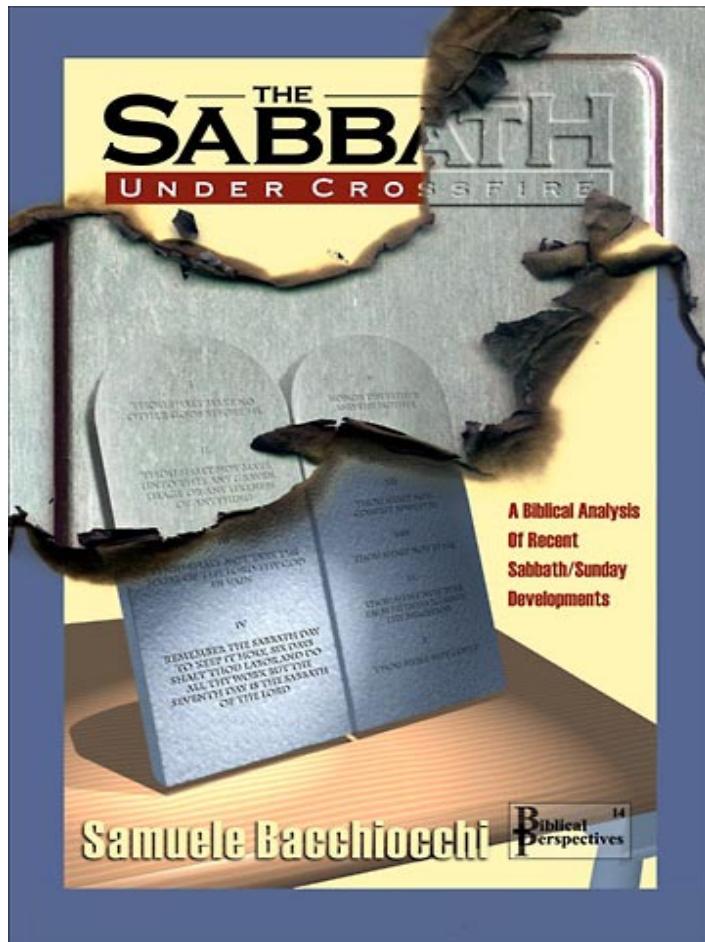


THE

March - May 1999

Sabbath Sentinel

PROMOTING THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH AND COOPERATION AMONG SABBATH-KEEPERS



Can the
Sabbath
Survive
Under
Crossfire?

BSA
The Bible Sabbath Association

Review: *Sabbath Under Crossfire* • God's Infinite Love • Interview with Pastor Lester •
Keeping the Sabbath and Keeping Your Job • The Sabbath and Military Service

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The Sabbath Sentinel

March-May 1999 Volume 51, No. 2, Issue No. 476

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Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible in the United States. Those who choose to voluntarily support this international work to promote the Sabbath and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God are welcomed as contributors.

Annual Membership Contribution: Regular Membership \$25; Family Membership \$30. All memberships include an annual subscription to *The Sabbath Sentinel*. Make all checks, drafts and money orders payable to *The Bible Sabbath Association* (VISA and MasterCard accepted).

The Bible Sabbath Association is dedicated to promote the seventh day Sabbath. As a non-sectarian association for Sabbath-observing Christians, BSA accepts members who acknowledge Jesus Christ (Yahshua the Messiah) as their Savior, believe the Bible to be the Word of Eternal, and uphold the seventh day Sabbath. BSA takes no official position on other theological issues, and publishes *The Sabbath Sentinel* as a forum to promote understanding and share items of interest to Sabbath observing groups and individuals.

Opinions expressed in *The Sabbath Sentinel* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editorial Staff or of *The Bible Sabbath Association*.

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New Editor Needed

Lars Harrison has resigned as TSS Editor. We wish to thank Lars for the excellent work he has done. You may also see his fine work in putting past issues of the magazine on the Internet at the BSA website, www.biblesabbath.org.

The Bible Sabbath Association needs a new editor as soon as possible. Are you interested in promoting Sabbatarian co-operation and the challenging work of gathering articles, page layout, and meeting printing deadlines? One of the most

difficult tasks is obtaining good quality articles. Although the pay is currently nothing, the rewards of helping others more than compensates for the hard work. I have greatly enjoyed putting this magazine together, but other responsibilities make this endeavor more than I can handle.

If you would like to become the BSA editor, or assist in editorial tasks, please contact me at **(307) 686-5191** or E-mail giveshare@vcn.com. **Thanks for your willingness to help!**

Bacchiocchi? Not Again!

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, Professor of Church History and Theology at Seventh-day Adventist Andrews University, is a controversial figure. Besides being the most noted Sabbatarian of our time, he draws controversy wherever he goes, even in Sabbatarian circles. At a "Friends of the Sabbath," seminar in Bend, Oregon, a couple of years ago, a Seventh-day Adventist loudly proclaimed, "Dr. Bacchiocchi does not represent the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Dr. Sam says that he is banned as a speaker at some SDA colleges and churches. This is probably due to his uncompromising stance against women's ordination, and his support for the observance of the annual Biblical Holy Days.

Has there been over kill or too much focus on Bacchiocchi? Do leaders often get too much coverage, and smaller, less known Sabbath-keepers not enough recognition? Actually, TSS has given little coverage to this champion of the Sabbath. We should cover both the small and big activities of interest to Sabbath-keepers.

The seventh day Sabbath is under attack, even within Sabbatarian churches. When in Australia to attend the 1996 "Friends of the Sabbath" seminar in Sydney, a sincere SDA told me of a concerted movement within the Seventh-day Adventist Church to get rid of the Sabbath, like

what has happened in the Worldwide Church of God. Dale Ratzlaff, former SDA, has attacked the Sabbath in his book, *Sabbath in Crisis*. Joseph Tkach, Jr., current head of the Worldwide Church of God, has jettisoned Sabbath-keeping in that organization, although assembling on the Sabbath in that Church is still practiced by many. Tkach has close friends in the Church of God, Seventh Day, who may have the same agenda.

If you do not like Sam Bacchiocchi because of his sometimes high pressure book salesmanship, or dislike him for some other reason, please reconsider your blasé attitude towards him. Forget the man, and listen to the message of his new book, *Sabbath Under Crossfire*. How you respond to his message could well spell the difference between your abject capitulation to the frontal attack on the Sabbath, or your glorious victory in the Messiah, the Master of the Sabbath. *Sabbath Under Crossfire* is a monumental book. We in The Bible Sabbath Association are very pleased to highly recommend this excellent resource. If you know someone who has given up the Sabbath, give them a copy of this book, and perhaps the Almighty will use it to revive and rekindle their love for the true Sabbath day. *The Sabbath Under Crossfire* is available for a suggested donation of \$12.50 from The Bible Sabbath Association.

TSS

book review...

The Sabbath Under Crossfire

This book is sorely needed by every Sabbath-keeper!

BY RICHARD C. NICKELS

It's out, it's awesome, and you need it! Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi's newest book, *The Sabbath Under Crossfire: A Biblical Analysis of Recent Sabbath/Sunday Developments*, addresses critical issues especially important to current and former Sabbatarians. If there is any book that you read this year, don't put it off, read this one.

The Pope attempts to provide Biblical support for Sunday-keeping.

In July, 1998, Pope John Paul II issued a lengthy Pastoral Letter, *Dies Domini*, which appeals to Christians to observe Sunday as the fulfillment of the Sabbath, and calls for civil legislation to facilitate Sunday observance. In a break with traditional Catholic teaching, which until now, has admitted that Sunday-keeping came from Church tradition rather than Scriptural mandate, the Pope attempts to provide Biblical support for Sunday-keeping. The need to respond to the Pope's "new" theology was one reason why Bacchiocchi decided to write his new book.

Earlier in 1998, former SDA Dale Ratzlaff, author of the book, *Sabbath in Crisis* (1990), appeared on radio station KJSL in St. Louis, Missouri. He savagely attacked the Sabbath. His book had earlier been used by Joseph Tkach of the Worldwide Church of God to overthrow the validity of Sabbath-keeping. My friend, Neil Gardner of Florissant, Missouri, responded to the radio station with letters answering Ratzlaff's points, asking for equal time to present an affirmation for the seventh day

Sabbath. Gardner asked me to join with him in defense of the Sabbath. It became apparent to me that someone like myself would be no match for the polished rhetoric of Ratzlaff. I suggested that we try to get Dr. Bacchiocchi to debate Ratzlaff, which he graciously agreed to do. The one-hour debate was held on June 15, 1998, and continued for many weeks over the

Internet. Eventually, Ratzlaff backed off from further discussion. Ratzlaff's anti-Sabbath attacks were a second motivation for Bacchiocchi's new book.

Dr. Sam had promised his wife Anna that he would take a year off from writing books to spend more time with her and attend to household chores. Because of the urgency of the Pope's Letter and Ratzlaff's frontal assault on the Sabbath, Dr. B. felt he had to break his promise. I am sorry, Sam, for helping you to break your promise, but I trust the result will benefit many, as indeed it has and will. Incidentally, when I met her in 1995, in San Antonio, I asked Anna Bacchiocchi if she has trouble

command, the "full expression" of the Sabbath. This is in stark contrast to the so-called "New Covenant," and related "Dispensational" teaching (adopted by Ratzlaff and Tkach) which emphasizes the radical discontinuity between Sabbath and Sunday. Dispensationalists hold that the Sabbath is a Mosaic, Old Covenant, institution that terminated at the cross. Bacchiocchi shows that Sunday is not the Sabbath, as the Pope now maintains, because the two days differ in authority, meaning, and experience. Sunday is so lacking in authority that it needs the Pope to call for civil legislation to foster its observance. In most European countries, Sunday Laws have been in effect for many years, yet Sunday Church attendance is less than 10% of the Christian population. In Italy, 95% of Catholics go to church *only three times* in their lives, when they are "hatched, matched, and dispatched." Sunday laws fail to encourage the practice of Sunday-keeping.

In Chapter 2 of his book, *Sabbath Under Crossfire*, Bacchiocchi explores in depth the question: "Is the Sabbath creation or ceremonial?" In spite of **Genesis 2** and **Mark 2:27-28**,

Sunday laws fail to encourage the practice of Sunday-keeping.

getting in a word edgewise with her constantly talking husband Sam. She assured me that in their private lives, she *does* get to say her piece!

The Pope challenges Christians to respect Sunday, not merely as a Church institution, but as a divine

many professing Christians, including Ratzlaff and Tkach, believe that the Sabbath is not a creation ordinance given to mankind, but a Mosaic ordinance given to the Israelites together with the Ten Commandments.

Bacchiocchi carefully reviews the Biblical evidence, and uses non-Sabbatarian commentators in this (and other portions of his book), to lend authoritative support that the Sabbath is a creation ordinance for all mankind.

In Chapter 3, Bacchiocchi looks at the “Old and New Covenants,” referring to Joseph Tkach’s view of the distinction between the two covenants as the model for his discussion. Dr. Sam shows that salvation by grace through faith is the central theme of both the old and new covenants. Saving faith is never alone, because it is always accompanied by loving obedience, **Galatians 5:6**. The Decalogue is not merely a list of ten laws, but primarily ten principles of love. There is no dichotomy between law and love, because one cannot exist without the other. Bacchiocchi shows that Paul’s use of *sabbatismos* in

day, but that the *moral aspect* of the Sabbath commandment remains. They believe that the principle of observing *one day in seven* was not abrogated by Christ, but transferred to the observance of the first day of the week, Sunday. In exploring the topic of “the Savior and the Sabbath,” Dr. B. demonstrates the fallacy of both of these views. The healing miracles of Jesus on the Sabbath show the expansion, not the termination, of the Sabbath, and reveal the *redemptive* nature of true Sabbath-keeping. Just as God “is working until now” (**John 5:17**, literal translation), we too must work to extend the Sabbath rest and peace to others, **John 9:4**. “This means that for believers today,” Bacchiocchi states, “the Sabbath is the day to celebrate not only God’s creation by resting, but also Christ’s redemption by acting mercifully toward others,” page 173.

The Old Testament does not view the Law as a means of gaining acceptance with God through obedience, but as a way of responding to God’s gracious redemption. . . . Salvation has always been a divine gift of grace and not a human achievement.

Hebrews 4:9, supports literal Sabbath-keeping, answering Ratzlaff’s five reasons against literal Sabbath-keeping. Rather than the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices which were “abolished” (**Hebrews 10:9**), “obsolete” and “ready to vanish away” (**Hebrews 8:13**), Paul explicitly teaches that “Sabbath-keeping has been left behind for the people of God” (literal rendering of **Hebrews 4:9**).

Lutherans, as well as Ratzlaff and Tkach believe that Christ fulfilled the Sabbath commandment by terminating its observance altogether, and replacing it with an existential experience of salvation-rest available to believers every day. For others, such as Catholics and Calvinists, Christ fulfilled and terminated only the *ceremonial* aspect of the Sabbath commandment, the observance of the seventh

Next, Bacchiocchi presents a thorough discussion of “Paul and the Law,” and “Paul and the Sabbath.” How can one reconcile the seemingly contradictory statements of the Apostle Paul about the Law? Five major passages are examined, which are frequently quoted to support the idea that Christ has done away with the Law, and consequently the Law is no longer the norm of Christian conduct: **Romans 6:14**, “not under the law”; **II Corinthians 3:1-18**, the letter and the spirit; **Galatians 3:15-25**, faith and law; **Colossians 2:14**, what was nailed to the cross? and **Romans 10:4**, “Christ is the end of the law.” Bacchiocchi’s conclusion is that when Paul speaks of the Law in the context of salvation (*justification*, right standing before God), he affirms that Law-keeping is of no avail

(**Romans 3:20**). On the other hand, when Paul speaks of the Law in the context of Christian conduct (*sanctification*, right living before God), he upholds the value and validity of God’s Law (**Romans 7:12, 13:8-10; I Corinthians 7:19**). This is the most valuable portion of *Sabbath Under Crossfire*.

In my opinion, the teaching of the Worldwide Church of God throughout its history has been rather weak regarding God’s Law and the New Covenant. This shortcoming opened the door for Dr. Ernest L. Martin, former Chairman of the Department of Theology of Ambassador College, to lead over 10,000 members out of the Church in 1974, most of whom abandoned the Sabbath entirely. Martin paved the way for the Systematic Theology Project in the late 1970s, which was the theological underpinning for Joseph Tkach, Senior, and Junior. In a letter dated April, 1995, Dr. Ernest Martin (rightfully in my opinion) claims credit for many of the doctrines the Worldwide now says are “new truths.” Martin claims he has been proclaiming many of these “new truths” for over twenty years! Martin’s so-called “New Covenant” and anti-Sabbath teachings are well in line with those of Ratzlaff and Tkach. Many of the senior ministers today were taught by Martin when they went to Ambassador. Is it any wonder why so many have rolled over and played dead, when it comes to a Biblical understanding of God’s Law and the New Covenant? Tkach’s current teachings are merely Martinism, Act II.

In *Sabbath Under Crossfire*, Bacchiocchi states, “Contrary to what many people believe, the Old Testament does not view the Law as a means of gaining acceptance with God through obedience, but as a way of responding to God’s gracious redemption and of binding Israel to God Salvation has always been a divine gift of grace and not a human achievement,” pages 186-187. There is no such thing as Old Testament legalism; the Pharisees developed this aberrant concept between the

Testaments. "Paul rejects the Pharisaic understanding of the Law as a means of salvation and affirms the Old Testament view of the Law as a revelation of God's will for human conduct," p. 189. Ernest Martin, and some ex-WCG ministers today, makes Paul into a law-breaking antinomian. But the Truth is that our new life in Christ enables us to keep the Law, not as an external code (in the letter), but as a loving response to God (in the spirit).

Prior to reading this section of *Sabbath Under Crossfire*, I did not have a well-grounded understanding of the place of Law in Christian life. The plain, easy-to-understand terminology of Bacchiocchi, and his Biblical exegesis, is extraordinary. Do you know someone who has left the Church, maybe many years ago, and has given up the Sabbath and most all the other distinctive teachings we hold dear? Perhaps they would consider re-examining the issue of the Sabbath, God's Law, and Pauline theology. *Sabbath Under Crossfire* could be the best book on this subject ever written, and would make an ideal gift to help someone regain their spiritual footing. Don't forget yourself. Maybe you, like me, did not really dig into the teaching of Law by Paul like Bacchiocchi does in his excellent book.

Finally, in Chapter 7, Sam Bacchiocchi shows that many Sunday-keepers are re-examining and rediscovering the validity of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not an hour in worship services, but twenty-four hours of holy time spent with God, a divine vacation from the turmoil and stress of daily life. While some Sunday-keepers are more zealously keeping Sunday, the fact remains that Sunday is not the Sabbath. You cannot keep cold water hot! As Ratzlaff and the Worldwide Church of God are abandoning the Sabbath, the exciting news is that other Christians are rediscovering the seventh day Sabbath, observing the *literal day*,

and learning more of its spiritual meaning.

Bishop Steven Sanchez and the Wesley Synod of sixty-eight Methodist congregations in North America have recently become Sabbath-keepers, claiming that John Wesley originally kept the Sabbath and dietary laws. They observe the Sabbath from Friday sunset till sunset Saturday, have Saturday Church services, and abstain from work on the Sabbath. What great news!

Most Messianic Jews, who accepted the Messiah through Protestant efforts and were thus originally Sunday-keepers, have now become seventh day Sabbatarians. Sabbatarian Mennonites such as Daniel Leichty, are renewing the Anabaptist heritage of Andreas Fischer and Oswald Glait by returning to the Sabbath. The True

Sabbath-keeper perhaps for many years, rediscover the joy of the Sabbath, "a gift waiting to be unwrapped"? Will you allow God to enrich your life with a larger measure of His divine presence, peace, and rest that the Sabbath affords? And, most importantly, as Bacchiocchi concludes, will you DO SOMETHING to spread the Sabbath delight to others? Will you share your faith with others? Dr. Sam implores us to rid ourselves of spiritual lethargy: "Many more can receive the gift of the Sabbath if those of us who experience weekly the blessings of this divine gift will share with others the benefits this day brings to our lives," page 283.

Dr. Sam, now that you have helped me and others to become more thoroughly grounded in New Covenant Law, take some time off

Many Sunday-keepers are re-examining and rediscovering the validity of the Sabbath!

Jesus Church, founded in 1917 in China (which may have descended from earlier Nineteenth Century Chinese Sabbatarians) today has a million members in China and 79,000 in the free world. Their basic tenet states, "The Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week (Saturday), is a holy day, blessed and sanctified by God. It is to be observed under the Lord's grace for the commemoration of God's creation and redemption, and with the hope of eternal rest."

What is it going to be for you? Are you going to throw away the Sabbath like Martin, Ratzlaff, and Tkach? Are you going to observe the Sabbath in a legalistic, hard-hearted way, thinking that by so doing, you gain favor with God and earn salvation? This concept turns the Sabbath into a burden for your children so that they will likely reject it when they become adults. Or instead, will you, even as a

with Anna and get those household chores done!

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi's book, *Sabbath Under Crossfire*, retails for \$15 per copy. His other two classic Sabbath books are: *From Sabbath to Sunday* and *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*. It is a pity that perhaps Bacchiocchi's BEST book, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, has received so little publicity. A theological study of the philosophy and meaning of the Sabbath, *Divine Rest* helps us understand the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath, and how to keep it holy.

You may order any one of these three excellent Sabbath books for \$12.50 postpaid from **The Bible Sabbath Association, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718**. Or, you may order any two, or all three, for \$11 each from the same.

TSS

The Sabbath is a gift waiting to be unwrapped! Will you share this gift with others?

Sabbath organization profile...

An Interview with Pastor Lester C. Heilman, Jr.

BY ROBERT SUMNER

This is an interview with a pastor who has been called to more of the truths of the scripture these last two years, especially regarding an understanding of the Seventh Day Sabbath and God's Festival Days.

Sumner: Pastor Les, Please share some of your background. How did God call you and what have you been doing since then?

Heilman: I started out as a salesman, and was very good at it, and I thought it was my life. Then in 1979, I had a heart attack. This got my attention that God, Himself was dealing in my life. While lying in that hospital, I called upon God and asked, "OK, Lord, What do you want me to do with my life?" It was there I received a calling from the Lord, and was moved to go into the ministry.

In 1980, I went to seminary at The Evangelical School of Theology in Myerstown, PA. While there, part of my training was an internship at a church they gave me to preach at in Wormleysburg. We started with only 12 remaining members. The first week, I did what I was used to in sales, going

involved and I was fired due to a disagreement with a prominent member's idea over a building program. We learned a lot of lessons there. This firing took place on Xmas Eve, as we had to find a new building to celebrate that holiday. When the news got around to the members of the church, many of them became upset and left. They encouraged me to start a new church to begin building again. We launched out in faith. We ran newspaper ads, talked with people, and word got around. We started out with 45-50 folks at The Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church, which grew to over 150 members. I remained there as pastor until 1998.

Sumner: When did you learn about the Seventh Day Sabbath?

Heilman: While at the Cornerstone Church, we rented our facilities to a Sabbath-observing,

Day Sabbath was the correct day to worship the Lord of Creation.

I began hungering for more knowledge, understanding and fellowship with other Sabbath-keeping Christians. So I started looking around the Internet, searching in phone directories, and asking around town. I located in the yellow pages of the phone book a number for the Harrisburg Church of God, 7th Day, as well as another Sabbath group. I contacted these pastors and met with them and accepted their invitation to attend services. This was in 1997, and I've been going ever since. However, for awhile I was still pastoring the Cornerstone Church on Sundays, even sharing with them about the Sabbath, especially on a Friday night *Shabbat Service* there at Cornerstone. After a few months, once again local politics and adversity set in, and in a closed meeting away from the church members, I was fired. God used this to get me off of the fence, and devote myself to the Sabbath totally. It's been a harder journey for my wife, but the Lord is helping her along too.

Sumner: How has the transition from Sunday First Day services to the seventh day Sabbath worship been for you?

Heilman: It's been a **radical change!** I was a Sunday keeper for 65 years, starting out in the Lutheran Church as a young boy. My wife has had a harder time adjusting because of missing all her close friends, and differences with our children and other family members.

Since I was fired at Cornerstone, I also lost my livelihood that we counted on. My wife became ill and had to quit work too; so it's been real tough on us financially, and we are learning to lean on the

I began hungering for more knowledge, understanding and fellowship with other Sabbath-keeping Christians.

up and down the streets, knocking on doors. It was June then, and I met a lot of children, sharing with them and some of their families and inviting them to services. When my first Sunday service came, 12 children came, which surprised the old timers. My wife, Helen, started working with them, while I was busy with the normal pastoral duties. Soon the church grew to 75 members. With this success, I was transferred to another church nearby in Enola, PA. The Lord blessed us, and again we were blessed with many members.

However, after about 18 months, some local politics got

Messianic Jewish Congregation. They shared over the years about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and many other Jewish traditions. This peaked the interest of many of us, and we started studying. However, the rabbi/pastor of the Messianic group was not really motivated, or convicted, about the Sabbath. It was merely a tradition to them. This was not meaningful to me, so I had remembered about an old friend from seminary days, Jacob Myers, of The Assemblies of Yahweh. After getting in touch with him, fellowshipping and studying God's Word with him, I was convicted that the Seventh

Lord, and now all the new brethren we've come to know.

Our schedules and outlooks have changed too. Instead of just a couple of services per week for a few hours, we now can learn to appreciate and look forward to a **full 24-hour day of fellowship, family togetherness, and drawing close to God** as never before. It's now a day of celebration and learning. For example, we have rented a borough hall, and have Friday night/Sabbath fellowship

activities, and I will preach anytime I get the chance to.

I love to preach! I love to share God's Word! This is what I've been trained and called to do, and will continue to do so as long as the Lord permits. I share in our Sabbath Fellowship as well. I would love to be a full-time pastor at a Sabbath church somewhere, someday! My wife and I are open to any opportunities, so anyone is welcome to contact us and interview us.

I would love to be a full-time pastor at a Sabbath church somewhere, someday!

open to the community. There are old friends from the Cornerstone Church, folks from other Sunday churches, and a good number of Sabbath-keepers. Wow! What a way to start the Sabbath! We then fellowship at services Sabbath morning with the local church which is affiliated with The General Conference of The Church of God, Seventh Day — Harrisburg Church of God, Seventh Day.

Our relationships with our children and families have been strained, but it now is no longer a major issue as we are working it out, and the Lord is giving us some peace. One of the biggest things is learning and growing in the word of God, and accepting new truths being revealed to us. As we learn to be obedient to them, we are being delivered from old ideas, traditions of men, pagan ideas, and many deceptions from the enemy!

Sumner: What are your plans for the future? Where do you think the Lord is leading you?

Heilman: Right now we are just in a waiting pattern. We plan to continue to share with the Friday night LITTLE FLOCK FELLOWSHIP, as it is now known, and also to continue to pray and fellowship with believers, studying, learning and growing. I still serve in some community pastoring programs; officiate at funerals, weddings, and other



Sumner: What final thoughts would you like to share with TSS readers?

Heilman: My heart goes out to many because they have been deceived. I want to be part of sharing The Good News that our Lord and Savior has come and is alive today! I want to share the Good News about the Sabbath Day, even though it's against the traditions and the grains of society. I'd like to share it with as many people as possible

I've started writing and printing leaflets and tracts to share; contacting others, am on the Internet, and am witnessing to everyone that I can. If anyone wishes to contact me by telephone, my number is (717) 761-0406. My email is heilman@igateway.com

Our web page can be viewed at www.igateway.com/Lff.htm

Sumner: To the readers of TSS. This is the end of my interview. I hope it has encouraged you, and strengthened your walk with the Lord. Pastor Les, as we call him, is a very loving and devoted follower of God. His wife Helen is a dear sweet sister in the Lord. We have known them for two years now and count it a privilege to fellowship with them.

Robert Sumner is a Sabbath-keeping Christian residing in Harrisburg, PA. He can be contacted at (717) 652-9348, or faxed at (717) 651-0884.

TSS

Paganism Surviving in Christianity

Our friend David Hill of Queensland, Australia, continues to re-publish additional books by the great Seventh Day Baptist writer, Dr. Abram Herbert Lewis. With David's help, the latest Lewis book to be offered by the BSA is the 1892 work, *Paganism Surviving in Christianity*, 135-page photocopy, \$8.50 donation.

Lewis had a keen interest in returning exclusively to Biblical Christianity. Part of this task involves ridding ourselves of pagan trappings, which infiltrated the early Church.

As shocking as it sounds, Lewis shows that pagan methods of interpreting the Scriptures are still prevalent today. Lewis examines pagan water worship in Asia, Greece, Northern Europe, and Mexico, and how this was transferred to professing Christianity. He explores the effect of sun worship, Gnostic antinomianism, Sunday observance, the pagan cross, Christmas, Easter, Penance, Lent, the State religion, and many other pagan ideas and practices on the Church.

A.H. Lewis presents these helpful insights in a thorough, yet clear, easy-to-understand manner. He concludes, "When the last stain of paganism is removed, the world will see a Christianity which will be primarily a *life of purity*, through love for God and truth and men, rather than a *creed* . . . The Sabbath, as God's day, free from burdensome formalism, and filled with good works and spiritual culture will be restored; and this recognition of it as God's ever-recurring representative in human life will do much to bring in that universal Sabbathism towards which God is patiently leading His truth-loving children."

TSS

Would you like to write an article profiling a Sabbath group? Please E-mail us at giveshare@vcn.com

God's Infinite Love

BY JOHN SHIRN

One Sabbath morning an old-time preacher began to read a passage from the Old Testament in his old worn Bible that had since been repaired. The preacher was unaware that some glue had seeped between two pages where he was reading and had stuck them together. He started to read: "When men began to multiply upon the earth, and daughters were born unto them, the sons of heaven saw how beautiful the daughters of men were and so they took for their wives as many as were . . ." and here the preacher turned the stuck pages and continued: "300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, 30 cubits high, made of gopher wood and covered with pitch." After his initial shock, the still puzzled preacher recovered enough to say: "I must admit that the passage I read is somewhat unfamiliar to me, but I see it affirms a more familiar passage that says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made" (**Psalm 139:14**).

Made For Heavenly Love

So wonderfully are we made that each of us is a unique object of God's infinite love. God not only gives us the amazing gift of life. He gives us the gift of His undying infinite love as the source of our life's fulfillment in everything He has and does for us. Our religion is not rooted in what we can do for God, rather, it all rests on what God has already done for us. This is what charity is all about. He is the original giver. He gave us an

Jesus was raised in a humble carpenter's home. This is why Jesus went from village to village preaching and teaching and healing, and rejecting the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and proclaiming the eminence (lofty, greatness), the immanence (reality, inherence), and permanence of the Kingdom of God.

This is why Jesus endured the bloody horror of His beating and His crucifixion. This is why Jesus came out of the tomb saying: "Peace be with you" (**John 20:19**). This is why Jesus breathed the very Spirit of God into the world through His first disciples, the foundation of His Spiritual Church. Jesus lived, died, and rose again to make all things new in the purifying fire of God's incredible undying love. Jesus' mission was to show us the way to unconditional surrender of the self to His undying love of God.

His Love A Perpetual Gift

2 Corinthians 5:14 tells us that: ". . . the love of Christ constraineth us (hold together with a compelling force) because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." And now **verse 17**: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new." Past sins are gone — forget them. The reality of God's unlimited love is ours to accept . . . not earn . . . it is God's gift that He offers and He never withdraws it. It is steadfast, it is constant and it is eternal. We can't

Our religion is not rooted in what we can do for God, rather, it all rests on what God has already done for us.

undying, unmatchable gift. This is the good news of our Christian faith. This is why Jesus was born in a smelly little barn. This is why

turn it off, we can't stop God from loving us, we can't weaken it, we can't undermine it and we can't command it to go away. And it

doesn't matter who we are or where we are or what we are. God loves us, even though we are not as we should be.

1 Corinthians 1:26 says: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Now this does not mean that God is foolish or weak. It means in comparison to men who think that they are wise and can not understand God's reasoning and ways. No, we are not as we should be when God calls us, but God calls the foolish ones of the world to confound the wise. God calls the weak ones of the world to confound the mighty. He calls the base and the despised to confound those who are not . . . to bring to nothing those who are . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence" (**verses 27-29**).

But of those who are in Christ Jesus, God has made into them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption that according as it is written, "He who glories let him glory in the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 1:31**). The staggering truth is that God does not love the world or mankind in some vague or abstract way. God loves you, the real you, as you are right now, and with a love the depth of which we cannot penetrate with our mortal minds. From the cross Jesus has said to you and to me that God would rather die than be without you. Can you grasp that? Yet, that is the message of the cross — God would rather die than be without you. **Romans 5:8** says: ". . . God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Can You Accept the Gift?

The question that confronts us before all others is not: "Are you at this moment as pure as the Apostle John or as sinful as Mary Magdalene?" Rather, the question is: "Are you ready to accept the gift

of God's undying love to the center of your being? To act on it?" To bet your life on it? Are you willing to accept this reality as the necessary point of departure for your journey toward fulfillment and sonship in God's Kingdom?

Several years ago, Arnold Palmer, the great golfer played some golf matches in Saudi Arabia. His playing greatly impressed the King of Saudi Arabia and before Palmer left the country the King told him he would like to present him with a special gift. "What can I offer you?" The King asked. Palmer expressed his gratitude for the offer but said he had enjoyed the visit very much and that a special gift was not necessary. The King insisted and Palmer finally said: "Alright, you can give me a golf club; that would be a really nice remembrance of your hospitality." The next day — the story goes — a messenger appeared at Palmer's hotel and handed him a deed to a 300-acre golf club! Some one has said that the moral of this story is, "In the presence of the King, don't ask for small gifts." There is no sin so great as to cause God to offer you anything less than the greatest gift imaginable — which is sonship in His Family, unless you fully and completely reject Him permanently. To reject Him permanently is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and cannot be forgiven. **Mark 3:29** states that: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost (Spirit) hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."

There is no rebellion so wild that would cause Him to give up on you. There is no depression so deep that can prevent Him from continuing to take the initiative with you. He tells us through **Isaiah 1:18**: "Come now, and let us reason together . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." No matter how bad things go for you — no matter how depraved you may have been — God does not give up on you. Again, He tells us in **Revelation 3:20**, "Behold, I stand at the door,

and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Notice that you have to do something. You have to open the door. You have to accept Him. You have to let Him in, let Him control your life, you cannot do it as well as He can.

None Need Perish

Notice the parable of the lost sheep in **Matthew 18:11-14**. His will is that none should perish even though one had been lost — He will find and save every one. God is not talking about woolly animals here; He is talking about people who stray from His teachings; those who are temporarily disillusioned. He will find them and restore them into His fold — but they must be willing to obey and not be self-willed. This concept is repeated in **2 Peter 3:9**, where we are told that, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; (here again we must distinguish between man's thinking and God's thinking — they are not the same) but is long suffering (we are not always as longsuffering as He is) to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to

angels surround you and keep you from being seduced by Satan in moments of fear and temptation. He persists and persists and persists in this way because of His tremendous love for you and His burning desire to bring you to fulfillment as a human being, as His son or daughter, eternally. Whether you like it or not, no matter how far off you have gone, God is going to continue in retrieving you — His child — the work of His hands, unless you openly and knowingly rebel and deny Him for your own self-willed pleasures. As we stated above, this attitude is unforgivable.

The Good Life Now And Then

God continues to work with you in spite of yourself in many cases for the purpose of bringing you fulfillment, pleasure, and joy in this life — now — as well as eternal life in His Kingdom. Notice what He wishes for us through Apostle John. He wants us to prosper and be in health (**3 John 1-4**). While this salutation is from John to Gaius, it is also indicative of God's will for us, as we have noted in above scriptures. God rejoices when a brother or sister testifies of the truth and walks in

This undying love of God's is tremendous and infinite toward you and me, but you block the blessing from God the more you rebel, the more you stray from Him, the more you try to run your own life your way.

repentance." Note the condition — you have to do something — you must come to repentance, or in other words — come to reality and accept Him. He forgives all sins (**Matthew 6:14-15**, and **18:21-22**).

This is the tremendous love that God has toward us. God continues to move steadfastly and operates in a thousand ways in your life. Ways that you do not expect. He is that still, small voice guiding you in moments of despair and indecision. His ministering

the truth, and He has no greater joy than to hear that His children walk in the truth.

This undying love of God's is infinite toward you and me, but you block the blessing from God the more you rebel, the more you stray from Him, the more you try to run your own life your way. The closer you walk with God the more that channel for fulfillment — that channel for blessings, the more

Continued on page 20

Keeping the Sabbath & Keeping Your Job

BY DR. DANIEL BOTKIN

“I’d like to keep the Sabbath, but I can’t — I have to work on Saturdays.”

Wrong. You may think so, but you are mistaken. No one who believes in keeping the Sabbath has to work on Saturdays, at least not in America. No one is pointing a gun at the heads of American Christians and Jews and forcing them to work on Saturdays. Americans who work on the Sabbath do so by their own choice, not because they have to.

There were many Sabbath-keeping Christians in Communist Russia who were ordered by their oppressive government to work on Saturdays. Many of these Christians chose to obey God rather than man, and they lost a lot more than some crummy job. They suffered imprisonment, exile, and torture for refusing to break God’s holy Sabbath. When we stand with these faithful saints before the Lord on Judgment Day, will any of us have the gall to say, “Well, Lord, I wanted to keep the Sabbath, but I couldn’t — I had to work on Saturdays”?

How does a disciple of the Messiah go about getting every Sabbath off from his job? First of all, you do *not* go in and ask your employer if you can have Saturdays off. You are not there to make a request; you are there to inform. You *inform* your employer (politely and respectfully, of course) that you will not be available to work from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. Your employer may respond in a number of ways:

- “I’ll see what we can do to accommodate you, but in the meantime you’ll have to keep working Saturdays.”
- “We can give you Saturdays

off, but you’ll have to work for a few hours on Friday nights.”

- “We’ll do our best to accommodate you, but we may have to occasionally ask you to come in on a Saturday if we’re short of help.”

None of these responses is acceptable. Pharaoh tried three times to persuade Moses and Aaron to compromise the Lord’s demands. (See **Exodus 8:25-29, 10:8-11.**) Moses and Aaron steadfastly refused to accept Pharaoh’s offer of a compromise solution, and we must likewise refuse to accept an employer’s offer of a compromise.

What if your employer refuses to accommodate you? One solution is to look for a different job. However, that may not be necessary. If this particular job is important to you, you may want to inform your employer of his legal obligation to accommodate employees’ religious practices. This should be done in a polite, respectful manner, not in an obnoxious or threatening way.

Many people do not realize that federal law requires employers to accommodate employees who need time off for religious reasons, “unless the employer demonstrates that accommodation would result in undue hardship on the conduct of its business.” You, the employee, do not have to prove the validity of your case. It is the employer who must try to prove that letting you keep the Sabbath would cause undue hardship to his business. The burden of proof is on the employer, not on the employee.

Federal law considers the following solutions to be “reasonable accommodation” which would *not* cause undue hardship to an employer’s business:

- Securing a substitute worker (even if the employer has to secure the substitute).
- Flexible scheduling (flexible arrival and departure times; floating or optional holidays; flexible work breaks; use of lunch time in exchange for early departure; staggered work hours; permitting an employee to make up time lost due to the observance of religious practices).
- Lateral transfer and change of job assignment.

The employer “must offer the alternative which least disadvantages the individual [i.e., the employee] with respect to his or her employment opportunities. The employer can also be required to bear the extra costs of accommodating the employee, unless the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission determines that it is “more than a *de minimus* cost.”

Sometimes an employer is afraid to give an employee every Saturday off for fear that other employees will see this and likewise demand every Saturday (or Sunday) off for religious reasons. However, according to federal law, this is *not* proof of undue hardship: “A mere assumption that many more people, with the same religious practices as the person being accommodated, may also need accommodation is not evidence of undue hardship.”

The above legal information can be found in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended [section 701(j), 703 and 717] and in Part XII Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Religion. These same laws apply to labor organizations as well as to employers. The

laws pertain not only to scheduling (though this is the most frequent accommodation needed), but also to other religious practices such as a man's right to wear a beard because of his religious convictions.

The employer's legal obligation to accommodate "pertains to prospective employees as well as current employees." This means that employers conducting a job interview must be very careful when asking about the need for religious accommodation: "The Commission will infer that the need for an accommodation discriminatorily influenced a decision to reject an applicant when: (i) prior to an offer of employment the employer makes an inquiry into an applicant's availability without having a business necessity justification; and (ii) after the employer has determined the applicant's need for an accommodation, the employer rejects a qualified applicant. The burden is then on the employer to demonstrate that factors other than the need for an accommodation were the reason for rejecting the qualified applicant, or that a reasonable accommodation without undue hardship was not possible."

I do not wish to bore readers with a lot of legal jargon, but Sabbath-keepers need to know that employees have legal rights to reasonable accommodations, and that some employees take their employers to court to enforce these rights. Even as I was writing this article, a story appeared in the 11/27/98 *Jewish Press* about a Seventh-day Adventist whose employer tried to refuse to accommodate her: "Lisette Balint, a resident of Carson City, Nevada, was offered a position in the city's sheriff's department, [and] the department refused to excuse her from working on the Sabbath" ("U.S. Court Defends Religious Rights," p. 62).

Sometimes the employer wins the case, of course, because sometimes it truly would cause undue hardship for the employer to accommodate the employee. When undue hardship is not an issue, though, the law is on our side.

Most employers are reasonable people and are intelligent enough to know that it would be wiser for them to accommodate your need than it would be to refuse you. Many employers will actually respect you for taking a firm, but polite, stand for what you believe. If they are smart, they will know that a person with strong convictions is likely to be a reliable, honest worker with some integrity. They will want to find a way to accommodate you. Some employers are not so kind and understanding, and will simply tell you, "No, you have to work on Saturdays." If that is the case, then you must pray and ask the Lord to show you what He would have you to do. Would the Lord have you take your employer to court, or would the Lord have you look for a different job? (You don't need to pray about whether or not the Lord would have you keep working on the Sabbath; He's already told you in the Ten Commandments not to do that!)

Fighting for your legal rights in court is one issue, but there is also the issue of maintaining a good testimony as a disciple of the Messiah. Some questions you might want to consider:

- Do I really want to work for an employer who lets me have the Sabbath off only because he was forced to do so by the court?
- Will going to court result in resentment and/or jealousy in my workplace, and do I want to work in such an atmosphere?
- Is this job really worth fighting for?
- Is it possible that letting me have every Sabbath off really would cause undue hardship for my employer's business?
- Even if the court rules in my favor, would there still be some hardship (though not "undue"), and would it be right to let my employer bear this inconvenience?

Keeping your job should really be your third priority in this arena. Keeping the Sabbath and keeping your testimony should be the first priorities. If you can do this and also keep your job, that's great.

Personally, I would not feel comfortable forcing my employer to pay extra costs in order to accommodate me, even though the law can require the employer to bear these minimal costs. For the sake of my testimony as a disciple of the Lord, I would prefer to not exercise this legal right, and would pay for the extra costs myself, unless my employer voluntarily and cheerfully insisted on bearing the cost. I would also be reluctant to demand my legal right to "the alternative which least disadvantages the individual with respect to his or her employment opportunities." If an employer were willing to accommodate me, I would want to find the solution which least disadvantages both of us. If my employer is willing to bear some minor inconvenience in order to accommodate me, then I should be willing to bear some minor inconvenience to keep the Sabbath.

Every situation is unique and has many factors to consider. This is why it is important to pray before deciding whether or not to take your employer to court if he refuses to let you have the Sabbath off. If you do lose your job for the sake of obeying the Lord, the Lord will honor your sacrifice. He may not provide another job immediately, but He has promised to meet your physical needs if you "seek first the kingdom of God" (**Mattew 6:33**).

In closing, always remember that you are not called to be a slave to your job. Although you are to treat your employer with honor and respect, your employer is not your Owner and Master. If you are a disciple of the Son of God, then He is your real Owner and Master. You are called to be a servant in His Kingdom. You are not called to be a slave to the world system. So don't let your employer or anyone else tell you that you have to work on the Sabbath.

TSS

— written by Dr. Daniel Botkin, who publishes a bimonthly publication, Gates of Eden. For a sample issue, write to PO Box 2257, East Peoria, IL 61611-0257.

The Sabbath and Military Service

BY RICHARD C. NICKELS

The Sabbath-keeping Church of God has a long tradition of non-participation in war. Both the Church of God (7th Day), and most descendants from the Worldwide Church of God are opposed to military service. Some of these groups have anti-participation-in-war statements in their statements of belief. While Seventh-day Adventists do not have a statement on carnal warfare in their official doctrinal statement, SDA's, when inducted into the military, generally become non-combatants.

Anabaptists in Europe, who became prominent in the 1500s, generally opposed taking part in warfare. While not all Anabaptists were Sabbath-keepers, some were. My ancestors became followers of a prominent Sunday Anabaptist named Menno Simons, founder of the Mennonites. Because they would not participate in Prussian wars, my German Mennonite ancestors, known as the "von Nickel" clan, gave up their ownership of the largest nickel mine in Eastern Europe, and settled in the south Russian area of the Ukraine, at the invitation of Russian Empress Catherine the Great. John Kiesz, the late noted evangelist of the Church of God, Seventh Day, also is descended from these

warfare often face contempt, ridicule, and persecution. In spite of ardent persuasion from public officials, my grandfather in North Dakota refused to buy War Bonds during World War I. Buying bonds was supposed to be voluntary. He did not want to support President Woodrow Wilson's war in Europe. As a result of grandpa's refusal, the local sheriff came to Cornelius Nickel's farm and confiscated a cow on behalf of the United States war effort.

In 1969, as a young college graduate and twenty-one year old convert to the Sabbath-keeping Church of God, I faced a hostile draft board shortly after I was baptized. The government had declared me "1A," which means that I was subject to being drafted and sent to the Vietnam War. I performed a diligent study of the Bible teachings on war, writing a lengthy paper to my draft board, in order to convince them that I was a sincere conscientious objector to war. One of the members of the Draft Board reviewing my case was Professor of Religion at the college I had been attending. I remember his pointed questions, and sneering ridicule of my beliefs. I got a little practice in case I ever have to appear before a Grand Inquisition. Rather than allow me

classes, mopped floors and cleaned toilets. It was a good, character building experience. I could have fled to Canada to live with relatives there, but I am happy that I was able to serve my country in a non-destructive way. While some of my contemporaries who went to Vietnam came back in pine boxes, crippled with injuries, or drugged out of their minds, I worked with handicapped people and learned many helpful lessons.

My personal experiences are not unique. Sabbath-keeping and non-participation in warfare seem to go hand in hand. The Waldenses huddled in the valleys of the Alps underwent military attack and persecutions time and again. They were never aggressive, and only in extreme circumstances would defend themselves.

Conscientious Objectors During the Civil War

During the American Civil War, many Adventists and Church of God Sabbatharians refused to participate in the war.

One clear indication of the beliefs of the *Hope of Israel* (name of the Church of God paper, the predecessor of today's *Bible Advocate*) supporters generally was their conscientious objection to participation in the Civil War.

It appears that some Advent groups attempted to buy exemption from the draft for their male members. Eli Wilsey of the Hartford, Michigan, "Church of Christ" spent at least four months in prison "for refusing to fight with carnal weapons." Frequent news articles on the progress and staggering costs of the war were published, with the exhortation to the brethren to have nothing to do with the "war, revenge and murder."

I am happy that I was able to serve my country in a non-destructive way.

Germans in Russia. They eventually migrated further east, reaching Tashkent, in Asiatic Russia. In about the 1870s, seeking to avoid mandatory military service in the Russian army, my father's ancestors migrated to the Dakotas in North America. Others went to Paraguay, in South America.

Those who refuse to kill and maim other human beings in

to engage in public or international service in the Peace Corps as work in lieu of military service, the Draft Board decided that I must take the lowliest job available: janitor at Goodwill Industries in Portland, Oregon. So, for two years of alternate service, known as the "1-W" program, the valedictorian, of both his high school and college graduating

One news report was that brother William Cronk of Casco was drafted and passed examination, "but was declared exempt from field service on account of his religious principles. He is in the government service in the hospital."

N. Wallen and R.C. Horton reported in a letter dated January 16, 1865, from South Haven, Michigan, that the brethren of Hartford and Casco were going to try and raise \$300.00 to clear all the brethren who may be drafted.

The April 23, 1865 issue contained a quote from the *Harbinger* expressing sorrow at the death of President Lincoln, thanking God that Lincoln made laws to deliver Christians from participating in war.

John L. Staunton, a one-time president of the Michigan Conference, enlisted in the Union army. The Waverly church disfellowshipped him, maintaining that only non-resisters could be in their church.

H.E. Carver of Iowa was conscientiously opposed to Christians fighting with carnal weapons, that is, in warfare. He believed that the church should adopt the same position and urged that the question be discussed in the columns of the *Advent Review*. This occurred at the outbreak of the Civil War, shortly before the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

The Whites stated at a council in Lisbon, Iowa that the subject should not be discussed. They felt that appearing to be unpatriotic could be dangerous. James White

Due to the Church of God petition, a law was enacted exempting non-combatants from bearing arms.

wrote in the *Review* that to engage in war would be a violation of two of God's commandments, but in case of being drafted, the government would be responsible for an individual's violation of God's commandments. Something had to be said on this delicate subject, but Mrs. White never did

pronounce a vision concerning conscientious objection.

The Iowa Church of God brethren were firmly convinced that it was wrong for Christians to engage in warfare. During the initial phase of the Civil War, Elders B.F. Snook and J.H. Waggoner prepared a petition to the Iowa State government, asking their church be exempted as non-combatants. The petition was circulated among the brethren for signatures, and sent to the state capital. Battle Creek did not sanction this effort, terming it "fanaticism." Due to the Church of God petition, a law was enacted exempting non-combatants from bearing arms. Carver termed the non-action of the Battle Creek Seventh-day Adventists as "cowardly." This is only one example of some of the controversy generated by the subject of the military among Sabbatarians.

However, Uriah Smith reported that the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference did indirectly exempt Seventh-Day Adventists by petitioning the government to exempt them through an already existing law.

Conscientious Objection Today

Jesus said in **John 18:36**, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." The Savior's servants are not to engage in carnal warfare. There are many scriptures supporting the view that

Besides presenting a problem with the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," military service presents insurmountable problems with keeping the Bible Sabbath. As Ron Dart writes in his article, "Capital Punishment, A Christian Dilemma," there is little difference between a slave and a man drafted into the military. Soldiers eat and sleep when and where they are told. They work and fight when and where they are told. They are not free to quit and go home. If a civilian Sabbath-keeper refuses to work on God's weekly Holy Day, he may lose his job; a soldier under the same circumstances may be court martialed and jailed. Sabbath-keeping, versus military service and war, are totally opposed to each other.

Doctrinal Statements On Military Service

Article 15 of the Statement of Beliefs of the Church of God, Seventh Day, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, states: **"Participation in Warfare.** Jesus Christ our Lord taught us to love and forgive our enemies, and to work for the peace and salvation of all peoples. Wars among nations and violence between persons are not God's perfect will, but result from greed, lust for power, selfishness, and other sinful motives. Christians should renounce such carnality and the weapons of human strife, and should not participate in military combat through the armed forces. **Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-38; Romans 12:17-21; John 18:36; Matthew 26:51, 52; 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4; James 4:1.**"

The United Church of God, an International Association, with home office near Cincinnati, Ohio, says this in their statement of beliefs:

"We believe that Christians are forbidden by the commandments of God from taking human life, directly or indirectly, and that bearing arms is contrary to this fundamental belief. Therefore, we believe that Christians should not voluntarily become engaged in military service. If they are involuntarily

participating in war is contrary to New Testament beliefs. I suggest that you read the article, "Military Service and War," written by Herbert W. Armstrong, available on the Worldwide Web at <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/rt.taylor/armyservice.htm>.

We believe that Christians should not voluntarily become engaged in military service. — United Church of God belief.

engaged in military service, we believe they should refuse conscientiously to bear arms and, to the extent possible, to refuse to come under military authority."

Down through history, Sabbath-keepers have often been persecuted and attacked by papal armies. They have had to flee to avoid massacre, and have had to defend themselves only under

extreme, provocative, circumstances. In the Twentieth Century, purposeless wars have slaughtered millions. If there is any lesson to be learned from this bloody history, it is that war is "hell," and that a Bible believer should shun such evil practices. We look forward to the coming of the Savior. His return will initiate the ONLY "war to end all wars." Sabbath-keeping and

military service appear to be totally incompatible. This is a very critical issue. The Sixth Commandment is as important as the Fourth Commandment. Our weapons are spiritual, not carnal.

If any of our readers have comments or stories to relate on the subject of military service, please write to the editor. **TSS**

humor . . .

Regarding working on the Sabbath: If you can train an ox, why can't you train people?

It was 1948 when Gulag Irkutsk, a Christian believer in Siberia, received a 25-year sentence. After refusing to work on Sabbath, he was ordered to stand in a three-by four-foot cell for 10 days with only water for nourishment. For a year Irkutsk went through the same routine, in confinement for 10 days and out for four days.



has made the ox into a Sabbath-keeper.

After a year a general came to inspect the prison camp, and found Irkutsk in solitary confinement. When the general inquired about his confinement, Irkutsk explained about the Sabbath. "I am a believer in God," Irkutsk said. "A sign of my loyalty to Him is to rest on the Sabbath. However, I am prepared to work twice as much the day before in order to have the Sabbath off."

Irkutsk was ordered to carry enough water for the 1,000 prisoners — filling the reservoir by transporting well water. Prison officials provided Irkutsk with an ox, and for 10 years they followed the same routine of working twice as fast the day before and resting on Sabbath.

Later Irkutsk was released for his outstanding work record, but the ox remained and assisted another prisoner as he transported water. When the first Sabbath came, that ox lay quietly chewing his cud. Nothing would move the beast — neither shouting, pulling, threatening, or beating. Every Sabbath the same drama happened. Finally the exasperated jailer told the prisoner, "You will never change the ox's behavior. The Sabbath-keeper

— John K. McGhee

Note: any resemblance of the ox to real people today is purely coincidental! **TSS**

DIRECTORY OF SABBATH-OBSERVING GROUPS UPDATE

One of the most important ways the BSA serves to promote co-operation among Sabbath-keepers and helps new Sabbath-keepers is publication of the book, *Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups*. The last update was 1996, and it is time to prepare and issue a new release, as well as an Internet version. If you are interested in chairing the Directory Committee, or serving with others on this project, please contact Richard Nickels at the BSA immediately.

Please send updated information about your group for inclusion in the next *Directory*. Thanks for your help!

WHY SO MANY DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCHES OF GOD?

BY ROBERT SUMNER

Throughout the past 25 years, I have personally witnessed many divisions in the Churches of God. Some "seemed" to be beneficial, but most have been more harmful to the "Body of Christ" and to the lives of many brethren, than they have been edifying.

But, is this anything new? Of course NOT! The Apostle Paul addressed this same issue, and may I say, very harshly. I must examine my own motives sometimes and ask myself; "If I lived in the days of the Apostle Paul, and belonged to one of the Churches of God, would I have been part of 'the divisions'?"

Notice the admonition to the Church of God, at Corinth. "Now I beseech you brethren, by the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ; that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgement. It has been declared . . . that there are CONTENTIONS among you. One of you says, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ'. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? he that glories let him glory in the Lord!" (**I Cor. 1:10-31**).

"And I brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ . . . for you are yet carnal. For, whereas there is among you ENVYING, STRIFE, AND DIVISIONS. ARE YOU NOT CARNAL AND WALK AS MEN? Who is Paul? And who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man! I have planted, Apollos watered, but God that gives the increase! Now he that plants, and he that waters are ONE; and every man shall receive his own reward

according to his own labor. For we are LABORERS TOGETHER WITH GOD, you are GOD'S HUSBANDRY, you are God's building . . . for (any) other foundation can no man lay that is laid (already), which is Jesus Christ! (**I Cor. 3:1-11**).

Remember that the Corinthian Church had many more "outward" gifts of the Spirit than that recorded of any of the other churches (**I Cor. chapter 12**). The Apostle Paul however declared them "carnal," NOT "spiritual"! Why? DIVISIONS, ENVYINGS, STRIFE, AND CONTENTIONS!

How many in the Churches of God today does this fit? Dare any of us "examine ourselves whether we be in the Faith"? (**II Cor. 13:5**); or among the "divisions"? Do we have an attitude of "I belong to this Church of God"? Or, "Our church holds onto this (pet) doctrine"? Or, "I will support and follow this minister of God," "this church denomination," "this organization" NO MATTER WHAT! Aren't we saying what the Corinthians said before, "I am of Paul" (a particular church or denomination); "I am of Apollos" (a particular speaker); "I am of Cephas/Peter" (a particular minister), or "I am of Christ" (a particular doctrine/teaching/truth)?

Are there ministers and church leaders who bicker and fight? Whose ego or pride gets hurt, or in the way, and they must go out and try to "out-do"/"out-church" one another? Who among us claim to be the one God has chosen, and no one else? What did our Savior say about this subject? "You know that the princes of this world [Gentiles] exercise great authority over them. But, IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU! Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (Greek = servant),

It is a problem everyone talks about, but few do anything about it.

Are you a cause of division?

Or instead, are you a cause for peace?

and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant (Greek = bond slave, servant)! (**Matt. 20:25-27**). Ministers are but trusted, proven servants, not governing **masters who lord it over God's people!** (See **I Peter 5:1-10**). They are overseers, not taskmasters; gifts to the Body of Christ, not takers! WHY? To build organizations, works, or denominations (especially for themselves)? NO! “And He (Christ, THE HEAD OF HIS CHURCH, NOT ANY MAN) gave some apostles; some prophets; some evangelists; some pastors and teachers (notice He gave some, not many) for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. TILL WE ALL COME INTO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD; unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (**Eph. 4:11-13**). Not some man’s fulness, but Christ’s, “SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, may grow up into Him in all things; WHICH IS THE HEAD, EVEN CHRIST” (**Eph. 4: 15**).

Compare this, brethren, with the church or congregation you fellowship with. Does the leadership meet these criteria? If not, they need to be addressed properly according to Scripture. Ministers of God, do you meet these qualifications? If not, there needs to be a change in your ministry. Remember, CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF HIS CHURCH — NOT MAN! Not any organization! Christ is the foundation of the church — not any doctrine! not any “truth”! not even any commandment keeping!

Remember that we are all brethren, workers “laborers together with God together, “laborers together with God”! God is the potter and we are the clay. Christ is the vine, we are the branches. All glory belongs to Him alone!

How did the Apostle Paul respond? “For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified”! (**I Cor. 2:2**). If our speech, teach-

ings, sermons, doctrines, beliefs, actions, or whatever else, DO NOT REVOLVE AROUND THIS MOST CRUCIAL CORE FOUNDATION — WE HAVE GONE ASTRAY! Does this mean, not to teach doctrines? The Sabbath? Truth? Scripture? God forbid. Of course not! IT MEANS THEY ALL MUST BE CHRIST CENTERED! Is it wrong to have different church groups or denominations? Not necessarily. Remember, all the churches of the New Testament were independent assemblies — yet all worked together to share God’s love; to share Christ and Him crucified; to provide fellowship; to evangelize; to provide for physical needs of their community and the Christian communities at large; and to continually build up the body of Christ.

In **I Cor. 12:4-6**, we find there are different administrations, as well as different gifts, all by the same Spirit of God! All were part of the body of Christ! Yes, there are different parts of the body, with different functions.

However, they are still one in faith, one in spirit, one in goals, one in purpose, and one body working together!

Compare **I Cor. 12** and **Eph. 4**. Even the Apostle Paul had differences of opinions on how to “do the work”/“administration,” yet still it was working towards the same goals, and “extending the right hand of fellowship.” The foot can’t tell the arm, I don’t want you, and still function as part of the same body. If the big toe is stubbed or hurt, the whole body suffers. We are connected together and should work TOGETHER IN CHRIST!

How is the Church different from secular, worldly organizations? If you cannot answer that question, then something is obviously wrong. Famous religious figures are “busted” for wrong doings and immoral acts. Is this different from the world? How does this reflect on God’s Church, the Body of Christ? Scripture tells us, “by this shall all men know you are my disciples if **YOU HAVE LOVE ONE FOR ANOTHER**”

(**John 13:34-35**)! All of us who have separated from various denominations **or organizations — how are we known?** By **our differences?** Are we prideful about our differences, or reasons we left? Do we lift up doctrines, spiritual gifts, sacred names, leaders, ministers, “The Work,” “The Truth,” or our way of doing things? Or rather, are we known by the fruit of God’s Love in our lives and in our churches, and in our dealings with other brethren from other churches? Do we have the same kind of love our Lord displayed while He was here on earth? What fruits are we displaying — carnal, or of the Spirit? (**Gal. 5:13-26**)

Where are all the Bridge Builders”? The “Peacemakers” (**Matt. 5:9**)? The “Repairers of the Breach” (**Isa. 58:12**)? The “Pure and Undefiled before God” (**James 1:26-27; Matt. 25:36-46**)? The “Ambassadors for Christ,” and “The ministers of Reconciliation” (**II Cor. 5:17-21**)? If we are part of the ministry/work of Christ as many of us claim — why aren’t there more who are “anointed to preach the gospel to the poor; heal the brokenhearted; to preach deliverance to the captives; and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (**Luke 4:17-19**)? Are we about our Heavenly Father’s business, or our own? Are we building our own little empires, or the Kingdom of God? Are we fellowshipping and working together as “fellowlaborers with God,” or separating ourselves to do “The Work,” that only “we” can do? Are we the only ones, or, are we part of the Body of Christ with Him at the head? “BEHOLD HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY” (**Psalm 133:1-3**).

We constantly hear of church splits; groups breaking up; and new independent fellowships and individuals starting out. Frankly, much of this is sad to see. It’s even sadder to have experienced some of this personally. Brethren, you have fellowshipped with for years,

turning their backs on one another. WHY? Are the children of God, the real enemies? God forbid! Who is the accuser of the brethren? The thief, destroyer? Well, of course it is Satan, the devil! Why aren't we fighting him instead of our brethren? Why do we bang our heads against the wall, hurting ourselves? Jesus asked this of Saul, who became Paul, on the road to Damascus, "Why do you kick against the pricks?" We should join in the battle to fight our common enemy, not ourselves. Satan knows how to divide and conquer.

When was the last time you were encouraged to hear about brethren getting together and healing their differences? Coming together in harmony, mutual respect, and humility of spirit? Why don't we hear more of this? Why don't more brethren share good things, and good news such as in "The Journal" and "The Sabbath Sentinel"? I like hearing good reports, and not so much negative all the time. Information that builds and edifies, and does not tear down. How about you?

Would you like to hear a good report? I have one to share. In the central Pennsylvania area, several hundred brethren left a major denomination in 1974. Many reasons were given, including administrative, theological, and personal. Soon there were splits off splits, etc. About fourteen years ago, the remaining larger group broke up in half. One half remained with a certain organization; while the other operated for years as an independent group. Individually, God was dealing with their spiritual growth. The independent group finally matured enough to see the need of a larger affiliation and doing work for the kingdom of God; so they joined with an old, large denomination in the 7th day churches. Meanwhile the former group who had stayed with another organization had difficulties, and became more or less independent also. God led them to a maturity that helped them see they needed to be part of a bigger affiliation. During the

years of separation, the Lord was working with these split groups because members of each group attended the same functions and fellowshipped socially. Finally the Lord led the leadership of both groups to meet with each other; and it was decided to join back together after all those years. In the last three years the Lord has worked marvelously, by the healing of personal hurts, changing attitudes and clearing up any other major differences.

Some of the important matters to consider are these: 1. We serve the same Lord, why not work together? 2. Doctrinal differences are minor. Learn to allow others a different viewpoint. 3. We all grow at different levels in grace and knowledge, so allow for this with mercy and love. 4. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. 5. Support one another, even when we sin and fall short. 6. Teach the Word of God. 7. Preach the gospel — the good news. 8. Allow for freedom of expressions as long as it edifies. 9. Let God be God, not us. 10. Don't condemn one another. 11. If some believe the Festivals of Leviticus 23 are mandatory, and others do not, don't bicker and fight — learn from one another. Allow for differences, as this does not take away your salvation. There are many others but ALWAYS BE HUMBLE AND PUT CHRIST FIRST in everything you do! The restored congregation is now growing spiritually and in numbers as well. Praise God for His mercy! His grace and love! Praise Yahweh!

Why isn't cooperation such as this being duplicated across America, and other countries? Why aren't more brethren working together? You don't have to attend the same services to work together, or to fellowship together. You should be on the same team, with the same goals and purposes. If we keep our minds open, and a humble attitude — perhaps we will learn something from another brother or sister in the Lord. If we maintain this concept of "we only have the truth," or "we only have

God's special anointing," or "our leader is the special one called of God"; then we are missing the true calling of God! We must be ministers of the conciliation and reconciliation of God, ambassadors for Christ — not just serving ourselves, or our organizations!

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," **Rom. 12:1-2!**

"If there be any consolation in Christ; if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies, fulfill you my joy that you be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord; of one mind let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the father . . . for it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure . . . do all things without murmurings and disputings that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke; in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights to the world, holding forth the word of life . . . (**Phil. 2:1-16**).

Are we lights? Do we express God's love? Are we Ambassadors for Christ? Ministers of Reconciliation? Bridgebuilders? Prayer warriors? Repairers of the breach? Peacemakers? Meek? Humble? Is Christ central to everything we do? Let's glorify God together. Let's have the same mind as Christ. Let's love one another. By this shall **all men know** we are His disciples!

TSS

Wearing the Green

BY RICHARD C. NICKELS

March 17 is commonly celebrated as St. Patrick's Day, who, according to Roman Catholics, is the patron saint of Ireland, the Emerald Island. Thus, green has come to be associated with St. Patrick. When I was a child, unless I wore something green on St. Patrick's Day, I was likely to get myself pinched. Many adults use the occasion to engage in reveling and drinking, green beer and whiskey being the accepted manner to celebrate Irish history.

The Truth of history is not well known. Patrick was not Irish, but a Scottish missionary to Ireland. He was not a Sunday keeping Roman Catholic Trinitarian, but a Sabbath-keeper opposed to the Trinity concept. Seventh Day Baptists have long been aware of the facts concerning Patrick. The book, *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America* (1910), reports that the Christian Church in Ireland was founded soon after the death of Christ by disciples of the Asian Churches. Columba's establishment of a Sabbath-keeping community in the island of Iona was the result of Patrick's teaching. Celtic Ireland was unattached to Rome until at least 1155. Some Irish Sabbath-keepers remained until the nineteenth century.

According the Seventh-day Adventist historian Leslie Hardinge, in his book *The Celtic Church in Britain*, Patrick (ca. 387-463) evangelized Ireland, founding over 300 churches and baptizing over 120,000 converts. However, Christianity existed in

servers of the annual Christian Passover once a year, on the fourteenth day of the first month in

preservation of the practice of Sabbath-keeping in continental Europe and beyond. Celtic Irish

"I keep the seventh day Sabbath, just like Patrick of Ireland did!"

the spring. They eschewed unclean meats. Their ministry had to be recognized, even by outsiders, to be honest and above reproach, and celibacy was not practiced until later times. Celtic services included a recitation of the Decalogue.

Wherever Patrick went, he left an old Celtic law book, *Liber ex Lege Moisi* (Book of the Law of Moses), along with other books of the Gospel. The *Liber* begins with the Decalogue, and continues with selections from the Torah. Citing **Exodus 23:1-19**, Part 4 of the *Liber* emphasizes that the Sabbath is to be kept, along with three annual feasts. Part 5 notes that according to **Exodus 31:13**, the Sabbath is a sign of God's people. Patrick practiced laying on of hands after baptism for the receipt of the Holy Spirit. While "St. Patrick" is revered as a Roman Catholic saint, his writings appear to place him squarely in the Sabbath-keeping Messianic tradition. **St. Patrick was one of us!**

The Celtic Church in Britain, 265 pages, is available from the BSA for \$9.00. This is one of the most interesting books you will ever read. It is appropriate that the book's cover is green. Green is the color of the Irish; green is also

missionaries evangelized Europe during the Dark Ages.

So, the next time someone asks you on St. Patrick's Day if you are wearing green, tell them, "Yes! I keep the seventh day Sabbath, just like Patrick of Ireland did!" Let us continue to wear the green.



NOTE: Chris Barr of the Little Children of Jesus Christ, a Sabbatarian group in Pocahontas, Arkansas, showed me a copy of an ad his Church placed in their local newspaper. This ad brought a tremendous response to the group's web site.

St. Patrick's "DAY" — Come join with us to worship JESUS as did the Irish Patrick of old on this coming Sabbath, the Seventh Day, commonly called "Saturday." Like other Christian Irishmen of his time, Patrick was a Sabbath-keeper, kept Passover and the dietary laws of Moses, and stressed keeping the Law of God.

TSS

Green is the color of the Irish; green is also the color of the Sabbath.

Ireland long before Patrick's time. Many Celtic believers in Ireland were Arians (anti-Trinitarian). They kept the Sabbath from sundown to sundown. They were known to be Quartodecimans, ob-

the color of the Sabbath. Green invokes feelings of abundant crops and peace, which the Sabbath day pictures and exemplifies. Historically, Irish Celtic Sabbath-keepers have played a major role in the

God's Infinite Love

Continued from page 10

that channel for peace and the good things of life can be opened up to you. **Matthew 6:31-34** tells us that if we seek His Kingdom first in our lives (let Him take charge of our lives, live it His way), He will provide all that we need. He invented us and He knows better how we can please Him and thereby succeed in life. How clearly King David understood this as he wrote in his **139th Psalm**. Let us read it all now. David understood how involved and concerned this incredible God is with you personally.

Will You Comply And Accept The Gift?

Do you believe that God can and will perform this great love to you?

Read **Luke 1:26-45** and be convinced. Notice **verse 45** in particular:

"And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things, which were told her from the Lord." What if she had not believed? What if no one believed? We would have no Savior. We would have no guidance from the Creator and Sustainer. This passage shows complete belief that God is able to perform that which He promised. Notice how important it is to believe and do His bidding and not doubt, to care and not deny. What He promises He will do, and He promised us life everlasting in His Kingdom if we would but believe in Him and His Son Jesus. To believe in Them is to obey Them, to keep Their Commandments, to study Their teachings and to follow Them, to love Their ways of love, to want to be a brother or sister of Jesus and a son or daughter of the Almighty God. God designed the human family as a training ground to be in His perfect family in His Kingdom. Will you comply and be there? (**Romans 8:13-18**). **TSS**

Calendar of Events

May 21-23, 1999

Cassopolis, MI — PROCLAIMING THE SABBATH MORE FULLY CONFERENCE, at Camp Wagner Campground (revised location).

SPEAKERS: ABBOTT, Merwin, Lecturer; DAVIDSON, Dr. Richard, Chairman, Old Testament Dept., Andrews University; DAVIS, Dr. Sidney, Lecturer; DOUKHAN, Dr. Jacques, Institute of Jewish Studies, Editor "Shabbat Shalom"; FINE, J. Allen, Evangelist, Director "New Sounds of Inspiration"; GARR, Dr. John, President, "Restoration Foundation" Editor, "Restore"; LANE, Oscar, Evangelist, Last "Day Revival Ministries"; MALKMUS, Dr. George, Founder, "Back to the Garden Health Ministry," MERRITT, Dr. John, Founder "Friends of the Sabbath"; WASHINGTON, Richard, Pastor, Lake Region

Conference; WELLINGTON, Dr. Albert, Founder, "Project Gamaliel", Editor, "Crossroads."

E-mail: sabbathconference@usa.net, phone 847-253-0538. Register to: Sabbath Conference, P.O. Box 32, Arlington Heights, IL 60006-0032.

A writer of the nineteenth century fitly predicted, "at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and PROCLAIMED THE SABBATH MORE FULLY!"

Sydney Davis will be promoting the Sabbath and the BSA at this conference. Don't miss it!

July 2-10, 1999

Meridian, ID — Campmeeting of the General Council of the Churches of God (7th Day).

July 5-10, 1999

Tulsa, OK — General Conference Convention of the Church of God (Seventh Day). Held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Tulsa.

Adversaries of the Sabbath

The strongest foes of Messianic believers have been those once in our ranks who have become turncoats. From Judas Iscariot to today, our deadliest enemies have often been our former friends and guides (see **Psalm 55**).

Consider these recent Sabbath adversaries:

- Pastor *John Cowell*, after thirteen years of promoting the Sabbath in England, abandoned it. His book, *The Snare Broken*, written in 1677, caused considerable disturbances among Sabbatarian Churches in England. As Don Sanford, Seventh Day Baptist historian writes, "When a person rejects the Sabbath after having spent years championing it, the effect can be devastating," *A Choosing People: The History of Seventh Day Baptists*, page 48.

- *D.M. Canright* left the Seventh-Day Adventists in the 1880s, and wrote against them and the Sabbath in his 1889 book, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*.

- *Dr. Ernest Martin*, Chairman of the Department of Theology at Herbert Armstrong's Ambassador College, left the Worldwide Church of God in 1974, drawing ten thousand or more members with him to abandon the Sabbath. His theological concepts formed the basis for *Joseph Tkach*'s doctrinal rejection of the Sabbath in the mid-1990s.

- *Dale Ratzlaff*, following the lead of his earlier Australian mentor *Robert Brinsmead*, left the SDA Church and continues to conduct a ministry aimed at combating what he terms are "the errors of legalism and false religion." His 1989 book, *Sabbath in Crisis*, was used by Tkach to argue for the abolition of the Sabbath in the Worldwide Church of God.

The arguments presented by these men should neither be avoided, nor feared, by Sabbath-keepers. Does your Sabbath conviction stand up under crossfire?

TSS

letters to the editor...

I just read your article “Is Sabbath-Keeping Required for Salvation?” in the July/Aug issue of the Sabbath Sentinel. I understand your statements in regard to Calvin Burrell’s and Whaid Rose’s stand on Sabbath-keeping, but I am confused as to how you think Donald Ward’s belief that “Sabbath-keeping is essential for one to be keeping the commandments of God” is “missing the point,” and “wasting precious time.” In comparison to your own statement that — it is a requirement for your own salvation — and “they should be out there promoting the Sabbath” — it would seem that his stand agrees with your own. Paragraph #6 seems really confusing. Can you please explain what your point was on Donald Ward’s view? I thank you very much in advance.

*Pat Minica
Sutherland Springs, Texas*

Please review Dr. Donald Ward’s presentation of this topic, on tape C332, available from the BSA for a \$2.50 donation. My point is that God judges people based on what they know, what He has revealed to them. Luke 12:47-48 says, “And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

There are many fine professing Christians who are faithfully following what they know to be true. But at this time, God has not yet revealed to them the Sabbath of delight. We should not waste our time disparaging and judging them. We are responsible for obeying the Truth that the Almighty has revealed to us, with His help. And, they are responsible for that portion of God’s Truth they understand. They may ultimately suffer for the Truth that they do not understand, but remember that it is God’s responsibility to open their minds to more of His Truth, although we can, and should, be instruments in His hand to help others.

One does not effectively promote the Sabbath to non-Sabbath-keepers by telling them that Sabbath-keeping is required for their salvation. That turns them off to the Truth. We should teach the joy of the Sabbath, the Biblical mandate for us to observe the Sabbath. Once the Holy Spirit convicts them and they step out on faith and begin

keeping the Sabbath, then Sabbath-keeping does become a requirement for their salvation, as it is for mine. For a Sabbath-keeper to cease keeping the Sabbath is like a dog returning to his own vomit, a serious offence against the Eternal, II Peter 2:21-22. I believe that Dr. Ward and I agree very closely on this issue.

I am not delighted with the idea of going to a black and white format, especially for the cover. It is the cover that inspires people to pick up a magazine, so regardless of the content fewer people will pick it up and open it if it is not attractive. Those will never know the contents.

One thought on the contents! I am happy with the articles that are being printed. They are, however, elementary and basic. They are the type of articles new people should be reading, they do very little for people who are mature in the faith, since we already know these things.

What I would like to suggest is that we explore ways to get the magazine into the hands of the public without it being a financial strain on the budget.

God can use this magazine as a vehicle to call new people who will not have a certain “corporate slant” to the teachings they learn. They will get the views of different Sabbath-keeping authors, and have opportunity to settle where God leads them without being pressured by any certain corporate church organization.

What I am suggesting is this, (and I will be the first to volunteer), two ideas: (1) Send out a letter to all BSA members and ask for volunteers to sponsor, (that is to pay for), a gift subscription, (not a membership), each month of 1999 as a primary goal. For example, make a list of businesses such as your barbershop, hair salon, dentist, doctor, library, etc, at their business address. Select places that have a waiting room. Having a copy of TSS on display in a waiting room is a sure way to get it into the hands of new people.

(2) For those who would prefer to not sponsor a subscription, give them opportunity to purchase a supply of magazines each time a new edition comes out. You could offer them in lots of twenty five or fifty, and they could decide how many they wanted to order, and thy would assume the responsibility of giving them away to individuals of placing them in waiting rooms etc.

I am sure that once this is begun it will not be long until you begin receiving mail from new

people, and we will all have the satisfaction of knowing that we are sharing in and working together as associated brethren, spreading the gospel without interference from a domineering corporate hierarchy.

Everyone who participates in this will be a volunteer, and it is a legitimate first tithe expenditure. Everyone will pay in advance for what they are ordering, so there will be no surprise expenditures. If people can be encouraged to set a goal as to how many magazines they will be ordering of each issue, and write it in to you, you will be able to keep a pretty good handle on it.

I am setting my goal to sponsor one gift subscription per month for all of 1999.

I hope you will like this idea and that you will make this opportunity available to all who may wish to participate in it or something else perhaps that you may think of to get more people involved in God's work. I know a lot of people are sitting on their tithes nowadays not knowing what to do with them, and not trusting any of the organizational hierarchies to use them properly. This would give them something to do with some of their tithes and they will have some control over how they are used, not to mention the thrill of the "hands on experience" of doing something viable.

God bless all of you for your work and your efforts over the years, you have hung in there and done a good job. It may be that God will begin using us all in more dynamic ways as we learn to yield more to His will and search for ways to do His work.

Darl E. Arbogast
Kennesaw, Georgia

Great idea!

It costs much more to print the magazine with a color cover. We came to see that this is not an efficient use of our Master's money. With this issue, we are retaining glossy paper, yet still with black and white format, in order to reduce costs.

Each issue of TSS should have articles for mature and new believers. We encourage others to contribute articles of all kinds.

We encourage BSA members and supporters to send gift subscriptions to others, including

The Sabbath Sentinel values our readers' views. Address correspondence to Richard C. Nickels, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718, 307-686-5191; or e-mail to giveshare@vcn.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.

waiting rooms and other public places. A gift subscription would be about \$10. We will send bulk copies of past issues of the magazine for a donation for postage. Figure about \$2.50 for five issues, \$5.00 for twenty issues, \$10.00 for fifty issues.

Dear Friends,

I am very excited that you have decided to make *The Sabbath Sentinel* a free magazine to further spread the truth of the Sabbath. Here is a contribution to help with this effort. I am sure God will bless your effort.

*Faith Matwey
Gaithersburg, MD*

Rest is important on Sabbath

Not straying too far from the main subject, *The Sabbath Sentinel* should be about the Sabbath, nature of work, nature of rest, regular feature. Enjoyable Sabbaths I have had. How I keep the Sabbath, practical ideas, instead of extraneous subjects, explore new territory on Sabbath. Three ways of resting the seventh time in Exodus 23 day, month, year. There is a fourth way, which is more important, and most everyone does: take a bath How does someone spend an evening (after bathing)? By restful, enjoyment, or watching stupid TV?

*Regan Castevens
Sparta, NC*

Sharing TSS With Friends

I am enclosing our mailing list . . . in hopes that you can send free subscriptions to everyone that is not already on your list (contribution enclosed).

I am also praying for the success of your new project.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to help reach more people about the Sabbath. I really get a lot out of your publications.

*Charlotte Kincaid
Round Rock, TX*

It is lot's of work but very satisfying to be able to help others.

classified ads . . .

Signs of the Times

Signs of the Times, published by Seventh-day Adventists since 1874, is in its 126th year. The April, 1999, issue contains stories about "Jesus v. Sanhedrin — Why Jesus 'Lost' His Trial," "5 Ways to Restore Your spiritual Passion," "Why Did Jesus Have to Die?" and other interesting articles. Subscriptions to this 32-page monthly magazine, \$18.95 (US), \$21.95 (other countries). You may obtain a free sample copy for fifty-five cents postage (US). Write: **Signs of the Times, PO Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653**, or call (US) **800-545-2449**.

Should Sabbath-Keepers Eat in Restaurants on the Sabbath?

"Should Christians eat in restaurants on the Sabbath?" Some Sabbath-keepers would answer, "no!" while other Sabbatharians believe that there is no problem with eating out on the Sabbath. Randy Rondeau of the Winnipeg Church of God, has written a thought-provoking article, "Should Christians Frequent Restaurants on the Sabbath?" 15 pages, \$1.50 donation, available from The Bible Sabbath Association, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718.

Even if you firmly believe in one or the other position, you will find Randy's article instructive.

Gift Subscriptions to TSS

Share the joy of the Sabbath with a friend! Send us names of others who would like to receive our magazine. A donation of \$10 per gift subscription is appreciated.

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New, or True?

There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of . . . solid religion. In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine," **Eph. 4:14**.

Thousands will crowd to hear a new voice and a new doctrine without considering . . . whether what they hear is true. There is an incessant craving after any teaching which is sensational, and exciting, and rousing to the feelings. There is an UNhealthy appetite for a sort of . . . hysterical Christianity Inability to distinguish differences in doctrine is spreading far and wide Crowds and crying, and high-flown singing, and an incessant rousing for the emotions, are the only things which many care for. . . . The tendency of modern thought is . . . to condemn no opinion, everything is true, everybody is likely to be saved, and nobody is to be lost! — J.C. Ryle.

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Summer Camp

Daily fellowships, nightly tuck-ins, lifetime friendships and most of all, fun activities. Sounds like a parent's dream? It is. And it's found at the summer Church camp I go to, sponsored by the United Church of God, AIA.

This year, there are six UCG summer camps in the USA, for teenagers from the ages 10-18. I have only had the chance to experience one camp, Camp McKenzie, in Oregon. There, I have made the best friends a person could ever ask for. As a faithful Camp McKenzie camper, I am open to white-water rafting, over-night hiking, meeting new campers, and taking a bite of camp food and actually swallowing.

I am a teenager growing up in today's society, and I can honestly say that there are very few things that teenagers can do today for the Church. Taking advantage of summer camp is a great thing that a teenager like me can do, and it teaches me many things. And one of the best things is that your parents are miles away from you, so if you don't clean your bunk, there is no one there to nag you to clean up. But, from experience, if you have the messiest bunk, you get a beautiful bouquet of broccoli and have to eat it in front of the whole camp. Yuck!

Each day we start with a breakfast and a Bible study. Then each cabin has its own

schedule of activities, such as, archery, riflery, swimming safety, dance class, ropes course, basketball, volleyball, astronomy, and even etiquette classes. At the end of camp, there is a special dinner and a dance.

Summer camp is the best thing for a teenager today. It gives you a chance to hang out with people just like you, and have lots of fun doing it. There is nothing that pleases God more than His people having fun. And that's what Church camp is all about.

— By Mandie Nickels

Mandie Nickels is a 14-year old Sabbath-keeper in Wyoming. You may contact her at mnickels@angelfire.com.

For more information about UCG summer youth camps, open to Sabbath-keepers in general: www.ucg.org/youthcamp/camp.html, or write: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

Another youth camp is the Living Youth Camp, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan from July 27 to August 9, 1999. Activities will include flag football, volleyball, fishing, dancing, canoeing, obstacle course and much more. Write: Living Youth Camp, 2200 Cherokee Strip, Blue Springs, MO 64015, phone 816 228-2035, E-mail: LYC@pars.net.

Please send additional camp information to the BSA for the next issue!

The Sabbath Sentinel
(USPS 474-580) (ISSN 1082-0833)
A Bi-monthly Publication of
The Bible Sabbath Association
HC 60 Box 8, Fairview, OK 73737 USA
Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION BULK RATE US POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 116 GILLETTE, WY
