we, the individual must work at, no matter with which man-made organization we may or may not associate. For a fuller explanation of this subject, one may write for the article "One" from *The Faith*, Box 102, Holt, MI 48842-0102.

George Kinney, Contributing Editor
The Faith magazine

Knocking at Pearly Gates

In your recent editorial (Dec. '89) you had a hypothetical case of Peter asking people what they had done to deserve entrance into the "pearly gates." In the judgment of Matt. 25:31-46 the right to enter "the kingdom prepared for you" is based on how we have treated one another, for can we always tell who is one of His and who is not? In another glimpse into the basis for acceptance by the Messiah when He comes in power is Matt. 6:12, 14, 15: "... But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." So it is our relationships to one another—especially others in the body of Christ that makes all the difference in the final showdown.

George Estey
Garfield, New Jersey

ADS

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Theological Newsletter published monthly at \$20 per year. Send cash or check to D. F. Schubert, 3026 N. 40th St., Phoenix, AZ 85018. (3)

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Passover? Would Jesus have obeyed the traditions of the Jews or His Father? A series of seven cassettes for a suggested donation of \$20. Order from Christian Biblical Church of God, Box 1245, Hollister, CA 95024 or call (408) 637-1875. (3-4)

Women, learn your place in God's church. Ask Family of God, 7119 Western Tr., San Antonio, TX 78244. (3-8)

Plain-speaking, in-depth magazine of Bible truth—with insight into current events and prophecy. Free. Write YNCA, P. O. Box 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262. (2-8)

Adventist Church of the Promise (Messianic), serving northwest central Florida, invites you to weekly Sabbath services. For information call (904) 795-1758 or write P. O. Box 2426, Crystal River, FL 32629. (9-8)

Greetings from the Independent Church of God of Ft. Payne, Alabama. You are invited to attend services with us on the 1st and 3rd Sabbaths of each month, starting at 10 a.m. For additional information call (205) 672-2581 or (205) 492-7565. (3-9)

Good News Unlimited Meetings featuring Dr. Desmond Ford. Hendersonville, NC, April 6-7; local contact: Alvin R. (803) 582-2468. Oklahoma City, April 27-29; local contact: Dr. Harald K. (405) 340-0506. For full schedule write GNU, 11710 Education St., Auburn, CA 95603. (2,3)

Cheap Grace?

In simple language, there is no such thing as "cheap grace." It is how we relate to this grace which either cheapens it, or makes it that "marvelous, infinite, matchless grace" coming down from the Father above.

I can take the attitude—without saying a word—and manifest in life that I believe that the grace of God will save me in my sins. This cheapens God's grace as manifest through Jesus Christ; for He came to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). To manifest a lifestyle which uses the grace of God to cover the expression of one's selfish desires is to do "despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29).

On the other hand, if I perceive the grace of God to be insufficient to meet my need for redemption—now I wouldn't confess this—and I believe that I must add something to that grace to make it effective, I have also cheapened it. But more than that, I have cast reflection upon God saying, though not openly, God, you are not great enough to provide for my salvation, so I am going to make a contribution of my good works to help you out. This is as much an exaltation of self as is the selfish expression to live as one pleases yet proclaiming the grace of God as a covering for sin. God will condemn the cheapening of His grace no matter which course of life is followed. God's grace did not come cheaply and He will visit in judgment those who cast aspersion on that grace as well as those who presume upon his mercy.

William H. Grotheer; excerpted from
Watchman What of the Night? Feb. '90

New BSA Leaflet

Whatever Happened to the Sabbath?

Just two pages long, this tract challenges readers to search the scriptures for support for Sunday observance. Then it presents biblical evidence for the seventh-day Sabbath. An inexpensive means of sharing the Sabbath truth; handy size for pocket, purse, or correspondence (3 and 1/2" x 8 and 1/2"); very attractive cover.

Copies are available for 10¢ each, \$8 per hundred. Please add \$1 for shipping and handling. Free sample copy is available if you send a s.a.s.e. with postage for two ounces. Order from:

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