

# THE Sabbath Sentinel

March–April 2005



*“Lord, is it I?”  
Da Vinci’s “Last Supper”*

**BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association**

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

# **The Sabbath Sentinel**

March–April 2005 Volume 57, No. 2 Issue 512

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**Cover Quote:** *"And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, 'Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.' And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, 'Lord, is it I?'" (Matthew 26: 19-22).*

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## ***Showing the Lord's Death until He Comes***



This is a special time of the year for most Christians. It's hard not to reflect on the life and sacrifice of Jesus during that last week leading up to Passover nearly 2000 years ago. For a large number of Sabbath-keeping Christians, this is the one time during the year that they commemorate the Lord's death by taking the Lord's Supper, or Communion as it is often called. I fear that too often we allow our disagreements over which is the "correct" day for this observance to overshadow its profound and far-reaching significance. My only comment on this matter is that it should be obvious to every Christian that it is better to take the Lord's Supper than not to take it, for by taking it we "show the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). After all, that's why our Lord asked us to do it in the first place.

I am one of those who holds to this most ancient of Church traditions, the observance of the Lord's Supper in alignment with the Passover. Those who followed this tradition in the early Church were called "Quartodecimans" by the bishop of Rome. While the Western Church under the influence of Rome pulled away from the traditions of the apostles, eventually substituting Easter for the Lord's Supper/Passover observance, most Christians in the Levant and in peripheral areas of the Roman Empire (such as Britain) clung to the apostolic tradition of observing the Lord's Supper on the 14<sup>th</sup> day for the first Hebrew month (hence the term "quartodecimen," meaning the fourteenth).

I would encourage any Christian to read up on the Quartodecimen Controversy. It was truly a watershed event in the early Church. The conflict over when to observe the Lord's Supper begins with the trip of Polycarp (disciple of the apostle John and bishop of Smyrna) to Rome to meet with Anicetus, bishop of Rome (160-162 A.D.). Polycarp, in his eighties at the time, was unable to convince Anicetus to return to the tradition of the apostles. Although they parted amicably, there was no peace between the Roman Church and the Eastern Church until Rome finally crushed the tradition of the 14<sup>th</sup> and substituted Easter in its place. For the Church in Rome, the traditions of the Eastern Church (including seventh-day Sabbath observance) were too Jewish to be retained.

But, I must repeat that, in spite of my own reasons for adhering to the Quartodecimen tradition, I believe that God would much rather see Christians observe the Lord's Supper than not, even if the shape of their practices does not align with my own. It is indeed the substance of what we are observing that matters most—that we are observing the Lord's death until He comes, that we are commemorating the shedding of His blood to blot out our sins, that we can now approach the Throne of Grace and be welcomed as sons and daughters of the One True God. This is the New Covenant in His blood that He spoke of (Luke 22:20).

Last year at this time many of us saw "The Passion of the Christ." It is not a picture that I wish to see a second time; it's brutal and very honest about the suffering that Jesus took in my place. I think it was an eye-opener for many people who always looked at the Crucifixion in philosophical terms. After seeing the movie, it's impossible to think of Jesus' crucifixion as anything but a real, brutal murder. Yet, He knew it was coming and submitted to it willingly—all that so that I could approach the Throne of Grace and enjoy a relationship with Him and the Father that was not possible before that time.

I also believe that this season of the year not only brings us closer to God, but to each other. It's hard to go through our annual personal self-examination without a sense of community with others who are doing the same (1 Corinthians 11:28: "A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup." And, 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?"—NKJV).

As we once again remind ourselves of our own weaknesses, our failings and tendency to sin, we should also be reminded that we are all equal in our inability to save ourselves. As we once stood side by side before the Judge of all creation, we now stand as equals before our Savior and King. There is no better time than this. We should relish it in fellowship with all who have been saved by His Grace. —Kenneth Ryland

## Book Review:

# The Earliest Christians

By Kenneth Westby



The Earliest Christians? Just what were the earliest Christians like? What did they believe? What were their practices? Don't we all want to know answers to those questions?

Some may feel they already have answers to those questions. For them it is as simple as reading and believing the Bible. Just look in the New Testament and the answers are all there. But is it so plain? Today, those Christians who are orthodox, and they are the overwhelming majority, are comfortable believing their doctrines and practices are based in Scripture. Further, they can cite as proof to their claim almost 2000 years of affirming church history.

The orthodox (*ortho*=straight, correct, right; *dox*=belief, doctrine, opinion, view) have a point. Sunday keeping and belief in the Trinity, for instance, have a long history going back almost to the days of the Primitive Church. I say almost since even the orthodox will admit that Christian doctrine was not officially set, declared orthodox, until the seminal church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries. Until then there were competing "Christianities," competing doctrines, and competing theologies.

The first through the fourth centuries were a time of great debate and contest within the Christian community. It was also a time of great persecution. Following the days of the apostles the church was attacked from within and from without. On the one hand a host of heresies were entering the church as it fought against a slide into apostasy. This contest brought divisions in doctrine and fellowship. From without, the pagan Roman empire was bent on containing the spread of the new faith, and at other times destroying it.

Not everything was settled at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, or Chalcedon in 451 AD, but for the official Christian church finally recognized by the Roman Empire, the key doctrines and practices were largely fixed: the triune Godhead, immortal soul, Sunday worship, an ever-burning hell, heaven the reward of the saved, non-Jewish religious holidays, etc. Virtually all the basic theological doctrines of the orthodox Catholic Church survived the Protestant Reformation and today are considered orthodox for both Catholic and Protestant Christianity.

But what about that period before things became "orthodox"—the straight or correct doctrine? The first two hundred years of Christianity are often called the "lost centuries" or the dark period of church history. One historian observed that the church that emerged after that dark period looked quite different from the one pictured in the NT that entered it.

The history of this period is scant for at least two reasons. 1) It was a time of great persecution upon the church; the details of its history were given little attention by the Roman historians of the time; the church was often "underground" and few of its records have survived. 2) The victors of the doctrinal debates of the early centuries became the custodians of "church history"; victors always write the history of the wars they win and those histories often slant the story, justify their side, ignore facts, and take liberties to mischaracterize their opponents.

The orthodox victors had little interest in preserving the teachings of yet earlier Christians/Christianities which were in disagreement with their doctrine. It would not be helpful to their claims of orthodoxy to admit that they had departed from earlier Christian traditions. In fact, there was an active effort to destroy competing Christian theologies, discredit their leaders, and often, to mischaracterize their teachings. But like a difficult murder mystery where the killer has tried his clever best to cover his tracks, good detective work can often find enough facts and clues to paint the true picture of what happened.

Modern scholars have attempted to do just such a reconstruction of those "lost centuries" between the Primitive Church of the apostles and the emergence of orthodox Christianity of the fourth century. One such scholar is Bart D. Ehrman, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is widely known and respected in scholarly circles as an authority on the Early Church. He has written many books on the subject and is frequently featured on A&E and the History Channel. I have read several of his books and had the pleasure of meeting him two years ago where he lectured at the Society of Biblical Literature's annual meetings held that year in Denver.

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# 2004 English-speaking Scholarship Winners

Every year the BSA conducts an essay contest for the purpose of providing Sabbath-keeping students with scholarships to further their college educations. 2004's essay contest was divided into two categories, one for native English-speakers and one for those who speak English as a second language. In this issue of *The Sabbath Sentinel* we will feature our three native English-speaking scholarship winners.

Each contestant was required to write a maximum 500-word essay in answer to two of three questions:

- 1) A) Pretend you are at work. Your boss has told you that you must start working Saturdays or face being fired. The job market is bad. You probably wouldn't be able to find another job right away and you have a family at home to feed. What would you do? What would you say to your boss? How would you handle this situation?  
**OR**
- 1) B) You are at college on an athletic scholarship. Your scholarship is dependent upon your playing at all home games. Home games end up being on Fright night. Would you play the games? Why or why not? What would you say to your coach and to your school in light of your religious beliefs? How would you handle this situation?
- 2) There is a movement to change the weekly calendar to make Monday the first day of the week and Sunday the last day of the week. While this would enforce the idea that Sunday is the Sabbath day, what would you say to argue against this change? What kind of facts would you present to convince the people who would change this to leave it as it is? If this were to occur, how could Sabbath keepers continue to teach the truth of the Sabbath with the calendars being changed? How would you handle this situation?

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## First Place Winner Randall Siddens

*Nineteen-year-old Randall Lee Siddens, is currently attending Missouri Western State College in St. Joseph, Missouri. Randall grew up in Marceline, Missouri, where he attended church at the Church of God 7th Day.*

*Randall enjoys playing the guitar, and particularly he enjoys playing during the worship service at church. Randall has always been very active in various school and church activities.*

*Randall plans to move back to Marceline after college and work in construction. "I feel that my ministry is mostly to be an encourager of the church but also people individually," says Randall.*

### Question 1-A

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Ex. 20:8. This command from God sounds well and good, but what does it mean? If you read on down in Exodus 20 you will find that God explains what he means by this commandment. There are two things God asks of us in this command. He first asks us to not labor, and secondly He asks us to set the day apart as holy. Now being humans when given a command from God

we often ask ourselves, "What will happen if I do not follow this command?" In most cases God has explained the negative consequences of disobeying His will, but not with the Sabbath. God does however explain it nicely in John 14:15 when Jesus says "If you love me, keep my commandments." Here is the point we must understand, if we love God we will honor the Sabbath. If you do not love God then do not feel obligated to keep the Sabbath, but I am writing this paper assuming that my audience has made it a point to live a life that demonstrates a love relationship with the Father.

To show our love for God we must remember the Sabbath, and keep it holy. This will at first seem easy, after all how hard is it to take a day off and rest? Everything seems easy until you come to a tough situation. Here is a situation that may have happened to you or may happen in the future. Let us say that your boss at work has told you to work on Sabbath, or face being fired. The job market is bad, meaning getting another job will be hard, and you have a family to feed. A perfect example of being between a rock and a hard place.



On the one hand you face disobeying God and on the other losing a job and facing hard times feeding the family. What would God have you to do at this point?

There may be more than one way of solving this dilemma. First, I suggest explaining to your boss the situation. I know from personal experience that people will often go out of their way to work out a solution if you just share your convictions and dedication to loving God. The boss may find a different day for you to work, but if not the right thing to do is to quit. Finding a job can be difficult especially when the market is bad. This may mean you have to work harder at a lower paying job. Subsequently the family may need to tighten the budget. No matter how bad things may be, God will provide.

God has not asked us to give up everything we have to prove our love. He has, in fact, allowed us to be blessed when we do follow his commands. The Sabbath allows us to set aside a day to connect with God and grow closer to him. It is important that we keep the Sabbath even if it means making some small sacrifices. And let us not forget what our Lord sacrificed for us. God has given us everything; can we not take at least one day a week to set aside for God?

#### Question 2

Man has made many attempts to justify wrongdoings. One example is the movement to change the calendar so that Sunday would be the seventh day of the week. A person might question how this simple effort to change could be considered a way to justify wrongs. It comes from the purpose to change the calendar. The purpose of the change would be to justify actions of disobeying God's fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. Since the majority of Christians go to church on Sunday and do not honor the Sabbath, it might make sense to some degree to make this change of the calendar. This change however would not make a wrong, right.

The seven-day week was set up by God, for the sake of the Sabbath. Think of this, the year is based on a yearly rotation of the sun, and the month of a rotation of the moon, but the week has no rhyme or reason. In fact, having 365 days in a year makes a seven-day week very inconvenient. This is why we have "approximately" 52 weeks in a year. If a person wanted to sit down and make a work week they would not choose five workdays and 2 weekend days, because seven is an odd number for a weekly cycle. The Sabbath and our weekly need to rest, rejuvenate, and focus on God are the only reasons the week was setup as it was. A change in the calendar would be rejecting God's plan because He set it up this way, and to say that another way is better would be the same as saying man's way is better than God's way.

Even though it would be against God's will, there are still people who would like to make this change. The question is, "How will Sabbath keepers deal with the calendar change if it occurs?" I personally would resist the change. This might be seen as going against the grain, but if you didn't know, I am going against the grain keeping the Sabbath as it is now. This change would definitely test the faith and steadfastness of the Sabbath keepers, but it would not ruin anything that God has given us.

The truth of God's gift of the Sabbath should be taught no matter who or how many people have gone with new trends. This will be much harder to do if the calendar gets changed. One way to change the calendar would be to simply renumber the days. This would really not affect the truth much, because many countries have already tried this, and the Sabbath is still quite obviously the true day of rest. Another way to change the calendar would be to flip Sabbath and Sunday, making the week go Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday. This would change the names but would not change the work schedule, leaving the first day of the weekend as the true Sabbath. Either way it would be a deviation from God's plan and gift.

The Sabbath was made for man. We are not supposed to feel subservient to the Sabbath; we should enjoy the Sabbath and use its benefits of rest and reuniting to the fullest. The Sabbath is a gift and God will not let it be taken away from us, and let us also remember to show our love for God by keeping the true Sabbath. □

## **Scholarship Essay Contest 2005**

We are now taking applications for our 2005 Scholarship Essay Contest. If you are a college student or are planning to attend college in the near future, write us for a contest application and rules for this year's contest.

For 2005 the amount of scholarship money has been increased to \$1500 for first place, \$1000 for second, and \$500 for third. There will only be three prizes given in 2005, and native English speakers and those who speak English as a second language will have an equal chance of winning.

If you as a BSA member or reader of *The Sabbath Sentinel* would like to donate specifically to our scholarship contest fund, just write on the check "Scholarship Fund," and your donation will be separated into a fund designated only for our scholarship essay contest.

## **Second Place Winner Joshua Gaffney**



*My name is Joshua Gaffney and I am eighteen years old. I was born in Manchester, New Hampshire; however, I have lived most of my life in Berthoud, Colorado. I am the middle child of five children. I graduated from Berthoud High School in May 2004 and am currently attending the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology where I am pursuing a computer science degree. I also work at the information desk in the student center on campus. In my spare time, I like to play basketball, card games, video games, and watch movies with my friends and family. I attend an independent Sabbath-keeping church and am continuing to learn about God and Jesus Christ daily.*

### Question 1-A

One of the greatest challenges of being a Sabbath keeper is when an employer asks the Sabbath keeper to work on a Saturday or face being fired. This is a tough challenge to anyone's faith, especially if in the current job market one is not likely to get a job for months.

If this would happen to me, the first thing I would do would be to offer to take a double shift on another day. If the company allows employees to switch shifts, then there is more than likely another employee who would rather work on a Saturday than on a different shift some other day. I could also work for someone after sunset on Saturday, if there are any late shifts available. If the company would not let me trade shifts with another employee or if none of the other employees would want to trade shifts, then I would talk directly with my employer. I would tell him that I feel that God requires my observance of the weekly Sabbath and that I could not work on it. I would offer to work more time during the week, Sundays, and holidays such as Easter, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. This would probably be pleasing to the employer, because it would show that I am not trying to get out of work and it would help him fill shifts that others do not want. It will also show that I am willing to work around other's religious beliefs. If this still does not work, I would tell my employer that I am willing to be fired because I refused to work on the Sabbath and not to expect me on Saturday until after sunset.

If I were fired, I would have to be active in finding a job that I can make enough money to get by on and trust in God to help me get by. I would also remember that sometimes God lets things happen and take comfort in scriptures like 1 Peter 2:19 "For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God." When any employers are interviewing me to see if I

am qualified for the job, I would tell them why I was fired and that I will not be working on Saturdays. If the employer is good, he would see that I have morals and values, which would hopefully help him to decide to employ me.

### Question 2

There has been a movement to change the beginning of the week to Monday instead of Sunday. I feel that this could create a new challenge to Sabbath keepers. I would argue against changing the beginning of the week to Monday, because it would seem to show that the Sabbath is on Sunday rather than Saturday.

Because the people who would want to change the beginning of the week to Monday want to do so for business reasons, any religious argument would not change their opinions. Therefore, I would point out that the week has always started on Sunday, since before written history. I would point out that everyone is used to the week starting on Sunday and changing it could cause some trouble with schedules. I would also argue that changing the beginning of the week should not be done just for convenience sake. I would also use the analogy that the weekend is like the covers on a book. No matter how much you try, the first page of the book would not make a good book cover and the cover will not make a good last page.

If, however, the beginning of the week was changed to Monday, Sabbath keepers can continue to preach the truth about the Sabbath, despite people's claim that the new calendar supports Sunday keeping. The people who will be alive during the calendar change will know about it and for those who are not alive during the change, there will always be documents showing the change of the calendar. One will still be able to make the argument that man cannot change God, and He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Another argument Sabbath keep-

ers can use is to show that Jesus Christ kept a seventh day Sabbath. Then propose the question; if Jesus Christ kept a seventh day Sabbath, can man change the day and call it good? Another way to approach it, would be to ask a Sunday keeper to explain why they keep Sunday. If they have to explain their point of

view, it makes them analyze it themselves, then they may see the holes in their argument.

I feel that although changing the calendar might change some of the ways that Sabbath keepers defend the Sabbath; it still should not present that much of a problem to the committed believer.

## **Third Place Winner**

### **Heather M. Fauth**

*(Photo not available)*

*Luke 14:33 says, "Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple." This short verse sums up my perspective on life. For me to be Jesus' disciple I have to leave things of this world behind me, take up His cross and follow him. I have been taking this verse seriously since I became a teenager. During my freshman year in high school I was involved in swim team. After the first meet my coach came up to me telling me she needed me to swim Friday and Saturdays, days that are my Sabbath. Instead of rejoicing to go a step higher, my coach made me choose between swimming and church. I quit swimming for high school that day; however, it wasn't easy. I had to remind myself why I was doing it.*

*Six years later I'm still finding the blessings from my decision to quit. In everything I do I must look at it and decide who it's serving, who it will affect, and how it benefits my spiritual life. I believe the only way to know this is by praying and reading the Bible. I take the Bible literally and expect other Christians to do the same. This experience six years ago and others like it has made me ready to go into the entire world and preach the gospel to others. I am ready for missionary work and would like to pursue a profession that allows me to be involved in helping others.*

*Seattle Pacific University has an international service called SPRINT that I would like to get involved in while attending school there, the project has many mission projects on and off campus. I would also like to participate in the Church of God new Medical Missions after becoming an active medical profession; Physical Therapy Assistant, Occupational Therapist, or Physician's Assistant is something I am currently considering. I believe that God has given me a talent and passion for working with injured and sick people and would like to use those talents to serve Him and my community.*

#### **Question 1-A**

When wondering what the future holds for me I get anxious and worried, but in Philippians verses six and seven the Bible says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." I have read these verses many times reminding myself that God is ultimately in control because I do tend to fret over what the future may bring, especially when it pertains to financial and job issues.

The commandments are clear that the Sabbath (Saturday) is to be kept by doing no work and resting. As a commandment keeping Christian, I know that I will never work on Saturdays and must tell my employer this; however, I will also need to pray for confidence and trust because God does provide. There is a saying, whenever God closes a door; he opens a window; so after quitting my job I will have to look

for the window that God has opened for me. The window is not always obvious, but with prayer and faith God will show me, His servant, the way I should go. Matthew six verses thirty-one through thirty-four says "Therefore do not worry, saying "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Seeking the Kingdom of God is much more important than any job I could have on this earth, and by following God I know that He will provide for me and my family. I have seen the power of prayer in the stories of the time when my Grandpa had to quit his job to honor God's commandments. He told me that even though he was worried about where his and his family's

next meal would come from, he knew that it was better to follow God's commandments than to break them by working on the Sabbath. Because he was faithful to God in a time of testing, he has had many blessings and God saw him and his family through it and gave him an even better job.

### **Question 2**

In the beginning God created the seventh day and hallowed it. He set it apart so that man would have a day of rest, as stated in Genesis the first chapter. He made the Sabbath day a holy day, created only for humans because He knew we would need rest; He did not need the rest, but He set an example that we should follow. For what He does, we must also do. God was only looking out for His people's best interest, and He can command His people to rest on Sabbath because He is God. This is also the reason why He picked the seventh day to be holy, because He is God and has the right and power to decide what day we should rest. As followers, we must listen to His words and obey. In Exodus, Moses was given the commandments God had spoken to him; these commandments are direct in what God wants His people to do.

As a follower and believer of God, I must realize that this means that no matter what happens in this world, I must chose to follow God, even if that means being the only one. In John, Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep my commandments. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father; and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

By changing the calendar's first day to Monday, it would only cause those who are not strong believers of the Ten Commandments to falter. Just as the Lord's Supper is not held by the day on the calendar says, but by the moon, the same could be done for observing the Sabbath. God has always let the truth be known to His followers, and those who seek it will find it. My favorite verse that I would tell others who would question whether Saturday was the seventh day or not is Acts five, verse twenty-nine, "Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men,'" since it is men who are changing the calendar and not God, for the Sabbath has always been Saturday from the beginning of time.

### *Sabbath Morning Companion*

## **Finding Time for God**

If God created the world in six days and the man and the woman on the sixth of those days, it is instructive that God's next act was to take a break. After the busy-ness of creating and the joy of bringing to life two creatures made in his own image, God could have told them to get to work. Instead, he stopped and took time to build something more important than the dressing and keeping of his garden. He took a break so they could get to know each other.

I fear sometimes that in our 21st Century lives we spend so much time doing that we forget about being. For many of us who have children, activities and responsibilities have taken over our lives, and we find ourselves chauffeuring from here to there almost every night of the week, sometimes trying to be in too many places at the same time.

Add in the responsibilities of earning a living and serving in various volunteer capacities, and it is no wonder that so many of us lack the time to spend with our Creator. That's a shame, and I am convinced God thinks so too. While he did intend us to be doers (that is, to accomplish things), he also intended us to be relational beings. Man was put on the earth to dress it and keep it, but he was incomplete without a soul mate with whom to share it. And the first thing God did after putting the man and the woman together was to give them time off to allow them to get to know each other—and Him—better.

The Commandment says to work six days, and that's a big part of the command—work, and do, and accomplish, for that is a part of our mandate. It also commands us to take a break, for we are more than workers—we are beings, beings born for relationships. Once a week it makes sense to stop as God did, to cease from our physical

work and the busy-ness of our lives, and to nurture the eternal relationships of friends, family, and God. The idea of a Sabbath rest reminds us that this world and all the things in it will pass away, but the relationships we build will last forever.

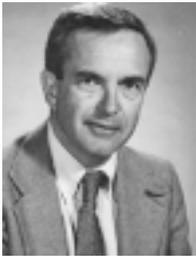
The world does its best to cause us to forget that. We are tempted to focus on the now rather than on eternity, and that can too easily succumb to the slavery of busy-ness if we have no time to reflect on the larger matters. It is accurate to say that our world can rob us of our personhood and make us slaves to its demands.

It is curious that the Fourth Commandment attaches itself to a rationale that addresses the issue of slavery: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work ... remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you there by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Deuteronomy 5:13–15).

Anybody who believes that the Sabbath is bondage needs to read again the above passage. We were given the Sabbath to remind us that slaves don't get a day off. It is a commemoration of freedom, which is one of the great gifts that God intends all to have. He gave the Sabbath day to show that we are not slaves, and by claiming that day, we are claiming the freedom we have in Christ and our God-given right to build our relationships rather than our earthly empires.

—Lenny Cacchio

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# The Myth of the Flat Earth

by Jeffrey Burton Russell

Presented before the American Scientific Affiliation Conference

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*How does investigating the myth of the flat earth  
help teachers of the history of science?*

First, as a historian, I have to admit that it tells us something about the precariousness of history. History is precarious for three reasons: the good reason that it is extraordinarily difficult to determine “what really happened” in any series of events; the bad reason that historical scholarship is often sloppy; and the appalling reason that far too much historical scholarship consists of contorting the evidence to fit ideological models. The worst examples of such contortions are the Nazi and Communist histories of the early- and mid-twentieth century.

Contortions that are common today, if not widely recognized, are produced by the incessant attacks on Christianity and religion in general by secular writers during the past century and a half, attacks that are largely responsible for the academic and journalistic sneers at Christianity today.

A curious example of this mistreatment of the past for the purpose of slandering Christians is a widespread historical error, an error that the Historical Society of Britain some years back listed as number one in its short compendium of the ten most common historical illusions. It is the notion that people used to believe that the earth was flat—especially medieval Christians.

It must first be reiterated that with extraordinary few exceptions **no** educated person in the history of Western Civilization from the third century BC onward believed that the earth was flat.

A round earth appears at least as early as the sixth century BC with Pythagoras, who was followed by Aristotle, Euclid, and Aristarchus, among others in observing that the earth was a sphere. Although there were a few dissenters—Leukippos and Demokritos for example—by the time of Eratosthenes (3 c. BC), followed by Crates (2 c. BC), Strabo (3 c. BC), and Ptolemy (first c. AD), the sphericity of the earth was accepted by all educated Greeks and Romans.

Nor did this situation change with the advent of Christianity. A few—at least two and at most five—early Christian fathers denied the sphericity of earth by mistakenly taking passages such as Ps. 104:2–3 as geographical rather

than metaphorical statements. On the other side tens of thousands of Christian theologians, poets, artists, and scientists took the spherical view throughout the early, medieval, and modern church. The point is that no educated person believed otherwise.

Historians of science have been proving this point for at least 70 years (most recently Edward Grant, David Lindberg, Daniel Woodward, and Robert S. Westman), without making notable headway against the error. Schoolchildren in the US, Europe, and Japan are for the most part being taught the same old nonsense. How and why did this nonsense emerge?

In my research, I looked to see how old the idea was that medieval Christians believed the earth was flat. I obviously did not find it among medieval Christians. Nor among anti-Catholic Protestant reformers. Nor in Copernicus or Galileo or their followers, who had to demonstrate the superiority of a heliocentric system, but not of a spherical earth. I was sure I would find it among the eighteenth-century philosophes, among all their vitriolic sneers at Christianity, but not a word. I am still amazed at where it first appears.

No one before the 1830s believed that medieval people thought that the earth was flat.

The idea was established, almost contemporaneously, by a Frenchman and an American, between whom I have not been able to establish a connection, though they were both in Paris at the same time. One was Antoine-Jean Letronne (1787-1848), an academic of strong antireligious prejudices who had studied both geography and patristics and who cleverly drew upon both to misrepresent the church fathers and their medieval successors as believing in a flat earth, in his *On the Cosmographical Ideas of the Church Fathers* (1834). The American was no other than our beloved storyteller Washington Irving (1783-1859), who loved to write historical fiction under the guise of history. His misrepresentations of the history of early New York City and of the life of Washington were topped by his history of Christopher Columbus (1828). It was he who invented the indelible picture of the young Colum-

bus, a “simple mariner,” appearing before a dark crowd of benighted inquisitors and hooded theologians at a council of Salamanca, all of whom believed, according to Irving, that the earth was flat like a plate. Well, yes, there was a meeting at Salamanca in 1491, but Irving’s version of it, to quote a distinguished modern historian of Columbus, was “pure moonshine. Washington Irving, scenting his opportunity for a picturesque and moving scene,” created a fictitious account of this “nonexistent university council” and “let his imagination go completely...the whole story is misleading and mischievous nonsense.”

But now, why did the false accounts of Letronne and Irving become melded and then, as early as the 1860s, begin to be served up in schools and in school-books as the solemn truth?

The answer is that the falsehood about the spherical earth became a colorful and unforgettable part of a larger falsehood: the falsehood of the eternal war between science (good) and religion (bad) throughout Western history. This vast web of falsehood was invented and propagated by the influential historian John Draper (1811-1882) and many prestigious followers, such as Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918), the president of Cornell University, who made sure that the false account was perpetrated in texts, encyclopedias, and even allegedly serious scholarship, down to the present day. A lively current version of the lie can be found in Daniel Boorstin’s *The Discoverers*, found in any bookshop or library.

The reason for promoting both the specific lie about the sphericity of the earth and the general lie that religion and science are in natural and eternal conflict in Western society, is to defend Darwinism. The answer is really only slightly more complicated than that bald statement. The flat-earth lie was ammunition against the creationists. The argument was simple and powerful, if not elegant: “Look how stupid these Christians are. They are always getting in the way of science and progress. These people who deny evolution today are exactly the same sort of people as those idiots who for at least a thousand years denied that the earth was round. How stupid can you get?”

But that is not the truth. □

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## Obedience Is Better Than Sacrifice

*Samuel said. Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 1 Sam. 15:22.*

Because the Amalekites “had lifted up their hands against God and His throne, and had taken oath by their gods” “to plague” His people “until there should not be one left,” the Lord “had appointed Amaiek to utter destruction (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, pp. 72, 73). It is always a dangerous thing to trifle with God.

For four hundred years the Lord delayed His punishment of the Amalekites, hoping they would turn from their evil ways, but they continually harassed His people. At last their cup of iniquity was full, and through His prophet, Samuel, God commanded Saul to destroy them utterly. Surely no command could have been more explicit.

In obedience to God’s directive Saul gathered an army of 210,000 men and attacked Amalek. The Lord gave him an overwhelming victory. But Saul did not follow through and fully obey God’s injunction. He brought back alive Agag, the Amalekite king, and spared the best of the sheep and oxen. That night the Lord told Samuel of the king’s disobedience. The next day, when Samuel went out to meet the victorious king and asked about his success, Saul responded with these lying words:

“I have performed the commandment of the Lord” (1 Sam. 15:13). Samuel then asked, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” (verse 14).

Instead of humbly confessing his error, Saul tried to shift the blame on the people, at the same time attributing a good motive for their disobedience: “The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God” (verse 15). Human judgment might reason that if the sheep and oxen taken from the Amalekites were to be slaughtered they might as well be offered as sacrifices. But God is particular. He had commanded, “Utterly destroy” (verse 3).

God did not commend Saul for any good intentions he may have had, or for his partial obedience to His commands. Rather, He rebuked the disobedient king through Samuel with the words “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

When God commands He expects obedience. But He does not leave things there. With His command He supplies the power to obey, even as He gave Saul victory over the Amalekites when the king obeyed. But let us never forget that no gift, no sacrifice, no partial obedience, can take the place of full compliance with God’s requirements.

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*Reprinted from **New Every Morning**, p. 277. Author: Donald Ernest Mansell. Publisher: Review and Herald Publishing, 1981.*

## Evolution vs. Creationism

by Steve Farrell

The debate raging in Georgia – and beginning to spread its wings across the nation – over whether to teach evolution or creationism or both in the public classroom reminds us that free speech, free inquiry and freedom of religion are finally beginning to fight back against a centrist, fiercely intolerant, protectionist modern educational establishment that is run by a combination of agnostics, atheists, socialists, politically correct cowards (sadly, many of them ‘Christians’) and a host of men and women who have been taught *what* to think rather than *how* to think.

The point the elite, out-of-touch, bought-and-paid-for intellectual “giants” are hiding from you and me, their students and other advocates of academic freedom is that there is now, always has been, and always will be numberless dissenters within their ranks, and outside their ranks, who look into the heavens and Earth with the eye of science, and the eye of reason, and see such magnificent variety and order and wonder that they have no doubt, no doubt at all, that the universe was created by a Supreme Being, not by chance, not by evolution, not according to the obtuse theories of a class of men who demean themselves (and the rest of us with them) by supposing mankind to be the lowly descendants of amoebas and apes, rather than the literal offspring of God.

Talk about setting the sights of our children low!

Perhaps the most educated man in this nation’s history, Thomas Jefferson – a scientist of the first magnitude in so many areas of inquiry – saw in the universe what your children and my children are not permitted to hear, to consider, or to endeavor to prove:

“[W]ithout appeal to revelation,” he told fellow founder John Adams on April 11, 1823:

I hold—that when we take a view of the universe, in its parts, general or particular, it is impossible for the human mind not to perceive and feel a conviction of design, consummate skill, and indefinite power in every atom of its composition. The movements of the heavenly bodies, so exactly held in their course by the balance centrifugal and centripetal forces; the structure of our earth itself, with its distribution of lands, waters and atmosphere; animal and vegetable bodies, examine in all their minutest particles; insects, mere atoms of life, yet as perfectly organized as man or mammoth; the mineral substances, their generation and uses; it is impossible,

I say, for the human mind not to believe, that there is in all this, design, cause and effect, up to an ultimate cause, a fabricator of all things from matter and motion, their preserver and regulator while permitted to exist in their present forms, and their regeneration into new and other forms.

We see, too, evident proofs of the necessity of a superintending power, to maintain the universe in its course and order. Stars, well known, have disappeared, new ones have come into view; comets, in their incalculable courses, may run foul of suns and planets, and require renovation under other laws; certain races of animals are become extinct; and were there no restoring power, all existences might extinguish successively, one by one, until all should be reduced to a shapeless chaos. So irresistible are these evidences of an intelligent and powerful agent, that, of the infinite numbers of men who have existed through all time, they have believed, in the proportion of a million at least to unit, in the hypothesis of an eternal preexistence of a creator, rather than in that of a self-existent universe. Surely this unanimous sentiment renders this more probable, than that of the few in the other hypothesis.

Well, surely this unanimous sentiment would render itself more probable than that of “the few” in the other “hypothesis,” as it did in Jefferson’s age, except — guess what — those few have since hijacked America’s schools, ruled with an iron fist her academic journals, outlawed free speech, free inquiry and religious freedom in every learning circle, and have thus undone the good that Jefferson and the other Founders did, crushing dissent in their favor, as all bullies and all cowards who have something to hide have always done.

But a sleeping giant is stirring. A new generation has come to the realization that it’s time to take back the educational establishment from these ‘pro-choice’ liberals who offer *no* choice except *their* choice in the classroom, who tremble at the thought of another point of view, even some common sense challenging their precious godless monopoly, some common sense from ‘the many’ whom they despise. □

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*Reprinted with permission from NewsMax.com. NewsMax pundit Steve Farrell is associate professor of political economy at George Wythe College, press agent for Defend Marriage (a project of United Families International), and the author of the highly praised, inspirational novel **Dark Rose** (available at amazon.com).*

*For you West Coast night owls, try and catch Steve on Mark Edwards’ “Wake Up America!” talk radio show on 50,000-Watt KDWN, 720 AM, 10 p.m. to midnight, Monday nights; or on the Internet at AmericanVoiceRadio.com (preferred access at WakeUpAmericaFoundation.com).*

## The Wycliffe Bible Translation and the Term "The Preparation"

### (Part 1)

by Marsha Basner



Much commentary has been made by both Sabbatarians and non-Sabbatarians regarding the term "preparation" (in conjunction with the Sabbath). Its presence in the biblical accounts detailing the Savior's last week is presented as irrefutable proof that the day it refers to is supposedly Friday.

In consulting a lexicon, we find the following definition of the Greek term translated as "preparation:"

# 3904 *Paraskeue* (**Strong's Concordance**)

*paraskeuh/* as if from (3903)

Transliterated word phonetic spelling

*Paraskeue* par-ask-yoo-ay' [ ]

Parts of Speech (**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament [TDNT]**)

Noun, Feminine 7:1,989

#### Definition

- 1) a making ready, preparation, equipping
  - 2) that which is prepared, equipment
  - 3) in the NT in a Jewish sense, the day of preparation
    - a) the day on which the Jews made necessary preparation to celebrate a sabbath or a feast
- "Parasceve," is the Latin equivalent to the Greek term, "Preparation," which is defined as follows according to the **Catholic Encyclopedia**:

"In the Latin language, the term '*Parasceve*,' (equivalent to the Greek term, *Paraskeue*) seems to have been applied also to the eve of certain festival days of a sabbatic character. Foremost among these was the first day of the unleavened bread, Nisan 15. We learn from the **Mishna** (*Pesach*, iv, 1, 5) that the *Parasceve* of the Pasch, whatever day of the week it fell on, was kept even more religiously than the ordinary Friday, in Judæa work ceasing at noon, and in Galilee the whole day being free." (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11476a.htm>)

According to the definition of both *Paraskeue* and "Parasceve" the terms can be used to refer EITHER to the day prior to the Sabbath or prior to a feast day, refuting the claim that many have that the term 'preparation' as used in the Bible, exclusively refers to a "Friday." (The Eastern Church however, did eventually adopt the word *Paraskeue*, using it exclusively to refer to Friday.)

Interestingly, during the first century, the common term used by the Hebrews for the evening before the Sabbath or Festival was "Erev Shabbat," "Erev Pask/Passover," etc. Therefore when reading some of the earliest English translations, it was amazing to find the term "Sabbath even" or "Pask/Passover even," (as would be expected from writings of that time period), rather than the term "preparation" as is present in our "modern" English translation.

A common practice of many Sabbatarians is when presented with a new translation of the Bible, to check certain key texts to ascertain how the translator rendered them. When this author had the opportunity to view the Wycliffe Bible translation, of 1395, (a translation that is 610 years old, containing old English spellings that are sometimes hard to decipher) Heb. 4:9, the following was found: "Therfor the sabbat is left to the puple of God."

Finding that very interesting, assuming that the term "sabat" used above was the old English rendering of "Sabbath," Matt. 28:1 was checked with these findings: "But in the euentid of the sabbat, that bigynneth to schyne in the firste dai of the woke, Marie Mawdelene cam, and another Marie, to se the sepulcre."

Becoming more intrigued, an Internet search was run on Wycliffe and his Bible translation, the highlights are as follows:

The first hand-written English language Bible manuscripts were produced in 1380's AD by John Wycliffe, an Oxford professor, scholar, and theologian. Wycliffe, (also spelled "Wycliff" & "Wyclif"), was well-known throughout Europe for his opposition to the teaching of the organized Church, which he believed to be contrary to the Bible. With the help of his followers, called the Lollards, and his assistant Purvey, and many other faithful scribes, Wycliffe produced dozens of English language manuscript copies of the scriptures. They were translated out of the Latin Vulgate, which was the only source text available to Wycliffe. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug up, crushed, and scattered in the river! (<http://>

[www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/john-wycliffe.html](http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/john-wycliffe.html)).

Another interesting site revealed:

Some of his students joined him at the parish church in Lutterworth. There they undertook the monumental task of translating all the Scriptures into English, working from a handwritten Latin translation that was over 1000 years old. And they continued Wycliffe's practice of training "poor preachers," known as Lollards, who took the Word out to the common people across the land (<http://www.gospelcom.net/chi/GLIMPSEF/Glimpses/glmps013.shtml>).

Since Wycliffe wrote from a handwritten Latin translation 1000 years old, he had access to a translation written in the late 300's A.D.!

Perusing through many other texts, the following became apparent, that many verses in his Bible differed markedly from the same verses in the more modern, specifically our KJV Bible, (and other English Bibles which are based upon the Received Text/*Textus Receptus* of 1516 A.D.)

One series of verses which were specially noted are the focus of this article. Those are the verses containing the word "preparation" in conjunction with the term "Sabbath," occurring in the Gospel's accounts of our Savior's last week. The following is a comparison of the following texts, Matt. 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, John 19:14, 31 & 42 in the KJV and the Wycliffe Bible:

#### **Matt. 27:62**

*KJV:* "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,"

*Wycliffe:* "And on the tother dai, that is aftir **pask euen**, the princis of prestis and the Farisees camen togidere to Pilat,"

#### **Mark 15:42**

*KJV:* "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,"

*Wycliffe:* "And whanne euentid was come, for it was the euentid which is bifor the sabat,"

#### **Luke 23:54**

*KJV:* "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on."

*Wycliffe:* "And the dai was the euen of the halidai, and the sabat bigan to schyne."

#### **John 19:14**

*KJV:* "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!"

*Wycliffe:* "And it was pask eue, as it were the

sixte our. And he seith to the Jewis, Lo! youre king."

#### **John 19:31**

*KJV:* "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

*Wycliffe:* "Therfor for it was the pask eue, that the bodies schulden not abide on the cros in the sabat, for that was a greet sabat dai, the Jewis preiden Pilat, that the hipis of hem schulden be brokun, and thei takun awei."

#### **John 19:42**

*KJV:* "There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

*Wycliffe:* "Therfor there thei putten Jhesu, for the vigilie of Jewis feeste, for the sepulcre was niy."

#### **Observations:**

In Matt. 27:62, instead of the term "the day of preparation" as used in the KJV, Received Text, Wycliffe uses, "after pask (passover) even."

In Mark 15:42, instead of the term "preparation" as used in the KJV, Wycliffe uses the term "eventide."

In Luke 23:54, instead of "the preparation," Wycliffe uses the term "even of the haliday."

In John 19:14 instead of "preparation of the passover" Wycliffe uses the term "pask eve."

In John 19:31, instead of "the preparation" Wycliffe uses the term "pask eve."

In John 19:42, instead of "preparation day," Wycliffe uses "vigilie of the Jewes feeste."

We can draw two conclusions from this comparison. Either the term "preparation" (parasceve in Latin, paraskeue in Greek) was not present in the Latin texts which Wycliffe used, or he intentionally ignored it on each of these 6 occasions.

Based on this man's reported passion for truth, this author has concluded that this term "preparation/parasceve" was not used in these aforementioned texts in the manuscripts which Wycliffe used which dated from the 4th century A.D.

*To be continued....*

#### **End Note**

An online site for the Wycliffe Bible is [http://www.bibledbdata.org/onlinebibles/wycliffe\\_nt/index.htm](http://www.bibledbdata.org/onlinebibles/wycliffe_nt/index.htm)

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Ehrman's most recent book is *Lost Christianities—The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, \$30). His focus is that mystery period of church history during which the cherished faith of the earliest Christians came to be abandoned, destroyed, and forgotten. What can be known of those times? One of Ehrman's purposes is to bring back in view for us moderns what was lost amid the sands of time.

The late Dr. Charles Dorothy, ACD's Director of Biblical Research and my associate for many years, was a specialist in the inter-testament period and the first century of the current era. Like Ehrman, he documented many "Judaism's" and many "Christianities" populating the religious world of the first century—not too unlike our religious scene today.

Dorothy broadly characterized the early church as branching into two wings toward the end of the first century, and it continued to diverge in the centuries following. He labeled them the Jewish wing and the Gentile wing. By the fourth century the Gentile wing had thoroughly eclipsed the remnants of Jewish Christianity and became recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Dr. Dorothy also noted that there were many iterations of Christianity within those two wings already manifesting by 100 AD.

Epiphanius, the orthodox bishop on the island of Cyprus, writing in the fourth century, attacks eighty different non-orthodox Christian groups calling them heretical. He names and describes several of them.

Using the writings of Epiphanius and other early accounts, Ehrman documents many strains of early Christianities, but in this book he chooses two to illustrate the likely two ends of the spectrum: the Ebionites and the Marcionites. The Ebionites represented the extreme of the Jewish wing of the Christian movement, the Marcionites the extreme at the Gentile wing.

Contrasting the two, Ehrman writes,

The Marcionites [followers of the second-century theologian and evangelist Marcion], on the other hand, had a highly attractive religion to many pagan converts, as it was avowedly Christian with nothing Jewish about it. In fact, everything Jewish was taken out of it. ...Not only were Jewish customs rejected, so, too, were the Jewish Scriptures and the Jewish God. From a historical perspective, it is intriguing that any such religion could claim direct historical continuity with Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

At the other extreme of those earliest "Christianities" is a group called the Ebionites. This was a group that existed in the 100s AD (2<sup>nd</sup> Century)—and perhaps for centuries following. What was written about them was largely penned by their opponents. The description of their doctrine is gleaned from at-

tacks written against various Ebionite "heresies." The proto-orthodox heresiologist Tertullian attacked them, as did Origen and other "church fathers."

The "proto-orthodox" were, of course, church leaders in the early centuries whose theology would eventually prevail and become considered "orthodoxy" in later centuries. They were not known for their tolerance as their opponents could testify. The Ebionites were one of many early sects of Christianity that came under attack. What "heresies" did the Ebionites hold?

Ehrman describes them:

Proto-orthodox authors clearly agree that the Ebionites were and understood themselves to be Jewish followers of Jesus. They were not the only group of Jewish-Christians known to have existed at the time, but they were the group that generated some of the greatest opposition. The Ebionite Christians that we are best informed about believed that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah sent from the Jewish God to the Jewish people in fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures.

They also believed that to belong to the people of God, one needed to be Jewish. As a result, they insisted on observing the Sabbath, keeping kosher, and circumcising all males. That sounds very much like the position taken by the opponents of Paul in Galatia. It may be that the Ebionite Christians were their descendants, physical or spiritual. An early source, Irenaeus, also reports that the Ebionites continued to reverence Jerusalem, evidently by praying in its direction during their daily acts of worship.

...The Ebionites, however, maintained that their views were authorized by the original disciples, especially Peter and Jesus' own brother, James, head of the Jerusalem church after the resurrection.

One other aspect of the Ebionites' Christianity that set it apart from that of most other Christian groups was their understanding of who Jesus was. The Ebionites did not subscribe to the notion of Jesus' preexistence or his virgin birth.<sup>2</sup>

The Ebionites were Jews who insisted there was only one God. Marcionites were Gentiles who insisted that Jewish practices were fundamentally detrimental for a right standing with God. These two groups were clearly the far end representatives of what Dr. Dorothy characterized as the two wings of Christianity.

Within the two wings and between these two extremes there were many intermediate groups with more moderate positions. Ehrman speculates on what Christianity might have looked like had the Jewish wing prevailed.

If the Ebionites had established themselves as dominant, then things would be radically different for Christians today. Christianity would be not a religion what was separate from Judaism but a sect of

Judaism, a sect that accepted Jewish laws, customs, and ways, a sect that practiced circumcision, observed Jewish holy days such as Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana and other festivals, a sect that kept kosher food laws and probably maintained a vegetarian diet. ...In any event, Ebionite Christianity was "left behind" at a fairly early moment in the history of the church.<sup>3</sup>

Another interesting observation Ehrman makes concerns why Christianity was able to take root in the pagan world of the Roman Empire. Before Christianity could succeed it first had to be palatable.

Unlike today, in the ancient Roman world there was wide-ranging suspicion of *any* philosophy or religion that smacked of novelty. In the fields of philosophy and religion, as opposed to the field of military technology, it was the old that was appreciated and respected, not the new. ...Nothing new could be true. If it were true, why was it not known long ago?

The Strategy that Christians devised to avoid this obstacle to conversion was to say that even though Jesus did live just decades or a century or so ago, the religion based on him is much, much older, for this religion is the fulfillment of all that God had been predicting in the oldest surviving books of civilization. ...Moses lived four centuries before Homer, eight centuries before Plato....Christianity is not a new thing...and as an ancient religion, it demands attention. ...Had Christians not been able to make a plausible case for the antiquity of their religion, it never would have succeeded in the empire.<sup>4</sup>

What finally emerged as orthodox Christianity was a blend of various forms of early Christianity. It borrowed from (or shared with) elements of both Ebionite and Marcionite Christianity.

Some of these "common grounds" or "borrowings," whichever they were, obviously stood in tension with one another and several unique aspects of proto-orthodoxy were the result. For example, while affirming the authority of the Jewish Scriptures (with the Ebionites but against the Marcionites), the proto-orthodox rejected historical Judaism (with the Marcionites against the Ebionites); while affirming the divinity of Jesus (with the Marcionites against the Ebionites), they also affirmed his humanity (with the Ebionites against the Marcionites).

...From a historical point of view, it appears that the Ebionites did indeed teach an understanding of the faith that would have been close to that of Jesus' original disciples—Aramaic-speaking Jews who remained faithful to the Jewish Law and who kept Jewish customs even after coming to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. But the Ebionites came to be declared heretical by the proto-orthodox.<sup>5</sup>

Ehrman's conclusion should resonate among many of us who can identify with particular teachings among

these early Christianities—especially those within the Jewish wing of the early church.

An anti-Jewish bias would eventually become enshrined in the orthodoxy that became the Roman Catholic Church. Since the fourth century that particular Christianity dominated the history until the Protestant Reformation. But below the radar of mainstream church history, countless varieties of non-orthodox (heretical?) Christianity survived and at times thrived.

Just as in the first few centuries of early Christianity, today's world has "many Christianities." We should note, however, that the true body of Christ, the Church of God, is a spiritual body of believers who have received God's Holy Spirit. Their names are known to their God and membership in that True Church is totally independent from membership in any visible denomination or church. For that, I praise God!

If you love to study church history—or just like a good detective mystery—you will enjoy Ehrman's *Lost Christianities*.

**End Notes:**

Ehrman, Bart D, *Lost Christianities*, Oxford, 2003, p. 103.

*Ibid*, p 100-101

*Ibid*, p 110

*Ibid*, p 112

*Ibid*, p 253

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*Kenneth Westby is a director emeritus of the BSA and founder and director of the Association for Christian Development (ACD) and the Virtual Church. The ACD Web site can be found at [www.godward.org](http://www.godward.org).*

## **Special**

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# Sister Lillian Huddleston

Mrs. Huddleston, who died at age 102 on September 3, 2004, began keeping the Sabbath at age 47, and kept it as an adult for 55 years. Sister Lillian Ringo Huddleston was born October 7, 1902, in a small town named Ringo, Missouri (after her father) in the area of Charleston, to Thomas R. Ringo and Ella Mae Whittiker. She was reared and educated in Boley, OK (near Indian Territory). Converted at age 11, she accepted the “true apostolic doctrine.”

In 1949 she became a member of the North Street Seventh Day Adventist Church. Later she joined the Worldwide Church of God in the late 1950's. She traveled across the USA and Caribbean visiting different feast sites and friends during the winter months, which could be quite harsh in her home town of Flint, Michigan. She later joined the Assembly of Yahvah in Messiah where she remained a member until her death. She wrote poems which she would share as “specials” in congregational meetings, and collected and wrote tracts to share with visitors to her home. Sometimes she would send them out randomly in the mail.

Sister Lillian was an evangelistic missionary and Bible teacher.

Since 1934, beginning in Blytheville, Arkansas, it was her evangelistic work that brought her to Flint in 1943 to work with the late Elder Johnny Smyer in the civic and community religious work. Her main purpose in life was to try to show people a better way of life. Sister Lillian pioneered in many fields in Flint. She was the first African-American to serve as bishop sewing teacher on the Mott Adult Program and was coordinator of many of its programs including Tot Lot, Hot Breakfast. She also worked as a stepping stone leader, in child accounting for board of education, as campaign worker in 3rd ward to elect Mr. Floyd McCree as first African-American city commissioner (now councilman), served on the executive board of the NAACP and Urban League at Fairview Community School, homeroom mother, PTA president, Homemaker program assistant liaison for the truant officer, Mr. John Russell and the welfare mothers of the Fairview community, served on the 100 member board of commissioners for the urban renewal program.

Her evangelist work took her through the USA and Canada. She didn't confine her missionary work to any one group organization but worked wherever needed or accepted. She preferred to be known as a woman who loved Yahvah (God) and people—a woman who

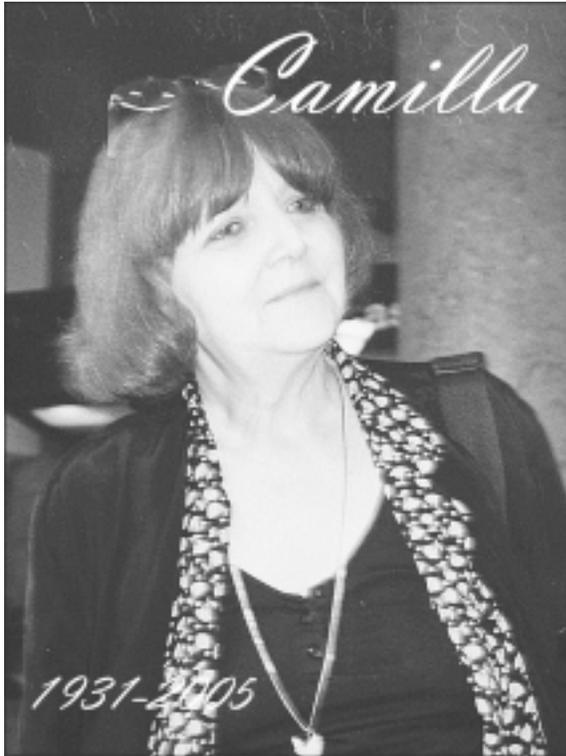


lived in the house by the side of the road and was a friend to humanity.

In recent years she received as recognition for her work, the Sojourner Truth award, Volunteer of the Year award and Woman of the Year award. She was a member of Hasselbring Community Center, served on the advisory board, a charter member of the Negro Women Business Professional Organization and a charter member of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. While a charter member, she made many worthwhile contributions to the center and community. Her motto, “keep Hasselbring represented” and that she did. Her latest project was the United Negro College Fund which, through her leadership, Hasselbring contributed hundreds and hundreds of dollars to Negro colleges.

She leaves to cherish sweet memories her son, Mr. Charles Mason (Cheryl) Ewing, Flint, MI; grand daughters, Ms. China and Ms. Nikki Charue Ewing, Ypsilanti, MI; sister, Mrs. Lorraine Rowlett, niece, Ms. Yvonne (Darrin) Rowlett-Watkins, great niece, Ms. Coresha Rowlett, great nephew, Mr. Stephon Rowlett, all of Pontiac, Michigan; many adopted children, a host of many good friends including dearest friends, the Johnsons, Redmonds, Makandes, Earnestine (James) Washington, of Flint, and Marsha Basner of Tulsa, Oklahoma; adopted grandson, Mr. Joseph Fraiser, a sister like pal, Mrs. Alice Turnbull, adopted sister, Mrs. Lelia Caldwell, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Mendez, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip (Linda) Lester, brother and sister Otto (Ester) Meisel, and sister and caregiver, Mrs. Rutlia Porter and the members of the Only Child Club and Assemblies of Yahvah of the Messiah.

# Sister Camilla Dorothy



*Dear Friends,*

*Thank you for your kind notes of sympathy and remembrances of Camilla. She died on January 8, just a few weeks short of her 74<sup>th</sup> birthday. Your comments provided encouragement to me and JoAn during a very sad time. Our eyes are drying out and we move on with the great memories of Camilla we will always hold. She has left a big hole in our lives that cannot be filled until that beautiful resurrection we all long for.*

*The funeral, which I officiated, was before a packed chapel of about two hundred people. Camilla had a large family of seventeen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Unable to attend were two of Camilla's long-time friends, Dr. Karl & Donna Hampton, who now live in Montana. Karl wrote the paragraph's below which I read during the service. I think it captures one of Camilla's most attractive character qualities. The picture of Camilla to the left was taken about the time her husband Dr. Charles Dorothy died.*

*—Ken & JoAn Westby*

*(Editor's Note: Camilla Dorothy was the sister of long-time BSA board member, Kenneth Westby.)*

## “SUCH A ONE WAS CAMILLA”

Along the road of life, we've seen many sights and places, we've met and spoken to so many people. Most contacts with others were momentary, fleeting in passing — the names and even faces — long forgotten.

But there are those — the few along the road of life — who have traveled closely with us. Our lives and theirs have been woven and melded together. Along this road we have shared our dearest hopes and dreams .... as well as our greatest difficulties and sorrows. We have rejoiced together — sharing meals, blending our voices in songs and laughter. We've sat together in stillness as we've shared disappointments and loss ... such a one was Camilla ... such a friend, and more than a friend was Camilla.

Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe, with a true friend like Camilla. Having neither to weigh our thoughts, nor measure our words, but pouring them all right out, just as they were, chaff and grain together. Certain that a faithful hand would take and sift them — keep what was worth keeping — and, with the breath of love and kindness, blow the rest away.

For nearly 45 years, we have been blessed by knowing Camilla. But what is that to having her friendship throughout the glorious eternity which lies ahead.

*Karl and Donna Hampton*

## **Is Your Religion Neurotic??**

*by David L. Antion, Ph.D.*

Can a religion be neurotic? The word “neurotic” is derived from the word “neurosis.” It has to do with forms of mental disorders in which the person is not delusional – i.e. seeing things that are not there or hearing sounds that are not there (psychotic). A person who is a hypochondriac (believes s/he is sick all the time) would be neurotic. So would a person who is depressed. Depression is a form of neurosis.

The late psychologist, Rollo May, suggested three main features that characterize a neurotic religion. In this article we will paraphrase them and expound on each.

1. A religion is neurotic when it separates people from, rather than strengthening their attachment to, fellow human beings.

Many churches and religious leaders cause their followers to shun others and look on them as polluted or inferior. Even when religious leaders claim they preach to the contrary, you will find their followers shunning and avoiding neighbors and oftentimes relatives too.

A prime example was the sect of the Pharisees. Their very name meant “separatists.” They separated themselves from those they thought to be sinners and looked on them with disdain. Jesus used their neurotic tendencies to teach His disciples better ways. In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9), the Pharisee compared himself and his righteousness to the lowly publican. He even thanked God that he was not like other men (or women for that matter)—extortioners, unjust, adulterers. And he was also glad that he was not like the publican (v. 11). But Jesus pointed out that it was the publican in his total humility in admitting his sins who went away justified!

The Scripture makes it plain that Jesus did not separate Himself from the publicans or other sinners. The Gospels make a specific point of this! “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him” (Luke 15:1). Jesus did not separate Himself from them. Rather He spoke to them and taught them better ways and the good news of God’s Kingdom. The Pharisees and Scribes murmured, “This man receives sinners, and eats with them” (v. 2).

In Matthew’s Gospel we read: “And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat (food) in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him

and his disciples” (9:10). Jesus never kept His disciples from other people. He did not promote a suspicious, distrustful attitude. In fact, suspicion and distrust are the cornerstones of the paranoid personality and are very much part of neurotic religion.

Because of His attitude toward all humans, it was easy to characterize Jesus as the friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matt. 11:19). It was because He came eating and drinking that they also called Him gluttonous and a winebibber. He evidently ate and drank with the publicans (tax collectors) and sinners (probably harlots).

When Jesus was invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee a woman came to Him with an alabaster box of ointment. She washed His feet with her tears and wiped them dry with the hair of her head. The Pharisee said, “...if he were a prophet, he would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him: for she is a sinner” (Luke 7:39).

Pharisees would not touch another human they thought was a sinner. Jesus lectured the Pharisee on common, decent hospitality. He pointed to the woman as being more gracious and kind than His host.

We also have the example of the Samaritan who stopped to help a Jew who had been mugged, robbed and left for dead. A Levite passed him by. A priest also passed by. Neither helped him. But the Samaritan had compassion and was not afraid to help another human being though different in religion and racial mixture (Luke 10:30-33).

Jesus’ example plainly shows us that separation from other humans is neurotic. That doesn’t mean that we must do everything they do – of course not! Jesus’ teaching was that we should not only love those who love us, we should even “love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44). It’s not enough just to greet those who greet you. Jesus asked, “And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Even the publicans do so” (v. 47).

In spite of this plain teaching from the Bible, many “religious” people will shun others and not even speak to those of another church or religion. This is often encouraged by their leaders in an effort to keep a fence around the flock. (I suspect that ministers who get their living from the “tithes” or offerings of the people would do everything to make sure their people stay within

the fold. After all, the minister's very financial security would be at risk.) To be sure, it is so hard to do what Jesus commanded (Matt. 5:44) and so easy to fall in line with the tendency of human nature to demonize others and separate from them.

Paul had to keep the Corinthians from misunderstanding. When he wrote not to keep company with fornicators he was not talking about people in general but a church discipline of exclusion for a "brother" (1 Cor. 5:9-10). Paul had no restrictions on the brethren greeting, talking to and being in the company of the people of the world. He said if we could not deal with those people because of their sins, we would have to leave the world because there would be virtually no one except church members to talk to.

There is another thing that happens when you talk only to people who believe every little thing you do. I call it mental or spiritual incest. It is the constant inbreeding of all the same ideas. This creates a false reality and is the hallmark of cults.

To keep people in a cult one must make sure they do not talk to or hear ideas from other sources. Imagine the power the cult then would have over its followers.

If I put you in a room – cut off from all other sources of information except my words – I could get you to believe virtually anything. I could tell you that wild animals were roaming the streets, that your family had all been killed, that you lost all your property, etc. Since you have no other source of information you are left with only two choices – believe what I say or reject it. But when you reject it, you do so without any substance since you have no other information to contradict it!

To keep this from happening to our nation as it did in Nazi Germany, the framers of the Constitution put in the 1st amendment. We call it freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly – and, of course, freedom of religion.

But most cult leaders don't even have to fear that their people will seek other sources of information. Why?

Because the people themselves often shun any source of information that they feel will be contrary to their belief system. In other words, the people themselves cut themselves off from all other sources of information but their leader.

You have probably known people (maybe you were one or are one) who will not read anything but their own church's publications. They will not listen to any sermon that is not preached by an official minister of their own church group. And, certainly, they will never darken the doorway of another church to attend services there.

Their leaders praise them for this! They are told, "You are loyal to God's government." The leaders de-

ride nonconformists who dare read or listen or attend what is not approved by the leader. "You have lost your fear of God", they are told.

A religion is neurotic when it separates you from rather than strengthening you attachment to others because it promotes paranoia – distrust and suspicion. Social isolation is also neurotic.

2. Religion is neurotic when it impoverishes your life rather than making it abundant.

What is your religion doing to you? I have seen people who have sacrificed so much financially that they were financially impoverished. Some felt they must give 30% or more of their income to "the church" and its programs. You can see people of different cults soliciting donations in airports, on the streets, or from door to door. These people have to serve many hours of time as part of their religious duty.

I have seen people who couldn't afford to take care of their own or their children's health but sacrificed mightily for their religion. Their health and the health of their families were impoverished.

There are other ways to become impoverished. Some churches discourage learning. Have you heard this statement? "When I joined that church I had to check my brain at the door and only picked it up when I walked out." Some churches forbid their members to read certain books. People are often discouraged from getting higher education when the leaders refer to schools as "worldly colleges" or as "colleges of this world" or as "institutions of Satan the Devil."

They want their people to read and study only the literature written and sent out from "the church." In effect, they want mind control. When your mind shrinks rather than expands, we may say that you have been impoverished.

In Jesus' day the Pharisees and chief priests wanted the officers to arrest Jesus. They asked, "Why have you not brought him?" The officers answered, "Never man spake like this man." Note that they did not ask, "What did this man say?"

Rather, with closed minds, the Pharisees retorted, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knows not the law are cursed" (John 7:45-49). Implication: do what your leaders do and only what they do. Believe what you leaders believe and only what they believe. Think only what your leaders think and only what your leaders tell you to think.

There was one Pharisee who was not closed-minded. His name was Nicodemus. He said, "Does our law judge any man, before it hears him and knows what he does?" (v. 51). Nicodemus had the logic to imply, "Shouldn't we at least hear what he says and find out what he does?" Even this rational statement was thrown out by asking sarcastically, "Are you also of Galilee?" Many re-

religious leaders love to use pejorative statements when they can't deal with issues with fact or logic.

Religion should help make life abundant. It should free us to seek and search for truth. It is the truth that will set us free (John 8:32). A religion should give us peace of mind, inspire us to a "merry heart that does good like a medicine" (Prov. 17:22). A religion should free us to become prosperous if we can. Naturally we want to heed the warning and not fall into the trap of trusting in riches or loving money (1 Tim. 6:10).

Jesus said that a thief came to "steal, and to kill, and to destroy." But He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Notice that the word "abundantly" is placed in opposition to the word "steal" (which makes one poor), and "kill" (which takes away life), and "destroy" (which ruins life). The abundant life does not take away from life, does not kill and does not cause us to be ruined financially or otherwise. The winds of life blow hot and cold on everyone from time to time. But Jesus, as our Messiah, came that we would have life and that our life would be abundant. Beware if your religion causes you to be otherwise.

3. A religion is neurotic when it appeals more to your fears and cowardice than it does to your love and courage.

Have you ever been inspired to do really good and really great things? Did this inspiration come from your church or your minister?

When religion appeals to your love it makes you want to do good, defend the weak, care for the sick, feed the hungry, help your neighbor (Luke 10:29-37; Mark 12:28-31). The apostle James said, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). It is an artful thing to be in the world but not get spotted by it! But we must not be afraid to show God's love to other people who are made in God's image.

At the end time when Jesus comes in His glory He praises some and rebukes others because "I was hungry. I was thirsty. I was a stranger and naked. I was sick and in prison." In both cases – those who came to His aid and those who did not — did not know it was Jesus! Which Christian would refuse to give food or drink to Jesus? Which one of us would refuse a "stranger" if we knew it was Jesus? Who among us wouldn't offer clothing to a person in need if we knew it was Jesus?

If Jesus were sick or in prison, we would be sure to go visit! But they didn't know it was He when they did good to Him. On the other hand, they didn't know it was Jesus when they passed Him by and didn't do a good deed for Him (Matt. 25:34-46).

Many religious leaders keep their people in the fold by fear tactics. Some times religions grow mightily by appealing to the fears or prejudice of others. Though

not religious, the Nazis used the widespread fear tactics of a cult and appealed to the cowardice of the German people.

Why do religious leaders use fear and prey on the cowardice of people? Simply this. People are motivated by fear. You'll run faster because of fear than because of love. A person might run fast because they fear that a loved one will be hurt. But it is still out of fear.

I have heard many stories from people who felt if they didn't conform to their religion that terrible consequences would overtake them. Some ministers have even gone so far as to say to mothers, "If you leave this church, your children will no longer have God's protection and anything that happens to them will be on your own head."

A religion should appeal to our courage. Paul appealed to Timothy with these metaphors: the good soldier of Jesus Christ who endures hardness; the athlete who strives for mastery; the hardworking farmer; and the skillful workman (2 Tim. 2: 3-15). Paul used his own example as a person who suffered trouble for the word of God. He stated, "Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10).

These words of Paul inspire us: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (v. 11-12).

Paul appealed to our strength and courage when he wrote, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (4:6-7).

Read here words that appeal to your love and courage. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honest (honorable), whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Note that Paul did not limit where truth, honesty, right, pure, the lovely, the good report, excellence or things worthy of praise were to be found. Some people can't see anything good outside their church or religion.

Here is Paul appealing not to fears and cowardice but to love and courage that Christians may rise to their highest level in Christ glorifying the Father.

Beware of neurotic religion that appeals to your fears. Are you afraid to live? Are you afraid to love? Are you afraid of people? Are you afraid of the future? Are you afraid of the present?

The only fear we need is the "Fear of God" which is the beginning of wisdom and the awesome worship of our Creator. When a religion fills you with fear, it is neurotic.

## Applied to Other Aspects of Life

In discussing this article with one of my friends, he suggested that the three characteristics of neurotic religion could be applied to other aspects of life also. For instance, we could say that a marriage relationship or a dating relationship is neurotic when it separates you from rather than strengthening your attachment to other people. We know that husbands who are abusive, wife batterers attempt to cut their wives off from relationships with friends and relatives.

We can apply these principles to corporations and jobs. Let's take this example: Your career is neurotic when it impoverishes life rather than making it abundant. Or when your boss appeals more to your fears and cowardice than to your love and courage.

We can apply all three principles to a family. A family is neurotic when it separates you from others, when it impoverishes your life — mentally, emotionally, or financially — and when it appeals more to fear and cowardice than to love and courage.

## What is the Cure?

In summary, the cures for the three characteristics of neurotic religion are

1) Don't let religion separate you from other people — friends, relatives, acquaintances. One of the reasons many so willingly separated was that they felt like oddballs. They were ashamed of their beliefs and felt others would consider them odd. But, how can we be a "light to the world" if we hide under a bushel?

2) Don't let religion impoverish your life—mentally, emotionally, socially or financially. Persecution might arise in which hardship and poverty happen. Recall the "poor saints at Jerusalem." But it was outside persecution and the fact that their fellow countrymen would not trade with them that caused them to be impoverished, not their religion per se. God gave us a mind. Christianity is a mind religion and we should not shy away from intellectual growth. Furthermore, the New Testament approves of being prosperous. Read the parables of the pounds and talents.

3) Note that love is the cure for fear (1John 4:18). Courage is the cure for cowardice. Whenever you catch yourself being afraid to love you need to rethink what's happening to you. Be courageous to express concerns, introduce yourself to others, and openly welcome them. Have the courage to let your light shine. Have confidence in God's love for you and that He will see you through to the end. He will finish the work He started in you!

You can use these principles in many ways and apply them to many more situations including friendships. But, the main focus of this article is to apply them to religion. Now that you have read the article, what is your conclusion? Is your religion neurotic?

I am not just referring to a church organization. I am referring to the religion that you adopt in your own life. It is easy for us to blame organizations for our religion. But the truth is that each of us adopts beliefs that form our own religion.

You and I are responsible for the religion we employ in our day to day lives. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ it will not help us much to plead that it was "that organization" that made us neglect to help "one of the least of these"—Jesus Christ Himself!

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—Dr. David L. Antion is the founder of Guardian Ministries in Pasadena, California ([www.guardianministries.org](http://www.guardianministries.org)). He was ordained over 40 years ago as a minister of Jesus Christ and is a licensed psychologist and family counselor. David resides in Pasadena, California, with his wife Molly.

## The Church in the World

### PAKISTAN:

Anwer Masih was acquitted in Lahore last month by a Judicial Magistrate's Court, making him the first Pakistani Christian ever acquitted of blasphemy in Pakistan's lower courts.

Masih, now 32, was arrested November 30, 2003, and charged with violating Article 295 and 295-A of the Pakistan Penal Code, for allegedly "disturbing someone's religious feelings" and slandering a religious prophet. Muslim extremists from the banned but active Lashkar-e-Mujahideen (Islamic Religious Army) have vowed to kill Masih over his alleged remarks against the prophet Mohammed. "But we will never let you go," the letter said. "We will shoot you whenever we find you alone, since you blasphemed against our holy prophet. We have an earnest desire to kill you because you have infuriated us. We Muslims don't want to see you alive. Someone from our Lashkar-e-Mujahideen will eliminate you one day."

His wife, Bushra, had been forced to snatch up the children that afternoon and flee on the bus to her relatives living in another city. "My religion says I should forgive this man," Masih told Compass. "But after hearing these things, that he even tried to kidnap my daughters, I don't want to forgive him."

With his judicial charges cleared but his life still under threat, Masih joins more than a dozen other Pakistani Christians who, despite their innocence, have been forced to apply for asylum abroad to live under new identities. You can read about Anwer and other persecuted Christians on the Open Doors Web site.

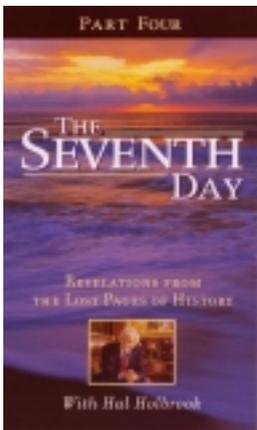
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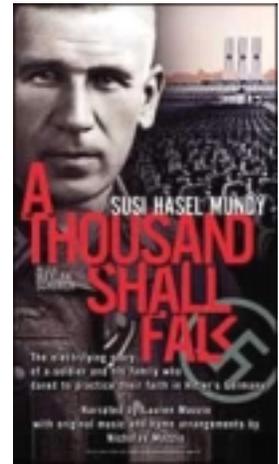
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## **A Thousand Shall Fall**

by Susi Hasel Mundy



I'm not much for reading books on history, so when my husband, Richard, kept bugging me to read *A Thousand Shall Fall*, I kept ignoring him. Finally out of frustration I picked it up. I started reading it Friday night and put it down about midnight, and then finished reading it the first moment I had free. It's the most fascinating book I've ever read. Reading about the pure faith and trust that this entire family had made me wonder if ever tested, I would be able to hold to my beliefs in the face of persecution so severe that I could lose my life. **Franz Hasel** on the German front never wavered, and his wife, **Helene Hasel**, at home, never had one moment of indecision when it came to obeying God. Yes, both along with their children, suffered many hardships and hunger, and Franz could have lost his life at the snap of a finger, but they knew what they believed and chose, against tremendous odds, to obey their God.

Every time we turn around, we see our religious rights being taken away. How do we know how much longer we will be able to worship in peace? Read this true story and see what kind of faith it takes to continue to worship God in the face of possible death.

—Shirley Nickels

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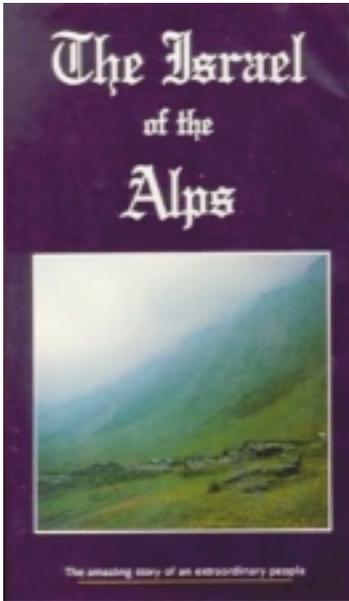
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