

THE Sabbath Sentinel

July–August 2004



**Can Traditional
Marriage Survive?**

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

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

The Sabbath Sentinel

July–August 2004 Volume 56, No. 4 Issue 508

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Editor: Kenneth Ryland, tss_editor@biblesabbath.org

Associate Editors: June Narber & Shirley Nickels

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BSA Worldwide Web Site: <http://www.biblesabbath.org>

Correspondence and manuscript submissions: Address all inquiries to: Kenneth Ryland, c/o *The Sabbath Sentinel*, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718. Phone: (307) 686-5191, E-mail: tss_editor@biblesabbath.org

International addresses:

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

Nigeria: Basse Akpan, Nigeria BSA, P. O. Box 1277, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. E-mail: ycog1@yahoo.com

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What Has Happened to Marriage?



"According to a national homosexual-rights advocacy group, it's a done deal that a Federal Marriage Amendment banning same-sex 'marriage' will never make it out of the Senate—and they say they have the Democratic backing to prove it.

"According to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), at least three Democratic senators have pledged to block any legislation proposing to amend the U.S. Constitution to prohibit recognition of same-sex unions. In a mid-May press release, NGLTF said Senators Barbara Boxer of California, Chuck Schumer of New York, and Debbie Stabenow of Michigan met with leaders of the 'gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community,' during which the lawmakers reaffirmed the 'solidity of support' against a Federal Marriage Amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman" (AgapePress, June 4, 2004),

Is the traditional, God-given form of marriage dead? Here in the United States the subject of what constitutes a legal marriage is being debated as never before. The fact that some are even questioning the definition of marriage is in itself an admission that the traditional one-man-one-woman view of marriage is under serious question. In this editorial I will take a look at several issues relating to marriage that are seldom addressed.

As most know, the urgency of finding a legal definition of marriage was brought to the forefront by two factors: the legalizing of homosexual marriage in the Canadian courts and the mandate by the Massachusetts State Supreme Court that the state legislature present a bill legalizing homosexual marriage. The fact that the courts in both countries have grossly exceeded their authority is a matter that will have to wait for another time. Suffice it to say that in free societies the role of the courts is generally limited to interpreting how laws are applied rather than mandating their creation. That is because those who serve on the bench are often appointed and, therefore, not subject to the will of the people through election. Their primary job is to understand and interpret in legal terms the will of the people, not impose their will on the people. Such court actions defeat the very purpose of freely elected constitutional governments.

In the United States many Christians and other concerned citizens are beginning to press their Congressmen and Senators to pass a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman. If this marriage definition becomes part of the U.S. Constitution, then all other forms of marriage, including homosexual, will immediately be rendered illegitimate. Such an amendment would not suddenly make all citizens moral. It would, however, preserve in constitutional law the traditional, God-given definition of marriage and guard its sanctity within a legal framework.

Although I support a federal marriage amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the definition of marriage is not the real problem. The problem in America and other Western societies is the Church. Fully 50 percent of married American Christians will become divorced, about the same percentage as the general population. In other words, Christians are indistinguishable from non-Christians when it comes to the sanctity of marriage and family life. Many Christians give little importance to God's pronouncement in Malachi: "I hate divorce." As Jesus explained to the Pharisees, it was never God's intention that married couples get divorced. He only allowed it because of the hardness of their hearts. How hard are our hearts when we Christians divorce at the same rate as the general population?

I am not arguing that there are not very valid reasons for separating from a spouse—be it abuse or sexual immorality, which these days carries with it the possibility of contracting a deadly disease like AIDS or hepatitis. However, none of these reasons comes close to approaching the 50% divorce rate. Most people who divorce are simply unhappy and want out, and their vow before God means little to them compared to their own personal happiness. As the great Christian philosopher, Francis Schaeffer, often said, the rebellion and immorality of the '60's and '70's would eventually give way to an era in which personal peace and comfort would be considered the highest value. We are in the midst of that era, and many Christians have come along for the ride.

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Marriage for Life

by Richard C. Nickels, BSA President

What divine institution was ordained and blessed by God at creation? If your answer is "the Sabbath," you are correct. If your answer is "marriage," your answer is also correct. The Sabbath and Marriage are two foundational Bible doctrines.

Importance of Marriage

Marriage is the theme of the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, the Eternal teaches us the importance and spiritual significance of marriage. In Eden, God taught mankind two doctrines: the Sabbath and Marriage. These are related, for the Sabbath is the avenue for our relationship with God, and human Marriage is a God-plane relationship with another human being, to help us build our relationship with God.

At the institution of marriage, there was no provision for divorce. However, mankind quickly departed from God. Sin made the marriage relationship more difficult, Genesis 3:16-19. Cain departed from the presence of the Lord, Genesis 4:16, married, had a son named Enoch, and built a city named after Enoch. Cain's descendant Lamech was the first recorded polygamist. The line of Cain continued to be divorced from God's presence.

Genesis 6 shows that wrong marriages and wrong sexual relationships led to God's judgment of the Flood. The word translated "violence" is Strong's #2555, *chamas*, the same word for Abraham and Sarah's sin involving Hagar, Genesis 16:5. See also Malachi 2:16. Marriage is not a contract, but a covenant, verse 14. As in the days of Noah, sexual sins will abound just prior to our Lord's return, Matthew 24:37-38.

At Sinai, God spiritually married Israel, Exodus 19:7-8, Jeremiah 3:1-22. At least three of the Ten Commandments directly relate to marriage and family. Several Old Testament statutes regulated marriage, including Exodus 21:7-11, 22:16-17, 19, 34:14-17; Deuteronomy 22:13-30, 24:1-4.

God did not condemn Lamech, Abraham, and Jacob, for their polygamy, but it was wrong—it was contrary to Genesis 2:21-24. God also did not condemn Abraham for lying about Sarah. Isaac, a type of Christ, had only one wife, Rebecca. God teaches us by examples, I Corinthians 10:1-12.

Marriage is a covenant; without a *force majeure* provision for fraud. See the story of the Gibeonites, Joshua 9:1-27, noting verse 14. The Israelites did not seek God's counsel, and they went ahead and were duped, yet they were still bound by their oath. In like manner, marriage is a serious matter, and by their actions, a couple is bound for life. The example of Jo-

seph and Mary (Matthew 1:18-25) shows how to apply Deuteronomy 24. General "fraud" is no grounds for divorce with the right to remarry.

In the New Testament, Jesus' teaching made laws of marriage more binding, Matthew 5:32, 19:1-12. In speaking to the carnal Pharisees, Jesus amazed His audience, not siding with the Hillel or Shammai schools, who allowed divorce and remarriage for adultery, or any reason whatsoever. Jesus said that only for fornication (sexual sins before marriage) can there be divorce with the right to remarry.

The Apostle Paul did not water down the Savior's teaching on marriage. Paul upheld the Bible teaching that marriage is for life, Romans 7:1-3, I Corinthians 7:39. As believers, we look forward to the coming marriage of the Church to Christ, Revelation 19:7-9, 21:2, 9, the eternal marriage from which there will be no divorce. Our marriages today should prepare us for the divine eternal marriage to Christ, Ephesians 5:21-33.

In 1974, a church I used to attend changed its former teaching on marriage. Marriages were thenceforth held to be valid only as long as both parties are "pleased to dwell" with one another. However, I Corinthians 7:12-15 does not provide an escape clause for marriages, which are bound for life, verse 39. "Not under bondage" means not obligated to provide support, sexual relations, etc. It does not mean "free to remarry someone else." Man-made marriage loopholes are so big that you can drive a semi-truck through them! Let us return to the Truth of God, teaching and practicing the importance of life-long marriage relationships.

Misplaced Emphasis

Some evangelical Christians today are in a frenzy, reacting to the juggernaut onslaught of the homosexual agenda, which seeks to "legitimize" same-sex unions, contrary to the plain word of God. In a desperate attempt to turn back the tide, some are calling for a constitutional amendment stating that marriage is a union of one man and one woman. If such an amendment were to become law, which is doubtful, it would do little to change the tide of history. Civil unions can

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Reflections on Marriage and Culture

by Marvin Moore

Marriage is a hot topic today. The key question is whether the right to marry should be extended to same-sex couples. I'll begin by stating categorically that I support the one-man, one-woman concept of marriage. So does *Signs of the Times*. God established this pattern when He created our first parents in Eden, and the Bible maintains that pattern consistently throughout.

The most pressing question for Christians is how we should relate to the recent demand by same-sex couples for the right to marry. Some Christians are demanding an amendment to the United States Constitution that restricts marriage to heterosexual couples.

Whichever way that effort ends up, there's more going on here than laws and constitutional amendments. The issue is our culture. And the point is this: Laws reflect culture; they don't create it. As culture changes, laws change to match the collective understanding. The Christian culture that dominated Western society for 1,500 years is eroding, and it's being replaced by a secular culture that's indifferent to our Christian heritage at best and hostile to it at worst. The question is, How should Christians respond?

It's fine to push for constitutional amendments. Maybe we'll get one through. However, we must remember that a constitutional amendment isn't necessarily a permanent fix. Witness the fate of the prohibition amendment less than a hundred years ago. In less than 15 years it was reversed. Why? Because the culture wanted it that way.

So the key question for Christians is how to change the culture. And I propose that laws won't do it—not when the laws fly in the face of what the culture as a whole wants. You may object that the majority of Americans favor heterosexual marriage. Polls indicate that that's true today, but if the cultural movement of the past hundred years continues, it's not necessarily going to be true tomorrow.

So again, how do we change culture? Or, perhaps more to the point, can Christians change culture? Is it even reasonable for us to try changing the current trend? If history is any guide, the answer is a definite Yes.

Christianity began 2,000 years ago as a tiny, backwater religion in a culture that was dominated by paganism and a Hellenistic secularism that in many respects was similar to our own. Homosexuality was widely accepted, including homosexual relationships between adults and children, which our culture defi-

nately rejects. Yet within 300 years Christianity had conquered that secular, pagan culture, and for the next 1,500 years a Christian culture dominated Western Europe.

How did the Christians do it? Not by passing laws. They did it by evangelizing one soul at a time.

Of course, 2,000 years ago the tiny Christian church wasn't in a position to press for laws. But we don't live 2,000 years ago. Today Christians are still a powerful force in Western society, especially in North America. As long as we keep a proper separation between religion and government, it's appropriate that we use our collective influence for the enactment of legislation that protects our cultural understanding. In our democratic society that's as much our right as anyone else's, and we're remiss if we fail to exercise it.

However, I also recognize that, given the direction our culture has been moving the past hundred years or so, this is only a stop-gap that can be reversed about as easily as it can be instituted in the first place. The only way for Christians to truly reverse the culture is to take a page out of the handbook of the early Christian church: Evangelism, one soul at a time.

This solution may not be popular in some Christian circles, especially those that seek a legislative solution to the cultural drift. But I'm convinced that it's the only one that will work in the long run. I sometimes wonder what would happen if Christians in America spent as much money and energy on evangelism and soul winning as they spend on politicking.

So what is evangelism? Public evangelistic meetings have their place, but that's not primarily how the early Christians did it. First of all, they lived their faith, and second, they shared it personally, one soul at a time. We Christians need to get back to the basics: being the salt of the earth, not the pepper.

This solution doesn't bring quick results. It took the early church 300 years. But if we're patient and really do live our faith and share it, change can happen. It's really up to you, me, and every other Christian. We should vote our convictions, of course! But more important, we must live them. That's the most significant thing we can do to preserve our Christian culture.

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Re-evaluating the Wisdom of Using Extra-biblical Jewish Traditions for Messianic Worship

by Dr. Daniel Botkin



The Apostle Paul warned Titus about the importance of “not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth” (Titus 1:14). There is nothing wrong with using fictional stories (“fables”) as parables to illustrate spiritual truths. Yeshua often did this. And there is nothing inherently evil about manmade traditions per se. But if Jewish traditions and fables turn people away from the truth, then there is a problem.

The worst Jewish fable is the one that has been around since the morning after the Messiah’s Resurrection: “His disciples stole the body.” Some Jewish fables, though relatively harmless, are just plain silly. For example, the rabbis say that Queen Vashti had a tail. Adam had one, too. Adam also mated with other “wives,” Neanderthal-like creatures that were not quite human. Here’s another one: When Pharaoh’s daughter rescued baby Moses, her arm miraculously telescoped and stretched way out to the middle of the Nile River to reach the basket. Furthermore, we are told by rabbis that this is the true meaning of the Bible’s statement that God redeemed us “with an outstretched arm.” We should not take such farfetched Jewish fables seriously.

What about following Jewish traditions? Some Jewish customs would be okay except for the fact that they are presented as commandments of God instead of traditions of men. The kindling of Sabbath candles is one such example. When lighting the candles, Jewish tradition requires the recitation of a blessing which states that God “commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.” But God commanded no such thing. There is nothing in the Scriptures that even suggests that candles should be lit to honor the Sabbath. Orthodox Jewish sources admit that the custom originated as a reaction against the Karaites, Jews who rejected the Oral Traditions of the rabbis. The Bible says not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath, so the Karaites did not use fire for anything on the Sabbath, even if the fire had been kindled before the Sabbath. The Orthodox understood (correctly, in this case) that it is permissible to derive benefits from a fire on the Sabbath if the fire is kindled before the Sabbath. So to prove that they were not Karaites (and perhaps to spite the Karaites), the Orthodox Jews began the custom of lighting candles just

before the beginning of the Sabbath. Now every Sabbath, Orthodox Jews declare that God “commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.” They do the same thing every winter with the blessing for the Hanukkah candles, stating that God “commanded us to kindle the Hanukkah lights,” even though there is no biblical commandment—not even in Maccabees, the book that tells the Hanukkah story. By making these statements, Jews affirm their loyalty to the Oral Torah—the traditions of the rabbis which were rightly rejected by the Karaites and the Nazarenes. Even the blessing recited after the Torah reading is meant to affirm one’s loyalty to the Oral Torah, according to *The Artscroll Siddur*, which says of this blessing—“‘Torah of truth’ refers to Written Torah, ‘eternal life’ refers to the Oral Torah.”¹

Most people in the Messianic movement desire to worship and practice their faith like the Apostles did. Some believers erroneously assume that this means that we should follow the Torah in the manner prescribed by Orthodox Judaism. However, the Orthodox Judaism of today is not the form of Judaism which existed in the days of the Apostles. The questions we need to ask are not “What do the rabbis teach?” or “How do Jews interpret the Torah?” The questions we need to ask are “What did the Messiah and the Apostles teach? How did first-century Messianic believers worship? What was their view of the Written Torah? What did they think of the Oral Torah with its man-made traditions?”

These questions are partly answered in the New Testament. However, there are some details which are not answered in the New Testament, nor even in extra-biblical historical writings. The period of history between the death of the Apostles and the appearance of the so-called “Church Fathers” is a period which is especially sketchy to say the least. Consider what historians have said about this period of history:

“For fifty years after Paul’s life, a curtain hangs over the Church, through which we vainly strive to look; and when at last it rises, about 129 A.D. with the writings of the earliest Church Fathers, we find a Church in many ways very different from that in the days of Peter and Paul.”²

“The scanty and suspicious materials of ecclesiastical history seldom enable us to dispel the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the Church.”³

“What happened during this time? Obviously, it was a time of many heresies. The Church Fathers come on the scene in the second century to tell us vociferously who the heretics were and where the ‘orthodox Church’ was. These men claimed to be the followers of the apostles, but their theology was different and seemed to blend Hellenistic philosophy and Babylonian religious custom with Christianity.

It was certainly a far different theology from that of the Jerusalem Church which Paul said he had taught the Gentiles to follow (Acts 15:2, 22-28; 1 Thessalonians 2:14). It is interesting that the descendants of the Jerusalem Church, the Nazarenes, were labeled as heretics and persecuted for their regard of the Mosaic law when they were merely carrying on the tradition of the Church of Peter and James.”⁴

A lot of the details of first-century apostolic worship have been lost to history. However, we do know from the Bible and from history what the Nazarenes generally believed about Yeshua, about Paul, and about the Written Torah and Oral Torah. They believed in Yeshua’s virgin birth, His divinity, and His resurrection. They recognized Paul as a legitimate apostle and accepted his writings. They believed that the Written Torah should still be followed, but they viewed the Oral Torah as a “very burdensome yoke of Jewish traditions.”⁵ Jerome tells us how the Nazarenes understood the prophecy about Jesus ministering in the land of Naphtali in Isaiah 9:1: “The Nazoreans venture to explain this passage as: When Christ came and His preaching was glittering especially the land of Naphtali was delivered from the errors of the scribes and Pharisees, and He struck off from its neck the very burdensome yoke of Jewish traditions.”⁶

Some man-made Jewish traditions are harmless. Some are actually helpful, and can be used in a meaningful way to affirm our faith in the Messiah. If a Jewish tradition is not contrary to the Scriptures, it is permissible. However, just because a tradition is permissible and Jewish does not necessarily mean that it has some intrinsic value for believers in the Messiah. If Jewish traditions become a burdensome yoke, then we need to let the glittering Word of Yeshua strike them off from our necks.

As a congregational leader, I use this three-pronged diagram to show why our congregation exists.

The two greatest commandments are to love God and to love our fellow man. We love God by worshiping and obeying Him. We love our fellow man by edifying him if he’s saved and evangelizing him if he’s

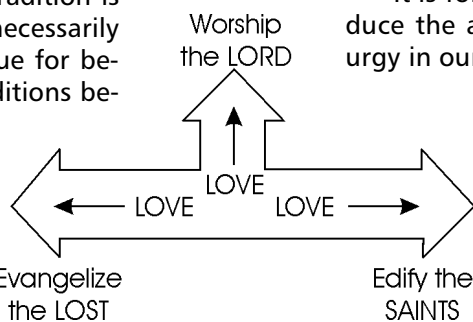
lost. When we assemble together on the Sabbath, the things we do together as a congregation should somehow relate to our congregation’s three-fold purpose.

With these thoughts in mind, I began to question the value of extrabiblical Jewish traditions some months ago. First, their value in regards to worship. Some Jewish liturgical traditions can be used for worship, but is this the best way to worship the Father? Yeshua said that the Father seeks true worshippers who will worship in Spirit and in Truth. The Spirit can be quenched by too much prescribed liturgy. Truth is not upheld by uttering Jewish blessings that affirm the authority of the rabbis’ man-made traditions.

What about edifying the saints? Do man-made Jewish traditions edify the saints? Some of the traditions can, especially if they affirm our faith in Yeshua as the Messiah. But are Jewish traditions the best way to edify the saints? The Bible speaks of other ways to build up the saints. Jude wrote about “building up yourselves on your most holy faith [by] praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20). Paul said, “Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth” (1 Cor. 8:1). The text of 1 Corinthians 14 speaks about edifying the saints by prophesying, by tongues and interpretations, and by other gifts that spontaneously flow as the Holy Spirit moves among the congregation. So it appears that the saints will be edified more by prayer, love, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit than they will be by Jewish traditions.

How about evangelizing the lost? Do Jewish traditions help draw unsaved visitors to the Savior? Or do the Jewish traditions alienate them? Jewish traditions might help Jewish visitors feel more comfortable and at home, but the traditions can alienate, intimidate, and bore non-Jewish visitors. I know, because some visitors to our congregation have expressed such responses, even though the Hebrew liturgy was minimal and an English translation was provided. Furthermore, there have been times when even I have felt bored by too much Jewish liturgy. And I understand the Hebrew.

It is for these reasons that I decided to reduce the amount of Hebrew prayers and liturgy in our weekly Sabbath meetings. We still do the Shema (“Hear O Israel...”) and the v’ahavla (“And thou shalt love...”). The Shema reminds us that our God is Yahweh and He is echad (one). The v’ahavta reminds us that His Torah is encapsulated in His two greatest commandments. Both of these declarations are straight from Scripture, as is the Aaronic Benediction that we use to close our Sabbath service.



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Fighting Sexual Temptation

A little imagination can steer us away from insidious sin.

by Dr. Charles M. Stone, Jr.

"If you were on an island with 13 sultry singles, would you be tempted?" Over 64,000 people responded to this reality show Web survey with these results: 45 percent - definitely; 16 percent - definitely not; 39 percent - well, you never know. Another show on the same TV network promoted itself with "Follow a group of eleven single men and women who are given the opportunity of a lifetime — to live together in the most exclusive resort ever created." Each episode focuses on a modern-day adaptation of musical chairs: musical bedrooms. In this version, the singles decide whom they will sleep with each night.

These two reality shows represent the emerging cultural attitude toward sex: It's fun and OK as long as it's "safe"—nobody gets hurt and two consenting adults agree to it. Sensuality has become central. Dallas Willard aptly described our culture when he wrote, "The drive to self-gratification opens up into a life without boundaries, where nothing is forbidden—if one can get away with it. 'Why' is replaced with 'Why not?'" (*Renovation of the Soul*). Because God created our bodies and sex, He has the right to determine sexual boundaries. His manual, the Bible, clearly states those boundaries: He limits sexual expression to marriage. Since we can't avoid these counter-biblical attitudes in our culture, how can we protect ourselves from their influence? How do we keep sexually pure in an age of boundary-less sex? How do we "flee sexual immorality," as the Bible exhorts?

The apostle Paul gives sound advice in 1 Corinthians 6 when he describes four images of a believer's body that require our imagination. Permissive sexual views in Corinth challenged the believers at that time. Because many came from sexually immoral backgrounds, they faced the temptation to fall back into their former lifestyles. That problem, and others as well, prompted Paul to write 1 Corinthians. He paints vivid images in chapter 6, explaining why God limits sex to marriage. When we use our imagination to visualize these body images, they become powerful tools in fighting against sexual temptation. They help strengthen the sexual boundaries God established.

Christ's body

The first concept is to visualize your body as part of Christ's body. Paul poses this question in

1 Corinthians 6:15: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" His question figuratively describes our bodies as parts of Christ's body. Paul doesn't imply that we are divine, but with this image he states that we represent Christ in a physical way to the world.

Our culture values the human body. We believe it's important to take care of and protect from harm or abuse. Because society values the body, human services agencies will remove a child from physically or sexually abusive situations.

Similarly, such a belief can motivate us to keep our bodies sexually pure, since we are an extension of Christ's body. Eugene Peterson paraphrased verse 15 when he wrote in *The Message*, "You wouldn't take the Master's body off to a warehouse, would you?" It's unthinkable to imagine Christ's body used in a sexually immoral way. Therefore, because our bodies are a part of Christ's body, Paul states that sex outside of His boundaries misuses the body of Christ. When sexual temptation confronts us, an image of sexually misusing Christ's body can help us resist.

A Sacred Place

Second, visualize your body as a sacred place. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 Paul parallels a believer's body to a physical temple when he writes that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Because we respect a physical temple (a church) as a holy place, we expect that only holy and sacred activities would occur there. Likewise, because a believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, it makes sense that we would use our bodies only in holy ways.

In Paul's letter to his protégé, Timothy, he elaborates on this theme:

"In a well-furnished kitchen there are not only crystal goblets and silver platters, but waste cans and compost buckets—some containers used to serve fine meals, others to take out the garbage. Become the kind of container God can use to present any and every kind of gift to his guests for their blessing" (2 Timothy 2:20, 21, *The Message*).

We received a beautiful silver serving tray for a wedding present years ago. My wife keeps it in a safe place in one of our kitchen cabinets. She uses that plat-

ter for special occasions. We reserve the expensive platter only for the best.

On the other hand, we have a cheap plastic trash can we keep under the kitchen sink and throw moldy leftovers and garbage into it. I don't care what I put in the trash can, because I don't value it much. However, I would never put garbage on our silver platter. Because Paul describes our bodies as temples of His Spirit, crystal goblets, and silver platters, using our bodies in sexually immoral ways implies we put trash into the place where the Holy Spirit lives.

Sexual immorality defiles that sacred place. We should treat our bodies in holy ways. Sex outside marriage treats them as I would our silver platter were I to toss smelly chicken bones on it. The next time you feel sexually tempted, bring to your mind an image of a silver platter with stinky garbage on it. Remind yourself that were you to give in to that temptation, you would do something similar to the holy place where God's Spirit dwells.

God's Property

Third, visualize your body as God's property. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 Paul states, "You are not your own," implying that God actually owns your body. I'm embarrassed to say that a pitchfork I borrowed from a friend ten years ago still sits in my tool shed in the back yard. I always take care of things I borrow and always return them (well, almost). Common courtesy motivates most of us to take care of things others have loaned us, since they don't belong to us. Paul teaches that God gave us our bodies as "loaners." They belong to Him, not to us. He entrusts us with them for safekeeping and expects us to use them in ways that respect His ownership. Owners rightfully set the rules for the use of their property. Because God owns our bodies, He has the right to limit sexual expression to marriage. When believers have sex outside of marriage, they don't respect God's property.

Think of the last item you borrowed from a friend or neighbor. Remember the attention you paid to its care. Let that thought remind you of God's ownership of your body the next time you feel tempted to sexually misuse it.

Priceless Treasure

The fourth concept is to visualize your body as a priceless treasure. Scripture states that we were "bought at a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). Although scientists have determined the value of minerals and metals in a human body to be about \$32, the price tag God places on us is beyond comparison. He valued us so much that He paid

the price of His own Son, as 1 Peter 1:18, 19 tells us: "The ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God" (NLT).

What we treasure, we take care of. I love good food, so I value taking care of my teeth, because good oral hygiene allows me to enjoy eating. So I brush and floss; I don't use a toilet bowl brush on my teeth. What we value, we guard, protect, and wisely use.

Because God paid a huge price for us, He expects us to honor Him with our bodies. How a believer uses his body reveals the value he places on it. If he esteems it as God does, he will stay sexually pure. If he uses his body in a sexually dishonoring way, his actions reveal little regard for God's value of his body.

Imagine the most priceless possession you own. Think about how you take care of and protect it. Now imagine your body as one of those priceless possessions. The next time you feel sexually tempted, remember to value your body as highly as God does. Let that image motivate you to resist this temptation.

You may not find yourself on an island with 13 sultry singles. Few people will. But the normal course of life brings plates full of sexual delicacies outside of marriage that Satan would love you to sample. When those delicacies entice you to cross God's sexual boundaries, visualize these images of your body. Your sanctified imagination can become a powerful weapon against the lure of forbidden sex.

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Shoring Up Your Defenses Against Sexual Temptation

1. Put a porn filter on your e-mail.
2. Block cable TV channels that regularly feature sexually explicit shows.
3. If married, never flirt with someone who's not your spouse.
4. If married, avoid emotional intimacy with someone of the opposite sex who isn't your spouse.
5. Don't assume you're immune to sexual temptation.
6. Find same-sex accountability partners who can ask how you're dealing with temptation.

— Dr. Charles M. Stone, Jr.

“We Shall See Jesus,” Remembering Linda Woods

Linda Mae Woods, the daughter of Martin and Virginia (Sheffield) Ogren, was born in 1947, and died in 2004. She accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior at an early age and was faithful to serve Him throughout her life. In 1968, she married Paul Woods, and they enjoyed over 35 years of marriage until her death. She grew up as the daughter of the Pastor of the Seventh Day Church of God in Caldwell, Idaho, and for the last 21 years was the pastor’s wife of the same church.



Paul & Linda Woods

Linda impressed me as a woman of God. Well-known for singing with her husband Paul, she also played the piano for church services, and played the accordion. She also coordinated monthly Women’s Bible Studies in her local church. She had a heart for missions. As a result, for many years, Paul has been a consultant to me relating to our mutual church contacts in Nigeria, India, and other international areas. Linda and Paul have long reached out to other Sabbatarian groups. For years, they have cooked for several camp meetings, including the Meridian Camp Meeting in Meridian, Idaho, and the Feast of Tabernacles at Salmon Falls Bible Camp in Washougal, Washington.

Linda’s Journal Notes contains these gems: “Our faith weakens when we are without works of righteousness.” “Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden” (Corrie ten Boom). “Safety isn’t in the absence of danger, it’s in the presence of the Lord.”

In the summer of 2003, Paul and Linda made a wonderful recording of some of their vocal and instrumental music. “We Shall See Jesus,” contains sixteen selections, including “City of Gold,” “I’m Free,” “Pity the Man,” “I Thirst,” and others. For an audio CD or audio cassette, write: **Seventh Day Church of God, PO Box 804, Caldwell, ID 83606-0804**. There is no price on these recordings, but a donation would help defray expenses.



May all of God’s people be inspired to serve Him by the life of Linda Woods! I am looking forward to the day when Linda Woods and all the saints will see Jesus.

— by *Richard C. Nickels*

Seventh Day Baptists to Gather for Annual General Conference

Over 700 church delegates and friends are expected to meet on the campus of West Virginia Wesleyan College for the 192nd session of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, August 1-7, 2004.

The Rev. Dr. Dale D. Thorngate of Salem, W.Va., will preside over the meetings. President Thorngate has selected “Seeking God with All Your Heart” (Jer. 29:13) as his theme.

The annual gathering draws members from the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of USA and Canada, and often includes fraternal delegates and guests from several SDB Conferences overseas. Sessions of Conference business and agency reports are complemented by many hours of praise and fellowship, seminars and Bible study.

Answering the need for a concerted effort in missionary labors, the first General Conference was organized in Hopkinton, Rhode Island, in 1802. Following the movement’s roots in England around 1650, the first Seventh Day Baptist church in America was founded in 1671 in Newport, RI.

Rev. Thorngate served as the Conference’s Executive Secretary from 1981-1990. Now a local pastor in Salem, Thorngate also serves on the denomination’s Council on Ministry and General Council. His wife, Janet, is chair of the Conference’s Faith and Order Committee and serves as President of the SDB Historical Society.

For more information, you may visit <http://www.seventhdaybaptist.org>.

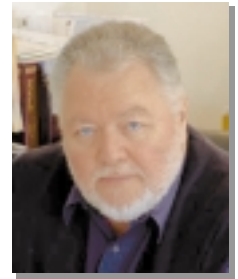
Submitted by:
Kevin Butler

Director of Communications
sdbmedia@inwave.com

Science has discovered...

The Amazing 7-Day Cycle (Part 1)

by Kenneth Westby



By surprise, science has discovered amazing seven-day cycles in the very building blocks of plant and animal life. These newly found sevens, or “septans,” also lie buried in us humans — deep in our metabolic, hormonal, and neuronal networks. This startling discovery has wide-ranging effects that you will want to understand. The following article explores those effects by answering three questions. First, *does the formerly unknown, automatic rhythm of sevens hold the secret to one of history’s most perplexing enigmas — the origin of the seven day week?* Second, *what could these innate, autonomous rhythms mean for us?* And lastly, *what will this new knowledge tell us about the biblical Sabbath and the Creator God?*

Society’s seven-day calendar week is the only major rhythm of human activity that is totally oblivious to external nature. This so-called “social week” rests on mathematical regularity alone. We may casually assume that our week is really a division of the moon cycle. If that is our assumption, we forget that the lunar cycle is not a twenty-eight-day cycle, but approximately twenty-nine days, twelve hours, forty-four minutes and three seconds — or 29.5306 days between new moons. A precise quarter of the lunar cycle amounts to the uneven figure of 7.38625 days. So any week using that true length would begin at different times of the day every time the cycle started. There is just no way to neatly divide the lunar cycle into weekly blocks of complete days.¹

Then what about the sun? Doesn’t the cycle of seven relate to the center of our solar system? Again, no! The 7-day week is also independent from the annual solar cycle of 365 1/4 days. A “year” of 52 weeks would have just 364 whole days. Nor is the week in harmonic sympathy with the star year of 366 1/4 days. Star days or “sidereal days” are about four minutes shorter than solar days (an observer will see a particular star at the same position four minutes earlier on successive nights). In short, there are no known external rhythms in nature that could explain the near universal existence of the seven day social week.

Yet, the importance of the seven-day week — or heptad, a series of seven — is monumental. Eviatar Zerubavel, in his book *The Seven Day Circle (The History and Meaning of the Week)*, notes that:

“... a continuous week, for the establishment of settled life with a high level of social organization [is indispensable] Only by defining the week as a pre-

cise multiple of the day, rather than as a rough approximation of a fraction of the lunar month, could human beings permanently avoid the problem of having to handle loose remainders and, thus, introduce into their lives the sort of temporal regularity that they could never attain with the quasi week.”²

Professor Zerubavel is saying that a regular, predictable week plays a major role in developing our civilization.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

We take for granted the commonness of a worldwide seven-day week, but that hasn’t always been the case. “Weeks” varying in length from three to nineteen days have existed in past cultures. In parts of Africa three, four (especially along the Congo river), five, six and eight day weeks are found, and always in association with market days. Along the Congo the word for week is the same as the word for market. In North America the Mayas of Yucatan — skilled mathematicians and pyramid builders — had clusters of five-day weeks. In South America the Muyscas had a three-day week, the Peruvians and Malaysians a five-day week.³

The ancient Etruscans, who inhabited the land the Italians do now, had an eight-day market week which they passed on to the Romans no later than the sixth century B.C. As Rome expanded it encountered the seven-day week and for a time attempted to include both. But the coexistence of two weekly cycles was unworkable. The popularity of the seven-day rhythm won out and the eight-day week disappeared forever.⁴ Emperor Constantine eventually established the seven-day week in the Roman calendar and in 321 A.D. set Sunday as the first day of the week.

Apart from the biblical record, historians have had difficulty placing the precise beginning of the seven-day week. It is simply acknowledged as an ancient practice of very early origin in the evolution of civilization.⁵ The historical record becomes specific, however, with the appearance of Israelite religion and culture. In the millennium before Christ the distinctive of Israel’s (and Judaism’s) seven-day week became widely known. Its special seventh day devoted to worship and rest—the Sabbath—became an identity trademark that has endured to the present.

Jeremy Campbell, in his comprehensive inquiry into the human nature of time, jauntily titled *Winston*

Churchill's Afternoon Nap, gives Israel full credit for introducing the seven-day week.

"In all the ancient world, so far as is known, there was no seven-day calendar cycle except for the Jewish week, which existed at the very beginning of the monarchical period in Israel [approximately 1000 B.C.] and perhaps even earlier than that. A seven-day week was unknown among the ancient Greeks, whose holidays were held at very irregular intervals, since they fell on the days of religious feasts in different cities up and down the country. Besides the Israelite heptad, or seven day period, another tradition contributed to the forming of our modern seven-day week. Long before the Greeks, Babylonian astronomers began to identify and name the seven heavenly bodies (sun and moon included as "planets") which they observed moving about the sky. Lacking our modern telescopes, they did not spot Uranus, Neptune or Pluto. Neither did they name weekdays after those seven "planets." Assigning planets to the days of the week is attributed to the Egyptians. But once a planet became attached to a day, the seven day "planetary week" came into existence.

". . . The planetary week, however, was a relative newcomer compared with the Jewish week. . . [and] may have evolved from [it], and was undoubtedly influenced by it. Presumably the seven-day structure of the Jewish week came first, and later people began to call the days of the week after the names of the planets. Our modern week is a blend of both traditions."⁶

Zerubavel concludes that "the astrological seven-day week, which evolved in Alexandria during the second century B.C., was introduced to the West through Rome sometime toward the end of the first century B.C. If it was Alexander the Great's conquest of Greece, Babylonia, and Egypt that, in bringing those three civilizations together, was indirectly responsible for the evolution of the astrological week in the first place, it was Julius Caesar's conquest of Egypt that, in making Rome heir to the glorious Hellenistic heritage, was responsible for importing that oriental cycle to the Occident."⁷

He also concludes that while the Jewish and astrological weeks evolved independently, they were eventually joined together by another power. ". . . It was the Church that was responsible for integrating the Jewish and astrological weeks together and spreading the seven-day cycle throughout most of the world.⁸ Yet Christianity was by no means the only carrier that helped spread the Jewish week around the globe. Starting from the seventh century, Islam was responsible for importing this seven-day cycle to the east coast of Africa, the Sudan, Central Asia, large parts of North and West Africa, and even as far as to the Malay peninsula and parts of Indonesia."⁹

Both Christianity and Islam inherited the seven-day week from the Jews. Both established worship days separate from the Jews: Sunday for the Christians, Friday for the Moslems—both days touching the original Sabbath. These three religions with their three worship days clustering together have played key historical roles in bringing the beat of a seven-day week to all the world.

"THE SEVEN-DAY WARS"¹⁰

Because of the bond between religion (Christianity especially) and the week, there have been two major attempts in modern times to obliterate the seven-day week in favor of a different length week. The first attempt came in the late 1700s. The humanistic French Revolution promised the people a new Age of Reason to replace regressive religious superstitions. A new secular, "rational" week of ten days was devised and approved by the ruling Convention in October, 1793.¹¹ The ten-day "decade" was patterned after the decimal principle, having ten days divided into ten hours, of 100 minutes each with each minute divided into 100 decimal seconds. Every tenth day, the "decadi" was reserved for rest and celebration of various natural objects and abstract ideas. Notre Dame was renamed the Temple of Reason.

"The real target of the reform campaign," notes Zerubavel, "was the Christian [Church] . . . and from a symbolic standpoint, the abolition of the seven-day 'beat' expressed the wish to de-Christianize France far more than the attempt to make life there more 'rational.'"¹² During the Reign of Terror the ten-day "decade" was imposed by force. Churches were closed and allowed to open only on the tenth day. People were even forbidden to wear their good clothing on the traditional Sunday, with severe fines and even jail sentences given to violators. Religion, however, proved too resilient and the attempt to destroy the seven-day week (1793-1805) failed completely . . . as did the First Republic of France.

Not learning a thing from France's failure, the Communists ruling the Russian Revolution tried a second, even more radical experiment 140 years later. Their aim was the same: abolish religion by abolishing the seven-day week. The Soviet scene was a five-day continuous work week which called for 80 percent of workers to be on the job on any given day — a plan which left 20 percent to share a day off. There was no longer a national day off. The advertised reason for the new rotating five-day week was to increase production.

After eleven years of disappointing production and epidemic irresponsibility in the work place (1929-1940) Stalin called it quits and gave the Soviet people back their seven-day week. Concludes Zerubavel, "In both France and the Soviet Union, some desperate attempts were made by two of the most ruthless totalitarian regimes in history to completely destroy the Judeo-Christian, seven-day week. In both societies, to this day, it still remains the dominant 'beat' of social life."¹³

CULTURE OR BIOLOGY—WHICH CAME FIRST?

In light of these massive failures, we must face the question “why seven?” Since the seven-day cycle is not a naturally occurring event in our external environment, can culture alone explain how a whole society six billion strong now beats to a seven-day rhythm?

Tracking the development of the seven-day week in human events, as we have briefly summarized above, has been a far easier task for historians than explaining how the cycle originated in the first place. Researchers really have only two choices: 1) say that the week is a cultural/religious invention of unknown date which gradually took root in the ancient world, evolving with time to the near universal acceptance we find today; or, 2) take the biblical record of the origin of the week (Genesis, chapters 1 and 2) at face value — it was made by God at creation.

For convenience we may call option one — a standard, textbook explanation — “the cultural/religious outgrowth model;” option two naturally becomes “the biblical model.” It comes as no surprise that most modern historians reject the second, or biblical model, and spend their ink documenting the first one, attempting to explain the strange phenomenon of a seven-day week.

However one rates those attempts, recent discoveries revealing innate body rhythms of about seven days now call that cultural outgrowth model into question.

The relatively new science of chronobiology has uncovered some totally unexpected facts about living things, as Susan Perry and Jim Dawson report in their book *The Secrets Our Body Clock Reveal*. “Weekly rhythms—known in chronobiology as ‘circaseptan rhythms’—are one of the most puzzling and fascinating findings of chronobiology. Circaseptan literally means ‘about seven;’ see chart. Daily and seasonal cycles appear to be connected to the moon. But what is there in nature that would have caused weekly rhythms to evolve?

“At first glance, it might seem that weekly rhythms developed in response to the seven-day week imposed by human culture thousands of years ago. However, this theory doesn’t hold once you realize that plants, insects, and animals other than humans also have weekly cycles.... Biology, therefore, not culture, is probably at the source of our seven-day week.”¹⁴

Campbell summarizes the findings of the world’s foremost authority on rhythms and the pioneer of the science of chronobiology: “Franz Halberg proposes that body rhythms of about seven days, far from being passively driven by the social cycle of the calendar week, are innate, autonomous, and perhaps the reason why the calendar week arose in the first place.”¹⁵

What a bombshell!

THE RHYTHMS AROUND US

Mankind has always been aware of rhythms — they surround us. We live with daily rhythms of tides, light

and darkness, monthly rhythms of the moon, seasonal rhythms of birth, growth, harvest, hot and cold, and annual cycles of the sun, migrations, floods and drought. We have also observed cycles in our bodies which interact with those around us such as our daily sleep rhythms, daily temperature and blood pressure fluctuations, and the menstrual cycle which follows the lunar cycle precisely averaging 29.5 days.

However, until recently science has been aware of only the more obvious rhythms. Now the new science of chronobiology has begun to roll back frontiers revealing a universe replete with rhythms.

Franz Halberg, the brilliant scientist and founder of modern chronobiology, first began his experiments in the 1940s and now heads the Chronobiology Laboratories at the University of Minnesota. He offers us this rather detailed description of his field:

“Chronobiology is the eminently interdisciplinary science of interactions in time among metabolic, hormonal, and neuronal networks. It involves anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology, physiology, and pharmacology, at the molecular, intracellular, intercellular, and still higher levels of organization. The compounds coordinating a time structure — proteins, steroids, and amino-acid derivatives — provide for the scheduling of interactions among membrane, cytoplasmic, and nuclear events in a network involving rhythmic enzyme reactions and other intracellular mechanisms. The integrated temporal features of the processes of induction, repression, transcription, and translation of gene expression remain to be mapped ...”¹⁶

Simply put: Chronobiology is the study of how living things handle time.

Chronobiology is no longer a minor science. Perry and Dawson note that it “... is now being studied in major universities and medical centers around the world. There are chronobiologists working for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), as well as for the National Institutes of Health and other government laboratories. Chronobiology is becoming part of the mainstream of science, and it is changing our way of looking at life and time.”¹⁷

“Don’t confuse the science of biological rhythms with the quackery of biorhythms,” warn Perry and Dawson. “The two are as unlike each other as astronomy and astrology.”¹⁸

There are five major rhythms that beat in our bodies to insure our health and happiness (see chart below). The daily or circadian rhythm (from the Latin for “around a day”) is the easiest to detect and measure. We are born with our own set of circadian rhythms that in time become synchronized with our environment. Our rhythms vary slightly from individual to individual (23.6 hours, 24.3 hours, 25.4 hours, etc.) and they usually shorten as we age. For some unknown reason, women tend to have shorter circadian cycles than men.

Your Inner Rhythms

Type of Rhythm	Length	Examples
Ultradian	Less than 24 hours	Heartbeat. 90-min. fluctuations in energy levels & attention span. Brain waves.
Circadian	About a day	Temperature. Blood Pressure. Sleep/Wake Cycle. Cell Division.
Circaseptan	About a week	Rejection of organ transplants. Immune response to infections. Blood & Urine chemicals. Blood Pressure. Heartbeat. Common Cold. Coping hormones.
Circatrigintan	About a month	Menstrual cycle
Circannual	About a year	Seasonal depression. Sexual drive. Susceptibility to some diseases.

If all our individual cycles vary from a precise 24 hour day or 168 hour seven-day week, wouldn't we in time get terribly out of sync?

"Fortunately," write Perry and Dawson, "our bodies are able to reset themselves each day to the twenty-four hour rhythm, thanks to many powerful time cues. Chronobiologists call these cues *zeitgebers*, German for 'time givers.' Some can be found outside our bodies, some are located within, and others are part of our daily lives

"As if we didn't have enough *zeitgebers* to keep our bodies in sync with the world, our internal rhythms also help synchronize each other, for none of the myriad rhythms within our bodies works in isolation. Some rhythms rise while others fall—like a modern dance in which the dancers move seemingly independently of each other, but which actually has been carefully choreographed. The dance is so complex that chronobiologists are only beginning to understand the interrelationships of the rhythms."¹⁹

MYSTERIOUS WEEKLY RHYTHMS

The most intriguing of all biological rhythms are those set to a clock of about seven days. In his chapter "The Importance of Time," Jeremy Campbell reports:

"These circaseptan, or about weekly, rhythms are one of the major surprises turned up by modern chronobiology. Fifteen years ago, few scientists would have expected that seven-day biological cycles would prove to be so widespread and so long established in the living world. They are of very ancient origin, appearing in primitive one-celled organisms, and are thought to be present even in bacteria, the simplest form of life now existing."²⁰

One of Franz Halberg's amazing discoveries is that of an innate rhythm—about seven days—occurring in a giant alga some five million years old on the evolutionary time line. Because this microscopic cell resembles a graceful champagne glass, the alga (plant) is popularly known as mermaid's wineglass (*Acetabularia mediterranea*). When this "primitive" alga is subjected to artificial schedules of alternating light and dark spans of varying length over many days, this single intact cell is somehow able to translate all that manipulation of light and darkness into the measurement of a seven-day week!

As Campbell says, this inherent rhythm has to do with the internal logic of the body, not with the external logic of the world. Many more examples could be given. Involved experimentation with rats, face flies, plants and other life have revealed circaseptan rhythms similar to that of the mermaid's wineglass.²¹

If the seven-day week is an invention of culture and religion, as most historians would have us believe, how do we explain innate circaseptan rhythms in "primitive" algae, rats, plants and face flies? These forms of life have no calendar, can't read the Torah and don't know Saturn from Santa Claus.

IN SUMMARY

What we have seen so far is what science has uncovered in regard to the innate seven-day (circaseptan) rhythms of living things and how these new discoveries are forcing us to reconsider the reigning theories on the origin of the seven-day week. We learned that this mysterious seven-day beat is entirely independent from environmental cycles of sun, moon and stars — the only major rhythm of human activity that is totally oblivious to external nature, resting on mathematical regularity alone.

History credits ancient Israel as the culture that bequeathed the seven-day week to the rest of the world. In his book *The Seven-Day Circle*, Eviatar Zerubavel plainly states the "continuous seven-day cycle that runs throughout history paying no attention whatsoever to the moon and its phases is a distinctively Jewish invention."²² Modern attempts by the French and Soviets to erase the seven-day week—with its imbedded religious ties—ended in complete failure.

But was it culture and religion alone that eventually moved earth's six billion people to now harmonize in a universal seven-day rhythm? The new and respected science of chronobiology rhythms in human and other life forms points toward a biological explanation for the mystery of the week. In his study into the human nature of time, Jeremy Campbell states: "Inner time structure, in certain of its manifestations, seems to determine outer time structure, rather than the other way round. Rhythms of about seven days arose in living creatures millions of years before the calendar week was invented, and may conceivably be the reason why it was invented."²³

AN ORCHESTRA OF RHYTHMS

Chronobiology is continuing to document just how highly rhythmic we humans are. Most of our many ticking clocks are difficult to detect; they operate just below our conscious awareness. Innate and hidden in our cell structure, the mysteries of biological time have waited for the resolving power of modern computers to appear. Just as the electron microscope allowed scientists to peer deep into the structure of living cells, computer “magnification” and analysis now make visible internal clocks we didn’t even know existed. The most surprising of them all is the circaseptan. Campbell explains that “certain biological clock systems have been discovered only through the use of sophisticated computer programs, and when they are brought to light in this way, often surprise us. By showing us these invisible restrictions on our temporal freedom, scientists modify our knowledge of human nature, and they do not always do so in predictable ways. They are drawing a new map of the temporal anatomy of body and brain, and the map tells us truths we could not know otherwise.”

“It would be a big mistake,” Campbell warns, “to assume that this time anatomy is simple, that the clocks of the body all tick to a single measure, like watches in a jewelry store. A better image is that of an orchestra, a silent orchestra made up of numerous players under more than one conductor, each contributing in special ways to the harmony and complexity of the whole.”²⁴

These myriad synchronizing rhythms give substance to the well worn phrase “harmony of the body.” The “loudest” of the body’s oscillating frequencies is the 24-hour cosmic cycle of day and night — and until recently this circadian rhythm received most of the attention.

The surprise appearance of an internally generated seven-day rhythm, independent from all environmental influences, provides chronobiologists with intriguing possibilities for a new understanding of how the body’s complex orchestra of rhythms works.

Our bodies are carefully designed for self-protection even in matters of time. On the one hand we are an orchestra of rhythms; on the other our bodies demand stability and sameness—an automatic pull to homeostasis (the maintenance of a beneficial equilibrium, a self-regulated norm). Campbell explains:

“The two regulatory systems, one imposing sameness in time, the other providing orderly change, are complementary rather than being in conflict. A body function alters in a rhythmic fashion, and homeostasis stabilizes the altered state of that function.

“The clocks are able to generate regular periodic variations because homeostasis resists random, irrelevant variations. Both systems collaborate in maintaining the special time structure of the body

rather than simply surrendering to the time structure of the environment.”²⁵

We organize time on our own terms and to our own advantage.

Most, if not all, of the millions (literally!) of daily functions that occur in our bodies are organized within some rhythmic system. Some bodily tasks occur quickly in seconds, minutes or hours, others slowly over months. How can this orchestra of cycles governing such bodily activities as diverse in time as metabolism, maintenance, growth, defense and reproduction possibly be coordinated?

OUR INTERNAL SEVEN-DAY CLOCK

Chronobiology has found the answer. As Campbell explains:

“A particular function of the body may have a spectrum of rhythms with a dominant frequency that is very different from the dominant frequency of the spectrum of rhythms in another function, perhaps widely separated in space. Yet no matter which frequency component is the primary one in any given function, all rhythmic systems of the body probably possess an innate circaseptan frequency so that when they cooperate to perform a specific task which is body-wide, say, an immune reaction, the reaction occurs on a weekly schedule.

“That schedule is a compromise between too much time and too little. A day and a night, which is the dominant frequency in the spectrum of many routine body chores, would not be long enough to complete the complicated array of chemical and other activities that compose the immune defense reaction, and a month would be too long.”²⁶

In addition to being the key coordinating rhythm for the rest of the body’s many rhythmic interactions, a seven-day cycle has been found in fluctuations of blood pressure, acid content in blood, red blood cells, heartbeat, oral temperature, female breast temperature, urine chemistry and volume, the ratio between two important neurotransmitters, norepinephrine and epinephrine, and the rise and fall of several body chemicals such as the stress coping hormone, cortisol. “In fact,” Perry and Dawson note, “weekly rhythms appear easiest to detect when the body is under stress, such as when it is defending itself against a virus, bacterium, or other harmful intruder. For example, cold symptoms (which are really signs of the body defending itself against the cold virus) last about a week. Chickenpox symptoms (a high fever and small red spots) usually appear almost exactly two weeks after exposure to the illness.”²⁷

Doctors have long observed that response to malaria infection and pneumonia crisis peaked at seven days. Organ transplants face similar crises as the body’s immune system attacks the foreign organ.

Campbell explains: "When a human patient receives a kidney transplant, there is a rhythm of about seven days, a predictable rise and fall in the probability that the body's immune system will reject the new kidney. A major peak of rejection occurs seven days after the operation, and when a serum is given to suppress the immune reaction, a series of peaks occurs, with increasing risk of rejection, at one week, two weeks, three weeks and at four weeks, the time of the highest of all."²⁸

Chronobiology's pioneer, Dr. Franz Halberg, made another startling discovery—a three and a half day, or circasemiseptan harmonic of the circaseptan (seven-day) frequency. This phenomenon seems to occur when the living organism is under extreme attack or has somehow been critically altered. When the giant one celled alga "mermaid's wineglass" (described earlier) had its nucleus removed, it doubled its seven day frequency to one of about three and a half days.²⁹

He has also found that when cancer strikes humans, our circaseptan frequency is doubled to its circasemiseptan harmonic. Why? Campbell believes there must be rhyme and reason: "Circaseptan and circasemiseptan rhythms are not arbitrary, even though they seem to lack counterpart rhythms in the external environment." Dr. Halberg calls the move to a three and a half day harmonic of seven a "spectral compromise . . . the system does its own reshuffling."³⁰

The deeper we investigate the inner workings of life, an even more complex, intricate and absolutely marvelous display of design begins to appear. Out of the mind-numbing complexity of life a certain organizing rhythm starts to surface. The millions of living parts begin to respond to a rhythmic resonance broadcast on certain set frequencies. These parts innately know to tune their receivers to the proper sympathetically vibrating frequency — their beat. Just as we tune our radios and music suddenly springs to life, every living cell has imbedded in its primal genetic material a rhythm, a clock, a beat, a frequency, a resonance that helps it get in sync to live and function as designed.

Now we discover that the beat all life is tuned to is seven.

"In Franz Halberg's view," summarizes Campbell, "a central feature of biological time structure is the harmonic relationship that exists among the various component frequencies. A striking aspect of this relationship is that the components themselves appear to be harmonics or sub harmonics, multiples or submultiples, of seven, a number that has played a disproportionately large role in human culture, myth, religion, magic and the calendar."³¹

—————END OF PART 1—————

End Notes

1. Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Seven Day Circle* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 9.
2. Zerubavel, p. 10: emphasis added, words in brackets adapted from the author himself.
3. Article "Week," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, 1910.
4. Zerubavel, pp. 45-46.
5. Article "Week," *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1963 edition.
6. Jeremy Campbell, *Winston Churchill's Afternoon Nap*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), pp. 77-78.
7. Zerubavel, p. 19.
8. Zerubavel, p. 20.
9. Zerubavel, pp. 25-26.
10. "The Seven-Day Wars" is Zerubavel's chapter two title, p. 27.
11. R. R. Palmer, *The World of The French Revolution*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 120.
12. Zerubavel, p. 29.
13. Zerubavel, p. 43.
14. Susan Perry and Jim Dawson, *The Secrets Our Body Clocks Reveal*, (New York: Rawson Associates, 1988), pp. 20-21 (emphasis added).
15. Campbell, p. 79 (emphasis added).
16. Franz Halberg, "Quo Vadis Basic and Clinical Chronobiology: Promise for Health Maintenance," *American Journal of Anatomy*, 168:543-594 (1983), p. 545.
17. Perry and Dawson, p. 8.
18. Perry and Dawson, pp. 8-9
19. Perry and Dawson, pp. 11-13.
20. Campbell, p. 75.
21. Halberg, pp. 569-570; Campbell, pp. 75-76.
22. Zerubavel, p. 11.
23. Campbell, p. 83
24. Campbell, p. 15.
25. Campbell, p. 79.
26. Campbell, p. 133: emphasis added.
27. Perry and Davson, p. 22.
28. Campbell, p. 76.
29. Halberg, pp. 569-570.
30. Campbell, p. 132.
31. Campbell, p. 130.

©Association for Christian Development. Kenneth Westby is the founder and director of the Association for Christian Development and executive director of the Great Kings Discovery Project. Mr. Westby is also a director emeritus of the BSA.

We will probably continue to use some additional blessings and traditions for the celebration of the more formal events like Passover and Yom Kippur. But for our regular weekly Sabbath meetings, our Hebrew liturgy has been reduced, because I believe it was irrelevant and counterproductive to our three-fold purpose of worship, edification, and evangelism. Some of our people were using the liturgy as a substitute for spontaneous, Spirit-led worship, uttering no words of worship except for the blessings that were recited by rote. Some of our visitors felt alienated and uncomfortable with the unfamiliar Hebrew liturgy. Furthermore, several of our own people admitted in a survey that they were not edified by it. In an anonymous survey, I asked our people for suggestions for ways to improve our Sabbath services. Several people suggested that we reduce the amount of the rabbinic, the ritualistic, the liturgical, and the traditional. The results of this survey confirmed what I had been sensing for some time. So we reduced the Hebrew liturgy and made more room for Spirit-led praise and prayer and for the spontaneous moving of the Holy Spirit. So far, the results have been wonderful.

I am not suggesting that all Messianic believers must discard all Jewish traditions and liturgy. However, we should be aware of why the rabbis fixed and standardized the prayers and put them in a Siddur (prayer book). Rabbi Jeffery Cohen, author of *Blessed Are You: A Comprehensive Guide to Jewish Prayer*, tells when and how and why the Jewish prayers were standardized. Rabban Gamaliel II of Yavneh (A.D. 80-110) was the rabbi primarily responsible for the standardization of Jewish prayers. According to Jeffery Cohen, there were three main reasons Gamaliel wanted to standardize the prayers:

"First, he realized that, with the Temple in ruins, a new spiritual impetus was required, one which the synagogue and daily worship could best provide. Second, his period witnessed an upsurge of Christian missionary activity, coinciding with the composition of the Gospels and their dissemination among Jewish communities....

"Gamaliel was constantly pestered by minim, members of the new faith who delighted in engaging him in disputation; and he was especially alarmed at the infiltration of new Christians, indistinguishable at that time from their fellow Judean Jews, pressing their prayers and literature onto an unsuspecting Jewry. The simple, uneducated folk could not be expected to distinguish whether a religious text left in a synagogue was Orthodox or sectarian.

Neither, given the flexibility and spontaneity allowed in the framing of prayers, could they know whether one called upon to act as reader was a secret adherent of the new faith and was uttering acceptable or unacceptable religious sentiment. Hence Gamaliel's decision to establish, once and for all, a fixed and authorized order of daily prayer....

"Gamaliel's third reason may have been his wish to stem the disturbing fashion of charismatic or ecstatic prayer that was becoming fashionable among those early Christians and was appealing even to some of his own colleagues and disciples. In the absence of a fixed and regulated liturgy, they were emboldened to give expression to their own, often wild, outpouring of exaggerated body language and meaningless phraseology, claiming that it was the Spirit that was working on them....

"In the light of this potentially dangerous trend—especially given the corresponding spread of mystical and ecstatic prayer in Christian circles—Gamaliel may have felt further impelled to introduce the discipline and rational spirit of an officially sanctioned and statutory order of service."⁷

The above information was not written by someone antagonistic toward Jewish tradition; it was written by a non-Messianic Jewish rabbi. Nor is the above information taken from some fringe publication. It is taken from a book published by Jason Aronson, Inc.,

a Jewish publisher described in the Forward as a "famed publisher" that "publishes many books by current and former Y.U. [Yeshiva University] professors."⁸ This information

I am not suggesting that all Messianic believers must discard all Jewish traditions and liturgy.

shows that the three reasons for standardizing Jewish prayers were as follows:

1. To provide a cohesive, fixed form of worship to preserve the unity which had formerly been preserved by Temple worship.
2. To prevent Messianic Jews from uttering any prayers except those prayers which were pre-approved by the unbelieving rabbis.
3. To quench the moving of the Holy Spirit which was being manifested through the Spirit-led prayers of Messianic Jews.

So two of the three reasons the Jewish liturgy was sanctioned and ordered by rabbis who rejected Yeshua was 1) to prevent Messianic prayers, and 2) to quench the spontaneity of Messianic worshippers. Why should today's Messianic believers follow a liturgy that was deliberately composed to prevent Messianic worship? If today's Messianic believers limit their worship to what is found in the Jewish liturgy, they will utter no prayers that honor Yeshua as Messiah, and the moving of the Holy Spirit will be quenched. They will not be worshipping the Father in Spirit nor in Truth.

The most important things to happen when we gather on the Sabbath are 1) that the Father be loved and worshipped in Spirit and in Truth; 2) that the saints be loved and edified; 3) that the lost be loved and drawn to the Savior. For these things to happen, there needs to be a loving atmosphere where the Holy Spirit is welcome and free to move among us, in the members of the body. Too much tradition and ritual and liturgy can quench and limit the moving of the Spirit.

"But what about Jewish visitors who might show up?" some ask. "Romans 11:11 says we're supposed to provoke the Jews to jealousy. Shouldn't we conduct our Sabbath services like the synagogue for their sake?" Hebrew liturgy and Jewish traditions and rituals might make a Jewish visitor feel more comfortable, but these are not the things that will provoke him to jealousy. A person can only jealously desire something that he doesn't have. A Jewish person already has the traditions and rituals in the synagogue. A Jewish person will not be provoked to jealousy because we have his traditions and rituals; he will be provoked to jealousy because we have his Messiah. We need the presence of the Messiah, manifested by the moving of the Holy Spirit. That is the thing that will draw lost Jews and non-Jews to their Savior, edify the saints, and inspire Spirit-led worship. This is what the Father is after, and this is what I am after. □

End Notes

1. Artscroll/ Siddur, 3rd ed., ed. R. Nosson Scherman (New York: Mesorah Publ., 2002), 441.
2. Hurlbut, *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 41. Quoted in Dan Rogers, "The Historic Phenomena and Theology of the Nazarenes and Ebionites," *Giving & Sharing Newsletter* No. 74, Feb. 2004, 1 6f.
3. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: Random House), ch. 15, p. 382. Quoted in Dan Rogers' article.
4. Rogers, p. 17
5. See Dan Rogers article and Ray Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988).
6. Rogers, p. 18.
7. Rabbi Jeffery Cohen, *Blessed Are You: A Comprehensive Guide to Jewish Prayer* (Northvale, NJ/London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1993), 35-37.
8. "Aronson To Sell Division," *Forward*, 20 Feb. 2004, Newsdesk, p. 3.

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Speak Well of Others

I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. Luke 6:27, 28.

Early in the American Civil War, before General Robert E. Lee had demonstrated his genius as a military commander, he was severely criticized on numerous occasions by a fellow officer named Whiting. General Whiting had graduated from West Point at the head of his class and was regarded by his peers as an intelligent, capable officer. One day Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States, looking for a general to fill an important command, asked Colonel Lee, "What do you think of Whiting?"

Without the least hesitation Lee responded that Whiting was unquestionably the best man for the important job. Later, another officer took Lee aside and remonstrated with him, "Don't you know that Whiting has no use for you? Why did you recommend him?" Lee replied simply, "The president asked my opinion of Whiting, not Whiting's opinion of me."

It is relatively easy to speak well of people who speak well of us. The test of character is in speaking well of those who speak evil of us. Jesus states this principle in these words: "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" (Matt. 5:46, 47).

When the Christian applies the golden rule in the matter of speaking well of others he does not do so in order to have others speak well of him—though this is often the result. He speaks well of all men because this is the way Christ would speak. The Christian is not looking for the commendation of men or an earthly reward when he does this. He is looking for the heavenly reward—the commendation of his heavenly Father.

I once saw, hanging on a wall, a motto that said in effect: "Before you speak, make your words pass through three gates:

Is it true?

Is it kind?

Is it necessary?"

If we were always to practice this motto how many unkind things would be left unsaid? How many kind things would be spoken instead? Speaking of the virtuous woman, Solomon declares, "In her tongue is the law of kindness" (Prov. 31:26). This principle is not limited to women, it is applicable to anyone who is seeking to do God's will.

*Reprinted from **New Every Morning**, p. 318, Author: Donald Ernest Mansell. Publisher: Review and Herald Publishing, 1981.*

give homosexual partners the same benefits that married heterosexual couples receive. This ill-fated effort is like locking the barn door after the horse has gotten out of its stall.

A major battle to preserve the sanctity of marriage was lost in the early 1970's when New York voted to allow divorce for reasons other than sexual sin. As other states and countries had already, or did soon, follow suit, the Bible teaching that marriage between one man and one woman for life was corrupted. Divorce is easy today, and most professing Christian churches do not stand in the gap on this fundamental issue. By giving in to easy divorce, the way was paved for illegitimate homosexual "unions," and once this is normalized, then the way is thereby paved for polygamy, bestiality, and utter depravity. Sad to say, it has been reported that a couple married in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are more likely to divorce than a couple married in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Sabbath and Marriage for life go together. Why have Sabbath-keepers abandoned the higher ground? I believe there should be a vast difference in teaching and practice of Sabbath-keepers and others. Instead, we have met the enemy, and it is us!

The Decline and Fall

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that marriage is the foundation of civilized society. As goes the state of marriage, so goes the country. In 1788, Sir Edward Gibbon, England's eminent historian of the 18th century, published the most comprehensive history of the Roman Empire ever compiled. Under the title, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon's massive chronicle encompassed several volumes and suggested five basic causes for the collapse of Roman civilization.

Even a casual observer cannot help noticing numerous parallels between conditions which, according to Gibbon, led to the fall of Rome and conditions which exist today in America. Those five reasons are:

1. The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home.
2. Higher and higher taxes, the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace.
3. The mad craze for pleasure, sports becoming every year more exciting, more brutal, more immoral.
4. The building of great armaments when the real enemy was within—the collapse of individual responsibility.
5. The decay of religion, faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, losing power to guide the people.

Like early Rome, our society was built on strong families. But like Rome in its latter days, we have departed from moral truth, and are hurtling down the road to decline and ruin. The forces of humanism and

secularism in America have launched an all-out offensive against the traditional institution of the home. Record numbers of unwed men and women are living together, with many thousands of children born out of wedlock each year as a result of these immoral relationships. It used to be that one in three marriages ended in divorce; now, the number is closer to one in two. It is easy to find a casual attitude among our youth toward sex outside of marriage.

A constitutional amendment is not going to reverse our moral decline; an outpouring of repentance and returning to the Almighty is the only way to save our nation. As Christian Sabbath keepers, our first step should be to clean up our own house. Let us teach and practice the eternal Bible truth of the Sabbath, and Marriage for life.

Taking the Heat

John the Baptist lost his head when he condemned Herod for "marrying" his brother Philip's wife. Sometimes I too take a lot of heat for my uncompromising stance on marriage for life. In the past, some have left in the middle of one of my sermons on marriage. I certainly do not try to offend, but with God's help, speak the Truth in love.

Human marriage is a type of the divine marriage to Christ at His return. If we cannot be faithful to our spouse in this life, how can we be entrusted with eternal life in the divine marriage?

What divine institution, originally ordained and blessed by God at creation, has been seriously polluted? If your answer is "the Sabbath," you are correct. If your answer is "marriage," your answer is also correct.

Please read again Ephesians 5:22-33. Sabbath keepers, let us repent of polluting the Sabbath and Marriage, and, as the bride of Christ, make ourselves ready for His coming and the consummation of the divine, eternal marriage.

For further explanation of this vital topic, request the audio cassette, "The Importance of Marriage," C120, by Richard C. Nickels, from Giving & Sharing, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718. The cassette is free for residents of North America. All others please add \$2.00 for postage. □

Confessed after seeing "Passion"

Johnny Olsen, a notorious convicted killer and neo-Nazi, has confessed to two crimes in Oslo in the 90s. Olsen, 41, decided to purge his guilty conscience after viewing Mel Gibson's controversial film "The Passion of the Christ," newspaper *Dagbladet* reports.

On Saturday evening Olsen, one of Norway's most feared men, walked into the offices of *Dagbladet* and confessed to two bombings of Oslo's Blitz House, a self-styled "counter-culture center" that is a gathering spot for young left-wing radicals.

Christians are the guardians of morality for society. When Christian holiness is seduced, all of society follows in its train. Instead of leading society to higher ground, we have followed the immoral to play in her dark corners and back alleys.

Homosexual (or gay) marriage is not a problem all its own; it is really the end result of our lack of respect for the God who sanctified the union of one man and one woman in the Garden of Eden. It is the refuse of the horrible mess we have made of the blessing God gave to all mankind at creation.

I believe that only when we Christians really come to understand what we have left behind will we be able to seek our way back to the moral high ground that was ours in the beginning. It is that solid ground that decent men and women of conscience seek, and those who aspire to satisfy their most perverse passions despise. We are the watershed, the divide that forces society spiritually in one direction or another.

The place we must start is the book of Genesis. That was Jesus' starting point in his discussions of marriage. The place we have to end is to believe the Scriptures and live them out before the watching world.

In the first chapter of Genesis, we read: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (vv. 27-28). In Genesis 2 the Bible provides us a more complete description of the creation of woman and the joining of man and woman into a family. "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (vv. 22-24).

There are entire volumes that could be filled with the ideas presented in these two passages in Genesis. I would like to focus on just one small segment of these passages in order to make a point about the reason for marriage.

The primary reason for marriage is to produce children so that there will be a next generation. The intimate physical, spiritual, and emotional companionship that God created between the first man and woman is kind of environment that every child should be born

into. Although we could dwell on the tragedy that resulted when Adam and Eve decided to follow their own will rather than God's, I would like to focus attention on the perfect environment that God created for Adam and Eve and their children, and the purpose for all that.

Some might object, saying, "What about married couples that can't or don't have children?" I would have to reply that there is nothing to be condemned in that. The more intimate the marriage relationship between a man and woman, the better. God ordained it to be so. Man and woman are to be joined together to become one flesh. If children do not come out of that union, the blessing still remains for that couple. Nevertheless, the enjoyment of an intimate relationship between a man and woman does not require marriage. That is why Jesus made the point that men and women will not marry in the Kingdom of God: "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25). In the God's kingdom there will be no need for the sexual, physical union of a man and woman in order to produce future members of the family of God.

The second chapter of Malachi probably lays out the purpose of marriage better than any other passage in the Bible. Much of the book of Malachi deals with the treachery of Judah against the covenants they had made with God and the people's betrayal of the covenants (including marriage covenants) they had made with each other. These are God's words for the nation in Malachi 2:13-17:

And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." You have wearied the LORD with your words; yet you say, "In what way have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them," or, "Where is the God of justice?"

As for the purpose of marriage, there is no more poignant statement in Scripture than: "But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring." Yes, the ultimate

purpose of marriage is to bring godly offspring into the world so that they, after we depart, can bring the world a knowledge of their Creator.

It takes little imagination for any Christian to see how these words in Malachi apply to us. We are the Judah of today, and we have dealt treacherously with each other and with our heavenly Father, breaking our promises to Him or to each other—so much so that “He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from [our] hands.”

Once we look at the whole purpose of marriage, it’s easy to see that homosexual or any other form of “marriage” does not fit God’s vision of what will bring blessings to relationships between people. For that reason, the legalization of any form of “marriage” other than that outlined by the will of God must be opposed. If it takes the passage of a marriage amendment to slow our slide toward Gomorrah, then, I believe, we should work toward that end.

However, any kind of amendment to the U.S. or any other national constitution does not solve our pervasive problem of unfaithfulness to each other and to our God. It will only be a means of buying time so that we can put our lives into a proper relationship with God and each other, and then begin to bring our own good example to bear on society as a whole.

Ultimately, our objective is to lead all men and women to embrace the will of God. It is in His will that we will find eternal life. God once divided Israel into two camps and put one camp on Mount Ebal and the other on Mount Gerizim. There he explained to them that they could follow His will and receive blessings and live, or follow their own will, suffer curses and die. He ends His appeal to Israel in this fashion: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The apostle Paul also reminds us there are a lot of behaviors that are contrary to the will of God and will, in the end, destroy us, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Our lives are bound up in the relationships we have with God and the people that surround us. If we are faithful in our word to God and others, blessings will flow out from us in all directions. It is my hope that the whole body of Christ will begin to take more seriously the words we speak and the vows we make. Our spouses, our families, our friends, and our communities depend on our faithfulness to our word.

—Kenneth Ryland

Rediscovering the Sabbath

Human Commitment

The Sabbath stands not only for divine but also for human commitment. It signifies not only “that I, the Lord, sanctify you” but also that “you shall keep my sabbaths” (Ex. 31:13). By reassuring human beings that God is available and “working until now” (John 5:17) to accomplish the ultimate restoration of this world to His eternal fellowship, the Sabbath invites the believer to assume his responsibility by making himself available for God. By accepting God’s invitation to keep the Sabbath with Him, the believer enters into a special relationship with God.

The free offering of time to God is a supreme act of worship because it means acknowledging God with the very essence of human life: time. Life is time. When “time is up” life ceases to be. The offering of the Sabbath time to God enables believers to acknowledge that their whole life, not just one-seventh, belongs to God. It represents the Christians’ response to God’s claim on their lives. By bringing all routine work to a halt for one day, Christians act out their commitment to the Lord.

Sabbath, then, on the one hand, symbolizes God’s commitment to be available for His creatures. On the other hand, Sabbath keeping expresses the believer’s acceptance of the Creator and Redeemer’s claim upon their lives. In a sense, the Sabbath is the insignia of the believer, a sort of badge worn at God’s request in order to recall God’s loyalty to us and our loyalty to God. It is a placard we carry to show the world what we stand for and whom we serve.

During the week a person may feel frustrated by a sense of anonymity. “Who am I?” he may ask, as he lives and moves among the crowd. The answer that often echoes back is, “You are a cog in a machine and a number in the computer.” On the Sabbath, the answer is different. The Christian hears the Lord saying, “You may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you” (Ex. 31:13).

Being the symbol of divine ownership and sanctification, the Sabbath assures believers of their own divine election and sanctification. By renewing the sense of belonging to our Creator-Redeemer, the Sabbath restores to us a sense of human dignity, identity, peace, and rest to our lives.

*Excerpted from **The Sabbath under Crossfire** by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, p. 295. Dr. Bacchiocchi’s book is available from the Bible Sabbath Association bookstore.*

Pakistani Christian dies after attack by policeman

May 28, 2004

Samuel Masih, a Pakistani Christian who had been accused of blasphemy under Pakistan's strict Law 295, died tonight around 9 p.m. local time in the Lahore hospital where he was a patient.

Masih was arrested August 23, 2003, and was accused of throwing waste against the side of a mosque. He was held in the Lahore Central Jail until, suffering from tuberculosis, he was transferred to a local hospital on May 22.



Two days later, early in the morning, Masih was attacked by one of the policemen assigned to guard his room.

The policeman, a Muslim, reportedly told investigators that it was his religious duty, as a Muslim, to kill the Christian man. "I have offered my religious duty for killing the man. I'm spiritually satisfied and ready to face the consequences," he is reported to have said.

VOM sources said the body had been taken to a church in Lahore, and that police were pressuring church leaders to finish the burial tonight. Church leaders refused, saying they would hold the funeral and burial tomorrow morning. The situation is reportedly tense.

"This is another example of the danger our brothers and sisters in Pakistan face every day," said Todd Nettleton, VOM spokesman.

(Source: *Voice of the Martyrs*)

Pastor arrested, church building destroyed in Zhejiang, China

April 16, 2004

A 100-year-old building that housed an unregistered Chinese house church was badly damaged on March 11, then completely destroyed March 31. The church was located in Dong Gang Xi village, Beilun District, Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province. This congregation included about 300 members, and had existed for the past 20 years. Liu Fuen, 50, pastored the church throughout its history.

The pastor's home, which is where church meetings were held, had already been declared the site of "illegal religious meetings"

when members of the congregation met on March 8 to do some work on the building in order to make it better suited for church meetings.

Three days later, 300 Public Security Bureau (PSB), paramilitary police and government workers converged on the building, badly damaging it during a half-hour rampage. The group was led by Wang Tao, the Director of the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) for Beilun District. Seeing the destruction, four neighbors who were not Christians complained to Wang, saying, "How can you arbitrarily destroy someone's house?"

Wang ordered the four neighbors—Mu Jingou, Li Youfu, Li Liangfang and Zhang Weilong—ar-

rested and held on Administrative Detention for 15 days.

Christians at the church were able to repair some of the damage to the house, and continued meeting in the building until March 31. On that day, Wang led a group that arrived at the church in 28 different vehicles. Four PSB officers entered the building and evicted 10 Christians who were praying inside. Then, police and other officials completely destroyed the building, leaving only piles of rubble. Officials hung posters on surrounding buildings announcing that this was the site of illegal religious activity and was being destroyed for that reason. A loudspeaker also announced that message as the destruction went on.

Pastor Liu Fuen went into hiding after his home was destroyed, but was arrested April 9 by six PSB officers at the home of his youngest son, Liu Yongsheng.

Police were not done harassing this church. The congregation gathered for services at the home of Liu Mingliang, Pastor Liu's oldest son. PSB officers again raided the service, arresting Mingliang and breaking up the service. The raiding officers were led by Hu Xinyu, head of the so-called Political Protection Division of the district PSB.

The family has been given "Criminal Detention" paperwork for both Pastor Liu and for Liu Mingliang. While Administrative Detention signifies 15 days of incarceration, a "criminal detention" will last an indefinite period of time.

"China's government wants to control the church," said Todd Nettleton, a spokesman for The Voice of the Martyrs. "These are not troublemakers or criminals; they are simply Christian believers who gather to worship God and learn more about Him."

(Source: *Voice of the Martyrs*)

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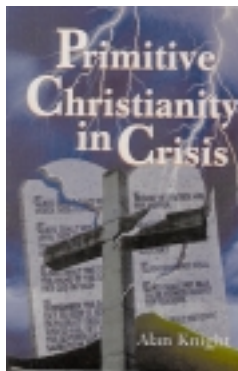
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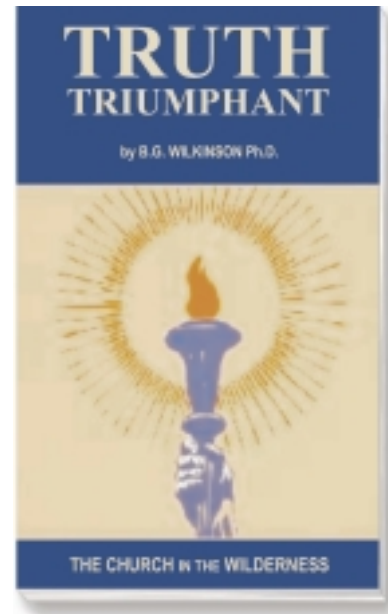
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