

The SABBATH SENTINEL

Serving the Seventh-day Christian Community

JANUARY, 1993



EDITORIAL

Reflecting on Eight Years as Editor

With the transition to a new editor well underway, I can't help but reflect on my more than eight years working with BSA. It's been a time of wonderful blessings along with some frustrations and disappointments.

Probably the greatest blessings have been the opportunities to meet Sabbathkeeping brothers and sisters in Christ from all over the world. From Lawrence & Lottie Burrell in Oklahoma to John Bennett in British Columbia, from Stephen Kube in Australia to James Siwane in South Africa, from Gus Ziebart in Germany to Leon Lawton in Rhode Island, I know I could travel all over the globe and fellowship with people I've met through BSA.

Of course, in meeting many people, I have been exposed to their experiences and confronted with their ideas. Some of these have reinforced my own convictions, some have challenged me, some have angered me—but all have enriched me.

As editor, I have been on the receiving end of hundreds of letters, articles, and cassettes. Many have been informative or have expressed appreciation for the work of BSA. Some have taken exception to something I've published. A few have demanded that I print an enclosed article or have consigned me to hell fire for some reason. Some authors have forbidden me to change a word of their work; others have given me license to edit in any way I saw fit. What diversity! As editor I have learned to appreciate the statement, "You can please some of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time." Long ago, I gave up trying.

Perhaps the most frustrating thing I've had to deal with is people who are convinced that they alone have the truth on some or all points or who maintain that if you aren't worshipping with them you're worshipping the devil. Having once been a part of such a group, I can understand the feeling; but being tolerant of the intolerant is a real challenge.

What great joy there is, however, when I receive a letter from someone who explains that he once thought he was part of the only Sabbathkeeping church in the country, but then came across BSA's directory or a copy of TSS and said, "Wow! I had no idea there were all these other groups! Praise God for BSA!" This is what motivates me to continue to support and encourage this work so that more and more people around the world can have the opportunity to see a bigger picture of what God is doing—so they will begin to look to Jesus Christ instead of to men!

I encourage our readers and members to give Sydney and Sherry Cleveland the same support and encouragement you have given me over the past eight years—so that they can be blessed as I have.

—Richard A. Wiedenheft

The Lord's Day-- Commentaries on Revelation 1:10

On occasion Sunday-keeping Christians present Revelation 1:10 as evidence that Sunday is the "Lord's Day." Since most Sabbatarians disagree with that premise, the following commentaries are presented for your consideration.

Desmond Ford, *Crisis!*, Vol. II, ©1982 by the author.

There is no evidence whatever for the assumption made by many that the Lord's Day here means the Day of the Lord (which would be written differently in Greek. Compare 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). All the features mentioned as to the who, the where, the how, and the when, hang together as a unity, and apply to the situation on Patmos.

There is still less evidence for the almost universal assumption of those who reject the above position (the Day of the Lord) that Sunday is intended. Milligan says, "Proof is wanting that the first day of the week had yet received the name of 'the Lord's Day.'²¹ Criswell admits, "We are under no commandment to meet on Sunday."²²

The Anchor Bible, after mentioning the various possibilities, declares, "However, it is very difficult to determine which is meant. Most probably the Christians would still be keeping the Sabbath, the seventh day." The author adds that nevertheless the Easter Day would have been very appropriate. We prefer the possibility she quotes as held by Strand, "the seventh day of the week," as the only one consistent

with biblical usage elsewhere. Compare Ex. 20:8-11 (which calls the Sabbath the Lord's three times), Isa. 58:13; Mk. 2:28; Mt. 12:8. The first conclusive evidence for the application of "Lord's Day" to the first day of the week is found in the apocryphal *Gospel According to Peter* (9, 12, ANF, 9:8) towards the end of the second century. When we recall the tremendous changes as our own era in the last three quarters of a century, we will hesitate to equate the phrase in Rev. 1:10 with usage made that long a period after the writing of the Apocalypse--particularly when it conflicts with one and a half millenniums of biblical usage.

Neither Jews nor Christians would call Caesar *κυριος* (Lord), and John here speaks of the sabbath in such a way as to show that Christians knew only one Lord--the Lord of the sabbath. In the vision received on this holy day of rest, John and all Christians were promised the speedy ushering in of the eternal rest, already foreshadowed by our present rest in Christ. See Heb. 4:3ff.

Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Sabbath in the New Testament*, ©1985 by the author.

The expression "Lord's Day"

found in Revelation 1:10 has been interpreted in four major different ways.

Sunday. The prevailing interpretation equates the expression "Lord's Day" with Sunday. This equation is based not on internal evidences of the book of Revelation but on three second-century patristic testimonies, namely, *Didache* 14:1, Ignatius' *Epistle to the Magnesians* 9:1 and the *Gospel of Peter* 35 and 50. Of these, only in the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter*, which is dated in the latter half of the second century, is Sunday unmistakably designated by the technical term "Lord's--*kuriake*."

The designation of Sunday as "Lord's day" which unmistakably appears before the end of the second century cannot necessarily be read back into Revelation 1:10. A major reason is that if Sunday had already received the new appellation "Lord's day" by the end of the first century, when both the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation were written, we would expect this new name for Sunday to be used consistently in both works, especially since they were

apparently produced by the same author at approximately the same time and in the same geographical area.

If a new term prevails and is more readily understood, a writer does not confuse his readers with archaic time designations. Moreover, if the new denomination "Lord's day" already existed and expressed the meaning and nature of Christian worship, the Gospel writers could hardly legitimately use the Jewish designation "first day of the week" instead. Therefore, the fact that the expression "Lord's day" occurs in John's apocalyptic book but not in his Gospel--where the first day is explicitly mentioned in conjunction with the resurrection (John 20:1) and the appearances of Jesus (John 20:19,26)--suggests that the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 can hardly refer to Sunday.

Easter-Sunday. Other scholars maintain that the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10, designates Easter-Sunday rather than the weekly Sunday. This conclusion rests primarily on the assumption that since in the New testament and in the sub-apos-

Sabbath Booklet

In clear, direct language, this booklet outlines the basic Bible teaching about the seventh-day Sabbath and the first day of the week. It is specifically designed for sharing the Sabbath truth with others.

- Five pages
- Handy size for pocket, purse, or correspondence (3 and 1/2" x 8 and 1/2")
- Very attractive cover
- Blank space on back cover for your own name and address
- Great for congregational outreach

Copies are available for 14¢ each, \$12 per hundred. Please add \$1 for shipping and handling. Order from:

The Bible Sabbath Association
RD 1 Box 222 • Fairview, OK 73737



Contact BSA by Phone

If you have questions about BSA, its services or publications, just dial (405) 227-3200 at any time between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Central Time; ask for Lottie.

Save money by calling on weekends or before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. (local time). Call:

(405) 227-3200

tolic literature little importance is attached to Sunday as a day of Christian worship, the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 must then refer to the annual Easter-Sunday, out of which the weekly Sunday later developed.

The major weakness of this interpretation is that it ignores the fact that the book of Revelation was addressed by John to the seven churches of Asia Minor, which we know strongly rejected the Easter-Sunday custom, holding fast instead to the Nisan 14 dating of the Passover. How could John have meant "I was in the Spirit on Easter-Sunday" when he wrote to Christians who, we know, would rather be excommunicated by Bishop Victor of Rome than accept Easter-Sunday?

Seventh-day Sabbath. A third view, held by seventh-day Sabbath-keeping churches, including Seventh-day Adventists, maintains that the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 designates the seventh-day Sabbath. This conclusion is based especially on the fact that Christ declared Himself to be "lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28).

While it must be granted that conceptually there is a connection between "Lord of the Sabbath" and "Lord's day," linguistically it is difficult to defend this interpretation because the phrase "Lord's day" is never used in the early Christian literature as a designation of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have interpreted the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 as a reference to the seventh-day Sabbath. Ellen G. White expresses this view saying, for example: "The Lord's day is the seventh day, the Sabbath of creation. On the day that God sanctified and blessed, Christ signified 'by His angel unto His servant John' things which must come to pass before the close of the world's history.¹⁵ Again she writes: "It was on the Sabbath that the Lord of glory appeared to the exiled apostle. The Sabbath was as sacredly observed by John on Patmos as when he was preaching to the people in the towns and cities of Judea."¹⁶

Personally I accept this interpretation, especially since I have shown in my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday* that there are compelling indications that Sundaykeeping did not originate before the reign of Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 117-138). Moreover, there are also indications that even when Sunday was introduced by the Church of Rome, many Eastern Christians adopted Sundaykeeping in addition to, rather than as a substitution for the Sabbath. What this means is that only the Sabbath could possibly be known to John as the "Lord's day" before the end of the first century when he wrote the book of Revelation.

The Day of the Lord. A fourth interpretation, which has been de-

fended by such distinguished scholars as J. B. Lightfoot and A. Deissmann, views the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 as a variation of "the day of the Lord" which is commonly employed in the Scripture to designate the day of Christ's coming and of His judgment. The reasons for this interpretation are discussed at length in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp. 123-131.

The basic support for this interpretation is provided by the immediate and larger contexts, both of which speak of the day of Christ's coming. Additional support is provided by Origen's use of the term "Lord's day" to refer explicitly to the day of Christ's Return,¹⁷ by John's reference to "the great day of God" (Rev. 16:14; 6:17), by the unique parallelism between Revelation 1:10 and 4:1-7. The parallelism consists of similarities of expressions, context and content which suggest that the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 may be understood, in the light of the parallel expression, "what must take place after this" (Rev. 4:1), to mean the Day of Christ's coming.

It may be possible to combine the last two interpretations by viewing the "Lord's day" both as a Sabbath day on which John was taken in vision and as the great day of Christ's coming which John saw in vision. What

HOW TO PROMOTE THE SABBATH IN YOUR AREA

If you are interested in sponsoring ads in your newspaper to promote the Sabbath and the aims of the BSA, we can help you. Write and request "Reaching Out through Local Advertising."

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

greater vision could have given courage to the aged apostle in exile for his witness to Christ! Moreover, the Sabbath is closely linked to the Second Advent. The meeting of the invisible Lord in time on the weekly Sabbath is a prelude to the meeting of the visible Lord in space on the final day of His coming.

**Sabbath Research Center, by
George Dellenger, ©1986.**

In Rev. 1:10 John the Apostle says "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." What does he mean? What is the Lord's day"? Is it Sunday? Is it the Sabbath? Is it a prophetic period? Is it any of these? Can we know?

Through the ages, there have been various interpretations of this term put forth. At least three suggestions have been proposed that are widely accepted today. These are: (1) John was telling us he was writing on Sunday. (2) John was telling us he

Have You Read It Yet?

A History of the Sabbath & Sunday

By John Kiesz

A concise, but authoritative, study of Sabbatarians

63 pages - \$3.00

**THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737**

NOW AT A DISCOUNT!

Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups

BSA's directory of seventh-day groups, sixth edition (1986), includes 188 listings; the 1989 supplement includes more than 140 additional listings. Both are now available at a discount.

Supplement only: \$2

Sixth edition only: \$3

Both sixth edition and supplement: \$4

Please add \$1 to your order to cover mailing costs.

The Bible Sabbath Assn. • Rt. 1 Box 222 • Fairview, OK 73737

was writing on the Sabbath. (3) John was referring to the period at the close of this age when the great God of heaven will directly intervene in the affairs of this world. Let us study into the subject and try to determine which of these proposed explanations is correct.

The first one is readily disposed of. "The Lord's day" is *not* Sunday! Jesus Christ says in Mark 2:28: "Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." So we see that Christ claims the Sabbath--not Sunday--as His day.

In Is. 58:13 we find that God calls the Sabbath "My holy day." These two verses prove conclusively which day of the week is God's day, "the Lord's day" in the sense of a day of worship.

It is true that many today refer to Sunday as the Lord's day in reference to a day of rest and worship. But this is a man-made application of the term, as is easily seen. In fact, Sunday was not called "the Lord's day" until 200 A.D. when Tertullian used the term in two of his books. Sunday was not officially designated the Lord's day until Pope Sylvester (314-335 A.D.) so named it. John certainly was not using a term so obscure it was another century before it was used again and over three centuries before it became official.

Homer W. Smith, in his book *Man and His Gods*, tells us the true origin of calling Sunday the Lord's day. He says "Sunday was called the Lord's day after one of Mithra's titles" (p. 130). Gordon J. Laing, in his book *Survivals of Roman Religion*, agrees, saying "Our observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day is apparently derived from Mithraism" (p. 149).

Yes, it was the Mithraic religion--the worship of the Persian sun god Mithra--that called Sunday the Lord's day. Modern Christianity got it from that religion.

The second suggested interpretation may also be quickly considered. It is true that some Sabbath-keeping writers and organizations have said Rev. 1:10 is a reference to the Sabbath. But we are not interested in human opinions, only in what the Word of God tells us.

It is totally unreasonable to think that John was telling us he was writing on the Sabbath. For one thing, the day of the week his visions occurred is of no importance to us. A second consideration is that every time the New Testament writers mention the seventh day, they call it by its name, the Sabbath (day). See Mk. 1:21, Lk. 4:16, Ac. 13:14 and 16:13 and some 55 other places. Why would John just one time use a different and rather

ambiguous term? (He uses Sabbath [day] eleven times.)

So, having disposed of the first two ideas, we come to the third interpretation, which, it seems to us, is the only sensible and reasonable one. John was in the spirit, that is, he was in a state of spiritual understanding.

"The Lord's day" is actually "the day of the Lord," mentioned many times in the Bible. John saw things yet future, things concerning a "day" --a time period--yet future. This is shown by the fact that Rev. 4:2 says of John: "Immediately I was in the spirit." Yes, he entered into a spiritual state during which Jesus Christ gave him visions.

A better wording would be "I was in the spirit *in* the day of the Lord." Rotherham renders it "I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord's Day."

This day, this time period, is referred to in a great many places in Scripture. See, for example, Is. 2:12, Joel 2:1, Zeph. 1:14-16, and I Thess. 5:2. It is the day of God's vengeance

(Is. 61:2 and 63:4). It is the day God will directly and personally step in to save man from self-destruction.

Another proof that this position is correct is that the use of the word "day" in the sense it is used here is not limited to this one verse. Note Jn. 8:56: "Abraham rejoiced to see My day." Here Jesus is referring to a time of unusual divine manifestation, which is exactly how the word is used in Rev. 1:10.

Finally, compare John's experience with that of Ezekiel. Ezek. 1:1 says the prophet "saw visions of God." Then in Ezek. 8:3 we read ". . . the spirit lifted me up between the earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem." John saw a door opened in heaven and was told "Come up hither" (Rev. 4:1).

It is beyond refutation that Rev. 1:10 does not refer to any particular day of the week. It refers to "the great and the terrible day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31).

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.

With all the ideas and materials in this finely illustrated book, you'll never have to wonder about what to do with children on the Sabbath. *Sabbath at Sommerhase* can be ordered from BSA for \$5. Please add \$1 to cover the cost of postage. Quantity discount information is available on request.

The Bible Sabbath Association
RD 1, Box 222
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737

Good News Unlimited in Russia

by Desmond Ford

Daily life in Russia is more harsh than in the West. But Christians there, as Christians here, work to bring the Light of Jesus to their land.

FACTS ON FORMER USSR

The former Soviet Union covers eleven time zones, and a sixth of the earth's area. It has the world's third largest population. This population consists of over one hundred different nationalities. There are as many languages.

There are twenty million more women than men. This is one country of Europe where most of its soldiers have died within its own borders, not in wars of conquest.

Over seven years ago, when many nations headed toward better things, Russia went into a cul-de-sac because of humanistic philosophy.

Communism is, to quote Arthur Koestler, "the light that fails." For all people, and every individual, who turns from Jesus of Nazareth, the Light of the world, life must inevitably become drab.

But to those who receive Jesus of Nazareth comes life, and life more abundant forevermore.

How the Trip Occurred

Early in 1992, in the providence of God, I made contact with a World Vision representative who had just returned from preaching the gospel in Russia. World Vision is one of the finest and most efficient evangelical Christian charities.)

I told him of GNU's desire to make some contribution to the spiritual welfare of that great land. I said, "I know you don't know me or GNU, and will naturally be reticent to recommend us, but may I send you some of our literature? I can contact you again later."

We made contact later, and he

gave me the telephone number of the World Vision translator who was to meet me in Moscow. In my phone conversations with her, she hinted that a small evangelical group would sponsor meetings for me. That was if I were willing to go outside Moscow, to a city four hundred miles away. I knew that spiritual entrepreneurs of all kinds--such as Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses--have overrun Moscow. I was glad to embrace her idea. I later found it had its perils.

The arrangement was that GNU would pay for the printing of several thousand copies of the New Testament in Russian. These would be



Dr. Desmond Ford in Moscow

given away at meetings. GNU would also pay for advertising and hiring halls.

Our fulfillment of these arrangements would have nothing great in it by worldly standards, but we trusted the dear Lord would use it to His glory. The group I was to work with in Russia is a tiny, struggling group of evangelical Christians. It was recently organized to draw attention to the biblical teachings of grace. This is difficult to do in regions traditionally dominated by Communism and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Spiritual Conditions

There is wonderful news from some evangelists in Russia that thousands are responding to their message. We know that this news is true, and we rejoice that such a day has come!

But it would be quite false to think that this is typical of all places throughout the former Soviet Union. My Christian friends in Russia told me that former Communists are still in control of many of the provincial areas. Also, leaders in the Russian

Orthodox Church resent any messengers bringing the evangelical faith. Members of the Orthodox Church tore down advertisements for our meetings.

Groups Preached To

The congregations that I addressed included: church groups; unbelievers who responded to the invitation to attend each local Palace of Culture; a prison group of several hundred young men; a hospital group; factory workers in a very large industrial plant; people at a home for retirees; and school children. One of my talks was given over the radio, daily, for a month in one city. Media journalists interviewed me, and that was later shown on TV.

It was exciting to see hundreds of people claiming the free New Testaments. (GNU had bought 4,000 copies to be distributed at the preaching centers.) I have never signed so many books in all my life!

Yet, in no case did my audiences number in the thousands. In the great centers of population, such as Moscow and Leningrad, people are more independent and less bound by con-

vention. There, multitudes will attend religious meetings. But we should not assume that this is universally the case. The stories of great crowds do not apply in the countryside.

My People Impressions

No one who spends just a few weeks in a country, who visits only half a dozen cities and some provincial villages, has any claim to being an authority on that country. What follows, then, is a record of *impressions*. What I saw is possibly not in every instance representative of Russia as a whole. It is also probable that I misunderstood some things.

My overwhelming impression is of a strong people, patient and marvelously impressive, living in a wasteland. (T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*, kept coming to mind.)

While the people have a national character of strength, this is, in part, the result of the rigors of their circumstances and environment. Except for the large cities, the areas I visited existed in third world conditions. It is a harsh land for its inhabitants: drab, dour, gray, polluted, and poverty-stricken.

However, Russia does differ from most third world countries in this: The majority of third world countries have never known the refining influence of Christianity. Though Russia has divorced itself for seventy years from Christianity, you can still see the influence of the faith in the values of the land.

Russia is a much safer place for strangers than most third world countries. While I did see beggars here and there, it was nothing compared to the numbers that exist in third world countries I've visited.

In appearance, most of the Russians I saw would have passed without comment in Australia, or the USA. Where I was, in the southwestern part of Russia, there was remarkable racial uniformity. I rarely

saw other than white faces and blue eyes. The clothing is the same as in most modern lands. Some items clearly proclaim their origin, such as Paris or the USA.

My Land Impressions

The country is one of tremendous potential and wealth. Providence has endowed it with an abundance of rich minerals and areas of fertile, arable land. The oppressive saddle of Communism has burdened the country so cruelly and wastefully that the land's resources have been squandered and lost.

The people of Russia are God's children by creation, and our brothers and sisters in the human race. Many have asked the important question, "Are people starving?" I saw no evidence of hunger in the areas I worked in. The reason is that the Russians grow much of their own produce either in garden lots at home, or on land allotted by the city. I saw an abundance of fresh food. The people have less reliance on canned, packaged, and bottled products than in Australia, the USA, or Europe.

Saddest Thing

The saddest thing about this great country is that most young, and middle-aged people are not avowedly Christian. They are certainly influenced by Christian values and culture, often to a striking degree. But most make no profession of faith in Christ. (The story is different with older women. A great number of them are believers.) Terrible, terrible, spiritual damage was done to millions by atheistic views of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Communism.

I remember when I was praying in a hospital ward, one burly Russian man looked at me rather fiercely, and shouted, "I reject Jesus Christ!" In another ward, a very young man made a nonsense statement that my translator said amounted to, "I believe

in nothing!"

It is encouraging to see that Christian evangelistic activities are now having a measure of success among the young of Russia.

One factor makes the story of Communism remarkable. In our century, Communism had numerical success in conquering two vast empires, and influencing many other countries. Yet, it was reared on a very flimsy and unstable basis. We now know that Karl Marx's research for his book, *Das Kapital*, was very unscientific indeed. (See Paul Johnson's book, *The Intellectuals*, for the evidence.)

Admirable Characters

The fine character of the many Russian people I met greatly impressed me. I speak not only of the Christian workers with whom I associated. At the prison for boys, where I spoke, there were guards who obviously had a deep concern for the well-being of the young men under their charge.

One guard took me to see a boy in solitary confinement, and we talked through a translator. The guard is in charge of the political indoctrination of the prisoners, but I'm sure he is a committed Christian. He was eager to do all he could to make sure that all his young men, including the one in solitary, should hear the gospel.

I remember the young woman doctor in charge of the hospital where the young people sang, and I preached. She was a fine woman, and anxious that I go into the various wards to pray with patients. I was happy to do it. The hospital was very stark. Only basic necessities were available. This is true of many Russian facilities.

I think of the manager of a large machinery factory. He made provision for those of his workers who were too shy to go to a religious meeting. My message was carried

over large loudspeakers throughout the building. He gave me a book about the industrial plant as I left. He looked just like Boris Yeltsin. I can only say he was wonderfully courteous and cooperative.

The music of the youthful singing group that sang at meeting after meeting also impressed me. Some of the musicians gave their testimonies on how they met Christ. (Occasionally my translator told me what they were saying or I would not have known.) One man found Christ while in the Red Army. (In Russia, every young man must spend two years in the army.)

Fond Farewell

Then came the last day of my meetings. The greater part of 1,000 people came to the Palace of Culture at Voronezh. I preached a comparison. I compared Russia, and the whole world, to the ancient city of Samaria that fed on garbage even though God had already delivered the city by His power and grace (2 Kings 6-7). Hundreds stood confessing Christ.

Then my young friends, and the leaders of the evangelical group (including my treasured translator), took me to the train for Moscow (twelve hours away). They plead with me to return another year. My last view of them was as they enthusiastically waved good-bye from the station platform.

Isn't it wonderful to know that Christians never say "Good-bye" for the last time! May God raise up a multitude of Christian workers for Russia. Will you not pray daily for that great country?

Since returning from Russia, Dr. Ford has experienced dizziness, especially when he tried to preach. Doctors concluded that he was exhausted by his strenuous trip to Russia and had probably picked up a virus in the remote Russian villages where he preached.

This article is reprinted from *Good News Unlimited*, November, 92.

Adventist Leaders Meet-- Speak Out On "Certain Private Organizations"

At its annual 1992 year-end meeting, the North American Division (NAD) leadership met at the SDA world headquarters in Silver Springs, MD. President Alfred C. McClure called the division to discipleship, revitalization, and evangelism. Introduced at the meetings were a prayer thrust for the division, programs to reclaim former Adventist members, and new evangelistic strategies to reach young people and ethnic minorities. Setting the tone, McClure led the church leaders in spending considerable time on their knees in prayer during the four days of meetings.

NAD secretary, Harold Baptiste reported that division membership reached more than 778,000 in June, a net increase of almost 11,000 over the previous year.

Part of the evangelistic thrust will be a concerted effort to reach out to former or inactive Adventists. Using the help of current members, NAD leaders hope to amass a list of half a million names and addresses by next spring. They hope that one tenth of these will attend a special Sabbath service and that by June of 1994, 25,000 will rejoin the church. The evangelism plan also calls for outreach to African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

One significant action by the NAD was a unanimous decision to inform the membership of certain independent organizations that are causing dissent in the church. The leaders

applauded the work of many private Adventist ministries that have long worked alongside the denomination in what could be characterized as a supporting role. However, they noted that "In a few cases . . . private organizations have worked at cross-purposes with the denomination, have become destructively critical of the leadership of the church, have undermined the confidence of members in the organized body of believers, and have drained away funds that could have been used in accomplishing the mission of the church. Such behavior presents a serious challenge to the spiritual health of the church body."

While articles in SDA publications in recent years have referred in broad terms to independent or private ministries, discussing whether or not such groups take financial support from the denomination, the NAD leaders decided it was time to take more specific action. A book entitled *Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries* is to be mailed to all pastors in North America and be made available in Adventist Book Centers. It named names and gave details about the activities of specific groups. A 16-page condensation was published as an insert in the November 5, 1992, issue of *Adventist Review*.

Listed in the insert were Hope International, Hartland Institute, Prophecy Countdown, Steps to Life church in Wichita, Kansas, Rolling Hills congregation in Florida, and

Good News Unlimited. According to the paper, denominational leaders have spent time in prayer, study, and discussion with these organizations, but that they "have displayed an unwillingness to operate in harmony with denominational procedures and protocol." Citing Acts 15, it continued "... church elders must alert church members to such dissidents who either cause dissension or undermine our central beliefs So the [SDA] church must act to protect itself and its members. But it acts out of love and concern, not out of malice. The church does not attempt to dictate the beliefs or work of these private organizations. It only asks for the courtesy and charity that any genuine Christian would afford fellow members."

Hope International and Hartland Institute are characterized as organizations seeking to reform the Adventist church, which they believe is abandoning foundational truths and is heading toward apostasy. "In other words, the [private organizations] charge, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded on a Bible-based theology, but as time has gone by, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has surrendered some of these beliefs and now holds, in some aspects, a theology that is not biblical but one that mirrors that of the 'fallen' Protestant churches."

The article answers these charges by explaining that historic Adventism did not include doctrinal positions regarding many of the issues that reform groups are raising, that the early SDA church resisted forming an authoritative creed or church manual, and that the church does not have an official statement on some of the issues being raised by Hope International and The Hartland Institute (e.g., the precise nature of the humanity of Jesus). The church has "... never 'formally' adopted a position on the question of just how

Jesus' nature compared with Adam's and with ours . . . [or] on perfection and the precise nature of human obedience." The insert goes on to allow that these groups have every right to teach and preach whatever they want, but criticizes them for trying to do so while attempting to maintain an SDA identity and ties to the church and church membership.

While the insert provides a number of excerpts from the writings of and detailed information about the activities of Hartland Institute (Colin Standish), Hope International (Ron Spear, Ralph Larson), and Prophecy Countdown (John Osborne), Good News Unlimited is only mentioned by name. GNU president and former SDA theologian, Dr. Desmond Ford, is not mentioned at all.

The insert ends with an appeal for cooperation and tolerance: "Explain your particular theological understandings, but allow other, equally sincere members to have their views also and still be counted your brothers and sisters in Christ. In other words, be tolerant on those points that the church has left open. Never seek to destroy confidence in the . . . leadership of the church If you see wrongs in individuals, follow Christ's counsel in Matthew 18, but never publish the matter abroad. And never encourage members to bypass God's treasury and send their tithes to you, for this is not God's plan. Let's work together--in unity, but not necessarily in uniformity--to finish our mission. We love you. Your Church."

Change of Address?

By all means notify us in advance if you move. If we send a SENTINEL to your old address the post office charges us 30 cents to return it--and you risk missing that issue.

Evangelical Community Takes Note of WCG Changes

A recent article in *Christianity Today*, the leading evangelical news magazine was headlined "Worldwide Church of God Edges Toward Orthodoxy." Author Randy Frame wrote that the 99,000-member body "... has moved tentatively in the direction of orthodoxy in recent years." He cautioned, however, that cult watchers are not at all ready to "issue a clean bill of theological health."

The article reports that under the leadership of Joseph Tkach, the WCG has engaged in dialogue with evangelical scholars and adjusted its teachings on such things as dress, observing certain holidays, seeking medical attention, and is reexamining its teaching on the Trinity. While WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong taught dogmatically that the Trinity was a

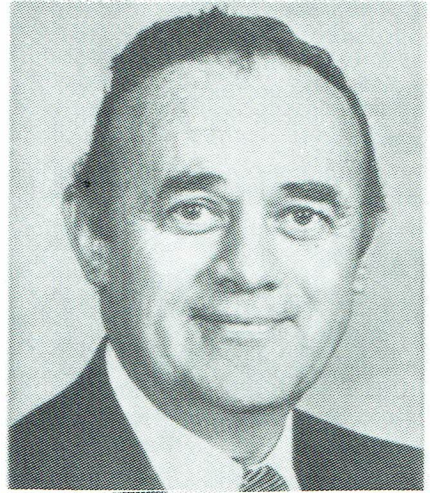
pagan false doctrine, papers published by the church in the last year or two are far from dogmatic. While they do not at all endorse the Trinity doctrine, they accept it as a legitimate attempt by theologians to "reach a deeper understanding of God's nature."

The CT article concluded with a note that those "... who have monitored WCG from an evangelical perspective applaud the changes they have seen, even as they hope for more. As of now, WCG appears to still be a long way from the mainstream church's standards of orthodoxy.

While evangelicals and many former WCG members and Sabbath-keepers are somewhat optimistic about the changes in the WCG, many former members are very critical. The Philadelphia Church of God,



WCG's Founder, Herbert W. Armstrong



Joseph Tkach, leader of the Worldwide Church of God

Edmund, Oklahoma, led by former WCG member Gerald Flurry, is very aggressive and bold in championing the teachings of Herbert Armstrong. Attendance at the PCG-sponsored Feast of Tabernacles has grown from 225 in 1990 to more than 1350 this year in seven sites around the world. The church's slick magazine, *The Philadelphia Trumpet*, and booklets published by PCG look very much like those published by WCG in former years, even as they proclaim the former doctrines and denounce changes made by Tkach. The November issue of *The Philadelphia Trumpet* criticized the WCG by saying: "This statement of beliefs on the nature of God is just one more political maneuver to win favor from this world. It is spiritual double talk. To the world it looks as though the Church accepts the Trinity. But for WCG members, the leaders are saying that they aren't changing anything! Do not be fooled! Church leaders have accepted the doctrine of the Trinity!"

Apparently anticipating the current allegations, Mr. Tkach flatly denied WCG was accepting the doctrine of the Trinity. Writing in the December 23, 1991. *Worldwide News*, Mr.

Tkach stated: "The church affirms the oneness of God and the full divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Someone may ask, 'Does this mean we now accept the doctrine of the Trinity?' No, it does not."

Meanwhile, responses in WCG congregations across the country seem to be varied. Some members and former members continue to report harsh treatment by local ministers as well as assertions that "nothing has changed." Other pastors have apparently been much more accepting of the changes and are fairly tolerant in dealing with dissent. And while attendance at local WCG congregations has for years been allowed by invitation of the local minister only, the December issue of *The Plain Truth*, included a notice on the back cover inviting people to write for information about local congregations.

Obviously, significant changes are taking place in this second largest Sabbathkeeping group in North America creating a tension between those who hold to the historic, traditional teachings, and those who embrace the more moderate, open approach that is being promoted by Herbert Armstrong's successor.

FREE 1993 BIBLICAL CALENDARS

That upholds the Calendar God gave to Moses, which Christ Jesus and His Disciples continued to keep--but not according to the Old Testament. God made a New Testament with us in Jesus, our Savior, in Whom He gave all authority--and no other. The color Calendars are 8 1/2" x 14" with Bible scriptures. For you and others, write to:

The Sodergrens, Ministers
Church of God (New Testament), At Large
45-020B Malulani Street
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Resources Available From BSA

Books

<i>The Sabbath in the New Testament</i> by Samuele Bacchiocchi (275 pp.)	\$10
<i>From Sabbath to Sunday</i> by Samuele Bacchiocchi (372 pp.)	\$10
<i>Divine Rest for Human Restlessness</i> by Samuele Bacchiocchi (320 pp.)	\$10
<i>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.)	60¢

Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups

Sixth Edition, 1986 and 1989 Supplement

\$4

Sabbath at Sommerhase Story and Lesson Book (128 pp.) & Activity Packet \$7 ea.;
\$5 ea. for 6 or more

<i>Sabbath at Sommerhase</i> Story and Lesson Book (128 pp.)	\$7 ea.; \$5 ea. for 6 or more
Activity Packet	\$3 ea.; \$2 ea. for 6 or more

(for bulk orders, add 10% of total for postage and handling)

Back Issues of *The Sabbath Sentinel* (when available) 10 for \$3; 30 for \$5

Booklets

<i>Why the Seventh-day Sabbath?</i> (12 pp.)	20¢ ea.; \$17/100
<i>Roman Catholic and Protestant Confessions About Sunday</i> (12 pp.)	20¢; \$17/100
<i>The Bible Sabbath: Seventh Day or First Day?</i> (6 pp.)	14¢ ea.; \$12/100
<i>Bible Truth About "Salvation by Grace Through Faith"</i> by F. Walker (32 pp.)	35¢ ea.; \$6/20
<i>Questions for Seventh Dayists Answered</i> by T. Littrell (18 pp.)	Out of stock
<i>Has Sabbath Time Been Lost?</i> by Joseph M. McGuire (10 pp.)	Out of stock

Tracts

<i>The Rest of Your Life</i> (2 p.)	10¢ ea.; \$8/100
<i>Whatever Happened to the Sabbath?</i> (2 p.)	10¢ ea.; \$8/100

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

Promotional Aids

BSA Brochures	No Charge
Sabbath Calendars	\$2.00 ea.; \$1.75 ea. for 10 or more
Ballpoint pens with imprint: "The Seventh Day is the Sabbath"	\$5/dozen
Bumper Stickers: "I Break for the Sabbath"	\$1 ea.
Sabbath Seals	\$1/dozen
Post cards with Sabbath message on one side, space for personal message and address on the other side	\$1/dozen

Cassette Tapes Write for Complete List

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

ORDER FROM:

The Bible Sabbath Association

Rt. 1, Box 222 • Fairview, OK 73737

Phone (405) 227-3200

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

BSA

NEWS FROM THE BSA

Editorial Transition Progresses

During October and November I had the privilege of working with the new TSS editor, Sydney Cleveland, and his wife, Sherry, on the December (calendar) and the January, 1993, issues of TSS. During the weekend of November 20-22 I was privileged to speak at the 7th Day Independent Christian Church on Sabbath morning and at the Family Church of God in the afternoon. Saturday evening and Sunday the Clevelands and I worked on the January issue while Darlene did a paper for a college class she is taking. Mike Galimore joined us for a few hours to work on layout possibilities for an 8 by 10 format. Probably one or two more weekends in December and January and the transition will be complete. Meeting and working with the Clevelands reminds me so much of the experience I had eight years ago, traveling to Hagerstown, Maryland, to work on TSS at the kitchen table of Eugene and Darlene Lincoln, when I took over as editor for him.

Do You Read Seventh-day Periodicals?

If so, perhaps you can help the editors. We're always on the lookout for news items, for significant quotations (for the *To Repeat* column), and for outstanding articles for excerpting or reprinting. If, in your reading, you come across material that you'd like to see passed on to other Sabbathkeepers, please send it to the new editor, Sydney Cleveland, at 172 Suncrest Dr., Greenwood, IN 46143.

Bulk Mailings

Lawrence and Lottie Burrell report

that they have been busy mailing out back sample issues of TSS along with flyers advertising the new 1993 calendar. Meanwhile, in an effort to encourage distribution of our remaining stock of directories, the price for both the directory and supplement has been cut to \$5. Richard Wiedenheft has hopes of beginning work on a new directory after the transition to the editorship of Sydney Cleveland is completed and after our current stock of directories is depleted.

Newspaper Ads

A number of BSA members have run Sabbath ads in local newspapers--with mixed results. One subscriber from Ohio has used a less direct approach with a fairly good number of responses. Her ad simply reads "Free Bible literature. Eternal life? Write . . ." To those who respond she sends a packet of material, including a Sabbath article. If you would like more information, write to BSA for our fact sheet entitled "Reaching Out Through Local Advertising."

Sharing Names and Address

Mailing sample copies of TSS to people who are not regular subscribers is our primary means of introducing our association to them. You can help us by sending names and addresses of Sabbathkeepers you know. Some BSA members have sent us local church directories. Don't worry about whether or not someone is already on our list; we check all names and addresses against our computer list before we mail to them.

TO REPEAT

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS BY OR ABOUT SABBATHKEEPERS

Clearly, the protests of the Christian activists have not been blessed by God to stop the flow of the blood of the unborn. Nor have their demonstrations even dented the widespread and indiscriminate sale and use of pornographic materials. And in all candor, this failure could have been easily foretold, for the plain truth is that God does not ordain, nor empower this kind of Christian activism. For it continues to be the will of Almighty God that evil societies must be—can only be—changed through spiritual regeneration. If this evil is to be overcome, such a transformation must be spiritual. It must be life-changing, which makes whatever scant political or courtroom victories Christian activists manage to obtain, worthless.

"Ineffective Christian Activism" by
Walter E. Adams, *Bible Advocate*, July/August, 1992

Early Seventh-day Adventists were mostly anti-organization. To form a new denomination was to return to Babylon, out of which they had been cast. Unthinkable! But the die was cast. The differences between Seventh-day Adventists and their former communions were irreconcilable. They needed also to be distinguished from Adventists who had not accepted "present truth." Organization was inevitable (1861).

Focus on North America from
Adventist Review, October 1, 1992

It's alright for our children to enjoy themselves on the Sabbath. It has been proven that their minds will be much more receptive to learning if their bodies are able to express themselves in healthy movement. If we want children to come to know the Sabbath as a "delight," we'd better begin to use our noggins to make it a delight. . . . Let's start teaching our children that all areas of life are fun, learning is fun, sports and physical activities are fun, and God's Sabbath also is fun. It is fun to be with people of like mind spiritually. A joy unspeakable and full of glory.

"The Abundant Life Newsletter" by
Robert H. Sorge, N.D., Ph.D., October, 1992

Martin Luther taught salvation *sola fide* (faith alone). This may be a starting point for believers who are first coming to Yeshua, but it is not adequate to sustain a relationship with Yeshua. The result is "easy-believism," the heresy that all you have to do is say the magic words leading to "salvation." Then you can live like hell and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. At the other end are those who believe in "Lordship" salvation. According to this doctrine you will not make it unless you make Yeshua the Lord (Master) of every aspect of your life. The truth may be between these two extremes. "Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead by itself." Jacob (James) 2:17).

"Who Will Enter the Kingdom of Heaven? by
Rick Chaimberlin, *Petah Tikvah*, October-December, 1992

NEWS

FROM THE SEVENTH DAY COMMUNITY

Sabbath Victory In Canada

Sabbathkeepers in Canada will find it easier to keep a job after the recent Canadian Supreme Court decision concerning religious freedom.

School janitor Larry Renaud of British Columbia was fired from his job because he refused to work on the seventh-day Sabbath. Although the school board seemed willing to work out a solution, the school labor union would not go along, saying that the exception would not be fair to others.

Renaud appealed his case all the way to the Canadian Supreme Court. The Court ruled in favor of Renaud in an unanimous decision (6-0).

"Minor interference or inconvenience is the price to be paid for the religious freedom in a multicultural society," Justice John Spinka wrote. He also wrote that labor unions may not exclude themselves from human rights legislation through contracts.

In 1977, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that morale of other workers would be lowered by giving one employee a special privilege based on religious reasons.

Iron Curtain Meltdown

In May, 1992, the Adventist World Radio (AWR) began broadcasting to Europe from Moscow, Russia.

The new location will allow the Seventh-day Adventist Church to reach Europe from Italy to Scandinavia. AWR also began broadcasting to China, Burma, India, and Pakistan from their new location in

Siberia last March.

Shocking Figures

In last October's newsletter, the Summit School of Theology (SST) reported surprising figures on the pastoral condition of Church of God Seventh Day congregations.

Out of 164 missions and churches, only 62 have a credentialed or licensed pastor. While 37 churches do have a lay person serving as pastor, 65 churches have no pastor at all.

Polling All Churches

According to an Oklahoma law, churches may be used as polling places for government elections.

A challenge to this law was made by atheist Frank Otero, who ran for mayor of Miami, Okla. last year. He only received three votes. He claimed that by allowing voting to take place in churches, his constitutional, political, and religious rights were violated.

In *Otero v. State Elections Board*, a federal appeals court has ruled that an atheist candidate suffers no disadvantage by having polling booths in church buildings. In the 3-0 decision, the panel said that "excessive entanglement" of religion and government had not been proven by Mr. Otero.

This column has been compiled by Ed Ozalas from articles appearing in *Adventist Review*, *Summit School of Theology Newsletter*, and *Church & State*.

MAILBOX

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Counting The Days

I am a bit confused by George Dellinger's letter (July, '92). In his letter he insinuates that our Savior said He would be in the grave three days and three nights. A careful search of both Cruden's and Strong's Concordances failed to reveal such a statement.

Therefore I can only assume that Brother Dellinger, like I once did, interprets the words "heart of the earth" in Matt. 12:40, to be the grave.

As long as I held that belief, I always ran into trouble with every interpretation of that scripture. First I was told that in those days, part of a day was counted as a whole day and part was counted as an entire night. I could find no way to find more than part of two days and part of two nights from Friday night to Sunday morning.

Then I heard the Sabbath resurrection theory, which demands a Wednesday crucifixion.

Luke 24 blocked that by saying "Now upon the first day of the week . . ." in vs. 1, and in vs. 13, "And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus . . ." It goes on to describe our Savior's conversation with them and their explanation of what had happened to Him in the corrupt courts and on Calvary.

Then they said, "today is the third day since these things were done," in vs. 21. So far I have been unable to find any explanation that Sunday can be the third day from Wednesday. Perhaps someone can show me how.

Doesn't it seem that we should

seek another interpretation of the term "heart of the earth," and try to find one that is trouble free.

W. H. Green
Odessa, Texas

Waiting For Sequel

Upon seeing the article about the Worldwide Church of God relaxing it's view of the Godhead (Oct. '91), I immediately became a subscriber. Holding on to the promise of the news department editor to keep us informed of other WCG changes made since Herbert Armstrong's death, I have been quite disappointed. Since that issue there have been no more articles about the drastic watering down of God's doctrines by the new administration in Pasadena.

Then in the July, '92 issue under the Mailbox column appeared a letter from a WCG member in Missouri, thanking you for your directory of Sabbathkeeping groups. I wonder how thankful he would be if you kept us updated on the more than 30 changes that his church has made in less than seven years?

I was disfellowshipped from the WCG along with many other faithful followers of HWA and I am now a member of the Philadelphia Church of God led by Gerald Flurry. Could you please print our address so that other members of the WCG can learn of these changes before it's too late. All requests are kept confidential.

Philadelphia Church of God

P.O. Box 3700
Edmond, OK 73083
(405) 340-7474

Wayne Turgeon
Edmond, OK

ADS

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Free subscription to "Insight," a newsletter of Biblical understanding. Write Gary C. Miller, 1805 Decker St., Pocahontas, AR 72455. (1-6)

Were the N.T. Jews legalists? What are "works of the law"? Send \$6.00 for important study. Make check to Rodney Nelson, 4808 SW Oleson Rd. #E, Portland, OR 97225. (1)

I need your help! Mt. Zion COG Boarding Home in Andhra Pradesh, India, houses 74 homeless poor and orphaned children ages 10 to 15. Clothing and God's will offerings are desperately needed. Write New Genesis Ministries, 5594 N.O.B.T. (#125), Orlando, FL 32810, for mailing instructions. Thank you for your help! (1)

Light Magazine answers the difficult Biblical questions while returning to the foundational truths long neglected. No charge. YNCA, POB 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262. (1-12)

Read "Biblical Tithing is Not on Money!" (33 pp.), an eye-opener! Suggested donation, \$3. Write Gary C. Miller, 1805 Decker St., Pocahontas, AR 72455. (1-6)

Wanted—Serious minded male Believer to live and work in a wilderness setting in the Missouri Ozarks. Assist survivalist with garden, food storage, dogs, chickens, and small building projects. Room and board furnished. Comfortable lifestyle surrounded by big woods and waters if you have no chronic health problems, enjoy reading and Scripture study,

and have an absolute love for the truth. Perfection not required but you should be working toward that goal and be willing to live a celibate life without television. Meekness is fine, but no wimps need apply. If the above fits you, call (417) 934-2507:)

Preparing the next generation of Christian leaders and workers—that's the mission of Spring Vale Academy, a Sabbathkeeping boarding high school. For more info, write SVA, Dept. TSS, 4150 S M-52, Owosso, MI 48867. (1-4)

Free Catalog offering books on Sabbath, subjects of interest to Sabbathkeepers, Bible study aids. Some discounted or special prices. Write Bible Education Services, PO Box 736, Troy, OH 45373. (12-1)

What is Satan's Subtlest Secret? Ask Family of God, 7119 Western Tr., San Antonio, TX 78244. (1)

We have 50,000 copies of a "new" foreword (80 pages) explaining the original "1884" *Great Controversy* which depicts the "History of the World" from Adam to after the 1,000 years! From anywhere in the world, send for your free copy. Ann DeMichael, 1926 Hwy 21 North, Malo, WA 99150. (11-4)

Classified ads are available at the rate of 30¢ per word (including each word and each group of numbers in the address). Send copy for classified ads and payment to The Bible Sabbath Assn., Fairview OK 73737. Ad copy without payment will be returned.

**IS YOUR
NUMBER
UP?**

Your renewal notice comes with every issue!

The 4-digit number on your mailing label gives the year and month that your subscription expires. For example, if 9201 appears below your address, January, 1992 is the month of expiration.

Please renew automatically! Don't miss an issue.

Annual Subscription \$12 (\$14 outside U.S.)
 Membership in BSA (including subscription) \$20

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.

BSA Sabbath Calendars for 1993



January 1993

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

Special features: Sabbaths in red, information about moon phases, Biblical months, dates for festivals and holy days, bible verses. The 1992 calendar is being published as a part of the December issue of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, so all subscribers will automatically receive one.

Order extra calendars for \$2.00 each; \$1.75 for 10 or more. Please add \$1 to order for postage and handling. Will be shipped early in December.

The Bible Sabbath Association

Rt. 1 Box 222 • Fairview, OK 73737