

The Sabbath Sentinel

January–February 2012

*Remembering those who
have gone before us.*

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:
for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed. – 1 Corinthians 15:52*

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath Sentinel

January–February 2012 Volume 64, No. 1 Issue 553

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Editorial: About this Issue

Our dearly beloved board director and editor of The Sabbath Sentinel, Ken Ryland, had a heart attack and surgery in December. He is recovering right now so he was unable to do this issue. Calling on a wide array of friends, I decided to have a special memorial issue honoring all deceased Sabbath keepers of this generation who often go unsung. The leaders are often well known and their legacy well recorded. However, lay members and ministers often pass through this life without a lot of documentation of their incredible service to God and his people. This issue is dedicated to all of them.

Of course, there is not enough space to write an article about everyone. I asked the Board and our Sabbatarian friends on Facebook if anyone had someone they would like to commemorate in this issue. I have included everything I received. There were dozens of well wishers who mentioned someone dear to them who had touched their heart and lives but they did not have the time or enough knowledge to write an article about them. Our hats go off to those who paved the legacy before us. We look forward to seeing every single one of them when Jesus Christ, the Messiah, soon returns with a blast of a mighty trumpet. The whole FAMILY of GOD will be reunited at that time. May we pray that day is SOON UPON us. Until then, we in fond remembrance here at The Bible Sabbath Association, pause to honor our family members who are now asleep awaiting the resurrection of the dead.

June Narber, Interim President, junenarber@yahoo.com

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BSA 2012-2016 Board-Members Announced: Selection of the 12-member Board of Directors to lead and serve the Bible Sabbath Association for the next four years is now complete. They are: **Marsha Basner** of Tulsa, Oklahoma; **Bryant Buck** of Freeport, Illinois; **Bryan Burrell** of Fairview, Oklahoma; **Calvin Burrell** of Denver, Colorado; **Lenny Cacchio** of Kansas City, Missouri; **David Guerrero** of Central Wisconsin; **Dusti Howell** of Emporia, Kansas; **Tom Justus** of Springdale, Arkansas; **William Lussenheide** of Menifee, California; **Eric Moore** of Grandview, Missouri; **June Narber** of Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and **Ken Ryland** of Mulvane, Kansas. The board's first piece of business will be to elect its officers, and the results of this will be reported in the next Sentinel. Your prayers for the Association's leadership are appreciated.

Directors at Large: Darrell Estep, Calvin Burrell, Bryan Burrell, Rico Cortes, John Guffey, Dusti Howell, Tom Justus, Earl Lewis, Kenneth Ryland

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Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible in the United States. Those who choose to voluntarily support this international work to promote the Sabbath and proclaim gospel of the kingdom of God are welcomed as contributors.

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

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

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

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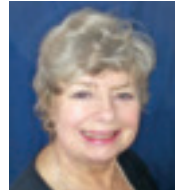
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Why Do We Need a Resurrection?



by Tina Engelbart

What are most people afraid of? If they are honest, most of them say they are afraid of death. You might have some atheists who insist they are not. If they are not, why do they or we for that matter, fight with our last breath to hang on to life? Why do most of us go through very expensive medical procedures at the end of our lives to buy a few more months of life? But even for atheists, there is a saying from a field sermon in Bataan. "There are no atheists in foxholes." It is an expression used to argue that in times of extreme stress, fear, near death, such as in heat of battle, all people will believe in or hope for an afterlife — even atheists. They might have fleeting thoughts of wondering if their belief had not been wrong after all, and perhaps there might be a merciful Deity to save them.

There is a strong will to live in most of us – except perhaps in those who are willing to commit suicide. And Satan from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden used this desire for eternal life to deceive Adam and Eve into disobeying God by eating the forbidden fruit. They believed his lie when he tempted them to sin so "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God." (Gen. 3:4,5). Satan promised them life eternal – they would never die. It is ironic that Adam and Eve fell for something which they already had from God, had they eaten of the Tree of Life. And thus began the belief in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

So even now, among most mainstream Christians, this is a core belief – when you die, if you haven't been too bad, you go straight to heaven. They used to say the soul goes to heaven, or hell if you were a Hitler type. The word soul isn't used as much nowadays. However, very few are consigned to hell unless they are murderers, pedophiles, or rapists.

But if you go straight to heaven after death, why do you need a resurrection? When I first became interested in the truth, I was going with a young man who had studied for the priesthood. He was wondering about my beliefs and why I didn't believe in going to heaven. I asked him if he believed in a resurrection of the dead. He said yes, he did. I then asked how did that work?

If a person died, did his body rot in the grave and his soul go to heaven? Then at the resurrection, this pure soul would then be reunited with a filthy, decayed body? How did that make any sense? Of course, he could not answer. The truth is, if you believe in going to heaven or hell (the immortality of the soul) **there is no need for a resurrection, and in fact, you don't believe in the resurrection of the dead.**

The Resurrection Chapter

In I Cor. 15, which is the resurrection chapter, there were people in the Corinthian church who also did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Perhaps they believed in the immortality of the soul, since that is a Greek pagan belief.

Paul says, "How do some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead?"

He answers this question by starting to prove Christ's resurrection. "I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you." And this was the gospel he delivered:

*3 "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,** ⁴ **and that He was buried,** **and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,**"*

So the first and most important proof Paul provides is this: Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection were exactly as the Scriptures prophesied. Scripture was fulfilled.

Then he provides eyewitness proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

5 "and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."

Many of the eyewitnesses were still alive and they could be checked out. Now that the evidence of Jesus' resurrection is established and cannot be denied, Paul says something very interesting:

*12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.***

He is asking them, how can you say there is no resurrection of the dead if Christ was resurrected? If there is no resurrection, Christ is not risen. And he says our preaching is vain (useless), and all of us are yet in sins. (vs. 14,17). Not only that, but "we are false witnesses."

18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

As death came to all by Adam, life comes to all by Jesus through the resurrection of the dead (vs. 20-22).

Then he goes into the description of the "baptism for the dead."

*29 Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? 30 And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? 31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily.** 32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? **If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"***

33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Nobody seems to know what this baptism for the dead is. Some say there were pagans in the city of Eleusis just north of Corinth who practiced a form of baptism for the dead as is mentioned by Homer in his *Hymn to Demeter*.

However, Luke P. Wilson in "Did Jesus Establish Baptism for the Dead?" posited that Paul in this section used the figure of speech called ellipsis which removes words to add force to the sentence. "He reasoned that continuing to practice baptism by immersion required faith in the resurrection." He adds the ellipsis back and then I Cor. 15:39 would read thusly:

"Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for THE RESURRECTION OF the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for THE RESURRECTION OF the dead." (www.irr.org/mit/baptism-for-the-dead.html)

But whether Paul is alluding to a pagan practice or not, one thing is certain — baptism pictures death. **Those who are baptized are baptized into death.** Since that is the case, why bother with baptism at all if there is no resurrection? Just eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

Roman 6:3-5 explains the baptism, death, and resurrection connection.

*3 Or do you not know that **as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?** 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

*5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, **certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,***

As we see in the above scripture, baptism must fulfill three things – death, burial, and resurrection.

Without a doubt, **the resurrection of the dead is the only way to gain eternal life.** And the first requirement is baptism. As Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." And there can be no baptism without repentance.

Now what happens if a person does not believe in attaining eternal life through the resurrection of the dead but believes he goes to heaven right away? Such a person would not be aware of the steps required by the Bible for attaining eternal life, the two mentioned above being repentance and baptism by immersion. The word baptism means immersion. Sprinkling doesn't do it. But there are other requirements this person would not know of and would not meet by omission.

Some Requirements for Eternal Life Keeping the Commandments

The young man asked Jesus what he had to do to have eternal life. Matthew 19:16-19.

16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

17 So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

18 He said to Him, "Which ones?"

Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 19 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Jesus told him, "Keep the commandments." He is specifically enumerating the Ten Commandments which include the Sabbath. How many Christians miss this requirement?

Loving God, Loving Your Neighbor as Yourself

Or how about the lawyer who asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life. Luke 10:25-29:

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

27 So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"

28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" "...He showed him mercy."

And Jesus said "go and do likewise."

Again, Jesus pointed him to the Law and the lawyer responded correctly by citing the Great Commandment, which is a summarizing of the Ten Commandments into one sentence. But then, asking further, the lawyer wanted to know who his neighbor was. And Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan and told him to go and do likewise – showing mercy to an undesirable Samaritan in this case. How many Christians would know this also is a requirement to inherit eternal life?

Searching the Scriptures

Another requirement is searching the scriptures. John 5:39 says:

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

Partaking of Jesus' Body and Blood

This requirement is to partake of the Passover service annually. How many Christians know to do that? Taking communion does not satisfy this requirement. John 6:54:

Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Following Jesus

Following Jesus is another requirement. John 10:27-29:

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

Loving Your Life Will Cost You Eternal Life

John 12:25: He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Serving Jesus

John 12:26: If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

Knowing God, Knowing Jesus

John 17:3: And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

These are just some of the requirements to attain eternal life via resurrection of the dead which are missed by many Christians.

Another Purpose for the Resurrection is Judgment

The Bible says in many places that God will give out judgments and punishments for things we have done on the earth. How else could He be a just God and not avenge, for example, the 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust? How would evil men ever be held accountable if there were no resurrection of the dead – of the just and the unjust – and a Day of Judgment?

II Cor. 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Acts 17:30: Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

It is the Body that will Be Resurrected

It is interesting to note that it is the body that will be resurrected. The Greeks believed that once the body had been destroyed, there was no possibility for returning to life.

However, Christ's body was resurrected. That is why the tomb was empty. Christ's body could be touched. He told Thomas to see his hands and feet.

John 20:27: *Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and **look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side.** Do not be unbelieving, but believing."*

Phil 3:21: *who will **transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,** according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

The Hope of the Resurrection

Paul caused quite a stir "because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection." Acts 17:18.

Jesus cannot be preached without the resurrection. In Acts 23:6 Paul before the Sanhedrin declared that he was on trial because of "my hope in the resurrection of the dead." This hope is not some time of wishful thinking that it may or may not happen. This hope is grounded in the reality of Jesus' resurrection – it will also happen to us. Without the resurrection, we would have no hope. We would all perish, as Paul so eloquently explained to the Corinthian church in I Cor. 15. If we have hope in Christ in this life only, we truly are to be the most pitied. But that is not the case. Jesus was resurrected and so will we be. That is our hope grounded in truth.

On December 21, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people on board as well as 11 on the ground. One woman, who lost a very musically talented daughter was overwrought with grief. The hardest thing, she said, for her was to live with the thought she would never see her daughter again. She is wrong. Because of the hope of resurrection from the dead, she will be reunited with her daughter once again. But how sad for her she does not know this truth and can't look forward to seeing her again.

My husband, Ozzie Engelbart died in a car crash, a head-on collision, on March 31, 2000. The Bible tells us he is asleep awaiting the resurrection of the dead. And we, his loved ones, also have this hope of the resurrection that we, too, will see him again and be with him and Jesus Christ for ever and ever. My children and I talk of this often, of how it will be when we will be together him again. What a wonderful thing to look forward to!

I Thes. 4:15-17: *...that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷ **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Tina Engelbart attended Rutgers University in N.J. and received a Bachelors' Degree from Ambassador College having attended both the Bricket Wood, England and the Pasadena Campus. She was married to the late Ozzie G. Engelbart and assisted in his ministry for 32 years as he pastored various churches in the U.S. Her interests are research in historic and religious topics, Biblical issues concerning women, as well as health and nutrition. She now resides in the Dallas, Texas area with her two daughters and two grandchildren, and attends the United church of God in Dallas, TX.



Oswald
"Ozzie" G. Engelbart

In Remembrance

Once within a lifetime,
Maybe twice if truly blessed,
Someone comes into your life
Who inspires your very best.

He lived his life to serve the Lord,
And to serve those like you and me.
God was his priority,
And God is now his destiny.

He taught by his example,
He practiced what he preached.
He impacted every sphere of life,
Where his influence reached.

He didn't desire glory,
Or seek after worldly fame.
He lived God's love in every way,
And I'll never be the same.

Husband, father, brother, son,
Dear to us in different ways.
He lived a life of excellence,
And he earned Heaven's praise.

His was a voice I could trust,
On his counsel I could depend.
I knew him as a pastor,
But most importantly as my friend.

The Greatest of These is Love

by Clarice Joseph Jackson



*"Once within a lifetime, maybe twice if truly blessed
Someone comes into your life, who inspires your very best..."*

These are the opening words of a poem written on the back of an envelope while waiting in an airport. The plane would take me to a memorial service honoring Ozzie Engelbart, an incredible man. Ozzie was a big bear of a man with the widest smile I have ever seen. His usual greeting was a bear hug that would almost squeeze the breath out of me! I had the blessing of knowing him for over thirty years.

He was pastor of the Church of God I attended as a teenager, and the first Christian minister I knew personally. I grew up in an observant Jewish home and was the eldest child of a Rabbi, a Holocaust survivor. The cultural transition was difficult to say the least. In those early days, I didn't analyze what it was about Ozzie that attracted people; what quality he possessed that made everyone feel special when they were in his presence. I didn't know much about spiritual gifts, but I recognized that the love of Messiah was reflected in this man's life in a special way. And because of his care, his counsel and example, my faith in Messiah was encouraged and strengthened.

In the early days of my walk as a believer in Yeshua, Ozzie Engelbart seemed to instinctively recognize the struggle I faced as the only Jewish member of the congregation. For the sake of my faith in the L-rd, I worshipped apart from my family and all that felt familiar and comfortable. There were times when I almost gave up. But this pastor with the heart of a true shepherd wouldn't let me quit. More than once he left the other ninety-nine of his flock and went after this one little Jewish lamb who tended to wander away from the safety of the fold when discouraged.

He upheld my Jewishness even when others in the church didn't understand, and encouraged me to still take part in Jewish family celebrations. Even after he moved away from the Dallas area he stayed in touch with me and my family. On one trip back to Dallas, he drove about two hours to visit my parents and my Dad's synagogue. Another time he turned down an invitation to preach while in Dallas so that he could see my hospitalized father in Corsicana. This was the kind of man he was because of who he was in Messiah. In the process he gave a greater

testimony of Messiah's love to my parents than any sermon, and the lives of our two families were intertwined by the love of Messiah.

I spent several vacations with the Engelbart family and a lifetime of friendship grew between our two families – one led by a Christian pastor of German parentage, the other a Jewish Rabbi forced to flee Nazi Germany. This special man recognized the needs of a lonely Jewish teenager, and reached out in love to include me in the life of his family.

The greatest test of our friendship came when I left the organization that Ozzie Engelbart served to join a Messianic Jewish congregation. At that time he didn't understand Messianic Judaism, but he knew I believed the L-rd was leading me, and realized I needed the fellowship of Jewish believers. He accepted and supported my decision even though he didn't understand. I knew he was disappointed although he never told me so. A year later, in town for my brother's wedding, Ozzie attended services with me. That day he finally understood and was happy that G-d brought me to a place where I felt at home.

The one quality which stood out in every aspect of his life was love. He loved G-d passionately and faithfully. He loved his family and was devoted to his wife and three children. He loved the people he served and cared about each one as an individual. He loved his friends, being loyal and trustworthy. He treated all with honor and respect. I've met many people who set wonderful examples, but never anyone with the spiritual gift of love in the way it was manifested in his life.

When we want to do mighty works for G-d and desire more dramatic spiritual gifts, remember the words of Paul, "And now abide faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love." I Cor. 13:13. I know from experience the transforming power of this gift. How thankful I am that the first minister the L-rd brought into my life had the greatest of spiritual gifts. How I look forward to that bear hug the next time that we meet!

photo: Grant Cochrane, FreeDigitalPhotos.net



Robert H. Rodgers

January 2, 1936 - July 18, 1993



Centertown, Kentucky | Age 57

Bob Rogers was an old Kentucky preacher that I met one night back in the early 1990's at a little Sabbath keeping Church near Marengo, IN. We were having guest speakers come in for a week long teaching conference. He spoke of the old days back in the depression years and how he and his mom would walk for miles down an old mud road on many a cold winter's day to make it to a small country church. They would fire up the wood stove and along with the few gathered there would spend hours studying and hearing the spoken Word.

Brother Rogers felt led to come up from Kentucky to teach in Indiana. He and I became very close friends and brothers. He became my spiritual mentor and I suppose that I, his protégé. He appeared in my life at the time I had some very deep questions that needed answered. The very first message that he spoke to us at our little Church, answered those questions. He and I traveled around southern Indiana and parts of Kentucky together preaching and teaching and fellowshiping with one another and the brethren that we met. I spent that last couple years of his life with him.

Brother Rogers died of heart failure in the summer of 1993. We traveled down into Kentucky for His burial. I had never met his wife Sharon, but when she and their son David found out I was there, they embraced me with the love of a brother and a mother. They asked if I would be a pallbearer for this great man of God, little known by most, but known by Yahweh and the whole host of heaven, that I'm sure of. He was known lastly by me, a simple young man at the time, but he had a profound impact upon my life and my relationship with the one true and living God. I'm sure over the course of his years, there were many others that he had also mentored. To this day, I have yet to hear a man preach with the authority that Brother Rogers spoke with.

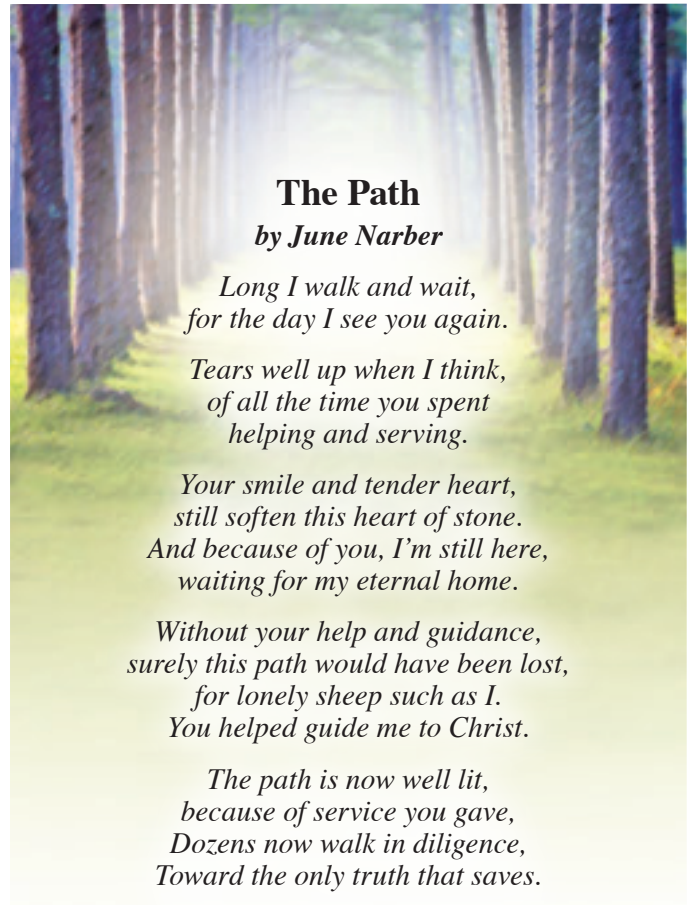
His wife and son gave me the last Bible that Bob had used, of which I promptly told them that I felt it was proper that they kept it. They denied my request, saying that Bob had considered me as his spiritual son. I still have that old Bible, all worn out and marked up from his last years of study. It is one of my prized study helps in my personal library. Inside the front few pages, Brother Rogers wrote these words as if to me and I can still hear his voice with his old Kentucky dialect: **Isaiah 61: "Beauty for Ashes"** "When your life is in ruins like the ashes of

a burned out shanty, Jesus can rebuild it for you into a beautiful mansion: **A palace for a king, because He will make you a king in His Kingdom.**" With an asterisk right after his words, someone (possibly Sharon, his wife) had scribbled: "This could happen to you, as it did Bob."

I miss that old man. I have now grown older myself and think so much of those short few years spent with this humble man of God and how Yahweh put him in my life. He is resting in the grave, waiting for that great day of his resurrection, safe from the horrendous events prophesied to come.

We shall see one another again in the Kingdom!
Love, Brother Bob Wyman

image: Pakorn, FreeDigitalPhotos.net



The Path

by June Narber

*Long I walk and wait,
for the day I see you again.*

*Tears well up when I think,
of all the time you spent
helping and serving.*

*Your smile and tender heart,
still soften this heart of stone.
And because of you, I'm still here,
waiting for my eternal home.*

*Without your help and guidance,
surely this path would have been lost,
for lonely sheep such as I.
You helped guide me to Christ.*

*The path is now well lit,
because of service you gave,
Dozens now walk in diligence,
Toward the only truth that saves.*

In Memory of **Goldie Mellerup**

The Quiet Leaders

by Dale Stucker



photo: Darren Robertson,
FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Hebrews Chapter 11 is well known for its list of God's Faithful. Here we see Patriarchs and well known figures mentioned throughout the Bible. In Romans chapter 16 we see another list of faithful believers, both men and women, whom Paul salutes and expresses his deep appreciation for their humble service. How often do we miss those verses in the end of the Hall of Faith which speak of the nameless many that by faith gave their lives for their faithfulness, and how often do we skip past Paul's personal greetings to the faithful workers of the Church in places distant at the end of his letters?

The early writers' recognition of those workers for the Lord bears testimony of the words of Christ when he admonished us all to go to the world with the good news of salvation. It is from these people and all that follow that the will of God's word comes to life from generation to generation. It is safe to conclude that without the enduring effort of those bearers of precious seed would only the rocks and birds today give praise to the Almighty.

In Romans Chapter 12, the apostle Paul writes to his brethren in Rome "beseeching" them to live their lives in service of love by the Christian philosophy he carefully laid out earlier in his letter. It is here that he tells us all we each have our place to fill, to find that place, and to live it in a way that serves our fellow man, gives God the glory, and by so doing, fulfills the commission of Christ.

Through the ages countless men and women have done just that. They have lived their lives in quiet, humble service to God, almost all of them with never even a post mark in the annals of history, yet to a person, every one of those people made an incalculable contribution to the cause of Christ that no other person on earth could have performed. From that time to present day not a day goes by that many of these faithful workers conclude their challenge knowing that their treasure has been laid up for them in heaven and now patiently await His soon return.

For me, it is these people who make up the Quiet Leaders of the Church of the living God as mentioned in 1 Timothy 3. Quiet not only because their work here on earth is done, but quiet too, from how they lived their lives while serving Him. These are the leaders I hold in

highest regard; the ones who were successful to recompense to no man evil for evil, and as was possible, able to live peaceably with all men. Were it not for these worthy leaders at home and abroad where would the rest of us learn, by example, Paul's admonition given us in Romans 12?

While growing up in the Church of God I got to meet and know many of those leaders personally, and for that blessing I will be eternally grateful. Five that come to mind exemplify for me that quality I find in the book of Romans: **Vernon (Pa) Patchen**, musician and servant to students at Spring Vale Academy for decades and family pastor before that; **Melvin Sweet**, pastor and educator to many all across the United States; **LL Christensen**, Step-grandfather and faithful servant for Jesus in the Church of God. (Oh, he could get animated, but it was always with a twinkle in his eye and an undeniable love for his fellow brother); **Ray Benight**, trusted publisher in hard times and trusted pastor and friend for many beyond even his own congregations; and Brother **Jim Kuryluk** of Nampa, Idaho who passed away on February 1, 2012. His service for the Lord as a pastor spanned many states and decades. Since his retirement over 20 years ago Bro. Jim continued his calling as head of Sonshine Ministries, a 501c3 corporation, spreading the gospel to those in prison and retirement homes where many were blessed by his passion to serve those that otherwise are often overlooked. No matter the times, I never once saw these men's character change. Their resolve to live peacefully, yet uprightly in the best way they knew how has been an inspiration for me and is cause for me to emulate them as well. ...Well, at least I try to.

As we reflect on the lives of those men and women, now gone, who made positive, undeniable, impacts on our own lives let us also not forget to thank those that are still among us for the living example they now are to us and may it always be our own prayer that we too can encourage those around us just as did those from the ancient Biblical Hall of Faith to the Quiet Leaders we once knew ourselves.

Dale Stucker resides near Boise, Idaho and currently attends a small Messianic Fellowship, but considers several Sabbath keeping Congregations there in the Treasure Valley his Church Family.



Harold E. Cormany

December 26, 1927 - December 5, 2007



Servant of God's Church for 49 years.

The inspiration to pen this article hit me like a bolt of lightning the instant that I saw a social network post by one of the Bible Sabbath Association directors, Ms June Narber on the BSA Facebook page. June had written, "Another request for articles for a special memorial issue of the Sabbath Sentinel where deceased sabbath keepers "who made a lasting contribution or a strong influence into the lives of others" will be commemorated.

Allow me to begin with a brief narrative I like to call "The Residual Effect."

After a preacher died, his relatives found his many sermon manuscripts neatly tied and filed away. On top of them was a card with this inscription: "Where has the influence gone on these sermons I have preached?" On the other side was the answer. He had written: "Where are last year's sun-rays? They have gone into fruits and grain and vegetables to feed mankind." "Where are last year's raindrops? Forgotten by most people, of course, but they did their refreshing work, and their influence still abides." In conclusion the preacher said, "So too, my sermons have gone into lives and made them nobler, more Christlike, and better fitted for the Kingdom of heaven." [Source: Our Daily Bread]

When I read that inspirational illustration it makes me think of a certain minister from God that was very special to many people including this very writer.

Harold E. Cormany was a sincere loving pastor of God's flock for several years. He, along with his beloved bride Joyce, were baptized in March of 1958 with full immersion, and with the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit, as instructed by the word of God.

The truth of the word of God and its revelation led him to write, "I found that the Church of God has never been an organization of millions or billions of people, but that Jesus calls it 'little flock', and that few find the narrow way that leads to eternal life." He also penned later on his website: "I have found that we are the Body of Christ, with Him being the Head."

With his beloved wife, a sister-in-Christ, Joyce by his side over the years, he faithfully served the body of



The Minister's Legacy

You preached us the Word. You taught us of Christ
 You warned us the dangers of Satan's device
 You gave us godly counsel and anointed our head
 You taught us to pray earnest for our daily bread

You shared our sorrows and comforted our cry
 You helped bear our burdens (with nary a sigh)
 You spoke with the spirit that flowed as a fountain
 You taught us that faith could move any mountain

You taught us to love which cast out all fear
 You taught us our Father was not far but near
 You taught us to endure and persevere in all strife
 You taught us God's love and His words of life

You now have put off this fleshly tabernacle
 You've been released from the pains of life's shackle
 You're work in His service, for this time, is done
 You'll wait in His graces until comes home the Son
 At the sound of the Trumpet, you'll wake and you'll see
 All the faces of the faithful who learned Christ from thee.

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 In loving memory of **Harold E. Cormany**

Christ in various roles including that of a fully ordained minister. After departing Worldwide Church of God, he ministered unto several congregations including the Church of God International at Chicago and had a brief association with The Christian Biblical Church of God.

I had heard, from other ministers and from Harold himself, that one time while visiting a mental health facility for the first time to pray for a person inside a, likely demon-possessed, inmate kept loudly crying out to him by name, "We know you, Harold! We know you are a man of God!" The demons know when they are in the presence of the spirit of the Holy One. That is an example of him being a reflection of the one True God he

faithfully served. I think that anyone hearing that recounting of the scenario scarcely could walk away unaffected.

In 1993, Harold decided to go independent from the larger corporate church organizations. This decision allowed Harold to pastor several groups, and begin an audio-cassette/printed article based ministry. Since 1995, he, with his faithful wife's dedicated assistance, had sent out over 45,000 audio/cassette tapes of nearly 500 sermons on many Biblical topics.

Harold once dutifully taught me that, besides a strong guiding hand and words of admonition, God's people were fragile and needed our love, prayer, and support. He said the structure of the Body existed to nourish and build up the faith of the saints of the Most High. I will never forget that as I minister to others. I recall how he recounted to me how he and his wife would tearfully pray for the sick and afflicted – whether they personally knew them or not – with a loving sincere heart. This opened my heart to want to do the same in Christ. I believe many others were deeply affected by their contacts with this man of God. The seeds he had sown over his lifetime fell on many types of soil and, in some, God brought forth an increase. Praise to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Harold.

In 2003, Harold began a web ministry titled Herald Ministries (He was quick to differentiate that it was "Herald" as in "proclaim" not to be confused with his name "Harold" as some less literate or those thinking the name self-centered would suppose.) In 2007 on December 5th, at 79 years of age, Mr. Harold Cormany, a saint, fell asleep. He passed away after a short illness complicated by pneumonia.

Harold's website published post-mortem these words: "...this is his website and Herald Ministries was his ministry. His last wishes were that his ministry be continued through the website and this we plan to do if God continues to provide the means. The home page will remain the same because nobody else could greet new visitors and explain why this website exists better than he could. ...We will begin to add many of these tapes as streaming audio's so they can still be heard. We will continue to present new articles and sermons that meet Mr. Cormany's criteria — that they be involved in the search for Truth."

While it saddens me that Harold's last wishes to keep the Herald Ministries website up and running did not prevail, I smile outwardly because I know the work he did in service the Lord and his brethren continues on in many of us. The day I heard of his passing I was inspired to write the following poem in commemoration of the strong influence and lasting contribution that God gave his church through his "meek but not weak servant" Harold Cormany.

by Kenneth Hoeck

Then What?

A youth and an old man talked one day.
Said the boy: "I think I'll go away
From Father's old farm—don't know just when."
The old man listened, and asked: "What then?"

"I guess I'll have some fun in town
The first few years—then settle down
And get a job and earn a lot."
The old man smiled and asked, "Then What?"

"Why, then I'll meet the girl of my dreams,
Whose folks have money; and then it seem
I'll buy a fine home with everything new."
The old man queried, "Then what will you do?"

"I guess I'll invest in bonds and stocks;
That's where they say opportunity knocks.
Maybe by then I'll be governor."
And the old man asked, "And then what more?"

"Then I guess I'll retire if I please,
And travel, and live a life of ease."
The old man thought as he scratched his head.
"Then what will you do, my son?" he said.

For a moment the lad made no reply,
Then answered slowly:

"I guess then I'll die."
A deep silence followed as both
of them thought;
Then the old man asked softly,
"My boy, then what?"

— Eugene Lincoln



Eugene Lincoln was Editor of The Sabbath Sentinel for 25 years, from 1960 to 1985. He then served as President of the Bible Sabbath Association from 1988 to 1995. He died in July, 2004.

We read in Titus 2:2 that older men are to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. These are qualities that abounded in Eugene Lincoln.

What we are saying here about Brother Lincoln would probably be the last thing he would want us to say, either on Sentinel pages or anywhere else. But that fact is just further confirmation of the exemplary Christian character that was developed in him by God's grace. In an association where diverse views prevail on many peripheral issues, his balanced and tolerant spirit has been good medicine for us all.

by Calvin Burrell



Jeananne Gibson

February 1930 – April 1999



Personal examples are powerful. They can motivate us to do evil, or to do good. What we hear too rarely are stories about people who do the right thing: people who love, serve, and sacrifice for their families, friends and acquaintances.

Jeananne Gibson, my mother, was one of those people who cared enough about family values, true values, and godly values to have made a difference in the lives of many. I hope you will be able to see and appreciate her example to such a degree that you might desire to affirm it and follow it in your own lives.

Jeananne was a person of principle. She understood that true Christianity was not just a matter of getting a particular set of doctrines right, but more importantly that it was a matter of genuine love for God and neighbor. She believed in practicing what she preached. This was the driving, moving energy and philosophy that empowered her life.

Jeananne believed in keeping her word and her commitments. She made two covenants in her life. One was to her husband, Bill, and the other to God Almighty and her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jeananne was *Semper Fidelis*, always faithful to both of her covenants. You know, this point is worth mentioning in a society that treats the word “commitment” with disdain. Jeananne was able to celebrate 46 years of marriage to one man! As Bill himself would say, that was no mean feat! A long-lasting, happy marriage takes work. It just doesn’t happen by itself. Jeananne did her part of the marriage’s homework and she gets top grades for it. She was a wonderful companion and an empathetic listener.

Jeananne was a natural teacher. She had the patience to make a profession in special education, teaching children who found it difficult to learn. She had the respect and honor of her coworkers. Jeananne was an inspiration to workmates, as she moved over the years from volunteer assistant to co-chairperson of her high school department. Carolanne would often joke about ‘My Mom the shop teacher’ as Jeananne was a true jack of all trades teaching woodworking, catering, math, reading and everything else on the curriculum.

She was an active, though quiet member of her church community for 33 years, serving with diligence, compassion, and taking special pains to help the sick, elderly, and the single moms as she had opportunity. At services she was often behind the scenes arranging flowers, preparing food, or helping teach Sabbath school. She was a living example of hospitality and generosity, a true modern day Dorcas.

Jeananne was a lifelong learner as well as a teacher. She accepted the challenge of going back to school to get her teaching degree in mid-life and excelled in her courses. Every evening would find her diligently studying the scriptures with a zeal to know what God required of her. When she found herself paralyzed, one of the greatest trials was not being able to do this daily reading, though she greatly appreciated Bill’s efforts to read to her. She wished she could overcome the extreme fatigue related to the paralysis thinking that she could learn to mouth paint or keep up her correspondence by learning to use the computer. She used her many talents whether knitting, cooking, crafts, painting or gardening to serve and give to others. Most of us have some of her creations to remember her by. She had a spirit of adventure. We have so many wonderful memories of weeks spent traveling and worshipping God together at the fall festivals. Whatever the locale, whether Paris, Chamonix, Vail, Belgium, Tadoussac, or Del Mar, having Mom accompany us made it special. Only rarely did Mom and Dad take vacation time for themselves. Usually they planned their free time around friends and family.

And Jeananne never neglected to teach her own children. She fulfilled what the Scriptures command: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Jeananne’s personal, loving care went beyond her own children and extended to her children’s children. Many a person receiving the type of injuries Jeananne received from her accident might have been consumed by self-pity or depression. And while Jeananne did feel low at times and even sorrowful after her paralysis, especially for the

loss of the ability to use her hands with which she had rendered such diligent service over the course of her life, and her interest in her family never waned.

Many times she has encouraged us, even inspired us, to use our talents in God's service. It was her sound counsel that prompted us to work for the church instead of pursuing a career in stockbrokering. Later, Mom and Bill made it possible for us to change career directions and move into the journalistic field. Finally, it was their generosity that made it possible for us to follow a dream and put into manuscript form our first book, *House Rules for Humanity: Finding a Straight Path through a Crooked World*. Without Mom's unflinching encouragement and inspiration we would never have seen it to this stage. She continued to enthusiastically support our endeavors when we are sure others thought we were either too impractical or just plain crazy. Even in her difficult last few months she expressed the dream of being able to speak fluently once again so she could put our book on tape. Now without her daily ministering to our spirit we must find the will and energy to fundraise, publish and market before her dream and ours becomes a reality

In spite of her situation, being wholly paralyzed and respirator dependent, she didn't allow herself to withdraw into a shell. When Don Waugaman, a church member who was not personally known to Jeananne, visited her, he was amazed that she could still smile and make him feel appreciated and welcome. I was there when Jeananne admonished my wife to never, never, never lose faith despite the difficult, seemingly hopeless circumstance in which she found herself. You could always count on her to show hospitality. She trusted implicitly in that verse in Psalm 34 that says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all." Jeananne believed with all of her being the exhortation stated in the First Epistle of Peter that says:

Praise be to him who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of the fullness of his compassion caused us to be born anew by kindling in us a life-giving hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He has made us sharers in an inheritance which is imperishable, free from all blemish, and which can

never fade, an inheritance stored up in heaven for your benefit, for the benefit of those who, by virtue of their faith, are being kept under the protection of God's power, in readiness for a work of deliverance which is waiting to be disclosed at the end of time.

This being so, you feel overjoyed, even though, if it has to be, you may find yourselves saddened for a short time by various trials. And there is a purpose in this, namely, that the genuineness of your faith having been established—your faith which is more precious than gold, which, perishable as it is, is yet tested by the assayer's fire—you will be seen to have praise redounding to you, when the time comes for Jesus Christ to reveal himself.

Many have asked how such a horrible accident could have happened to such a wonderful person. Why did Jeananne not die immediately when she fell down the stairs, breaking her neck, making it impossible for her to breathe on her own? The circumstances were such that in just a few more seconds I would have been in the shower and would never have heard her fall and come to her assistance. I believe that in his mercy God allowed us seven months to say good-bye. Jeananne suffered as an example of patient endurance to others.

And though we have had to say good-bye for now we know that, as with all of God's saints, the time will come when the promise will be fulfilled.

The Lord himself will come down from heaven, There will be a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. And those who have died and were in Christ will rise first.

Jeananne in her next conscious moment will receive her reward—eternal life—as God's word promises! "Jeananne" means God is gracious. She lived up to her name. In the kingdom of God she will be given a new name to reflect her character strengths that were both gracious and patient. We who remain should celebrate the life of Jeananne and what she meant to us. Let us consider her example, learn from it, and follow it. In this way we can be worthy memorials to the fact that our lives have been graced by this precious, righteous woman.

by Jeff Patton



Should Christians Vote?

by **Dianne D. McDonnell**

As waves of anti-Christian rhetoric and outright evil sweep across the United States and the entire globe, this author maintains with scriptural backing that voting is one of the ways we must stand up for true Christianity.

Many thousands of Christians believe that voting in a national election would violate their standing as members of God's Kingdom. [1] They have been taught that they are like representatives of a foreign country—God's own Kingdom—and like diplomats, they should have no part in the voting or politics of the country where they live. [2] But is this teaching backed by the Bible and the teachings of Jesus and the example of the early leaders of the church? Or is it just faulty reasoning based on misapplied scriptures?

A doctrine must agree with the entire Bible or it is simply the opinion of men. Must we forgo our national rights when we become a part of God's Kingdom? What biblical examples apply? This article will reveal the truth from biblical examples of how the New Testament Christians viewed their own citizenship and their rights as citizens in their era.

Christians still Retain their Nationalities

When the apostle Paul wrote about newly converted Christians, he often mentioned their nationalities. Christians retained their national identities even after they became members of God's Kingdom.

Acts 17:12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

They were still "Jews" as a nationality or "prominent Greek women" and "Greek men". Obviously, each person DID NOT have to give up their nationality or the rights that went with his/her nationality!

Christians Keep their City Citizenship

In this verse we find that Paul still considered himself a citizen of Tarsus and even boasts about his city!

Acts 21:39 Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city..." "

We see positive proof that Christians still retain the citizenship connected with their city.

Jesus Identifies Himself by an Earthly City

When the resurrected Jesus spoke to Saul in a vision, he identified himself by the city where he lived before starting his ministry.

Acts 22:8 "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied."

It is not wrong to be identified with an earthly city or nation!

Paul Demands his Rights!

Paul had rights because he was a citizen of the Roman Empire. When those rights were violated, Paul protested loudly!

Acts 16:37-39 But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city.

Citizenship in Heaven

Paul wrote to the Philippians that Christians have citizenship kept for them in heaven:

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet having citizenship recorded in heaven did not stop Paul from using all his rights of citizenship in this present world!

We don't Give Up one Citizenship for the other!

In still another city we find Paul again in trouble and about to be beaten with a whip. He AGAIN demands his rights, and he is protected because he is a Roman citizen!

Acts 22:23-28 As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?" When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen." The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes, I am," he answered. Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship." "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.

Dual Citizenship Rights

Paul knew that his citizenship in God's Kingdom did not stop him from exercising his rights as a citizen of Rome! He had **dual citizenship**, and he had **certain rights** in both the present physical kingdom of the Roman Empire, and the future, far superior Kingdom of God! He represented God's coming Kingdom, much as an ambassador does, yet **he did not have to give up his Roman citizenship** or any of his rights as a citizen.

In the United States, those who are native born Americans have ALL of the rights of citizenship. **Our rights include the right to vote** in all city and national elections! We do not have to give up these rights to become a member of God's Kingdom!

He is a Roman Citizen!

The commander of the Romans troops took special note of Paul's citizenship because it meant that Paul had certain RIGHTS that were guaranteed. The commander wrote to the Governor,

Acts 23:27 This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and **rescued him**, for I had learned that **he is a Roman citizen**.

"I appeal to Caesar!"

Later Paul was about to be turned over to Jews who planned to kill him! His reply was:

Acts 25:11 "...if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. **I appeal to Caesar!**"

Paul did not hesitate to USE ALL of his rights as a Roman citizen, even appealing to Caesar himself. In the first century the republic of Rome had become a monarchy. Yet there was still local voting on some non-appointed offices, but only Roman citizens could vote. Do you think Paul would hesitate for one minute to VOTE for the candidate he felt would be best for Christians? Certainly not!

Affiliations, Rights and Obligations

Paul had many affiliations—he was a Jew, a citizen of Tarsus, a Pharisee, a Roman citizen and a Christian looking forward to God's Kingdom on this earth. His zealous Christianity did not negate or do away with his rights as a Jew, Pharisee, citizen of Tarsus or his rights as a citizen of Rome! We also have many affiliations with obligations and rights associated with each one.

Voting on Church Issues and Trash Hauling

Here is an example of the entire church selecting men for a certain job, and it looks like they voted.

Acts 15:22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, **with the whole church**, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch....

Based on this and other examples of the entire church voting, the United Church of God allows limited voting within the church. United also **allows voting on local issues** like **sewage disposal and trash hauling**. [3]

Limited Local Voting, but No National Voting?

If Christians can vote to remove sewage and trash—why can't we vote to remove a corrupt local politician? Or why can't we vote to remove from office a national Politician caught illegally skimming public funds into his own pocket? Yet United's policy paper tells us we should not vote for any candidate—as if they won't affect our lives. To explain their odd reasoning the doctrinal statement gets a little convoluted with scriptures taken out of context. The following section is a prime example.

Not Being a Part of This World

The United Church of God uses the following scripture as a key verse:

"But God tells His people, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities' (Revelation 18:4-5). **Therefore, as God's people we should avoid involvement in the political systems of this world,...**" [4]

What is Wrong with this Interpretation of Rev. 18:4-5?

Look at the context of this quote in your own Bible, **chapter 18** of Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Verse 2 of the same chapter identifies what God is saying to come out of. It is "Babylon the Great". In Rev 18:10 just past the quoted verse we find, "Woe! Woe, O great **city**, O Babylon, **city of power!** In **one hour** your doom has come!" Clearly God is **not** referring to the political systems of this world as the United writer would have us believe, but God refers to a rich, powerful, great city that sells "cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls;..." Rev. 18:12.

Revelation is a prophetic book revealing future events, and in the future this city will be consumed by fire in a single day, even a single hour, Rev. 18:8. "In **one hour** such **great wealth has been brought to ruin!**"

An argument can be made for Babylon being part of a church or religious organization for we read in Rev. 18:20, "...Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you". And in verse 24, "In her was found **the blood of prophets** and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth." This Babylon is a city where true Christians have been martyred.

To equate casting a vote for the candidate of your choice in a national election with **being a part of** this evil city called **Babylon**—that is just **not logical!** It is not a correct understanding of these verses.

Jesus and Politics

Sometimes **the struggle to do what is right** and refute what is wrong **becomes “political”!** Even Jesus found his teachings and actions being interpreted in a “political” light. When he rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey, Matt. 21:1-11, he was demonstrating the first fulfillment of Zech. 9:9, “See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Fulfilling prophecy and pointing toward a future time when he would come as a King with great power—that was Jesus’ true motive. Yet some of the people of Jerusalem read a different motive into his actions. The people of Jerusalem were used to seeing Roman generals ride victoriously on fine horses with chained captives walking behind them with the people cheering wildly. So to some it looked like Jesus was ridiculing their military leaders or even the emperor himself when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with crowds cheering him.

But wasn’t this a prophetic **message** being fulfilled? It was God’s own message which revealed that human ways are NOT the ways of God. Was Jesus getting involved in politics? No, Jesus was illustrating publicly what is God’s Way.

Politics and Right and Wrong

When we stand up for what is right in God’s eyes sometimes those who do not understand our motives might call our actions “political”. If we speak out publicly against partial birth abortion, a process in which a full term baby is killed just as he/she is being born, that could be seen as a “political” stand. But it isn’t a bit “political” for the innocent infants being killed! So do we say nothing and DO NOTHING on these issues of right and wrong because someone might call us “political”? No, we must stand up for what God reveals as right!

Jesus is a king who has qualified for world rulership. Yet when a sign was put over Jesus’ head saying “King of the Jews”, Mark 15:26, it was a political charge. If he was a King, then they felt he threatened the emperor. Jesus admitted to Pilate that he was a king, Mark 15:2, and had often alluded to a future world-ruling kingdom, Matt. 8:10-12, Matt. 25:34, Luke 1:30-33, Luke 13:29, John 18:36. **Was Jesus being political** or just telling Pilate the truth? It was God’s truth.

Do you see how deciding lines between right and wrong, truth and lies, sometimes emerge into a national forum, and that national dialogue gets labeled “political”? Issues of true right and wrong, and good and evil impact true Christians far more than issues of trash removal! **No one** should be able to **stop us** from **standing up for God’s truth and being counted!**

The Good Stored within Us

Jesus said we must **bring forth good** from the good stored within us.

Matt. 12:35 The good man **brings good things** out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

We cannot bring forth good in our nation if we do not participate.

Doing Nothing in the Face of Evil

Are we guilty of doing nothing even though we clearly see which policies are good and right and what policies are wrong and evil?

James 4:17 Therefore, to him who **knows to do good** and **does not do it**, to him it is sin.

When it is in your power to stand up against evil policies with your vote—**and you fail to do so**, then you become partly responsible for the evil that results!

Living as Free Men

Peter instructed Christians to live as “free men”

1 Peter 2:16 **Live as free men**, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

Do we really live as FREE men and women when we can’t vote? Voting in a free society is one of the most cherished of all rights. We are not “free” to sin, but neither are we “free” to ignore evil and allow it to grow because of our inaction! Inaction can indeed be a “cover-up” for evil, allowing it to thrive because we do not truly live as “free” men.

Doesn’t God Decide Who Leads Us?

This next point is raised by non-voting churches and used to oppose the democratic process of voting in local and national elections:

Daniel 2:21 And He changes the times and the seasons; *He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise **and knowledge to those who have understanding.*** [5]

Their reasoning is that since God controls everything—why should we participate in any election? God can indeed influence minds and hearts and bring about events that change the course of any election. But whose mind and heart does God find **easiest to influence**? Since true Christians who love God, and are deeply converted, are given God’s own Holy Spirit— then **our minds and hearts** are the **most easily influenced!**

The second part of this verse is “He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.” If God gives His people His Holy Spirit, wisdom,

knowledge and understanding—then WHY should they refuse to participate in selecting national leader of their country? Does it make any sense to have all these benefits from God and yet refrain from using your RIGHT to vote? It makes no sense!

Division as a Reason for Non-participation

In their Concluding Statement, another issue that is raised as an “underlying reason for **not voting or running for a public office**, is **promoting peace** within the Church, **not division over vote-related issues.**” [6]

In other words, **if you can't vote, then you can't argue** about voting matters at church! This “don't vote policy” is **not the answer** to the problem of division over political matters! If church members are arguing over what minister they like best, is it solved by firing all ministers? You know that wouldn't happen. If the women are arguing about how long skirts should be, would the church decree that no woman can wear a skirt? No, of course not, members would be told that they should leave arguing outside the church doors. In the same way a voting church is reminded to leave its campaign buttons outside the church if arguments start sprouting.

Non-Participation and Withdrawal

Many of the same religious writers that urge Christians not to vote also teach a general non-participation in all things “worldly”. However, the definition of “worldly” differs from church to church. It is SIN in this world that we must withdraw from and avoid getting entangled with! We do not have to withdraw from ALL things—just that part that is the spiritual “leavening”. [7] We must work in this world, buy food and goods in stores of this world, and eat in this world's restaurants. We live in this world. We must not withdraw from necessary things that keep our democratic nation running!

Jesus tells us to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's regarding taxes, Matt. 22:17-21. Taxes are **necessary** to keep our nation functioning. The authors of the United paper state that because voting is voluntary it is not the same as paying taxes. Yet isn't voting **necessary** to keep our nation functioning? If everyone follows what these leaders advocate, then **how does our democracy continue to function?**

Voting is how our present earthly leadership is determined. Jesus came to impact this world, even though some thought his actions were “political”! We are not to participate in the SIN of this world, but voting in an election is not a sin! Even the United Church of God admits this:

“...we do not consider it a sin to cast a vote,” [8]
“The Church does not declare voting, itself, to be a sin.” [9]

Since it is not a sin, then why isn't it left up to individual decision?

Are you Accountable for your City's Decisions?

Did Jesus teach that the citizens of a city are held responsible for the decisions of that city? **Do you have “accountability”** for what happens in your city? Believe it or not, Jesus taught that there was accountability city by city for the actions of the citizens of that city!

Luke 10:11-15 ‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ “I say to you, it will be more tolerable **in that day** for Sodom than for that city. [*Here Jesus refers to the Day of Judgment when he returns to this earth.*]” Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!”

Jesus is saying that each citizen of the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum will be RESPONSIBLE when they stand before him in judgment. These cities saw miracles and yet rejected the message God sent to them! This passage shows that **we each share responsibility for our city and the decisions of our city!** If our city become more and more evil and against God, and yet we have not even cast a single vote to try and counteract that evil and stand up against it—we will find ourselves answering to God and Jesus Christ for our lack of action!

Are We Afraid to Stand Up?

We must not be afraid to stand up for God's Way of life socially or politically, for we must account for every word we speak, and every decision. Joseph of Arimathea was on the Council, a board of elders having religious and **political authority**. On that fateful morning those members voted on an issue fraught with political overtones—the fate of Jesus:

Mark 15:1 Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, **reached a decision**. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

After the death of Jesus, Joseph came forward to speak to Pilate:

Luke 23:50-52 Now there was a man named **Joseph, a member of the Council**, a good and upright man, **who had not consented to their decision** and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and **he was waiting for the kingdom of God**. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.

Here was a good man who was “waiting for the kingdom of God” and yet he **held an office in a group that had political power!** He had “not consented to their decision”. In other words, he had voted against crucifying Jesus, but he was out voted. If Joseph had **refused to vote** on that day, if he had just hid himself—would he be responsible for failing to try to stop evil? Yes, he would have failed to try and counter evil. Would he be held responsible for a decision to hide himself rather than boldly voting against the murder of Jesus? Yes, hiding himself would also be a decision and a failure to oppose wrong.

Joseph did vote, but evil prevailed because it was God’s will for Jesus to die. **Casting his vote was not wrong!** Even after he had been unable to stop the crucifixion, Joseph came forward at great personal risk to claim the body of Jesus to put him in his own tomb. He didn’t say, “**This is a political issue** so I’m not going to get involved!” He spoke up before Pilate and his brave words and actions are forever on record. Perhaps Joseph had heard first-hand these words of Jesus:

Matt. 12:36-37 “But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For **by your words you will be acquitted**, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Remember, **a decision to NOT PARTICIPATE is still a decision** and we are held accountable for every word and every decision!

A Christian Holding Public Office!

United feels its members should not seek public office. [10] Yet we find in Rom. 16:23 a Christian is mentioned by name who held a public office! “...**Erastus, who is the city’s director of public works**, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.” In Corinth a pavement has been excavated that bears the name of Erastus and his title as director of public works! It stands as mute testimony that Christians did and can serve in public office! [11] Erastus was one of the first 70 apostles. [12]

Evaluating by the Commandments

As Christians we should evaluate the plans and backgrounds of those running for office from the standpoint of God’s Ten Commandments and God’s way of life. Does one party consistently mock God and those who believe in God? How does each candidate stand on whether or not a mother should be encouraged to take the life of her unborn baby? What about our tax structure? When the nation of Israel in ancient times paid a tithe they each paid the same percentage, ten percent. God is fair to both rich and poor.

We need to carefully evaluate candidates and their future plans from a true Christian viewpoint. Register to vote. Become informed, and then pray about it. Finally, vote! It is your right and obligation as a citizen, and as Paul did, you need to use your rights as part of being free. Your rights are given to you by the sacrifice of our country’s soldiers. If you take no stand against evil, then you will have to answer to God for your lack of opposition! Do not be deceived by false teachings that would deny you your rights as a citizen! You have dual citizenship, just as Paul did. As a Christian, you are a citizen of God’s coming Kingdom, and a citizen of the country in which God has placed you! Be accountable in all your decisions!

Here is a link to register to vote:

http://www.rockthevote.com/rtv_register.html

[1] Churches that teach a “do not vote” doctrine include but are not limited to: the United Church of God, an International Association, The Living Church of God, and Jehovah’s Witnesses.

[2] From the paper “Voting and Involvement in Politics,” A doctrinal statement of the United Church of God, an International Association written in 2003. Page 3.

[3] *Ibid*, Page 20.

[4] *Ibid*, Page 20.

[5] *Ibid*, the first part is quoted from the Bible, the last statement is personal opinion. Page 6.

[6] *Ibid*, Page 20.

[7] Paul referred to sin as “leavening” or “yeast” in 1 Cor. 5:7 “You must remove the old yeast of sin so that you will be entirely pure...” TEV Bible (Leavening is yeast, baking powder and baking soda, and is removed from homes during the Days of Unleavened Bread to symbolize sin being removed from our lives.)

[8] “Voting and Involvement in Politics,” Page 1.

[9] *Ibid*, Page 20.

[10] *Ibid*, Concluding Statement, “The United Church of God, an International Association, maintains its traditional teaching that a Christian should avoid voting and participating in political elections and running for public office.” Page 20.

[11] Erastus in Corinth, 2 Tim. 4:19. Link: This pavement in Corinth documents him having the important job of aedileship meaning treasurer or head of public works. <http://reasonstobelieve.blogspot.com/2007/01/corinth-isthmia-and-cenchreae.html>

[12] He was one of the 70 original apostles, Erastus was martyred in 67 A.D. in Rome. See link: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/foxs-book-of-martyrs/the-first-persecution-under-nero-a-d-67.html>

Mrs. McDonnell is a long time Church member, an ordained minister of the Church of God, and an outspoken proponent of women. On her web site www.Freedom-Ministry.com she writes with a Biblical perspective on diverse topics.

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