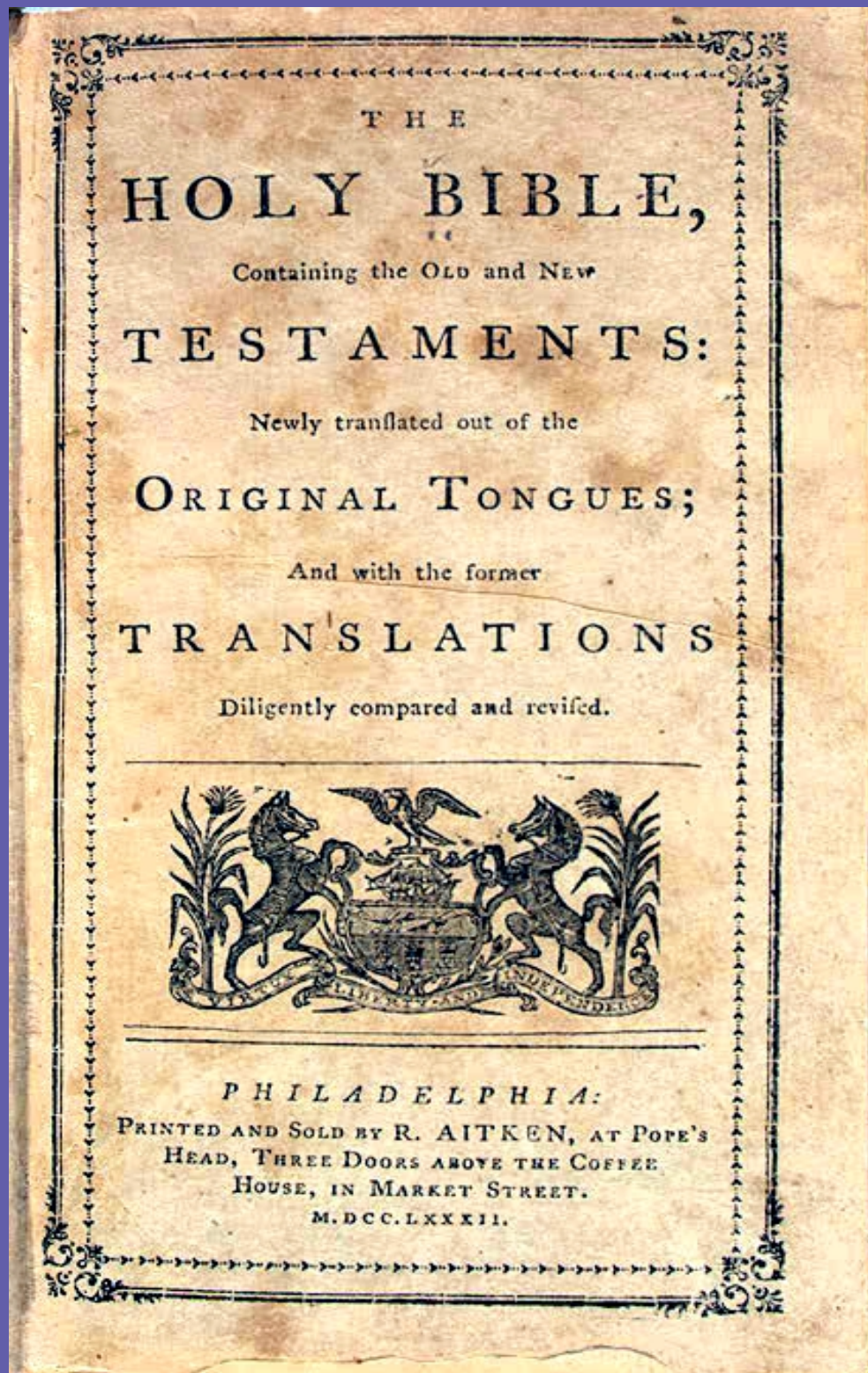


# THE Sabbath Sentinel

March–April 2002

—Aitkin's  
Bible



**BSA – The Bible Sabbath Association**  
**“The Sabbath was made for man...” – Jesus, the Christ**

**The Sabbath Sentinel**  
March–April 2002 Volume 54, No. 2 Issue 494

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**Cover Photo:** Upon Congress's recommendation and with its patronage, Scottish immigrant Robert Aitken undertook publication of the Bible in September of 1782. Aitken's Bible was the first English language Bible published on the North American continent.

*(Photo: U.S. Library of Congress)*

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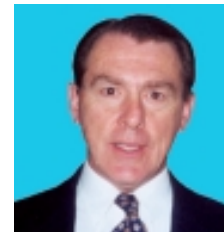
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# Recapturing Excellence



We have heard many times the scripture that refers to “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” Have you ever thought about what that means?

Excellency has to do with surpassing the current standard, exceeding the norm. That is certainly true of Jesus’ work on this earth. The norm was for a man or woman to present an animal to the priest for sacrifice to atone for sins. But, Jesus presented Himself. He not only exceeded the norm; He surpassed it to the ultimate. After His sacrifice, no other was necessary. In doing so, He took upon Himself the very worst of every man and every woman, so that they might be freed from the penalty of their own sins and cleansed to the core of their being. The exchange was that God would die for man — the highest and best for the lowest and worst. There is no more excellent thing in all of God’s creation than this.

This is our example, and I use it to show the quality of God’s work as well as the efficacy of it. All the work that God has ever done for mankind has this same mark of excellence, this unsurpassed quality. It is forever both thorough and complete. There is nothing lacking in it.

But, how does God’s work of excellence translate itself into our character? Let me say first of all that as He worked, so ought we also to work.

There was a time, a golden age, not too long ago, in which man came to understand that the worth of all his works would be judged by the Creator of the Universe. At this, man set his hand to labor in the most excellent fashion that the world had yet seen. It was not a matter of plundering nations and building monuments to themselves as the Romans had done. Men began to seek to know all that could be known of God and His universe. The grandest works of architecture, math, science, government, philosophy, music, art, and literature budded forth in this period of Renaissance and Reformation — Renaissance in the South of Europe and Reformation in the North. We do not often think of the Reformation in terms other than religious, but all fields of learning were nurtured in the bosom of the Reformation. And, although the Renaissance is typically viewed as the rebirth of classical Greek and Roman cultural expression, it was driven primarily by the Catholic cosmology. The essence of these two confluent philosophical

streams was primarily a religious one. These two views of God and the cosmos competed to determine which would predominate in the thinking of mankind. To confirm this, all one has to do is read the writings of the great men of the period like Columbus and Newton. Their passion to know God and carry the gospel of Christ, however they might have defined it, was all-consuming. That God existed and that men must serve Him to the fullness of their being was assumed. To people of that era the universe started at that point.

So, what has happened to our Christian view of the world as we embrace the third millennium A.D.? How is it that our testimony before the world has become exhausted? Where are the Newtons or Columbuses? Where are the great Christian statesmen like Washington and Adams? Why are there no composers like Haydn or Handel? The tide of their world view swelled to enormous proportions and swept Western man forward toward our modern era. But, the momentum is gone; the current has retreated from the shore. We have spent too many years drawing from their deposits without replacing them or adding to them.

I am often amazed at the foresight of Francis Schaeffer, a Christian philosopher who wrote in the early 1970’s that “personal peace and comfort” would become the obsession of the generation to succeed him. The coin of the realm in our day is the pursuit of money and comfort, and for these we have sold our Chris-

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*“Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men” (Pro. 22:29).*

*“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Ecc. 9:10).*

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tian calling.

I have no answer for the crippling malaise of Christianity other than to draw on the wisdom of those who have gone before us, a wisdom that they sought from the pages of Scripture. The Bible persistently counsels the believer to seek excellence. Proverbs 22:29 gives us this principle, “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.” Ecclesiastes 9:10 repeats this exhortation along with the reason for it: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”

*Continued on Page 8*

# **A Case of Rigormortis**

**by Kenneth Westby**



A sure evidence of death is the progressive stiffening of the corpse as muscle proteins coagulate. The condition is called rigormortis, and forensic specialists can determine the time of death by measuring how far the stiffening has progressed. When rigormortis is complete, the body is stiff. The low brow vernacular for a dead body, frequently heard in gangster movies, is simply: “a stiff.”

The sight of a pale, prone, and stiff corpse lying on a morgue’s cold stainless steel table is a depressingly hopeless scene. If the corpse is a loved one, the scene is oppressive, heavy with sadness. Apart from the power of our life-giving Creator to vivify that loved one, life itself would ring with hopelessness.

Yet we are far from hopeless. We know the hope of the dead is the speech of God, his call to “Wake up O Sleeper! Wake up my son, my daughter! Arise! Come forth to me!” When similar words were said to Jesus, as he lay stiffly on a cold rock slab, he immediately stood up! and walked out of the tomb. He now lives forever.

Death spells the end of all our thoughts and movements. Death is poignantly observed as rigormortis overtakes our once active body. There is nothing we can do about its eventual arrival. One day we will all die.

There is an equally serious condition to that described above, yet it is a state we can do something about. It is spiritual in nature. It is a spiritual condition common to the living—including many of us Christians.

## **Spiritual Rigormortis**

This spiritual condition can be described as a death-like case of inflexibility, immobility, stiffening, rigidity, coldness—a case of spiritual rigormortis. Unfortunately, this is not a rare phenomenon. Rather than following death, it precedes it among many Christians.

Specifically, what is spiritual rigormortis? It is the inability to move Godward; to change, to grow, to stand up for Jesus. In fact, it is the unwillingness to stand up for anything important—if standing up requires risk, money, time, inconvenience, or “heaven forbid,” effort.

Rigormortis Christians are spectators, sitting on their duffs, either watching and grouching about an evil world

getting more evil, or critiquing those “stand-up Christians” as they strive, grow and attempt to do some work for God. These sedentary watcher-Christians are not likely to admit that they are in a spiritually dead condition. In fact, if they found themselves in a bull-session discussion of Christian martyrdom, from the comforts of home or local church they would probably give all present the impression they would stand up for Jesus and die if necessary. This points up another fact about rigormortis Christians, the only thing that moves is their mouth. But talk alone is never a substitute for action.

About 250 A.D., the Roman emperors Decius and Valerian began a murderous campaign of persecution against Christians. The fortunes of the Roman Empire were then in decline and the rapidly growing Christian movement was a convenient scapegoat. While persecutions against Christians came from time to time, this was the first systematic attempt by the empire to crush Christianity.

In his history of the last days of Rome, Richard E. Rubenstein describes the imperial plan: “The strategy was simple: all subjects were ordered to sacrifice to the immortal gods or else risk the death penalty.”<sup>1</sup> How do you think the persecution proceeded? Would most Christians stand up for Jesus and refuse to do sacrificial worship to the Roman gods? Would most cave in to save their skins?

The plan worked and one reason for its success was the condition of the church itself. “The Christian movement had grown rapidly and now included large numbers of respectable citizens who had no taste for martyrdom or imprisonment. Far more of its members obeyed imperial orders or bribed their way out of trouble than risked the emperor’s displeasure. In the first year of the persecution, says one historian, ‘Christians joined with their pagan neighbors in a rush to sacrifice,’ and ‘the Christian church practically collapsed.’”<sup>2</sup>

The state terror continued for a decade, and amazingly, the church emerged stronger than ever. Among the ranks of believers sifting and sorting ensued. No room on the fence was available for sitting or straddling. It was stand up time before the high throne of

*Continued on Page 14*

# Why Does Nearly Every Culture Have a Tradition of a Global Flood?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.\*

One of the strongest evidences for the global flood which annihilated all people on Earth except for Noah and his family, has been the ubiquitous presence of flood legends in the folklore of people groups from around the world. And the stories are all so similar. Local geography and cultural aspects may be present but they all seem to be telling the same story.

Over the years I have collected more than 200 of these stories, originally reported by various missionaries, anthropologists, and ethnologists.

While the differences are not always trivial, the common essence of the stories is instructive as compiled below:

1. Is there a favored family? 88%
2. Were they forewarned? 66%
3. Is flood due to wickedness of man? 66%
4. Is catastrophe only a flood? 95%
5. Was flood global? 95%
6. Is survival due to a boat? 70%
7. Were animals also saved? 67%
8. Did animals play any part? 73%
9. Did survivors land on a mountain? 57%
10. Was the geography local? 82%
11. Were birds sent out? 35%
12. Was the rainbow mentioned? 7%
13. Did survivors offer a sacrifice? 13%
14. Were specifically eight persons saved? 9%

Putting them all back together, the story would read something like this:

Once there was a worldwide flood, sent by God to judge the wickedness of man. But there was one righteous family which was forewarned of the coming flood. They built a boat on which they survived the flood along with the animals. As the flood ended, their boat landed on a high mountain from which they descended and repopulated the whole earth.

Of course the story sounds much like the Biblical story of the great flood of Noah's day. The most simi-

lar accounts are typically from middle eastern cultures, but surprisingly similar legends are found in South America and the Pacific Islands and elsewhere. None of these stories contains the beauty, clarity, and believable detail given in the Bible, but each is meaningful to their own culture.

Anthropologists will tell you that a myth is often the faded memory of a real event. Details may have been added, lost, or obscured in the telling and re-telling, but the kernel of truth remains. When two separate cultures have the same "myth" in their body of folklore, their ancestors must have either experienced the same event, or they both descended from a common ancestral source which itself experienced the event.

The only credible way to understand the widespread, similar flood legends is to recognize that all people living today, even though separated geographically, linguistically, and culturally, have descended from the few real people who survived a real global flood, on a real boat which eventually landed on a real mountain. Their descendants now fill the globe, never to forget the real event.

But, of course, this is not the view of most modern scholars. They prefer to believe that something in our commonly evolved psyche forces each culture to invent the same imaginary flood legend with no basis in real history. Instead of scholarship, this is "willful ignorance" of the fact that "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:5, 6).

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\* Dr. John Morris is President of ICR.

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# Stem Cell Research: Truth vs. Hype

by Carrie Gordon Earll

In 1998, researchers at the University of Wisconsin successfully harvested the first stem cell from a living human embryo. To most Americans, the event seemed an insignificant footnote on the pages of medical history. Little did most of us know how it would direct public debate over the value of human life.

## Building Blocks of Life

Stem cells have the potential to develop into several different types of cells, and everyone's body contains them.

There are two basic types of stem cells: embryonic and adult. Embryonic stem cells come from human embryos and form in the early days of human development before individual cells receive their "assignment"—for example, before they turn into blood, brain or hair cells. Scientists speculate that these immature (or blank) cells can easily be coaxed into becoming any number of cell types, thereby holding great promise for healing the human body, with possible cures for diabetes and heart disease to treatments for burns and spinal-cord injuries. However, harvesting these cells comes at a tremendous price: A living, human embryo must be destroyed.

Adult stem cells, on the other hand, come from a variety of sources, including the placenta, umbilical-cord blood, brain tissue, skin, bone marrow and body fat.

Harvesting these cells requires no destruction of human life.

The use of adult stem cells in medical treatment is not new. For years, leukemia patients have obtained adult stem cells through bone-marrow transplants, and cancer patients often receive their own "cleansed" stem cells after chemotherapy. Adult stem cells have a proven track record of helping patients in the healing process.

Despite what you might hear in the media, embryonic stem cells have yet to demonstrate any therapeutic benefit to patients. Speculation as to the healing power of embryonic stem cells is just that: speculation.

Scientists admit they have far to go before mastering the complicated and rapid process of embryonic stem cell growth and development.

Yet many Americans incorrectly believe these cells already provide treatments and cures. There is also evidence embryonic stem cells are difficult to control, potentially putting patients who are treated with these cells at risk for serious side effects.

As research with adult stem cells progresses, scientists are learning that these cells may be almost as versatile as embryonic ones and capable of converting into various cell types for healing the body—without destroying innocent human life.

The tendency of media reports to blur the distinction between adult and embryonic stem cells leads



### *What is a stem cell?*

Stem cells develop into the cells that provide the basic building blocks of the human body. During early development these cells give rise to all of the cells that form the 210 distinct cell types in our bodies. In adults, these stem cells provide support to the body by replenishing existing cells when they wear out or are destroyed.

### *Why do scientists want embryonic stem cells for research?*

Because the cells are alive and may help develop treatments for healing disease and injuries. At the embryonic stage of development these immature stem cells are called pluripotent and can develop into virtually any cell or tissue in the human body. In order to harvest these stem cells, scientists must break through the outer ring of the embryo—an act that always kills the tiny human life.

### *Are adult stem cells pluripotent too?*

Scientists are optimistic about the versatility of living adult stem cells. Initially, scientists thought that differentiated cells (those already assigned to tasks in the body) would be too developed to be pluripotent. However, recent research on adult stem cells indicates that these cells may be stimulated or morphed into other types of cells, making them more flexible than previously thought—precisely the quality that makes embryonic stem cells so attractive to some researchers.

some to believe pro-life organizations such as Focus on the Family oppose stem cell research. This is not true. Focus on the Family wholeheartedly supports adult stem cell research. We do oppose research that destroys human embryos.

## Protecting Innocent Life

Congress recognized the threat to this tiniest member of the human family and first banned federal funding for research involving human embryos in 1996. However, that prohibition has no power over privately funded research, which continues to use human embryos for lethal experimentation, as seen by the University of Wisconsin's successful embryonic cell harvesting.

Last Aug. 9, President George W. Bush announced that his administration would not fund stem cell research that would destroy human embryos. Dr. Dobson recalls the speech as strongly pro-life: "Never before has an acting President made such a bold national address in support of the sanctity of unborn human life." Another positive part of the President's announcement was his call for the creation of a council on biomedical ethics, headed by Leon Kass, M.D., Ph.D., an ardent and intelligent defender of human life at all stages.

But Dr. Dobson regrets a portion of the President's announcement. He explains, "We were disappointed by Mr. Bush's decision to allow federal funding of research on 60 or so existing stem cell lines. The killing of embryos, even if it happened in the past, is never justifiable for scientific gain." With that, Dr. Dobson also explains that good pro-life friends in Congress warned that if Mr. Bush had banned all research, he would have surely been presented with a veto-proof bill allocating federal money for new embryonic stem cell research. That would have assured the killing of more little, preborn children.

## Fundamental Questions

The question of whether it is acceptable to destroy a human embryo for his or her stem cells raises basic questions about the value of life: When does human life begin? When is human life worthy of protection? Where will science and law draw the line?

Biologically, human life begins at conception (or fertilization) when sperm and egg unite. This new embryonic life is 100 percent human, complete with 46 human chromosomes and his or her own genetic code. As the embryo grows, he or she begins the journey through all of life's stages: embryo, fetus, infant, toddler, adolescent and adult. To classify any one of these stages of life as not human discriminates based on age, appearance or location.

Scientists' ability to harvest embryonic stem cells was assisted by the existence of so-called "surplus" embryos, frozen and stored in fertility clinics across the country. Infertile couples created these embryos with the intent of implanting the tiny humans in the womb during a procedure known as in vitro fertilization (IVF). The number of unclaimed embryos has grown through the years as couples are encouraged to fertilize more eggs than are safely implanted in a single IVF cycle. Some scientists, patient groups and politicians argue that any unused embryos should, with parental consent, be destroyed for their stem cells.

Parents of embryos frozen in fertility-clinic storage can implant the embryos, donate the embryos to scientists for lethal experimentation or donate the embryos to other infertile couples for whom IVF has not been successful. Obviously, implanting an embryo in his or

her mother's womb or in the womb of another married woman who desires a child are the best options for the embryonic girl or boy. The latter, called "embryo adoption," has successfully blessed several infertile couples with children, including one child who was featured on a "Focus on the Family" radio broadcast.

Scientists conducting embryonic stem cell research initially said that destroying existing frozen embryos stored in fertility clinics would be sufficient to provide the cells needed for research. However, scientists at two privately funded laboratories recently lamented that additional sources of embryos are needed and announced

that they are taking the quest for embryonic stem cells two further steps, shattering age-old limits in medical ethics.

-The Jones Institute, a fertility clinic in Norfolk, Va., announced it is using donor sperm and eggs to create embryos for the sole purpose of destroying the embryos for stem cells.

-Advanced Cell Technology, a private biotechnological company in Worcester, Mass., used cloning techniques to create embryos for lethal stem cell harvesting.

The announcements confirm scientists' intent to create human life for the express purpose of destroying it and set the stage for laboratories to create "embryo farms" to provide researchers with an unlimited supply of fresh embryonic stem cells. They also confirm what many critics of embryonic stem cell research fear: The thirst for embryonic stem cells is unquenchable.

Proponents of embryonic stem cell research argue in favor of killing embryos (created for reproduction or destruction) for their stem cells based on the notion



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Along with the seeking of excellence, there is another reason the Christian should never produce anything other than his very best. It is the principle of “returning value for value received.” It is the Golden Rule: “Do unto others what you would have others do unto you.” If only we would keep this one thing in mind, much of the sloppy, second-rate work turned out by Christians would vanish. If we are paid for our work, it should be the best that we can give for the money we get. None of us likes to receive poor-quality work or goods for the money we spend; our goal must be to make sure that others never receive such work from us. By this we set the standard of the highest and best.

There are principles that lead to satisfaction in life and a clear conscience, if not money and fame. Great men of the past lived and breathed these principles. Our forefathers lived by the creed *Imitatio Dei*, i.e., that all Christians should be imitators of God in every aspect of life. And, until every believer comes to understand what it means to become like God, we will never recapture the culture.

There is much more that could be said about this topic, but I leave it to you, dear reader, to engage your mind and take the initiative to bring forth excellence from all your efforts. □

## Two Books Written for Our Times!



Author Roy A. Marrs presents two important studies in *Paul, New Testament Lawyer and Advocate of Grace*, and the companion book, *God's Revised Will and the Rest of the Story*. In these books author Marrs takes a fresh look at the Covenants and Hebrews 3 and 4.

Marrs responds to those who say: “Keeping the Sabbath won’t save you!”...“Of course, it won’t! Neither will refraining from adultery, nor honoring your parents! Obeying God will not save, but each of us needs to be saved from disobedience, which God calls sin!”

These two books are free. They are sent in pairs or, for groups, two boxes of 22 of each title. Postage in the U.S. is \$3 for two books or \$20 for two boxes. Send postage upon receipt. Request by e-mail: [marrsr@lodinet.com](mailto:marrsr@lodinet.com), or to Roy A. Marrs, 102 Mokelumne River Drive, Lodi, CA 95240.

## Book Review

Elder Roy Marrs has written a comprehensive and extremely well thought-out pair of books called, *God's Revised Will and the Rest of the Story* and *Paul, New Testament Lawyer and Advocate of Grace*. Even the most seasoned bible scholar might find himself at task to explain some of Paul's writings, which at times may seem contradictory.

Using the passages of the Bible to explain itself, Elder Marrs brings Paul's writings into sharp focus so that the meaning is consistently clear as a whole. In *God's Revised Will*, Elder Marrs looks at each argument which has been used to nullify the ten commandments and shows that God's law is still in force, but no longer written on tablets of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart.

What I particularly love about this book is that each question about the covenant is posed, and then decisively answered by detailed quotations from the scripture. Several of the well-read members of our congregation have this book, and commented that it is excellent. I firmly believe that it is far better than books I have seen elsewhere on this topic (including well-stocked Bible bookstores). If you read it, I believe you will agree.

His second book, *Paul, New Testament Lawyer and Advocate of Grace*, deals with Paul's often difficult to understand writings on grace versus the law. Even the Apostle Peter wrote that some of Paul's letters “contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). Elder Marrs clearly shows the beauty of grace and faith which does not nullify the law, but which, through God's Holy Spirit, enables us to “uphold the law” (Romans 3:31).

The role of good works is clearly defined as “it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.” Some portions of the law which were changed are outlined as those which constitute a “wall of partition” between Jew and Gentile, and were fulfilled.

This is an excellent dissertation on the law, grace, faith and the commandments. It has a biblical answer to every argument that is usually given in an attempt to show that the entire law was abolished, and shows the ultimate self destruction involved in that line of thinking. I was so impressed with these books that I obtained several copies and distributed them to members of the church.

I recommend them without reservation to anyone who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, for they show that the answers are all unwaveringly contained in the BIBLE.

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Review by Dr. Leroy Brown of the Sacramento Church of God (SD)



# New Covenant Theology:

## *Doesn't Anybody Read this Book Anymore?*

by Kenneth Ryland

My friend Harold turned to me and said, "You know, Ken, we don't need the law. The law was made for sinners, and we've been saved from sin. All we need is to follow Christ."

To anyone who has come to know Christ as a Sabbath-keeper, this is strange theology, but to many who have lived their Christian lives as Protestants, this is familiar territory. Although I think this approach to the Bible is based on false assumptions, I do not question the sincerity of people like my friend Harold who cannot conceive of any other way to look at their relationship with God. What I don't understand is why, when Sabbath-keeping Christians have been liberated from this lawless approach to Scripture, anyone would want to go backward to the "weak and beggarly elements" of gnosticism. Yet, this is exactly what is happening in some sectors of the Sabbath-keeping church under the guise of "New Covenant Theology," so called (it has a modern, up-to-date ring to it; doesn't it?) Maybe they are just tired of trying to hold their ground against the Sunday-keeping world. The trouble is, Protestantism is in decline and is not holding its own ground against the onslaught of an increasingly secular, lawless culture.

My goal in life is to know God intimately and to live by the faith of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Yet I know that if I have been set free from sin by Christ, I cannot—yea, I dare not—live any longer in the sins from which that I have been freed, and it is the law of God that defines the behaviors and attitudes that I must avoid. Why is that so hard to understand?

### **It's Always the Sabbath**

When you take a good, long look at "New Covenant Theology," there is really only one commandment that the "liberated" ever object to. It is the Sabbath. I don't know of any professing Christian that believes that idols are a good thing, or that it is all right to murder or commit adultery. The rationale for keeping the Sabbath is much harder to understand than that for any of the other commandments. After all, time is just time, a ticking of the clock; isn't it? There seems to be some human logic in keeping our minds free from lies or covetousness. We can understand that taking the Lord's name in vain debases the name of the very God that we profess to exalt. But the Sabbath, where is the logic in that? And, absent a direct New Testament command that says,

"Thou shalt keep the Sabbath," most in the Christian community reject it out of hand.

The problem of interpretation of the New Testament seems always to revolve around the apostle Paul. For that reason it is always good to remember the apostle Peter's words about the epistles of his fellow apostle, Paul: Paul's letters "contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). That said, let me bring you some genuine New Covenant theology right out of your own New Testament scriptures:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17-19). Of course, anytime Christ says "think not," that is exactly what some are going to think. These same people will say that since He fulfilled the law, we are not obligated to keep it. He did that for us. But, have heaven and earth passed away yet?

### **The Apostle Paul's Perspective**

Of course, anyone who has read the apostle Paul thoroughly will quickly see that this apostle to the gentiles is a great defender of the law. He makes a very eloquent defense of the law to the Roman Christians in chapter seven of his epistle to them, pointing out that man's problem is not the law, but man's carnal nature: "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:10-14). Paul makes it clear that the law of God is not just words chiseled into tables of stone; it is spiritual. It is the very manifestation of God's

nature and must become part of our Christ-like nature when we become converted by God's Spirit.

The apostle Paul drives this point home even further in chapter eight of Romans: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:6-9). Here Paul is emphasizing that the problem of man is not the law but the flesh—the carnal mind. In the flesh the mind cannot be made subject to the law of God. The apostle's very obvious conclusion is that the mind must be made spiritual so that it will by nature (divine nature) become obedient to the law of God.

In these two chapters of Romans Paul speaks directly to the issue that is brought up in the book of Hebrews—that under the New Covenant, the laws of God are written on our hearts and in our minds (Hebrews 8:10 and 10:16). Later in Romans the apostle speaks of Israel's unbelief—that is, why Israel failed to keep its covenant with God. He condemns Israel's lack of faith in God, which would have allowed them to see in Christ the hope of their salvation. He does not condemn the law, but rather Israel's insistence that obedience to the particulars of the law was more important than their faith in the saving power of God's Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 9:30 – 10:13). They missed the very point of the law, which was to bring them to faith in Christ. They were like the musician who sees only sharps and flats and quarter notes but misses the beauty of the entire symphony.

### What about Hebrews?

The writer of the book of Hebrews (who may well have been the apostle Paul) explains how God has remedied the flaw in the first covenant—the flaw being in the people of Israel, not in the law. God's solution: Write the law into the hearts of the people! "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them [the fault was with the people], he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the

Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest (Hebrews 8:7-11).

The mind that is converted by the presence of the Spirit of God is no longer hostile to the laws of God. As can be seen in the above passage from Hebrews, God's New Covenant does not do away with the law but ensures that the law will be written on the hearts of His children. And their hearts will lead them to obey His law.

### Is the Law Made for the Righteous?

Back to my friend Harold who was paraphrasing 1 Tim. 1:8. I have no quarrel with the way he lives his life. He lives a very law-abiding, godly life and certainly does not blaspheme God in any way. And, since I know something of his miserable background, I can say without reservation that God has worked miracles in his life. He truly is not the carnal, unregenerate scoundrel that he was in his youth. I simply think that he does not yet fully understand how the Spirit of Christ has made him a righteous, law-abiding, God-fearing man. First Timothy does say that "the law was not made for the righteous man," but if you read the entire passage in context, it is very clear that the law of God has a desirable place in the life of a Christian:

"Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:7-10).

In this passage from 1 Timothy, Paul puts the law of God into a social or cultural context. He is not using it the same way his did in Romans 7 and 8. Nevertheless, the apostle states emphatically that "the law is good." He obviously believes that the goodness of God's law is an unvarnished truth that needs to be repeated. Simply put, God's law exposes sin, and it provides governments as well as churches a divine justification for restraining evil and maintaining order. This is very similar to what the apostle has to say about government authority in Romans 13. Since the righteous are by definition obedient people, of course the law is not made for them—that is, it is not made for the purpose of restraining their sinful behavior. If they were law-breakers and sinners, we could not call them righteous. So, you see, even righteousness itself has something to do with being obedient and law-abiding.

One other important principle to glean from 1 Timothy and Romans 13 is that the basis of good civil government is God's law. The founders of the United States recognized this principle to be the cornerstone of the

American Republic and any other truly free society. Now, since America's founding civil authority relied on God's law to define good and evil, is it too much to expect that Christians should also rely on God's law to define righteous and sinful behavior? To say that we no longer need God's law because we now have Christ makes no logical sense whatsoever.

I have always marvelled that some who claim to know God could read Jesus' plain statement, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets," and come to the conclusion that He did indeed come to do away with the law and the prophets. In that passage from Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus states that He came to fulfill the law and the prophets. If Jesus truly lives in us, He will fulfill the law and prophets in us as well. This is how God writes His laws into our minds and on our hearts (Hebrews 8:10). This is the very heart of the New Covenant.

### The Identifying Mark

Many modern Christians fail to consider what the Bible portrays as the identifying mark of the Christian at the perilous close of this age, immediately prior to the return of Christ. Revelation 12:17 gives us a clear description of the faithful followers of Christ during a period of great tribulation, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." And, so that we would not be confused about how we should live, our Lord repeats this description in similar words in Revelation 14:12, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." This has always been the identifying mark of the saints of God and will continue to be God's description for those who follow Christ right up until the Savior's return. It is also one of the most identifiable signs of the people of God today.

### Conclusion

To put it bluntly, New Covenant Theology is nothing but sophistry. This theology would have us throw out the commandments of God in favor of "the love of Christ" as if the two were somehow opposed to each other. Much is made of the kinder, gentler way of New Covenant grace, with the obvious inference that those who believe in obedience to God's law are nothing more than warmed-over Pharisees. Little thought is given to the fact that grace cannot exist without law in some form or another.

One of Jesus' missions on earth was to put people like the Pharisees in their place for their grotesque mishandling of God's law. By contrast Jesus exemplified obedience to the law from a heart filled with the Spirit. In following Jesus, we embrace God's law and reject the way of the Pharisees, who knew nothing of the grace

and compassion of God. We also reject the lawless, formless "love" of our modern Gnostic Christians who believe in life without eternal consequences and follow the same "mystery of lawlessness" that their ancient spiritual ancestors pursued. These people believe that the "love of Christ" somehow cancels out the commandments of God—never realizing the obvious contradiction of their beliefs. They do not see that they are merely an extension of the lawless spirit of the world that surrounds us. It has gobbled them up.

Jesus knew that the law was a spiritual force, a life-sustaining principle—the very power of the nature of the Almighty Himself—that must manifest itself in the mind and behavior of any who possess the Spirit of God. For our Savior, the commandments could not be separated from the lives of those who truly believed in Him and God's salvation. That is why He stated clearly that it was not enough just to refrain from murder; His followers must likewise refrain from the hate that leads to murder. The proponents of New Covenant theology make the same mistake that the Pharisees made. They try to divide the Spirit from the law. The Pharisees believed that it was enough to convert the body, disregarding the mind. One could avoid adultery yet hold lust in the mind. The New Covenant Gnostics believe that if we just love our neighbor in the name of Christ, all our evil deeds will be washed away. If one takes New Covenant theology to its logical conclusion, there is really no need for repentance since there is no longer any law that demands our obedience, and "where there is no law, there is no transgression."

We can be thankful, however, that not all Protestants accept this consciousnessless form of Christianity. There are many who believe strongly in the Ten Commandments, and in God's law in general and reject the notion that God's law is outdated. Our disagreement with these people would be, of course, over which day is the Christian Sabbath, and I believe that many would accept the Sabbath if they only understood that in keeping Sunday as their "Sabbath," they are obeying the edict of Caesar rather than the law of God.

When Jesus stated: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17), He was speaking of the way to salvation for all men, not just for the Jew. He knew that the Jews of His day were close, but had failed to understand that obedience to God's law must be driven by faith in God's salvation through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. As we keep the law from the heart filled with the Spirit of Christ, we can truly love others—even our enemies—as He did. This is how we have the love of God in us. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Scripture says that God's commandments are not a burden; New Covenant Theology says they are. Which will you choose?

# Back to Basics

by Brian Knowles



One of my early mentors, in the face of our church's then endless crises, used to say, "Brian, there are three things that I know: God exists, the Bible is His Word, and this is His Church." At some point, he omitted the third item and left the organization. I'm not sure how he presently feels about the first two. In times of crises, it is natural to reexamine the foundations of one's own personal faith.

Now that war with terrorism has settled in as an integral part of American life probably from here on out, it is natural to ask oneself, "What do I really believe? For what would I be willing to put it all on the line?" Make no mistake; we are facing an enemy that hates our faith, and that of the Jews. To this demonic enemy, we are mere prey. Furthermore, this enemy does not make any distinction among kinds of Christians. A Sabbatarian is as much an "infidel" as is a Catholic or a Baptist.

With all this in mind, let's reexamine my mentor's three issues, and see where we can go from there.

## God's Existence

My reasons for believing that God exists are no longer purely intellectual—though those are indeed compelling. I believe he exists because I'm convinced that I've *experienced* his existence.

Back in the thirteenth century, English philosopher Roger Bacon suggested that there only three basic reasons for believing, or claiming to know, anything: reason, external authority, and experience. He was convinced that the third was the best. I agree. When it comes to the existence of God, reason can only take you so far. Not that reason is a bad thing. There are many convincing reasons, born of the process of reason, to believe that God exists. It is far more rational to believe that God exists than that he doesn't.

External authority means virtually nothing to me any more. The fact that someone in ecclesiastical authority says that God exists is not of itself a valid reason to believe that he does.

Experience is the real clincher.

So how do we experience God firsthand?

If you've ever experienced the healing power of God, you'll never again doubt his existence. I have. I've prayed for people, and anointed them, and seen them miraculously healed – sometimes within minutes. Once,

when I was praying over the phone for a man who lived in a distant city, a tumor fell off his temple while we were on the phone. The place where it had been was smooth as a baby's tummy. I knew that it wasn't my power that made that happen.

Like many of you, I've experienced personal healings as well as divine protections and interventions. I have seen the shape of my own moral life transformed by the indwelling Spirit of God. I have experienced the phenomenon of conversion and subsequent transformation. By the influence of the Spirit of God, I am no longer the same person I was 40-plus years ago.

I have a myriad of personal reasons to believe, on the basis of experience, that God exists. I've had prayers answered in ways that could not be attributed to coincidence or time and chance. I've seen the hand of God in world affairs. I've seen it in the personal lives of thousands of believers. I doubt that anyone could convince me today that he does not exist.

God is real, but he's sometimes a real mystery. He doesn't do things on my terms. He doesn't always drop everything to answer my prayers exactly when I want them answered. He tests my patience. He tries my faith. But in the end he comes through because he is my Father and he loves me.

## The Bible is His Word

I still believe that God has revealed himself, and his will, through the Bible. I am convinced that it is an inspired product of the infallible God. People wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God to do so.

At the same time, I no longer accept the Evangelical view that the Scripture as we have them are inerrant; and I certainly reject the idea that we have such a thing as an error-free translation. That is simply an indefensible idea. We have no original autographs of Scriptural writings. We have only copies, and those copies are at variance with each other in myriad points. At the same time, within those copies, we have all of the critical information that God has revealed. It just takes good scholarship to sort it out.

When it comes to the translation of these copies, we run into all kinds of problems. To illustrate, let me quote from a book entitled *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard (p. 67):

"The Gospels are rife with mistranslations, 'But does it really make any difference?' the reader asks. 'Even if

there are mistranslations here and there, does one really have any difficulty in understanding the words of Jesus? Are there any passages that have been misinterpreted to such an extent that they are potentially damaging to us spiritually?

“Unfortunately, the answer is ‘yes.’ In fact, had the Church been provided with a proper Hebraic understanding of the words of Jesus, most theological controversies would never have arisen in the first place.”

Sadly, the Church has been building dogma and doctrine on *translation*, rather than on the meaning and intent of Scriptural texts themselves. Those of us who are unable to work with the texts in their original languages should not be “doing theology.” The fact that we have has resulted in a world of cultic error. Furthermore, I am convinced that if we don’t understand Scripture from a Hebraic viewpoint, we hardly understand it at all.

### “This” Is His Church

Is the Worldwide Church of God (my old denominational affiliation) still the main manifestation of God’s Church on planet Earth? I think not. Is it “a” Church of God? Not necessarily. Does it include within its membership members of the true Body of Christ? Most certainly!

The point here is that I no longer believe that the true Church of God can be identified on the basis of organizational structure, doctrine, dogma or by its leading personalities. God may or may not be doing a work through certain individuals. There’s certainly no single doctrinal “package” that represents the absolute truth on the subject. Each group embraces true and false doctrines, true and false Christians, true and false ministers. Individuals are more or less led by the Holy Spirit. We all have varying degrees of understanding of Scripture. We all have blind spots, prejudices, flaws, sins, and hang-ups.

I’ve said it many times: Organizations are what the Church *has*, to use as tools, not what the Church *is*. The real Church is the Body of Christ. It is made up of all of the people on Planet Earth to whom God has given His Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). Such people may be found in most Christian churches.

Fragments, parts and particles of truth may be found throughout the larger Church. There is no perfect denomination, or congregation. And I have never yet met a minister who seals up the sum of all theological knowledge and understanding, myself included.

I can now understand why former members of the Churches of God are finding places within so-called “mainstream” churches. They know that Sunday is not the Sabbath, but they also see no harm in meeting on Sunday to learn the Word of God, or to fellowship with brethren. To use a Biblical expression: “Against such there is no law.” If they see the Spirit of God working in a Sunday-keeping Church, they are drawn to it rather than to a Sabbatarian Church that displays carnality, party spirit, negative politics, and intolerance for differ-

ence of opinion. I know of ex-ministers and lay people alike who are now attending, or even ministering in Lutheran, Congregational, Nazarene, Orthodox, Presbyterian, and charismatic churches. I am acquainted with others who attend Messianic synagogues or Church of God Seventh Day congregations. All, in some ways, are finding their spiritual needs met in these churches. They are discovering parts of the Truth that were suppressed in the Churches of God. At the same time, they are running into error, blind spots, politics and all of the other negatives that seem to plague the larger Church. They seek the wheat, and reject the chaff. It’s that simple. In the midst of it all, the Lord knows them that are his.

The Body of Christ still exists. Like the mustard seed it continues to grow. But it hasn’t yet gotten its act together doctrinally, politically or organizationally. That may not happen until Messiah comes to straighten us all out.

In the meantime, we all have to find a place in the Body where we can grow and produce fruit for the Kingdom. That may or may not be within the Churches of God Pod.

It is simply beyond the capacity of most of us to resolve all of the theological and political problems that exist within the Church in the span of our lifetimes. As they say, it’s not “doable.” At some point, we have to pick the hill we are willing to die on. We have to decide where in the Body we’re being led to settle, and there try to do all the good we can while avoiding the downside of things. If God loved us while we were yet sinners, the least we can do is learn to love each other even when we disagree on points of doctrine. Not long ago, a friend sent me a copy of something the late Albert Einstein said. It seems appropriate to quote it here:

“Strange is our situation here on earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes it seems to us that we have a divine purpose. There is one thing we do know definitively: that we are here for the sake of each other.”

We are not here to kill each other, as were or are the communists, Nazis and Islamic terrorists. We’re here to nurture, support, and love, care for and heal each other. We’re here to exercise loving dominion over a beautiful earth that is the handiwork of God. We are here to learn how imitate to God in whose image we are made.

God, who is unchanging, has instructed us, “You shall not hate your brother in your heart...you shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge...you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:17-18 NKJV). That was God’s will in Moses’ day, and it is his will today.

When the Church repents of party spirit, cults of personality, and doctrinal exclusivism, it will make a great stride forward in spirituality. I still know that God exists, and that the Bible is his Word – but I don’t always know that “this” is his Church. □

Yahweh. Many failed the test and denied the Savior before men. But a strange thing happened. “Although the great majority of laypeople and many churchmen played it safe, the heroism of a few was a more potent public influence than the compromises of the many. Particularly notable was the bravery of Christian women. Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria, who barely escaped martyrdom himself, describes how a local mob, worked up to a bloodthirsty pitch by the authorities, seized the wonderful old lady Apollonia, battered her till they knocked out all her teeth, built a pyre in front of the city, and threatened to burn her alive unless she repeated after them their heathen incantations. She asked for a breathing-space, and when they released her, jumped without hesitation into the fire and was burnt to ashes.”<sup>3</sup>

The self-sacrificing examples of so many brave Christians drew the admiration of Rome’s pagan populace and many were drawn to join such a demonstratively committed community of believers. The Church then experienced a tidal wave of conversions.

### **More Martyrs and Heroes**

God gives us many true heroes to inspire and guide us toward taking stands for him and for righteousness. Take those three young Jewish men who chose to be thrown into a fiery furnace rather than break the first commandment by worshipping king Nebuchadnezzar’s image of Gold.<sup>4</sup> Or consider Esther who risked her life to save the Jewish people from genocide.<sup>5</sup> Remember the example of Deborah, who, when the men of Israel lacked the courage to stand against the Canaanite king who cruelly oppressed them, stood up and joined the battle. God made her army a “thunderbolt” and gave her a glorious victory.<sup>6</sup> Steven stood up to the religious leaders of the Jewish nation and gave them a most inspired account of their national history and sins, and of their responsibility for the recent murder of Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He was stoned to death while seeing heaven opened and beholding Jesus at the right hand of God.<sup>7</sup> The biblical list of martyrs and heroes is long.

Modern day martyrs are innumerable. There was Dietrich Bonhoeffer who, being so stricken with such great loathing over the plight of the Jews, joined a plot to overthrow Hitler and was hanged by the Nazis. And the German pastor Martin Niemöller, who in 1934 personally admonished the Führer Adolph Hitler to cease his anti-Christian attacks, his crude infusion of pagan German mythology and his persecution of Jews. He was threatened but would not be silenced. His house was bombed, he was imprisoned, and finally died in Dachau concentration camp.<sup>8</sup>

Thousands of German pastors and priests were killed by the Nazis for resisting the crimes of an illegitimate and evil state. They stood up for something. They

did not have rigormortis. They were not prone. Their Christianity required them not to remain neutral. Sadly, they were a minority as many more thousands of clergymen and most of the German Christian church chose to go along with the Reich.

In the last century, more Christians have died standing up for righteousness than at any time since the church began. Hundreds of thousands have died in the last two decades in countries like the Sudan and China. We are warned that persecution will increase before an end is finally made at the return of Christ.

I know it can be hollow to talk of being faithful to martyrdom when such talk is made from the comforts and safety of my American home. However, the Bible makes it plain that if we are devout and self-sacrificing in our daily living now, God will give us the strength to pay the ultimate price should it ever be required. We should pray for safety, not martyrdom. In fact, we are nowhere counseled to seek martyrdom and are permitted to flee it when possible. But when faced with the sword, and fleeing is not possible, it is either stand up for Jesus or deny him.<sup>9</sup> But we should not fool ourselves; if we are not spiritually standing up for anything now, we won’t stand at that final test. If I am not a dynamic, moving, growing, and “doing” Christian now, it is unlikely I will have the spiritual backbone and will to pass such a test.

The fact is, virtually all of you reading this will never face such a spiritual showdown as emperors Decius and Valerian forced on our fellow Christians 1800 years ago. But that doesn’t mean we aren’t being tested because we are—right now, every day in every way. The test is this: love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.<sup>10</sup> Stand up now and walk the Way of God. Join in proclaiming his truth. Take on his divine nature by becoming like Christ, and be full of love and good works to all your neighbors.

This brings us back to the frighteningly serious condition I call spiritual rigormortis. This condition is the mirror opposite of standing up for the Cause of Christ and actively working to further the coming of the Kingdom of God. It would be healthy for us to give ourselves a private “physical” to see if we are rigormortis Christians. We could ask ourselves:

- Do I stand up to myself? Do I deny my self-indulgences; do I battle laxity, ambivalence, tolerance and casualness toward sin? Do I refuse acceptance of whatever the fallen culture dishes out? Do I pray for a loving, serving, and giving spirit so that I might be used of God for his plans?
- Do I stand before God in humility asking him to actively direct my life? Do I submit my will to his greater will? Do I seek the clarity of his judgment on questions of right and wrong? Do I manifest conviction on the things of God? Am I moving

Godward in mind and character and love?

- Do I stand up to others either to serve or resist: serving others at their point of need; resisting evildoers who would lead me away from The Way. Am I bold to share my faith and eternal hope with those in my circle of influence? Do I stand up for my beliefs and for what is right? Am I willing to draw lines at major issues, at core values? Am I afraid to stand up and be counted for Christ in the presence of men?

## Frozen in Time

There are Christian folk I know who are frozen in time with a set of doctrines. To them, Christianity is a nice set of “the one and only true doctrines.” Like a bag of heavenly golf clubs, these doctrines will allow the user to shoot through the course of life with a winning score.

But doctrines are not Christianity. Dynamically moving Godward, becoming like Christ, is true Christianity. Doctrines summarize truths of Scripture. They are important and some are more important than others—the “weightier matters”—as Christ clearly labeled them in Matthew 23:23. Doctrines are the bones that, rightly put together, help define what the body of truth should look like. But they are not the body, they are not God. One can intellectually embrace the right doctrines and remain a rigormortis Christian, or worse yet, an enemy of God.

We of the Bible Sabbath Association believe with deep conviction that the Sabbath is an important truth of God—a signal doctrine that points to the identity of God himself as Creator, and to our relationship with him. But, we also can state with even greater conviction, that the Sabbath is only a part of the Story of God, and being a Sabbath-keeper does not equate with being a Christian. If that is a truth, and I believe it is, we Sabbatharians will be judged on how we stand up for Jesus on all counts of Christian behavior, not just the Sabbath.

There is a danger to thinking one has it figured out doctrinally. Such thinking provides deceptive camouflage to unregenerate, self-centered living. One can “feel” right while “acting” wrong. If anything is plain in Scripture, it is that God will always judge us by what we do and how we act, not with our doctrine-set, our pretensions, or our Christian camouflage. A lukewarm condition in some respects is more dangerous than being stone cold, for it allows for easy self-deception of one’s sorry spiritual condition. Lukewarm is but a stage toward spiritual death.<sup>11</sup>

God knows a stiff when he sees one. He can take our hand and feel it is cold. He can watch our Christian life and see that it is spent in the prone position. If you are concerned that you are not standing up for righteousness in every area of your life, concerned that you are growing cold or already there, that you are spiritually stiff, not grow-

ing and not moving Godward, there is hope if you want help. Not only can our Great God resurrect the dead and make them stand up and live, he can also resurrect a Christian with a case of rigormortis.

The first stanza from one of my favorite songs, *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*, reads like this:

*“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldier of the cross;  
Lift high his royal banner, It must not suffer loss:  
From victory unto victory his army shall he lead,  
Till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.”*

There is no rank for immobile Christians in the Army of God. Join me in praying to our Lord for the conviction to become hot, mobile, active, and stand-up Christians.

—Kenneth Westby is a vice president of the BSA.

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### End Notes:

1. Richard E. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God—The struggle to Define Christianity during the Last Days of Rome* New York, Harcourt, 1999, 18.
2. *Ibid.*, 18.
3. *Ibid.*, 19.
4. Dan 3:12 ff.
5. Est 4:12-17.
6. Jdg 4.
7. Ac 7.
8. Vincent Carroll & David Shiflett, *Christianity on Trial* San Francisco, Encounter Books, 2002, 119-121.
9. Mt 10:32-33.
10. Dt 6:5.
11. Rev 3:15-17.



## Why the Seventh-day Sabbath?

***This attractive booklet lists six reasons why keeping the Sabbath is important for today. The back cover is formatted so as to be suitable for stamping the address of your local congregation!***

***Order code number P205 to purchase this booklet. They can be purchased for only \$17 per 100 copies. This is an inexpensive but effective way to teach others about God’s precious gift of His Sabbaths!***

# Q & A Dialog on the Sabbath

## **Q: Do you believe Christians should observe the Sabbath today?**

As one of our basic, fundamental beliefs, the Association for Christian Development recognizes the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of God. We believe it is God's will that Christians use this special day in a way that fulfills its purpose and intent.

## **Q: But isn't the Sabbath "Jewish"?**

Many consider the Sabbath to be Jewish because of the emphasis the Jews have placed on keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath was one of the special signs God gave the nation of Israel as a part of the Old Covenant (see Ex 31:16-17). But the Sabbath predates the Jews. Jesus plainly taught that God had made the Sabbath for man (Mk 2:27). The Sabbath was created that first week – when man was made (Ge 2:1-3). God rested on the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath day, and sanctified it, set it apart for special or holy use (Ge 2:3, Ex 20:11). He is our example. And in the New Testament, Christ observed the Sabbath as our example (Lk 4:16; Jn 14:6-7; 1Jn 2:3-6). The apostles and New Testament Church observed the Sabbath, as even did Paul and the Gentiles (Acts 13:42-44; 17:2; 18:4). So the Sabbath is also a Christian institution and was the day of weekly worship for the early church well into the second century.

## **Q: But isn't it impossible to perfectly keep the Sabbath because of its many restrictions? Didn't John say that even Christ broke the Sabbath?**

John 5:8-18 shows that Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath. In other words, he did something that was contrary to their Sabbath rules and regulations (v. 16). In the same verse Jesus was accused of blasphemy against God (v. 18). On other occasions the Jews accused Christ and his disciples of other "unlawful deeds" (Mk 2:23-24; 3:2; Mt 12:1-14). Of course, Jesus never

sinned against God's Ten Commandments (1Pe 2:21-22). If he had, he couldn't have been our Savior. Rather than Jesus "breaking God's law," the Jews were breaking God's Commandments by their human traditions (Mt 15:1-9). They were teaching commandments of men (v. 9). Their hearts were far from God (v 8).

## **Q: Do you mean the Jews of Christ's day weren't really keeping the Sabbath properly?**

That's right. Over the years, the Jews added many regulations to the Sabbath. Many do's and don'ts. These were a result of their interpretations of the few verses regarding Sabbath observance given in the Old Testament. But without God's Spirit they lacked the spiritual understanding to properly interpret the Old Testament Scriptures.

Clearly, God is more concerned with attitude and motive than mere legalistic compliance. There is a spiritual reason and purpose behind the Sabbath command. Somehow it was being missed by the religious establishment of Christ's day. Lacking an understanding of the Sabbath's divine design, men made it into a religious artifact—a burden instead of a blessing.

## **Q: But don't our actions reflect our attitude?**

Yes. That's a good point. If you know God's will and have an obedient attitude toward God, your actions will tend to be in harmony with God's will. But the Jews, lacking the attitude, spiritual understanding, and heart to obey, misunderstood God's intent for the Sabbath and looked to outwardly visible actions as evidence of righteousness.

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Source: Association for Christian Development  
<http://www.godward.org/>

## Proclaiming the Sabbath More Fully Sabbath Conference 2002

May 17-19, 2002

Berrien Springs, Michigan  
ANDREWS UNIVERSITY  
V. E. Garber Auditorium  
in Chan Shun Hall

**"HE SHALL THINK TO CHANGE  
THE TIMES AND THE LAW"  
Daniel 7:25**

Prophetic history shows that anti-Judaism has played as much as a role in the abandonment of the annual Holy Days as it has in the abandonment of the Sabbath. The strong anti-Judaic reason for rejecting Sabbath observance is also the fundamental reason given by early Christian writers for condemning the observance of the annual Holy Days. In both cases the "beast" power of Daniel seven did not "nail to the cross" the holy days and the Sabbath; rather, it replaced them. The New Testament reveals they existed and were universally observed in the early church.

The "Christian" theology of contempt against the Jews has influenced the repudiation of biblical institutions such as the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days. This conference is an attempt to show the truth that God gave the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days, not as trademarks of Judaism, but as signs of His saving plan for the whole human family. These together "Proclaim the Sabbath More fully."

This Sabbath conference will address the restoration of a biblical liturgical calendar to the church. *Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God's word in their native purity.*

"In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired." Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, page 678.

For further information contact:

M. Basner — (918) 521-1414  
(918) 835-8509

Email: [sabbathmorefully@yahoo.com](mailto:sabbathmorefully@yahoo.com)



## God's Care for His Earthly Children

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance. Psalm 33:12.*

Americans usually think of July 4, 1776, as the birthday of their nation and, of course, it is. But it is the Constitutional convention of 1787 that really launched the American ship of state. Jealousies between the larger and the smaller States almost wrecked the convention from the outset. Finally, when the discouraged delegates were about to pack up and leave for their respective States, Benjamin Franklin, 81 at the time, slowly rose to his feet and said, "If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father, how can a nation be born without His notice?" The elder statesman then suggested that prayer be offered. After prayer, Franklin delivered a brief, but powerful address based on Psalm 127:1: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." The effect of this action upon the delegates was magical. A spirit of working together took over, and the Constitution of the United States was framed. And on this date in 1787, Delaware ratified it and thus prepared the way for it to be adopted by other States.

Benjamin Franklin's reference to sparrows and nations is true of individuals. Nothing happens to the child of God except it be God-caused or God-permitted. No matter how lowly and obscure you may be, or may think you are, God has a plan for your life. Think of David, a mere shepherd when he was called to be king. Think of Elisha, a humble plowboy following the oxen when the prophetic mantle fell upon him. Think of Hannah, despised by Peninnah when God granted her request for a son. All of these individuals were of lowly rank, yet all of them had God-planned lives.

As we allow this truth to sink into our innermost consciousness, we will come to recognize that all that comes to us, every circumstance that impinges upon our lives, has a bearing on God's plan for us. It is either caused by God or is allowed by Him to happen. Trials and disappointments, injuries by enemies and even friends, hardships and privations, all have their God appointed mission to prepare us to carry out His plan for our lives.

Since this is true, there should never be any room in our lives for discouragement or despondency. When we have made God the Lord of our lives, when we have prayed that His will might be accomplished in us and through us, we may rest in the knowledge that whatever happens does so for our eternal good.

*Reprinted from New Every Morning, p. 347. Author: Donald Ernest Mansell. Publisher: Review and Herald Publishing, 1981.*

*Continued from Page 7*

that is it acceptable to sacrifice embryos for the potential greater good of others. To argue that "surplus" embryos may be thrown away in any case arrogantly glosses over the fact that embryos are living human beings, created in the image of God and deserving protection. They are tiny boys and girls with complete genetic codes, not spare parts for medical experiments. To propose creating human embryos solely for scientific benefit and then destruction is unspeakably evil.

It is never morally or ethically acceptable to advance medical science by sacrificing human life, regardless of the promised result. Modern history is rampant with examples of people who were considered expendable for the good of scientific advancement, including experiments conducted upon concentration-camp victims in Nazi Germany and syphilis-infected African-American men left untreated in Tuskegee, Ala.

Medical research must have limits guided by ethics, morals and Scripture. If we allow researchers to destroy embryos for their stem cells today, what will prevent the same scientists tomorrow from the equally egregious act of dissecting 6-month-old unborn children in the womb for their body parts? Unless we delineate a clear line establishing that life is present and protected at conception, all human life is at risk. □

*Carrie Gordon Earll is a bioethics analyst for Focus on the Family.*

**Focus on the Family** magazine, January 2002, Volume 26, No. 1, published by Focus on the Family. Copyright ' 2001 Focus on the Family. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. Used by permission.

## Bible Trivia Quiz

- 1) What was the apostle Peter's Aramaic name?
- 2) In which body of water was Jesus baptized?  
a) Euphrates River; b) Pool of Siloam; c) Jordan River; d) Sea of Galilee
- 3) What was the apostle Peter's brother's name?
- 4) Moses first heard God's voice when he saw the burning bush on which mountain?  
a) Moriah; b) Horeb; c) Zion; d) Olives
- 5) King David's first wife was  
a) Bathsheba; b) Michal; c) Abigail;  
d) Rebecca

Answers: 1) Simon Barjona (Mt. 16:17, KJV); 2) c (Mark 1:9); 3) Andrew (Mark 1:16); 4) b (Ex. 3:1); 5) b (1 Sam. 18:27)

# McSpirit

by Lewis J. Goldberg



We are all familiar with the news that Christianity is trending weaker in this country. Infecting all media and messages lately - well, the last twenty years, at least - along with the watering down of the 'truly important,' is a corresponding puffing-up of the 'meaningless.' Those who supply us with the music, words, and images that drive our thoughts of what is real, desirable, and available [those folks in the advertising world] have turned to clothing the trivial in 'spirituality' to push their messages. For many, this is the only exposure they have to anything remotely appearing to originate outside their selfish confines, but they are indeed deceived, for this 'new spirituality' emanates entirely from within, having no roots or origins in God.

Advertisers have discovered that human beings suffer an intangible emptiness if their soul is not fed. This is simply our longing to return to God our Father. Hucksters have turned this hunger into a secular philosophy that now pervades every aspect of communication from every type of organization: from charities to corporations, from government agencies to [even] traditionally Christian entities. Most people call this philosophy 'secular humanism.' Here, let's call it McSpirit.

McSpirit borrows themes from established religions - mostly Christianity, but also from Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, America Indian beliefs, and maybe a few other -isms. It uses music that sounds like medieval chants; imagery that conjures up prayerful, meditative feelings; and even the cadence and wording of their messages invoke a sense of permanence...right-ness, and even righteousness.

Some Examples...

- If I hear one more commercial on the radio—some company or another touting how wonderful and humanitarian they are, with some dreamy, hymn-like boys choir chant in the background—I'm

gonna 'review my lunch.' Case in point: the latest Phillip Morris commercial about how they flew - what was it...five tons of food? - to the refugees in Kosovo. The ad has a disclaimer at the beginning: "based on a true story." The segment contains so few facts that if any of them didn't happen, there really is no story left to tell. Five tons of food would probably last only twelve minutes, and is likely equivalent to the amount of defectively packaged product they toss daily.

- How about the Salvation Army and their "...it takes more than tools from the hardware store to rebuild shattered lives, it takes the tools [poignant pause] that come from the heart." Everybody now: Aaaaawwwwwww! And this from an organization supposedly dedicated to spreading the Gospel. Nice that they knocked Jesus Christ off His cross and hung one of those velvet sad-eyed doggy paintings in His place. Okay, I'm an extremist, but a group that has the word 'salvation' in their name ought to be a little more 'on task' with the God thing.

- Can we visit any company's website nowadays without seeing a link from their homepage called something like "community support," "global responsibility," "protecting our environment," or [my personal favorite] "our diversity?" If I go to an auto manufacturer's website, I don't want to be preached to, I want to know about my vehicle, "fergoodnessakes." I don't want a lecture in civic responsibility, where I should throw my trash, or how we should make the world safe for cross-dressers and pedophiles.

It's Everywhere!

It used to be [in the much-lauded 'old days'] that people, organizations, and other conglomerations of humans did what was widely known as "the right thing." No one ever elaborated on why they did it...they just did it. And this is where McFaith is mas-

sively appealing - everyone is still concerned with doing the right thing, it's just that now they tell us why, and it's not the same why that it would have been 50...75...100 years ago. The rules have changed, and the forces of McFaith are ensuring that we all understand the New Catechism. They teach it to us as we drive to work, as we read our magazines, as we entertain ourselves. They teach it to our children in the public schools through the textbooks, the films they are forced to sit through, and even through the teachers themselves. They teach our children using even more insidious methods than they use on us grownups. Watch the trailers on the videos you purchase and rent for your children. You hand them this drivel, and then tell them to watch it.

Pay attention also to the story lines in the latest kids' shows. Barney was written by the 'UN Committee on Infantile Indoctrination.' Jay-Jay the Jet Plane is rife with eco-nonsense and phony humanistic morals. Winnie The Pooh we remember as those three or four classic stories that Disney made popular in the 1960's...now Pooh only lacks a cleric's collar with all the nonsense he's spewing. I have caught others offhand and cannot remember the titles, but the problem seems pandemic. Many shows begin as good ideas with good story lines. Later, when they become popular, the big marketing money gets injected, and before anyone notices the advertising department is making plot suggestions. With these kids' shows, as with everything else, they used to have characters that simply did the 'right thing'...now they lecture our children as to why...and it's nothing like what we'd tell them...

...if we cared to.

The sad fact is that the Priests of McFaith are doing a much better job of teaching their version of morality than God's Church does His. Pastors, are you listening?

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## **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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## **Last Notice**

### **Third Annual BSA Scholarship Contest**

*The Bible Sabbath Association* wishes to announce the 2002 BSA Essay Scholarship Contest. The contest is open to all students in their junior year in high school (or home schooled students that are one year away from being college-bound (approximately ages 16-17), **and** to all college-age students up to the age of 25. The application deadline is April 1, 2002. Each applicant will be given a free subscription to *The Sabbath Sentinel* for one year along with his or her application entry. The four winners of the essay contest will be awarded prizes as follows: first place \$750; second place \$500, and third and fourth place with an award of \$250 each. Scholarship money will be paid directly to the trade school/college or university the student has been accepted at for the fall 2002 school year. The contest is open to U.S. and international students. It is open to any Sabbath-keeping Christian regardless of church or organizational affiliation.

**Former BSA essay scholarship winners may NOT enter the contest this year. This is to allow others the opportunity for the prize money.**

The three essay questions for this year's contest are as follows:

- (1) The lessons I have learned from keeping the Sabbath in my life;
- (2) How I explain the Sabbath to others (teachers, employers, friends, etc.); and
- (3) Challenges facing Sabbath keepers and/or Sabbath keeping churches in the years to come.

**Applications must be filled out completely. Essay questions must be hand written by the applicant with a typed copy attached for easy reading by the judges.**

For Scholarship Applications, call toll free 1-888-687-5191 or write:

Attention: Scholarship Contest c/o The BSA, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, Wyoming 82718, or June Narber at [jnarber@hercurian.com](mailto:jnarber@hercurian.com), or write her at 6325-9 Falls of Neuse Road #193, Raleigh, NC 27615. Forms are also available on the BSA Website, [www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org). Donations for next year's scholarship gladly accepted. We need donations to insure that we can continue the scholarship program.

Please send any donations to

***The Bible Sabbath Association,  
3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718***

# ***The Church in the World***

## **Hong Kong Businessman Released**

Chinese authorities have finally released 38-year-old Hong Kong businessman, Lai Kwong Keung, who had been jailed for smuggling Bibles into mainland China. It seems that the Chinese government was responding to public concerns expressed by President Bush prior to his recent trip to China. To Chinese officials this seemed the perfect time to show the world a much more “tolerant” face toward Christianity. Also the Beijing government is hoping to lay the public relations groundwork to entice people from all over the world to attend the Olympic Games may be held in China in 2008.

Mr. Lai is a member of evangelical “Church in Hong Kong,” known elsewhere as the “Little Flock.” The Little Flock is said to be the fastest growing church in China, with 500,000 members.

In May 2001, Mr. Lai was one of a group of three arrested by the Chinese authorities for allegedly “using an evil cult to undermine law enforcement.” It is alleged they were caught smuggling more than 30,000 Bibles into China. While these Bibles were similar to the government-approved version, the PSB reportedly objected to them because the commentary and notes in the Bibles had not received government approval. If Lai had been convicted, he would have faced a possible death sentence. —  
*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*

## **Secret Documents Reveal Crack on People of Faith**

According to a recent report by the Committee for Investigation on Persecution of Religion in China, Chinese authorities have killed well over 100 people and arrested thousands in a crackdown on Christian churches that operate outside government control.

Only government-monitored church services are permitted by the Beijing regime. The report states: “The level of persecution aimed against unregistered Christians in China is high. The persecution against underground Christians has escalated and originates at the highest central levels of the Chinese government.”

Independent British human rights expert, Robin Munro, has confirmed the authenticity of secret Communist Party documents smuggled out of China which show that Chinese government authorities at the highest levels are actively pursuing a policy designed to extinguish all Christian activity not controlled by the state as well as the activity of other religious movements. “It paints a pretty frightening picture of the Chinese security authorities’ attempt to suppress a wide range of spiritual groups,” stated Munro.

Foreign religious scholars believe that there are perhaps 60 million underground, or house, church members. The officially sanctioned Christian churches have around 15 million members.

The report indicates that in 20 provinces 129 people had been killed, 23,686 arrested, and 4,014 sentenced to re-education. Often trumped-up criminal charges are issued against unregistered Christians in order to avoid outside criticism.

## **Colombia**

Open Doors staff reported that five believers were assassinated in Riobravo Valle, Colombia, for their refusal to join the guerrillas. Compass Direct reported the late August release of Pastor Enrique Gomez, after being held hostage for six months by guerrillas. In September Colombian guerrillas kidnapped a Slovak priest and released him a few days later. In September the New Tribes Mission concluded that the three American

missionaries kidnapped eight years ago were shot by their captors three years later. —*Source: Open Doors with Brother Andrew*

## **India**

Christians experienced continued persecution in the northern part of India, according to Compass Direct. Fanatical Hindus composed a hit list on the Internet of so-called criminals that are against Hindutva (Hindu nationalism); amongst them are the Pope and several evangelists. The Indian government is considering introducing a bill aiming to put a general ban on religious conversion. In another legislative move, the pro Hindu government has decided to replace the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act with a stricter law to prevent the free flow of foreign funds to Christian missionaries and NGO’s. A few incidents of Christians being forced to reconvert to Hinduism were reported in the states of Orissa and Chattisgarh. When the Christians in Hathaud village in Chattisgarh refused to renounce their faith, they were falsely accused of crimes and ten of them were arrested. Three women were released after 15 days but the men were still in detention by mid November of 2001. —*Source: Open Doors with Brother Andrew*

## **Burma**

The situation of the Christians in Burma is clearly deteriorating. A woman preacher from the Chin area was condemned to two years labour camp. The military dictatorship has banned Christians from meeting in buildings less than a century old. More than 100 church buildings have already been closed in the capital Rangoon and the nearby Shwe Pyi Tar since June. All church buildings have been forced to close in the southern township of Hlaing Tai Yar. At least 17 Christian ministers have gone into hiding and five missionaries have been ordered to leave the

country. In July pastor Gracy was sentenced to labor camp on unjustified charges, our staff reported. Hundreds of Christian tribal Nagas were forcibly converted to Buddhism by the country's military junta and religious monks, the Naga People's movement for Human Rights mentioned on 11 November. Those resisting were persecuted and kept as bonded labor. Many Nagas have fled to India as a result. Via our staff we heard that some Christians were killed for their faith in the Karen areas. —Source: *Open Doors with Brother Andrew*

### **Turkmenistan**

The government effectively bans all religious communities from carrying out any religious activity, with the exception of mosques under the control of the state-sanctioned Muslim Board and parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church. All Protestant churches - including the Baptists, Pentecostals and Adventists - have been closed down, as have Jehovah's Witness, Bahai and Hare Krishna communities. None of these may own a place of worship, meet for worship even in private homes, publish or import religious literature, have access to the media, teach religion to adults or children, run religious education establishments or have their own leaders.

In theory Turkmenistan's religion law allows groups with 500 adherents to register and function legally, but in practice officials demand that all 500 must be citizens who live in the same district of a town or the same rural district - and even then will deny any application by a non-Muslim or non-Orthodox community.

In November 1999 the city authorities in the capital Ashgabad bulldozed the Adventist church, which had been built with official permission and completed only three years earlier (Keston has a copy of a video of the bulldozers in action). The authori-

ties claimed the land was needed for a new road, but when Keston visited the site not long after the demolition, the rubble remained with no sign of progress on the road. Two mosques and two Hare Krishna temples have also been demolished to halt the religious activity being conducted there.

A number of Jehovah's Witnesses in Turkmenistan remain in prison, some for conducting "illegal" religious activity, some for refusing military service. No religious prisoners have been freed as a result of presidential amnesties. As in previous years, the December 2001 amnesty for the end of Ramadan required all amnestied prisoners to swear an oath of allegiance to the president and country on a copy of the Quran, something the Baptist and Jehovah's Witness prisoners find unacceptable.

Police and officers of the National Security Committee (KNB, former KGB) regularly raid religious meetings in Turkmenistan, even those held in private homes. On 15 November 2001 the police and KNB raided a service of the Protestant Word of Life church in a private home in the capital Ashgabad. Some forty people were held several hours, five were held overnight and all but a handful were given huge fines (some being fined twice). Three foreign nationals —among them two pastors—were deported to Russia and threats were made to confiscate the flat where the meeting took place, although the threats have not been carried through. Those who invited the three foreigners have been interrogated and threatened. Murad Djumanazarov and Jamilya Boltaeva, two church members who had travelled to Ashgabad for the meeting from the village of Deinau 35 kilometres (20 miles) from Turkmenabad, were sentenced to fifteen-day prison terms in Deinau. A further two were threatened in Deinau with being "locked away".

On 16 November 2001, a day after the Ashgabad raid, an Adventist meeting in Turkmenabad (Charjou) was raided. Six people were held for several hours before being freed. Although they were warned they would be summoned again, so far this has not happened. All their religious books as well as audio and video materials were seized. Police confiscated from the flat's owner legal documents proving ownership of the home, and these have not been returned either. Church members fear she may lose her home, as has happened to believers of other faiths who have used their private homes for religious meetings the authorities deem illegal.

On 8 January 2002, Turkmenistan's most widely-known Baptist prisoner of conscience, Shageldy Atakov, was freed ahead of the end of his sentence. Atakov has now been reunited with his family, but remains under close surveillance. —Source: *Keston News Service*

### **Kyrgyzstan**

New Decree Set to Tighten Religious Controls. As preparations continue for a new religion law which could be approved as early as May, the Kyrgyz government has issued a decree tightening controls on publishing which seems set to increase control over religious organizations. The senior Muslim cleric in Jalal-abad region in southern Kyrgyzstan told Keston News Service he feared the "audit" of religious organizations heralded by the decree would impact not only on "religious extremists", the professed target of the decree, but on ordinary believers as well. A human rights activist from Jalal-abad agreed. "I have no doubt that in time we will feel the impact of this decree, and that the controls over believers will tighten," he told Keston. —Source: *Keston News Service*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor:

I would like to reply to a number of articles from the last issue:

First, I would like to say I have come full circle concerning the subject in Q+A. I had no clue Mr. Davis was in the military but his reasons seem honest enough and hence, I agree with a Messianic writer which was published a couple years ago in **The Sabbath Sentinel** that God will be the judge of our motivations. The clergy have the right to judge whether we keep God's laws or not but God (Yeshua) will judge our motivations and manner of keeping his laws!

Secondly, concerning Messianism, I believe Calvin Burrell's teaching on the Covenants was a condemnation of the Messianic people, a Sabbatarian people also. He did not say it blatantly but it's really ironic that when some Believers want to obey God more, they are condemned as "legalists" (Burrell's words)! Why oh why oh why are righteous people called "extremists" and "legalists"?! I tell you a Truth: the enemies of the 7<sup>th</sup> day people are NOT the Protestants and Catholics anymore! Catholic theologians understand that the Church has not replaced the Jews but that the Church must come into Israel (Romans chapters 9-11). How is it that those who aren't really considered Believers understand this now but that Sabbatarian Christians continue to teach that old protestant heresy (irony #2)??

I needn't return condemnation because "those who curse Israel will be cursed (cf. Gen. 27:29). In fact, this judgment has already begun on the Sabbatarian Christians as evidenced in the last issue also! The plea by a

COG7 member to reproduce is another irony (#3): the fact that almost all Sabbatarian churches are dying is due to her condemnation of the Believing Jews and those who come unto Her, while Messianism is one of the fastest growing Faiths in our time!

And finally, the fourth irony is that those who think the Adamic covenant "to be fruitful and multiply" is still applicable today are hypocritical! How can one choose one "old" covenant command over another?? Besides, it is all too obvious the world needs less people, not more!

I have never seen the foolishness of one denomination show more in TSS than last month.

JB

Vancouver, WA.

*Calvin Burrell answers JB*

*Dear JB:*

*Ken Ryland, editor of **The Sabbath Sentinel**, has forwarded me your response to my "Primer on Covenants" in the November-December issue. Thank you for reading what I had to say, and for caring enough about the issue to respond.*

*Although one paragraph of my article, in particular, might be interpreted to be an objection to Messianic Judaism, I assure you that such was not my intent.*

*My use of the word "legalism" in that paragraph is not aimed at those who, as a response to God's grace in Christ, choose to obey more of the Torah than I do. Rather, the context of the paragraph implies, I think, that the legalist is the one who trusts his/her obedience to the law (any law!) as the basis of his/her right standing before Yahweh. Another way of say*

*ing this is that the legalist is one who elevates the Old Covenant (the law) above the New (the gospel). Most Messianics that I know of don't have this problem, but some Sabbatarians do have it.*

*Your comments on the relationship between Israel and the Church piqued my interest also. Everything depends on how the terms are defined, of course. Wouldn't it be true that, understood in their broadest, biblical sense, they are equivalent expressions for the people of God? If so, then neither must Israel come into the Church, nor the Church into Israel, for each is already in the other.*

*I do not mean to engender debate over this issue, but to affirm, I think, that my view is not far apart from what you expressed in your letter.*

*Again, thanks for reading, and for writing.*

Yours for Grace and Truth,  
Calvin Burrell

*JB responds to Calvin Burrell*

Dear Mr. Burrell:

Thank you for the clarification and kind response to my response. I have found through the TSS that dialogue among the Believers is a good thing.

Your comment on Israel/Church was interesting and well put, in the "broadest definition," of course. Touché! If you really were saying about the same thing as I was, I hope time will prove so.

You have fulfilled the Sabbath intent this Sabbath day by delivering to me a peaceful and conciliatory response. Baruch Ha-Shem.

JB

## Classified Ads...

### “Saving Children from Destruction”

AN EXHAUSTIVE STUDY © 2001

For Information write to

*Journal for the End of the Age*

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(June 02)

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**FREE FOR HIS CALENDAR.** Contains those events He commanded, and prophets prophesied in the Old Testament. Christ Jesus, with others, fulfilled them in the New Testament. Brief of His Calendars enclosed. Order for you and others. Outside America, 10 only due to high airmail postage. Send request to

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*Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96745, America*

(June 02)

### Seeking Fellowship

Couple in Winchester, Virginia,  
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### Pastor Wanted

Seventh Day Baptist Church  
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**Send resume to**

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Middletown, CT 06457

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(April 02)

**For classified ad rates, please write us at  
the address listed on the back cover.**

## Thank You!

The response to our 2002 Fund Raiser has been overwhelming. The BSA Staff and Board of Directors would like to thank you very much for the generous support we have received from all of you.

## New Children's Material

Because of the need of home-schoolers and Sabbath churches for good material, we have found some very interesting Children's and Sabbath materials to add to our list.

**Choice Stories for Children:** 40 character-building stories. \$7.00

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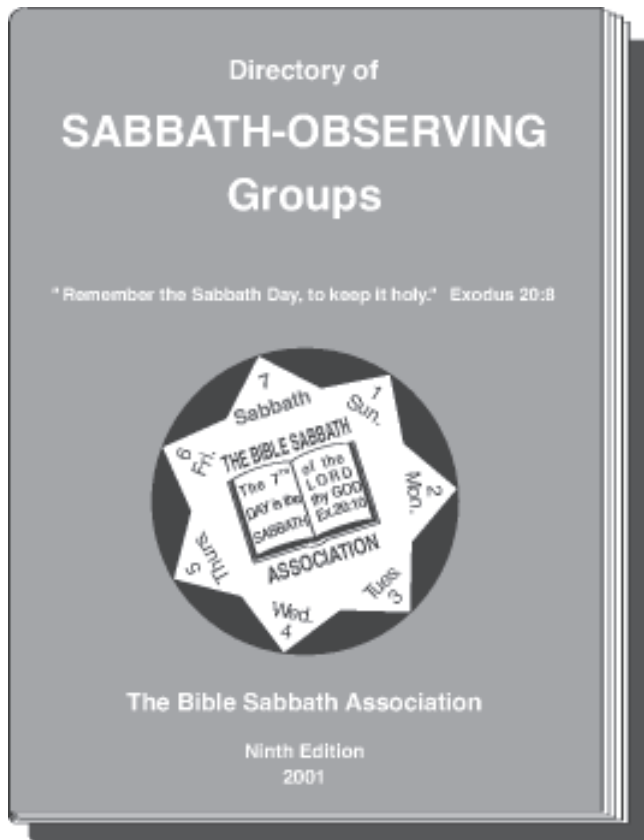
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