

# THE *Sabbath* SENTINEL

November / December 1998



To every thing there is a season of Thankfulness



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# A Season For Thankfulness

**T**he last two months of the year are for many Americans a season for thanksgiving. It is a time when families gather together to show respect and love for one another, and when many merchants depend upon people buying gifts for themselves, their friends and families. But should there only be a few annual days of the year when people show love for one another and families gather together in unity? During this season many generous individuals also extend their charity to poor and less advantaged people. But, should we not follow Christ's admonition in Matthew 25: 35-36 every day in our service to mankind: "For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

It is interesting when we consider the Thanksgiving season, which just passed, that the true meaning of giving thanks is often missed. After the Plymouth colonists completed their first harvest in 1621, Governor William Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving and prayer. What people often refer to as "The First Thanksgiving," saw colonists and Native Americans sitting down in peace to celebrate a feast of giving thanks. However, this feast was never repeated. In fact, to these devoutly religious people, a day of thanksgiving was a day of prayer and fasting, and would have been held any time that they felt an extra day of thanks was called for. Nevertheless, the 1621 Pilgrim feast, spent together with their neighbors, the Indians, has become a model for the American Thanksgiving celebration.

Although, through righteous leaders God's people gave thanks in seasons to God for blessings (Exodus 14:29-31; 1 Chronicles 15:28-16:4), they again and again elapsed into idolatry and Sabbath-breaking (1 Kings 4:20-25; 12:29). America began her history of giving thanks to God (as commanded in Psalm 50:14), but they, like the Israelites, quickly slipped into the same idolatry and substitution of Sunday worship over God's commanded Sabbath. Remembering is difficult for people who are historically so quick to forget.

When reviewing the bountiful blessings enjoyed in the world's richest and most blessed country, contrasted with these humble beginnings, we should recognized this by giving thanks for all the gifts that the Eternal has provided us. This scenario is often analogous to our Christian beginnings and blessings. It is therefore important that we learn from history and not make the same mistakes the ancient Israelites made and the modern-day Americans are making. We must never forget to keep Ten Commandments of

God. When the foundation of the house of the Eternal was laid in Zion, people sang praises to God and gave thanks (Ezra 3:11). Let us be thankful for the blessings that God has afforded us and the foundation He has laid in us through Christ. (At this season read Deuteronomy 8 and honestly look at your own blessings).

We realize that it is impossible to adequately offer thanks for everything God has provided. When we understand that God supplies all our needs through Christ, we are in prayer and supplications with thanksgiving making the request that you all continue to assist the *Sentinel* in promoting righteousness and keeping of God's true Sabbath day (cf. Colossians 4:6, 19).

The theme of this issue is "A Season For Thankfulness." The lead article by Royce Mitchell is about "Being Thankful For the Gifts of the Keys to Understanding God's Word." Although we can understand what the Bible tells us, it is often difficult to discern what God's true intentions are. How do we discern God's guidance in leading us in the right path in our Christian life? Ernest Bergmann in his article "Discerning God's Guidance" shows us how we can learn to discern God and what He requires of us, His messenger and His message.

In the Sabbath Organization Profile, we feature *Christian Educational Ministries*, which was formed to serve individual churches and Christians with audio and video tapes, a newsletter, a Bible study course, and materials for youth ministry. Ron Dart, formerly with *Church of God, International*, who founded this ministry, is a persuasive voice in religious programming with a loyal and growing following for his radio program—*Born to Win*.

We have also a reprint article from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* about how the Sabbath was changed to Sunday, and an eighty-five year old Sabbath-keeper writes for the first time in the *Sentinel* in her word study "My Zion."

Because of the financial difficulties, some of what we addressed in the September - October issue, we have reduced this issue to 16 pages. We plan on resuming to 24 pages when finances warrant such a move. Your contributions and assistance in ensuring that this magazine continues in its current format in 1999 are greatly appreciated. Looking forward to hear from you. May you always give thanks "unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12).

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# Being Thankful Of The Gift of the Keys to Understanding God's Word!

BY ROYCE MITCHELL, JR.

When considering the blessings our Great God and loving Father has bestowed on us, I realized that I had to severely constrict my topic, since the list of blessings would easily take up every page in this issue of *The Sabbath Sentinel*. What came to mind when I considered the fascination that my young granddaughter has with keys, was that God, in His wonderful mercy, has given us important keys to spiritual understanding. As I meditated on this, I wondered about the set of keys basic to our spiritual need to understanding the Word of God.

## Do We Need a Key to Understand the Word of God?

Is it necessary to have a key or a clue to understand the Word of God? The scriptures makes it clear that we do in fact need help to understand what God expects of us. The Ethiopian eunuch, found by Phillip, was studying the prophet Isaiah's writings for understanding. When asked if he understood what he was reading, he replied: "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31 NAS). To fully understand the scriptures, we need someone to guide us. God does not expect us to pick up His Word and without guidance, understand it. Otherwise, there wouldn't have been a need for Christ to establish His Church.

## Christ Gives the Keys of Understanding to His Disciples

The necessity to be taught is also given by Christ. When Christ taught, He spoke in parables. The disciples questioned Him on this point.

"And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in para-

bles?" And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; and you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I should heal them.' But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear" (Matthew 13:10-16 NAS).

Note that Christ said that it was not given to the people who heard His voice to understand Him—to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Does the Kingdom of Heaven seem mysterious to us today? Try talking to someone in one of the majority churches about this. They don't have a clue to what you are talking about. They believe they are going to heaven when they die. The concept of a Kingdom of God here on earth is foreign to them. Those who understand these concepts have been called and chosen to receive this key of understanding. This gift is not given because of our superiority over humanity—since God is no respecter of persons. Instead, it is given to us so we can prepare to help mankind to understand when this key is given to them. All

mankind is promised to one day be understand the meaning in Christ's parables. So, what are the keys to understanding what we have been given?

## The First Key: "the Holy Spirit"

I have selected four keys to discuss in detail for this article. The first key is that we must have God's Holy Spirit to understand the Bible. That in itself is a tall order because nobody can come to Christ except that God the Father calls them, and nobody can come to God except through Christ! This can be found in John 6:44, 65, 14:6; Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22.

This key is found in 1 Corinthians 2:11-14: "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (NIV). We cannot understand the things of God except through God's Holy Spirit. The things of God are foolishness and not acceptable to men who do not have His Spirit. In order for us to understand, we must first receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to a believer as an act of obedience (Acts 2:38). "And we are witnesses of these things; and {so is} the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." (Acts 5:32, NAS). The first key to understanding is the



possession and accurate usage of God's Holy Spirit.

### **The Second Key: "Being Teachable"**

The second key to understanding is that we must be teachable. Trying to cram our own preconceived notions about what God says into scripture is an example of not using this key. Psalms 25:9 teaches us that humility is crucial to being able to understand the Word of God. It states, "He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way"(NAS). What other character trait is important to being able to understand God's Way?

Isaiah 28:9-10 provides the answer: "To whom would He teach knowledge? And to whom would He interpret the message? Those {just} weaned from milk (spiritually)? Those {just} taken from the breast (spiritually)? (NAS).

God's knowledge is only taught to the spiritually mature. Yes, you may receive basic spiritual knowledge—referred to as "milk"—but true, in-depth spiritual understanding comes to those who spiritually mature. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). The spiritually mature, or as the Greek suggests "of full age or perfect," have developed a habit of exercising their physical and spiritual senses to not only sense what is good and evil, but to choose actions which are godly. Christians must be willing to put aside any belief that is contrary or in conflict with the Bible (2 Corinthians 10:5). As long as we continue to try to cram our own meaning into what the Bible instructs, we will never gain understanding (2 Peter 2:20). That is not an attitude of humility—an attitude of being teachable.

A child of God is open to be led by his elder brother, Jesus Christ, and through Christ's teachings and the Holy Spirit that guides us into all truth (John 16:13). When we have this attitude of being able to be taught by God, we are on the road to begin to understand the mysteries of God.

### **The Third Key: "the Bible Contains God's Complete and Authorized Teachings"**

The third key is the realization that the Bible contains the complete and authorized teachings humanity needs to understand

God and His mysteries. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (NAS).

The Bible can teach us about our sins and train us in God's righteousness. This is necessary to equip us for every good work. Christ said that there is none good except the Father, and the Scriptures (both Old and New Testaments) teach us to be like the Father. Paul did not have a canonized "New Testament" when he wrote this. When Paul wrote this, he had the scrolls containing the Law (Torah or Pentateuch—five books of Moses), the Prophets and the Writings (Hagiographa). This has been ordered into what we today refer to as "The Old Testament" He also had the "books" or the writings of Matthew and Mark (and perhaps other accounts) and his own letters to the churches (2 Timothy 4:13). God wanted Paul's words preserved for us and we must use them in conjunction with the rest of scripture to gain knowledge.

Since all Scripture is inspired by God, we conclude that the Bible does not contradict itself. Contradiction would be confusing to us—His own children! God does not want those He calls children to be confused about what He desires from them (1 Corinthians 14:33). How do we instruct our children in human understanding and moral behavior? We certainly would not teach our children to act in one way, and then do exactly the opposite? It is sad that many parents practice this injustice with their children. They teach their children not to lie, and then tell them that Santa Claus will bring them gifts if they are good! Our Father is not like this. He wants us to understand His Way. He makes it clear to those who are willing to accept the fact that He will never contradict Himself. The Ten Commandments are not suggestions for human conduct, but the principles and constitution that God makes Himself live by. Through the Bible, God has provided truth for His children to live by, rather than allowing humanity to develop truth and living principles from their personal ideas. A loving father provides a path and the tools for his children to walk a righteous and meaningful life (Proverbs 22:6).

What is an example of not using scrip-

ture in the proper manner? Herbert Armstrong once used the example of a preacher hating women wearing their hair in a knot on their heads, in what was called a "top knot." In defense of his hatred, the preacher quoted Matthew 24:17, which says, "Let him which is on the house TOP NOT COME DOWN to take any thing out of his house" (KJV). That was an absurd example, but it illustrated how the Scripture must be taken for what God intended, not for our own desire.

If you want to see this in action on a daily basis, try to reason with members of Christian churches about any belief that cannot be proven from the Bible. For instance, consider the concept that mankind will burn in a hell fire. Some state that this is exactly what happened to the rich man in the parable of Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. The Bible says that the "dead know nothing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). So, if men are burning in Hell, then Ecclesiastes 9:5 is a contradiction to Christ's word. Contradiction is confusing and God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Whatever the truth is about the parable of Lazarus, it can not mean that rich men are burning in Hell right now. Yet, this Scripture is used to prove that there is suffering going on in Hell Fire for those who were not saved. We must fully realize that the Bible contains God's complete and authorized teachings!

### **The Fourth Key: "God never changes"**

The fourth key is one that I began to understand more fully over the past few years, since the disintegration of the Worldwide Church of God. The key is that "God never changes!" What He requires of us today, He requires of all men! "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6, NAS). In Hebrews 13:8-9 it is written, "Jesus Christ {is} the same yesterday and today, {yes} and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were thus occupied were not benefited" (NAS). Two important points are made here. First, because God does not change, we are not consumed, or destroyed, and His mercy never fails! Secondly, because Jesus never changes, we

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# Discerning God's Guidance

*By discerning God's guidance we can know the right path to take!*

BY ERNEST P. BERGMANN

**H**ow do we know what God wants us to do? How do we sense the right path to take? How do we even know which of our choices are God-directed or worldly? By discerning God's guidance and using it. That seems to be an obvious answer, but a gossamer recipe. In this study we will explore discernment.

God provides discernment in many ways. At times His directions are plain as day, and at other times they are only a sense, a feeling or comfort level. They relate a good deal to our particular relationship we have with God and our willingness to yield important decision-making authority to God's guidance through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in converted human beings.

Satan often provides input by diverting our attention to worldly solutions, or to solutions that "feel right." An old expression says, "Satan shows us his best before God shows us His best." However, for a Christian who implores God for answers, sometimes God shows us His best first. The key is to discern God's way and immediately act upon it when it is given to us. Consider that God told Adam and Eve His solution to life, before Satan diverted their attention to His way of sin.

## Wisdom vs. Discernment

Before we begin, two definitions are in order: wisdom and discernment. Wisdom is looking at God's word and its application for human life through God's perspective. Wisdom as it relates to God's word is an understanding of what is true, right and lasting. It means reading the word of God and understanding what God means. Wisdom is being able to look beyond the obvious and seeing God's word in its deep spiritual meanings as it presents itself in our own life. With this wisdom, God's way

is clearly superior to the way of the world's wisdom, which cannot provide us with salubrious solutions to life's problems.

Discernment answers the common questions we have in life, and it is looking at situations, choices, people, problems, things and events through God's perspective, and choosing God's alternative. It means seeing and performing human activity with the aid of God's laws, precepts, principles and standards. The Bible often use the word "judgments" for "discernments." Judgments are God's way of telling us right from wrong, good from evil, and transforming obscure paths into clear paths in harmony with God.

Where do we begin? A good starting point is faith. Without faith we are blind to God's words, and they have no real meaning to us, or to our relationship with God. Faith is the spiritual contact and means by which we can see God's word through spiritual eyes. It is defined in Hebrews 11:1 - 3. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

Faith puts form to the gossamer, reality to the impossible, understanding to confusion, and certainty to doubt.

## How Do We Get God's Wisdom?

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:" "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:7, 10, 11).

The Spirit of God indwelling in converted Christians searches the deep things of God, and passes these meanings to us on the emotive and cognitive level. We have the ability to see His viewpoint and extend it to situations and decisions we need to make.

When God calls Christians to His service, there is no escape from fulfilling the job He assigns (Psalms 139:7-12). God prompts, prods, pesters and pushes until we yield to Him and "volunteer" to serve. Jonah is a good example of an individual who tried to escape from God's calling (see the book of Jonah). Most individuals who are called are not swallowed by a fish, but everyone receives a sign or message of the services God expects.

## Learning to Rely on God' Wisdom

Discerning how God wants us to respond to a situation, is not outlined in specific detail. However, God aids us in the discernment process. He makes it plain what His decision regarding our life shall be. But God rarely forces Himself into our decision process. We always have a choice, but God knows what is best for us.

The Psalms is a book with many practical applications for discerning the word of God. In Psalms 34:15, we are told to walk with God and trust Him. "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."

We are to be righteous by walking with God in accordance with His rules. God knows what is happening in our lives. He hears us when we pray and even protects us (through His ministering angels) when we don't know for what to pray (Matthew 4:6, Hebrews 1:14). What a glorious thought—God is not a distant God, but He reacts to everything that happens in our lives. When we need help we are assured that we can call on God and He will hear us.



One lesson in gaining discernment is given in Psalms 37:7-9. "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth."

Waiting patiently for God is not easy, particularly for an American. We want instant answers and instant gratification. "Lord give me patience and give it to me NOW," is a humorous statement, but so true to our human nature. God appears to have little patience with the impatient. Whoever wish to receive guidance from God must wait for it. It took Moses 40 days on the mountain before God gave him the Ten Commandments. Elijah had to wait on a mountain 40 days, and feeling depressed and alone. Even Jesus, our Creator and Savior, had to spend 40 days in the wilderness before He could begin His ministry. God often makes us wait so we can prepare ourselves to receive His message.

How often do we see the wicked prosper while the Christian struggles? If we could see inside that prospering person we may see a different viewpoint. When riches are built on evil actions there can only be one outcome. Maybe it won't be in this life, but it surely will be in the next life. Our gain is in our attainment of eternal life with God.

With God's wisdom and His Spirit of discernment in us, we can draw closer to the way He wants us to live. Do we know all of the nuances of the Bible? Hardly! God teaches us what He wants us to know. The key is not in what we know. But rather, the key is in unblocking our spirit from receiving instructions from the Holy Spirit and letting God teach us what we need to know-and then doing it.

### **Biblical Characters Learning Discernment**

Many characters of the Bible wrestled with God in some manner or another. Daniel walked with God in a very personal and correct way, and he appeared to have a perfect internal peace. Could there have been internal conflict in Daniel? Certainly! He had two very real authorities over him, God and the King Nebuchadnezzar. God placed the king over

Daniel. But Daniel discerned that God's rules were above any earthly rules. Daniel stood by God and was counted worthy to escape even death. God never forsook him.

Daniel and his friends discerned that God's food laws were designed for the human body. The conflict and the outcome are described in Daniel 1:4-17. The Babylonians were not eating their food in accordance with the laws of the Moses. Instead Daniel and his friends did not wish to disobey the law God had provided for His people and they discerned that God would stand behind His word and bless them for their obedience. The actions directed by their discernment and obedience increased the faith of Daniel and his friends when they saw the direct hand of God in their lives.

The story of Joseph is one of my favorite examples of discernment. Joseph easily could have become a great failure. He was scorned by his brothers, sold into slavery and cast into prison in a foreign land. This happened because he had a divine dream of becoming a great ruler. God was training him for that position and provided a dream for him to encourage him in the tribulations he faced. After years of training, Joseph became the second highest ruler of Egypt. As a result of Joseph's discernment, the Israelites were able to live in the land of Egypt and prosper. God used Joseph in a very special way, and Joseph was able to discern God's hand and His way.

Did you ever notice when things go wrong they really go WRONG? Troubles tend to come in bunches. Considering Job that when he had lost all he had, except his wife, he didn't curse God!

"And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." "But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips"(Job 1:21; 2:10).

Job saw the hand of God in all things of his life. He saw God giving him blessings and taking them away. Job discerned that he was merely the steward of what God blessed him with. Food, clothing, shelter, children and material things were only "on loan" by God for Job's caretaking. In the

end all things would work for Job's spiritual gain. He discerned that God gives and takes away. The key was to learn to submit to the power and wisdom of God.

Paul had a "thorn in the flesh," and he prayed to God three times for relief (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). The answer came. The thorn remained to allow Paul to concentrate on God's mission. After Paul had discerned the reason for his suffering, he submitted to God's will for his life.

When David was the anointed king of Israel, Saul was on the throne and he became David's enemy. Saul knew that God had selected David as the new king. Instead of repenting to God and asking for forgiveness, Saul schemed to kill David. David, on the other hand, was able to discern God's principles and willing to wait until God would remove Saul from his position.

David discerned that God was the authority that placed rulers on thrones and removed them. By being patient and waiting for God's decision, David had the chance to learn to be a warrior, psalmist, poet and king. God was educating David, teaching him all the characteristics and talents he would need when he became the king of Israel. God is training us now to be kings and priests to reign on earth (Revelation 5:10).

### **Discerning God's Message to Us**

We need to discern God's message to us that come in many forms: a direct word, through the Holy Spirit, by visions and dreams. Samuel, the prophet, began his experience of discerning God's message at an early age. Samuel's first encounter with God came in a dream (1 Samuel 3:9, 16-18). It is interesting that God's message was for Eli, not for Samuel. God used Samuel as a messenger, possibly because Eli had put up too great a barrier to penetrate with a message. Samuel told Eli that he was to be punished for raising ungodly children and not correcting them when they sinned against God. The message from God may not always be pleasant, but it must be heard.

### **Discerning God's Messenger**

Finally, we need to discern God's messenger. Jesus asked Peter a very personal and a very important question. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"

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# Christian Educational Ministries

BY JUNE NARBER HARRISON

**R**on Dart believes that the many church organizations have experienced a kind of involuntary decentralization, and the former centralized, monolithic organization many believers have been used to is dead. The world has changed and the trend in the business world is toward greater decentralization to allow for a more effective operation and cooperation. Instead of trying to recapture the old model of religious observance and governance, we must press on toward what Paul called "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

It was based on these premises that *Christian Education Ministries* was founded as a service ministry, rather than a church or controlled by a church. CEM provides educational services to all brethren such as: weekly audio tapes, video tapes, material for youths, youth camps, and seminars.

**The Sabbath Sentinel:** You were originally part of *Church of God, International* with Garner Ted Armstrong. When did you leave this ministry to start up *Christian Educational Ministries*?

**Ron Dart:** Our incorporation date was November 9, 1995. I had resigned a little earlier from CGI.

**TSS:** Do you have a statement of beliefs?

**RD:** Summary of what we are all about is listed at our web site at ([http://www.cemnetwork.com/about\\_cem.htm](http://www.cemnetwork.com/about_cem.htm)).

**TSS:** What kind of materials do you publish?

**RD:** Booklets, newsletters and Sabbath School materials.

**TSS:** You have a radio show, called *Born to Win*. How many radio stations are you on?

**Ron Dart** is the Chairman of the Board and President of Christian Educational Ministries, which was formed to serve individual churches and Christians with audio and video tapes, a newsletter, a Bible study course, and materials for youth ministry. He is a persuasive voice in religious programming with a loyal and growing following for his radio program—*Born to Win*, and a keynote speaker at seminars, workshops, sermons and public service messages to community organizations.



**RD:** Currently, we are on 107 radio stations.

**TSS:** Why radio instead of television as a main medium for evangelizing?

**RD:** Television is extremely expensive and requires a strong centralization of funds and an integrated marketing approach. I am not prepared to go that route at present.

**TSS:** Is your radio program primarily heard in the USA or is it on international stations as well?

**RD:** Primarily it is heard in the USA, but also in Australia, Canada, Short Wave and on the Internet.

**TSS:** How many people work with you at CEM?

**RD:** We have seven full-time and one part-time.

**TSS:** "CEM is not a church." Is this statement correct?

**RD:** Yes that is correct.

**TSS:** If asked what your main purpose for existing is, amongst many other Church of God splinter organizations, how would you respond?

**RD:** We are a service ministry providing many of the services that the small churches can not do on their own. Our primary purpose is educational. Even the radio program is more educational than "evangelistic."

**TSS:** How did you come to name your radio show *Born to Win*?

**RD:** It arose from a sermon I gave a few years ago on overcoming. *Overcome* is comprised of three syllables. "Win" is one. I felt very strongly that many of us had assumed we were, like the old song, "Born to Lose." But God put us at risk in the world so we could overcome. We were born to win.

**TSS:** How many years have you been a

*A Sabbath Sentinel  
Interview with*

**Ron Dart**  
Christian  
Educational  
Ministries



minister? Do you have a local congregation in your hometown that you minister to?

**RD:** I was ordained on the last day of the feast in 1961. I speak regularly at the independent Tyler Church of God, but I am not the pastor. John Reedy is pastor. I declined to provide anything more than advice to the local church.

**TSS:** You often visit different areas of the country for a type of "weekend spiritual retreat". Is this the correct name for these weekend conferences you are involved in?

**RD:** We call some of these *Christian Renewal Conferences*. These involve a number of presenters with me as the "anchor." They are aimed at what the title implies, spiritual renewal. Other sessions are *Meet the Teacher* sessions, usually sponsored by a local church that has asked me to the area to meet the folks, teach and answer questions. We invite all the people on our mailing list plus the radio audience.

**TSS:** At these weekend conferences, how do you pick the areas you will go to? Does a local church invite you? If so, do they sponsor your visit, via hosting your expenses?

**RD:** Mostly these are by invitation. Sometimes they pay expenses, sometimes we do. There is no set standard for these, we just work it out as we go.

**TSS:** Do you believe in tithing? How should a congregation decide how much they should pay a hired minister, if they have such?

**RD:** Yes, I believe in tithing, but I have no idea how a congregation might make that decision. Currently none of the independent congregations we know are doing this.

**TSS:** How many listeners do you have for your radio broadcast?

**RD:** I can estimate there are around 50,000 listeners to *Born To Win*.

**TSS:** How many sermon tapes do you mail out in a given calendar month?

**RD:** We mail out 8,000 to 10,000 sermon tapes per month.

**TSS:** Do you work with any other established church or organizations regarding your evangelistic attempts?

**RD:** We have no barriers to doing so, but not that many opportunities. I have an invitation to speak at what is essentially a *United Church of God* gathering in Cincinnati in late December, and I have accepted. I have frequently spoken at

*Friends of the Sabbath* meetings. We cooperate with *Barnabas Ministries*, and Alan Ruth has given seminars for us. We cooperate with various independent ministers on a regular basis.

**TSS:** How did you first learn about the Sabbath?

**RD:** My wife's brother lived a couple of hours away from us when we returned to *Hardin Simmons University* (Abilene, TX) after leaving the Navy in 1956. He was a member of the *Radio Church of God* and often came to visit us. We often spoke until the wee hours of the morning, and he turned us on to the *Ambassador College Correspondence* course, *Plain Truth* and other literature. We decided to apply for *Ambassador College* in 1958 and I was accepted.

**TSS:** What is the main focus of your ministry?

**RD:** See the "About CEM" section of our web site. Matthew 28:19-20 is our mandate.

**TSS:** What are CEM's goals for the upcoming months and years?

**RD:** We have just started daily radio on two stations on an experimental basis. We feel we have a niche to fill, and I have no plans to broaden the ministry--only to develop what we are doing more thoroughly. The primary emphasis will be on Youth (YEA) literature and the radio program.

**TSS:** Does CEM have any special doctrinal positions that set them apart from other similar organizations that descended from the *Worldwide Church of God* "Family Tree"?

**RD:** Not really. We are doctrinally orthodox with the Church of God tradition. We are very strong on the Sabbath and Holy day observance. Since CEM is not a church, but serves a lot of churches, we have kept our doctrinal statement very simple so as not to exclude churches.

**TSS:** Is your doctrinal core the same as can be found in the COG International?

**RD:** Probably the strongest difference

is not doctrinal but philosophical. I am becoming increasingly disenchanted with the centralized church organization. They are fine people, but the idea is flawed. I much prefer the community based church working in concert with other similar churches. I believe God is going somewhere with all this and I am content to go along for the ride.

**TSS:** What is the biggest problem confronting Sabbath keepers in the time in which we live?

**RD:** Iniquity is abounding, and the love of many is waxing cold.

**TSS:** Which Passover do you observe, the 14th evening or 15th? Do you observe the Night to be Much Observed? (note to our readers: The Night to be Much Observed is a celebration, similar to what the Israelites experienced after the death angel "passed over" their houses and they left Egypt. Many Church of God groups celebrate it the night after Passover to celebrate our victory over sin, because of Christ's incredible sacrifice. It is celebrated by a special meal, usually with many households sharing in it.)

**RD:** We observe the Passover at the beginning of the 14th and we observe the night to be much observed.

**TSS:** What does CEM teach about the role of women in the church?

**RD:** We do not have a doctrinal statement on this, as this is a determination that must be made by the churches. However, I do not believe there is any ministry in the church that is barred to women with the possible exception of the preaching ministry. I believe that women are one of the strongest elements of leadership in the church and that any church that neglects this dooms itself to the margins. Godly women are found everywhere in the Bible. They are influential and effective at ministry. The challenge that faces churches is how to gracefully finesse this question, but it must be dealt with or we will forever be running on one lung. **TSS**

## **CEM Contact Information**

**Address:** P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791, USA

**Telephone:** 1-888-Bible 44

**E-mail:** cem@ballistic.com

**World Wide Web:** <http://www.cemnetwork.com>



# Sunday vs. Sabbath From the Catholic Encyclopedia

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**S**unday (Day of the Sun), as the name of the first day of the week, is derived from Egyptian astrology. The seven planets, known to us as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon, each had an hour of the day assigned to them, and the planet which was regent during the first hour of any day of the week gave its name to that day. During the first and second century the week of seven days was introduced into Rome from Egypt, and the Roman names of the planets were given to each successive day. The Teutonic nations seem to have adopted the week as a division of time from the Romans, but they changed the Roman names into those of corresponding Teutonic deities. Hence the dies Solis became Sunday (German, Sonntag). Sunday was the first day of the week according to the Jewish method of reckoning, but for Christians it began to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath in Apostolic times as the day set apart for the public and solemn worship of God. The practice of meeting together on the first day of the week for the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is indicated in Acts, xx 7; I Cor., xvi, 2; in Apoc., i, 10, it is called the Lord's day. In the Didache (xiv) the injunction is given: "On the Lord's Day come together and break bread. And give thanks (offer the Eucharist), after confessing your sins that your sacrifice may be pure". St. Ignatius (Ep. ad Magnes. ix) speaks of Christians as "no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also Our Life rose again". In the Epistle of Barnabas (xv) we read: "Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day (i. e. the first of the week) with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead".

St. Justin is the first Christian writer to call the day Sunday (I Apol., lxvii) in the celebrated passage in which he describes the worship offered by the early Christians on that day to God. The fact that they met together and offered public worship on

Sunday necessitated a certain rest from work on that day. However, Tertullian (202) is the first writer who expressly mentions the Sunday rest: "We, however (just as tradition has taught us), on the day of the Lord's Resurrection ought to guard not only against kneeling, but every posture and office of solicitude, deferring even our businesses lest we give any place to the devil" ("De orat.", xxiii; cf. "Ad nation.", I, xiii; "Apolog.", xvi).

These and similar indications show that during the first three centuries practice and tradition had consecrated the Sunday to the public worship of God by the hearing of the Mass and the resting from work. With the opening of the fourth century positive legislation, both ecclesiastical and civil, began to make these duties more definite. The Council of Elvira (300) decreed: "If anyone in the city neglects to come to church for three Sundays, let him be excommunicated for a short time so that he may be corrected" (xxi). In the Apostolic Constitutions, which belong to the end of the fourth century, both the hearing of the Mass and the rest from work are prescribed, and the precept is attributed to the Apostles. The express teaching of Christ and St. Paul prevented the early Christians from falling into the excesses of Jewish Sabbatarianism in the observance of the Sunday, and yet we find St. XXXXXX of Arles in the sixth century teaching that the holy Doctors of the Church had decreed that the whole glory of the Jewish Sabbath had been transferred to the Sunday, and that Christians must keep the Sunday holy in the same way as the Jews had been commanded to keep holy the Sabbath Day. He especially insisted on the people hearing the whole of the Mass and not leaving the church after the Epistle and the Gospel had been read. He taught them that they should come to Vespers and spend the rest of the day in pious reading and prayer. As with the Jewish Sabbath, the observance of the Christian Sunday began with sundown on Saturday and lasted till the same time on

Sunday. Until quite recent times some theologians taught that there was an obligation under pain of venial sin of assisting at vespers as well as of hearing Mass, but the opinion rests on no certain foundation and is now commonly abandoned. The common opinion maintains that, while it is highly becoming to be present at Vespers on Sunday, there is no strict obligation to be present. The method of reckoning the Sunday from sunset to sunset continued in some places down to the seventeenth century, but in general since the Middle Ages the reckoning from midnight to midnight has been followed. When the parochial system was introduced, the laity were taught that they must hear Mass and the preaching of the Word of God on Sundays in their parish church. However, toward the end of the thirteenth century, the friars began to teach that the precept of hearing Mass might be fulfilled by hearing it in their churches, and after long and severe struggles this was expressly allowed by the Holy See. Nowadays, the precept may be fulfilled by hearing Mass in any place except a strictly private oratory, and provided Mass is not celebrated on a portable altar by a privilege which is merely personal.

The obligation of rest from work on Sunday remained somewhat indefinite for several centuries. A Council of Laodicea, held toward the end of the fourth century, was content to prescribe that on the Lord's Day the faithful were to abstain from work as far as possible. At the beginning of the sixth century St. Caesarius, as we have seen, and others showed an inclination to apply the law of the Jewish Sabbath to the observance of the Christian Sunday. The Council held at Orleans in 538 reprobated this tendency as Jewish and non-Christian. From the eight century the law began to be formulated as it exists at the present day, and the local councils forbade servile work, public buying and selling, pleading in the law courts, and the public and solemn taking of oaths. There is a large



body of civil legislation on the Sunday rest side by side with the ecclesiastical. It begins with an Edict of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, who forbade judges to sit and townspeople to work on Sunday. He made an exception in favor of agriculture. The breaking of the law of Sunday rest was punished by the Anglo-Saxon legislation in England like other crimes and misdemeanors. After the Reformation, under Puritan influence, many laws were passed in England whose effect is still visible in the stringency of the English Sabbath. Still more is this the case in Scotland. There is no federal legislation in the United States on the observance of the Sunday, but nearly all the states of the Union have statutes tending to repress unnecessary labor and to restrain the liquor traffic. In other respects the legislation of the different states on this matter exhibits considerable variety. On the continent of Europe in recent years there have been several laws passed in direction of enforcing the observance of Sunday rest for the benefit of workmen. **TSS**

VILLIEN, Hist. des commandements de l'Eglise (Paris, 1909);

DUBLANCHY in Dict. de theol. cathol., s. v. DIMANCHE (Paris, 1911);

SLATER, Manual of Moral Theology (New York, 1908); the moral theologians generally. Transcribed by Scott Anthony Hibbs

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## Keys

*Continued from page 5*

should not be seduced or carried away by teachings and doctrines established by men. Christ and later Paul sternly warned the churches of God about the trickery of Satan and those who perverted the gospel of Christ after man's reasoning (Mark 7:7; Romans 16:17; Galatians 1:6-11; Colossians 2:22; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:13, 4:2-4; Revelation 2:14-15, 24). This is a vital key to understanding what we need to know. We need to follow God and His Word as the authority for our lives, and develop a relationship with God that will never change.

Many religions teach that the Commandments of God were nailed to the cross by referring to Colossians 2:14, which refers to how Christ removed the death sentence placed on mankind as a result of sin. This type of perversion of Scripture can be unlocked through the key "God never changes." Knowing that God never changes, it is clear that the obedience to His Ten Commandments He required of the Old Covenant Israelites, He also demands of mankind today. A person will never gain salvation through strict commandment keeping, because it is a gift. Instead a person shows his love for God by his obedience in keeping God's Commandments. Some religious individuals fail to understand that we can lose our salvation once it has been given to us, if we don't have faith and love in keeping ourselves from sinning.

### Old Testament Obedience Fulfilled by the New Testament Christian

One might say that there was no baptism in the Old Covenant. Yet Paul clearly states that they were baptized! 1 Corinthians 10: 1-2. Others will say that they didn't have the Holy Spirit, yet Paul clearly states that they drank of that same spiritual drink that we do! Still others will say that the sacrifices are done away. But we have Jesus Christ, whom we sacrifice again daily by our inability to refrain from sin. What about the thank-offerings listed in the Old Covenant? Shouldn't we observe them? We are the daily thank-offerings! Notice in Romans 12:1 where it states, "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of worship" (NAS). We are thank-offerings, the daily sacrifices presented to God! What about circumcision, which created such uproar in the early church? Surely that was done away, right? Not at all! Notice what Paul says in Romans 2:29. "But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God" (NAS).

What God required from His ancient people is required by us in a spiritual form today. God, being displeased with the ancient nation of Israel for their disobedience, had to create a new and better covenant. This covenant was founded on

better promises for a spiritual Israel, composed of people that the Father would raise out of many nations (Hebrews 8:6). But, the requirements remain the same! The New Covenant was not founded on different rules of conduct and belief. God is holy and will not dwell in uncleanness (Leviticus 19:1, Matthew 5:48). Daily repentance from the sins we commit is necessary to keep God's presence—His Holy Spirit dwelling within and empowering us. The Old Testament commands of God are in spiritual form required of us today!

### Being Thankful for the Keys of Understanding

To recount, there are at least four keys to understanding God's Word. First, we must possess and use the Holy Spirit of God. Secondly, we must be teachable and not conform the Word of God to our ideas, but instead being conformed to the teachings of God. Thirdly, we must understand that all scripture is inspired by God and profits us if we obey it. Finally, we must understand that God never changes.

If we use these keys, we will never be deceived by strange doctrines. We will understand that while we are special to God and since He is no respecter of persons, we have the same requirements to keep the commandments He required the physical nation of Israel to keep. We can be comforted of the steadfastness God has demonstrated throughout mankind's history and in the knowledge that He is teaching us His Way.

Thankfulness, a theme we see emphasized at this time of the year, can be combined with great joy at this wonderful knowledge! Let us be thankful for the keys God has provided for His saints to understand the mystery of God (Colossians 1:26). If we continue to keep His law in thankfulness, we are reassured that one day we will hear those lovely words: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you by your Father!" (Matthew 25:23, 34) **TSS**

*Royce Mitchell, Jr. is a member of the United Church of God, an International Association, in the Houston South Congregation, and welcomes your comments via e-mail at [rmitchel@flash.net](mailto:rmitchel@flash.net).*



# "My ZION"

## WORD STUDY BY MINNIE ALBERTSON

Zion (or Sion) refers to a specific land. It is a city, a mount, a mountain; Jerusalem; a land which is known today as "Israel". In the Bible, God calls it "my land" and "it is mine."

"I brought you into a plentiful country-but when you entered, ye defiled MY LAND and made MY HERITAGE an abomination" (Jeremiah 2:7; 16:12). God had many plans for His Land in the future!

Eight of the Old Covenant prophets called Zion "YHWH (rendered Yahweh in this study) land", or "my land." Other texts inform us that Zion is where His sanctuary will be located. "I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah, an inheritor of MY MOUNTAINS; and mine elect shall inherit it and my servants shall dwell there" (Isaiah 65:9).

**Moses:** "the land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me" (Leviticus 25:23).

**Samuel:** "Then hear thou in heaven, and give rain upon THY LAND thou has given to they people for an inheritance" (1 Kings 8:36).

**David:** "Yahweh is King-the heathen are perished out of HIS LAND" (Psalms 10:16). "Yahweh, thou has been favorable unto THY LAND: thou has brought back the captivity of Jacob" (Psalms 85:1).

**Isaiah:** "I will break the Assyrian in MY LAND and upon my MOUNTAINS tread him under food" (Isaiah 15:25).

**Jeremiah:** "I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled MY LAND, and made mine HERITAGE an abomination" (Jeremiah 2:7). "I will recompense their sin double, because they have defiled MY LAND" (Jeremiah 16:18).

**Ezekiel:** "Therefore thus saith Yahweh...against the heathen and Idumea, have appointed MY LAND into their possession with the joy of all their heart" (Ezekiel 36:5).

**Hosea:** Some of the nation forgot Yahweh" they shall not dwell in Yahweh's LAND" (Hosea 9:3).

**Joel:** "a nation is come up upon MY LAND, and pity His people" (Joel 2:18). "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my HERITAGE Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted MY LAND" (Joel 3:2).

Are we paying enough attention to these eight prophets of the Eternal? How can Zion only be considered the church (prophetically), when it is referred to in the above scriptures as a specific land?

Since Yahweh is the creator of all the earth, we could say that all the land is His, but He specifies which land is special to Him. Many translators choose to spell Zion at times as Sion. However, in every instance it refers to the same place. In Strong's Concordance, the word Sion is #4622; and was derived from #6726 in the Hebrew Lexicon. In the Green Lexicon, #4722 on page 65 says, "Sion (Tajjon) a hill of Jerusalem", and "of Hebrew origin." The Hebrew #6726 says: "a permanent capitol, a mountain of Jerusalem." It is referred to in nine places in the

# Discernment

Continued from page 7

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15-16). Who is Jesus to you? Is He merely a prophet or a righteous and wise preacher of love and peace? If Jesus is our personal Savior, we need to learn more about discernment. When we make a lifetime commitment to follow Jesus, the chances for discerning God's messages in our lives are endless. Let's pray to God for discernment. **TSS**

*Ernest P. Bergmann is a member of the Church Of God in San Antonio, Texas, and can be reached at 7103 Andtree Blvd., San Antonio, TX 78250 or e-mail at ernrom@juno.com.*

## Calendar of Events

### December 24-27

#### In the Footsteps of the Messiah: Bible Study Seminar

**Wagoner, OK** — Featured speakers include Norman Edwards, Joseph Good, John Merritt, Jim Rector, Dean Wheelock and others. For information, call Mitchell Smith at (903) 882-7446.

### LAST SABBATH OF EACH MONTH

#### Dallas UCG Singles Activity

UCG Dallas, TX, has monthly singles activity open to all denominations, on the last Sabbath of each month featuring a meal and round table discussion, games, cards, music, dance and other activities. For more information, contact David Sullins at (972) 484-5865 or dsdittohd@hotmail.com or visit the Sabbatarian Singles bulletin Board at <http://www.INSIDETheWeb.com/messageboard/mbs.cgi/mb101438>

*If you have calendar of events of conferences, meetings, speaking engagements, and other related events of benefit to Sabbath keepers around the world, please send the information to: Lars G. Harrison, The Sabbath Sentinel, 6325-9 Falls of Neuse Road, Suite 193, Raleigh, NC 27615 USA, (919) 839-6930, or e-mail at insearch@mindspring.com*

New Testament. "Rejoice for we will see the Lamb as He stands on Mount Sion" (Revelation 14:1). Look up the references to Zion and Sion, then rejoice for He will return to Zion!

*(Minnie Albertson is an eight-five year old Sabbath keeper who lives in Hillsboro, Oregon. Correspondence sent in care of TSS will be forwarded to her).*



"Thank you for your sane study on the Sabbath in the July/August 1998 issue of The Sabbath Sentinel."

*Paul Hons, Jamaica Plains, MA*

Dear Mr. Harrison:

Enclosed is a study for you which I have researched much on. My husband and I loved to research the Bible, but after 58 years of marriage he died. I miss him every time I start researching. We have been Sabbath keepers since 1947. He found it first, and I who taught a Sunday school class was sure he was non-scriptural. But the truth of it soon convinced me. From then on, we accepted the (Sacred) name and have written several tracts on that. It is a hard subject to get across. We wrote a booklet "Why we keep the Sabbath" and some how it got down to Sao Paulo, Brazil and we received a letter from them that the whole Sunday keeping church had begun Sabbath keeping! We were startled for we did not know how they got hold of that study. We have since learned that there is quite a group in Sao Paulo that keep the Sabbath. We have not found a local group that loves His Name. I am presently going to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, for I need the fellowship. One lady we have known for years we often meet with.

I have just finished an article on races and no one seems to have found what I have found. Surely there is someone somewhere! But I have not seen any which go into the scriptural reasons we should think of all man as our brothers. For 24 years I was a writer for a newspaper, but had to quit when my husband Warren became ill. You are doing doing a valuable service to the Sabbath keepers. If you print the enclosed article I'd like to have copies of it to give to my Adventist friends. My mind is still good, but I am 85 years old. My husband died at that age. But I am no longer able to write by hand, as I am shaky. Best wishes to all who are in the work with you.

*Minnie Albertson, Hillsboro, Oregon*

"With great pleasure have I seen TSS become more powerful in Word and in serving this year along with BSA. I desire to be a full fledged member this year to see to it that BSA continues this positive development...Mr. Nickels, I would like to praise you for writing the 1 page article in July-August. It infuriates me that the leaven of WCG Pharisees is trying to do worse that destroy one church, but a whole body! There is an answer to the question, "Is Sabbath keeping (or any of God's Laws) required for salvation?" But the purpose of the question when posed to us is not enlightenment but division, much like the Pharisees on many occasions tried to trick Jesus into answering an error/lie. Your word was much needed at this time and a spiritual answer. Thank you."

*John Bobetsky, Chicopee, MA.*

## A BSA Sabbath Tract Story From A Reader

"It was back in early September of this year. I found a man in downtown, on the public square in Cleveland, Ohio professing the Sabbath day. A lady came up to me and asked me what day is the Sabbath day. I promptly answered and said the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath Day. I then told her not to take my word for it, read the Bible and prove it for herself. Genesis 2:3 tells us "God rested on the seventh day, and He blessed it and sanctified it, because He had rested from all His work." The lady then said, "You are just like that other guy, his telling everyone that Saturday is the Sabbath Day, but its not, Sunday is", and she then walked away. So, I went over and talked with the man who was passing out your tract "Search The Scriptures" (AP5M2). He was a Sabbath keeper like myself. Now I've searched the scriptures for over thirty years and I can't find any change of the Sabbath Day. As I read God's wonder filled word, the Bible, I've become so convinced of this fundamental truth that I have debated it with Sunday Christians, including with their ministers. Boy, do they get hot under the collar. Please send me further information about BSA and your Association, tracts, booklets and bible studies that you might recommend as well"

*Thomas F. Saver, Sr. North Royalton, OH*

"Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$25.00; an offering to help you with the work of the Lord. I enjoy the well-written articles in TSS and I look forward to receiving each issue. Mr. Nickels, you and your fine staff of people are to be complimented for producing such a well-written magazine. May the Lord bless each and every one of you."

*John F. Mauro, Idaho Falls, ID*

"I like the larger issues of TSS, and they are very good articles. God bless you, Bodily, soul and spirit."

*Leroy Bass, Washington Island, WI (\$100 donation enclosed)*

*(To insure that TSS is able to be published in our financial crisis, we must decrease TSS to 16 pages. We hope to resume to the normal length of 24 pages, when finances warrant this. Thanks for your patience, prayer and support during this time—ED)*



**The Sabbath Sentinel values our readers' views. Address correspondence to Lars G. Harrison, The Sabbath Sentinel, 6325-9 Falls of Neuse Rd., Suite 193, Raleigh, NC 27615 USA; fax to (919) 878-3803; or e-mail to [insearch@mindspring.com](mailto:insearch@mindspring.com) or [lharrison@altika.com](mailto:lharrison@altika.com). Letters should include the author's name, title, company or affiliation, address, and optional e-mail address. The Sabbath Sentinel reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and space.**



# Will You Support the BSA?

**D**ear Readers:

For the past six months *The Bible Sabbath Association* has been experiencing serious financial problems. There are many reasons for this.

## Reasons For Our Financial Problems

The cost of postage has gone up drastically over the past several years, as well as, the cost of printing. All of the pamphlets that we offer have to be printed in volume from time to time, and in order to get a lower cost we must print thousands of them. This, of course, costs hundreds of dollars initially, but keeps the cost per unit down so we do not have to charge BSA supporters a huge amount to obtain the pamphlets. All of the books and videos we offer our customers must be ordered in bulk quantities in order to get wholesale prices, which in many cases costs quite an outlay of cash initially. We are unable to get the lower discounts for making copies that many larger cities offer, and every two months the cost of printing *The Sabbath Sentinel* is our biggest expense.

## Are We a Valuable Service to Brethren Around the World?

*The Bible Sabbath Association* has had some wonderful supporters ever since it was established. There are Sabbath-keepers who have been responsible for keeping the BSA viable since the very beginning, and we wish to express our thanks to all of them. Do you as a Sabbath-keeper believe that our organization is truly doing a work that is valuable to our brethren around the world? Would you like to join those who have been supporting *The Bible Sabbath Association* with tax deductible donations?

## Directory of Sabbath Observing Groups Planned

We are planning a new printing of the *Directory of Sabbath Observing Groups* as soon as time and resources are available. At the moment we are accumulating updated information for publication. If you, as an individual, know of a group of Sabbath-keepers, or a new church,

please send us as much information as you have, along with a address and phone number, fax number, e-mail address, etc, we will get it into our files. The first half page will be free. There is a charge of \$100 for each additional half page. If you wish an additional advertisement for the inside cover or outside of the book, please call for prices.

## BSA Scholarship Program and its Fund

Sabbath-keeping young people need help and encouragement. If we are not youth-oriented, we are doomed to extinction. To promote Sabbath-keeping among youth, *The Bible Sabbath Association* is initiating a modest **BSA Scholarship Program**. With your support, it may grow, and be offered year after year. Any Sabbath-keeping person, up to age 25, is eligible. International students are encouraged to apply. Scholarships will be paid directly to accredited colleges, universities, or trade schools. First prize is \$750, second prize is \$250. Depending on contributions to the BSA scholarship fund, additional prizes may be awarded. Part of the application process is a short essay. There is no application fee for subscribers to *The Sabbath Sentinel* magazine (published six times a year in color, \$15 US, \$20 Canada, \$25 International). Others must submit a \$10 application fee. Completed forms must be received by February 15, 1999, and winners will be announced on or before April 1, 1999. Write for your application form today, or e-mail [giveshare@vcn.com](mailto:giveshare@vcn.com). USA tax-deductible contributions to the **BSA Scholarship Fund** are welcome. Let us encourage our youth!

## Beliefs of Sabbath-Observing Groups

The first edition of *Beliefs of Sabbath-Observing Groups*, about 100 pages, is now available for a suggested donation of \$12.00 postpaid. Updates are planned. This is a verbatim compilation of doctrinal statements of various Sabbatarian groups, a very interesting study of similarities, and differences, of Sabbath-observing groups. We request additional statements of beliefs for future updates, and it may be submitted as a computer file.

—Richard Nickels, BSA President



### God's Work in Thailand

In North Myanmar Chin Hills district (a region called Katchinland), 5,000 people have chosen to become affiliated with the *Australian Independent Church of God*. One of their ministers/leaders, Lazumbrang (Lazum for short), was in this region for two weeks this last summer conducting bible studies and fellowshiping with these Sabbath-keepers, originally from different denominations. Lazum plans, as finances are available, to print Sabbath tracts and other articles for distribution to these rural native Hill tribe brethren. Lazum risks being arrested for his spiritual work, since these activities are not allowed. Please pray for Lazum's physical protection and this work. The harvest is great and the laborers few.

### Local Evangelism

Many independent Sabbath Groups in the United States are becoming more active in local evangelism. Small doctrinal and Sabbath tracts, published by BSA and Tom Justus, are being strategically placed in community places; and advertised in local weekly ad shoppers, such as "The Thrifty Nickel," and other related community publications. Consider the prospects of advertising in a similar fashion in your own local areas. BSA has a variety of tracts explaining the Sabbath doctrine in clear detail that you could use!

### Internet: A New Meeting Place

The internet has become a great meeting place for Sabbath keepers. One of the largest Sabbatarian web sites, hosted by Mary Bierman of Arkansas, is called "Assorted Flavors of Sabbath keepers". This web site links up with every major Sabbath keeping community in the world, of every doctrinal basis. BSA and TSS are also advertised on this web site. It is located at: <http://www.flash.net/~ssef/assorted/>

**BSA WEB SITE** — Contact Alan Ruth at <http://www.biblestudy.org>

### CUAL ES EL DIA DE REPOSO DEL NUEVO TESTAMENTO?

Sabe usted cual es el dia de reposo del Nuevo Testamento? Aprenda lo que declara su propia Biblia sobre este tema de vital importancia.

Escribanos y pida el folleto gratuito titulado, "Cual es el Dia de reposo del Nuevo Testamento?" Dirijase a *The Bible Sabbath Association*, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718.

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### Free Bumper Stickers With Each Renewal Order to TSS

*We have a supply of donated bumper stickers with the words, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever - just like his seventh day sabbath!". As supplies last, we will issue one free with each order or renewal to TSS.*

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V201	The Israel of the Alps 85 min video - Waldenses	\$30
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TSS	1-yr subscription to The Sabbath Sentinel	\$15
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# Seasons of Thankfulness



**A**braham Lincoln proclaimed in 1863, "We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our

hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwells in the heavens." (excerpted from Thanksgiving Proclamation).

Remembering God in our moments of joy and continually expressing our thankfulness in seasons of sadness underscores our relationship with the Lord and inspires obedience, trust, and love. Moses imparted a key to understanding God's blessings and curses when he wrote to tribal Israel, "Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 8:11-14). In ancient times, Job was singularly outstanding in his ability to praise God in all seasons. Out of adversity, Job spoke, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 1:21; 2:10).

Whatever the circumstances, whatever the season, be thankful! "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever

you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:2,12).

In prayer and thanksgiving, we share our anxieties with the Lord. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7).

Globally, God's people simultaneously experience times of joy and times of great persecution. The dimensional Body of Christ is not unlike a multi-faceted jewel of great price. To every member of that Body, in every circumstance, there is a season of thankfulness. The present stresses are always transcended by the peace of Jesus Christ. We are reminded of this in the angels' message, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and on earth, peace to all in whom he delights." (Luke 2:14).

— Mike Galimore [wyldfyre@bluemarble.net](mailto:wyldfyre@bluemarble.net)



## Coming in 1999

The specter of Y2K – the year 2000 is causing some computer consultants to build survival shacks in the desert.

In an upcoming issue of *TSS*, we will examine the evidence and take a look at the dire predictions many people agonized over anticipating Y1K – 1000 A.D.



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