

# The SABBATH SENTINEL

Serving the Seventh-day Christian Community

APRIL, 1992





# If You Were Wrong, Would You Want To Know It?

*If your experience is anything like mine, you are undoubtedly approached frequently by individuals who want to debate various aspects of theology. Whenever such a discussion takes place, I always wonder whether or not my antagonist is open minded; he undoubtedly wonders the same about me. And I wonder about me. Am I really open minded? Do I want to be open minded?*

*Of course, if the debate has to do with the fine points of prophecy—or the nature of heavenly creatures—or something else that is incidental to my faith, I can easily be open minded. But what if I am being challenged about my basic beliefs about God or about how He wants me to live? If I were wrong about Him or His will, would I want to know it?*

*Most of us would be hard pressed to find a person who would say, "My mind is made up, I don't want to know if I'm wrong." Yet as we interact with others we frequently come across people whose minds appear to be closed to truths we see so clearly. It's easy for us to despise such narrowness, such bullheadedness. But are we the same in certain matters?*

*Suppose someone came to you and asked "If God were not a Trinity, would you want to know it?" or "If God were a Trinity, would you want to know it? For many Christians, it is heresy even to ask such questions.*

*But if we believe in a supreme being who is responsible for all that exists in the universe, then we have to believe that all truth is His truth. And if we believe that our ultimate purpose in life is to know Him and to please Him, then our real quest is simply to seek His will and His truth. We must follow that truth wherever it leads. But because we are finite, because our ability to know Him is limited, at any given point in time we can only know Him to whatever degree He reveals Himself to us through his word or otherwise. What if He should lead us to understand that we are wrong?*

*When the day comes that I am convinced I cannot be wrong on some doctrine, I am saying, in effect, "I know God perfectly in this regard" or "I know God as well as I want to know Him in this matter." To do that I would have to be God or above God.*

*Does this mean we should all become relativists and say we can't know anything? Absolutely not. We need to have deeply held convictions, based on our best effort at understanding God's revelation to man. We need to live by those convictions and share them with others. But at the same time we need a large dose of humility. We need to realize that we are limited, that we see through a glass darkly, that God is in heaven and we are on the earth. We need to recognize that our ultimate security depends on God's love and grace extended to us—not on our relatively puny attempts to know Him and to understand all there is to know about His will for us.*

—Richard A. Wiedenheft

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**HOPE, LOVE,**  
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greatest of these is  
**LOVE.**

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**For those who don't know Him—  
Jesus Christ and Him Crucified!  
For those who do know Him—  
the liberty of His Sabbath!**



# *The Decay of Sabbathkeeping and Sabbath Theology*

by Desmond Ford

In the twentieth century two divine institutions have fallen into neglect and decay, bringing subsequent chaos to morality and social order. These two institutions are the very ones established in Eden, reaffirmed in the Decalogue, and specially reformed by Christ Himself—the Sabbath and Marriage.

As all other moral duties grow out of the fourth and fifth commandments, so the neglect of the Sabbath and family institutions bring neglect of all other religious obligations. Satan needs but to attack these two, and the whole structure of piety must ultimately be dissolved if he is successful. In the tragic history of the last century we find confirmation of this truth.

Were it possible for a nineteenth century observer of men and things to reappear in our day, the contrast in social and religious behavior would prove overwhelming. We do not mean that human nature has essentially changed one jot, but only that once accepted standards have disappeared in a landslide of ideals. If any one wishes to trace certain of the influences which brought this to pass, let him study what historians and sociologists have to say about the impact of the Darwinian and technological revolutions, and the changes brought by World Wars I and II.

One classical work in this regard is Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*. See also Will Durant's *The Story of Philosophy*, particularly his chapter on Nietzsche. In more popular vein are the sociological studies by Frederick

Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday, Since Yesterday*, and *The Big Change*. (For more philosophical viewpoint, see P. Sorokin's *The Crisis of Our Age*.)

Allen points out as one straw indicating the direction of the social wind that divorce rates tripled in the first half of this century. Since 1950 they have doubled again, so that now one marriage in every two in this country is headed for the courts. As for Sabbathkeeping, look around you.

The great mass of people in the professed Christian world have never observed Sunday in a sabbatical sense. This has been true in Europe for centuries, but only true of England and America this last hundred years. In modern church-going we have a brief tipping of the hat to our Maker, but even that gesture is riddled with the planning of secular pursuits for the rest of the day. What this means, of course, is that the greatest agency for learning of God and duty has been largely denuded of its effectiveness. Hitherto, wherever faithfully practiced, the sanctifying of a whole day to religious purposes made possible the effectiveness of the Christian gospel by providing for its proclamation and by instruction regarding its need. But now, for all practical purposes, the fourth commandment has been eviscerated, and with it the professing Christian church. Sound and fury remain, but the potency of the apostolic and the Reformation eras is unknown.

Without a doubt, the decay of the sabbatical institution and the truths it symbolizes have resulted in our



present meteoric crime rate, rampant materialism and humanism, the increase to pandemic proportions of suicide and depression its preliminary, and the general moral malaise. Those who rarely stop to think of God, also rarely stop to think of right in contrast to wrong. Not blatant atheism nor immorality is the central problem but rather the practice of the absence of God. Has it not been demonstrated through all time that there is need to fear most that person who fears God least?

One of the reasons for Sunday ceasing to be observed in a sabbatical sense is the increased awareness by Protestant ministers that the New Testament does not provide any legitimate basis for observing Sunday as the fulfillment of the fourth commandment. Exegetical advance since the publication of Winer's *Greek Grammar* has been along the lines of geometrical progression. So much so, that today exegetes from Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant backgrounds often agree in their conclusions on a given passage of Scripture. Because of this, there is now a great gulf fixed between some of the creedal tenets of a church body and what is believed by the professional exegetes of that same group. For example, since Oscar Cullman's "Immortality of the soul and the Resurrection of the Dead," published in the *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin* a generation ago, a countless host of exegetes have acknowledged that the Bible nowhere teaches the Platonic view of the nature of man. Similarly, many long cherished sectarian beliefs have melted in many movements before the fire of scholarly research pursued within those same movements.

A large number of Sunday-"keeping" clergy have long been aware that the Puritan polemic for sabbatizing on the first day of the week has not withstood modern investigation. Let us refer to a few features which have become apparent to many in this cen-

tury.

1. As H. Reisenfeld and others have pointed out:

In actual fact there is nothing which indicates that the first weekday in the life of the early church was a "holy day" on an analogy with the Sabbath in the life of the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup>

2. Not only was the first day of the week not observed as a holy Sabbath, but there is no real New Testament evidence that it was even kept as a regular meeting day. Again we quote Reisenfeld who reflects the convictions of many:

...neither in the cited passages nor elsewhere is anything said about the apostles or later Christians in general gathering together on that day. True, Jesus had risen from the dead on the first day of the week according to the Jewish chronology, but if this day had been expressly selected as a substitute for the Sabbath by Christians, then somewhere in the New Testament, writings or in the older literature of the early church it should be called "the day of the resurrection" or something similar. But all designations of this kind are lacking and, similarly, any suggestion in the texts in question that the early church consciously selected a week day for their gatherings is absent.<sup>2</sup>

3. Furthermore, both the biblical and historical evidence indicate that the seventh-day Sabbath was long observed in the Christian church. Scores of Christian writers from the early centuries can be quoted to this effect. See our appendix on the matter. Note Reisenfeld again:

We may take it for granted that the Sabbath days gave Christians in general the opportunity to go to the temple's or synagogue's three services during the course of the day, or at least to one or some of them.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that the Christian day-or-night-of worship was preceded by the Sabbath, resulted, however, in even the Sabbath being used for Christian gatherings and services in districts where this day to a greater or lesser extent had the character of holiday in the general life of the communi-



ty. It is easy to picture that for many members of the community it would be more suitable to take part in services during the course of this day, when work ceased in the large Jewish communities in, for example, Syrian towns, than to do this during the night hours before a new working day and working week. That this was the case can be read from the order of service in parts of the Eastern church, where instructions and lectionaries indicate that the Sabbath was a day of worship in a way similar to Sunday.<sup>4</sup>

If we now turn our gaze from the ministry of Jesus to the rules and conceptions of faith in the early church, it may seem as if the church should have retained the observance of the Sabbath—even though in a modified form—and this precisely because Jesus had given to this day a new symbolic content and consequently an eschatological perspective, something which must have appealed to the reflective activity of early Christian leaders. That they were aware of the Master's attitude to and teaching about the Sabbath is clear both from the fact that the pericopes containing the arguments concerning the Sabbath were handed down in the various strata of Gospel matter and also from the wording in which the various pericopes have been clothed.<sup>5</sup>

4. Even key "first-day" texts more likely apply to Saturday night than to Sunday.

When Paul was in Troas and thus in a Christian community in a Hellenistic milieu in the fifties, people gathered together "on the first (day) after the sabbath" to break bread. From the context it appears that it was in the evening, perhaps late, for the apostle prolonged his sermon until midnight (Acts 20:7). It was on that occasion that a young man fell asleep and fell out of the window. The form of the expression suggests that it was the evening after the Sabbath, not the evening after the day following the Sabbath. ...When Paul instructs the Corinthians that literally "on the first day after the sabbath" they should put aside what they can do without to put in the collection (1 Cor. 16:2), ...it would appear to have been in the evening or night

following the Jewish Sabbath.<sup>6</sup>

One should compare the N.E.B. translation of Acts 20:7 and the discussion in *The Expositor's Bible* on this text.

5. Thus for the first three centuries we never find Christian writers using the "first-day" texts as evidence for Sunday Sabbath-keeping. Reisenfeld believes the early church met on Saturday night and then later for "practical reasons" brought in Sunday observance.

...the combination of the first day of the week with the day of Christ's resurrection was not the primary and, from the very beginning, the ideologically dominating conception of the Christian day of worship, but rather that this had developed in obvious connection with the rhythm of the Jewish week but for practical reasons was postponed to the night after the Sabbath and later to the following day.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, in his monumental *From Sabbath to Sunday* summarizes thus:

Traditionally the adoption of Sunday observance in place of the seventh-day Sabbath has been attributed to ecclesiastical authority rather than to Biblical precept or mandate. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), for example, states categorically: "In the New Law the observance of the Lord's day took the place of the observance of the Sabbath, not by virtue of the precept Fourth Commandment, but by the institution of the Church." The same view was reiterated three centuries later in the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (1566), which states, "It pleased the Church of God that the religious celebration of the Sabbath day should be transferred to 'the Lord's day.'" During the theological controversies of the sixteenth century, Catholic theologians often appealed to the ecclesiastical origin of Sunday in order to prove the power of their Church to introduce new laws and ceremonies. The echo of such a controversy can be detected even in the historical Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* (1530), which states: "They (the Catholics refer to the Sabbath-day as having been changed into the Lord's Day, con-



trary to the Decalogue, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath-day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!"<sup>8</sup>

The monumental symposium (about 700 pages) sponsored by the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research in Cambridge, England and written by Professors D. A. Carson, Harold H. P. Dressler, C. Rowland, M. M. B. Turner, D. R. de Lacey, A. T. Lincoln, and R. J. Bauckham, concludes that "it is barely imaginable that first day Sabbath observance...commenced before the Jerusalem council. A.D. 91. Nor can we stop there. We must go on to maintain that first day Sabbath observance cannot be easily understood as a phenomenon of the apostolic age and of apostolic authority, at all."<sup>9</sup>

True, there are some modern writers defending the Puritan position. These include R. T. Beckwith, W. Stott, F. N. Lee, and Paul K. Jewett. But their works have not met with general scholarly agreement. And it has to be conceded by all that the opposing position is by no means novel. The volume *Questions on Doctrine* has a symposium of statements by earlier writers to the same effect. Neander, Robert W. Dale, Dr. Isaac Williams, Lyman Abbott, Dean F. W. Ferrar, Canon Eyton, N. Summerbell, William E. Gladstone concur. For example, the well-known statement of Neander runs:

The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday.<sup>10</sup>

The central figure of Christianity tells us that the Sabbath was made for man, inferring its introduction at the time of creation and its continued obligation so long as men exist on this planet (Mk. 2:27). Christ certainly observed the Sabbath Himself in life and death, and nowhere intimated that it

was soon to cease. At the risk of His life and mission He cleansed that institution from its human burdensome traditions obviously with a view to its later right use. He warned against those who made void the commandments of God by their human traditions. See Mk. 7:9-13.

Let those who wish to live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" consider the biblical and historical evidence on this issue. Then fear not to take your stand with patriarchs, kings, prophets, apostles, and the great God--all of whom kept the Sabbath of Eden. Not in order to be saved, but because of the gift of so great salvation, be not timid to follow the example of Him who named Himself "the Lord of the Sabbath."

George Adam Smith in his classic commentary on Isaiah wrote that in essence the Sabbath passages of that book (especially 58:13, 14) taught "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the Sabbath, ye do it unto Me." Therefore let us keep the festive day as the recurring reminder of God's mighty works in creation and redemption. See in it the symbol of the perfect joyous rest of heart and conscience given to all who trust in the finished work of Christ, for it is written "we who have believed enter that rest." Heb. 4:3. Christ is our Sabbath and He has given us His special day to remind us of that glorious truth.

#### Endnotes:

1. H. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition*, p. 124.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-24.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-28.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.
8. S. Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, p. 229.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
10. Cited in *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 172.

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# Baptists Find Open Door in Africa

by Leon R. Lawton

Since the mid-1940s, the continent of Africa has had a key role on the world scene. The independence movement brought dozens of new countries into being; the political freedoms thus gained also brought communist governments to some, and dictatorships to others. Tribal rivalries were also heightened so that several countries went through years of civil war with hundreds of thousands dead and injured. World powers lined up to help one side or the other, bringing further turmoil.

Drought and inept governments brought famine to many lands, most noticeably in Ethiopia and Sudan. As political, social, economic, and religious changes came, the work of Christian missions suffered. Yet through it all, the statistics that were

available showed more rapid growth of the Christian church in Africa than in any other continent.

## Seventh Day Baptists In Africa

Following the establishment of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation in 1965, three Conferences became members: The Central Africa Conference of SDBs, Malawi; the SDB Conference of South Africa; and the Nigeria General Conference of SDBs. The first of these was the only one receiving missionaries from the SDB General Conference of USA and Canada. It also had branch churches or missions in neighboring Mozambique, and in Zimbabwe and Kenya.

Through the years, correspondence has come from individuals in other African countries sharing their like faith and seeking to relate to Seventh Day Baptists. Most were referred to leadership in one of the sister Conferences for follow-through. Many were seeking financial support for themselves or their ministries, and this was not possible as a first step.

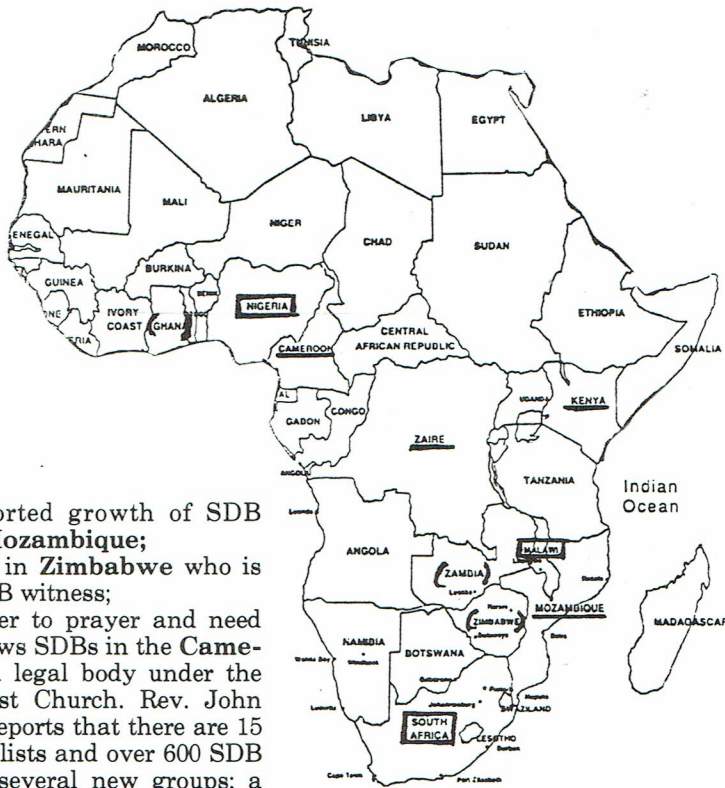
## Immediate opportunities

Hopefully, the 1990s will bring an era of greater peace in Africa. Additional inquiries have come, and open doors are evident. These include:

- A conference of churches in **Zaire** that has begun to keep the Sabbath and wishes to relate to the SDBWF;
- A pastor and small group meeting in **Ghana**;
- A Baptist pastor in **Zambia** who has come to the Sabbath and wishes to relate to SDBs and have an effective witness;
- The continued witness by two small SDB groups in **Kenya** who ask again for a visit from other SDB







groups;

- The reported growth of SDB churches in **Mozambique**;

- A pastor in **Zimbabwe** who is starting a SDB witness;

- The answer to prayer and need that now allows SDBs in the **Cameroon** to be a legal body under the Native Baptist Church. Rev. John Mpako now reports that there are 15 active evangelists and over 600 SDB members in several new groups; a revitalized clinic in the Kumba area needs equipment and supplies; and the ongoing Theological Education by Extension (TEE) training of pastors in the Native Baptist Church, set up by Rod Henry needs the study books in French as well as English.

- For the first times in decades, the Central Africa Conference work in **Malawi** will not have a resident missionary following the departure of the Ian Ingoes. Some personal contact would be most helpful in our continuing fellowship.

#### How should we move forward?

Based on these facts, the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society is tentatively planning to send a team of two board leaders to Africa in 1992. They will visit several countries. It would be good if all countries could be included, but time and funds could prevent that.

With continuing political unrest in several of these countries, would such visits be unwise? We do not know the future. But we do know that the Lord will lead and that the prayers of His people will be answered! Wisdom, understanding, resources, personnel, and the time factor are all interrelated and vital.

Each of us can have a vital part through prayer. May the Lord give direction, vision, provision of needs, and the ability to allow us to walk in His Way.

Now retired, the author served as Executive Vice-president of the SDB Missionary Society for many years. Reprinted from *The Sabbath Recorder*, January 1992.





## *Voice of Prophecy Marks 50 Years*

The pioneer Seventh-day Adventist radio program, Voice of Prophecy (VOP), is celebrating a half century of nationwide broadcasting. The Sunday program was aired coast to coast for the first time on January 4, 1942, just 4 weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor. During the five decades since, more than 881,600 students have graduated from the headquarters correspondence school alone. According to Lonnie Melashenko, associate director-speaker for VOP, "Some of the most exciting news today is that our New Life course has been translated into Russian.... Our broadcasts have been heard there on shortwave for more than 25 years, but now Peter Kulakov has a broadcast every week on national radio and on many local stations." This month, Melashenko and his parents are to conduct a six-week evangelistic series in Borislav, Ukraine, near their family's ancestral home.

Voice of Prophecy got its start in the late 1920s when H. M. S. Richards conducted public evangelistic meetings in California. In 1930 he began a radio program on a Los Angeles station, gradually adding other stations in the West. The first Sunday in 1942, the program went nationwide on 89 stations. Four weeks later an an-

nouncement by associate speaker Elder Fordyce Detamore that the correspondence course was ready for mailing resulted in over 27,000 responses in five weeks, 60,000 by the following September. The program expanded quickly, with programs blanketing much of South America and Australia by the following year.

After the war, VOP expanded rapidly, adding foreign languages and overseas stations. In 1946, it was among the programs to air on the first commercial radio station in Manila, Philippines. As the number of stations increased around the world, Bible schools were set up, even in countries where the program could not be broadcast. H.M.S. Richards, Sr., dreamed of having the program on stations throughout China and actually started with one in Shanghai in November, 1946. But with the communist revolution, his plans were thwarted. However, five years ago Adventist World Radio station KSDA on Guam went on the air, reaching much of Asia including China.

Today there are 133 schools around the world offering courses in 66 languages and dialects. Voice of Prophecy has programs in 36 languages on more than 2,000 radio stations



# Early Life of Conrad Beissel

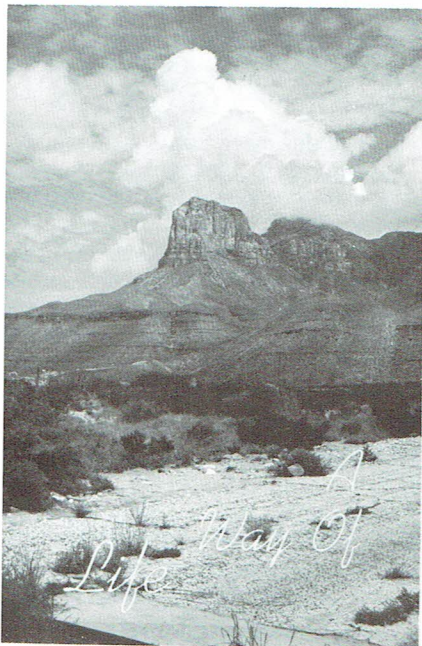
by Joseph Zerfass

The following article about the founder of the Ephrata Cloister was presented at the Spring Love Feast at the Cloister, April, 1991; it is reprinted from the July, 1991, issue of *Church News*, published by Snow Hill Society of German Seventh Day Baptists. The author is a member of the Zerfass family that was prominent in the Ephrata history dating back to the 1770's; he is on the Board of Directors of the Ephrata Cloister Associates.

Time seems to have that quality of correcting some of history's mistakes. A few years ago, retired professor Richard Beam visited Beissel's birthplace, in Eberbach, Germany, and he made some enlightening discoveries. He was able to locate Beissel's baptismal records; and there is confirmed evidence that Conrad's first name was "Georg" rather than "Johann", and his birth year is actually "1691" instead of "1690". Additionally, it records his baptism into the Calvinistic

faith on March 4, 1691, when he was only three day old.

Georg Conrad Beissel was the tenth child of Mathes and Anna Beissel. His father, a baker by profession, died approximately five and one-half months before Conrad was born. It is understandable that a father-less family of this size would surely experience many financial difficulties. To complicate things even more, Mathes Beissel's poor management of the family funds only added to their fi-



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nancial woes. Conrad's widowed mother faced many hardships in the struggle for her family's survival. She too, passed away when Conrad was only eight years old, leaving him to be cared for by his brothers.

Providing the necessities of life for this orphaned child only added to the burdens of the already impoverished Beissel family. Conrad was not afforded any educational opportunities—his schooling, if any, was virtually non-existent. However, he seemed to be gifted with a fair amount of intelligence and displayed an exceptional capability for learning. His natural ability to become self-educated, along with his smallness in stature, oft times brought ridicule from his brothers—only adding to the misery of his childhood.

Following in the family tradition, Conrad, while in his teens, was placed in an apprenticeship with a master baker. By those with strong religious

convictions, this was considered to be an unfortunate happening in Conrad's young life. The master baker was also an accomplished musician; and, from him Conrad learned to play the violin. As a result, he would accompany his master in playing at weddings where he also fell into the sinful habit of dancing. As he tired of playing the violin, he would then switch to dancing and would alternate from one to the other during the festivities of the wedding. This unrestrained frivolity caused Conrad's conscience to bother him and was a factor that led to his conversion.

Conrad's mother was a very devout person; and, surely her spiritual influence on his early life was now having its effect. He became very remorseful with his lifestyle; and, he convinced himself that he was a very sinful person. In his search for inner peace,

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he sought after higher spiritual development. Conrad's conversion took place in 1715 when he was 24 years old; and, it is said that he achieved superhuman faithfulness in God. His religious fervor led him to become a Pietist. Pietism was a growing religious movement that sought to replace the prevalent and boring church doctrine with an inner faithfulness that was to be practiced constantly throughout one's daily life.

After completing his apprenticeship, Conrad became a journeyman baker. So successful was he with his baking abilities that he was soon elevated to the status of master baker. He became a member of the Baker's Guild and was elected to the position of treasurer. It was the custom for journeyman craftsmen to travel about the country plying their trade; and, this customary practice nearly cost Conrad his life. He had intended to join approximately four hundred members of his guild on a journey to Hungary. However, for some unknown religious conviction, he decided not to take the trip. Fortunately for him, because the entire group was slain by the Turks.

Prior to Conrad's birth, the religious community of Europe had suffered through many years of turmoil and persecution. So that by the time he was in the early stages of his life and seeking spiritual nourishment, there were three dominate religions available to him; namely Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed. As his spiritual life developed, he found that none of these

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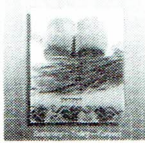
denominations were acceptable to his growing religious convictions as a Pietist. Conversely, Pietism was not to be tolerated by these same powerful and domineering faiths at that time.

Conrad so excelled in his profession that his baked goods were in great demand throughout the land. His expertise then brought to his employer much acclaim. This same success created much jealousy among the other bakers of his guild. His fellow bakers were further intimidated by Conrad's constant criticism of their worldly behavior that was practiced during their guild banquets. They were so outraged with his success and his criticism, that they were able to convince the city council to have him arrested and thrown into jail. The charges against Conrad were deemed insufficient to keep him imprisoned; however, the guild was not to be outdone. They then accused him of being a Pietist, and caused him to be brought before the ecclesiastical court. In the plea bargaining that followed, Conrad was given an opportunity to maintain his freedom by choosing one of the three dominating churches, and attending services only once a year. So compelling were his religious convictions that he refused, and he was banished from the land.

Conrad bade farewell to his friends and family, and barely missed the soldiers that had been sent to arrest him. The trials and suffering of his banishment were so severe that he fell into ill health. He wandered about from place to place hardly being able to survive in his miserable circumstances. Two of his close friends, Steifel and Stuntz, persuaded Conrad to join them in a journey to America so that they could pursue the religious freedom that was so important to them. Conrad was so destitute that his friend, Stuntz, paid for his passage to America.

At the age of 29, Conrad Beissel, along with his traveling companions, left his fatherland for a new life in America. He arrived in Boston in the fall of 1720; and in the late fall of the same year, he and his friends journeyed to Germantown, Pennsylvania, where Conrad had hoped to spend his life in devout solitude.

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<i>History of Sabbath and Sunday</i> by John Kiesz (64 pp.) .....	\$3
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<i>The Bible Sabbath: Seventh Day or First Day?</i> (6 pp.) .....	14¢ ea.; \$12/100
<i>Bible Truth About "Salvation by Grace Through Faith"</i> by F. Walker (32 pp.) .....	35¢ ea.; \$6/20
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# BSA

## Department Editor Recovering

BSA life member and TSS department editor Howard Mesick is recovering miraculously from a massive stroke suffered last fall. After two and a half months in a coma, around the middle of February, he began regaining consciousness and was moved to Camden, New Jersey, for rehabilitation therapy. His wife, Cathy, reports that he "is now awake and aware. He can speak, he can remember his past and knows where he is and what happened to him. However, he doesn't have much personality left and doesn't really care about anything. He has no desire to do anything and doesn't react to things with any motivation or emotion.... He still has to have a breathing tube and a feeding tube..., he cannot use his left side." Please continue to pray for him and his wife, Cathy, and their children.

## In Search of New Editor

After seven years as editor, I have officially asked the BSA board to begin searching for a successor. When my wife and I moved to Michigan in August of 1990, I made a two-year commitment to work for Spring Vale Academy as business manager and director for development. After a year and a half on the job, we have committed ourselves for at least another year.

Given the very heavy demands of my work in this educational ministry to young people, I find I can no longer do justice to my BSA responsibilities. For the last year and a half I have been doing the necessary editorial work for TSS, handling essential correspondence—and not much more. I'll continue doing that until my replacement is appointed by the BSA board.

Qualified persons interested in serving BSA and the Sabbathkeeping community as editor of TSS should send a resume to The Bible Sabbath Association. Anyone with questions about the scope of work involved in the job may write or call the editor at his address listed in the staff box on page 3. Please pray for God's guidance for our association as we seek a new editor.

## Announcements for Summer Meetings

It's none too early to be planning summer conferences and campmeetings. It is our policy to publish announcements of such meetings provided they are open to all Sabbathkeepers and are conducted by individuals or groups basically in harmony with the purpose of BSA. April 15 is the deadline for the June issue. May 15 for the July issue.

## Take BSA to Conferences and Festivals

If you would like to have some BSA literature for distribution at summer conferences or fall festivals, now is the time to contact us. We can provide you with a supply of BSA brochures and some literature for distribution as free samples. Other materials are available on a consignment basis.

## Sharing Names and Addresses

Names and addresses are our primary means for introducing our association to new people. You can help by sending us names and addresses of Sabbathkeeping friends. Some readers have sent us local church directories. Don't worry about whether or not someone is already on our list; we check all names and addresses against our computer list before we mail them.

THE SABBATH SENTINEL



# NEWS

NEWS FROM THE SEVENTH DAY COMMUNITY

## Brave New World?

The new European Community may change the weekend habits of many European countries by declaring Sunday a national day of rest.

In much of Europe, the calendars differ from most others in that they arrange Sunday so that it is the seventh day. If EC political leaders have their way, citizens will be forced to adhere to strict rules for compulsory rest. The plan is backed by Luxembourg, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany.

In spite of the fact that the EC is trying to push the idea through quietly, many businesses are enraged at the attempt. They claim that the action will force prices to rise and put thousands of jobs in jeopardy. Biblical Sabbathkeepers would be forced to shop during the week and rest on Sunday, in addition to their Saturday observance.

## SDB in Zambia

Rev. Edwin D. Mukumbo has worked with Seventh Day Baptists from around the world, but his attention is now focused on Zambia, Africa.

Enlisting even his children, Rev. Mukumbo has reached all nine provinces of Zambia with his seminars. The reverend is also the author of the article "From Witch Doctor to Pastor," which appeared in the May, 1984 edition of *The Commission* (Southern Baptist Missions).

To aid in his endeavors, Rev. Mukumbo has written to other SDB's with this request: "I am asking you to pray for me everyday, that the Lord be very close and precious to me during this time."

## Gospel of John Arrives In Romania

Driving through Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Ukraine, Pastor Risto Sorsa brought more than 15,000 pounds of supplies and 1,000 copies of John's Gospel into Romania during the fall of 1991.

The Gospels and half the supplies were left with the Romanian Seventh Day Baptists and three area hospitals received the remainder of the shipment. The pastor and his helpers slept in their truck while in Romania except for one night when they were able to sleep in a SDB church. They plan to make another delivery as soon as they can raise the funds.

According to Pastor Sorsa, "Our churches are poor, and pastors receive no financial support. But there is plenty of work!"

## While in Russia...

Sabbathkeeping brethren in Russia have been contacted by Church of God Seventh Day leaders from Germany and Poland.

The purpose is to set up meetings to aid the Russian church in organizing. In the areas of Kiev and Tashkent alone, there is an estimated 5,000 people. The plans call for a North American representative to join the team. They will then drive to Kiev and from there, fly to Tashkent.

The cost for the trip is estimated at \$2,000 and will last for about three weeks.

## Indian Cyclone

A cyclone reeked havoc on several districts in India last November. Among the victims were many Seventh



Day Baptists.

Dr. B. Kishor Kumar reports, "The havoc it played is indescribable since there is nothing to describe except the pathetic results, particularly in rural areas, left in its wake. It was worse

than the last one in May, 1990."

This column has been compiled by Ed Ozalas from articles appearing in *Christians in Crisis*, *Focus on Missions*, and *Missions Abroad* Annual Report.

### *Announcing a NEW BOOK...*

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## Scroll Fragment May Imply a Suffering Messiah

A newly released text from the Dead Sea Scrolls mentions the execution of a Messiah-like leader, suggesting that some ancient Jews held the "Christian" belief in the slaying of a Messiah, scholars said last week.

One fragment contains five lines of text that describes a "leader of the community" being "put to death" and mentions "piercings" or "wounds," said Robert Eisenman, a Professor of Middle Eastern religions at California State University, Long Beach.

The text also uses Messiah-related terms such as "the staff," "the Branch of David" and the "Root of Jesse," said Eisenman, who helped translate the fragments.

Its language is close to that in the Book of Isaiah, which says: "For our sins he was wounded." Many Christians claim Isaiah's words prophesied the coming of Jesus.

Eisenman said he did not know whether the leader mentioned in the text was Jesus, but he said the text has "far-reaching significance" because it shows the scrolls' writers and early Christians shared similar Messianic ideas.

He said the text supports his controversial theory that the most recent scrolls were written by Jews who helped form early Christianity. Many other scholars believe the scrolls were written by an ascetic Jewish sect called Essenes.

"We've known for a long time, that there are connections between ideas contained in the scrolls and Chris-

tianity. However, this particular idea - the idea of a dying Messiah - is new and explosive," said Michael Wise, a University of Chicago professor of Aramaic.

Wise, who helped translate the fragments, said it was always thought that Jews at the time of Jesus expected a Messiah who would restore Israel to dominance politically. Yet the newly released text shows that the Jewish scroll writers had the idea of a Messiah who would suffer and die.

"That shows this was not an idea unique to Christianity," Wise said.

"Anything which potentially impugns the uniqueness of the Christian message can be seen by some people as invalidating it or weakening it," said Wise.

A group of scholars, working under Jordanian and later Israeli auspices, controlled access to many of the scrolls for 40 years, drawing criticism that they were deliberately dragging their feet in publishing translations.

The Huntington Library in San Marino broke the monopoly in September by giving qualified scholars free access to its 3,000 photographs of scroll fragments. Eisenman was the first granted access.

Published in *Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 16, 1991, and reprinted in various other periodicals including *Shofar Shalom*, published by Beth Ha Shofar, Seattle, Wash., Jan/Mar 1992



## TO REPEAT

### SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS BY OR ABOUT SABBATHKEEPERS

When the United States began pressuring Israel into Middle East peace negotiations, intending for Israel to withdraw from some of the area it owns through an absolute deed of ownership, (in the Bible) from Almighty Yahweh, serious consequences have resulted. Two severe storms struck the East Coast of the United States, even to the point of destroying a substantial part of President Bush's summer home at Kennebunkport, Maine.

*"The Narrow Way Newsletter"* by Jacob O. Meyer,  
Assemblies of Yahweh, Jan., 1992.

For many years we pontificated on things we did not really know. We spoke, for example, of the dire consequences to follow the fall of the Turkish Empire. But you don't hear any sermons on that topic today. And why? Because time and circumstances have caught up with our interpretation, and proved it to be incorrect.... When things are getting worse, we say it shows the nearness of the end. Now in our time freedom and peace are breaking out in Europe, and in many other parts of the world. And we say it shows the nearness of the end. We cannot have it both ways and still retain our credibility, can we?

*"An Appeal for Caution"* by Roy Adams, *Adventist Review*, Jan. 16, 1992

I'm beginning to see that Jesus is not culture bound. True, He did say to "hold fast till I come." But precisely what did He mean I should hold on to?

*"I Come"* by Helen Pyke, *Adventist Review*, Dec. 26, 1991

Those who rarely stop to think of God also rarely stop to think of right contrast to wrong. Neither blatant atheism nor immorality is the central problem, but rather the practice of the absence of God. Has it not been demonstrated through all time that we need to fear most that person who fears God least?

*"Sabbath or Sunday?"* by Desmond Ford, *Bible Advocate*, Feb., 1992

Will you heed the call of Yahweh's Holy Spirit and prepare your personal ark of safety by obedience to Yahweh's commandments? The time is growing short!

*The Sacred Name Broadcaster*, Nov., 1991

*Quotes don't necessarily reflect the views of The Bible Sabbath Association.*

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# MAILBOX

## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

### Keep His Commandments

In response to Bill Ritz' letter (Jan., '92) about keeping the Sabbath and other "works," he forgets that Yahshua (Jesus) Himself said that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law," (Matt. 5:18). Also, James says if we break one commandment we're guilty of breaking all, so if I keep the Sabbath but commit adultery or murder, I'm guilty.

The fact is that we keep his commandments as a result of our love, our relationship with our dear Lord. Scripture says if we love him, we'll keep his commandments and it won't be grievous either. It's a natural result. If your children love and respect you they'll generally be obedient as a result of that love and respect. Also, Revelation clearly indicates that the saved are obedient to the commandments (Rev. 12:17, 14:12). However, it's because of our love for our dear Saviour, who did so much for us, that makes us want to please Him in all things whether it makes us popular or not.

Anything different is putting the cart before the horse. If we say that we love him and don't do what He says, we are liars and the truth is not in us (I John 2: 3&4).

Curtis A. Blank  
Sanger, California

### Heavenly Wisdom

I do not believe that I have ever read anything in Adventism which would be equal to the article "Flexibility" by John D. Garr, in heavenly wisdom and at the same time set forth the most basic rules for correcting the evil in the ranks of so many Sabbath-

keeping institutions (Jan., 1992).

Pharisaism in any given church body develops not from natural causes in the human mind. It stems from, and is brought into existence by an egocentric religiousness. The very teachings which those religious leaders of Christ's day adopted, still cause a disease that exists in those doctrines. Sabbathkeeping to the Jews was the life-blood of Judaism, albeit, a contaminated blood. Whereas the original intent of the rest day as a physical institution was to foreshadow the coming of the Messiah, these Pharisees had all the correct answer: "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die."

The word "law" is made to be a synonym in our day by all the Christians who by this use of the word, make it appear that what was set forth in the ten commandments was not a covenant; it is foisted upon the Christian world as the "moral law." Duplicity plays a large part here. The use of the word "law" for the Sabbath day is just the same problem. As a result, today's Sabbathkeepers follow in the same footsteps of those who demanded Jesus' death.

Brother Garr has made it clear that what is found to be wrong in religion is being as unbending in purpose, as in demonstration of that purpose. Where is love to be found in such a course of Pharisaism? God is love!

William Ritz  
Santa Cruz, California

### A Deeper Appreciation

I have been a member of BSA for about six months and in the Jan., '92



issue of TSS, I read the article by John Garr, (Flexibility), and have come to a deeper appreciation for the BSA.

If I might ask, who is Mr. Garr and what denomination is he with? I am a former member of the Worldwide Church of God and the Church of God International. I find myself leaning more toward the doctrines of the Church of God, Denver.

Also, from the "Mailbox" column in the Jan., '92 issue, is a letter from Dr. Harold M. Cherne. This is a good

response on his part, (re: "Christ and the Law"). However, shouldn't he be informed that our Saviour was in the tomb for a full 72 hours, (Wednesday crucifixion, Saturday resurrection)?

Jay A. Pavely  
Florence, Kentucky

Editor's note: John D. Garr is the manager of the Church Publishing Company which prints TSS. He is also pastor of the Church of God (Jerusalem Acres), in Cleveland, Tennessee.

## Help Wanted

## Part Time Position

### **Editor for *The Sabbath Sentinel***

Will have overall responsibility for the publication of the magazine each month. Duties include preparing all copy so it is ready for typesetting and layout; handling correspondence relating to the publication; interacting and communicating with Sabbathkeepers of many persuasions, reading many Sabbathkeeping periodicals and keeping up on people and events. Relocation not necessary; work may be done from your home or office. Knowledge of and access to desktop publishing equipment helpful.

Salary: negotiable

For information about the scope of duties, call Richard Wiedenheft at Spring Vale Academy; (517) 725-2391 (days) or 725-9128 (evenings).

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