

The SABBATH SENTINEL

Serving the Seventh-day Christian Community

APRIL 1991



EDITORIAL

The End Times?

With war in the Persian Gulf and with armies from so many nations gathered in rather close proximity to Jerusalem, many Bible students are convinced that the end of the age is upon us. Indeed, in certain Christian circles it is virtual heresy to suggest that there might be a considerable length of time before Jesus returns. I know, because three years ago I wrote an editorial that said, in essence, maybe we've been far too preoccupied with concerns about end-time scenarios, events, and dates.

Well, I was soundly chastised by quite a number of readers. So it is with a bit of apprehension that I return to the subject of the end times. But, it is, I believe, a subject we must address and articles elsewhere in this issue of TSS cover it from a couple of different angles.

*From the writings of Paul, Peter, and John, we know that the early Christians believed they lived in the last days. Throughout the centuries since then, many believers have taken great comfort in believing the return of their Savior was imminent. Others were undoubtedly motivated to true repentance by fear of the end of the world. But the fact remains that, while each generation has come to **its** end, the world is still here, awaiting the second coming.*

*Expectations of the second advent can be a very positive force — when it brings hope and leads people to embrace the gospel. But when people become preoccupied with the nearness of the end, when they become obsessed with dates and prophecies, then it is a very negative factor. When people decide not to have children, or neglect to get an education, or give away all their assets, or fail to preach the gospel, then belief in the nearness of the end can be detrimental. When people delay solving personal or spiritual problems, choosing rather to **endure** to the end, they may face bitter disappointment. When people are moved (or should we say **scared**) to “repentance” primarily because of fear of the imminence of the end, they may have second thoughts a decade or two later when no end has come.*

To be sure, we are 1900 years closer to the end than when the apostles expected it. And it may come very soon. We cannot be sure. What we can be sure of is that we had better be ready every single day of our lives. For our end could come at any time. And while we wait we had better be about our Father's business. Furthermore, our Christianity, our eternal relationship with God depends not on whether we live in the first century, the middle century, or the last decade of the last century. It depends on whether or not we are in the Christ.

—Richard A. Wiedenheft

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For those who don't know Him—
Jesus Christ and Him Crucified!
For those who do know Him—
the liberty of His Sabbath!

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

My Witness As A “Sundaykeeper”

*What is a Seventh-day Adventist doing
in church on Sunday?*

by Felix A. Lorenz, Jr.

The Sabbath is God's *only* holy day. I am a Seventh-day Adventist Sabbathkeeper. I always have been, and I'm sure that I always will be.

But I have found I can be a good Sunday-

keeper, also. One cannot keep Sunday as a holy day, because God never made it holy. And of course, you should not keep Sunday in place of Sabbath, any more than you should worship an idol in place of the Lord. Let me share my testimony of how God has blessed *my* Sundaykeeping.

Jesus knew truth, taught truth, urged people to accept truth. But He did it discreetly, not in a pushy way. His popularity among people whose lifestyle betrayed no interest in truth indicates that He was not forward or abrasive. It also indicates that conversion is sometimes a long-range process. He influenced people by a discreet, moral lifestyle. He planted

seeds that grew. Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and many others joined the Christians *after* Jesus had completed His ministry and left the earth. I decided to plant, water, feed, care, and let God take care of the rest. **Better Late Than Never**

I first became aware of the evangelistic possibilities and effectiveness of “Sundaykeeping” much later in life than I wish I had. I have directed choirs in many churches, which is a good way to witness, albeit limited to those whose talents lie in that area.

Other than choir directing, my first attempt took place in Milroy, Minnesota, where I taught public school in 1954-1955. Milroy had four churches: Catholic, Presbyterian, American Lutheran, and German Lutheran. I visited them all, then attended the Presbyterian church quite regularly.

In the Sunday school class I attended, discussions came up that indicated that I knew my Bible much better than did any of the others. Soon they asked me to teach the class as a substitute. Before long they asked me to be the regular teacher. I taught from their quarterly and used discretion in handling controversial topics (which are really few). Without compromising any convictions, I had a wonderful year there.

As a soloist I have participated in



many community, ecumenical, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter services. I spent several years as a disc jockey on WFBG and WMUZ in Detroit, without mentioning that I was a Seventh-day Adventist. Yet I frequently mentioned the Sabbath, and most listeners knew I was a SDA. I never had to compromise any Adventist principles.

Many doors opened. My last year at WFBG I preached in the churches of 13 different denominations.

In my case, "Sundaykeeping" has included directing choirs, serving a Methodist church for 15 years as associate minister, serving as a police chaplain for the past 12 years, and pastoring an Evangelical Church of Christ church for the past six years.

Seed Planting

My "Sundaykeeping" is a seed-planting venture. If I were to use it for an evangelistic platform, the doors would close.

Jesus wanted to win the heart of the woman at the well, but He refused to let her draw Him into an argument. He knew the Jews were the true people of God. He knew that Jerusalem was the true place to worship. Yet He didn't "straighten her out," even on these important doctrines.

Many people joined the ranks of the Christians even as the martyrs were led into the arena. Who planted the seeds? Who watered? What difference does it make? Souls were saved.

I pray for the growth of the seeds I am planting. I pray for those who will water the seeds. I trust and thank God for the increase.

 Excerpted by permission from an article that appeared in the August 24, 1989, *Adventist Review*; © 1989, Review and Herald Publ. Assn. The author has been an academy and public school teacher and a public relations counselor.

Predicting the End of the Age

by Richard Wiedenheft

Throughout the centuries, beginning in apostolic days, Christians have been concerned about the return of Jesus Christ—some to the point of setting dates and interpreting specific prophecies in the light of contemporary events. Sabbathkeeping Christians of our century are no exception to this general statement. Indeed, the two largest seventh-day groups were built, to a large extent, with belief in the nearness of the end as a central teaching.

The Worldwide Church of God, of which I was a member and minister from 1963 to 1974, taught boldly that the great tribulation and second coming were imminent—that the American and British people (believed to be the descendants of ancient Israel) would be taken into captivity by a United States of Europe led by Germany. Throughout the '50s and '60s, practically every drought, every blight, every disease outbreak was heralded as proof of the nearness of the end. Indeed, it was widely preached in the church that the great tribulation would begin in 1972 and end in 1975 with the return of Jesus Christ. Of course, it didn't happen. And, the church began to move away from making specific predictions and setting specific dates. Indeed, in an editorial in *The Worldwide News* last fall, Joseph W. Tkach, WCG pastor general, made it plain that "The World Tomorrow" telecasts are not to identify specific modern nations or blocks

of nations as being the specific fulfillment of Bible prophecies.

Similarly, the Seventh-day Adventist church has had a long history of preaching the imminence of the second coming. In a five-part editorial series during January and February of this year, *Adventist Review* editor William Johnsson addressed this very issue. He commented that nearly 150 years have passed since Adventist pioneers expected to see Jesus coming in the clouds. He wrote "...some Adventists seem to think that living in the blessed hope means a feverish search of the newspaper headlines for evidence that Jesus is about to come. Some seek to rework the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to find current applications, or to calculate the return of Jesus from the biblical jubilee cycle." Johnsson goes on to make an observation that I believe is entirely valid for all groups that tend to be preoccupied with the end times: "Thus, I believe, the blessed hope can be distorted and turned on its head. And further, I believe, we see the dire fallout of this twisting of God's precious promise in the falling away of many of our own young adults. To many of our best and brightest we have come across as so preoccupied with the future and so feverishly engaged to bring it about that we have little time for the present—and for them" (*Adventist Review*, January 10, 1991).

I recount the teachings of the World-

view, January 19, 1991).

I recount the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God and quote the writings of Dr. Johnsson to illustrate that it is not just a few Sabbathkeepers at the fringes who are concerned with dates, date setting, and with end-time scenarios. The preoccupation with such runs wide and deep. Notwithstanding the 100% failure rate of end-time dates throughout the centuries and even during recent decades, the trend continues unabated.

The following are quotations taken directly from the published writings of Sabbatarians. (Of course, many similar quotations could be found in the writings of those who don't observe the Sabbath.) Some are predictions that have already proven false; some are yet future; others are general in nature but give the unmistakable message that the end is imminent. In order to avoid embarrassing any individuals or organizations, names are omitted from these quotations, but the dates of publication are included.

It is our opinion that either 1989 or 1990 will become a crucial watershed year for the fulfillment of end-time Bible prophecy. If Yahshua the Messiah will return in this current Sabbatical cycle, some significant turning point must occur in either of these next two years. It is up to us to watch carefully for the signs of the end of the age. If no major events occur, then we must await the next cycle which ends in the year 2001-2002. (Jan '89)

Ultimately we will go in to a *national captivity* about the spring of 1991! (August '88)

1987 is the year when the false messiah will be presented to the world. The anti-Christ conspirators are preparing a moment of worldwide unity in prayer (for peace, and for the appearing of the false messiah) to be observed December 31, 1986.... Big troubles will begin in the summer of 1987, and the false messiah will ascend

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dictatorial power over us all between September 14 and October 14, 1987.... We hope that this timely message will alert you to the trouble ahead and allow you now to make necessary preparations before the summer of 1987. (Dec. '86)

When the world sees the forming of ten nations in Europe — *probably* to be called "The United States of Europe" — when the world sees that power move to occupy Palestine (modern "Israel")—when the world sees the Pope move his official headquarters to Jerusalem, thus setting up the "Abomination of Desolation"—then this world had better realize the great tribulation is beginning!.... A "strong man" will take the helm of government in Germany, *possibly* Franz Josef Strauss.... Germany, at the head of the United States of Europe, will conquer the United States and the British Commonwealth of Nations! (1985)

Since we are in the 70th 49-year cycle, then the Sabbath year 1993-94 will be the final year of forgiveness. At the end of that Sabbath year, the door of forgiveness will close and the day of judgment begins, as Messiah returns on the Feast of Trumpets 1994. ...the Church of God is asleep! We are approaching, with lightning speed, the Great Tribulation — a time of unparalleled trouble! (July 1987)

We have seen on the preceding page, that all the prophecies point to a certain date.... These reputable scientists are pointing out that in the latter part of 1982 there will take place an event unique in our Solar System. At that particular time all nine planets will be on the same side of the sun. That happens once every 179 years, but in 1982 the nine planets will...be in perfect alignment.... This alignment of the planets in 1982 may bring a sudden shift in wind patterns. In Revelation 16:21 we read, "A great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent." (Possibly at least 120 pounds) Rev.

11:2-6 indicates a three-and-one-half year period when rainfall will be restricted. If such a drought comes, then famine is certain. Three-and-one half years later in 1986 the comet Haley will again come around. This time scientists believe it might be a very near miss. Could this cause some of the effects we read of in Rev. 8:7-11? (Published sometime between 1974 and 1982)

Beginning April 1st, 1988, no rain will fall on the United States, England, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand. (1987)

George Bush will win the Republican nomination at the convention center this summer.... Ted Kennedy wins the Democratic nomination.... In the November 1988 election... Ted Kennedy will win by a very narrow margin. Jeanne Kirkpatrick is in as his vice-president. (1988)

It should be no surprise to most Christians reading this article, we are living on the edge of time. Jesus' return and the end of this age is imminent. From the account in Mark 13, He will return to a chaotic world.... Mark lists all the physical and social signs pointing to the end of this age. These signs are coming to pass. April, '88)

Mr. Bush is our last president. As a result of our wholesale departure from the true Almighty Sovereign of the Universe...our new president will surely go into an horrendous national captivity with most Americans.... only a scraggly few will Jesus find to bring back out of the horrendous captivity soon to come on our nation around the spring of 1991. (Dec. '88) This autumn and every Feast you attend from now on, you should take, not only your Bible and clothes for the one season, but also take clothes for all seasons, bedding, camping gear, your passport and other personal documents, any reference books that you use in study, extra canned food, and your savings. Take anything you would want to have

with you if you could not return to your home for a long time. Why? The end is so near! What if the economy crashes or a nuclear attack occurs while you are at a Feast site? (August '89)

The bad news is that on May 2nd...., the angel who blows the first trumpet plague will set fire to this land.... This will be the driest winter ever, especially throughout the south. Beginning with the equinox, there will be a most unusual absence of rain throughout the nation.... President Reagan will be cut off March 21; Bush (will be) in office, (by the) end of March. (Feb. '88)

Yet now I say unto thee to be practical; to prepare victuals for your own physical body necessary in time of need. I say — pack away necessities. The three and one-half years have begun and crashing and crumbling and climatic catastrophes break upon the scene, I say to you soon! (July '89)

You will learn why 1982, fall reckoning, is such a critically important date! You will see in that book why, depending on which "countdown" we use, this present world system may have only 7, or 19, or 28 years left to go — at the outside! (1983)

One sad fact is that for every writer predicting end time events, there are hundreds of people who scurry to their Bibles to try one more time to figure it all out. All this misses the point. Whether the end of this age come in 1991 or in 2091, the truth of the Bible is still the same. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life! Whatever our convictions about how near we are to the return of Jesus, we should be busy doing the work He gave us to do. And that work is the same in all centuries for all people. It is the work of sharing the truth that leads to eternal life.

Parents often talk about the younger generation as if they didn't have anything to do with it.

Setting Dates for the Second Coming

by Kenneth Westby

Date-setting for the return of Christ is a popular idiocy among the dogmatic religious. The 100% failure rate to date doesn't seem to faze the faithful. The latest dreamer (in a full-page ad in a major California newspaper) even gives us the starting date for the great tribulation (April 1, 1988! -- can he be serious?) with a prophecy of no rain for America for 3½ years. He modestly named his startup church "The Church of God Philadelphia Era."

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen an increasing torrent of date setters. In 1881 Claas Epp, a leader of Mennonite Brethren, announced himself as one of the two witnesses, and prepared to meet Elijah in the skies. He had Christ scheduled to appear on March 8, 1889, the date being fixed by an old wallclock, on which the hands had stopped, pointing to 89 (the Lord works in strange ways some would say). When 1889 passed without any cosmic happening, Epp had a vision that informed him that the clock leaned slightly and should be straightened up. Now erect, the hands on the poor old clock pointed to 91, and yes you have it, the correct advent date was 1891. When Christ missed that correct date Epp finally claimed he was a son of Christ and the fourth person of the Godhead adopting a baptismal formula Father, Sons, and Holy Ghost.

Just about every year of this century has been picked by some leader or group. Even large denominations have engaged in this game of prophetic Russian roulette. Why? Security for one thing; arrogance for another. Somehow we figure if we know the date of Christ's return (and souls in other churches don't) that will give us an advantage or perhaps even a "ticket" to the event. Given special insight to interpret world events in light of that date we can prepare to save our hide during the plagues and wars. Or even be raptured away to heaven or to a desert place of safety while the hapless fools that wouldn't buy into our prophetic scheme suffer like rats in the fire. Fantasy baptised as God's Truth is heady wine. I know. There was a time many years ago when I fell for the neatly crafted prophetic time table of a certain crafty denomination. I was looking for, among other things, the "key" that would unlock all the prophetic mysteries. In time I discovered no key was needed.

Never mind that Christ said we wouldn't know the day of his return (Mt 24:36); even if we did it would count for nothing. The righteous of ages past to a man and woman didn't know end time dates and might have been a bit discouraged had they. Many of them believed they were living in the end days as I and alot of

Sabbath at Sommerhase

by Lettie Lippincott Siddens

This 128-page Sabbath storybook for families contains 17 stories and 13 Bible lessons—all relating to the Sabbath, all full of ideas for making the rest day an exciting one for children. The activity packet includes some 30 worksheets, games, puzzles, plays, and projects.

Sabbath at Sommerhase is available for \$7, the activity packet for \$3. Please add \$1 to your order to cover the cost of postage. Quantity discount information is available on request.

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you reading this essay probably do. The serious sense of urgency encouraged by that belief is not a fault, but an asset re-enforcing the fact our brief rite of life is truly our "last days." We don't come back in every century to sample the culture and politics. This is it -- now! Each day we breathe we exist before a living God who inquires into our attitudes and actions and whose judgment is forever final. How could the stakes be higher if our living happens to occur in the Apocalypse generation?

Avoid setting dates for what the Father and Christ must and will do on their divine time (1 Th. 5:1-11). Instead look at the dates on your gravestone -- there is already one there waiting for the second. Between those two dates your loving Savior has some important business with you. Let's mind that business!

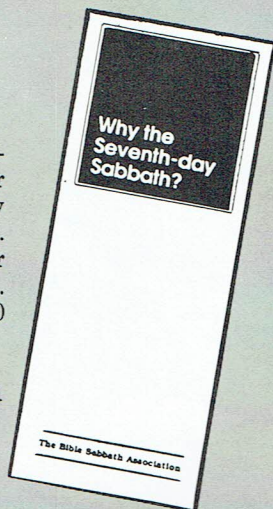
Reprinted from an editorial in the Aug/Sept 1987 issue of the *ACD Newsletter*, published by the Association for Christian Development.

Why the Seventh-day Sabbath?

In clear, direct language, this 12-page booklet gives six compelling Biblical reasons for observing the seventh-day Sabbath. Handy size (3 and 1/2" by 8 and 1/2"); attractive cover.

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The Resurrected Savior-to the Last First

Notice the *Order of His Appearance!* He started with the “least” of His disciples, a single woman named Mary Magdalene. Then He appeared to the rest of the women, next the lesser disciples (not of the twelve apostles) on the way to Emmaus, and then appeared to Peter (who had denied Him). But He did not appear to His eleven chosen *Apostles* as a group until afterwards (about twelve hours *after* His resurrection)!

Apparently the principle of the first being last, and the *last being first* was in application here. It is very significant, therefore that Christ appeared *by choice* to the *women first*. In Jewish society the women were considered least, but by Christ’s actions He elevated their status!

From “Why Did God the Father Give the Holy Spirit to Women?”
a 1990 manuscript by Leila McMichael,
who resides in Lenoir, North Carolina

COMPUTERS AND COMIC RELIEF

By Bishop John D. Garr

It has been said that to err is human, but it takes a computer to really louse things up. Through the years I have seen some pretty interesting, ironic, and comical results from computerized solicitation and direct mailing programs.

There as the case when a friend's sainted mother, a generous giver and sponsor of many religious activities, received a computer-generated letter from a well-known evangelist telling her that God had spoken to him directly about her promising a rich and abundant blessing if she would send an appropriate offering to help support his ministry. Unfortunately, the letter was mailed six months after this blessed sister had died. Needless to say, the letter was a source of grief to the family.

Then there was the case when I received a letter addressed to the Church Publishing Company, asking me to purchase some printed materials. The salutation of the letter greeted me as "Dear Mr. Church." Of course, I was flattered by the appellation; however, not in my wildest dreams could I imagine myself large enough to merit that title.

By far the best case of computer folly that I have seen came in a recent letter that came to John Dewaine, pastor of The Church of God in Pittsburgh, Pa. The letter, a sales promotional from Bell of Pennsylvania, is presented at right.

Pastor Dewaine took advantage of the occasion to write the office whose computer generated the letter and the mailing list. Here are some excerpts from Dewaine's letter.

"I received your letter today and must admit it was the highlight of my day. Yes, I know there are many companies offering various types of telephone services today because God knows all things. I am sorry you did not know that God does not use Bell of Pennsylvania, because He has His own communication system. You can call Him toll free at any time and His line will not be busy. God's serv-



ice is also of the highest quality; for, you see, He only has one mediator between Him and man, Jesus Christ. No credit card is necessary because He is all knowing, once you call Him He will never forget you. God's toll rates are also lower than AT&T, MCI, US Sprint, and even Bell of Pennsylvania, for He is just a prayer away. Speaking of the latest state of the art equipment, I have never seen messages sent and received to God

that are so loud and clear and yet travel far greater distances than man is capable of so far."

The Bell of Pennsylvania letter and Pastor Dewaine's response were picked up by the Pittsburgh Press and were used in an article, giving the Pittsburgh church and its pastor some good publicity.

Computer glitches are funny, but a good response can serve to glorify God and generate good publicity.



Bell of Pennsylvania

A Bell Atlantic Company

One Parkway
15th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

Dear Mr. God:

As you know, today there are many companies offering various types of telephone services. That's why I'm writing to you.

Because you already use Bell of Pennsylvania for your regional toll calls, you are a valued customer and your continued business is important to us. That's why we're working hard to keep it...

By providing you with the dependable, high quality service you've come to expect from Bell of Pennsylvania, including our ever-reliable Operator Services and convenient Calling Card Service.

Contribution to Lasting Values

by Clifford Hansen

If there is one thing we are short of, it is the knowledge of how to use, and/or the will to use, our short lives for the ongoing creation of lasting values. And I ask: Where is the light that we Christians are commissioned to bring to this world?

I want to suggest a role for Sabbath-keepers to play toward bringing about a fulfillment of this Christian dream—the dream of mankind living wholly under the rule of God—that goal of history which the voice behind the open door declared *must come to pass*. I believe Sabbathkeepers possess an extremely valuable and potentially effective tool for contributing toward that end—for bringing “light” into the world. The tool of which I speak is the Sabbath. We have not yet begun to realize the possibilities—the spiritual insight and power—available to us and, indeed, to all mankind, through our observing the Sabbath dedicated to supporting lives of active participation with God in the unfinished, ongoing work of creation.

Throughout its long history, the practice of Sabbathkeeping has provided symbolism for the major convictions of our Judeo-Christian faith. Consider the moral and spiritual growth that could come into the life of the human race should any substantial number of people begin to observe the Sabbath, motivated by an appreciation of, and allegiance to, the ideals and values thus built into Sabbath observance.

Such Sabbath observance requires more than resting and attending church every seventh day of the week. The Sabbath of the Bible embraces all the time of God’s people—six days of labor as well as the seventh day of rest. It involves the culture of body, mind, and spirit in constructive social relationships and in efforts that result in a responsible care for God’s gifts to us: our lives, our fellow human beings, and our world home. Sabbath observance is a means for bringing eternal values into all of our quickly-passing days. Of far greater importance than the day we keep is the quality of the experience. The validity of our Sabbathkeeping is to be found in the enrichment which it brings into our lives and into our Christian witness.

If, however, our Sabbathkeeping is to fulfill its function—truly become a means for enhancing the quality of our lives, and for mediating the enrichment to others in our time—it is essential that it be understood, proclaimed, and witnessed to in ways that are meaningful to life today. Our Sabbath witness must not be based upon a faulty reading of the Bible. It must be based upon a purpose to accept all truth from whatever source it may come.

And what do I mean by that? I mean, specifically, that our Sabbath witness must not depend upon a literal reading of the six-day creation story of Genesis. Not only does all the scientific evidence we can gather go

to show that the world and all forms of life evolved over long periods of time, it is also evident to persons familiar with the culture and literature of the ancient Bible world, that the six-day Creation Story was not intended to be taken literally. It is poetry—literary art—thoughtfully and beautifully constructed, like the parables of Jesus, to convey profound convictions of faith, and to relate man in constructive ways to the ultimate mystery of the universe in which we all must live.

Such understanding of the creation story is not new to Seventh Day Baptists. It was boldly published by us at the beginning of the present century. Unfortunately, and to our loss, this truth, discovered in God's Book of Nature, has been somewhat neglected in recent years.

We need also, I believe, to grow into an observance of the Sabbath which is motivated *not* by a sense of necessity imposed by law—the Sabbath Commandment of the Decalogue—but as a commitment made voluntarily from a sense of appreciation for the added enrichment it brings to our lives. Such living demonstrations of the values of Sabbath observance could, I believe, bring about such a revival of spiritual culture as our world has seldom seen!

I invite you to join with me in dedicating our lives anew to climbing toward the higher ground of spiritual culture through a more creative experience of Sabbath observance.

Clifford Hansen is a retired Seventh Day Baptist pastor living in Jane Lew, West Virginia. Adapted from the May, 1990, issue of *The Sabbath Recorder*.

BSA BROCHURE

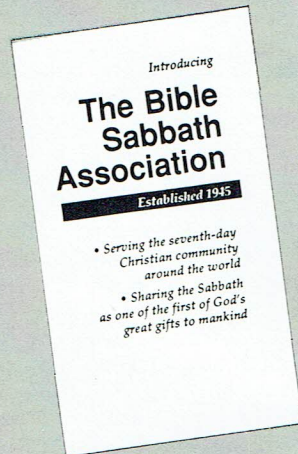
In succinct, easy-to-read paragraphs, this tri-fold brochure explains what BSA is all about. It outlines our mission and history, lists some of our publications and services, and invites readers to become members. A tear-off card is provided for easy reply.

This brochure is an excellent means of introducing fellow Sabbathkeepers to our unique association.

For a sample, send a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope. There is no charge for larger quantities; however, a donation to help cover the cost of postage would greatly be appreciated. Available also is a bulletin insert.

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<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 Law, the Gospel and the Sabbath</i> by Frank M. Walker (91 pp.)	\$3
<i>History of Sabbath and Sunday</i> by John Kiesz (64 pp.)	\$3
<i>God's Sabbath for Mankind</i> by Richard A. Wiedenheft (64 pp.)	60c

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BSA

NEWS FROM THE BSA

BSA MEETING NEXT MONTH

May 3-6 are the dates for a meeting for all members and friends of BSA at the Nevada, Mo., SDA church. Tentative schedule includes an informal welcome service on Friday evening, regular services at area churches on Sabbath morning; and a special BSA worship/fellowship meeting at 3 p.m. on Sabbath. BSA business meetings will be held Sunday and Monday.

Some of the BSA business to be discussed: amending by-laws; nominations for board members for 92-96; future plans for *The Sabbath Sentinel* (covering controversial topics, going to a free publication), literature needs, personnel needs, and long-range planning.

If you are at all interested in attending, write to Fairview for more information.

Topic Editors Being Lined Up

Some time ago, the BSA board approved for TSS an editorial change that would allow us to cover controversial topics, presenting various views without taking sides. We may call this feature "BSA Forum." A list of about 30 topics has been developed and is being circulated to people who have volunteered to serve as a topic editor. Each one will work on only one topic at a time. His job will be to collect and edit materials that lay out the various views on that topic, to give an overall review, and to provide a bibliography for readers who want to study the topic in greater depth.

The purpose of "BSA Forum" is to promote communication and under-

standing between Sabbathkeepers of various persuasions — helping all of us to better understand those who hold views different from our own.

If you have any interest in serving as a topic editor, please write to the editor.

Send Us Notices of Meetings

Now is the time to send us information on late summer and fall meetings. As a service to the seventh-day community. *The Sabbath Sentinel* publishes notices of national conferences, campmeetings, and festivals that are open to visitors. There is no charge for this service, however, donations are appreciated. May 15 is the deadline for the July issue.

Take BSA Literature to Conferences and Festivals

If you are planning to attend meetings this coming summer or fall, why not take along a supply of BSA literature. We can provide some materials that can be distributed free; the directory, *Sabbath at Sommerhase*, and other books can be provided on consignment. You pay for them (at a reduced rate) only after they're sold. Write us for details.

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.

NEWS

FROM THE SEVENTH DAY COMMUNITY

Editor's Note:

In this column in February we reported that Herbert E. Saunders, former president of the SDB General Conference, switched to pastoring a first-day church. A number of distinguished Seventh Day Baptists, many of whom are friends of BSA, wrote to say our story was in error when it said that Saunders has apparently doubted the Sabbath for some time. It is true that he resigned as pastor of the Milton SDB congregation in February of 1990 and that he accepted the pastorate of the Congregational church later in the year. However, he remains a Seventh Day Baptist and regularly attends the Madison SDB church. The Congregational church is fully aware of his Seventh Day Baptist membership.

We deeply regret that we did not check personally with Pastor Saunders before publishing this information. We apologize for any embarrassment we may have caused him, his family, associates, and friends. A longtime friend of BSA and proponent of the Sabbath, Saunders is author of the book, *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-Creation*.

While many Sabbathkeepers would equate pastoring a first-day church with abandonment of the Sabbath, Seventh Day Baptists have a long history of filling pulpits on Sunday mornings. SDB Historian Don Sanford, in his letter to us wrote, "Historically, Seventh Day Baptist have often been able to worship with our Sunday brethren, and even serve in pastoral roles without compromise on our basic Sabbath convictions.

Several of our early pastors in England, including Joseph Stennett, Henry Jesse, and Peter Chamberlen, saw nothing inconsistent with their associations with other independents. The first Seventh Day Baptists in America, Stephen Mumford and his wife, were listed as Sabbathkeeping members of the Tewksbury Baptist Church in England." Sanford goes on to explain that he has personally served a total of 18 different churches including the very Congregational church that Herbert Saunders now pastors.

Seventh Day Baptists are not the only Sabbathkeepers that minister with and for first day churches. Elsewhere in this issue is an article about a Seventh-day Adventist teacher who has served for many years as pastor of a first-day church.

CGI on Europe Radio

Garner Ted Armstrong, president of the Church of God, International, recently began a 15-minute radio broadcast twice a week over the Astra satellite owned by Transtar Satellite Television of England. The broadcast covers most of Northern, Western, and Central Europe. The well-known evangelist said, "It is elating to know that millions now will be able to hear the broadcast once again--people who have not heard my voice since the late 1970s," when Armstrong spoke on the Worldwide Church of God's *World Tomorrow* broadcast.

CGI's mail department received 219,000 letters last year through the first week of December, about 900 per work day. This was a 26% increase over the previous year.

Adventists on Abortion

Should the US SDA church oppose abortion? It depends upon those whom you ask. A recent poll in *Dialogue*, the newsletter of the Loma Linda University Church found that 60% of those asked wanted neutrality. Of the 40% who preferred a stand, most favored a pro-abortion position. Sentinel Research Services of Redlands, California, however, found that 56% of Adventists wanted their leaders to be anti-abortion. Sentinel touched upon abortion in a survey containing over 500 questions.

Woman Scalded for Teaching

In Tanzania, East Africa, last May, Adventists baptized over 1000 people in the town of Shinyanga during a Bible and health crusade. Georgia Mahende, a part-time literature evangelist, was preparing 11 candidates for baptism. One woman, angered that her husband was going to leave the Lutheran church, poured a pot of scalding water upon Mrs. Mahende's head and another on her back when she fell to the ground. Taken to the hospital with serious burns, she later asked that her persecutor be released from jail (the woman was not). Mahende said, "If I die, I will awake on the first resurrection morning. If I recover, the scars on my face will witness for the Lord whom I love so much." She was released from the hospital, healed four weeks later.

Feminists Withhold Tithe

The Adventist Women's Institute (AWI), a group which wants to increase female influence within the Seventh-day Adventists, has created an escrow account for tithe money. Upset over the denomination's vote last year not to ordain women, the

AWI wants SDAs to pay into the escrow account, rather than giving funds to the church, until women are ordained as ministers. Then the money would be released to the church. While the AWI see female ordinations as a civil rights matter, General Conference spokesman Shirley Burton said that the Bible does not support ordaining females; and most of the worldwide ministry opposes it. At a September meeting in Takoma Park, Pennsylvania, the AWI set forth a goal of "full equality by (the year) 2000." It called for, among other things, more women at all levels of the religious organization, "a full-time women's ministry person at the GC level to generate and disseminate accurate information concerning the equality of womar," and "guaranteeing proportional representation of women at all levels of decision making," according to an editorial in *Ponderings*, an AWI publication. The last requirement—a quota system within the CG—would be opposed by the overwhelming majority of Adventists. The other demands might find more support.

Church Census Shows Growth

The 1990 census of the Church of God (seventh Day), headquartered in Denver, evidences strong growth in all districts of the US and Canada. The biggest increase occurred in Canada, up 166% from 1980. The largest swell in the states came in the Northeastern District, which more than doubled its membership. The Central District had the least growth. Over all, the church increased to about 5750 members in the US and Canada, about a 46% jump from 1980.

LAW

ON THE LEGAL FRONT

Religious freedom is diminishing due to the Supreme Court's ruling in **Employment Division v. Smith** (TSS, Sept. '90). In that case, the court repealed the long-standing rule that the state must show a compelling interest to enforce a law when enforcement violates peoples' free exercise of religion. As a result the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has begun making Amish workers wear hard hats instead of their traditional hats; while families objecting to autopsies on religious grounds no longer have recourse to the First Amendment. Broader and more serious violations of religious freedom will no doubt come to light. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, designed to restore the "compelling state interest" test has yet to pass Congress.

"Unnecessary Work" on Sunday is prohibited in Prospect Park, NJ. When Robert Crawford discovered anti-freeze leaking from his truck one Sunday last September, he began to fix the problem. A policeman driving by told Crawford to stop; but Crawford refused. He was fined \$10 by a judge who told him he should have driven to a garage. But, of course, the garages were closed due to the Sunday law. Good thing Crawford doesn't live in England, where, a historian has discovered, centuries-old laws are still in effect which forbid eating mince pies or missing church on Christmas day.

Clergy malpractice can make a

denomination liable. The Evangelical Covenant Church of America (ECC), headquartered in Illinois, was unable to get itself dismissed from a sexual abuse suit against a Minnesota church's pastor. The Minnesota Court of Appeal ruled that a local church membership in a national group doesn't necessarily give state courts jurisdiction over the out-of-state corporation. Since the national ECC disciplines local pastors, however, the court said it has made itself subject to local jurisdiction. In another case, the Texas Court of Appeal said that the General Conference of the Assemblies of God could not be sued for sexual abuse by a local church pastor. The **congregationalist** structure of that group does not establish local ministers as agents of the denomination, said the court. Specifically, church donations to that national body are voluntary and the GC has limited powers of ordination. Seventh-day groups other than Baptists are more centrally organized and would be liable under Texas and other states' laws.

In Alaska, Samaritan Counseling Center must stand trial for one of its pastors' sexual advances toward a woman counselee. Even though the resulting intercourse occurred away from the center and after the counseling relationship ended, the Alaska Supreme Court found that the tortious conduct (action for which one might be liable) arose out of -- and was reasonably incidental to -- the pastor's job. (Adapted from **Court Report**, Autumn, 1990.)

TO REPEAT

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS BY OR ABOUT SABBATHKEEPERS

“The simplicity which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:3) gets thwarted by our quest to be right. We can easily become seduced by a futile, or even selfish search to solve all the historical and chronological questions clustering around Jesus’ last night on earth. Such problems as First Century dates, social modes and ritual practices can deflect us from the righteous purpose of Passover, not to mention all the biblical celebrations. . . . Let us remember that history, sound scholarship, and the most highly trained Bible experts admit that there are questions about the OT and NT Passovers that we cannot answer with certainty. Perhaps it will relieve you to know that. If the experts have not found definitive answers, why should God hold the rest of us responsible?

“The Power of Passover?” by Charles V. Dorothy,
ACD Newsletter, Feb/Mar, '90

The change that pleases me most is. . . that our laity and ministers have a better understanding of righteousness by faith now. . . Paradoxically. . . many have misunderstood the emphasis on righteousness by faith. There seem to be three groups in the church today. One group goes to the extreme of legalism, emphasizing standards and obedience while but dimly comprehending that it is love for Christ that motivates people to obey. A second group goes to the opposite extreme, what we might label liberalism. They seem to have little concern for lifestyle or obedience. They say Jesus has done it all. Love, love, love, love is their great theme song, but the change in lifestyle that should accompany their profession seems to be absent. . . The third group is walking in the middle of the right road!

Interview with retired minister Robert Spangler by William G. Johnson
Adventist Review, Aug 23, '90

There is, indeed, a time referred to in scripture as being “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” It is in Jer. 30:7. But when read in context, it is referring to the Kingdom of Judah being destroyed, and the Jewish people being taken away in what is known as the Babylonian captivity.

“The Time of Jacob’s Trouble” by Rick Chamberlin,
Petah Tikvah, Jul-Sep, '90

A weak, uneducated conscience can be as great a cause of stress as a seared or silenced one. Such a weak conscience keeps accusing us over trivia that is not really of moral importance. True guilt is an important warning that something is wrong. False guilt is useless stress created by phony expectations and unscriptural “rules.” Education of the conscience is essential for all of us if we are to avoid unnecessary stress.

“Coping with Stress” by Desmond Ford, *Good News Unlimited*

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

MAILBOX

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Praise for Sentinel

I very much appreciate the format of TSS. The graphics, print and layout are really exceptional for a magazine of such a limited circulation. The News and Law sections are always pertinent, informative and admirably brief. I appreciate your courage in presenting so wide a diversity of views. The Christian Sabbathkeeping community has two extraordinary bonds of union: the faith of Jesus and a reverence for His law, written on our hearts by His grace. However, we need a vehicle for hearing one another's views. TSS provides this vehicle as nothing else does. Let none who read the letters to the editor have occasion to say, "Behold how these Sabbathkeepers hate one another!" because of blistering criticisms they read concerning each other's theology. Let's all bear in mind that the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling and without hypocrisy. Jas. 3:17.

Brian Jones, Auburn, WA

I am very much interested in reading your magazine. I am a student at The Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw. I am 27 years. I am a poor Sabbatarian. Thank you for your help, and I am waiting for your magazines. God bless you.

Polish reader

Enclosed is a check for \$500 for life membership in BSA. I like the quali-

ty of the TSS editorials. They always either challenge me or articulate feelings I have had for a long time. Many thanks. I am a Sabbathkeeping Christian who is, by choice, not affiliated with any denomination. BSA helps me feel somewhat connected to brothers and sisters in Christ that share my views on the 7th day Sabbath.

Life member from Palmdale, CA

Importance of Sabbath

I agree with you—for those who live in Christ, the Sabbath is a freedom and a joy, a blessing, not a curse. For the past ten years that I've been saved, I've always wondered exactly what God wants me to do. I've tried different Christian churches, applied myself to their various regulations. Since they all differ so, I became confused and somehow lost my way—which was just listening to the Holy Spirit and reading God's word. Last year He showed me the Sabbath commandment, gave me peace in it, and then told me, "Come out of her, My people," (Rev. 18:4, 5) for about two weeks until I realized what He meant. Babylon is confusion, which is what I got by going to religion instead of just to Jesus who saved me. I finally have the answers I longed for all these years—to keep God's commandments, keep faith in Jesus, share the gospel, and fellowship with other Christians outside the walls of Babylon.

Sister from Massachusetts

Send letters to The Sabbath Sentinel, RD1 Box 222, Fairview, OK 73737.

ADS

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Small Sabbathkeeping congregation located in Pennsylvania is seeking enthusiastic pastor. Please send resume to Pastoral Position c/o The Bible Sabbath Assn., RD 1 Box 222, Fairview, OK 73737. (4,5)

Concert Tour-June 1991. Spring Vale Academy SOUND choir will be touring Eastern Canada and US. If your church is interested in hosting or hearing a gospel concert by Sabbathkeeping young people, write SOUND, 4150 S. M-52, Owosso, MI 48867. (4)

After 6000 years, the question of "When the Sabbath of the Lord Begins" has been answered clearly and fully. Please write to the International Sanctuary Research Center, Knoxville, IL 61448 for the booklet, authored by Dr. James D. Wang, Director of the Center. A donation of \$3.00 is suggested for the booklet. (4,6)

Feast of Tabernacles October 11-18, 1991. For locations for Sabbath and sacred name groups, write to Camp of Yah, 1838 W. Hayes St., Davenport, IA 52804. Group Discussions, Bible studies on fasting, food combinations, Daniel 7:25 calendar changes, prophecy, etc. (4,5)

Commandment Keepers! Tired of liberalism, compromise, and retreat?

Want to return to the doctrinal *landmarks*, restore *high standards*, and get on with the *mission* of God's church? Join with us, and help us to *repair* the breeches in the walls, and to get on with the Work. For details rush \$1.00 and s.a.s.e. to The World Conference of the Seventh-day Church of God, P.O. Box 455, Claremore, OK 74018. (4)

Free 1991 Sabbath Calendars. Write to The Sodergrens, 45-020B Malulani St., Kaneohe, HI 96744. Sorry we are late in offering the above. We'll be glad to send as many as you need for your families, relatives, friends, church group, and yourself. (4,5)

Free article, "Come Out of Babylon: Keep the Scriptural New Moon." Write to Gary C. Miller, 1805 Decker St., Pocahontas, AR 72455. (4,5)

Free article, "Three Vitaly Important Points about Passover." Write Gary C. Miller, 1805 Decker St., Pocahontas, AR 72455. (4,5)

After 6000 years, the question of "When Should the Sabbath of the Lord Begin?" has been answered clearly and fully. Please write to the International Sanctuary Research Center, Knoxville, IL 61448 for the booklet, authored by Dr. James D. Wang, director of the Center. A donation of

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nyvale, CA 94087. (1-5)

Sabbatarian Christians: The Bible says that *no one* committing sin is saved. Want proof? Free booklet "Are You Really Saved?" Fighters for Truth, Box 975. Mill City, OR 97360. (4-6)

Must women really be silent? Ask Family of God, 7119 Western Tr., San Antonio, TX 78244. (1-7)

Tetragrammaton Pin. Wear and witness Yahweh and Yahshua's sacred name. Write for information. Send sae to Pins, Box 308, Spring Valley, OH 45370. (3,4)

Light Magazine open your understanding to the meat of the Word. News events explained prophetically. No charge. YNCA, POB 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262. (11-10)

Meet Sabbath Singles! Meet your special life-time companion. Special introductory offers to ladies. For more information, contact Sabbath Singles, P.O. Box 1382, Odessa, TX 79760-1382. (3-5)

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 about display advertising is available on request.

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If you really want to receive THE SABBATH SENTINEL but cannot afford a subscription, let us know your need. The generosity of others enables us to send out a limited number of "love" subscriptions.

**Official meeting of
The Bible Sabbath Association
May 3-5 in Nevada, Missouri**

All BSA members and other interested individuals are invited to attend. The three-day gathering will include discussions about a wide range of BSA business and Sabbath-related topics such as:

- sharing the Sabbath thru literature, radio, advertising
- dealing with differences of belief among Sabbath keepers
- nominations for BSA officers and directors
- evaluating BSA publications
- long-range goals for the association
- amendments to BSA by-laws

Sessions will include committee meetings on special interests, plenary sessions, reports by BSA officers, and worship services. A great opportunity to meet other association members personally, to get to know many Sabbathkeepers from a wide range of backgrounds. A great chance to actively participate in association planning.

For further information, write:

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