

THE **Sabbath Sentinel**

November-December 2003



BSA The Bible Sabbath Association

...the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.

The Sabbath Sentinel

November-December 2003 Volume 55, No. 6 Issue 504

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New BSA Officers for 2003 to 2007

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Vice president: Marsha Basner
Vice president: June Narber
Secretary: John Paul Howell
Treasurer: Bryan Burrell
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Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible in the United States. Those who choose to voluntarily support this international work to promote the Sabbath and proclaim gospel of the kingdom of God are welcomed as contributors.

Annual membership contributions: regular membership \$25; Family Membership \$30; Life Membership \$500. All memberships include an annual subscription to *The Sabbath Sentinel*. Make all checks, drafts and money orders payable to *The Bible Sabbath Association*. (VISA and MasterCard accepted).

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

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

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The BSA Conference



The BSA meetings are over, everyone's rear end is tired out, and a new set of BSA officers was elected to serve the 2003 to 2007 term. What's more, we all left in a good mood and no one was mad at anyone. That's worth a lot. As a result of the cooperative and positive atmosphere that prevailed, God was able to inspire some very good ideas that we will begin to implement over the coming year, which means that you will see some positive changes in the way we do things.

Our meetings were held at the Tulsa Church of God, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, from Oct. 1 to Nov. 2. The entire Tulsa congregation, pastored by Lawrence Gregory, could not have been more gracious and helpful to us. Not only did they open their facilities to us, they were continually busy providing us and other visitors with refreshments and smiles. By the end of the meetings we were all worn out; I can only imagine how exhausted the members of the Tulsa COG were. On behalf of the BSA, all I can say is a very inadequate "Thank you."

Let me just mention just a couple of the items we covered in our meetings.

The BSA Scholarship Contest

Without doubt one of the most important undertakings of the BSA is our scholarship essay contest. We are all very pleased to be able to offer some financial aid to our Sabbath-keeping young people. One phenomenon that has occurred in recent years is we have an increasing number of applicants from outside the U.S. and Canada—college-bound students that speak English as a second language. Since our contestants have traditionally been evaluated on their ability to use the English language, that puts nonnative speakers at a distinct disadvantage. In order to remedy this inequity, the board agreed that from now on our scholarship essay contestants would be divided into two categories—native English speakers and nonnative English speakers. We will pick two winners from each category, giving more emphasis to the content of nonnative speakers.

What you can do to help with our scholarship program. People often ask us, "What can I do to help?" Our scholarship fund must be refilled each year. If you believe that awarding scholarships to our Sabbath-keeping young people is worthwhile, consider making a contribution to the Scholarship Fund. This fund is kept separate from our other monies because of its specific, predetermined use. If you make a contribution to the scholarship fund, it will be used for that, and that only.

You can also help us look for funding from people or entities outside our family of readers and members. For example, there are many foundations and corporations that offer grants for higher education, but they must be contacted. If you are aware of such funding sources, please contact BSA president, Rich Nickels. Our board will then evaluate the possibility of using that source of outside funding. Please know also that we will never use any outside funding source that compromises the mission and integrity of the BSA. We would rather not have the money than jeopardize the clear vision that God has given us.

Become a Member of the BSA

One of our most important, yet underemphasized, needs is for more BSA members. If you are not a member, we hope you will become one. The annual cost of membership is only \$25 for individuals and \$30 for families. Lifetime memberships are \$500. There are certain benefits to BSA membership. Some of them are as follows:

For the BSA a broad base of membership means stability in funding for things like free subscriptions to *The Sabbath Sentinel*. It means that we can continue to send out thousands of pieces of free literature each year, much of which is used for personal ministry and evangelism by those wishing to spread the knowledge of the true biblical Sabbath and salvation. Also, through member contacts, we can strengthen the bridges being built between Sabbath-keeping groups.

For you the member, there are some distinct benefits. For all new and renewing members, we will continue to send all your orders free of postage costs. Also, in an effort to help our members with their personal ministries and evangelism, new and renewing members will receive 100 copies of their choice of any free leaflet or tract listed on the BSA order form. In addition, they may choose a free copy of either our *Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups* or *Sabbath at Sommerhase* (including the activity pack for children's Sabbath school).

More to Come

I haven't covered all that we accomplished at our meetings, but I hope what I have mentioned will whet your appetite to become a member of the BSA if you are not already, and look to the BSA as a resource for cooperation among Sabbath keepers and for personal ministry and evangelism. □

One Special Birth

by Calvin Burrell



Today, we celebrate—not a *birthday*, but a *birth*.

Just over 2000 years ago Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the days of Herod the King. The Bible tells us so.

His mother, Mary, and his presumed father, Joseph, welcomed him into the world, while heaven's angels and lowly shepherds came to adore the newborn babe.

Jesus lived on earth more than 33 years as a builder's son, an itinerant preacher, and a Jewish rabbi. He died by crucifixion in the early spring of 29 or 30 A.D. Although he never wrote a book, held public office, led an army, nor traveled more than 200 miles from his birthplace, He has had more impact upon the course of world events than all other world leaders combined.

Like every other person, the life of Jesus began with a birth—we know not the date. Most births follow a predictable course of human events: a man, a woman, an embrace; his seed unites with her egg, and a new life is formed which emerges into the world amidst pain and labor nine months later. The pattern is repeated tens of thousands of times daily in our world, un-amended from that given to our first parents in the garden.

All births in the human family have followed that model, except one: the birth of Jesus. His birth was special, one-of-a-kind. Not because of when He was born, or where. Jesus was born in a barn, certainly not the only time an expectant mother has been forced to deliver her child under crude conditions. He was born in the fall, we believe: nothing unusual about that. And He was born at night, which will be true for more than half of those born this December, 2003.

The birth of Christ is unique and cannot be duplicated, not for its when and where, but because of its Who and Why. He had a special mother, a one-of-a-kind Dad, and He Himself was the only Son so begotten.

Special Mom

Brief reports about Mary in Scripture present the fact of her extraordinary character. She was reflective and insightful, slow to speak except in praise, strong

in faith and conviction yet fully submissive to the surprising will of God for her life: this is Mary.

What is special about the mother of Jesus is not the admirable quality of her person, but the surprising nature of her pre-mature pregnancy. Still little more than a youth, she was found "with child, and without a husband."

In light of our western culture in this generation, one might well respond: "What's so special about that?" After all, out-of-wedlock childbirth is nearly as common nowadays as are those where mother and father are both present and duly licensed for nine months.

It is true that Mary was pregnant before marriage and that her reputation suffered among the town gossips of her day. Still, what sets Mary apart from the masses who so lightly esteem modern marriage is not that she was pregnant before marriage, but instead the fact that she was a virgin while pregnant. The implanted ovum in her womb had not been fertilized by the seed of a man, but by the power of the Holy Spirit!

This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14: "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Not just any virgin is foretold here, but *the* virgin: blessed is she among women (Luke 1:42). While Rome has exalted Mary to a position unjustified by Scripture, could it be that many Protestants too easily ignore her role in Heaven's plan?

A Special Son

The Jesus that was born to Mary in Bethlehem over two millennia ago was not your average child. The names He was given set him apart as unique. The name Jesus itself means "Savior" and He was also called "Emmanuel" because God came to be with us through Him.

Both "Son of God" and "Son of Man" are attributed to Christ, suggesting that Heaven and Earth have somehow met and kissed in Him. Other names given Him by the Spirit of God boggle our mind, but set our feet to dancing: Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,

Continued on Page 20

Meet the New

BSA Board of Directors for 2004-2007

Basner, Marsha
7800 N Victor, Sperry, OK 74073, 918-425-6424



Marsha Basner is a Registered Dietitian, has a Master's Degree in Food and Nutrition and runs a private practice. Marsha is affiliated with the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Tulsa. Her studies with a Baptist pastor (Southern Baptist Convention) resulted in his affiliation with the Seventh-day Baptist denomination. She is the moderator of the Sabbath_In_Africa Internet forum, which investigates primitive Sabbath observance on the African continent. (see http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Sabbath_In_Africa). She is a research fellow with the Sabbath In Africa Project at Oakwood College, Huntsville, AL, founded by Dr. Charles E. Bradford, author of "Sabbath Roots" researching the ancient Sabbath keeping traditions of the African continent where there have been recent discoveries of African Jews, Sabbath-keeping Christians and various Sabbath-keeping tribes. She is co-moderator of the SDA Feast Class Internet Forum investigating the relevance and continuity of the Sabbath and Biblical festivals in the Christian Church (see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sdafeastforum>). Assists in organizing the annual "Proclaiming the Sabbath More Fully" Sabbath Conferences, a symposium of Biblical scholars and students investigating the Biblical Sabbath and Festivals. Served as a co-editor for "Proclaiming the Sabbath More Fully" Newsletter and co-authored "The Creation Origin of the Festivals" (see <http://www.graftedin2torah.org/Gen1.html>). She has also authored an article entitled, "Should Christians Eat Kosher?" A passionate witness and evangelist for the Sabbath, she is actively involved in Biblical research, Bible studies and distributes tracts about the Sabbath locally, nationally, on the Internet, through postal mail and through "postage-paid" return envelopes.

Burrell, Bryan
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Bryan Burrell is a lifetime resident of Fairview, Oklahoma, where he and his wife, Sue, own a farm equipment business and manage a family farming operation. Their son Mark is the manager of the equipment business and their son Paul is a Continental Airlines Pilot.

Bryan and Sue were both raised in Sabbath-keeping homes as were their parents and grandparents and several great grandparents. Through the years they have attended many Sabbath-keeping churches and are active in the Fairview Church of God (Seventh Day) where they have served in many ways. They are life members of The Bible Sabbath Association and Bryan currently serves as Treasurer.

Bryan graduated from Oklahoma State University and enjoys taking additional college classes. He is a licensed insurance and securities agent in Oklahoma and specializes in assisting clients with financial planning. For over ten years Bryan has been a certified mediator for the Oklahoma Alternative Dispute Resolution System and volunteers his services as a mediator for businesses, individuals, families and churches.

Bryan is a graduate and member of Leadership Oklahoma, a member and past president of the Fairview Chamber of Commerce, a past president of the Fairview Board of Education and has served on an advisory board for the area Career and Technology Center, civic organizations and his local church. He is a certified pilot and flight instructor in private, commercial, multi-engine and instrument categories.



Burrell, Calvin
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Lifetime Bible Sabbath Association member and current BSA Board member; member and ordained minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day); current editor of the Church's BIBLE ADVOCATE magazine and director of its Ministries Training System; married 37 years, with three children and five grandchildren; age 60; currently resides in Houston, Texas.

Davis, Dr. Sidney L.
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Dr. Davis is a naturopathic physician (specializing in alternative therapies for over 25 years). He is also a retired naval petty officer. His church affiliation is with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He is also one of the principle organizers of "Proclaiming the Sabbath More Fully" Sabbath Conferences which is a symposium of Biblical scholars and students dedicated to the promulgation of the Sabbath truth. Dr. Davis is also involved in an effort to open dialog between SDA's and Jewish believers in the study and investigation of anti-Semitism in the Christian church, the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and addressing the anti-Christian propoganda and attitudes in Rabbinic theology.



He is the moderator of the SDA e-mail Feast Class Forum that is open to all interested in the investigative study on the relevance and continuity of the Sabbath and Biblical holy days (see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sdafeastforum>). Dr. Davis is also presently involved in a research project that is studying the Sabbath-keeping traditions of the African continent where there have been recent discoveries of African Jews, Sabbath keeping Christians and various Sabbath keeping tribes throughout the continent. He is a registered research member of the Southern African Missiological Society (see [/8409/aic.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/8409/aic.htm)) He is co-moderator of the Sabbath In Africa e-mail Forum (see http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Sabbath_In_Africa.) Dr. Davis currently serves as President of The Bible Sabbath Association.

Estep, Darrell
PO Box 2358, Port Orchard, WA 98366



Darrell Estep and his wife Helen live in Port Orchard Washington. He was been a Sabbath keeper all his life and has worked with the General Council Churches of God 7th Day organization since its beginnings in 1947. He has served as President of the General Council for many terms. Darrell has been a staunch leader for his local church Congregation Beth El Messianic Congregation located in Western Washington on the Puget Sound near Tacoma where he serves as Chairman of the Board. He states that once he actively began promoting the Sabbath real blessings came into his life! Darrell has been a College professor most of his life teaching engineering drawing and computer aided design.

Since retiring from active employment he and his wife have committed to use their retirement years in service to the Lord. If reelected he is looking forward to continue his work with the BSA in promoting the Sabbath. Darrell and his wife have five children who all love the Lord!

Howell, John Paul

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A Christian for several years, and a Sabbath-keeper for the last nine years, John Paul Howell is also an Electrical Engineer and Software Developer, specializing in telecommunications and computer networks.

John Paul always had questions regarding the validity of the Fourth Commandment while growing up in a Sunday-keeping church. Ten years ago, while teaching youth about the Ten Commandments as part of a week long "Backyard Bible Club," the reality of the Fourth Commandment struck home. This caused him to begin the wonderful journey of proving to himself not only the validity of God's Sabbath day, but also of gaining a better understanding of God's wonderful plan for mankind.

Throughout John Paul's walk with Christ, he has readily volunteered for numerous speaking and teaching positions for both children and adults. For the past four years, he was the leader of the weekly Bible study group at his former company. He also regularly accepts song leader and speaking roles at either his local church or other Sabbath group meetings as the need presents itself.

John Paul is currently a member of the Bible Sabbath Association board of directors. He is also the current keeper of the BSA website, and a Lifetime BSA member.

John Paul lives in Baltimore, Maryland with his wife of 14 years. He and his wife have an eight-year-old boy and a six-year-old girl.

Justus, Tom

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Tom Justus, a native of Northeast Arkansas, has been married to his wife Thelma more than fifty years. They had four children. Bob, the eldest son, died in 1993. In the printing business most of his life, Tom's company, Just-Us Printers, prints *The Sabbath Sentinel* magazine, along with many full color magazines. It is among the top ten sheet fed printers in Arkansas, has thirty full time employees, and has recently expanded. Tom currently is a BSA Vice President.



Tom was associated with the Worldwide Church of God from 1955 to 1978. He was ordained an elder in 1962, pastored churches, and set up and managed the Church's printing press at Pasadena, California, and in England, which published *The Plain Truth* magazine and all the Church's literature.

In early 1978, he left the WCG and started the Church of God International congregation in Pasadena. In 1979, he moved back to Arkansas and started his own printing plant. He continued to help Garner Ted Armstrong. He was on the CGI Ministerial Council for seventeen years. He was responsible for printing and mailing *Watch Magazine* until his departure in 1995.

Tom is active in community services, and is Pastor of the Church of God, Sabbath Day in Springdale, AR. He and his church started a basic doctrine booklet program reprinting old booklets, which are given out free in any quantity needed. Tom's goal now is to help as many people possible see the weakness of having a hierarchy and learn to evangelize in their own community.

Lewis, Earl
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Earl Lewis lives in a small town north of Joplin, Missouri. He and his wife, Wanda, recently celebrated forty-two years of marriage. They have three children and nine grandchildren.

In 1967, the knowledge of the Seventh Day Sabbath came through personal study and Earl attended and became active in the Joplin Church. He later moved to Stanberry, attended Midwest Bible College, and several summer sessions of Summit School of Theology.

Earl has served in a pastoral position for the Church of God (7th Day) since 1974. He recently retired from the pastorate but has not slowed down his involvement in the ministry. He continues to serve as an Elder and Board Member for the Joplin Church. He is outreach coordinator for the Joplin Ministerial Alliance and serves as a volunteer chaplain at the county detention center. He is Director of SEED Missionary Aid Association and operates the Giving & Sharing Bookstore. He leads a weekly Twelve Steps for Christian recovery meeting and an Overcomers Sabbath School class. He is a member of the city council and mayor pro-tem.

He actively spreads the SEED of God's love and way of life as he goes about. Many Gospel seeds are planted in foreign countries where the SEED and Giving & Sharing ministry assists foreign workers with Bibles, Christian magazines and other literature. His love and concern for people is exemplified by a willingness to serve others and be available to help them reach their full potential as God's children, and his unselfish promotion of the Bible Sabbath Association.

Narber, Eva June
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June Narber has been active on the BSA Board of Directors for eight years and with TSS (associate editing/writing) for six. She is the chair of the BSA Scholarship Essay Program. She was called by God in her early teens to keep the Sabbath alone, apart from her family.



She holds a Master's Degree in International Development with a concentration in anthropology/forestry coursework from North Carolina State University and a Bachelor's Degree (theology) from Ambassador College. She currently teaches ESL (English as a Second Language) at two community colleges and through private lessons. She also does non-profit organization consulting, occasional technical writing projects, and has been a traditional herbalist/natural healing consultant for over ten years.

June is a researcher, writer, non-profit organization participate, public speaker, counselor, and service focused individual. She is focused on promotion of the Sabbath truth across "all" the humanly created boundaries and into the international areas, having had first had experience living/working in Thailand. She is internationally and interculturally aware. She believes that the Sabbath is the key that unlocks a human being to the greater truth of scripture.

Her interests include the international church, the community church at the local level; the empowerment of the individual believer through obedience to God's laws and through local evangelism and through service to "neighbor." She sees a great work needs to done to unite brother and sister in the church, in learning how to love and serve each other, yet while living, working and functioning in the modern world.

Nickels, Richard C.

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Rich Nickels has been associated with the Bible Sabbath Association since the 1980s, serving as Board Member, President, and Secretary. He is a lifetime BSA member. His wife, Shirley Nickels, is BSA Office Manager. They have three grown children.



Rich was baptized in 1969, was a church administration employee of the World-wide Church of God from 1971-1973, and currently worships with the United Church of God and Living Church of God. In 1978, he founded Giving & Sharing, a non-profit ministry providing Bibles and other Christian literature to Sabbath-keepers around the world. See www.giveshare.org. He was ordained as an elder in the Church of God in 1999, and frequently gives Bible Studies and sermons.

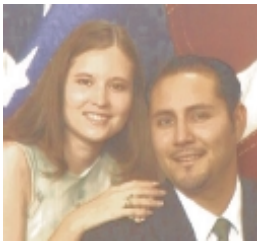
Rich Nickels is the editor of "The Giving & Sharing Newsletter," publisher of "Church of God News," and author of many Bible Studies and books, such as History of the Seventh Day Church of God, Biblical Holy Days, Biblical Marriage and Family, Biblical Law, and Biblical Health and Healing.

During his work for the BSA, Rich has greatly expanded the BSA literature list, established the BSA website, compiled the 2001 edition of the Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups, expanded The Sabbath Sentinel circulation by moving it to a free publication, and answered numerous requests to the BSA by personal correspondence.

The Nickels family strongly supports the BSA's mission to promote the Sabbath and cooperation among Sabbath-keepers.

Parada, Barbara R. Nickels

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Barbara Parada is a 28-year old native of Oregon, U.S.A. who has lived in Washington, Wyoming, Missouri, Texas, Mississippi, and Florida and is currently a permanent resident of El Salvador, Central America. She is a graduate of Texas A&M University with a degree in marine biology. She is a member of the United Church of God, an International Association.

She moved to El Salvador in 2001 with two dreams: one, to marry her prince charming, and two, to open a home for children. She lives with her husband, José Roberto Parada Guerrero, outside the capital of El Salvador. They are very involved with their church and love working with children, teaching Sabbath School for a group of 30 children ages 2 to 13.

Barbara serves as the graphic designer and one of three editors and principal writers for a woman's magazine, "Ellas," published by the UCG congregation in San Salvador. The Paradas founded Close to You, Inc., a U.S. non-profit, tax-exempt charity organization, in 2002. They founded this organization first, to provide an educational facility and jobs for members of their church, and second, to help the children and adults of El Salvador. Barbara serves as chairman of the board of directors for the organization and as secretary and treasurer for the El Salvador office. She is also a board member of the El Salvador chapter of LifeNets International, Inc. and volunteers regularly at a nearby Seventh-day Adventist orphanage. She is fluently bilingual in English/Spanish.

Ryland, Ken
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Ken is editor of *The Sabbath Sentinel* magazine and a Sabbath keeper of nearly 40 years. Ken lives in Kansas with his wife Patti and son Daniel where they regularly attend the Wichita South Seventh-day Adventist Church, and on occasion attend other local Sabbath-keeping congregations.

Ken first came to the faith in 1965 while attending the University of Mississippi and was baptized in Memphis, Tennessee, in May of that year. Since completing a B.A. in Spanish and History at Ole Miss, Ken has graduated from Ambassador College and from Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas with a Master's degree in Spanish. Ken moved to Pasadena, California, in 1972 to work for the Spanish *Plain Truth* magazine and became managing editor of that magazine in 1976. Ken also taught Spanish and American History at Ambassador College for several years.

Ken currently works for a large aerospace firm as a senior technical editor and has his own Web site at <http://kvryland.tripod.com> and is a regular contributor to the Association for Christian Development Web site and ACD's *New Millennium* magazine.

The Christian Does not Renege

"In thy pavilion, O Eternal, who may be a guest, who may dwell on thy sacred hill? He who keeps to his oath, though he may lose by it." Ps. 15:1-4, Moffatt.

It is said that, next to the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress* has been translated into more languages than any other book. John Bunyan, its author, spent some twelve years in Bedford "gaol" for preaching his beliefs. Offered freedom on condition that he stop preaching, he replied, "If you let me out today, I will preach again tomorrow."

Even while he was confined in prison, Bunyan continued to preach, and some of his fellow inmates accepted Christ. These converts he formed into a little congregation of which he was pastor.

Bunyan's confinement during his first years of imprisonment, following the restoration of the British monarchy, was especially hard, but as time went on the prison restrictions became more relaxed. The jailer learned that he could trust Bunyan and made it possible for him to spend some of his time outside the prison. Bunyan could easily have taken advantage of this arrangement and escaped, but he did not.

On one occasion Bunyan's enemies suspected that his jailer was allowing him these unusual privileges. Hoping to embarrass the jailer and put an end to Bunyan's little freedom, they prevailed upon the king to send an officer to the prison in the middle of the night to check on his presence. That night Bunyan was indeed at his home. But during the night an irresistible impression came over him

that he must return to the prison at once. This he did. When he arrived at the prison gate, the jailer assured him that there was no need for him to return that night. But Bunyan insisted he be taken back to his cell.

Minutes later the royal officer arrived and asked the jailer, "Are all the prisoners safe?" "Yes," replied the jailer. Pressing his investigation more closely, the officer asked, "Is Mr. Bunyan in his cell?" Again, "Yes." "Then, let me see him," the officer demanded. Bunyan was summoned and, satisfied, the officer left.

While some might question the "legality" of Bunyan's excursions from prison—and they may have a point—the fact remains that though Bunyan could have escaped many times, he never did, because he had given his word that he would not. He refused to renege.

The Bible tells us that one of the characteristics of people living in the last days would be that they would be "treacherous" (2 Tim. 3:4, N.A.S.B.). That is, they would go back on their word, renege. This, a true Christian will never do, even though he may lose by standing firm. □

Reprinted from New Every Morning, p. 184. Author: Donald Ernest Mansell. Publisher: Review and Herald Publishing, 1981.

What Can We Learn from Plants?

By C. Frazier Spencer

"For I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Thy works (Psalm 139:14). Some general information about plant complexity may be of interest before we get into specifics.

A book titled, *The Secret Life of Plants*⁽¹⁾ has some remarkable information. "Worm like rootlets, which Darwin likened to a brain, burrow constantly downward with thin white threads, crowding themselves firmly into the soil, tasting it as they go. Small hollow chambers in which a ball of starch can rattle indicate to the roots the direction of the pull of gravity."

"When the earth is dry, the roots turn toward moister ground, stretching, as in the case of the lowly alfalfa plant, as far as 40 feet, developing an energy that can bore through concrete. A study of a single rye plant indicates a total of over 13 million rootlets with a combined length of 380 miles. On these rootlets of a rye plant are fine root hairs estimated to number some 14 billion with a total length of 6,600 miles."

Can plants see? The author informs us, "A climbing plant which needs a prop will creep toward the nearest support. Should this be shifted, the vine, within a few hours, will change its course into the new direction. Can the plant see the pole? Does it sense it in some unfathomed way? If a plant is growing between obstructions and cannot see a potential support it will unerringly grow toward a hidden support, avoiding the area where none exists.

A second author⁽²⁾ thinks plants can see. "A shoot kept in the dark will creep towards a single chink of light. The plant can see. Hedgerow flowers facing west at sunset, turn during the night to face east to catch the dawn sun and will continue to make such movements even when kept under uniform lighting, for days on end."

The book, *Introductory Botany*⁽³⁾ adds more plant accomplishments, "Desert-dwelling tamarisk trees reportedly have roots that grow to a depth of 165 feet to tap underground water."

For more information we go back to *The Secret Life of Plants*, "Darwin found that a sundew can be excited when a piece of thread is laid on it weighing no more than 0.078 of a grain. A tendril, which next to the rootlets constitutes the most sensitive portion of a plant, will bend if a piece of silk thread is laid across it weighing but 0.00025 of a gram."

The book, *Botany for Gardeners*⁽⁴⁾ adds to our information: "An apple of average size may contain about 50,000,000 cells. One leaf from the tree on which it grows has about as many. If we estimate roughly the number of apples and the number of leaves on a tree, and add something for the trunk and branches and the root system, we arrive at the astonishing total of twenty five quadrillions. When you bite into an apple you may have a mouthful of a million cells!"

And isn't it remarkable that all of the cells work together as one tree unit?

More About Plant Cells

We learn more about plant cells, "As the root burrows its way down, the stem aspires upwards. And the final result of the growth of the stem is different; green leaves spreading to the light. It is curious that its (the stem) cells behave differently from those of the root, for all came originally from the same beginning, the same single cell, in fact. Indeed, this is the greatest riddle of biology: what causes cells to differentiate."⁽⁴⁾

The Secret Life of Plants relates what may be another riddle. "As far back as 1600 a Flemish chemist, Jan Baptista Helmont, had planted a willow sapling in a clay pot containing two hundred pounds of oven-dried soils and for five years had given the tree nothing but rain or distilled water. When Helmont removed the tree and weighed it he found it had gained 164 pounds whereas the weight of the soil remained approximately the same. Helmont wondered if the plant had not been able to turn water into wood, bark, and roots."

The author provides more information. "Frontiersmen and hunters in the prairies of the Mississippi Valley discovered a sunflower plant, *Silphium laciniatum*, whose leaves accurately indicate the points of the compass. Indian licorice, or *Arbus precatorius*, is so keenly sensitive to all forms of electrical and magnetic influences it is used as a weather plant. Botanists who first experimented with it in London's Kew Gardens found in it a means for predicting cyclones, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions."

"So accurate are alpine flowers about the seasons, they know when spring is coming and bore their way

up through lingering snow banks, developing their own heat with which to melt the snow."

Have You ever Wondered...?

We have to wonder what tells these plants, hidden under snow, that spring is coming? How did these plants know they needed to evolve the needed specialized heat capability? After all, other plants don't have heat making capabilities.

The author sums up quoting Raoul France⁽⁶⁾, a Viennese biologist, "Plants which react so certainly, so variously, and so promptly to the outer world, must have some means of communicating with the outer world, something comparable or superior to our senses."



The principle benefit of mycorrhizae is a large enhancement of the absorptive surface area of the root system. The extensive network of gossamer mycorrhizal hyphae can increase the root's effective surface area by several orders of magnitude. In fact, several kilometers of hyphae have been found in a liter of soil. (Source: University of Wisconsin)

What is going on here? Did Darwin see a "brain" in plants? Can plants really act like a compass? It's staggering to think of plants that see or plants that predict the weather, not to mention plants so sensi-

tive that they can "feel" a minute weight of 0.00025 of a gram. And what about plants that make needed heat so they can push through snow or have a means of communication comparable or superior to our own?

It seems that the plant world is much more complicated, organized, and truly awesome than we ever realized?

What about the soil that plants grow in? A little bit of information from the book *Tales from the Underground* will help us understand this mystery.

"Step out into the backyard, push your thumb and index finger into the root zone of a blade of grass, and bring up a pinch of earth. You will be likely holding close to one billion individual living organisms, perhaps ten thousand different species of microbes, most of them not yet named, cataloged, or understood. Interwoven with the thousands of wispy root hairs with the grass would be coils of microscopic, gossamer-like threads fungal hyphae, the total length of which would best be measure in miles, not inches.

"That's just in a pinch of earth. In a handful of typical healthy soil there are more creatures than there are humans on the entire planet, and hundreds of miles of fungal threads.

"Within a dimension of about one square yard, they (graduate students) typically uncover billions of microscopic roundworms called nematodes, anywhere from a dozen to several hundred of the much large earthworms, and 100,000 to 150,000 insects, and that's in addition to the astronomical numbers of fungi, single-celled bacteria and protozoa, and other creatures that don't fall into these major groups."

Sir David Attenborough, a fellow of the Royal Society, is a widely acclaimed British television producer and the author of many books explaining Natural Science. Because his writings support evolution, this writer feels his observations and conclusions are therefore all the more striking.

The Introduction portion of his book, *The Secret Life of Plants*, contains some startling statements. "Plants can see. They can count and communicate with each other. They are able to react to the slightest touch and to estimate time with extraordinary precision. They take other organisms captive and use them for their own purposes."

Surely Sir David is exaggerating — they see, count, communicate, time with precision, take captive! How could mere plants do any of that? How could plants, that have no consciousness as do animals, accomplish all of those things? What is the source of the plant's knowledge, information, and decision-making ability?

Let's look at Attenborough's studies to learn more.

A Plant that Is “Programmed”

“The seeds of a cheese plant develop in spikes of a thousand or so. When they ripen and fall, they scatter widely over the floor and almost immediately germinate. Green worm-like shoots slowly writhe out of them and begin to extend across the ground, the hub of which is the bole of the tree that still supports their parent. It seems almost miraculous that they should all, in some way, know where to go. They do because, like all plants, they can sense the light.

“But they, unlike most shoots, do not seek it. They are programmed to avoid it and they head for the nearest shade. If they fail to find a tree trunk within six feet or so, then they run out of their (seed) fuel and die, exhausted. But if one encounters a vertical surface within that distance, it suddenly changes. Instead of seeking shade, it seeks the light. It begins to climb upwards. Small round leaves spring out and they, at last, produce food. With this new fuel supply, it climbs more strongly.”⁽²⁾

So Sir David sees programming as part of the makeup of these tiny shoots. Furthermore, most plants seek light, but these, instead, seek shade. Until they reach a vertical surface, when they change completely and now seek light. This is rather strange behavior for plants without consciousness. Where did the programming come from? From where does this knowledge of when to change and seek light come?

A Tiny Carpenter at Work in the Plant World

A plant is used to protect a caterpillar species from its enemies.

“In the rain forests of Borneo, one small moth caterpillar constructs a most ingenious device that enables it to feed out of the sight of hungry birds. It starts work on the margin of a leaf and chews a cut inwards as though it were about to remove a semicircular segment. But when it reaches the farthest extent of the curve and seems about to arch back towards the margin, it stops and returns to the edge of the leaf. It walks along it and makes another cut as if complete the semicircle from the other direction. But just before it joins the first cut, it stops.

“The segment is now attached only by a small hinge. The caterpillar next spins silken threads across the hinge between the segment and the rest of the leaf. As the silk dries, it contracts. This first hoists the segment into the air and then brings it down on top of the caterpillar. Now, working from beneath, the caterpillar makes a short slit at right angles to the cut edge of the segment. It pulls one edge of this across the other so creating a pleat. This converts the segment into a tiny dome. The whole pro-

cess takes a couple of hours. As a result of all this ingenious labor, the caterpillar can nibble away at the leaf surface beneath, safe from the eyes and beaks of hungry birds.”⁽²⁾

Is it not likely that lot of thought went into protecting this caterpillar species? The tiny creature has to make a cut of an exact length, then stops, retreats, and makes another cut of an exact length, leaving a small “hinge” portion uncut, weaves thread that is designed to contract as it dries, makes a short slit, makes a pleat, pulls one edge across, and finally ends up with its protective dome.

Is this not remarkable behavior? It is inconceivable that all this knowledge developed over a period of millions of years, as evolutionists proclaim? The knowledge had to be full and complete all at once for the species to survive. Such concise and intricate complexity does not and cannot evolve through a series of false tries and accidents over millions of years finally resulting in the exact sequence of meticulous carpenter work that is required! The mathematical probability alone renders such an evolutionary feat impossible—let alone the odds of surviving through hundreds of millennia without the caterpillar’s abilities being fully developed.

The Plant with Plumbing Characteristics

Attenborough tells us about a plant that captures prey:

“Marsh pitchers grow only on isolated sandstone plateaus in south-eastern Venezuela where there is little or no soil and the processes of decay...proceed very slowly, many plants have to supplement their diet with the bodies of insects.

“The marsh pitcher’s trap is a very simple one. It’s foot-long leaves are curled lengthwise and joined at the margin to form a tall vertical tube. At the top, the tip of the midrib flares into a reddish-rimmed hood that carries a great number of nectar-producing glands. The abundant rains keep these trumpets filled with water. If they were topped up to the very brim, they might be so heavy that they would be in danger of bursting, or toppling over.

“But this does not happen. The seam joining the margins of the leaf is not fastened along its entire length. It stops an inch or so below the upper rim and the resultant vertical slit acts as a safety overflow. One species has a ring of small holes encircling the tube a little below the upper margin and these too act as overflows.

“Flies and mosquitoes, attracted by the sweet fragrance of the nectar, alight on the hood. As they explore the plant in search of more nectar, they tend to move down into the tube. But this is cov-

ered with long, slippery, downward-pointing hairs. Losing their grip, the insects slop downwards. That worsens their situation, for they descend to a section of the tube where the walls have no hairs at all but are smooth and waxy. Down they slide until they tumble into the water. Unable to get any purchase on the surrounding walls, they drown. Bacterial decay then dissolves the tiny corpses and the marsh pitcher absorbs the resulting soup."⁽²⁾

Imagine that. An inch or so from the top is a needed safety overflow. Slippery downward sloping hairs carry insect prey down until the sides are smooth further accelerating their downward slide into the waiting water where they drown and the plant's bacteria turn them into nourishing soup to support the plant. Pretty ingenious? It seems so to this writer.



*A bee gathers nectar
(source: Webshots)*

There are several species similar to the marsh pitcher including eight species of trumpet pitcher found in the southeastern United States.

A Most Unusual Partnership

"The bucket orchid is one of the most interesting of all plants. The front of the flower is formed by two small wings. These serve as signposts. Behind them hangs the little bucket that gives the plant its name.

"When a flower opens, two small glands on the stem connecting the bucket to the frontal wings secrete a liquid that drips down and fills the bucket to a depth of about a quarter of an inch. The flowers now give off a sweet heady perfume.

"Each of the twenty or so species of bucket orchids has its own brand of scent. Although human nostrils cannot distinguish between them, little iridescent bees that live in these forests certainly can. Each species of orchid attracts its species of bee."⁽²⁾

We might wonder, why would each species of orchid need its own scent? Surely under evolution wouldn't the same scent do for all twenty species? Our scientist author answers.

"It is only the male bees who respond to the orchid. Its smell seems to excite them greatly and when a flower opens there will soon be several male bees buzzing around it in an agitated way. Before long one will land on the...bucket and make his

way to a rounded pad that rises from the rim at the base of the short stem connecting the bucket to the front of the flower.

"From this pad he scrapes an oily substance which he packs into pockets on his back legs. This is not a food. It is an ointment that he will use to attract females during his elaborate courtship rituals — which is why each species needs its own special brand."⁽²⁾

What a perfect match up! Twenty different orchid scents corresponding to twenty bee species. It seems that getting this ointment is critical to the courtship and survival of these all of these bee species. How did the first 100% evolved bee even know it had to go only to this one, unique orchid source? How did the orchids know they had to develop a unique scent, different from that of their nineteen sibling orchid species, so as to attract their own special bee species? Which came first, the orchid or the bee? Doesn't logic say all twenty orchids and all twenty bee species had to happen at the same time, which would be extremely unlikely under the evolution scenario?

An Unlikely Long Way to Get Nectar

The book *Evolution — the Triumph of an Idea*⁽⁵⁾ tells us more as it explains "how evolution works" in an extraordinary orchid named *Angraecum sesquipedale*. One of the petals on its pale white flower is shaped into a 16-inch deep shaft, and nestled in the bottom of the shaft are a few drops of sweet nectar.

What could this deep nectar possibly be for? What evolutionary force created it? Wait long enough and the answer will arrive on the wing. A species of moth visits the orchid. Its tongue, coiled up like a watch spring, begins to fill with blood, and as it does, the pressure forces it to straighten out. It grows to be 16 inches long, far longer than the moth's entire body. The moth snakes its tongue down the tube until it reaches the sweet nectar, it buries its face in the flower, and as it does, its forehead rubs against pollen grains. When the moth is finished with its drink, and flies away with the pollen smeared over its head. The pollen on its forehead brushes off on the new orchid where it can fertilize that flower's eggs."

So there you have it. An orchid with a 16 inch deep shaft and a tiny moth that somehow has a corresponding 16 inch tongue, far, far longer than the moth's entire body. As a result of their relationship, the orchid pollen is distributed to make new orchids. Does this seem incredulous to you? Does this seem to you to be something that happened by pure accident? We are told to look around at creation and see the hand and intelligence of our Creator.

The author continues, "It may be hard to believe that a pair of species could be so tightly linked together,

and yet nature is filled with such intimate partnerships. Life consists for the most part of a web of interacting species, adapted to one another like a lock and key."

If you can look around and see lots of locks and keys do you think maybe there was a master locksmith?

Can a Plant Count and Tell Time?

Sir David Attenborough thinks so and tells us about it.

"There can be no question, however, as to the most spectacular of all these hunting plants. It is, surely, the Venus flytrap. It too is a rosette a few inches across. It has narrow green leaves that at the end are prolonged into two reddish, kidney-shaped lobes on either side of the midrib. The outer margin of each lobe is fringed by a line of spikes and, just beneath them, there is a band of nectar glands. The open face of each lobe carries a few isolated bristly hairs.

"An insect, attracted by the nectar or the red coloration can crawl around on the surface of a lobe with impunity, provided it doesn't touch one of the bristles, for they are triggers.

"Even touching one is not necessarily lethal, for nothing will happen immediately. But if it touches the same one or another on the leaf within twenty seconds, then - with a swiftness that may alarm a watching botanist, the two lobes snap together. The reaction takes no more



The Venus flytrap consumes its prey. (Source: Univ. of Calgary)

than a third of a second." Imagine that. To continue, "The stimulus that triggers it is an electric one, but exactly what mechanism drives the closure, is, even now, not fully understood."⁽²⁾

Attenborough then explains two items that, at first glance, might appear to be inefficiencies, but are really very cleverly designed features. Notice:

"Why should the plant require its victim to touch a hair trigger twice in quick succession? In order that the leaf is not made to close by an inanimate object such as a blowing leaf falling on to it. And why are the marginal spikes not set closer together? Because an insect below a certain size will not provide enough sustenance to compensate for the energy spent in digesting it."⁽²⁾

We are now confronted with some questions of logic. Where did the intelligence come from that arranged things so that only a beneficially sized insect

will operate the complex mechanism? Doesn't it seem that somewhere along the line a decision was made, "it must be at least this size and nothing smaller"? That the plant is able to count off twenty seconds seems evident. That it is able to count one, then two, then "zap" also seems evident. Is there counting or time-keeping ability in a bolt of lightening, a blob of algae, or a billowing ocean? So, where did this knowledge and ability come from? If we dissect a Venus flytrap plant, or one of its seeds, will we find the knowledge somewhere in the plant or a seed? If we can't find it, where is it, and how is it passed on to each succeeding generation? It seems obvious that a Higher Intelligence be at work here.

In Summary

We have studied the following main points:

1. A single rye plant is amazingly complex, having 13 million rootlets comprising 380 miles. It's fine root hairs total 6,600 miles.
2. Two authors have demonstrated plants can "see."
3. An average apple tree is not simple either, containing some 25 quadrillion cells; all functioning together.
4. There is a compass plant.
5. There is a weather plant.
6. An alpine flower develops its own heat to melt spring snows.
7. One plant is programmed to avoid light until it reaches a vertical surface; then it

seeks light.

8. A moth caterpillar performs exacting carpenter work to construct its protective dome.

9. Marsh pitchers have a necessary water safety overflow.

10. The scents of 20 different bucket orchids supply a needed mating substance for 20 bee species.

11. An orchid with a 16 inch deep shaft depends on a tiny moth with a 16 inch tongue to spread its pollen.

12. We are told by an evolution supporter that nature is full of such "locks and keys".

13. The Venus flytrap plant can count.

14. The Venus flytrap plant can measure twenty seconds.

15. Its two trapping lobes snap together, after counting and timing, at a speed of 1/3 of a second.

16. Its snapping mechanism is electrically driven, although researchers don't know how it is done.
17. The insect prey of the Venus flytrap plant has to be a certain size before the system traps them..

One Final Question:

Are all of things we have just studied more logically the result of:

Evolution, which admittedly is mindless, purposeless, accidental chance,

or

more logically the result of planning and design of a Creator God?

Which one makes more sense to you?

End Notes

(1) *The Secret Life of Plants* by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, published 1973 by Harper and Row, New York.

(2) *The Private Life of Plants* by Sir David Attenborough, published 1995 by Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

(3) *Introductory Botany* by Linda R. Berg, Ph. D, published 1997 by Saunders College Press, division of Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

(4) *Botany for Gardeners* by Harold William Rickett, published 1957 by The MacMillan Company, NY.

(5) *Evolution — the Triumph of an Idea*, published 2001 by Harper Collins Publishing, inc., NY, 10022.

(6) *Tales from the Underground* by David W. Wolfe published 2001 by Perseus Publishing, Cambridge Center, MA 02142.

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"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." — John Adams, second president of the United States.

Romans 10:4: Goal or Termination?

Paul continues his argument in verse 4, which literally reads: "For Christ is the goal of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This crucial text begins with the conjunction "For—gar," thus indicating a continuous explanation within the flow of Paul's thought. This means that this text must be interpreted in the light of its immediate context where Paul discusses the failure of the Jews to attain the righteousness promised by the Law.

In Greek, the key sentence reads "*telos nomou Christos*," which literally translated means "The goal of Law [is] Christ." The structure of the sentence with *telos nomou* at the beginning indicates that Paul is making a statement about the Law rather than about Christ. The Law (*nomos*) has been the center of Paul's discussion since Romans 9:6, and particularly since Romans 9:31, where he speaks of *nomos dikaiosunes*—the Law of righteousness, that is, the Law that holds forth the promise of righteousness.

Note must be taken of the fact that in the immediate context, Paul does not speak of the *Law* and *Christ* as standing in an antagonistic relationship. In Romans 9:31-33 he explains that, had the Jews believed in Christ ("the stone"), they would certainly have "attained" the Law which promises righteousness. Consequently, in the light of the immediate context, it is more consistent to take the Law—*nomos* as *bearing witness to Christ* rather than as being abrogated by Christ. The abrogation interpretation ("Christ has put an end to the Law") disrupts Paul's flow of thought, works against his main argument, and would have been confusing to his readers in Rome accustomed to use *telos* with the sense of "goal" rather than "termination."

The athletic metaphors used in the immediate context (Rom 9:30-33) also suggest that *telos* is used with the meaning of "goal," because *telos* was one of the terms commonly used to denote the winning-post or the finish line. Other athletic terms used by Paul are *dickon* (Rom 9:30-31), which denotes the earnest pursuit of a goal; *katelaben* (Rom 9:30), which describes the attaining of a goal; *ouk ephthasen* (Rom 9:31), which refers to the stumbling over an obstacle in a race; and *kataiskuno* (Rom 9:33), which expresses the disappointment and shame of the defeat.

The implications of the athletic metaphors are well stated by Badenas: "If by accepting Christ the Gentiles reached the winning-post of *dikaosune* [righteousness] and, thereby, acceptance within the new people of God (Rom 9:30), and by rejecting Christ Israel did not reach the goal of the Law and thereby admission into God's new people, the logical conclusion is what Romans 10:4 says: that the goal of the Law and the winning-post of *dikaosune* [righteousness] and entrance into God's eschatological people are to be found nowhere else than in Christ."

Excerpted from *The Sabbath under Crossfire* by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, pp. 223-224. Dr. Bacchiocchi's book is available through the Bible Sabbath Association.

Meditation

God's Medication

by
Regina Gray

Growing up, I recall both reciting and singing in Sunday School and in Vacation Bible School, Psalm 19:14: *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.*

But growing up in a home headed by a conservative, fundamental, evangelical pastor (my dad), I don't recall ever discussing the practice of meditation.

During my growing up years, the practice of meditation was reserved for those who either stood on their heads or sat in what appeared to be an uncomfortable squatting position and made humming sounds while maintaining what appeared to be a blissful countenance.

It never occurred to me to question what those meditating were actually doing - or why. I just knew it wasn't something conservative, fundamental, evangelicals did!

In my later years I have learned that questioning a practice and going to the Bible for personal, Scriptural answers is the only way to be sure I am getting an answer that does not include the influence, interpretations, and opinions of other persons.

Meditation when defined as *the act or process of thinking* becomes a simple, harmless process. (More simple for some of us than we care to admit, maybe!) Meditation is the act of thoughtful reflection and deliberation. So the *content* is what is helpful or harmful to us, not the process.

Psalm 19:14 sets the standard for content ("acceptable in Thy sight") and there are numerous Scriptures that clarify what we are to meditate on and what results we may expect.

Psalm 1:2: But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Psalm 104:34: My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

Psalm 119:

15: I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

23: Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

48: My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

97: O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

98: Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

99: I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

148: Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.

It is Scriptural to meditate—on Scripture! How do you meditate?

1. Select a quiet place and a time when you can expect minimal or no interruptions. Start your day an hour, 30 minutes, or even 10-15 minutes earlier than you normally would.

2. Select a verse or passage to thoughtfully reflect and deliberate on. Spend time allowing the Scripture to speak to a personal need you have for healing a hurt, for forgiving someone or being forgiven, for comfort, for strength, for encouragement, etc.

3. Commit to memory phrases, verses, or passages to recall in situations when you need strength, encouragement, etc. Commit to memory while you are young, because those verses tend to be more easily recalled as you get older, than the verses you memorized more recently as an oldster!

I have just begun meditating on 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

I am reminded that my body is wearing out but my spirit can remain vibrant and useful in spite of physical impairments! One "light affliction" for me has been separation from family members because of misunderstandings; and I know that the more than seven years that have passed are truly "but for a moment" when compared to the eternal, so I am encouraged and pray you will be as you meditate in His Word. □

Reprinted from from "Gates of Eden" bimonthly newsletter, Sept.-Oct. 2003. "Gates of Eden," an outreach of the Gates of Eden Messianic Congregation, is available at P.O. Box 2257, East Peoria, IL 61611-0257.

Thou Shalt Not Show the Ten Commandments

A commentary by Scott Ashley
Good News managing editor

It's hard to say which was the greater miscarriage of justice in the U.S. justice system this week—the federal court order that a granite monument containing the Ten Commandments be removed from the Alabama State Judicial Building, or the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal to have anything to do with the case.

On the one hand we have a handful of federal judges ordering Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore to remove the monument from state property because it offended the sensitivities of several lawyers, who then filed suit to have it removed. As chief justice, Mr. Moore was within his legal and official rights to install the monument, which bears not only the Ten Commandments but also quotes from the nation's founding fathers.

Judging by the reaction of Alabama's outraged citizens—many of whom voted him chief justice based on his stand in another case in which he refused to back down on public display of the Ten Commandments—they feel the federal courts are interfering with their religious freedom. If the lawyers were that easily offended, they say, why couldn't they just ignore it and look the other way? After all, law-abiding citizens are expected to ignore public displays of nudity, profanity and every kind of obscenity imaginable. Why couldn't the lawyers?

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is quite clear: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." As former presidential candidate Alan Keyes rightly asked at a rally in support of the chief justice, "If Judge Moore is breaking the law, I'd like to know which law it is. . . . Where, I ask them, is the law that is being broken? Where is the Constitutional provision that is being defied?"

The Tenth Amendment is also explicit: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." Since Congress is expressly forbidden to interfere with citizens' religious freedom, and has passed no laws forbidding display of the Ten Commandments, this is clearly a state matter to be decided by the citizens and officials of the state of Alabama.

The heart of the problem, Dr. Keyes noted, is that federal courts are increasingly "imposing a uniform national regime of disbelief and atheism on the people of this country. They are doing exactly what the Constitution of the United States forbids."

Judging by the majority of recent court decisions, it would be hard to argue with that conclusion.

Which brings us to the second travesty of justice this week, the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal to hear the case.

Isn't it ironic that only a few weeks ago the Supreme Court somehow discerned in the U.S. Constitution the legal right for homosexuals to commit deviant sexual acts—acts that, incidentally, are the most effective way to spread the AIDS virus and impose a death sentence on one's sex partner—but the public role of the Ten Commandments aren't worthy of their consideration?

What does this say about the priorities of the United States' judicial system?

It's especially hypocritical that the Supreme Court justices would let stand the lower court ruling that the Ten Commandments display must be removed from the Alabama State Judicial Building, when the east entrance of their own Supreme Court building showcases a massive sculpture of Moses bearing two tablets on which the Ten Commandments are inscribed.

And that's not all. Moses appears again (holding two tablets) in the south courtroom of their building, and two tablets bearing the Roman numerals 1 through 10—a clear symbol of the Ten Commandments—are carved onto the oak doors separating the courtroom from the building's main hallway.

Allusions to or quotations from the Bible and God can be found throughout many of Washington's federal buildings and monuments. At some point will we see the day when they are chiseled away and carted off in ignominy?

The founding fathers of the United States were God-fearing, believing men who established the new nation on a biblical foundation. John Adams, a member of the Continental Congress and second president of the United States, said of the U.S. Constitution that it "was made only for a moral and a religious peoples. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States and son of the second president, said in 1821 that "the highest glory of the American Revolution was this; it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."

Now we are seeing those bonds between morality, religion and government officially dissolved by the highest courts in the land. They are increasingly making it clear that God has no place in American public life. "Thou shalt not show the Ten Commandments," they have told one American state and its highest judicial official.

Where will these sickening trends—the elevation of perversion and the debasement of God's Word—lead? Thomas Jefferson gave the answer two centuries ago:

"I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever."

If only America's courts, and its citizens, would heed.

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“YOU ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW”

by Daniel Botkin

What did Paul mean when he said believers are “not under the law”? The standard Christian explanation runs something like this: “We don’t need to obey Old Testament laws anymore — unless they happen to be repeated somewhere in the New Testament.” Christians who hold this erroneous view require God to repeat Himself if He expects them to obey a command, regardless of how many times He commanded it before Christ came.

David Stern, in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, discusses at considerable length the meaning of “not under the law.” Stern concludes that being “under the law” means operating from a legalistic viewpoint which perverts the Torah into mere legalism, something God never intended. Thus Stern translates “under the law” as “in subjection to the system which results from perverting the *Torah into legalism*” (*Gal. 3:23*). That, Stern says, is the “law” that we are not “under.”

My explanation of what it means to be “under the law” has focused on the significance of the preposition *under*. If a man is “under” the law, that means the law is outside that man and above him. We who come into the new covenant have God’s law internalized, written on our hearts. (*Jer. 31:31-34*) Thus the law is no longer outside us and suspended above us like a sword, ready to condemn us. It is inside us, written on our hearts. Therefore we cannot possibly be “under” the law. And because the law is internalized, we obey it from an inward motivation, not because of some external pressure. Our new nature *wants* to obey the Torah once we see its beauty.

I recently heard a slightly different explanation from a sister in our congregation. About twelve years ago, this sister was taking a course in business law at a community college. The law professor, an attorney who had taught at prestigious universities, asked the students, “How many of you are under the law of the United States?”

All the students raised their hands. The professor asked the students, “Are you under indictment or just under arrest?” The students looked puzzled, so the professor explained what it means to be “under the law.”

To be “under the law” means that you have either: (a) been arrested because someone has accused you of a crime and/or the police have reason to suspect you of a crime; or (b) you have been indicted, i.e., the court has determined that there is enough evidence to warrant putting you on trial. In other words, if you are “under the law,” you have been accused of breaking the law and you are waiting to see if the court will find you guilty or not guilty. If you are declared guilty, you will be punished; if you are declared not guilty, you will not be punished. We are all required to *obey the law*, the professor explained, but that is not the same as being “under the law.” To be “under the law” means to be under arrest or indictment and awaiting the verdict.

This sister went home and considered the Apostle Paul’s statements about not being “under the law” in the light of this legal definition. The phrase “you are not under the law” took

on a brand new meaning for her. She realized that Paul simply meant that we are no longer under arrest or indictment in the courtroom of God. We have already received a “not guilty” verdict, because the penalty for our crimes was paid by our Advocate, the Messiah, when He died as a sacrifice to atone for our sins. *Yet we are still expected to obey God’s law. the Torah*, even though we are not “under the law.”

The sister shared this legal information and her new understanding of Paul’s statement with her Lutheran pastor, a highly-educated man who was normally very patient.

“That’s stupid,” he replied.

To determine the alleged stupidity of this understanding, let us look at Paul’s statements about not being “under the law.”

“For sin [i.e., law-breaking: ‘for sin is the transgression of the law’ (*1 Jn. 3:4*)] shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law [not under arrest or indictment for breaking God’s law], but under grace [declared ‘not guilty’ by God’s mercy]. What then? Shall we sin [break God’s law] because we are not under the law [not under arrest or indictment] but under grace [declared not guilty’]? God forbid!” (*Rom. 6:14f*).

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law [under arrest or indictment for breaking God’s law], shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. [N IV, ‘we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.] Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified [declared ‘not guilty’] by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster [no longer under arrest and indictment and awaiting our verdict]” (*Gal. 3:22-25*).

“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage to the elements of the world [natural superstitions about the physical world which led to the breaking of God’s law - see Tertullian, *Against Marcion V.4*]: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made [literally, ‘becoming’] under the law [was brought under indictment at His Crucifixion, when He bore the penalty for all the lawbreaking done by others], to redeem them that were under the law [all those arrested and indicted for breaking God’s law], that we might receive the adoption of sons” (*Gal. 4:3-5*).

“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law [desire to be judged by the law, which will result in your arrest and indictment, ‘for all have sinned’ (*Rom. 3:23*)], do ye not hear the law [don’t you know the law will condemn you if you are ‘under the law’]? (*Gal. 4:21*).

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law [not under arrest or indictment for breaking God’s law, because the Spirit will not lead you to break God’s law]” (*Gal. 5:18*).

I guess that Lutheran pastor can call me stupid, too.

Reprinted from from “Gates of Eden” bimonthly newsletter, Sept.-Oct. 2003. “Gates of Eden,” an outreach of the Gates of Eden Messianic Congregation, is available at P.O. Box 2257, East Peoria, IL 61611-0257.

Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace! (all from Isaiah 9:5, 6).

A study on the uniqueness of God's Only-begotten would more than fill a library, but two facts, both of which Scripture gives as "signs," will clinch the point for today:

1. His mother was a virgin when He was born (Matthew 1:23).

This is the sign promised through the prophet Isaiah more than 700 years earlier, and it is a sign that has never been duplicated either before or after the birth of Christ. If Mary was not a virgin at His birth, we have a mere man with us as Immanuel—not God. This amazing—and to some, amusing—miracle of the virgin birth is sometimes called the "Incarnation." It simply refers to the divine moments when "the Word became flesh" and dwelt with us, beginning in Mary's womb and then manifested in Bethlehem's manger. Thus is fulfilled the first great sign.

2. His tomb was empty after He had died (Matthew 12:38-40).

This is the sign that Jesus himself gave to those who sought to see some miracle that they might believe in Him. Jesus said He would give only one sign—that of Jonah the prophet. While the sign includes a time element within it, its primary thrust is apparently that of his being buried and rising again.

If Jonah didn't come out of the whale after 72 hours therein, the citizens of Nineveh would not have received the Word of the Lord to repent, and the city would not have been spared. Exactly so, if Jesus didn't rise to Eternal Life after His death and lying in the tomb for three days, then we have no hope of resurrection or immortality. If Christ is not alive, we're all dead men! His resurrection is the great sign of the gospel and of eternal life!

The baby Jesus was a special child. If you can believe that "the Word became flesh" at the beginning of the gospel, and that "He is not here; He is risen" at the end, every other Bible miracle and report becomes plain. These are the two signs of Jesus uniqueness, and they are the book-ends of the gospel without which all the rest holds little meaning or truth.

One-of-a-kind Dad

In the birth of Christ, we have a special mother—"the virgin"; we have a special Son—"the Word made flesh"; and we have a special Dad—"Abba, Father."

He is the infinite One, the transcendent I Am, the One known by Michaelangelo when he painted the "Arm from Heaven" reaching down to touch the hand of man reaching up. He is the awesome God—often thought to be unknowable and unapproachable—Who sits upon the circle of the earth and before Whom its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who spreads out the heavens like a curtain, and stretches them like a tent to dwell in.

This infinite and unfathomable God is also the One who comes near. He is the One Who so loved the world that He gave His only Son—in birth...in life...in death...and in resurrection and exaltation to His own right hand.

This is the God who is With us—personally through His Son, and permanently through His Spirit. This we believe! And because He loved and gave, we have everlasting life!

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Calvin Burrell is a vice president of the BSA. This message was first preached as a sermon in Galena Park, Texas on Sabbath, October 11, 2003.

The Nigeria BSA Fund

In order to facilitate the work of the BSA in Nigeria and West Africa, the BSA has created a separate fund in the U.S. that will allow the director of the Nigeria BSA (NIBSA), pastor Bassey Akpan, to use the funds for the work of spreading the gospel in Nigeria and West Africa.

If you would like to make a contribution directly to the work of the Nigeria BSA, please write "Nigeria Fund" on your check, and send it to our Wyoming address in the U.S., the same as you would for any other correspondence.

If you would like to write a note of encouragement to pastor Akpan, write to the address given on the inside front cover of the magazine listed under "International Addresses." Please do not, under any circumstance, send money directly to Nigeria. Any contributions should be sent only to our Wyoming office at 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718, USA.

The Church in the World

Chinese Christian Xiao's wife notified of charges; Liu investigation ongoing, October 21, 2003

Mrs. Gou Qinghui, wife of imprisoned house-church Christian Xiao Bi-guang, finally received official notification of her husband's arrest at 5 p.m. today. Chinese law states that the families of arrested persons will be notified within 24 hours of arrest; Xiao was arrested September 26.

Mrs. Gou needed the official notification to hire an attorney to represent her husband. She has now done that, and attorneys plan to visit the Detention Center of Lushan County in Henan Province, where Xiao is being held, later this week.

The official document included the charge against Xiao, "subverting the national government." It also included a hand-written note explaining the delay. According to the note, signed by officers Zhang Dang Yi and Li Hai Tao, they received the wrong address from Xiao during his interrogation, and therefore could not meet the deadline established by Chinese law.

"This is a clear result of pressure put on by Christians around the world," said VOM spokesman Todd Nettleton. "They had to come up with an excuse for why they didn't follow their own law. Beijing PSB officers know where Brother Xiao lives. In fact, they have been monitoring his wife's activities. They could have delivered this notice at any time during the past month, but they didn't until international pressure mounted."

Sister Gou has been told to notify the PSB before traveling. She hopes to visit her husband soon.

—*Voice of the Martyrs*



Vietnam: House Church Battles the Government

Rain was falling as Christians gathered on the site of their now demolished church building. In the absence of their worship sanctuary, a white cross was anchored into the muddy soil to give some sanctity to the proceedings that would follow. Assembling in their raincoats and with umbrellas in hand, a small group of worshippers lifted praise to the King of Creation.

For four months, members of the Thu Thiem house church continued congregating on the barren slab of concrete that marked the place where this unregistered congregation had staked its claim to religious freedom. The Communist authorities, always jealous of the Christians' allegiance to God, had torn down their chapel. It was July 1, 2000.



In November 2001, Pastor Truong Van Nghanh filed a request to re-build on the block of land they legally possessed. Authorities stalled the request so that in May 2003, Pastor Nghanh requested a permit for a "temporary" building. According to law, applicants may legally proceed with a temporary building if officials do not respond within 20 days.

Receiving no response, the congregation prayed, and then decided to proceed with their building plans.

In a well-planned operation, a truck load of building materials and a tricycle arrived in the church yard at 5.30 am, on Monday, June 9, 2003. By 6.00 am, 45 Christians

from the Thu Thiem and Phuoc Binh churches, supported by 25 from the house church of Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, had gathered for work.

By 6.15 am, police arrived and when they saw what was about to happen, they called for backup. By 6.45 am, officers from the Ward, District 2 and Ho Chi Minh City came with many police, including traffic police, and with officers that control building applications and codes.

On Tuesday, June 10 the District 2 authorities summoned Pastor Nghanh for discussion. The authorities had also cunningly organized a gang of troublemakers to provoke the Christians, in the hope of causing public disorder as an excuse to arrest the Christians, providing an opportunity for authorities to demolish the new construction.

—*Voice of the Martyrs*

IRAQ

Ziwar Mohammed, a Kurd in Iraq, was shot 28 times by a Muslim radical because he refused to deny his Christian faith. He left behind a wife and five children. Ziwar demonstrated an unshakable faith, and now you have the chance to respond in prayer. Pray that Ziwar's widow experiences God's love through the ministry of her local church. Pray that other believers will be bold examples of faith, and share the hope they have in Christ like Ziwar.

"The world is becoming more and more hostile to Christianity," says Carl A. Moeller, president/CEO of Open Doors USA. "It is critical that we stand together in unity in support of our persecuted brothers and sisters worldwide. And praying for those suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ is the most important action believers can take."

—*Open Doors*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Send your comments about *The Sabbath Sentinel* to tss_editor@biblesabbath.org, or write to Kenneth Ryland, editor, 1204 N. First, Mulvane, KS 67110, USA



Dear Editor:

I found your September-October 2003 issue of *The Sabbath Sentinel* in a trash pile here in my prison cell block. Being a Seventh-day Adventist, I picked the issue up and read it.

I was hurt by Dr. Davis' article on pages 4 and 19 where he repeatedly referred to Sabbath observance by Seventh-day Adventists as "legalistic." I saw no examples in the article of "legalistic applications" of Sabbath-keeping by SDA's. To what does Dr. Davis refer, exactly?

Sabbath keepers should stand shoulder-to-shoulder, rather than at opposite ends of extended fingers. "The Sabbath was made for man..." NOT "The Sabbath was made for Jews..." or "The Sabbath was made for Seventh-day Adventists..." or even "The Sabbath was made for Church of God parishioners..."

I was recently barred from law library attendance here at the prison until I begin listing Saturday & Sunday as my days off from work, rather than Sabbath & Sunday—as I have been doing for years. Persecution against Sabbath keepers will soon spread and escalate in other areas, both in and out of prisons.

Let us all unite now and try to put aside labels and, instead of pointing fingers at each other, point all ten of our fingers toward Father Yahweh in thanks for the light He has allowed us to share.

I would like to receive your fine magazine, but I have no money to pay for it. Please keep me in your prayers if you will. Thank you.

Anyone out there who would write at letter to Warden Massingill on my behalf on the Sabbath issue is requested to.

Respectfully,

Edward B. Lyon, Jr. – 454153
Rt. 2, Box 4400: Hughes Prison
Gatesville, Texas 76597-0001

Dear Edward,

Thank you for your response to my article "Chuck Missler's Sabbath" from the Sep/Oct. issue of *TSS*. I am responding to what seems to be a misunderstanding or a misreading of my article. I attempted in that article to bring before our readership the theological view of the Sabbath as presented by Chuck Missler of *Koinonia House* ministries. One should not conclude from my article that I share or endorse Missler's Sabbath theology. I presented the article because I think Missler's unique and novel view about Sabbath observance represents a challenge to the popular Sabbatarian theology. Such a challenge deserves careful consideration. It is Missler, not I who targets Seventh-day Adventist theology of the Sabbath as "legalistic" by alleging that it is based on "the external observance of the law" or that it is observed in obedience to the Mosaic covenant or the Ten Commandments. Missler articulates what some would call an "antinomian" (anti-law) position. Such a view states that Sabbath observance in response to obedience to the law is legalism. This is also the position of the "new covenant theology," a view which the majority of Christians share. One may accept or object to this definition of legalism, but such a definition must be acknowledged whether one is a spectator or a participant in any current theological discussion of the law.

The view of legalism as presented by Missler would probably be considered narrow by the majority of Sabbatarians who would define legalism as the attempt to gain salvation as a result of observing the law, or the view that salvation can be achieved or merited through compliance with a legal code. The majority of Sabbatarians would counter the charge of legalism by stating they observe the Sabbath commandment in faith, by faith, or as a result of faith (cf. James 2:14ff) and

not simply as a command in the legal sense. Again Missler and the new covenant theologians (NCT) would object because they see faith as the basis for keeping the law, or that keeping the law as a response of faith as an errant faith based on keeping the law and thus still legalism. The NCT sees the person of Jesus as the only basis for a Christian faith according to the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone without the "works of the law."

What should be of particular interest to Sabbatarians and which I think merits a serious and concerned response is Missler's Scriptural basis for his charge of legalism for a Sabbath observance which references the Sinaitic legislation as its fundamental premise. Missler follows the NCT basis for his antinomian view against Sabbath observance on the following classic proof texts: Galatians 4:9,10, Colossians 2:20 and Romans 14:1-6. It is in the examination of these texts that "the critical theological issue" – the law, comes face to face with the popular Sabbatarian theology. What is being provoked here is a Sabbatarian response to the interpretation of these proof texts. Where I agree with Missler is that the fundamental issue is not the Sabbath per se, but "the role of the law." It is in the examination of these proof texts where the critical theological issue of the Sabbath as legalism emerges, "where the rubber meets the road" so to speak.

I agree with you that the Sabbath is not just for Jews anymore than it is just for Christians who observe it. I believe that not only should sectarian Sabbath keeping Christians stand "shoulder to shoulder" but that all Sabbathkeepers Jew and Gentile should stand "shoulder to shoulder" because as Missler rightly points out, in the world to come, all mankind will be Bible Sabbath observers.

Regards,
Sidney Davis

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by
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Dr. Bacchiocchi explains why many Sunday-keepers are now switching to the Sabbath. B224

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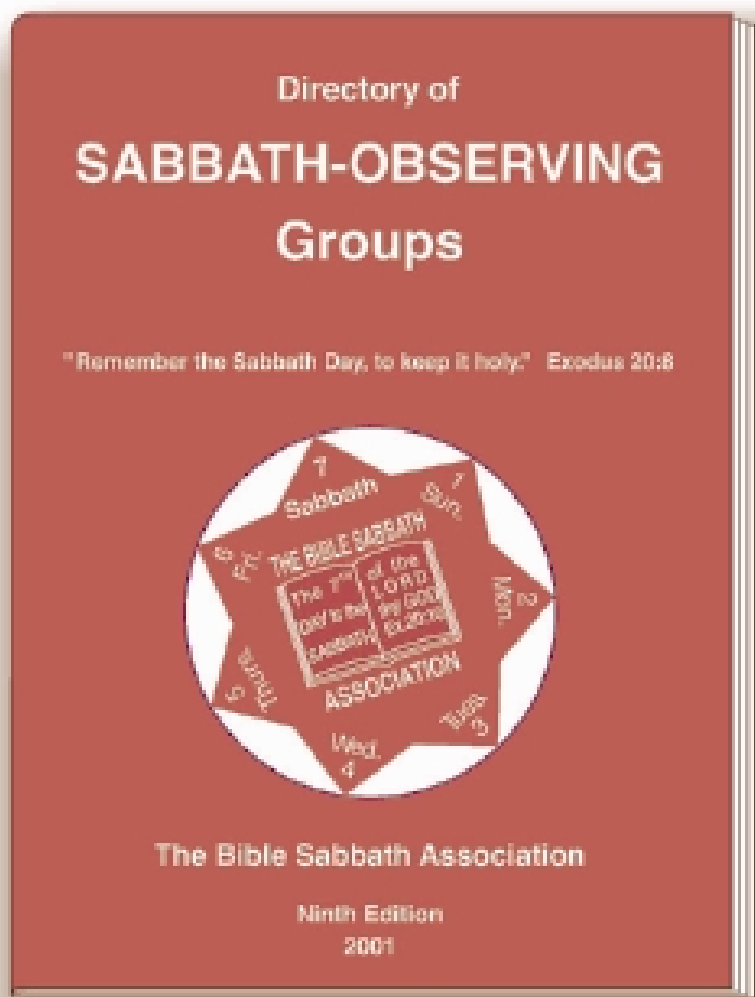
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You may also order by credit card by calling 307-686-5191, or e-mail at info@biblesabbath.org.



The Sabbath Sentinel

*A Bi-monthly Publication of
The Bible Sabbath Association
HC 60 Box 8, Fairview, OK 73737 USA
Address Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 500
SPRINGDALE, AR