



July—August 2000

The Sabbath Sentinel

Can't We All Just Get Along?

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

"The Sabbath was made for man..." — Jesus, the Christ

The Sabbath Sentinel

July August 2000 Volume 52, No. 4 Issue 484

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BSA Worldwide Web Site: www.biblesabbath.org

Correspondence and manuscript submissions: Address all inquiries to: Royce Mitchell, Jr., c/o *The Sabbath Sentinel*, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718. Phone: (307) 686-5191, E-mail: rmitchel@flash.net

International addresses:

Australia: Bible Sabbath Associates, Jim & Lyn Carnochan, 7 Sunny Ridge Rd., Arcadia NSW 2159, E-mail: lyn_carnochan@hotmail.com

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Editorial

WHY CAN'T WE ALL GET ALONG?



It's been over eight years now. We all remember the horrible scenes: there was looting; rioting engulfed a large portion of south Los Angeles; fires wreaked havoc in many lives; news video showed episode after episode of man's capability for directing senseless, mind-numbing violence at his fellow man. The area was a war zone and in the end, everyone involved lost. Even a man who had taken a savage beating at the hands of the Los Angeles Police Department a year earlier, Rodney King, was brought out to plead with us in a cry that has now become famous: "Can't we all just get along?"

What about that? Can't we all just get along? A better question might be, "WHY can't we all get along?" We can find the truth of the answer to this lying deeply embedded in what we are; our solution lies in recognizing the source of our motivation.

It is within our nature to want to be right all the time. We don't typically desire to be wrong. The need to be right at all times is inherent; while this is not necessarily a bad thing—still what comes from that desire that can be a problem. How we deal with the situations where we **are** wrong, or where another points out our error, will often illustrate our human nature, or it can demonstrate the nature of God growing within us. *The choice is ours.*

In James 4 we find some scriptures that describe tendencies which we normally associate with the world's violent, non-Christians. We are right to associate such predispositions with the drives of those who are unconverted—yet, we miss an extremely powerful point if we only apply these solely to those who don't know God. These scriptures, found in James 4:10-12, state: "**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?**" (KJV).

A profound insight is hidden in these verses for us to dig out, if we have the desire to do so. The point is that earlier in the chapter are discussed wars, fightings, lusts and other carnal actions, and then these verses go on to use the word "*brethren*" in the context—and, they accuse those of us who speak evil of our brethren of being judges of the law, a position occupied by the "*lawgiver*." There can be no argument as to who the Lawgiver is; putting ourselves in His place is a grave error: it is to put ourselves in the same category as Satan, who also sought to put himself in the place of God.

Our desire to be right manifest itself in a two-fold problematic manner. First, there is the defensive position taken when a supposed error in our beliefs is pointed out to us. It doesn't matter if the other was actually *trying* to point out an error or not; it only matters that someone is making a point that directly conflicts with what we choose to believe. As a result, we react in a manner that indicates our displeasure with the other: we become argumentative and assertive, sometimes even to the point of arrogance and rudeness. Has this ever happened to any of us? Speaking for myself, I know it has happened to me!

Some time ago a good friend tried to point out to me that a belief that I held was indicative of the Nicolaitans spoken of in the Book of Revelation. My first reaction was to quote the many scriptures that upheld my own position, and to discount immediately anything else this brother had to say. But, was that how the situation should have been handled? Did I need to degrade the situation to an argument between brothers—or, was there a better way?

Happily, there was a better way! It was sad that I had allowed a conversation get out of hand and abused a friend—but it ended happily because I did learn something about a personal belief and a bad attitude harbored within me. I had allowed my beliefs to become the *sacred cow* and forgotten that gaining true understanding was more important.

How then should I have handled the situation?

(see "Editorial," page 17)

The (Vice) President's Message Calvin Burrell Life in the BSA



Our parents joined the Bible Sabbath Association (BSA) not long after it began in 1945. In 1955 they drove to Florida, loaded their '51 Buick (rear seat removed) with Sabbath literature and secretary/ treasurer equipment, and transplanted the BSA office from the home of BSA founders George and Mabel Main to our Oklahoma farm home.

Dad and Mother saw to it that their four children shared in family chores, including BSA work. After the move from Florida, every piece of Sabbath literature had to be hand-stamped with the new Fairview address. My sister and I stamped a "jillion" pieces between us, I think. More tedious, and thankfully more rare, was the task of preparing sunset charts requested by BSA members for their locales. This meant adding (or subtracting) the correct number of minutes for each of the 365 days on a master chart, and typing the resulting 365 times in perfect rows and columns—with no "delete" key.

Those early efforts for the Bible Sabbath were more dad-compelled than Spirit-inspired, I recall. But my folks' example (and God's grace!) eventually drove home for me the value of Sabbath and all it stands for. Today I am proud to be a member of the BSA and to serve as one of its officers.

THESE TWO, WE BELIEVE

George Main, Lawrence Burrell, Eugene Lincoln and other BSA leaders were insistent that our Association embrace only two tenets of faith, as called for in its founding documents. The first was that of Jesus Christ (Yahshua the Messiah) as our Savior and Lord. This is another way of saying that BSA is, at the foundation, a Christian people. The other basic tenet for the BSA is, of course, belief in and observance of the seventh day as "*the Sabbath of the Creator and of Christ the Lord.*"

Reflecting on these two tenets, the first ranks higher among the priorities of our faith. This is proven by Scripture that teaches the preeminence

of God's Son over creation, over the temple, over the church, over the Sabbath, and over all things (Colossians 1:16-18; Matthew 12:6; Mark 2:28). Because forgiveness of sin, and eternal life, come to us through the perfections of Jesus Christ and not through our flawed obedience, we confess the person and work of our God and Savior as the magnetic centers of our faith.

Sabbath, while no substitute for the Lord as our highest Treasure, still plays an important role in the faith and practice of those who recognize it as His will and one of His great gifts to humanity. It is with the hope of restoring the many blessings of Sabbath to all of God's people that we lift our voice continually on this issue.

We are among the many followers of Christ who commend Him as Savior and Lord to a lost-and-dying world like this. We should pray for all good efforts of godly people to make Him known.

Consider also that we are among a smaller group of Jesus' followers who commend the seventh-day Sabbath to a tired-and-restless world like ours. Given the frantic pace of these times and the fragile faith of most peoples, a Sabbath given over to God's peace and love is needed now, more than ever.

For those learning to trust Christ and obey Him, the Sabbath comes with double-commendation. One of the things that accompany salvation (Hebrews 6:9), the weekly rest day points us to creation past, to salvation now, and to Kingdom come. It follows our Lord's example (Luke 4:16) and obeys His teaching. Matthew 19:17 states: "***And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments...***"

THESE TWO, WE PRACTICE

The work of the BSA falls into two parts. The first is the ministry of promoting Sabbath and all that

it symbolizes. We aim to tell the world of wonderful rest in God, and to teach those who know Christ to obey the Father's fourth commandment and receive the added blessings that always come with obedience. These are accomplished by the distribution of various printed and audiovisual materials (available through our Wyoming office), and by our personal words to others—naming just two of our methods.

We recognize and appreciate the greater efforts at Sabbath promotion that are continually made through the many Sabbatarian churches and organizations. BSA is not a Church, but it complements all other efforts to share the secondary "good news" of God's Sabbath.

The other half of the BSA ministry is one not duplicated anywhere that we know of. It is the service of enhancing the harmony and fraternity that should exist among Christians who observe the seventh day Sabbath.

Every few years, we publish an updated Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups. This booklet lists a dozen or more denominations and scores of congregations that remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. (Most of these are in the U.S. and Canada, although multiplied [but unknown] more exist in other countries.) Sadly, many of our brethren are not much aware of the extent of the Christian Sabbatarian community. Some Sabbath-keepers probably feel as isolated as Elijah in the desert. One of our goals is to get out the good word about the breadth of fellowship and choice available to those keeping Sabbath.

INVITATION TO FELLOWSHIP

A wide variety of doctrinal positions exists among Sabbath-keeping Christians, just as it does within the larger religious community. Too often we allow these differences to keep us separate from others who trust the same Lord and whose obedience includes the same Sabbath. The BSA urges us to learn to cooperate with such brethren, without compromising the unique points of our own faith.

We may protest here that we already "love" each other—a greater command than Sabbath. But what good is "love" if it remains only in the tongue, and never gets translated into acts of fellowship? I John 3:18, ***"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."***

It is the goal of our BSA that Sabbath-observing Christians will go beyond the word "love" and actually learn to "like" each other, too. When we do,

we may begin to reap some of the blessing that God commands where brethren dwell together in unity (Psalm 133). We can only learn to "like" folks as we come to know them personally.

It is not our goal to bring all Sabbath-keepers under one organization or super-church. Rather, we hope to give some visible expression to the unity that Scripture assigns to all who are "in Christ" and who have received His Spirit. Our goal is **cooperation** with others (***"till we all come to the unity of the faith"***—Ephesians 4:13), **without compromise** to ourselves (***"let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"***—Romans 14:5).

AND TWO CONCERNS

Let me offer two cautions for those who share this vision of cooperation as a distinctive mission of the BSA. First, if we are to accomplish much in this direction, we will need to lay aside our self-appointed individual mantles as "guardians of truth." I may not endorse the emphasis some Sabbatarian brethren give to Hebrew festivals, but I am devoted to them as fellow-believers in the Hebrew Messiah.

It is not possible for you or me to correct all of each other's errors, and it is not always necessary to try. Such efforts too often spell the death of fellowship, and God never insisted that perfect doctrine was a requirement for salvation anyway. Some of us should probably lighten up a bit in this area.

My second caution is aimed at the other extreme, the risk of too much tolerance—which I've urged in the two preceding paragraphs. Even in our small circle of Sabbath-keepers, there is such a thing as too big a tent. When do we accommodate (or invite) too much within our association of Sabbath-keeping Christians? In my opinion, we do so when we welcome those who deny either of the two tenets of faith presented earlier in this article.

BSA welcomes those who are, first, disciples of Jesus Christ, and second, keepers of the Bible Sabbath. If you're reading about us for the first time, please take the time and opportunity to learn more so that we can learn to "love" and "like" each other as we ought.

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Calvin Burrell is Third Vice President of the Bible Sabbath Association and a long time member of the BSA.

IGNORANCE IS *NOT* BLISS

by David L. Taylor, Pastor
Westerly RI Seventh Day Baptist Church

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee," Hosea 4:6.

Ignorance is a stronghold of Satan's kingdom of darkness. It is so dangerous that it is destructive. Far from bliss, ignorance is a form of gross darkness [Strong's 4656—skotoo = 1) to darken, cover with darkness, 2) metaph. to darken or blind the mind; see Rev 16:10].... Darkness is what God has delivered us from; Col 1:12—13 [Strong's 4655—skotos = 1) darkness: 1a) of night darkness, 1b) of darkened eyesight or blindness; 2) metaph.: 2a) of ignorance respecting divine things and human duties, and the accompanying ungodliness and immorality, ..., 2b) persons in whom darkness becomes visible and holds sway]. Considering its destructive capacity, ignorance is something that we should **not** be ignorant of.

If we have no love for the truth, then the Lord allows strong delusions that we may believe the lie—and so, our ignorance becomes our destruction. When we reject knowledge, we reject God.

Those who do not love the truth are deluding themselves. 2 Thessalonians 2:11 says, **"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."** Why? It is because they reject knowledge and truth.

When those in darkness attempt to study Scripture, Satan stands by with his own running commentary, twisting the truth into a maze of lies. Let us stop and analyze how Satan accomplishes that. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10: **"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love**

of the truth, that they might be saved." Ignorance is pervasive in Satan's kingdom of darkness. Destruction comes through ignorance, and ignorance is the judgment that God sends to those who **"love not the truth."**

We must wrestle against the devices of Satan which keep us ignorant of the truth. How do we do this? We should cry out to the Lord for wisdom, for knowledge, for understanding, and a heart that is tender. We must not only receive His truth, but walk in it.

"...ignorance is something that we should not be ignorant of."

Satan is extremely cunning. He distracts with the riches and the cares of this life. We read in Mark 4:19: **"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."** The Adversary keeps us so busy with the things of this world that we get

choked off from God's Word; he thus holds us occupied, entertained, ignorant of the truth, and unfruitful.

Satan's mission is to cast a stumbling block before God's people. When the Lord sent Moses to deliver Israel, Satan sent the "wise men" and the sorcerers to resist him. Likewise, when the Lord sends His messengers with the gospel, Satan is right there to distract. He confuses and prevents the Word's progress. In Exodus 7:11-12 we read, **"Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods."** The Lord prevailed, but Satan tried to distract and confuse.

When Paul preached the truth, Satan sent

Elymas—a sorcerer—to withstand him. See this in Acts 13:8; **“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.”** Satan sends his deceivers when the Lord sends His messengers. The Devil makes every effort to pervert and confuse the meaning of the Word of God.

If he can, Satan will use our friends to keep us ignorant of the truth. The Lord says, **“Come out from among them and be ye separate.”** We must listen to the Word of God first, and not allow ourselves to be distracted—even by our friends.

Luke 6:22-23 shows us: **“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.”** The prophets of the Lord were murdered; they were **“stoned, they were sawn asunder,”** Hebrews 11:37. The false prophets were exalted.

Satan uses delay to keep us ignorant. When we delay, we put things off until tomorrow because we don’t think we have time today—often never returning to the important task we put off. In Hebrews 3:7-8 we find, **“Wherefore as the Holy Spirit saith, ‘To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness’.”** The Lord is telling us to hear His voice today. Satan says, **“Do it tomorrow. You are still young. Wait a week or two.”**

Satan loves compromise. If he can’t get you in any other way, he will get you to compromise. He causes us to think that there is no problem in compromising a little and not being so straightlaced on the truth. **“After all,” he says, “are we really sure what we think is truth is true?”**

We read in Exodus 8:28: **“And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me.”** The Pharaoh was telling them that he would compromise and give them their way, but they had to come right back and not go too far. He expected a compromise in return.



Seventh Day Baptist
General Conference
of the United States and Canada

Satan has his own gospel—peace without repentance. Satan’s gospel does not lead away from sin. Satan’s gospel is, **“Accept Jesus and be saved—Just as you are.”** He will preach peace through the blood of the cross, **as long as you don’t depart from sin.** Satan doesn’t mind repentance, ... **“only ye shall not go very far away.”** Just don’t walk too far away from sin!

Jeremiah 23:21-22 reads, **“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied....”**

How do we discern whether someone is sent by the Lord? How do we judge their speech? The next verse tells us, **“...But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to**

***“Willful ignorance
shuts out Christ
and opens wide the
door for Satan.”***

hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.” This is how we sort out the truth tellers from the deceivers (intentional or also deceived). Do they get people to turn from their sins, or do they compromise and say **“don’t go too far away”?**

Christ must be our King. Jesus Christ must be our Lord. We must serve our Lord only. We cannot serve God and mammon. We must understand that there is only one way to walk in the light—God’s Way. We are to walk in the light of His Laws—under the Kingship of Christ. We read in Exodus 10:26, **“Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind.”** Moses had to tell Pharaoh that he would not compromise.

We too must obey the Lord; we must go and take everything with us, for there is no returning there can be no looking back. If we put our hand to the plow and look back, we are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. This is what the Lord told Moses: **“...there**

shall not an hoof be left behind.”

The sinner must leave all sin behind, leaving no occasion for return. Luke 11:52 tells us, ***“Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.”*** Can we see that the Lord is pointing out that ignorance is a terrible trap foisted on us through Satan and his kingdom of darkness? The lawyers not only refused to enter in themselves, but they hindered those that would. They took away the key of knowledge. How did they hinder them? They perverted the truth, arguing against the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel He preached.

The knowledge of Christ and His Way opens the door to our freedom. Willful ignorance shuts out Christ and opens wide the door for Satan. The knowledge of Christ delivers and brings the way of freedom from sin, from self and from Satan. Through ignorance, men serve the devil in the kingdom of darkness, regardless of whether or not they realize it. Jesus tell us in John 14:6, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*** Our Lord Jesus Christ opens wide the way; Satan attempts to close the way.

Those laden with sin live in ignorance. They are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Such are deceived—and the deceived don't know they are deceived, or they would not be deceived!

If we are going to walk in sin, we are by default going to be living in ignorance. We will never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 3:6-7 says: ***“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*** We cannot walk in sin and walk in light. If we are to avoid sin (as we ought), we can not be ignorant—ignorance is not bliss!

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David L. Taylor can be reached for comment at the following phone numbers: (401) 348-8385 Phone (240) 248-8174 Fax/Voice Mail. Or, he can be reached via email through the Bible Sabbath Association's email address and through the editor's, rmitchel@flash.net.

“Assorted Flavors” Home At Last! **Mary Bierman**

Several years ago a gentleman was looking for someone to take over Assorted Flavors of Sabbatar-ians. After much consideration I was honored with carrying on the list. He had *Mary's Treasures* to look at for my resume in the application.

Over these last few years a list that he started has grown even more. Hundreds upon hundreds of hours has been put into it to keep the 7th day commu-nity in touch. Miscellaneous links were added such as resources, research materials, Sabbatarian Sisters, music, home school, prayer list, and other odds and ends links. Not counting the school links or odds and ends it was a total of over 1050 links. We upgraded our hard drive a couple of times, and added memory as well.

We have had thousands of visitors over the years. All this time I was learning how to make web pages, my son thought I was Cyber Space Lucy. He would shake his head and say he didn't know how it worked but it did! The link was always attached to my other URL with my personal webpages.

Now Assorted Flavors has a new home all of its own with its own simple address. I moved it so many times due to advertisements on banners, not being able to pay for them to not show up, or for more space. Many likely gave up trying to keep up with Assorted Flavors.

Now it has a home where you can book mark it, know it will stay, the Father willing, and set your links on your webpage to reflect this new URL.

It even has a new look, new lay out and shorter link pages so it will load a bit faster.

I invite you to come by for a visit, and please sign the Guestbook. A long lost friend of yours may just find your email address there! If you have a group, be sure to leave the web page for it, a bit about it and the loca-tion so it can be added to Assorted Flavors. In that way, others can read about your group with a longer explanation than I can provide

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*The web address for Assorted Flavors is: http://www.geocities.com/assorted_flavors_7thday/. We at *The Sabbath Sentinel* and at the Bible Sabbath Association thank Mary Bierman for her tireless work in keep-ing the brethren abreast of developments within the Sabbatarian community.*

Sabbath Roots: The African Connection

A Book Report by Richard Nickels

Black Africans have a unique proclivity toward accepting the seventh-day Sabbath. Historically, Ethiopia, and many other parts of black Africa have been bastions of Sabbatarianism. Their isolation, for centuries, from the corrupting influence of Rome has allowed Africans to maintain much spiritual independence. Today, Christianity in general, and Sabbath-keeping in particular, is exploding in sub-Saharan Africa.

Charles E. Bradford, author of **Sabbath Roots: The African Connection**, brings to light many surprising historical facts. Those of us who have been schooled in European civilization may be shocked to realize the existence and widespread nature of unvarnished Christianity in black Africa, for centuries. About 340 million Africans profess Christianity. According to reliable estimates, Africa has the world's largest concentration of Sabbath-keepers, some 20 million people, of which only about three million are Seventh Day Adventists. The Sabbath is natural to black Africans. God is doing a work in Africa!

Ethiopia Equals Sabbath-Keeping

Ethiopia (Abyssinia) is a nation defined throughout its existence by its fidelity to the seventh-day Sabbath. Today, the numbers of Sabbath-keepers are exploding in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Gabon, Congo, and elsewhere. Why? Because of the work of missionaries in the 1800s? No! The Sabbath is thriving in Africa because the Sabbath roots of Africa run deep, both in Scripture, and historical practice.

In **Psalm 68**, the Pentecost Psalm, we read, *"Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God,"* **verse 31**. And, she has, and is, responding to the Almighty. *"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt,"* **Hosea 11:1**. *"From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring Mine offering,"* **Zephaniah 3:10**. (Zephaniah may have been of African descent, because he was the son of Cush, a code name for a descendant of Cush, son of Ham.) *"Also the sons of the stranger . . . every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; Even them will I bring to My holy*

mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer," **Isaiah 56:6-7**.

African-American preachers have long emphasized the importance of Ethiopia in the plan and purpose of God. For them, the Abyssinian Church is the Church in the Wilderness through which God had maintained for Himself a witness down through the centuries. Egypt is mentioned in Scripture 611 times; Ethiopia 20 times. Egypt figures prominently in the plan and purpose of God, **Isaiah 19:24-25**. Ethiopia and Egypt are representative of the entire African continent. For the Ashanti (Akan) of Ghana, Saturday has been the traditional holy day, a day of worship of God. Among the Yorubas of Nigeria, the seventh day of the week has been a day when no work, no marriage, no festivities, should be performed. There is no record at any time in the history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that they have officially given up the Sabbath. Another group of Ethiopians, the Falasha, or "Black Jews," hold to a form of Old Testament religion that was dominant in Solomon's days.

There is a natural God-consciousness among Africans, both in Africa and in the "diaspora," or dispersed. With its theme of deliverance from slavery, justice, and righteousness, the Old Testament looms large in African thinking. Modern white, liberal, theology is foreign to the black mind, which usually take the Bible literally, and religious beliefs seriously. One does not go to Africa only to preach the Gospel; he goes to learn about the Almighty.

Racial Origins: One Source, One Place

What is the origin of the races? While some aspects may be shrouded in mystery, Bradford argues for a monogenetic (single source, single place) origin of mankind and the races, in Africa. Assyria in Mesopotamia, understood to be a northeast extension of Africa, is called in the Bible, "the Land of Nimrod [son of Cush]," **Micah 5:6**. In the "Table of Nations" of **Genesis 10**, Ham's progeny are given more space than any of the other sons of Noah. Of Ham's four sons, Mizraim went to Egypt, Cush to Ethiopia, Phut to Libya, and Canaan to Palestine. Whatever the origin of the racial differences of man-

kind, Bradford argues for their common origin, and common access to Yahweh's covenant, **Genesis 9:8-19**. The Sabbath is the great common denominator of that covenant. No one is excluded.

The so-called "curse of Ham" of **Genesis 9:20-27** was not on Ham, but Canaan. The startling occurrence of Hebrew words in West African languages, especially in Yoruba, is evidence that covenant people descended from Ham have long permeated the African continent. Far from being pariahs from God, the Eternal has a heart for the African people: "Blessed be **Egypt My people**, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance," **Isaiah 19:25**.

Church of Ethiopia Sabbath Roots

gives much fascinating information about the history of the Church of Ethiopia. The Queen of Sheba was from Ethiopia, and bore a son from King Solomon. Falashas continued the Old Testament religion. In **Acts 8:26-40**, we are given the account of the introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia, with the conversion of the Ethiopian treasurer (eunuch) by Philip. The treasurer returned to Candace's court, and as a result, Ethiopia became the first Christian nation. The influence of Ethiopia on the rest of Africa was enormous. Ethiopia has been the model nation of Africa for 2,000 or more years. The Bible uses the name, Ethiopia, to mean all of sub-Sahara Africa.

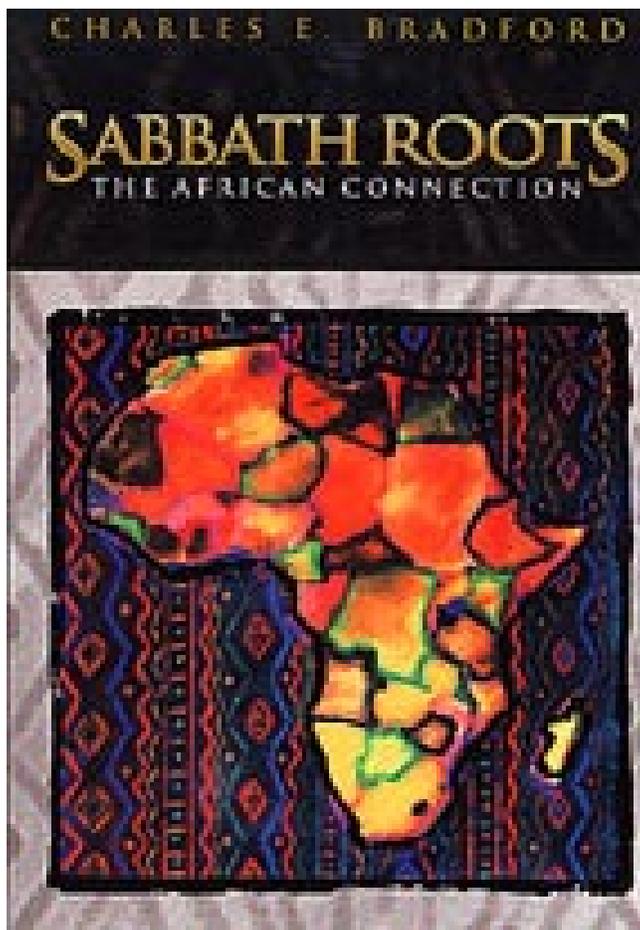
While Europeans (and especially Romans) have continually been uncomfortable with Jewish things, Africans are typically pro-Jewish. That is why we see the Europeans abandoning the Sabbath for Sunday, while many Africans continued to revere the Sabbath. Europeans adopted pagan Greece as their cultural model, while Africans leaned toward Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Although European history

is steeped in portraying Africa as the deep black hole of humanity, Africa actually became a model for the rest of the world, albeit not always known to be so.

Conflict With Islam

Islam arose 600 years after Christ due to the failure of western European Christendom to live up to, and spread, the true Gospel message. Muhammad and his cohorts sought to reclaim the faith of Abraham, which Europeans had abandoned. Islam nearly defeated Europe, and severely endangered Ethiopia. Yet when Islam swept North Africa

and the Middle East, Moslems created a shield for Africa from the corrupting influence of the Roman Church. The Ethiopian Church continued independent for centuries, until at last the Jesuits encroached under the guise of helping Ethiopia resist Moslem invaders. More of this story is given in Michael Geddes' book, ***The Church History of Ethiopia***, available as a 148-page reprint for \$12.50 from the BSA. The battle between Islam and Sabbath-keepers continues today in Nigeria, where the northern part of the country and the central government are dominated by Moslems, and the eastern and southern portions are predominately Christian.



Black African Openness to God

Charles Bradford takes us on a fascinating tour of Africa, visiting Sabbath-keepers from coast to coast, and sharing tidbits of their remarkable history. Today, Sabbath-keeping is so prevalent in Africa, that in some places, like the Kisii District of Kenya, the government cannot hold elections on Saturdays. Sabbath Roots is truly a remarkable and inspiring history.

It has often been said that Africans twist and distort Christianity, so that when western mission-

aries leave, the jungle grows back quickly. Sometimes, this has been the case. However, people are generally the same, regardless of the color of their skin. At least Africans did not change the Sabbath to Sunday, and create the Inquisition and Albigensian Crusades against those who believed the Bible. Catholic Europeans did this and more to distort the Gospel. There has long been an openness to God in black Africa. In their honest zeal, Africans often put western civilization to shame.

A King with Ten Sons

An illustration of the African mind's skill to put the Bible text into a format uniquely African is given by this story told by a young African lad. The purpose is to illustrate how the original Sabbath was changed by the European ecclesiastical establishment. It is a story Africans, and anybody, can relate to.

"Once upon a time, there was a great king who had ten sons. Then one day, the king decided to go on a journey. He called his ten sons before him. He also called for the Prime Minister. He embraced each of his sons, one by one, saying 'Oh, my son.' The king then turned to the Prime Minister and said, 'While I am away, take care of my sons.'



"Soon after the king was gone, the Prime Minister called the sons and lined them up before him for inspection. When he came to son number four, the Prime Minister said, 'You do not look like a royal son.' He took him out of the lineup and sent the boy into the fields to work with the slaves. Then the Prime Minister took his own son and put him in the place of the king's son.

"But the king came back one day, and called the Prime Minister to give an account of how he had taken care of his sons. The Prime Minister said, 'O king live forever. I have done as you have com-

manded.' He told the king that his sons were well.

"Then the king said, 'Bring in my sons.' As he had done at the first, he embraced them all until he came to the fourth son. Then he said, 'You are not my son. You must be an imposter.' The king turned to the Prime Minister and said, 'Who is this?'

"The Prime Minister replied, 'Your Majesty, your son did not look like a royal son, and so I removed him from the lineup and put my son in his place.'

" 'Who gave you permission to do that?' the king demanded. The Prime Minister was speechless. 'But where is my son?'

"The Prime Minister responded, 'He is in the fields, Your Majesty, working with the slaves.' This made the king very angry. He banished the Prime Minister and his son from the realm and restored his own son to his proper place in the lineup."

When the story is over, the usual response from the African audience is, "Tell us, what is the meaning of the story?" The lad would answer:

"The king is God, and the ten sons are the Ten Commandments. The fourth commandment is the commandment that says 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Prime Minister is the church, the one He left in charge of the commandments. But the church changed God's day of rest and put another day in its place, a day it chose. But the King is coming

back!"

My African Friends

My first exposure to African Sabbath-keepers came shortly after I began Giving & Sharing in 1978. Through my book, History of the Seventh Day Church of God, I became acquainted with Sabbath-keepers in Nigeria and Kenya. Over the years, we have sent them many Bibles, concordances, books, and articles. One African elder, John I. Ajalli, "pictured" above, began to contribute Bible Study articles, which we reprinted and sent to our mailing list. See two of John's excellent articles, Study No. 100, "I

Believe in Jesus Christ, What's it all about? and 102, "***Worship Not the Beast With 666***," on the www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/ website.

Although I never met him, John and I became spiritual brothers through frequent correspondence. His untimely death around the late 1980s temporarily halted our relationship, which I hope to renew in the Kingdom of God.

I will never forget the episode in which the Ajalli family endangered their freedom to worship God on the Sabbath day. As related by Mrs. Ajalli, she was in her garden hoeing weeds one day, when a group of snake worshippers were passing by. They were shouting and worshipping a snake (which was their "god"). The snake was allowed to go where it willed, and the worshippers followed chanting and singing. The serpent strayed from the road into the Ajalli garden, and Mrs. Ajalli warned the pagans that if they didn't get their snake out of her garden, they would be sorry. They refused to listen to her, so she killed the snake with her hoe. Well, this "sacrilegious" act caused a great uproar in the community, because she had killed their god. The local chieftan made it rough on the Ajalli family, and it was thereafter difficult to conduct Sabbath services in their compound.

John Ajalli and his wife had courage and faith. While many Nigerians begged for money, and we suspected that some sold the free Bibles we sent them, John was different. He once wrote that he appreciated the Bibles and literature we sent him, but if we couldn't or wouldn't do so, he and other Africans would still continue the work of God. John was a trustworthy servant of the Almighty.

Two Nigerians have visited our home. The first, James Obi, is a short, effervescent man, with a sparkling personality. He worked for Shell Oil Company in Nigeria, a leading oil producer. He visited us once for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and delivered interesting Bible Studies. James introduced me to Nigerian Christian music, which I like very much. When I was helping James unload his luggage, I noticed a fishy smell. He had brought some dried fish on a stick. He coaxed me into eating some of it with him. First, he made a kind of paste with some dried greens he called "bitter leaves." Then, we dipped the fish in the bitter leaf paste. It tasted, well, unique! We assured him that we did not eat pork, but he per-

sisted in asking us, meal after meal, if there was any pork in the food, as he did not eat it either. We thoroughly enjoyed James' brief visit.

Another Nigerian, Christian Nwakafor, stayed at our home for a while, when we lived in Washington State. He had a different personality than James, was shy and reserved. Christian came from Ibo country, the "bush" portion of eastern Nigeria. The Ibos are most receptive to Christianity, and elders have told me that anyone who is a polygamist is not allowed in their Church. As he was not accustomed to indoor plumbing, I had to literally get into the shower with Christian to show him how to use it. Christian was a fine young man.

Nigerians Proclaim Sabbaths

Africans may be low on funds, but they tend to be high with fervent energy. My friends, the Nigerian Sabbath-keepers, are my kind of people. I have been amazed at how zealous many of them are for God's Truth. Sure, there are impostors and charlatans there, as in other parts of the world. But, there are also zealous, dedicated workers who faithfully persevere, in spite of the financial difficulties and hardships of living in a Moslem-dominated country that is hostile to Christianity.

How the Nigerian Church of God keeps the festivals puts many American Sabbath-keepers to shame. Even during the spring festivals, they have hours of daily Bible Studies each day of the Feast, recreational activities, evangelistic meetings, and festive meals. They plan long in advance, and every festival has some time devoted to proclaiming God's Sabbaths to others. We are called to be servants of others, not spiritual hermits and isolationists. Our faith should result in action, a life well-lived, not just a creed of belief. May true believers everywhere exhibit these zealous characteristics.

Sabbath Roots by Charles E. Bradford, is not just a book for black people, but for all of God's children. We all have, or should have, Sabbath Roots in Africa.

— Richard C. Nickels

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*Review: **Sabbath Roots: The African Connection**, by Charles E. Bradford. Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1999, 234 pp. Available from: **Bible Sabbath Association, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718, \$15 plus \$2 postage.***

THE SEVENTH DAY MEN

by
Leon J. Lyell

Few modern Sabbath-keepers know anything of the first formulation of the Sabbath doctrine in the modern era. Many will be surprised to learn that it has come directly from the seventeenth century—where, a handful of Englishmen and their congregations “discovered” and observed it.

These Sabbath-keepers did not consider themselves to be forming a new denomination; indeed, they did not form a unified group. Rather, they saw themselves as only one step ahead of their brethren.

Today, it is possible to uncover the main features of this rediscovery. The story is of real people, from diverse backgrounds, many of whom displayed the same human failings as modern Sabbath-keepers do. This history is a heritage that all Sabbath-keepers share.

Leon J. Lyell

PART 1: THE SABBATH UNDER THE KING

John Traske: The Truth in Trouble

Soon after the publication of the famous King James Version of the Bible in 1611, an itinerant preacher named John Traske arrived in London. Disgusted by the obvious corruption and indulgence of the clergy of his day, Traske emphasized that God would give his Spirit to those who obey him in the way they live their lives.

Traske began advocating fasting, and went on to revive the Old Testament prohibition on unclean meats. In a short time, this gifted preacher had built a significant following of men and women, all seeking to obey God's commandments. Hamlet Jackson was one such scrupulous student. His studies led him to conclude that there was no Biblical command to observe Sunday, and that the Saturday-Sabbath observed by the Jews had never been abolished.

Stunned by this discovery, Jackson went immediately to Traske—who was also convinced and began observing the Sabbath, as well as vigorously preaching the “Saturday Sabbath.” Most of Traske's congregation also adopted it. In 1614, Traske or-

dered Jackson and three others to proclaim their discoveries of obedience and also to heal diseases by anointing with oil.

Sunday verses Sunday

At this time two opposing and equally elaborate arguments were developing about the meaning of Sunday. The traditional Anglican view, upheld by King James himself (as Head of the Church of England), saw Sunday as a new Christian festival. They held that it had been established by the early church with the consent of God, that it was called the “Lord's Day” in honor of the Lord's resurrection, and that it had no connection at all with the Sabbath of the Old Testament, which was made redundant at the cross.

Opposing this view, a growing body of “Puritan” opinion insisted that the Bible nowhere annulled the Sabbath command. However, because of the resurrection, the Sabbath had somehow been transferred to Sunday, which was now the “Christian Sabbath”. Exactly how and when this transformation took place was the subject of much disagreement!

Traske's “Judaising”

Traske's argument was by contrast attractively simple: the Sabbath command remained and it had not been changed to Sunday. However, Anglican and Puritan alike both cried “Judaising!”. Now, while the term was very ill-defined, all agreed it was a very undesirable thing to be doing!

In circumstances still unclear, Traske and his followers were arrested in 1616. Brought before a panel of bishops, Traske refused to be argued back to Anglican orthodoxy. Offended by his challenge that they would all one day observe the Sabbath, they imprisoned him and urged him to “repent.”

While in prison Traske continued his study of early Church history, no doubt with material provided to him by the bishops. As a result, he made another surprising discovery: he denounced Easter as a man-made blasphemy of the same kind that Sunday was! In its place Traske adopted the Old Testament date of the Passover and also observed the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Infuriated with his “arrogance,” Traske’s persecutors formally charged him in 1618 with sedition—seducing the King’s subjects away from the Church of England to Judaism. Traske was imprisoned, degraded from the ministry, whipped, mutilated, branded with a “J” on his forehead, and fined one thousand pounds. Defeated and dejected, Traske gave up his beliefs and published a recantation three years later. He was immediately released from prison. His wife however remained in prison till her death—still a Sabbath-keeper.

To Traske goes the honor of being the first known Christian of modern times to observe the Sabbath and the Passover. Nonetheless, his name became so stigmatized with the Judaising tag, that the following generation of Sabbath-keepers avoided all mention of his name.

Brabourne: A Vital Link

In 1621, the Puritan Thomas Broad published a book detailing the reasons why Sunday should be considered the Christian Sabbath. It became prescribed reading for Puritan ministers, and Theophilus Brabourne was one of the many respectable preachers who studied it.

However, Brabourne’s reading led him to disagree with Broad on one point: he could find no convincing evidence for the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Amazed that nobody seemed to have noticed this gap in logic before, he published a three hundred page book, *Discourse on the Sabbath* (1628), on this issue.

Brabourne had more surprises to come. Nobody responded to his book, so he then quickly revised it (also in 1628), putting the case for the Sabbath more forcefully. This time, he dedicated the work to King Charles I, and asked him (as the head of the Church) to enforce the Saturday Sabbath.

This book certainly was noticed: Charles was offended and Brabourne found himself before the Bishops. Astounded and unrepentant, Brabourne was sent to Newgate prison for eighteen months. After a year Brabourne was reexamined and threatened with the loss of his ears in an effort to speed his repentance. Brabourne then quickly submitted a brief ambiguous statement, which was accepted as a recantation.

Brabourne lost his living as a minister, but continued to observe and write for the Sabbath. However, not wishing to be disloyal to the Church of England, he remained a staunch supporter of her and

refused the opportunity to lead a break-away congregation.

Part 2: The Sabbath Under Cromwell Ockford: A New Phase

By 1643, the English Puritans had won the argument about Sunday, and the law of the land now upheld the “Christian Sabbath”. Politically, two Civil wars preceded the execution of Charles I in 1648. Cromwell now headed a Puritan government that opposed the idea of a State Church and was prepared to allow some freedom of thought. Interestingly, the Government opposed the celebration of Christmas because of its papist/pagan origin.

Up sprang a variety of “independent” churches. It is important to remember that these were a long way from modern denominations. Each congregation considered itself to be a part of the one Christian Church; for example, “baptist” was at this stage a popular name given to those congregations which practiced “*believer’s baptism*”—it did not become a denominational title until the following century.

In 1650, a pupil of Brabourne’s, who had adopted believer’s baptism, announced that the Sabbath commandment has been “restored to its primitive purity.” James Ockford’s seventy-two page treatise indeed marks the start of a rapid spread of Sabbath keeping amongst some “baptist” congregations.

Thomas Tillam and Peter Chamberlen M.D.

Thomas Tillam was a prominent preacher at Hexham, to the north of London. His vigorous exhortations, usually based on graphic adaptations of Revelation, brought scores of people to baptism by immersion. Jealous rivals soon complained of his preaching methods to Hansard Knolleys—whose London congregation provided leadership for many baptists. In 1653 Tillam was called to give an account of himself.

The particular issue of dispute which provoked this was Tillam’s adoption of the laying on of hands on all believers at baptism. This newly discovered ordinance was not accepted by Knolley’s congregation, which then revoked its support of Tillam’s ministry. Essentially, this meant that Tillam had no money or credentials with which to preach.

Feeling betrayed, Tillam set out to find other congregations which might share his views on baptism, prophecy and laying on of hands. This search led him to Dr. Peter Chamberlen, who guided the only baptist congregation which supported the Fifth

Monarchy Movement.

The Fifth Monarchy movement was what we might describe today as a semi-political pressure group which drew support from “fundamentalist” congregations. It expected Christ’s Kingdom (the Fifth Monarchy to follow the four Kingdoms described in Daniel 2) would soon be literally established on earth. To prepare for this, they advocated that England quickly pattern its government and laws on Biblical prescription.

This link, and the firm friendship which grew from it, would prove important for the Sabbath idea as well as the long term establishment of Sabbath-keeping congregations in England—and later the United States. In normal times these two men would never have met. Chamberlen was a clean shaven aristocrat and former Royal Physician who wore his hair long and powdered. He and his father had invented forceps for use in childbirth and had the influence to undertake many good-works for the community. Tillam, who believed that real men had short hair and long beards, came from a very different social position.

Another baptist and moderate Fifth Monarchist was Henry Jessey. He was a gifted preacher with a sound knowledge of Hebrew—who believed that the King James version had lacked an understanding of Israel’s calendar and customs. Jessey was active in the campaign to readmit the Jews to England in the 1650’s.

The Jews had been expelled from England in the twelfth century, and this fact created some awe regarding what the Jews actually were. Some had an irrational fear, and others, such as those who observed the Sabbath, wanted to know much more about “God’s chosen people.” Jessey observed a number of what opponents described as “Jewish laws”—which certainly included the Sabbath. He knew that the “lost tribes” were to play a part in end time prophecy and made attempts to identify who they were—even postulating that they may be the American Indians. He was never to know that the truth was closer to home!

Their Discovery of the Sabbath

By 1655 Tillam had moved to Colchester. There his gifts as a preacher impressed the local mayor who invited him to use the parish church. Enlivened by this opportunity, Tillam had baptized over one hundred people in a few short months. It is also probable that Tillam came to know Brabourne who lived

in the area.

Early in 1656, Tillam began holding services in the parish church on Saturday. Exactly how he arrived at the notion of the Saturday Sabbath is not clear. Through this period he had remained in regular and close contact with Chamberlen, whose London congregation adopted the Sabbath about the same time. Another possible link is that Chamberlen probably knew Ockford.

Displeased with Tillam’s innovation, the authorities had him imprisoned. Like many seventeenth century religious prisoners, Tillam occupied himself in writing and produced his most memorable work: ***The Seventh Day Sabbath Sought Out and Celebrated*** was published in 1657 and brought a rush of condemning response. In more than two hundred pages, Tillam developed the link between the Sabbath and Biblical prophecy, first suggested by Ockford, into a detailed scenario. The Sabbath, said Tillam, “...is in these very last days become the last great controversy between the Saints and the Man of Sin, The Changer of Times and Laws”.

Tillam was the first to call the Sunday Sabbath the Mark of the Beast, a cry many later Sabbath-keepers would take up.

Tillam had one disagreement with Chamberlen on this subject. While Chamberlen felt that Sabbath observance negated all significance of Sunday, Tillam believed that the resurrection could be celebrated on Sunday, so as not to cause divisions between Christians.

Perhaps the strongest agreement of the pair was that their adoption of the Sabbath would aid the conversion of the Jews—a sure sign that Christ’s return was near. As Chamberlen wrote to Tillam, “*The Jews of London are very much affected with our keeping the Sabbath.... I perceive it is a great stumbling block to them, ... that Christians violate the Sabbath.*”

Chamberlen’s Congregation

Tillam’s book was written as an answer to a pamphlet against Sabbath keeping by William Aspinwall, a leading Fifth Monarchist. Aspinwall systematically dissected the arguments of Ockford and another Sabbath-keeper, John Spittlehouse, in an effort to ridicule both the Sabbath and Sabbath-keepers.

Spittlehouse, spokesman for Chamberlen’s congregation, had published his advocacy of the “unchangeable morality” of the Sabbath in mid 1656.

Aspinwall's abuse did not quell Sabbath enthusiasm. Almost immediately, Spittlehouse and William Sellers presented a (perhaps naive) petition to the Chief Magistrates, asking that the Sabbath be established in law. The task must have seemed easy, as English law now supported all the arguments in favor of Sabbath-keeping. All they had to do was convince the lawmakers that the supposed Sunday texts of the New Testament did not change the Sabbath to Sunday. Their confident appeal was, to their dismay, unceremoniously rejected.

The Baptist Challenge

The Sabbath had now become an issue of controversy among baptists, many of whom now observed it. Jeremiah Ives, a popular baptist controversialist, decided to meet the arguments head on: he challenged Tillam, Chamberlen and one Matthew Coppinger to a public debate on the issue. The three agreed, and for three days in 1658, the Stone Chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral was crowded with eager listeners.

Each side considered itself the winner. Whatever the case, it was soon after that two able preachers added their voices to the defence of the Sabbath: Edward Stennet and John James.

Stennet had been a chaplain for the Parliament during the Civil wars—and, though not a Fifth Monarchist, he did expect Christ to return in his lifetime. His defence of the Sabbath was published in 1658. In it he argued for the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments, which he dubbed the "Royal Law" (James 2:8).

Part 3: The Sabbath under the Restoration Persecution Renewed

In 1658 Oliver Cromwell died. Soon the experimental Commonwealth lacked stable government and by 1661 the exiled son of Charles I was asked to return as king. This he willingly did, promising religious toleration. In fact, persecution was renewed. All who would not support the Church of England, as previously constituted, were to be imprisoned or otherwise punished. The Fifth Monarchy Movement was banned, and those who supported it were regarded as rebels.

John James was at this time preaching to a "seventh day" church in Bullstake Alley, London. Like Stennet, James was not a Fifth Monarchist, but he did expect Christ to literally return to earth displacing all earthly government to establish the Millennium.

On the Sabbath of 19 October 1661, after a vigorous sermon on this subject, James was arrested with thirty of his congregation. The charges were plotting treason, and being a Fifth Monarchist. The authorities apparently decided to make an example of James and ordered him executed: his head was placed on a stake outside the Bullstake Alley meeting house.

Sabbath-keeping Spreads

No wonder that in such times many sought the relative freedom of America. One member of Stennet's congregation, Stephen Mumford, decided to escape and arrived in Rhode Island in 1664. There he found fellowship with the local Sunday keeping congregation. With Mumford the Sabbath idea came to America, and in a few years, with the help and encouragement of Stennet and Chamberlen, he established America's first Sabbath-keeping church.

Back in London, the dozen or so Sabbath-keeping congregations faced new times with tenacity and resourcefulness. Talented men would yet add their voices to the Sabbath chorus; and with each a new harmony. The aristocrat Francis Bampfield, also fully conversant with Greek and Hebrew was but one.

For example, in defending the Sabbath in 1677, he wrote in his book **The Seventh Day Sabbath - The Desirable Day**, "*The LORD Jesus Christ, who is Redeemer, was Creator.... Jehovah Christ as Mediator did himself at Mount Sinai proclaim the law of Ten Words.*" His argument is quite simply that it was Jesus Christ Himself who wrote the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. Why then would this same Christ seek to do away with one of "the Ten Words"? ("The Ten Words" is Bampfield's translation of the Hebrew for "ten commandments.")

What had been achieved by the end of the seventeenth century was not merely the rediscovery of an old idea, but the formation of a particular way of defending it. This defense would be repeated by succeeding generations of Sabbath-keepers—who, in time, would loose all knowledge of the men and times to whom they owed so much.

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Leon J. Lyell can be reached for comment at PO Box 206, Bundoora, Victoria, Australia, or by email at L.Lyell@latrobe.edu.au. We at The Sabbath Sentinel thank Leon for his interesting historical insight on the origins of Sabbath keeping in the Americas.

Editorial (continued from page 3)

At the BSA, and within the pages of TSS, we promote the concept that there can be and should be cooperation between the various children God has called. Cooperation only comes by understanding. When I allowed the situation to degenerate into an argument, with accusations that questioned the conversion of my brother, I lost for the moment the opportunity to allow my brother to teach me, and I him. I lost the opportunity to demonstrate any wisdom that God had given me. Instead of working through the important point we were discussing, I became the issue.

Since that time, God has granted repentance, and bible study has brought greater understanding. Indeed, to my shame—and joy, my brother was right! But, even if he had been wrong, it was still his belief, and a deeply held one. No spirit of cooperation was engendered by my rigid refusal to let the different belief go, and to work within the similarities that the two of us held. No sharing of insight was accomplished, no growth in love developed—until, in personal humility, God's character prevailed.

This scenario is not uncommon amongst us who call ourselves true Christians. How often does someone with a different belief say something to us that we believe ought to be challenged because it does not gel with a belief that we hold? Unfortunately, it happens all too regularly—and this happens to be one reason why we do not have cooperation among the people of God: people who *ought* to be the most cooperative of all mankind. How often do we jump to a blind challenge, instead of taking the time to hear what is being proffered? Again, all too regularly it seems.

The second way this problem manifests itself is through a desire to convert others to our way of thinking. This time, instead of assuming a defensive posture, we take the offensive. Our assumption becomes that the other, who doesn't believe as we do, is in error—and it should be our mission in life (our "Mission From God") to correct these brethren. If they are offended, then they are offended at **the real truth**. If we understand it, then it must be truth, and anything anyone else understands *differently* must be error—therefore, we must correct them since their eternal life is in jeopardy!

What usually happens is that, instead of the idea we were trying to convey, we once again be-

come the issue. In our brusqueness, we attempt to shove our understanding down the throat of "the unbeliever," who likewise believes that he or she is right. Again, an argument often ensues, and no point is made or remembered.

Yet, what has the Word of God to say? Romans 11:32: "**For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.**" (KJV). Another appropriate scripture might be Philippians 2:12: "**Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**" (KJV). As a shoal of fish in a net, we are all concluded in unbelief—and unbelief comes from ignorance (unintentional or willful).

Is there a scripture that deals with disagreements between brethren? An obvious example is that of Abraham and Lot: when the herdsmen quarrelled, it became apparent that there was not room enough for both groups to live in close proximity; the obvious solution was to haggle back and forth, or for Abraham to insist on his right as the elder—but, Abraham recognized a greater issue was at stake than who would get the prime watering holes! At stake was his relationship with his nephew (a future brother in Christ) and with his Creator. What was Abraham's response?

We find it in Genesis 13:8-9: "**And Abram said unto Lot, 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.'**" (KJV). Abram, as he was still named at this point, did not insist on his way being right. Indeed, he apparently did not even propose any solution except to let Lot choose. Can we adopt such an attitude when our belief or opinion differs from our brother?

I believe we can. However, we have to realize a few things about ourselves before we can. The first thing to be conscious of is that we do not understand all things perfectly. Our understanding is at best imperfect, and is possibly in outright error.

When we come to this realization, two things happen. First, we are not offended because we *don't have to be* right on all things. Secondly, we are not so quick to dogmatically pontificate on our real truth, because we comprehend the possibility that we may actually not have it right. Indeed, we are charged

with rightly dividing the word of truth—but, that right division is for ourselves—not for others, who are likewise charged with the same responsibility for themselves.

What then do we do when we disagree with another about sections of scripture? As an example: one brother believes the Feast Days of Leviticus 23 are to be kept by the Church today, while another does not. Both have scriptures to support their views. Is one an infidel? Is one a sinner and a non-believer? Is one looking to works for salvation instead of faith?

These are good questions—but they are not the most important ones: they are not salvational issues! Perhaps they are not even relevant questions at all. There are some though...

Isn't it more important to know whether or not we believe and keep the commandments of God? Shouldn't we be more concerned with believing that Jesus Christ came in the flesh and died for our sins? Aren't our common salvational beliefs more important than our non-salvational differences?

Isn't it far more important to realize that we are dealing with a brother and a fellow heir, and to act accordingly? Isn't what we Sabbatarians have in common far greater than the minor doctrinal differences that separate us? Which of us has been imbued with all knowledge and understanding so that we know the whole and absolute truth?

Perhaps another illustration will drive home the point. Which of us believes exactly as he or she did on the day of our conversion? That is, were our beliefs and understanding complete on that day—or, have we grown in understanding since then? Have we come to see that some scriptures do not mean what we thought that they meant? Consider another scripture; 2 Peter 3:18: ***“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*** (KJV).

Why this admonition to the Church if they were given all understanding upon their conversion? Why do we need to GROW in knowledge if we have it all right now? This may be a hard concept to grasp for some, but we can be in error on what we believe! It doesn't matter if we proved a matter to our satisfaction 25 years ago. If we have the same belief, but can not articulate the scriptures, and the meanings of the Greek or Hebrew words associated with them, or explain how another scripture of the inerrant word of God *doesn't* counter what we believe, our belief may be wrong!

If wrong, who are we to attempt to foist our

particular perspective on another. If our concepts are wrong, why are we defensive of them, rather than researching and proving them again? What does scripture say about this? Notice 1 Thessalonians 5:21, where it says, ***“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”*** (KJV).

Still, there is something that is not said in this verse which is just as important as what is being said. Can we see it? There is a word missing there! It does not say “Prove all things ONCE!”

With the word of God, proof is a lifelong adventure. We do not absorb it upon conversion—that is why we are admonished to GROW in grace and knowledge. That is why we understand so many things differently than we did upon conversion.

What did Paul say? In 1 Corinthians 13:11-13 we find wonderful insight: ***“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”*** (KJV).

What marvelous insight is contained in these few words! Paul grew and understood differently as he aged. Was he referring to the difference between his understanding before his encounter on the road to Damascus and after? And notice one more thing—he admits that NOW he knows IN PART! If, when he wrote the message to the Corinthians, he understood that he did not know all things, how much more should we be willing to admit that we don't know all things?

Let us ask ourselves some questions...is it possible that our brothers could be right about some point of contention? Do we spend any time in trying to understand why they believe as they do? Can we be right, but in a wrong attitude? Is it conceivable that all sides are wrong and that the truth remains unseen due to our hard heads and hearts? Could we have two different pieces of the right puzzle, and require communication and cooperation to put them together in order to see the big picture? There is much that we can still learn from each other, and that it is only the evil effects of our desire to be right that prevent our hearing out our brother?

So, as it was written so long ago, men and brethren, what shall we do? ... The first thing is to recognize our own sin—the sin of discounting our brother, which most certainly must fall under the command *not to murder* (to love your neighbor as yourself). On repentance, we certainly must then

accord our brethren the place of honor that God has given them, as His children, and coheirs with Christ. Anything less demeans them, and dishonors our Father.

Does that mean that we must all come into agreement on all issues of doctrine? A look at the book of Acts clearly shows that such agreement did *not* happen in the church—only one generation removed from Christ’s physical presence. It is therefore not going to happen now! What remains is for us to keep our carnality under control, to recognize that we don’t have all the answers, that the answers that we think we have could be wrong and that it is not a problem for us to be wrong—as long as we study the scriptures and are attempting to follow it *as we understand it*. One final scripture would bring home this point clearly. It is found in Romans 14:22-23: ***“Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”*** (KJV).

We must do what is right as we read it in scripture. It is vital that scripture (as discerned by God’s Holy Spirit) be our sole source of guidance in all things spiritual. This includes how we deal with each other, as well as what we believe and practice: we ought to be able to hear the beliefs of another and not be threatened by them; likewise we should be able to convey our own beliefs without a misplaced evangelistic fervor. If we can do these things, we will be able to bring about the cooperation that God and Christ desire among us—to get His purpose in us, and those around us, accomplished.

We have a purpose for which we have been placed on this earth. God has given us certain tasks to perform. One of them is to witness to the world concerning His coming Kingdom. That witness is best done through our example, by being ready to give an answer of the hope that lies within us.

Furthermore, God purposes to prepare us to reign as Kings and Priests with Christ. Kings do not roast and carve each other up, for surely a war would result. Yet, war is what we have had. We have been so consistent in defense of our own brand of Sabbatarianism that we forgotten God’s brand, which is the seal that is *supposed* to be on our true Christian foreheads!

We have been straining at gnats and swallowing camels; the time has come for us to recog-

nize what we are doing, and to use that precious gift of God’s Holy Spirit to change what we *are* into what we are *supposed to be*. (What better place is there to begin than in our own house?) The world around us is indeed a horrible and evil place to be - (even on its best day, and in the best place on earth); but even those who are not among us recognize the value in peace, and that is what we are discussing here.

Rodney King’s question is of primary importance to us. Even he wondered at the human state when asking the rioters if they couldn’t just get along. If he can have the insight to ask such a profound question, can’t we? And if we can ask, can’t we also provide the answer? After all, we do have the Word to guide us!

Doctrine is important. Understanding is important. Actions are important. Yet, what is more important to God? Clearly, the accomplishing of His will in all of us is the most important to Him. ...Without leaving any of these things unconsidered—we, nevertheless, ought to be foremost concerned that God values “what we are” (character wise) over “what we know” (dogma wise). It is high time we look at ourselves and to effected the changes required of us.

Let’s do what we know is right—what we read in His Word that we should do; but, let us also recognize that we don’t know it all, and accord our brethren the dignity and respect due them as Children of God and coheir of the promises. We can all get along. It is time we did.

The Conference in Tulsa that has been advertised in TSS for the past few issues will be taking place in the end of July. These are brethren who are endeavoring to find a way to bring cooperation among different organizations to accomplish a powerful preaching of the Gospel message to the world. We all understand that this world desperately needs to know that a time is coming when children will once again be able to play in the streets, and the elderly can enjoy watching them in safety. They need to know that the cruelty that we see around us every day will be brought to an end by the One who has the power to do so. We ask that you remember them in your prayers—that you would ask God to move His Spirit in their hearts to set aside personalities, and to do His will. With God’s help, they will.

Royce E. Mitchell Jr.

News of Interest to Sabbatarians

Sears OKs Sabbath Observers Deal

Courtesy of Associated Press Online—April 05, 2000

Sears, Roebuck & Co. has agreed to a settlement that allows repair workers who have religious objections to working on Saturdays to work Sundays instead.

Attorney General Eliot Spitzer - who had threatened to sue Sears - said the giant retail company also agreed to pay \$225,000 for employer education programs, \$120,000 in training scholarships for Sabbath observers and \$100,000 to cover the cost of his investigation.

"People should not be forced to choose between their faith and supporting their family," Spitzer said Tuesday. Sears "is pleased we were able to reach a satisfactory settlement," said spokeswoman Peggy Palter.

The company did not admit to any wrongdoing. The policies imposed by the settlement apply only to repair workers in New York state, she noted.

The attorney general targeted Sears last summer after Kalman Katz, an Orthodox Jew, claimed the company refused to hire him because he wouldn't work Saturdays. At least five other people had similar complaints, including a recently converted Seventh-day Adventist who said he was fired after telling Sears he needed to begin observing the Sabbath.

Katz said he was told all repair workers had to report on Saturday because it was the company's busiest repair day. Spitzer's investigation found most of Sears' repair work is done on Tuesdays.

Seventh-Day Adventists want to stop 'hate group' using its name

By CATHERINE WILSON, Associated Press

MIAMI — The national headquarters for Seventh-day Adventists asked a federal judge Monday to bar a West Palm Beach church it considers "a hate group" from using the denomination's trademark name.

Newspaper and radio advertising run nationally by the Eternal Gospel Church of Seventh-day Adventists denounces Catholics and most Protestants for worshipping on Sunday and likens them to Satanists and pagans.

The court fight has attracted worldwide interest among the denomination's 10 million followers. Dr. Russell Standish, an evangelical pastor from Melbourne, Australia, plans to testify on behalf of church pastor Rafael Perez's right to use the Adventist name.

"The issue is vital to religious liberty," Standish said outside court. "It's a generic name. Anyone who wants to can call themselves a Seventh-day Adventist, but you must remember there's a day of judgment."

Some of Perez's supporters said they don't support his ad message but contend the denomination is fighting him as an extremist because it is trying to become more mainstream and ecumenical.

The Silver Spring, Md.-based denomination has been trying since 1992 but wants a court order to prevent the church from using the term Seventh-day Adventist and the acronym SDA, which it currently tacks onto the church name. Pershes drew a round of "amen" from spectators, many of whom carried well-worn Bibles and prayer books, when he said prophet "Ellen White said the name Seventh-day Adventist is given to us by God."

King interrupted to warn the audience against making any distractions, saying, "There will be no showing of agreement or disagreement with what the lawyers are doing."

The judge also broke away before the first witness to take a call from Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg telling him he had been named winner of the Devitt award, recognizing distinguished service by a federal judge.

Testimony before King, who is hearing the case without a jury, opened with a history lesson, complete with 135 items from archives, about the early years of the denomination named in 1860.

The religion's name is based on beliefs in honoring the seventh day, Saturday, as the Sabbath and in the second coming of Christ. The trial is expected to last five to seven days.

We are praying for the success of this effort! Nobody wants to have any hate group associated with themselves!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We are writing to express our appreciation for the excellent article "Sunday Roots" written by Dr. Sidney Davis in the May-June Sabbath Sentinel.

It is one of the best articles we have read showing clearly the weaknesses in the "New Covenant Theology". It is something very much needed in the churches at this time and we are very thankful for Mr. Davis' efforts and also for his willingness to include mention of the feast days.

We are former Worldwide Church of God members.

John and Betty Campau
Zeeland, Michigan

Greetings from England! I received an issue of TSS—Thanks! I'm all for promoting cooperation between Sabbath observers.

Enclosed (are) a couple of our articles. You are welcome to publish, if suitable, in TSS. Dr. Davis may find the "Repentance" title of interest in view of his comments about the Law.

James McBride

Thanks for your articles and they certainly do contain information that would be of interest to other Sabbath keeping brethren. With your kind permission, we will hold them for future publication.

Ed.

Greetings B.S.A.! I still think our new Editor of the Paper is doing a great job. The Articles are interesting and informative. We are not going to be physically able to attend the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread at Kingdom City again this year. We will just observe it here at home—the two of us.

Eugene & Violet (no last name given)

Thanks for your support. However, I am certain that it is not the efforts of your editor that are making the magazine one that you enjoy. Many hands are making the load a light one. We do pray that all Sabbath keepers can find understanding with what is printed in TSS, as well as patience to deal with our brothers who believe slightly differently.

I've just recently been introduced to The Sabbath Sentinel through Richard Nickels, after a long line of contacts I've made with various Sabbath keeping groups and individuals across the country. It amazes me sometimes that there are so many of our brethren in the body of Christ Jesus who still divide themselves due to doctrinal issues. Yet, that shows me all the more that Satan has his focus set on the remnant of Israel.

However, I am grateful to the efforts of you and your staff to provide a forum in which we can openly express ideas and opinions, as long as our views are directed towards encouraging the Church of God, and edification.

Had I known the truth of God's plan and purpose for His people, I probably would not have found myself in prison. But, I accept the trials along with the many blessings. I know for a fact that Christ has not forsaken His called out ones. The Sabbath is the sign of His love.

Paul refers to the Christian life as a fight and a race and Jesus Himself admonishes us to endure until the end ...being closer than some may even now think possible.

Once again, I am thankful for the Sentinel and welcome correspondence from all who see the urgent need and great task ahead in attempting to grow in grace and in one accord. Shalom.

Ron Ilczhyn, # 133161
17601 Mound Rd. Corr. Fac.
Detroit, Michigan 48212

Thanks for your encouraging words and we pray for your personal situation as well.

May I suggest that BSA through the Sentinel again print the names, addresses and even phone numbers of its officers and directors. This would allow us to be a more open and responsive organization.

Bro. Joe McGuire

The TSS prints the names of all officers and an address to contact them on its inside cover.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (CONT.)

TSS is a great magazine, and presuming the TSS occasionally gets in the hands of unbelievers, at least I hope and pray that it does, and since we do believe in the Creator of the Seventh Day, may a suggestion be made that one article about salvation be included? However short it may need be. There is nothing wrong with trying to raise our own, so to speak, while we cooperate with each other, and attempt to persuade non-Sabbath keepers of the truth.

Milton Quinn

I receive The Sabbath Sentinel and do enjoy the Sabbath content, but the doctrines that are published views of different organizations should always have inserted after it, views not of Sabbath Assn., that is if the article is of doctrine not in agreement with Sabbath keeping organizationsI think only what all agree on should be published Christ, Salvation and His true day of Sabbath restWe should keep it that way I think. Don't you?

We need to break down prejudices among all Christians.

Pastor McConn

I hope that the editorial from the May-June issue answered these concerns that you have mentioned to us. On the inside cover, you will find the disclaimer printed that the views printed are not necessarily those of the Bible Sabbath Association. But, your letter struck a chord with me for another reason.

On one hand you suggest that we publish only the three things that you underlined, and I underlined above. But, those are things upon which we can all agree. While you tell us to do this, you go on to say that we need to break down prejudices among all Christians. As you know, prejudice often is the result of ignorance.

By publishing articles from members of various Sabbath keeping groups, we are trying to accomplish one of the main goals of the BSA, to promote cooperation among Sabbatharians. In order to cooperate, we need to understand why our brethren feel the way that they do. We need to understand why certain beliefs carry the importance that they do. In order to do that, we have to publish them. And, we must publish them in a way that is complementary to those brethren, that accurately reflects that belief. By doing so, we really will begin to break down the prejudices. Nobody here says anyone has to accept any belief printed here. But, we pray that all will be motivated to tolerance of our brothers who believe a little differently.

Ed.

TULSA OKLAHOMA PRAISE REPORT

On April 8, 2000, Pastor Cress of the Tulsa Church of God (Seventh Day), hosted a "Special Celebration Sabbath" to welcome Pastor Jim and Sister Opal Rowe into the fellowship of "Sabbatarians" in Tulsa. The Rowes and their congregation as Solid Rock Baptist Church had recently started observing the Seventh Day Sabbath. The meeting was held at Memorial Hall in Tulsa.

Representatives from several Sabbath-observing congregations were in attendance to offer these precious brethren the right hand of fellowship and congratulations on their stand for truth.

About 200 people attended, including delegations and/or members from these groups:

Tulsa Church of God
Seventh Day Bible Church
United Church of God
Church of God, Tulsa Fellowship
Branch Jerusalem, Church of God
Seventh Day Baptist
Seventh Day Adventist
Church of God (Seventh Day)

A delicious meal was served and then a program of thrilling praise music ensued, provided by teams from the Tulsa COG7 and Solid Rock Baptist Church.

After welcomes and prayers, a stirring message by Pastor Rowe was delivered, outlining his discovery and embracing of the "Sabbath Message."

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We at the Bible Sabbath Association also welcome these new brethren to the true worship of God as He commands. Perhaps Pastor Rowe could also send us his congregation's story for publication?

Ed.

CLASSIFIED ADS . . .

MANY INDEPTH BIBLE ARTICLES BY KEITH HUNT AT <http://keithhunt.com> (Oct 00)

Young, Sabbath keeping family wishes to purchase moderately priced home with acreage in secluded location. 402-386-5745 (**Aug 00**)

BIBLE TRUTH versus **RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**. \$1.00. CAL, Box 1035, Bellavista, CA 96008 (**April 01**)

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.

BSA DIRECTORY OF SABBATH KEEPING CONGREGATIONS- If your group wishes to be included in the new edition, please let us have your information as soon as possible. Please send to 3316 Alberta Dr, Gillette, WY 82718, general information about your group or organization, such as name of group, leader, phone number, address. If you send an email address, we can attach a form and send it to you. You can fill it out and email back to us. Otherwise we will mail the form. If you have access to a computer, the best method of sending information to us is via email so that it doesn't need to be retyped. **Don't assume we have received your email unless you receive a confirmation back from us.** We will utilize Microsoft Word with a 12 point in Times Roman. The final Directory version will be done in Microsoft Excel.

Entries to the Directory are free for the first 250 words. We will edit any entries more than 250 words. Should you desire to include more information about your organization or group than will fit in the 250-word format, additional space is available. The cost will be \$50 for an additional 250 words, or \$100 for a full page. Photos, [black & white are better than color], can be inserted in your extra page for \$30 each.

"ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA 11th Edition CD-ROM set only \$99.95. Interested? Visit www.ClassicEB.com for information." (June 01)

I BREAK for the SABBATH

The Bible Sabbath Assoc. • Fairview, OK 73737

Want to let others know where you stand on God's Sabbaths? BSA has these **bumper stickers** in stock right now! They can be purchased for only \$1 each, plus postage. Want to make a bolder statement? How about a package of 100 postcards with various Sabbath messages for only \$6? Order at our address in the next ad below!

Support BSA and our efforts to promote God's Sabbath! Become a

Member Today!

Regular Membership
\$25; Family \$30

**BSA, 3316 Alberta Drive,
Gillette, WY 82718 USA
Toll Free: 1-888-687-5191**

Classified ads are available at the rate of \$1.00 per word (including each word and each group of numbers in the address - telephone numbers count as one word) for each issue in which the ad is published.

Display ads are available at \$150 per quarter page for each issue the ad is published. Where possible your camera-ready copy will be utilized, or we will design your display ad for you. Send copy for all ads and payment to *The Bible Sabbath Association*, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718.

Discounts- 20% off for 2nd issue and 30% off for subsequent sequential issues.

Ad copy without payment will not be accepted for publication. Deadline is two months prior to publication. BSA reserves the right to reject or edit any ad copy. Publication does not imply endorsement by *The Bible Sabbath Association* or *The Sabbath Sentinel*.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS **FOR THE EXTENDED BODY OF CHRIST!**

The following individuals are distributing *The Sabbath Sentinel* in their respective countries. International brethren may support the BSA effort in these countries by sending donations to:

AUSTRALIA: Jim & Lyn Carnochan
E-Mail: lyn_carnochan@hotmail.com
7 Sunnyridge Road
Arcadia, NSW 2159

UNITED KINGDOM: Alan F. Dempster
E-mail: alan_dempster@virgin.net
100 ASHAMPSTEAD RD
Reading, Berkshire RG30 3LJ

NEW ZEALAND: Colin Moffat
E-Mail: cmoff@paradise.net.nz
18 St. Andrews Dr
Bethlehem, Tauranga
3001

BSA 2001 SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

The BSA 2001 Essay scholarship contest is underway. Interested parties can contact the BSA home office for an application; or access the form at the BSA website at www.biblesabbath.com or they can contact Scholarship Chair, June Narber Harrison at PMB 193, 6325-9 Falls of Neuse Road, Raleigh, NC 27615 or email at ejnarber@mindspring.com. The contest is open to qualified applicants anywhere in the world; please contact the home office or June for further details about the essay scholarship contest.

Applicants must be completed and postmarked by February 2001. There are three essay questions to be answered on the application, as well as other information. Winning essays will be published in a TSS issue sometime during 2001. Funding is still being sought to help us establish this essay contest as a permanent fixture at BSA. Our fund raising goal for this year is \$4,000. Donations should be specified for the scholarship fund and mailed to the BSA Office address.

Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

The Conference this year is August 6-12 on the campus of West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, an ideal location for the week-long sessions of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, USA & Canada.

Wesley Chapel will again be the meeting place for major business and worship services. All eating and meeting rooms are air-conditioned—and some of the dorms.

Register early. Official registration forms are available at: Seventh Day Baptist Conference c/o Lost Creek Seventh Day Baptist Church Box 241, Lost Creek, WV 26385 or call (304) 745-4481 or Email: stangio@hotmail.com.

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