

# THE **Sabbath Sentinel**

January–February 2005



**Locusts ravage the grain belt of northern Africa.**

**BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association**

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

# The Sabbath Sentinel

January–February 2005 Volume 57, No. 1 Issue 511

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**Cover Quote:** "You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it." (Deuteronomy 28:38).

**Cover Photo:** A young Mauritanian, hoe in hand, looks at a dense swarm of desert locust near Aleg, Mauritania.—U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO/G. Diana)

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# **Plagues of Biblical Proportions**



On the minds of many people these days is the question: Are we living in the end times? Aren't the end times full of plagues that ravage the earth?

Just within the past six months we have seen unprecedented destruction and death at the hands of Nature. It wasn't so long ago that we were all talking about the horrible devastation caused by not one, but three hurricanes that plowed through the Caribbean and the state of Florida. Although the loss of life was surprisingly small for the scope of the destruction from these hurricanes, the dollar loss for many islands and for the state of Florida was mind-boggling.

When I chose the picture for the cover of this issue of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, I was stunned by the amount of crop damage done by the locust plague to northern Africa from the Gulf of Aqaba to the Atlantic. If there is anything that Africa cannot afford, it is the loss of food supply. We have all been made painfully aware of the level of malnutrition and famine that has visited the poor people of East Africa. Of course, not all the food problems of that area are the result of Nature turning against man. Much of the misery results from the evil of governments that deliberately deprive portions of their population the foodstuffs and agricultural supplies they need.

What few people know is that as the swarms of locusts made their way from east to west, ravaging crops as far as the Canary Islands and many, riding the upper wind currents made it all the way to Mexico. Whether

their arrival to the gates of the Western Hemisphere portends ill for the coming years remains to be seen. Even though these swarming harbingers of famine died out on the shores of Mexico, future problems for this hemisphere may depend of whether eggs were laid in Mexican soil.

More destruction, more plagues are in the news as I write this column. Off the southwest coast of Sumatra in Indonesia an earthquake registered 9.0 on the Richter Scale, and the resulting tsumanis (there were at least two major ones) pushing waves at over 330 miles per hour washed over the coasts of countries as far apart as Thailand and Somalia. Deaths are not being counted in the hundreds, but in the tens of thousands.

When I see the massive proportions of these plagues, I can only think of our Lord's warning in Matthew 24—that these things must happen, but the end and His return are not yet (implying that they are close).

We live in an untamed world that groans and travails as it waits for the revealing of the the children of the True God. We all are helpless before these earth-shaking events, but we are not without hope. Our hope is what we must share with the world. It's called "the gospel," and this heaving, dying world needs what we have to give. It's time to put aside our differences and feed the hopeless with the one thing that can give them life beyond the miserable existence of world.

—Kenneth Ryland

## **Notice Regarding S.E.E.**

In the September-October 2004 edition of *The Sabbath Sentinel* we published an article about The Sabbatarian Educational Environment (S.E.E.) written by Norman Edwards, one of the trustees of S.E.E. Since the publication of that article we have been contacted by two other trustees of S.E.E., Homer Kizer and Phil Frankford, disputing the claims made by Mr. Edwards about services currently being offered at S.E.E. We strongly recommend that you make no decisions regarding your participation in S.E.E. until this current dispute among the trustees is resolved. We at *The Sabbath Sentinel* and the BSA will keep you informed of any change in our position.

# *The Gods of Atheism*

*by Kenneth Westby*



Atheists have always been a minority. In fact, until more recent times it was considered unintelligent to suppose there could be no god or gods. Cultures varied in the god or gods they held dear—from the sun, moon, and thunder gods of ancient paganism, to the animistic deities of darkest Africa, to the more sophisticated religions of the East, to the great monotheistic faiths of the Western world.

People would disagree or even fight over whose god was really God, but it was assumed that there was a god—or gods. How else could the universe, earth, life and all the observed cycles and powers be accounted for? Man was small compared to all the wonder about him and it was natural to assume some greater power (or powers) was at work and was behind the order and unexplainable “miracles” that are a part of daily life. How did little seeds produce plants and trees? How did new human life develop within the body? How did the planets and stars move about the sky? There were millions of such observations to which the only answer seemed to be that a power and intelligence greater than man was behind it all, and had designed it all.

Today we laugh at some of the silly notions the ancients had as they tried to explain the workings of nature. Yet within their limited thought-world (limited by scientific information not by intelligence), which varied by culture and knowledge, they knew there had to be powers at work greater than man. They did not assume an accidental, chance, or naturalistic origin to the ordered world they observed. Any such assumption would have seemed contrary to logic and common sense.

It is said man is a religious animal and that is certainly the case. He has good reason to be. The argument over God’s existence is not one that can be settled by a supreme court composed of brilliant scientists. God’s existence is a matter of faith, but it can also be logically inferred from the intelligent design of creation itself. The only argument should be: 1) who is the True God? and 2) what he is up to with man? The most comprehensive answers to these questions are what an intelligent religion should offer.

The Hebrew Bible says, “Only a fool has said in his heart there is no God.” We can argue with that bold

statement, but its logic is compelling. In the Judeo-Christian faith God is seen as the first cause of everything—the cosmos and all of creation. To believe that everything came into existence without God is to believe that things brought themselves into the highly ordered existence in which we find them. But there is no observable experience that highly sophisticated, intricately designed machines, buildings, or life forms have brought themselves into existence or materialized by accidents, blind chance and “naturalistic law.”

It is evident that there are but two options to explain man and the cosmos: 1) A god created it; 2) Everything came into existence by some other way since there is no god.

Yet the universe, life, and man are of such immense complexity and marvelous design it is quite logical and intelligent to see a powerful designer behind it all.

If one came upon a beautiful house while walking in the woods and observed that it was finished with fine doors, windows, trim, tile roof, sidewalks, surrounded by landscaping, a patio, and furnished inside with beautiful chairs, fresh flowers on the tables, beds, soft music coming from various speakers, equipped with electronic appliances with LED clocks, quality lighting, and with a roast cooking in an oven, could one logically conclude that it made itself or somehow came to be by an accident of “nature,” or just evolved to its present state over millions of years? For the walker in the woods to conclude the house was anything other than the result of intelligent design should make us all suspect he’d eaten too many strange mushrooms along the way.

Yet by comparison to a little sparrow watching our walker from the home’s tile roof, such a beautiful house in the woods is unsophisticated and crude. Life forms like a sparrow are infinitely more complex than a modern house, an F-18 warplane, or the space shuttle.

Along comes the doctrine of evolution which attempts to answer the obvious conundrum: How did we get this spectacular creation of life and limitless cosmos without an Intelligent Creator/Designer? Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution provided a desirable way

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*Continued on Page 18*

# 2004 International 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 two International Contest winners, both from Nigeria.

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

## First Place Winner Victor Okongor of Nigeria

*Victor Okongor is a student at Cross River University of Technology and is studying political science. Victor served as youth secretary in the Church of God Seventh Day and was a member of the football (soccer) club at his high school. He currently attends Yahweh's People Assembly.*

*Victor's desire is to become a barrister (lawyer) in order to advocate for the many poor people who are immigrating into Nigeria.*

### Question 1 A

If I am confronted with the issue of my boss telling me to start working Saturdays or faced being fired. Though the job market is bad and I probably will not be able to find another job right away and with my family at home to feed, I will accept the challenge by not working on Saturdays. This decision may be frustrating, painful and mind pricking, but then, I ought to obey Yahweh rather than man. Finally I will pray to Yahweh to provide me a job that will exempt me working on Saturdays. I strongly believe that with my heart-touching decision to obey

Yahweh rather than man that he will create a way of escape. But even if he does not make a way and it pleases Him that I and my family should die in starvation to Him be the glory.

To my boss, I will attribute it to his ignorance of the importance, of Saturday, and with the spirit of humility, I will go telling him that Yahweh ended his work of creation on the sixth day and the rested on the seventh day and blessed it, Gen. 2:1-3. Yahweh in the same vein, commanded man that He created in his-image and after his likeness to remember the Sabbath day (the seventh day of the week) to keep it holy, commanded that work should be done for six days, Ex. 20:8-11.

Yahshua said "I did not come to abolish the law but to fulfil them," Matt 5:17. That was why Yahshua—in line with the commandment of his father Yahweh; "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" made it his custom to always go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day to keep it holy, Luke 4:16. Similarly, Paul made it his custom of observing the seventh day of the week (Sab-



bath) Act 17:2. Even the disciples of Yahshua the Messiah, kept the Sabbath day holy. Yahweh Almighty says, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call my sabbath a delight the holy day of Yahweh honourable; and shall honour him, not doing thy own ways, not going after thy own pleasure nor speaking thine own words; then he will cause you to enjoy the blessings of Jacob" Isaiah 58:13-14.

Yahweh Almighty so much values the Sabbath day that His anger is always against those who break or violate the Sabbath day. That was why the man that was caught gathering sticks on a Sabbath day was commanded by Yahweh that he should be put to death, Num. 15:32-36.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of Yahweh. Hence, Solomon the wisest king says that the conclusion of the whole matter is to fear Yahweh and keep his commandments for it is the whole duty of man, Ecclesiastes 12:13; therefore, the Sabbath day as one of Yahweh's commandment should not be ignored.

To crown it all, in handling this situation, I will pray to Yahweh almighty to provide one job that forbids my working on Saturdays (the Sabbath day). In addition to that, I strongly believe that with my heart-touching decision to obey Yahweh rather than man, He being the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that are there in, will provide another source from which I can make ends meet.

### **Question 2**

As a Sabbath keeper, having known that there's a movement to change the weekly calendar to make Monday the first day of the week and Sunday the last day of the week which I know will boil down to the fact that Sunday is the Sabbath day. I would first of all pray lifting up the issue unto Yahweh's throne of grace and thereafter go on to argue against the change.

To anyone responsible for this change I would say that the idea is devilish, degrading and disobedient to the word of Yahweh to really convince the people who would change this to leave it as it is. I will go on presenting the following facts: that Yahweh worked for six days during creation and rested on the seventh day (Sabbath day) of the week. Yahweh himself in his commandment, commanded man to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. That it is a day of rest and worship. The almighty did not leave man in ignorance about which day is the seventh day of the week; hence he created light in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years. Gen. 1:14. I would furthermore remind the

people that which the Scripture says in the book of Daniel 7:25 and I quote, "And he shall speak great words against the most high and shall wear out the saints of the most high and think to change time and laws and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of times;" do they want this prophesy to be fulfilled on their heads?

Yahweh is not a man that the should make mistake. His do's and don'ts are encoded on the two tablets of stones engraved with his fingers. Why should the Sabbath day interest people to change? The scripture tells us that for whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet of offend in one point—he is guilty of all (James 2:10).

Who has hardened himself against Yahweh and prevailed? None. Pharaoh tried it but Yahweh ended it in the Red Sea. Nebuchadnezzar did the same and was made by Elohim to dwell among the beast of the field and lots more.

If the change will be allowed, it will be a difficult task for Sabbath keepers to teach the truth of the Sabbath with the calendar being changed as many will really find it difficult to believe the truth.

In handling such a situation, as I said earlier, I will take it first to Yahweh in prayer in accordance with what the Scripture says, "commit your ways into my hands and I will make them come to pass," and ask for His intervention in the matter. Also, I will go on to encourage as many Sabbath keepers who are within my reach to fervently seek the face of Yahweh for His divine intervention. Yahweh who gave the Israelites victory over their enemies will fight for Himself and with him on our side victory shall be ours. □

## **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 Israel Bassey of Nigeria**

*21-year-old Israel Bassey is a student at Cross River University of Technology and is pursuing Christian Religious Studies. In high school Israel served as youth provost and was very active in football (soccer) where he recognized as the school's top player.*

*Israel's college studies in Christian Religion allow him to learn a lot about the Scriptures. He hopes to use his education and experience to teach others about God. Israel would particularly like to receive a teaching position so that he could pass his knowledge of God and the Scriptures to his students.*

### **Question 1 A**

Now if My boss had told me that I must start working Saturdays or faced being fired, I having faith in the commandment of Yahweh, the scripture is my yard stick where in my faith encouragement and endurance is based. First and foremost, I will examine the scriptures, holding that Yahweh watches over his word to see that he fulfill it. After judging and examining the scripture then and there I take my stand.

As it is written, Yahshua knew the Joy that was ahead of him, he suffered unto death that he may receive the crown of glory (Hab. 12:1-3). He also advised Smyrna Assembly "Suffer you unto death, for I will give you a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

The Holy spirit through Apostle Paul admonished Lystra, Iconium Assembly that through much tribulation you shall enter the kingdom of Yahweh, (Acts 14:22). He also admonished the Romans Assembly that they should be encouraged for the glory awaiting them cannot be compared to the suffering of today (Rom. 8:17). To the Corinthians the spirit also said through Apostle Paul, "There has no temptation taken you but such as common to man, but Yahweh is faithful, he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it."

Furthermore, elder and the leader of the apostles, Peter admonished the Jews." But the Elohim of all grace who has called us to eternal glory by Yahshua the messiah after that you have suffered a while make you perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you." From these scriptural encouragement (Rom 15:4) there I stand.

I will therefore tell my boss that the Sabbath is a memorial holyday of Yahweh's creation that he rested, blessed, and sanctified. He also commanded man (one of his creatures) to remember it and keep it holy, for he made it a sign between him and his people. I will

go on telling him (my boss) that I will not be able to defile the Sabbath because it is a sin that is worthy of death (Num. 15:32-36).

In handling this situation, I will tell my family of the development, then encourage them to be courageous for the scripture says, "all things worketh together for good to them that fear Yahweh." Using the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego during the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 3, I will tell my family to take the challenge since our Maker loves challenges. Record has it that Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image for Babylonians to worship, but these three Hebrews that knew the commandment of Yahweh which says "thou shall not make for yourself any image of any form and you shall not bow down unto such". They all stood by the law to defend it. Please note that verse 16-18, the response of these three Hebrews to Nebuchadnezzar, "we are not careful to answer you this matter, if so our Elohim whom we serve is able to deliver us out of your hand, O king, but if not, be it known to you, O king that we will not serve your god nor worship the golden image which you have made." Due to the provisions of this competition, I will open the book of Daniel, verses 24 and 29 – 30, which talks of the victory the three Hebrew men had in the long run and show them. After this step I will go to the elder and pastor of my church and explain the situation to them and ask of them that they pray for me.

### **Question 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?

In a case of such where there is a movement to make Sunday the seventh day, eventually the Sabbath day, I would not be shaken at all but will believe that in all temptations there is always a way of escape.

To the body who is proposing to change the weekly calendar I will advice such body to withdraw it proposal for it against the will of Yahweh and then go on to presents the following from the scripture.



The Sabbath day is the most unique and special in all the days of Yahweh. It is a memorial of Yahweh's creations of all things on the sixth day, and the seventh day was blessed, sanctified, and separated from the rest. No other day was placed under such priority, it is peculiar and ultimate of all the days (Gen. 2:1-2).

Yahweh sanctified the Sabbath day before the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt by giving them manna all the six working days but making the field void of manna on the seventh day. And in addition to that, there was a specific measurement to be picked by each family and if any family picks above that omer, it would stink and produce worms. (Exo. 16:15-30). But double portion was picked on the sixth day against the Sabbath hence none was found in the field on Sabbath.

Sabbath is a peculiar day, it is the only day that was engraved in the fingers of Yahweh in the ten commandments (Exo. 20:8-11). The first day the house of Israel heard the voice of Yahweh speaking to them from heaven, Sabbath was mentioned. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, it is a Sabbath of Yahweh not man, you shall not do any work nor your house hold, Yahweh rested on that day, blessed and hallowed it.

Yahweh said to Moses, my Sabbath you shall observe and it shall be a sign between me and my people throughout your generations that you may know that I am—I AM HE that sanctifies you. Any one who defiles it shall surely be put to death; so Sabbath is unaltered (Exo.31:12-17).

Our master Yahshua said, "I have not come to destroy the law and the prophet, if anyone breaks one of the least commandment and teaches men so, he shall become the least in Yahweh's kingdom."

Witnesses of Sabbath by prophet Isaiah:

"If anyone who call the Sabbath delight, then Yahweh will cause such one to ride upon the high places of the earth and eat of the heritage of Jacob, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken it" (Isa. 54:13-14).

"...strangers and eunuchs that keep the Sabbath and do not pollute it, they shall be more than sons" Isa. 56:1-7).

"From one new moon to another and one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship Yahweh." This is future in the regeneration of the son of man when the kingdom comes.

Israelites who were captives that returned back to the land restored Sabbath and decided neither to sell nor to buy on the, Sabbath day, to restore all the commandments (Neh. 10:29-31).

During the days of our master Yahshua, all classes of Jews kept the Sabbath holy, and those who failed to do were regarded very low and considered as them that do not know Yahweh (John 9:16). To add, Yahshua our master, example and our shepherd, made it his custom by going to the synagogue on Sabbath days (Lk. 4:16). Apostles in the acts of their ministration, acknowledged Sabbath (Act. 17:2; 13:42-44).

Finally, to the body responsible for this change, I will tell them that the scripture has not given us any authority to change the sacred Sabbath to Sunday. Therefore anyone who dares is worthy of the punishment of death. In the book of Mark 8:35-38, Yahshua says therefore, let us remain to defend the word and commandment of Yahweh, even Sabbath.

To as many who believe in Sabbath, I will say to them that they should seek Yahweh the more. Go further to open Genesis 1:14 which talks of the significance the light of the firmament, and ask them to be courageous the more knowing too well what the Bible in Daniel 7:25 says, "and they shall speak great words against the most high, and shall wear out the saints of the most high and shall seek to change times and laws," and in the light of this tell them that it is a mere fulfillment of the Scriptures, but in all, Yahweh will make a way of escape for his people and the very Elohim that intervened for the three Hebrews in Daniel 3 will do the same for his people.

## ***Update on a Prior Scholarship Winner***



### **Hannah Basse Akpan**

**Hannah is now in college in Nigeria and studying marketing.**



# A Church of Busy Believers

by Sandra Doran

**Q:** *I am on the board of a 150-member church that seems to be in a Laodicean state. While we get a pretty decent attendance at church each week, whenever we schedule mid-week meetings and other activities, only the same small handful of people show up. How can we get the saints to realize that church membership should be more than just sitting in the pew each week?*

**A:** I am wondering whether you are asking the right question. Rather than judging a group of people as Laodicean, perhaps those in leadership at your church should be asking, "How can we better meet the needs of our congregation?" If your programs aren't working, it may be that they are not a match for those whose lives demand a fresh new way of doing things.

Consider the diverse and complex lives of people living now. This letter from a single mother of three children may serve as an eye-opener: "I get up at 5:00 A.M., let the dog out, pick up any dishes, start the dishwasher, pick up a couple things around the house, let the dog in. Then I start the wash, fluff what's in the dryer, get on the treadmill, watch the news, read yesterday's mail, get off the treadmill, fold the laundry, move the washing into the dryer, put away a load of clothes. Attempt to wake the boys, read my devotional, try again to wake the boys, shower, finally shake the boys awake. Dress, fix my hair, check to see that the boys are dressed, fed, and lunches packed. Then I take them to school, work about 10 hours, and start the thing all over again."

Whew! Talk about making every moment count. This woman is but one of a growing number of individuals in our churches whose plate is very full. The profile of our congregations is changing. There was an era when people needed things to do to fill their time and add meaning to their lives, but those days are long past. Our challenge for this year is to find relevant ways to intersect with people who have no choice but to make every moment count.

Where do we start?

First, we need to deepen our awareness of the complexity of the lives of the people who occupy the pews beside us each week. While we may view an individual once a week in a church role, we may be totally unaware of the other facets of his or her life that whirl with motion once the new week begins.

Second, we need to rethink the ways we structure activities for our congregation. To expect the mother whose schedule we read above to dash home from work, microwave a meal, jump into the car, and rush the children to an activity at the church on Tuesday, attend prayer meeting on Wednesday, or practice with the choir on Friday evening is to add exhaustion rather than support to her life.

Some churches are finding that families prefer to stay at the church in the afternoon after the worship service. These congregations are holding children's meetings and relevant programs once a month, offering people the opportunity to connect with one another, delve into the Word, make practical applications for living, and gather strength for the coming week.

Third, we need to make our churches places where people come away feeling energized, not drained. People today are rushed and hassled.

Church shouldn't provide more of the same. Church should be the one place where people feel the pressures of the week begin to loosen. We need to understand one another. Cut one another some slack. Get into a relaxed rather than a business mode. Make the terms "church family" and "church home" more than just catchphrases.

Perhaps its time to take off your judgmental hat and begin listening to people. I suspect that once you really get to know those who occupy the pews and leave so quickly each week, you will have ideas on how to restructure your congregation's ministries in ways that fit the schedules and needs of the members.

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*Reprinted with permission from Signs of the Times, July 2004 (www.signstimes.com). Sandra Doran, Ed.D., is an associate superintendent of education for the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

# Jesus is Alive!

by John Lemley

The most celebrated truth of the Christian faith assures victory now and forever.

The Bible is clear about Jesus who died on the cross nearly two thousand years ago. Starting three days later, women, angels, disciples, and 500 more eyewitnesses all concurred about what happened next. Over and over, they exclaimed, "He is alive!"

Let's be clear about it, too. Christians are unique in the world of religions: We serve a risen Savior.

The resurrection of Jesus is a crucial part of the gospel. Paul places at the forefront of his preaching "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). This is vital, for Paul goes on to say, "And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!" (v. 17).

Many sermons of the early church emphasized the resurrection of Christ as a central truth: "whom God raised up" (Acts 2:24); "whom God raised from the dead" (3:15); "with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (4:33); "Him God raised up on the third day ..." (10:40); "Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead ..." (17:3).

Over the backdrop of an empty tomb, the Bible triumphantly says, "Jesus is not here; He is risen!" Again today, the church repeats it boldly!

## Believers' Benefits

Christians enjoy several advantages from the Resurrection. For one, it assures us that our sins are paid for. Jesus was "delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25). The fact that He rose from the grave shows clearly that our sins are gone. The wages we earned by sinning are paid in full. If Jesus were still in the tomb, one could wonder if the price had been paid. But Jesus is alive, confirming His identity as God's Son and His power to forgive our sins and make us right before God (Romans 1:4, 16).

The Resurrection also gives us a living Savior. Because Jesus rose from the grave, He is now at the right hand of God, serving as our intercessor and advocate (Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1). These big words simply mean that Jesus is speaking for us now. He is at God's side pleading our cause, and He is at our side cheering us on. Jesus is the head of the church, giving direction. He is our example, giving courage. He answers our prayers, giving solutions—all because He is alive!

A living Savior assures us of eternal life—yet another advantage of the Resurrection. Jesus' victory over the grave assures us that the promise of eternal life really is true. We can confidently know that

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**We should rely on the One who has shown himself trustworthy in every respect of life, death, and resurrection.**

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all who've died in Christ will live again (1 Corinthians 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14). The pain of losing a loved one is common, but we have the blessed assurance of a reunion with all those who know the risen Savior. Be-

cause Jesus lives, we don't ever have to say a final "goodbye."

## Jesus is trustworthy

Jesus foretold His resurrection in Matthew 12:40, and He spelled out several of the details in Matthew 20:18, 19: the where (Jerusalem), how (betrayal, crucifixion), who (chief priests, scribes, Gentiles), and what (condemnation to death) of His death and the what (resurrection) and when (third day) of its reversal. Every prediction Jesus made happened exactly as He said.

A key verse here is "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (12:40). The six time periods of this verse cannot be squeezed into the traditional scenario of a late Friday burial and an early Sunday resurrection.

Jesus gave His word: He would be in the grave three days and nights. And He was—from Wednesday evening, just before sunset, until Sabbath (Saturday)

evening, just before sunset. The primary truth here is that Jesus rose from the dead. His accuracy regarding the length of time He would be in the grave gives us confidence that He is correct in all His other statements as well.

If Jesus' prophecy was colored with ambiguity or figures of speech, then the rest of His pronouncements might also be suspect. But our living Savior tells the truth. He is fully trustworthy—not fickle, taking back His word (Hebrews 13:8). His words are accurate to the smallest detail, and we can believe what He says.

## Relying on Christ

We should rely on the One who has shown himself trustworthy in every respect of life, death, and resurrection. Here is clarity for the confused: "Do you believe in the Son of God? ... You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you" (John 9:35, 37). More clarity to support the weary: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Blessed assurance for the lonely: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:20).

"He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25): That's a promise. Even the dead have Jesus' clear guarantee: Because He lives, they will live again. We can bank our life and our eternity on Jesus' statements. Whoever and wherever you are, whatever is happening in your life, Jesus invites you to rely on His words. They will not fail. No wonder we worship Him. Our living Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, is worthy.

Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11). Throughout eternity our love affair with Jesus will continue, thanks to the death and resurrection of Christ. As we gather around the throne, accompanied by the heavenly host, our eyes will see Him, and our lips will form these awesome words: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13). This is a good time to practice. Let's bow the knee and speak the words from a heart set free. All together now— "Jesus is Lord! He is alive!"

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*Reprinted with permission from **The Bible Advocate**, April 2004 ([www.cog7.org](http://www.cog7.org)). John Lemley and his wife, Lois, live in Vancouver, WA. John serves the Church of God (Seventh Day) as pastor in Portland, OR, and as editor of the Ministerial Forum.*

## Being Carried through Life's Sticky Situations

*by Julia Benson*

"Keera, Keera," says Kiersten, my toddler daughter, when she wants me to carry her down our staircase. I try to encourage her to come down herself, and sometimes she does. She's a whiz at climbing up, but climbing down is another story. Kiersten has even reached the point where she sneaks upstairs, which in itself wouldn't be so bad, except it could get her into trouble when she tries to sneak back down.

Sometimes I find that I sneak myself into some sticky situations where if I try to sneak back out, I get myself into trouble. I have a sneaking suspicion that I'm not alone in this phenomenon. Sin can be tricky like that. We see some sort of glittering temptation at the top of the stairs and like an impulsive child we deftly climb the steep steps to grab the forbidden gold. Disappointment often ensues when we reach the top because we've been suckered in by Satan to break away from our Father in heaven. And for what? Fool's gold coveted by a fool.

Often when I find myself at the top of the stairs and look down only to find a treacherous descent to get back to where I was, I expect God to carry me through, not unlike Kiersten's demand for me to "keera" her. Sometimes he does. Sometimes he knows that I just don't have the strength or the ability to get myself out of some sticky situations, so he lovingly carries me through. Sometimes, however, he knows that I need to learn a lesson so he makes me go it alone (at least that's what it feels like.) But then, after really thinking about the situation, I realize, I never go it alone. Maybe God doesn't carry me through every hard part of my life, but he never leaves me to fend for myself. He is always there.

So, for now, I still "keera" Kiersten down the steps occasionally, but I also let her come down herself if I'm close by. I want to teach her how to do it right so that she won't continue to find herself in the sticky staircase situation.

Psalm 20:1-2 says "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion." So, I know that when I find myself in need of the help of my Father in Heaven, all I have to do is call upon his name.

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*Julia Benson is a freelance writer who lives in a small town in northeast Iowa. A former school teacher, Julia now spends her time at home writing and taking care of her two-year-old daughter and husband. Julia attends an Adventist church in Wisconsin.*

# Christian Pastors Found Guilty of Vilifying Islam

**By Patrick Goodenough**  
**CNSNews.com International Editor**

*Pacific Rim Bureau (CNSNews.com) December 17, 2004*—Christians in Australia are pondering the implications of an explosive ruling handed down Friday by a legal tribunal, which found that two Christian pastors had vilified Islam.

Immediate reactions ranged from an evangelical commentator's view that the decision spelled "the beginning of the end of freedom of speech in Australia" to that of a liberal church denomination which said it sent a welcome message to "Christian extremist groups."

One of the pastors at the center of the dispute said he was saddened by the outcome, but he predicted it would galvanize Christians and other Australians who cared about free speech.

Pastors Danny Nalliah and Daniel Scot were found to have breached a section of the state of Victoria's controversial hate law, which says a person must not incite "hatred against, serious contempt for or revulsion or severe ridicule of" another person or group on the basis of religious belief or activity.

The complaint arose from a seminar on Islam run for Christians by Nalliah's evangelical *Catch the Fire Ministries* in Melbourne in 2002.

Three Muslims attended on behalf of the Islamic Council of Victoria and subsequently submitted a complaint under the state's Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, which had come into effect just two months earlier.

A lengthy legal process, weeks of public hearings before a tribunal set up under the law and months of delays finally reached a conclusion on Friday, when tribunal judge Michael Higgins handed down a summary of his judgment. A full 100-page report will be produced next week.

Higgins said the three respondents—*Catch the Fire*, Nalliah and Scot—had violated the section of the law covering hatred, contempt, and revulsion.

The law provides for exemptions in cases where the offending action was taken "reasonably and in

good faith ... for any genuine academic, artistic, religious or scientific purpose" or in the public interest.

But Higgins found that the exemptions did not apply in the case before him.

"I find that Pastor Scot's conduct was not engaged in reasonably and in good faith for any genuine religious purpose or any purpose that is in the public interest."

Scot, a Pakistan-born scholar of Islam, was the main speaker at the seminar. He and Nalliah argued throughout the case that they had merely informed Christians attending the seminar about Islam and its teachings, based on the religion's own texts.

The judge disagreed.

"Pastor Scot, throughout the seminar, made fun of Muslim beliefs and conduct," he said in the summary.

"It was done, not in the context of a serious discussion of Muslims' religious beliefs; it was presented in a way which is essentially hostile, demeaning and derogatory of all Muslim people, their god Allah, the prophet Mohammed and in general Muslim religious beliefs and practices."

Higgins referred to some of Scot's statements, including the view that the Koran "promotes violence, killing and looting"; that Muslims are liars; that Allah is not merciful and a thief's hand is cut off for stealing; and that Muslims intend to take over Australia and declare it an Islamic nation.

He said Scot "preached a literal translation of the Koran and of Muslims' religious practices which was not mainstream but was more representative of a small group in the Gulf states."

Higgins also said he had found Scot evasive and lacking in credibility.

Apart from the seminar, the judge also dealt with two other issues: a newsletter article written by Nalliah and an article posted on the *Catch the Fire* website shortly after 9/11.

In the newsletter article, Nalliah claimed that Muslim refugees were being granted visas to Australia while Christians who suffer persecution in Islamic nations were refused refugee visas. He also referred to the high birth rate among Muslims in Australia at a time the birth rate in general was dropping.

Higgins said Nalliah suggested that Muslims were “seeking to take over Australia.”

“Viewed objectively and in their totality, these statements are likely to incite a feeling of hatred towards Muslims.”

Regarding the article posted on the website 15 days after 9/11, Higgins said it suggested that Islam was “an inherently violent religion.” The author, whose full name was not given, “implies that Muslims endorse the killing of people based upon their religion,” the judge said.

Under the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, the tribunal is empowered to order public apologies, the payment of compensation or other steps. Higgins will announce penalties in late January.

### **“Truth is no defense”**

Speaking by phone from Melbourne after the judgment was delivered, Nalliah said the verdict had not referred at all to the issue of freedom of speech—the grounds on which the pastors fought their case.

“I’m saddened because we’ve lived under [Islamic] Shari’a law, and I thought those were the countries where you could not speak [freely]. And we come to Australia and make Australia our home, and we find ... freedom of speech is completely bound.”

Sri Lanka-born Nalliah worked with the underground church in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s, while Scot fled persecution in his native land in 1987 after being condemned to death under Pakistan’s blasphemy laws.

“It’s very evident that all we have said is the truth, but that has not been taken into consideration,” Nalliah said, noting that lawyers for the complainant had stressed to the judge throughout the case that “truth is no defense.”

While one could vilify someone according to race, religion was clearly subjective, the pastor said.

“Religion makes claims of truth. Each religion says ‘we are the right one.’ How can you vilify?”

Nalliah also lamented that a judge “who possibly does not know head or tail” of either Christianity or Islam was giving a verdict in a case of this type.

A similar view came from Bill Muehlenberg, vice-president of the Australian Family Association, who attended Friday’s hearing.

“How does a secular judge with no expertise in religion make such decisions when Islamic scholars themselves are divided on such crucial questions of

theology, interpretation and exegesis?” he asked afterwards.

“Much of what the judge considered offensive was simply quotations from the Koran,” he added. “To argue that quoting a religious book makes one guilty of vilification would put 98 percent of religious discussions out of bounds.”

Muehlenberg called on Christians to protest, lobby and pray about the decision, which he said “marks the beginning of the end of freedom of speech in Australia and the official restriction of proclaiming the Christian gospel.”

### **“Extremists”**

In sharp contrast to Muehlenberg’s view, the state’s Uniting Church welcomed the verdict.

“Today’s ruling will send a clear message to extremist groups in Victoria that their activities are not welcome here,” said the church’s social justice and international mission head, Mark Zirnsak

“These groups now have been given a clear warning that they will not have an unfettered ability to promote hatred and hostility in the community.”

Zirnsak also commended the state’s Labor government for passing the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act.

“In our view, the beliefs and actions of groups like *Catch the Fire Ministries* do not represent the broad view of Christian belief in this state, where respect, tolerance and acceptance are the hallmarks of daily religious life.”

The Uniting Church is a unique Australian denomination established from an amalgamation of the Methodist, Congregational and some Presbyterian churches.

Last July, it became the first church in Australia to openly allow practicing homosexuals to become ministers. It has a strong social focus and opposed the war in Iraq.

### **“Wake up”**

Nalliah said Friday that he, Scot and their advisors would study the tribunal’s full judgment when it became available and would then decide on a future strategy.

“It seems bad, but ... when Christ died on the cross, everyone thought it was defeat. But time proved that he rose from the dead and brought victory. Time will prove that this is not the end of this case [either].”

He said he believed the whole episode was part of a broader divine plan.

“I think this will really stir the church up, to wake up and take a stand. And not just Christians—every Aussie who loves freedom and freedom of speech is going to be affected by this decision.”

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# Why Jesus Is “Lord” of the Sabbaths

by Ian Hufton

(**Note:** The four-digit numbers in the text of this article are references to Strong’s Concordance.)

If Jesus is your Lord and Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbaths, what is your relationship to the Sabbaths?

Mark 2:27-28: “Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath [4521].”

“Sabbath” (the English word from Greek word [4521] *sabbaton* (sab’-bat-on) of Hebrew origin (7676); the Sabbath (i.e. *Shabbath*), or day of weekly repose from secular avocations (also the observance or institution itself).

## Christ Is the Focal Point of All the Sabbaths

Few people grasp that the focal point or “person” of every Sabbath is Jesus—our Lord—whom the Father has chosen to be the “Way” we come to our Heavenly Father. The weekly Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths all exemplify aspects of Christ’s interaction with those who follow Him and plan to spend eternity in His presence. Jesus came down from the Father in heaven to enlarge man’s understanding of what God is doing for mankind. In the gospel of John, chapter one, we read “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (vv. 1-3).

The Father allowed the Son to be the Maker or Creator of the whole physical universe. What a great honor! The Sabbaths are designed to remind us about “WHOM” we worship, as well as “HOW” and “WHEN” the Father and the Son want us to interrelate with Them.

Gen. 2:1-3: Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

## Jesus Made the Sabbath a Reminder of Past and Future Events

As stated above, Jesus (the Word), the Creator, made the weekly Sabbath day “for man.”

So then God, through Jesus, created a Universe and a weekly Sabbath for man to learn how to relate

to our “Spiritual Parents.” The weekly Sabbath reminds us of Jesus, the one who in the past created all and sanctified the Holy Day of Rest. It also reminds us of where Jesus wants to take us. In chapters three and four of the book of Hebrews Jesus is quoted, “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest...’ [Heb. 3:11] And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?... [chapter 4] Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it... For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ’ although the works were finished from the foundation of the world... and again in this place: ‘They shall not enter My rest... For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day’ ” (vv. 1, 3, 5, 8).

## There Remains a Sabbath-Keeping (a “sabbatism”)

Hebrews 4:9-11: “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.”

**SPECIAL NOTE:** In Hebrews 4:9 the Greek word behind “rest” is different from all other references to “rest.” In verse 9 the Greek word is number 4520. This word is defined as follows: “*sabbatismos* (sab-bat-is-mos’); from a derivative of NT:4521; a ‘sabbatism,’ i.e. (figuratively) the repose of Christianity (as a type of heaven).”

Keeping the weekly Sabbath as God described it is obeying God, and it should remind us all that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, was the awesome Being who was the Creator. Yes, the Sabbath was made for mankind and Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath and all the Universe. Each Sabbath we should delight in Who He is, what He has done and what He is planning to do in the future.

## Annual Sabbaths Reveal Christ and God’s Steps in the Salvation Plan

In recent years the study of the spiritual implications of the Holy Days found in Leviticus 23 has become popular among many believers who do not keep these annual festival days. Two things have be-



come powerfully evident from the study of the festivals: 1. that God's plan of salvation is easily observable in these sacred days, and 2. that the Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point of them and is foreshadowed in them.

In Leviticus, the 23rd chapter, we are shown the eight festivals that reveal the steps God is using to bring many sons and daughters to glory.

Lev. 23:1-3: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. [FEAST = FESTIVAL] Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.'"

**NOTE:** The first festival mentioned is the weekly Sabbath day. This festival occurs every seven days, or 52 times each year. The remainder of God's festivals occur only once per year (in their appointed seasons).

Lev. 23:4-7: "These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it."

In the first month of the Hebrew (Jewish) year, God commanded two annual festivals to be to be observed. First the Passover followed by the seven-day-long festival of unleavened bread.

### **Jesus Is Passover; Passover Is Jesus**

A complete study of the Bible reveals that Jesus is the central figure of the Passover festival.

Rev 5:9, 12: "And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood.'...saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!'"

Rev 13:8: "All who dwell on the earth will worship him [the beast], whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

John 1:29, 36: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"

1 Cor. 5:7: "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are un-

leavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

The verses above clearly show that Jesus is the great "spiritual" Lamb of God. More than twenty times in the book of Revelation Jesus is referred to as the Lamb. By focusing on Jesus, the Lamb of God, during the Passover festival we are looking forward to His coming, and we are looking back to His awesome sacrifice which was the first great step in the salvation plan.

### **Jesus Is the "Unleavened (Sinless) Bread" of Life**

The second festival on God's calendar also points to Jesus, who proclaimed that He was the "bread of life."

Read the following verses from John 6: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, 'Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven'" (v. 32). "...the bread of God is He who comes from heaven and gives life to the world" (v. 33). "And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst'" (v. 35). "I am the bread of life" (v. 48). "...the bread

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**Few people grasp that the focal point or "person" of every Sabbath is Jesus—our Lord—whom the Father has chosen to be the "Way" we come to our Heavenly Father.**

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which comes from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die" (v. 50). "This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever" (v. 58).

During the second festival of the year we are to eat (daily) unleavened bread. For these seven days, leaven (yeast), represents "sin," which we are to diligently avoid. Jesus was and is the unleavened (sinless) bread of life. If we spiritually feed on Him we will be eating of the bread from Heaven and we will live forever. By accepting the Passover sacrifice for our sins and committing to eat (spiritually) of Christ's ways we are beginning our journey to Salvation and eternal life.

### **Spiritually Drinking from Jesus, the Christ (Messiah)**

Exo. 23:16: "...and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field..."

John 7:37-39: "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given."

Pentecost (or the Festival of Firstfruits) focuses on Jesus who is the one from whom we drink in the Holy

Spirit. In the past, Jesus was glorified, allowing the Holy Spirit to be given (the promise of the New Covenant). In the present, Jesus is the one who sends us the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is a festival about drinking the Holy Spirit from Jesus and walking in His Spirit.

John 15:26: "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."

John 16:7: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

## The Trumpets Festival and Jesus

Lev. 23:24: "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial [2146] of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.'"

**NOTICE:** The Hebrew word (2146) behind "memorial" in the verse above is the word "memento." This Hebrew word is defined as follows: *zikrown zikrone* from 2142; a memento (or memorable thing, day or writing):—memorial, record.

God has created a festival which is a "memento" of blowing of trumpets. In the book of Revelation God shows us that His Son, Jesus, the Redeemer, appears in the sky when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet sounds.

Rev. 10:7: "...but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished."

Rev. 11:15: "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"

1 Th. 4:16-17: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. The dead in Christ will rise first. 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."

Jesus, "The Lord" comes to earth to rule and reign for a thousand years of reconstruction, peace, and abundance at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Jesus is the focal figure of this festival of Trumpets. As Paul said "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come" (Col. 2:16-17).

**NOTICE:** This festival of trumpets is a "MEMENTO" a looking forward to the greatest intervention (by God) in mankind's history. God, Jesus will appear, ready to defeat His enemies and rule this planet as King of Kings.

## Jesus Is the Focal Figure of the Day of Atonement

Lev. 23:26-28: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 'Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be

the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.'"

**NOTICE:** In the Old Testament writings to "make atonement" was the way to be "forgiven" before God.

Lev. 5:13: "The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him."

The Hebrew word for Atonement is "*kaphar* (kaw-far)"; and is defined as follows: *a primitive root; to cover (specifically with bitumen); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel: This word is translated into English in the following ways: appease, make an atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, (make) reconcile (-liation).*

So, in simple terms, "making atonement" is God's way for human's to be forgiven.

Lev 23:31-32: "You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

A study of the book of Leviticus clearly shows that the one whom God used to make the atonement was a "priest." Atonements were to be made throughout each year but the great annual atonement — **forgiveness** — **reconciliation** for the whole nation of Israel was made on one very special day each year the festival or day of Atonement. This was the only day in 365 that the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies in God's temple. All eyes were on the high priest as he made the atonement sacrifices and sent all of Israel's sins away (symbolically) via a goat that escaped with its life. In the book of Hebrews the Great High Priest of the universe is clearly shown to be Jesus (the Messiah), Christ.

Heb. 4:14: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."

Rom. 8:34: "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."

Heb. 7:25: "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

Jesus is "daily", our High Priest, interceding for us, making atonement for us, providing our forgiveness before our Father.

## Jesus Is THE "Worship King" in The Festival of Tabernacles

Zec. 14:17: "And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to

worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain."

Lev. 23:33: "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. 35 'On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it."

When Jesus rules planet earth for a thousand years from Jerusalem, the whole world will be at peace, and mankind will experience a "new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13).

### **"The Eighth Day" Festival Points to Jesus Resurrecting Billions**

Lev 23:36-38: "On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it. These are the feasts [festivals] of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations. besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD."

Rev 20:4-6: "...who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished). This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

The "rest of the dead" do live again but only after the thousand years is finished. The festival of Tabernacles pictures the thousand year rule of Jesus before the "eighth day" arrives. Then the rest of the dead will be resurrected.

Rev 20:12-13: "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works."

Ezek. 37:5: "Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: 'Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.'"

John 5:28-29: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice [the voice of Jesus] and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection (the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection or "eighth day") of condemnation."

### **Jesus Is the Salvation "Way"**

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

Salvation is "coming to the Father" through Jesus. When we keep the weekly Sabbaths and the annual Sabbaths, we are celebrating the various aspects of how Jesus is leading mankind to the Father (to salvation). Is it any wonder that Jesus said: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man [Jesus] is also Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28).

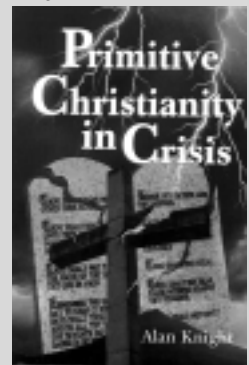
*Ian Hufton, born in Australia, now lives in Big Sandy, Texas, USA, with his wife Thalia. He and Thalia have three children. Ian is founder and pastor of the East Texas Church of God in Mount Pleasant, Texas.*

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out of the "God problem." His theory gave rise to a powerful rival to Christianity and Judaism. It proposed an attractive "superior" explanation to the origin of the species. It spawned a new god-less religion with various denominations called secular humanism, naturalism, rationalism, materialism, or scientific atheism.

As the first century apostles of Jesus established the Christian faith, nineteenth and twentieth century apostles of atheism spawned the religious isms listed above. Four "gods" of atheism stand out as pillars: Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. We will take a brief look at these men and the legacy of destructive isms thrust upon the world by their disciples—Hitler, Marx, Lenin, and Stalin.

Religions have their prophets. Atheism also has its prophets—the "gods of atheism" who are afforded great respect in academia. They have been cloaked in imaginary robes of sanctity and of a kind of infallibility that the pope could only envy."<sup>1</sup>

### **Charles Darwin**

While Darwin is claimed by atheists to be the greatest scientist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Darwinism has been all but abandoned. His theories have been weighed and found wanting, nevertheless his naturalistic explanation of the origins of life has been embraced in virtually every corner of the scientific community. Darwin, above all others, provided the ammunition for skeptics to attack the Bible and the notion of a creator God. After Darwin, God became unnecessary.

Darwin was born February 12, 1809, the same day as Abraham Lincoln, into an upper-caste wealthy family with servants.

Charles Darwin was a decent man who hated slavery—and said so at the risk of controversy. He was a devoted husband and father. He was also a keen observer of animal life. His defects lay in a strong and subjective antireligious bias which seems to have been rooted in his childhood but became increasingly powerful as he grew older.<sup>2</sup>

His father, Robert, was a gifted medical doctor who hated medicine and is described by Charles as "the largest man I ever saw" (six feet, two inches tall in a day when most men were five-feet-six, and he weighed 345 pounds). His father was overpowering, domineering, coldly strict, and in Charles' words, "almost supernatural." Yet the brilliant doctor was helpless to save his wife from an illness that left Charles a motherless child. Biographers have noted that the young Charles was intimidated by his father and even hostile toward him. It is suspected that he transferred some of that antipathy toward his concept of God derived from his Christian exposure.

Robert brought his son into training for his medical practice, but Charles did not take to it. His father then decided Charles should be a clergyman since he didn't seem to be of any other use. His father wasn't religious but having his son become a clergyman was a respectable job in the caste-conscious society of pre-Victorian England. He studied for the ministry for two years and then quit to pursue his greater pleasure of wandering the countryside shooting birds and collecting beetles.

It was at this time in 1831 that young Charles signed on as a naturalist on the ambitious five-year voyage of the vessel *Beagle*. He didn't keep precise records of where he obtained the various species he collected, but upon returning to England he reviewed his notes and began to construct the beginnings of his theory of evolution (others of his time had preceded him—Charles Lyell, Alfred Russell Wallace—with various naturalistic proposals to explain life). His visit to the Galapagos Islands off the west coast of South America was key to helping him theorize how species could adapt, change, and even morph from one to another.

In Darwin's theory, a single species diverges into several varieties, then into several different species, through the action of *natural selection*.<sup>3</sup> His term, *natural selection*, then became the universal solvent, like water, with which the origins of the life, in all its complexities and myriad forms, could be explained. Not everybody bought his explanations when his book *The Origin of Species* was published. He admitted to serious gaps and "problems" with his theory, but was committed to the idea that some force other than God must be responsible for life. Reading his biography, it is clear there were personal family resentments and anti-God attitudes that probably had more effect upon his embracing naturalistic evolution than any "evidence" he discovered on the Galapagos Islands.

Darwin spent the rest of his years trying to bolster his argument and answer critics. Unfortunately for him, they were years of continual depression and sickness allowing him only a few hours a day with which to work. His legacy is huge in that his theory took root and has animated modern science ever since—and not just science. The theory of evolution has powerfully influenced the fields of philosophy, psychology, politics, and just about every area of culture and society.

### **Thomas Henry Huxley**

You could call him the first Agnostic, in fact, he was the first to coin the term "agnostic." For Huxley, agnosticism was an attitude of healthy skepticism, a tool of the intellect, essential to the working scientist. It has none of the stigma of "unbeliever" or "atheist," and in Victorian society that was important to be accepted socially.<sup>4</sup> The distinction was mere camouflage.

Edward Aveling, Karl Marx's son-in-law, once extended his friendship to Darwin as a fellow atheist. Darwin corrected him that he was an agnostic. Aveling later wrote, "Atheist is only Agnostic writ aggressive, and Agnostic is only Atheist writ respectable."<sup>5</sup>

T. A. Huxley was known as "Darwin's Bulldog" and was Darwin's most able mouthpiece. "The motivating force that drove Huxley was his feeling of animosity towards the clergy who, at that time, had far greater status than the scientist."<sup>6</sup> His hostility toward religion and the clergy ran deep. The hell fire and brimstone preachers of the day came under his frequent attack as did the pompous rhetoric of authority figures in the church. We can sympathize with his criticism, but faulty or corrupt messengers do not render the message false. The message—the Bible—must stand or fall on its own merits.

Huxley claimed great respect for the Bible, but in order to attack the Christian religion of his day, he found it necessary to attack the veracity of Scripture. Darwin's theory proved the perfect vehicle to discredit the entire notion of miracles and supernaturalism which of course included creation itself and the miracles of Jesus. Since there is no need for supernaturalism (God), all things having come about through naturalistic mechanisms, the Bible is more myth than fact. If Jesus and the NT (New Testament) writers lied about miracles, why should one believe what else they teach?

The press of the day liked the challenge to the religious establishment and gave it great play. The debate was lively and the public were avid readers and followed it closely. Most of the great scientists of the time (Michael Faraday, James Maxwell, William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, who were the true giants of science) did not accept Darwin's theory nor Huxley's defense of it. But the press fell in love with the theory, gave it credence and in time opposing views found it difficult to receive coverage.

Even Huxley didn't agree with all of Darwin's assumptions, warning him repeatedly that a theory consistent with the evidence would have to allow for some big jumps, something the gradualism of Darwin's evolutionary theory didn't allow. Darwin even posed the question to himself, asking

Why, if species have descended from other species by insensibly fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? Why is not all the nature in confusion instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined? <sup>7</sup>

Once again, evidence and logic seem to have gotten in the way of his theory. But never mind, as Huxley used to ask the doubters in Darwin's time: What is your alternative? To answer the religious question of the human soul, Huxley invented a theory of consciousness which he proposed man shared with the animals. The theory was soon discredited

but his vigorous attack on Christianity continued until his death.

Like Darwin, Huxley was plagued by life-long malady. "I suffered from occasional paroxysms of internal pain, and from that time my constant friend, hypochondriacal dyspepsia, commenced his half-century of constancy [sic] upon my fleshly tabernacle."<sup>8</sup> His dyspepsia (indigestion) his biographers suggest may have been occasioned from his constant fear of death from "vapors" from a cadaver he had been exposed to as well as his fear of insanity since his father died in an insane asylum and two of his brother were crazy.

One peculiarity, Huxley spent his last years attacking the New Testament and one NT story in particular, the episode of the Gadarene swine (Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-20). It's the story of a demoniac from whom Jesus exorcised a "legion" of demons into a nearby herd of pigs, which promptly ran off a cliff into a lake where they drowned. Huxley thought Jesus showed cruelty to animals and he further discredited the whole story by smugly noting that Jews, who ate kosher, would not be herding swine in any case. Huxley was no better theologian than he was a scientist as the Gaderene district southeast of the Sea of Galilee was a Gentile area where swine were a dietary staple.

In spite of his war against Christianity, his long suffering wife Henrietta, like Darwin's Emma, would not convert to agnosticism but remained a faithful Christian to the end. On his tomb Henrietta had inscribed these three lines:

Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep;  
For still He giveth His beloved sleep,  
And if an endless sleep He wills, so best.

### **Friedrich Nietzsche**

Darwin and Huxley repudiated God, Jesus and the notion of a human soul, but they never deviated from the mainstream of Victorian morality. They actually believed, like modern liberals today, that educated people would continue to accept monogamy, mercy, and charity even without Christian faith and hope. Once God has been eliminated, however, his laws of morality soon follow. Huxley's famous grandson, Aldous Huxley, was a pathetic example of the abandonment of all standards. Instead of a believer in nothing as was his grandfather, he became a believer in everything including Hindu mysticism. A pioneer experimenter in hallucinogenic drugs, his last request as he lay dying was for a massive dose of LSD to ease his soul from his body.

John Koster notes: "There was a man, however, who realized the real social and philosophical impact of what Darwin and Huxley had "proved" in biology and physiology. He understood, more clearly than the two Victorians, that if God and Jesus and the immortal soul had

been 'ruled out of order' in the court of ideas, all morality had been repealed at the same moment."<sup>9</sup>

That man was Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), the German philosopher who famously declared, "God is dead." He spoke of a coming new "superman," who like himself, was freed from God and religion and needed only to satisfy his own selfish desires. To this day he is highly regarded by the anti-God humanistic left for having given voice to the "new morality." He declared man, not God, the center of all things.

In his very popular and famous book, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he speaks of his Superman concept:

You have made your way from the worm to man, and much within you is still worm. Once ye were apes, and even yet man is still more of an ape than any of the apes....

The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman *shall* be the meaning of the earth!

I conjure you, my brethren, *remain true to the earth*, and believe not those who speak unto you of superearthy hopes! Poisoners they are, whether they know it or not....

Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy: but God died, and therewith also those blasphemers. To blaspheme the earth is now the dreadfulest sin, and to rate the heart of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth!<sup>10</sup>

To Nietzsche the earth—materialism—is everything. He could be honored as the spiritual godfather to the modern radical environmental movement. He mocked conventional morality and succeeded in laying the foundation for modern hedonism. His influence in literature is enormous. He was adored by the American skeptic and writer H. L. Mencken who like many intellectuals in both Europe and America regard him as the greatest of all philosophers.

His attitude toward women, however, should appall feminists who otherwise embrace his new morality. He regarded women as playthings: "Man shall be trained for war, and the woman for the recreation of the warrior." He also advised, "Thou goest to women? Do not forget your whip!"

Nietzsche doted on the music of Richard Wagner and apparently sought an even closer attachment, but Wagner was a promiscuous heterosexual and didn't want Nietzsche as a lover. The idea that he was either secretly or latently homosexual has a lot to recommend it. He was reared by women, his father having died when he was very young. He grew up with no male influence yet curiously developed a general hatred for women.

He was a syphilitic, having either inherited the malady, or more likely as biographers suggest, he contracted it either with prostitutes during his student days or from a several day episode traveling with soldiers in a railroad boxcar. Whatever its source, syphilis marked

his life with its symptoms of occasional paralysis, and mood swings from depression to euphoria.

Nietzsche lost his faith in God as a youth and as an adult waged war against the Christian and Jewish religions. He was an anti-Semitic and wrote, "Christianity sprung from Jewish roots and comprehensible only as a growth on this soil, represents the counter-movement to any morality of breeding, of race, or privilege: it is the anti-Aryan religion par excellence." He regarded the values of Christianity and Judaism as *chandala* (mongrel) values.

In his book, *The Antichrist*, he writes, "We would no more choose the first Christians to associate with than Polish Jews—not that one even required any objection to them: they both do not smell good."<sup>11</sup> If his snobbery and hedonism were his prime faults, he wouldn't rank a mention among the famous names I discuss. His great legacy is his well received assault on God and the Judeo/Christian or biblical morality that draws its authority from God. He didn't believe in good or evil yet elevated the will of man to the highest good. To this end he wrote and labored.

In one of his last letters he signed himself "The Crucified," perhaps he meant that he, the Antichrist, was suffering for his message. John Koster describes his pathetic end which is eerily similar to that of other famous sufferers of the atheist syndrome. For his last twelve years,

he wandered around the upstairs rooms of his mother's house, completely psychotic and unable to speak coherently, while his sister, now widowed, struggled to build his reputation. Nietzsche's big break as an author came only after his insanity: People bought books by "the mad philosopher" out of curiosity.

...The prophet of the superman was in fact a syphilitic, a homosexual, and incompetent as lover, friend, and author. Nietzsche told people to "be hard" and "live dangerously." Throughout life he sponged off women, and was drug-dependent for his syphilitic and depressive maladies. He was, in the current vernacular, a wimp.<sup>12</sup>

Nietzsche introduced a radical humanism or naturalism that denied God and supernaturalism. Moreover, since Nietzscheism can justify no objective meaning for man's life in society it is the last stage of religious decay short of nihilism. The legacy of this man is the materialistic post-Christian culture of today's Europe.

## Sigmund Freud

The last of the four gods of scientific atheism we have time to consider is the father of modern psychotherapy. Sigmund Freud (1848-1939) admired Darwin, Huxley and Nietzsche and advanced and added to their anti-God philosophy by his theories of human motivation and how the human brain works. Huxley cut open



people and found no soul and decided that men were but machines and the soul-less physical brain alone explained any apparent uniqueness in man. Freud pried open the mind and found no soul but “found a theater and three dressing rooms for the id, ego, and superego.” Since the master said it was so, it must be.

For Freud unrecognized sexual desires control most or all human actions. His biography suggests that he transferred his own rather strange sexual hang-ups to the whole of human kind. But before he came to his sexual theories, he attempted to achieve fame by promoting the value and delights of cocaine. He didn’t discover it of course (it was brought to his Austria from the natives in the New World), but he was its publicist. He claimed it as good for just about everything and even sent some to his fiancé to put color in her cheeks. He also denied that it was physically or psychologically addictive.

Soon the negative and addictive properties of cocaine became known throughout the German-speaking world and medical opinion turned against it. Freud’s first attempt at a world reputation ended in disgrace and in death or addiction for the poor souls who followed his advice. He then turned his focus to female hysteria (fainting spells)—a common malady among women in the Victorian era. The problem wasn’t indigenous to being female, it had to do with the corsets, like body casts, that were required for eighteen-inch waistbands. The fashionable women of the day just couldn’t get enough oxygen to remain conscious, especially when they became excited. It also weakened stomach and abdominal muscles making childbirth difficult. In the dirty hospitals the death rate for mothers was 10-25 percent. The peasants who didn’t partake in the fashions avoided the problem. Female hysteria or fainting disappeared when styles changed.

For Freud the problem with women was sexual obsession together with a fear of sex. Fainting was just a symptom. Women in the 1800s had a good reason to fear sex given the high death rate for having a baby. Also, many women who had sexual fears charged their fathers or step-fathers with rape or attempted rape. Freud dismissed their complaints as untrue and postulated that they secretly wanted their fathers or uncles to have sex with them. He portrayed women not as victims, but as villains projecting their wish-fulfillment fantasies upon hapless men. Women were responsible for their own hysteria due to their fantasies and unquenchable desire for sex. An idea that Freud’s society welcomed.

Freud also had men figured out. Boys growing up want to have sex with their mother and kill their fathers. At least that was the case with little Freud who tells of his incestuous attraction to his sensuous and young mother and his rivalry with his hated Jewish father. As he matured he came to hate his father’s Jewishness and the Jewish religion. He wrote a book, *Moses and Monotheism*, attempting to destroy Moses and hack away at the

Ten Commandments—and perhaps his own Jewish roots. His last major contribution was an anti-Semitic attack just as Hitler was launching his Third Reich.

He became obsessively afraid of dying and consulted occult parlor games to see how much time he might have left to live. As it turned out, he lived a quite long life of eighty-three years. The last sixteen were miserable as he battled the effects of jaw cancer. As a lifelong smoker he puffed twenty fat cigars a day. After painful surgeries he was fitted with a prosthesis to replace part of his face. He lived with constant depression.

When Hitler began to threaten Europe he left his four elderly sisters in Vienna to face the fate of Jewish Europeans and fled to England. He soon lost his vitality and asked his doctor for a lethal dose of morphine to put an end to his cancer-ravaged life.

## Summary

The famous men we’ve discussed, Darwin, Huxley, Nietzsche and Freud, were instrumental toward ushering in the dead-end materialism that dominates much of Western culture. They and their followers twisted “science” into an attack on God and the Judeo-Christian religion. Numbered among their disciples are the bloodiest murderers in world history. Adolf Hitler embraced a neo-Darwinism and gave the world genocide. Marx and Stalin based their theories or reigns of terror upon their version of scientific atheism.

There are many more names that belong in the rogues gallery of atheists, but these four must rank as the gods of atheism. The damage and carnage their anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-morality theories and philosophies have wrought is beyond our calculation. God, however, has been watching.

For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written:

“‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God’”  
So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:10-12).

## Endnotes:

1. Koster, John P, *The Atheist Syndrome*, Wogelmuth & Hyatt, 1989, p 5.
2. Ibid., p 25.
3. Wells, Jonathan, *Icons of Evolution—Science or Myth?* Regnery, 2000, p 159.
4. Taylor, Ian, *In the Minds of Men—Darwin and the New World Order*, TFE Publishing, 1991, p 365.
5. Ibid., p 366.
6. Ibid., p 358.
7. Johnson, Phillip E., *Darwin on Trial*, IVP, 1991, p 46.
8. Koster, p 66.
9. Ibid., pp 81-82
10. Ibid., p 82
11. Ibid., p 97
12. Ibid., p 100
13. Ibid., p 104

### Top house church leader arrested in China

BARTLESVILLE, Okla., December 10 (VOM News)—One of the most prominent Chinese House Church leaders, Pastor Zhang Rongliang, was arrested on December 1, 2004.

According to VOM sources, 53-year-old Pastor Zhang was arrested in a rented apartment at Xuzhai village, Zhengzhou city, Henan province at about 1 p.m. One eyewitness said a Volkswagen car which apparently belongs to the Ministry of State Security had been parked near that apartment before Zhang's arrest. The license plate is given as Yu-A (illegible number) 0191.

Zhang's wife and children were not at home when the arrest occurred; they were able to escape and are now in hiding. The apartment was searched and all Pastor Zhang's Christian DVDs, materials and photos revealing relationships with foreigners and foreign agencies were confiscated. According to reliable sources, on the evening of December 1, Xuzhai village was surrounded by police and every house was searched. It is believed that pastor Zhang's wife and children were the targets of the search.

Mr. Gao Shunping, who helped pastor Zhang get an ID so that he could travel, also disappeared. At least three house churches at Fangcheng area were raided last week after Zhang's arrest, including the house of Ms. Xiao Min's parents. Xiao Min has been sought by the authorities because of her prolific writing of Chinese worship songs known as "Canaan Hymns."

There has been no communication with Pastor Zhang since his arrest, but it is believed that he is in custody in the Zheng Zhou area of Henan Province. Zhang is the leader of the Fangcheng Mother Church, Henan and the leader of the China

for Christ Church, which is one of the largest house church networks in China, estimated to have more than 10 million members. He has been well known by the international community as one of the house church patriarchs. He is a co-author of the House Churches of China's Confession of Faith and Declaration, which was published in 1999. He has been featured in a number of international articles and books, including "Jesus in Beijing" (2003) by former *TIME* journalist David Aikman, Newsweek (12th May 2004), *TIME* magazine, *Charisma* and *Christianity Today*.

Pastor Zhang has already spent twelve years in prison for his faith during five separate detentions since his secret baptism in 1969. He experienced harsh torture, including electric shocks, during his prison terms.

His arrest comes in the midst of a serious crackdown on China's house churches. In addition to a generally worsening situation and increased arrests, it is reported that there is now a disinformation campaign, similar to that used against the Falun Gong before the major crackdown against them. In recent weeks, the Chinese government has launched an international media propaganda campaign. It was reflected from articles both in an overseas pro-China website called DUOWEI news and the *New York Times*. The articles portrayed house churches as secret religious fanatics who even commit murder in the fight for new membership.

It is believed that the Chinese government purposely provided misleading and untrue information to these news outlets by linking the house church with a criminal group disguised as religion called Eastern Lightning.

VOM sources fear that Zhang could be in for harsh treatment by police. As the leader of a large house-church network, he could be classified as an evil cult leader. Police are also seeking Zhang's two sons, and could put pressure on him to give information about them and about the activities of other church leaders.

"Christians in China love their country; they pray for their government leaders," said Nettleton. "They simply ask for the right to worship God as they see fit. We urge Christians around the world to pray for Pastor Zhang and other Christians in China, and to protest to the Chinese government." — Tom Nettleton, Voice of the Martyrs ([www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com)).

**Dutse, Nigeria, November 30 (Compass)** — Police authorities have arrested 10 Muslim militants in Dutse, the capital of the state of Jigawa in northern Nigeria, for perpetrating an attack on a team of Christian evangelists on Tuesday, November 23. The incident reportedly caused two deaths and left at least 20 people with injuries.

According to police, the militants' aggressive action against the New Life For All gospel team provoked a violent clash with local Christians. Other Muslims reportedly joined in the fray, siding with the Christians against the militant group.

Police prosecution officer Yerima Inuwa told a Dutse magistrate court on Thursday, November 25, that the Muslim militants have been charged with breaching public peace under sections 113 and 248 of the penal code.

According to the police officer, the 10 heavily armed militants attacked the Christian evangelistic team and members of the public during an open air preaching event. Fighting then apparently broke out between the militants and moderate Muslim bystanders who voiced their disapproval of the militants' attack on the Christians and the fundamentalist beliefs that provoked it.

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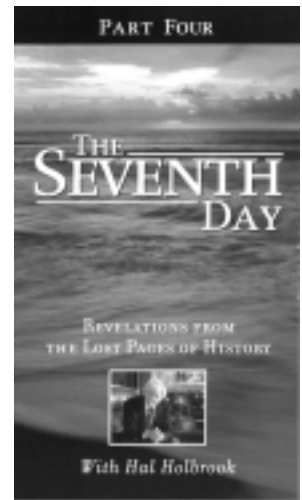
**The Seventh Day: Revelations from the Lost Pages of History.** Narrated by Hal Holbrook, parts 1 through 4 are now available from The Bible Sabbath Association. **Part Four** (60 min.) spotlights the resurgence of Sabbath observance in an era of religious upheaval—from late 15<sup>th</sup> century Russia through 16<sup>th</sup> century rebellion of Protestants, to the radical Sabbath revival of England in 17th century (cc). **Part One** (52 min.) lays the foundation for Sabbath in the creation. **Part Two** (47 min.) covers Sabbath history from Jesus to the fourth century. **Part Three** (50 min.) covers the Sabbath-keeping St. Patrick of Ireland through Wycliffe.

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### Directory of Sabbath-Observing Organizations

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# ***A Thousand Shall Fall***

*by Susi Hasel Mundy*

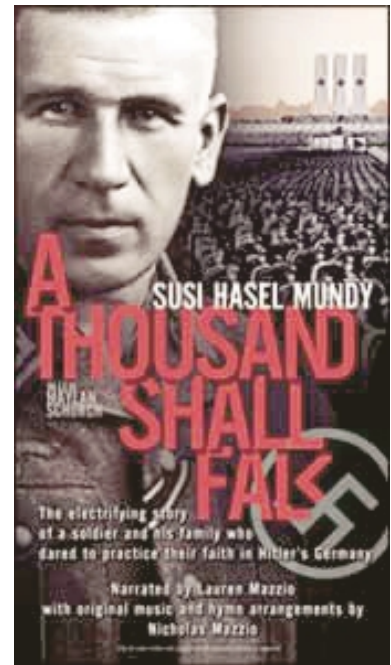
Would I be able to hold to my beliefs in the face of persecution so severe that I could lose my life? **Franz Hasel** on the German front never wavered, and his wife, **Helene Hasel**, at home, never had one moment of indecision when it came to obeying God. Yes, both along with their children, suffered 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.

This book is written so well that you won't lose interest. It's wonderful for teenagers and adults alike and could easily be read to young children. At this time we here in the United States can freely practice our faith. That is not true in many parts of the world and at times we get lethargic and careless about our faith because it is so easy.

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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