

A Short Commentary on Calvin Burrell

By John Merritt, MD. Tampa, Florida

I have known Calvin for nearly 30 years. He volunteered for and was very active in many of the earliest Friends of The Sabbath conferences in the 1990s, representing the Church of God (Seventh Day) (CG7) at these conferences.

A very memorable conference was the second Friends of the Sabbath conference, held in San Antonio, Texas in December 1995. That conference, among planned discussions on several topics, the primary topic focused on the continuity or discontinuity of the Leviticus 23 festivals for Christians. There were two presenters scheduled for the continuation, and two against. Calvin was one of those against, presenting the CG7 view. The other was Sammuel Bacchiochi, representing the SDA view. But during the months prior to this conference, Bacchiochi had intensely studied the subject as a historian-scholar, and had changed his mind, and even authored a book about his new views, which he made available at the conference.

After Bacchiochi's much anticipated detailed and passionate presentation, I was standing in the back of the room beside Calvin, who was up next. I pulled him aside and said, "Calvin, this was NOT what we had planned. This is unfair to you. Now, it's three to one. Calvin, you don't have to do this. I can rearrange the schedule and we can take an early break." His response was, "No, I will do what I came to do." And he stepped up and gave a succinct presentation of the beliefs of the CG7, and their opinions regarding the festivals, even though Bacchiochi had just thoroughly dismantled each of his points. The audience was polite, with few questions. I had always liked him and was honored to be in his presence, but after that, I admired him more deeply.

Calvin Burrell was a man of character, steadfastness, faithfulness. He was a man who wasn't wishy washy. You could always depend on him. Over the years since then we served together on the Board of the Bible Sabbath Association and became friends.

He will be missed. He is missed.

NB: attached are some photos of Calvin Burrell at the Bible Sabbath Association Board of Directors meetings in 2016 and 2020 here in Tampa, one at Shoresh David Synagogue with Marty Goetz, and one from a BSA conference in Big Sandy, Texas in 2021.