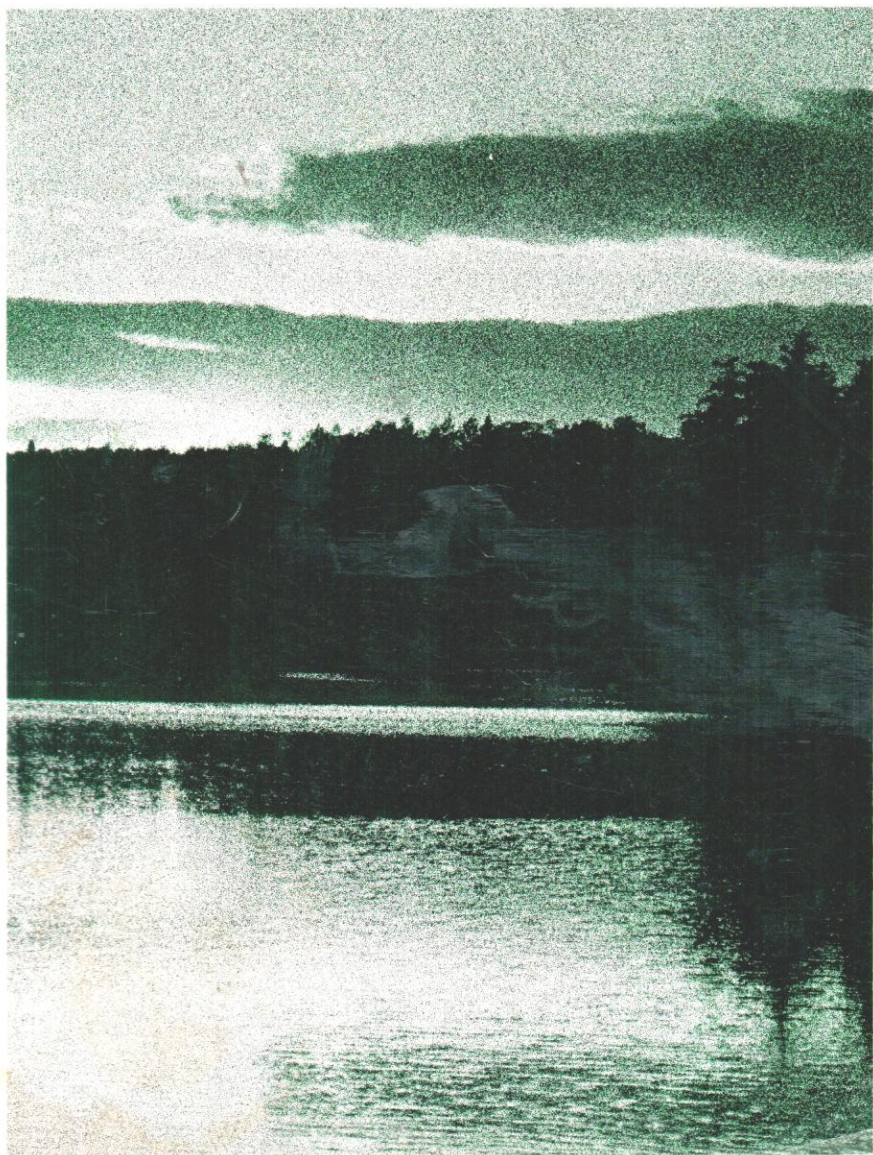


The Sabbath Sentinel

"Go set a watchman,
Let him declare what he seeth."
ISAIAH 21:9

AUGUST, 1981



If I Were God

By JANYCE ROYALTY

IF I were God and were all alone—I think I would want to create love. But love itself would not be enough, as love requires someone to love and someone to love in return. So, with my massive mind and infinite knowledge, I would probably design and make a being in my perfect image, with my same unlimited potential. I would create a being who would want to love me in return, if for nothing else than that I would shower him with my deepest love and would have created him in my own magnificent image. But the process of creating a loving companion has inherent problems, problems that must be overcome with time and a considerable amount of ingenious planning. The easy part is creating this creature and his environment. But to get him to acknowledge and love me—now that is a problem of very large scale and long-term proportions.

In making my creature, I could preprogram his mind to love me, but to do that, I would be creating only a puppet controlled with strings attached; a windup toy to go in circles. That kind of being would always respond in the same noncreative way, with about the same emotion that is felt when a flipped switch turns on a light. In addition, a creature like this could not be creative in or by itself because creativeness uses choice as a tool, and a windup toy would have no

choice; it could only do what it was programmed to do. Thus, in this plan of love, I must devise a way to receive love on a purely voluntary basis from my independent and uncontrolled creature, whom I shall call man.

In my plan of love I must give man a free choice to love me or not. He really *should* love me, for I will make sure he has food to eat, air to breathe, the sun to keep him warm, rain for water to drink, and on and on—an eternity of blessings that I shall provide for him. But if I am to give him a choice in loving me, then I must create the opposite; the love of himself. This I will do. Yes, I shall create selfishness.

When I create this man, he will be starting out with no experience. Since there is to be choice, my creature “man” will constantly have to decide between the right choice and the wrong choice. Thus, he will have only a 50-50 chance of doing what he should do, what I want him to do. So, I will set for him some guidelines, some rules he may follow. These rules will lead him to understand my creation “love,” to understand my creation “selfishness,” and to understand himself. I will call these rules “commandments.”

I will select a few quick learners, and after only a few million mistakes and wrong choices, they will understand my wisdom and

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start to follow my way on faith, rather than experience. But there is still a problem here, as a few years of experience will quickly be forgotten in eternity. So, I must devise a way to strengthen my creature and to build up his character. I must stretch his spiritual muscle and make his love solid as rock. This can be done only by constantly testing his strength until he falls. In fact, I think I shall make his body muscles grow strong in the same way, so that he might have an example and understand the constant setbacks, trials, and tribulations which he must endure. For only by passing the breaking point can a new goal be gained, and thus, strength be increased. For this reason I shall sometimes allow fallen angels to cause life to be most difficult for those whose love for me is clear.

My *eklektos*, my select few, shall love me even more as their world becomes less attractive and more despised. Yes, the world will hate my own, for my own shall begin to know my love. And the world will have greed for the benefits of the love they do not understand, do not know, and will not learn. But my select few will abound in the warmth and glory of my unlimited love. To them, fear will not exist, as I shall comfort them even in the shadow of death; for after they sleep, I shall be in them and they shall be in me. Then our spirits shall mingle as newlyweds, and we shall bask in the sunshine of my glory and love forever.

But most of man will discredit and ignore my commandments because until he begins to have my love in his heart, my rules will seem frivolous and of little value to him. And given a little time, his selfishness will surely grow into greed. Greed is only a step further away from me. Selfishness is wanting what you already have.

Greed is wanting what you do not yet have. Yes, I think I shall allow man to create greed. With greed he will surely desire power. And with power he will want to rule nations. After nations will come worlds; after worlds, space. As long as man travels the path of self-love, the path of selfishness, the path of wanting for one's self, I will see that he will constantly hunger for satisfaction. Yes, I will give satisfaction only to those who love me instead of themselves. But those who do love me and keep my commandments shall want for no earthly thing. With great joy they will give up everything for our mutual love and my kingdom to come. But the man who desires the self-love of power, worlds, and space will surely destroy himself, and his world too, with his never-ending quest for more satisfaction, more everything except the exercise of my love. He will be blinded in his own self-lust.

He will seek his own ways and the things that make sense to him. He will put himself above me and glory in his own creations and inventions, praising the works of his hands and kneeling before the objects of his own god. He will set for himself a day above mine and follow after his ancestors' worship of the sun, the very sun which was less of a creation than he is himself. He will become independent and arrogant; boastful and proud of his own limited accomplishments. He will think himself great and be not.

He will do everything against me, from removing real love from his relationships to "making love" in every way other than what I designed; from having many wives at once to having one wife after another; from sacrificing his child to the god of fire to sacrificing his unborn child to the god of his own vanity; from teaching that I am dead to teaching how the one who is without love at all, that viper of old,



can be commanded about in the spirit world; from teaching that I predestine everything to teaching that I never did exist.

He will turn his back on me and yet try to honor me with the symbols of his worthless gods: The tree, the flower, the spire, the egg, the calf, the ankh, the sphere, the rabbit, the snake, the ram, the deer, the cross, the moon, and the star. And he will say that he is not worshiping them; that they only serve to remind him of my glory. But I will know from what other gods they came and will be abhorred at the adulteration of our love. I will detest the things he loves, as they will serve to glorify only man himself.

There will be no end to his contradictions, and his confusion will abound. He will give up even his false religion in favor of no religion at all. He will doom himself by

taking a "wait and see" attitude. He will fear hellfire and brimstone but fear not the wrath of my indignation.

But all of his evil shall be his school, his education; for he will learn the foolishness of his own intelligence. And when he has polluted and made waste his soil, his air, his water, and his body, I shall present myself before man and have him live in my Kingdom of love, that he may compare his way of selfishness, self-love, hate, and destruction with my way of loving, giving, peace, and fulfillment.

In only one-seventh of his existence all the benefits of my love and my way of giving will be shown to him, and he will at last be filled. To freely, wilfully, with all of his heart, love me or not; that will be man's one great choice.

So shall it be. So it is. So it was. Yes, all this would be—if I were God.

Meet John Bennett

I was born in Nelson, B.C., Canada, June 29, 1938. I finished high school in Nelson in 1956 and attended the University of British Columbia.

At the age of 28 I came to know and accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior after a traumatic experience finding my profession as a locksmith and security consultant for Chubb, Mosler, & Taylor Safe Company in Vancouver. In 1961 I married a Nelson girl, who bore my son, Monty, in 1962. I remained married to her until she left in 1974. In 1977, a year of adjustment, I became engaged to Merrily in June, and we were married in August. I resigned my position as operations manager for Chubb Safe in November and opened my own locksmithing and consulting business, "The Lockdoctor," in December.

I became a baptized member of the First Baptist Church in Vancouver in 1966, where I taught Sunday School until 1971, when I resigned after a confrontation with the assistant minister and five members over my insistent questions about Saturday being the Sabbath and man not having an immortal soul. After a year of soul-searching and numerous visits to a variety of denominations ranging from Anglican to Pentecostal, I started attending the Worldwide Church of God, was baptized again, and attended church regularly. I graduated from their four-year Spokesmen's Club public speaking course.

In November 1978 my wife and I were disfellowshipped and "marked" for attending a GTA meeting and refusing to accept, without question, the church leadership.

So, with Mel and Doreen



Peacock (who also had been disfellowshipped and marked), we began holding Bible studies on the Sabbath, associating ourselves loosely with the Church of God International, of Tyler, Texas. We are still "hosts" for our 35-plus-member church group. We are extremely dedicated to teaching and sharing the truth of the Sabbath with Christians everywhere—a dedication we can't explain but must obey as the Lord leads us.

My wife, Merrily, helps me in my small business as I do in hers. She is a professional artist and interior designer, with a small antique shop in Gastown, a historic section of downtown Vancouver. We have combined both businesses in one store and work together very enjoyably.

My 18-year-old son lives with us, together with two poodles and a wee budgie bird. I spent two years as treasurer, one year as vice-president, and then as president of the British Columbia Locksmith Association and just finished four years of coaching a boys' lacrosse team. I was an avid golfer once until a back injury sidelined me a few years. Now it seems I've settled down to walking, working, Bible study, fellowshiping, and loving people. And it's not as bad as I thought it would be!

The President's Page

JOHN D. BEVIS

WITNESSING for Christ has always been done in two ways: by the spoken and written word. The Bible Sabbath Association has done much to share the Sabbath truth through the ministry of the printed page.

Our SABBATH SENTINEL is intended for our own membership as a source of information as well as inspiration and encouragement. But it is more than this; it has a distinct message to share with those who do not have a knowledge of our special message on the Sabbath and the blessings associated with this special time with our Creator and Savior!

We have numerous tracts that can be very effective messengers. A tract can reach people that we could never personally contact. It can continue to witness long after we have left the scene. A tract can continue its witness across the miles and for years to come. The message is always there—always ready to be shared whenever and wherever it is picked up and read. Many of us have been blessed by tracts, articles, and books written scores of years ago by dear brethren now departed.

We would like to encourage each SENTINEL reader to order a packet of

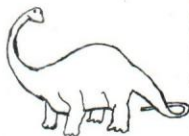
Bible Sabbath Association tracts and share them in coming weeks with your friends and in your community. There are many public places where you may wish to leave a supply of tracts for those to pick up who may be interested. We have opportunity to share in many places and under different circumstances. It is good to keep tracts in your home, office, place of employment, and automobile. You may be able to only say a few words to someone as a personal witness, but if you are prepared, you can give them a tract that will continue to witness.

Even other Sabbathkeeping friends who have not heard of the Bible Sabbath Association and its work would like to receive copies of our tracts and other publications. There are numerous ways in which we can witness with publications. The more we witness—the more tracts we share—the more results we will see.

The literature is available from our office in Fairview—the message is silent in the storeroom!

“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it,” (Psalm 68:10), and we might add, “and those who shared it with others.”

Att.: Fred Flintstone



THE Washington Post reported last June 21 that a three-man team is preparing to hunt game in the Congo. Nothing unusual about that, you say. But they're hunting for live dinosaurs. Specifically they will have their eyes peeled for a brontosaurus running around loose playing havoc and making 36-inch footprints in the mud. The 60-foot-long Mokele-Mbembe, as the fearful natives call it, was supposed to have become extinct 60 million years ago, give or take a year or two.

Dr. Roy P. Mackal, a microbiologist (why in the world would a microbiologist hunt a 20-ton beast?) at the University of Chicago, said, "We don't know. But we're going to check it out." A previous team that went to "check it out" three years ago has not been heard of since.

We hope those three intrepid men find their live dino romping in a swamp. But after hearing scientists tell us that he has been extinct for so long, folks may question other things they have told us, including how the earth was created. What if Yahweh **did** speak it into existence in six days?

Eugene Lincoln



THE SABBATH SENTINEL

(USPS 474-580)

EDITOR Eugene Lincoln
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Gilbert Sanford

The object of this non-sectarian, nondenominational association is to bring together into one strong organization all believers in the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) regardless of sect, creed, or denomination, for the sole purpose of spreading knowledge of, belief in, and observance of the Creator's Holy Day. The only qualification is belief in the seventh-day Sabbath.

Annual member contribution: Regular or subscribing members, \$10.00; family membership \$10.00 (individual certificates issued but only one set of records maintained and only one copy of the Sentinel and other mailings sent); supporting members \$10.00-\$24.99; sustaining members \$25.00-\$99.00; life members, \$100.00 or more during any one year.

WRITERS: Please type manuscripts double spaced and leave wide margins on all sides. Use only one side of paper. If you wish your manuscripts returned, include stamped, addressed envelope. Address to the editor, 1109 Holton Lane, Takoma Park, Md. 20912. We invite manuscripts on various aspects of the Sabbath, but cannot pay for them.

Opinions in articles are those of the writers and not necessarily endorsed by the Bible Sabbath Association.

G. G. Rupert: Preacher of All the Laws of God

By RICHARD C. NICKELS

THE effect of powerful Sabbath preachers often goes far beyond their own time. One such well-known minister is G. G. Rupert (1847-1922), who even today brings exciting discussion among several Sabbathkeeping groups.

Rupert was a Seventh-day Adventist minister for 30 years and knew Ellen G. White personally. About the year 1902 he left the Adventists, disagreeing primarily over prophecy. In 1915 Rupert founded a paper, *The Remnant of Israel*. His movement continued after his death and is still active today.

Leading a vigorous nationwide preaching and publishing effort, Rupert wrote numerous books and religious tracts, some of which are currently being reprinted. A distinguishing feature of his beliefs was that the United States is Israel. Last-day prophecies relating to Israel are seen as pertaining to America.

But most significant of all are the beliefs of G. G. Rupert about the Sabbath.

What is the most convincing, logical, and consistent way to present the Sabbath truth? For Rupert the best way to convince Sundaykeepers of the Sabbath is to "show the people there was no change when Christ was here in any way in the whole law written in the 'Book of the Law' . . . [and] they will soon give up the case."

Again, Rupert wrote, "The facts are there is not a single text in the

New Testament that teaches that any law that God ever gave was abolished and nailed to the cross."

Rupert thus taught that the Sabbath, holy days, and other statutes and laws of the Old Testament, are binding today. Only the ceremonial and sacrificial laws ceased with the perfect sacrifice of the Savior, he maintained. The laws of God, as magnified by Christ, stand immutable and unchangeable. They are one, with the Sabbath having a key place in our relationship with the Almighty.

These concepts have not been lost in dusty archives of unread, yellowed paper. They live on in a host of Sabbathkeepers today.

Several of Rupert's articles, including the one on the Law of God, appeared in the *Bible Advocate*, chief paper of the Church of God, (Seventh Day). Rupert, however, remained independent of this organization. But his views were very influential among the Church of God (Seventh Day), including its long-time leader, A. N. Dugger.

Recently, a number of writers have noticed the remarkable similarity of beliefs between G. G. Rupert and Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God.

Truly, the teachings of the laws of God by Sabbath preacher G. G. Rupert live on.

For more information, and a 31-page booklet on G. G. Rupert (\$1.00 post paid), write to Giving & Sharing, 7105 NE 107th Ave., Vancouver, Wash. 98662.

Chyrell Lynn Records New Gospel Album



In our gospel work we occasionally run into other singers, but I want to tell you about an unusual experience we had at a Full Gospel Sabbathkeeping fellowship meeting recently. Most singers are average or below, but what a surprise when Chyrell Lynn started

to sing! She was absolutely professional and sounded like she was right of Nashville—all country and we thought better than Loretta Lynn. She could certainly make the Grand Ole Opry and become famous, but as I talked with her I found that she has dedicated her talent to God. Yes, she is also a dedicated Sabbathkeeper.

I also want to mention Mike Shafer, who played the fiddle, and Tom McKnight, who accompanied on the piano and sang along with Cheri Beatty; all are outstanding musicians.

Another surprise! She has a record, "Chyrell Lynn Sings the Gospel." It is professionally done and can be ordered by writing her, Chyrell Lynn Bishop, Route 1, Box 102, Pekin, Indiana 47165. Enclose \$7 for the record or 8-track tape, plus \$1 shipping and handling.

They call their group "The Witnesses," and they are available to come to your church if it is not too far. If interested, write her for information. Good Luck, Chyrell Lynn.

—Dr. Fred Cox
The Ozark Travelers

HELP!

Would any SENTINEL reader who has ever borrowed any books from the Bible Sabbath Association loan library please check to be sure that all have been returned. We are short these two books and have had requests for them for loan.

ORIGIN OF SUNDAY OBSERVANCE W. E. Straw
FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY Carlyle B. Haynes

Thanks for your help.

Orchids and Onions

Thanks for putting me in touch with a beautiful fellowship, Bethlehem Temple Church in East St. Louis, through your article in the March issue. I was blessed during my stay there.

I would be happy if THE SABBATH SENTINEL were an attractive quarterly . . . with lots of news of Sabbath-observing groups. Special attention should be given to dialogues between groups, cooperative efforts, and a calendar of camp meetings, youth camps, seminars, and other meetings.

Eric Smith
Denver, Colo.

I plan to hold old-fashioned tarry meetings till the Spirit is outpoured as on the day of Pentecost. All interested should write me. We have a 150-acre site in the mountains and will continue daily in the apostles' doctrine. Sabbath will be observed, and we shall seek further light as the Spirit reveals.

James Lee Williams
Box 611
Downieville, Calif 95436

I was in the office of WGTS-FM's general manager Don Wheeler. He and I were just talking about a lot of different things that were going on in this country and in the world, when out of a clear blue sky he said to me, "Bill, I just received a copy of a magazine that you might be

interested in, especially considering some of the things you seem to believe in."

At that time he brought out your magazine. I briefly looked it over, asked him where he had gotten it from. He said he didn't know. Consequently I took down the information and sent for my first copy. Needless to say, it won't be my last one. I like a lot of the things I read; some of the things I'm still thinking about.

With our facilities as a production house, maybe someday we will be able to do some video programs in support of the Sabbath for worldwide distribution. Just something to think about.

Bil C. Morgan, vice-pres.
Real Life Communications,
Inc.

The New Experience
Broadcasting Association,
Philadelphia, Penn.

Our hearts have been deeply touched by the recent articles in THE SABBATH SENTINEL about the persecution of those faithful Sabbathkeepers in the USSR. I have just written to find out more about The True and Free Seventh-day Adventists. You know, we too are independent of and separate from the regular Seventh-day Adventist Church, probably for some of the same reasons that these groups in the USSR are independent.

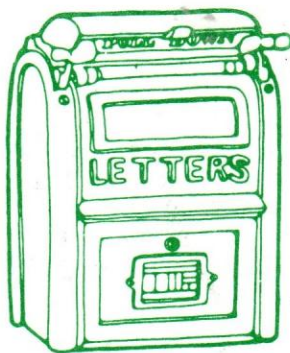
Melvin & Cecelia Bankhead

Clarksville, Ark.

Thank you for the wonderful little magazine, THE SABBATH SENTINEL. It is a great help. Keep up the good work. Yahshua is coming to reward His faithful children, so be of good courage. Yahshua's work will go on, and He will see to it that the necessary money will come in so you can continue publishing THE SABBATH SENTINEL.

May Yah richly bless each one of you as you put forth the effort to do His work.

Marion (Mrs.
Fehlman) Meader
Eaton Rapids, Mich.



Denominational Notes

CONDUCTED BY GILBERT SANFORD

In 1977 a group of Sabbath-keepers met in Bourbon, Mo., to form a Sabbathkeeping organization. They decided to hold meetings every week and to start the necessary paper work to become a fully legal, incorporated organization. Officers were voted on and a statement of doctrine developed.

This group advertised free Bible lessons in the *Grit* newspaper. The organization began to grow. It offered lessons that dealt with the Biblical Sabbath and with keeping the Commandments of Yahweh. It incorporated and opened an office in Oregon.

Kenneth R. Woodcock, former president, says, "Within two years we had over 250 persons from 26 states and 3 countries studying with us. In 1979 we were incorporated as

the Seventh Day Assemblies of The Good Shepherd. We are listed in the 1980 *Directory of Sabbathkeeping Groups* under that name."

By late 1980 members decided that their group was duplicating the work of another group very close in doctrine, the Assemblies of Yahweh, Bethel, Pa. Elder Jacob O. Meyer met with President Woodcock and in the fall of 1980 members voted to merge into the Assemblies of Yahweh. The group throughout its short history worked for and promoted keeping the commandments and observing the Scriptural seventh-day Sabbath. Now in 1981, being members of the Assemblies of Yahweh, each will work even harder to take to this dying world the truth of Yahweh's Sabbath and His commandments.

Oklahoma City Church of God (Seventh Day) Pastor Is Subject Of Newspaper Feature

Delvin O'Banion, pastor of the Del City, Okla., Church of God (Seventh Day) was the subject of a nine-column feature story in *The Sunday Oklahoman* on May 31. The article, written by staff reporter Covey Bean, was headed "Sabbathkeepers Contend That Saturday, Not Sunday, Is the Lord's Day."

The article follows:

BY COVEY BEAN

At precisely 7:38 p.m. Friday, a great change occurred in several hundred Oklahoma City households.

Television sets were switched off, radios went silent, play ceased, chores were left undone, outside activities were put aside. It was time to observe the Sabbath.

From that exact moment, the official time of sunset, until 7:39 p.m. Saturday, those who choose to keep Saturday as a holy day watched the world pass them by.

Observing the Sabbath on Saturday—the seventh day of the week—is the cornerstone of some 200 Protestant denominations. One, the Seventh-day Adventists, has a worldwide membership of a million or more. Others are smaller, but just as devout in keeping the Fourth Commandment.

They call themselves Sabbathkeepers.

And they base their belief on Scripture, which they cite verse after verse to support the concept that God intended for Saturday, not Sunday, to be the Sabbath. Otherwise, their doctrine is not far out of line with other Protestant churches.

"We're not doing it to be

different," explained Delvin O'Banion, pastor of the Church of God (Seventh-day) in Del City. "We do it because we love the Lord."

O'Banion, whose family has observed the Sabbath on Saturday through four generations, concedes their belief causes some conflicts, but when it comes to a showdown, religion comes first.

"There are certain businesses that operate on Saturdays and we realize they must, but we just can't be one of their employees," O'Banion said. "If one of us owns a business, it will always be closed from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday."

He said his own church sponsors a taco booth at the State Fair of Oklahoma each autumn, but they shut it down during the Sabbath period, foregoing the \$1,500 or so they could have added to their church's capital improvements fund.

"If a farmer is plowing or harvesting, he will stop, even if a storm is coming," O'Banion said. "The Lord gave it to us. If it's His will to take it away, we have faith in Him."

He said he once knew a cotton farmer in an arid California valley where irrigation water was available only on alternate days.

"If it was his day to irrigate on the Sabbath, he would pass up the water, but his crop always looked as good as anyone's," O'Banion said.

He said courts have seen to it that discrimination on the job doesn't get out of hand, although some instances do occur. Companies that operate seven days a week, he said, find Sabbath-

keepers desirable employees because of their willingness to work on Sunday.

More troublesome than handling a job for many of O'Banion's faith is the problem of keeping young people involved in school activities when they can't participate on Friday nights.

"That's probably the hardest thing for a parent to cope with," agreed O'Banion, who was unable to play organized baseball as a boy because of the conflict.

"At the time, I had some resentment," he conceded, "but now I understand."

He said his own son was able to play football because he attended high school in a state where games were scheduled on Friday afternoons. However, he said the boy was forced to be a constant substitute during basketball season.

On the other hand, he said his daughter was such an accomplished pianist, her school switched some activities to Thursday so she could provide the music.

"Generally, teachers are very accommodating," said O'Banion.

Young people of his religion spend their Friday nights studying for the next day's Sabbath school, talking with their parents, or otherwise keeping themselves in line.

"We try to teach them to put the Lord above their own pleasure," O'Banion said. "This doesn't mean we get 100 percent cooperation, but it's a teaching process."

If a teen-aged couple would like to date on the Sabbath, O'Banion said, they go to church, nowhere else. His church has worship

services on Saturday morning, but none on Saturday night.

When it comes to a once-in-a-lifetime event, such as a high school graduation, each member of the church uses his own discretion, O'Banion noted.

"Some take the strong view and their children wouldn't attend," he explained, "but my personal opinion is the Lord has instructed us to develop our talents. This is the climax of all that work. I don't feel there would be anything wrong with it."

He said the church also takes into consideration the necessity of caring for small children and performing other essential tasks.

"If a neighbor's house caught on fire, we'd be the first ones to help. Or a sickness. Or a death. Or any emergency. We're practical about it," he explained.

Because many other Christians are not so concerned about keeping their own Sabbath, shopping is no problem for people of O'Banion's faith.

"There are plenty of stores open on Sunday," he said. "We just have to plan our work. We work our schedule around Saturday."

However, he recalls his own mother and grandmother would never hang out their washing on Sunday out of respect for their neighbor's holy day.

O'Banion also recalls once in his own home when the television set was allowed on during the Sabbath.

"We had it on all day after the Kennedy assassination," he said. "That's the only time I remember doing it."

Joyful Sabbath Celebration

BY JOHN PURVINS

WE welcome the Sabbath, the queen we call Sabbath . . . for joy, rest, and prayer." We like this new song that was added recently to our selection. The lyrics and the melody are happy and moving. Centuries before, King David received this beautiful song: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise" (Psalm 100:1-4).

When a charismatic Christian friend comes to visit some of the Sabbathkeeping congregations in their worship services, he says to himself or his friends: "There is no joy among them. Look at all the sad faces around. That's what happens when you keep the law." Have you ever felt like being truly happy about the commandments, about the Sabbath day? Well, then, why don't you express your joy? Give some good hand-clapping. Enthusiasm is contagious. David saw it. "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph" (Psalm 47:1).

But no, we cannot do that. What would others say? People would say that we are happy; that we are glad about what Jesus did for us. People, after observing our radiance, would be encouraged and strengthened. They would perceive that our God is

a God of love, sharing, and happiness.

No, no, we cannot do this," says a certain theologian. "That is emotinalism." We cannot show our emotions; we have to suppress them. Does he mean that I have to suppress my positive and negative emotions alike? In other words, if someone comes to the church with open emotions of withdrawal, distrust, and sulkiness, it is OK; but if someone comes with open emotions of joy, praise, and hand-clapping, it is labeled emotionalism.

Do you know what happened to one of King David's wives, the one who criticized him for his emotionally open praise and dancing before God? She became sterile. Anti open-praise theologians are treading dangerous grounds—spiritual sterility.

But what about our inhibitions? What is preventing us, the church members, to express freely our happiness before our Father? I think it is our super self-consciousness. We have inherited it from an incident in the Garden of Eden. There the first man (Adam) and his wife (Eve) lost the right relationship with their Creator. Before the incident they could walk and talk with their Creator openly without inhibitions. Then something happened. Satan, disguised as a beast, enticed first the woman; then, through her, the man, to eat of the forbidden fruit. The man and the woman became super

self-conscious. They hid themselves from the presence of their Creator, their Father. They were super self-conscious of their appearance. Self entered the history of mankind. There was no instant physical change, but something happened to men's minds. Where there was a free, open, and spontaneous relationship before; there was now withdrawal and hiding. If someone had suggested to Adam (the first creation), "Let us praise our Father with joyous hearts and hand-clapping," probably both would have exhibited disapproving glances and self-conscious embarrassment. That is the inheritance from our first Adam.

But do not the Scriptures teach us that we have to be serious, somber, and self-controlled? Exactly. Whoever suggested that joyous praise and hand-clapping should be uncontrolled? And whoever questions the need for certain times to be somber and reflective? However, the Scriptures are very explicit to show that our praise of our Father and his Son should be joyous, happy, and without that super self-consciousness that is so prevalent today in many large Christian gatherings.

What about the churches and groups where a visitor hears lots of loud hallelujahs and shouting? Isn't this a big show-off? Some years ago I went to one such gathering. In that particular city and at that time I needed a helpful hand. However, when I presented my needs to one of the "outspoken" Christians, I was turned down.

Does this lend to generalizations? No, I have met others who have been very helpful and understanding.

We do not reject Sabbath-keeping because some Sabbath-keepers are show-offs, or self-righteous. We do not reject the truth that a person needs to be baptized

because some Baptist Christians are extraordinarily uppity-up. The truths of Sabbathkeeping and baptism are there simply because God revealed them to us. The same is with joyous praise, singing, and hand-clapping; this truth is simply there. God revealed the happy and spontaneous praise for our good. Enthusiastic singing and hand-clapping keeps our circulation systems healthy. It encourages those church members who are pessimistic and downcast to be more responsive and positive.

To many people church-going is a dutiful chore. Some go in fear that our Lord will judge them if they do not go. Some even keep the Sabbath day because of the punishment factor (which probably is better than not keeping it at all). What our Father truly desires is that we keep His Sabbath with a heartfelt gladness. After all, He has promised that a time would come when He would write His Commandments upon our hearts, and if He has done so, we should be excited about it. When King David was asked to go to church meeting, he responded with a heartfelt happiness; "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Assemblies of Yahshua invite all Sabbatharians to observe the Feast of Tabernacles with us Oct. 7-14. It will be held in a beautiful forest at Bastrop State Park, 30 miles east of Austin, Texas. A small family-type feast is planned, where participants will be given a firm foundation in basic Bible truths as well as excellent opportunity for fellowship. Tent space, camper space, or cabins are all available very reasonably. For more information write Assemblies of Yahshua, Box 11092, Austin, TX 78711.

Did Sundaykeeping Originate at Jerusalem?

PART I

THE vast majority of Christians don't know the real reason they worship on Sunday! They have been deceived by thousands of Sundaykeeping preachers and writers who argue that Jesus' followers began meeting on the first day of the week immediately after His resurrection.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

The Bible record makes it obvious that there is simply no way that the apostles abandoned the keeping of the Sabbath as commanded by God in the Ten Commandments. Wherever and however the Sabbath was changed to Sunday, *it was not changed by Christians at Jerusalem during the first century.*

Here's the proof.

The Jews at the time of Christ believed that God was concerned with only one nation on earth—Israel. The *promises* were for Israel; *God's blessings* were for Israel; the *Messiah* would come to save Israel. All other people were simply heathen Gentiles—they were dogs whom God would begin dealing with only if they were circumcised and became Jewish proselytes.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), the apostles began to realize the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God; but they still saw Jesus as the Savior of God's people Israel. They understood their commission basically in terms of bringing salvation to Israel. Those who repented and accepted Jesus

had no thoughts of abandoning Judaism. They continued to meet in the synagogues and worship in the temple. In fact, when Paul was going to Damascus to look for Christians to persecute, he was going to go to the synagogues (Acts 9:2). Even the Romans, at first, considered the Christians as simply a sect of the Jews, like the Pharisees or Sadducees. The early church viewed salvation strictly within the context of God's dealings with Israel.

Only when God sent a special revelation did one of the apostles first conceive the idea that the gospel might be for the Gentiles too (Acts 10). Through a vision Peter was instructed by God to preach to Cornelius, a Roman centurion. Peter was shocked—but he went; and in addressing Cornelius' household, he revealed the prevailing Jewish attitude of his day as well as the message he received from God. "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean" (Acts 10:28, NIV).^{*} This was indeed something totally foreign to the Jewish mind. It was the first major break with the "Israel only" concept, and it took a supernatural vision to get Peter to do it. Up until that time and even long afterward, salvation through Jesus was regarded as "for Israel only" by many of the Jewish believers. In fact, when Peter returned to

Jerusalem after preaching to Cornelius, he was severely criticized for having gone to a Gentile (Acts 11:3).

In view of this strong attachment to Judaism, can we possibly believe that the Christians had already abandoned the Sabbath for Sunday? Unthinkable!

As the years went by, Paul and others began to preach more and more to Gentiles, hundreds of whom believed. However, many, if not most, of the Jewish Christians just assumed that these Gentiles would be circumcised and become proselytes. They simply could not conceive of anyone coming into a relationship with God apart from becoming an Israelite.

When Paul insisted that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised and come under the national (old covenant with Israel, a tremendous controversy arose in the church. It grew to such proportions that a major conference was held at Jerusalem around A.D. 49 to settle the question (Acts 15). And the conclusion of that meeting was that Paul was right; circumcision was unnecessary for the Gentiles. However, the leaders did write letters instructing the Gentile Christians to abstain from fornication, from blood, from things strangled, and from foods polluted by idols; these were laws that they apparently considered particularly important for the Gentiles (Acts 15:20). Remember, the whole conference had to do with Gentiles. There was absolutely no thought of Jews forsaking the law of Moses.

PART II

The early Christians believed that salvation was simply an extension of God's dealings with Israel. They were so oriented to the law of Moses that a controversy arose when Paul did not require the Gentiles to be circumcised and become Jewish proselytes. A major

conference was held in Jerusalem in A.D. 49 to settle the matter.

However, the controversy didn't end in A.D. 49. The "Israel only" concept was so strong that it continued long afterwards. For example, some time later at Antioch, Peter was eating with Gentiles—until certain men from Jerusalem came. He was intimidated by their presence and withdrew from the Gentiles, as did Barnabas and others (Galatians 2:11-13). The attachment to Moses was that great! Can we possibly suppose that they had already abandoned the Sabbath almost 20 years prior to these events? Ridiculous!

Through the preaching of Paul and others, Gentiles continued to turn to Jesus without becoming Jewish proselytes. At the same time, however, thousands of Jews continued to be "zealous of the law" (Acts 21:20, 21)*, and many of them kept on harrassing the Gentiles about being circumcised (see Paul's letter to the Galatians). Rumors began to spread at Jerusalem that Paul was even beginning to teach the scattered Jews to abandon Moses (Acts 21:21). So when Paul returned to Jerusalem, the apostles there asked him to cooperate with them in proving that these rumors were false. He was to go into the temple and join in a purification ceremony. "Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law" (Acts 21:23, 24, NIV).

Of course the plan "backfired," and Paul ended up in prison. But the incident demonstrates clearly that the apostles—and even Paul—were still very much in tune with their Jewish heritage. There is simply no way they were keeping Sunday!

Further proof that the early Jewish Christians did not abandon the Sabbath can be seen from a

number of references in the New Testament.

First, Jesus instructed His disciples, " 'Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath' " (Matthew 24:20, NIV). Whether He was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or to the end of the age or both, it is clear that Jesus expected that His followers would continue keeping the Sabbath after His death. He gave no hint that it was to be abandoned.

Throughout the book of Acts, Paul consistently used the Sabbath for teaching both Jews and Gentiles "as his custom was" (Acts 17:2, NIV; see also 18:4). In Pisidia Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, where they were asked to speak (Acts 13:14, 15). When they had finished, some of the listeners asked them to come back again *the next Sabbath*, at which time "almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord" (verses 42-44). Again there is no hint that they were using Sunday for worship or meetings. On the contrary, this passage shows the orientation of both Jews and Gentiles—yes, even "the whole city"—to the Sabbath.

Following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the death or scattering of many of the apostles, the churches of Judea continued to be administered by

Jewish Christians. Post-Biblical church writers Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) and Epiphanius (A.D. 315-403) both record that the church at Jerusalem was led by 15 bishops "of the circumcision" until A.D. 135 when Emperor Hadrian besieged the city. The strong Jewish leadership continued at least until then. And in that context, there is simply no way that Sundaykeeping could have arisen among Christians there during the first century.

Of course Sundaykeeping did arise in the church—but not because of apostolic teaching. Rather, it began in post-Biblical times at Rome. It began in the church because of severe anti-Jewish attitudes in the Roman world, because of pagan influences, and because of political pressures under the godless emperors. Those pressures caused the early postapostolic church leaders to move as far away as possible from anything they had in common with the Jews and to move toward the customs and concepts of the pagan Roman world. In that process the simple teachings of Scripture were severely compromised.

—*Focus on Truth*

*All Bible quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1978 by New York International Bible Society.

THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION FAIRVIEW, OKLAHOMA

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

By the time you read this you will likely have received your copy of the 1981 Primary or Nomination Ballot. If you have not already done so, it will be deeply appreciated if you will immediately mark it to reflect your choice of the candidates and place it in the mail to reach this office no later than September 1, 1981.

Blue Law Debate In South Carolina

The South Carolina Senate began debating a bill that would remove the blue law restriction under which grocery stores may have not more than three employees on Sundays.

The author of the measure, Sen. Alex Sanders, argued the limitation no longer is realistic and discriminates because it does not apply to a long list of other things sold on Sundays.

A modern supermarket cannot operate efficiently with only three employees, Sanders said, and it is an invitation to shoplifting.

Opposing the bill on religious and moral grounds were Sens. J. Verne Smith, D-Greenville and Robert C. Lake, Jr., D-Newberry.

Smith told the Senate it was "about to expedite ourselves out of a

tradition, and one of these is that we have a day of rest."

"It's one more step toward making Sunday just another day," he said, insisting it would force people with strong religious feelings to work on Sunday.

Lake, a church elder and Sunday school teacher, sounded the same theme. "The Bible hasn't changed. It says, 'The seventh day thou shalt rest,'" he said.

The bill also would adversely affect the health of grocery store employees, who are opposed to it, Lake said. Neither, he argued, does the public need it.

"There's plenty of time to shop. We don't need Sunday to spend more money," he said.

The bill cleared the Senate on June 3.

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Feast of Tabernacles Memorial, 1981

Once again Pilgrim Acres First Assembly of Yahvah invites friends to join us in a week of praise and thanksgiving to our great Creator, Yahvah, and His son, Yahshua the Messiah.

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men and women, dining area, and shower facilities to accommodate all who come. There is plenty of room for campers, motor homes, and tents. Meals will be supplied through free-will offerings.

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Lack of time keeps us from acknowledging them. We will return unused ones if they are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Thanks for your help!

Happy Birthday, World!

We celebrate our birthdays,
For each one has his own—
And our friends and relatives
The right one all have known!

Our birthday is important
It's our birthdate that God gave,
And always will be that same day,
Right into our grave!

No one can ever have the right
To change that very day,
Or force on us another,
Or to have that much sway!

And so I think and ponder
On the birthday of the world,
God's own declared test day,
On the seventh day He unfurled!

How can His creatures change the
day
That God Himself had given?
The day God finished His creation
And set the tune for heaven!

We must all remember
That what Jesus to us gave—
A Sabbath He kept holy,
Is ours until the grave!

The seventh day is God's Sabbath
The Bible tells us so—
And to keep it holy is His will,
That's good for us to know!

He made the world in just six days—
Then Sabbath day unfurled!
And told us to remember it!
Happy Birthday, World!

—Rahya Montuori

ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention, Church of God congregations! Professional radio announcer, author of several articles, and presently lay speaker at Tulsa church, will record radio messages for your church for one-, five-, fifteen-, or thirty-minute formats. Asking no personal fee, but does ask that the cost of recording tape be provided. Will use only top-quality, reel-to-reel tape. Contact Larry D. Spurgeon, 8645-B E. 66th Place South, Tulsa, OK 74133 for further details.

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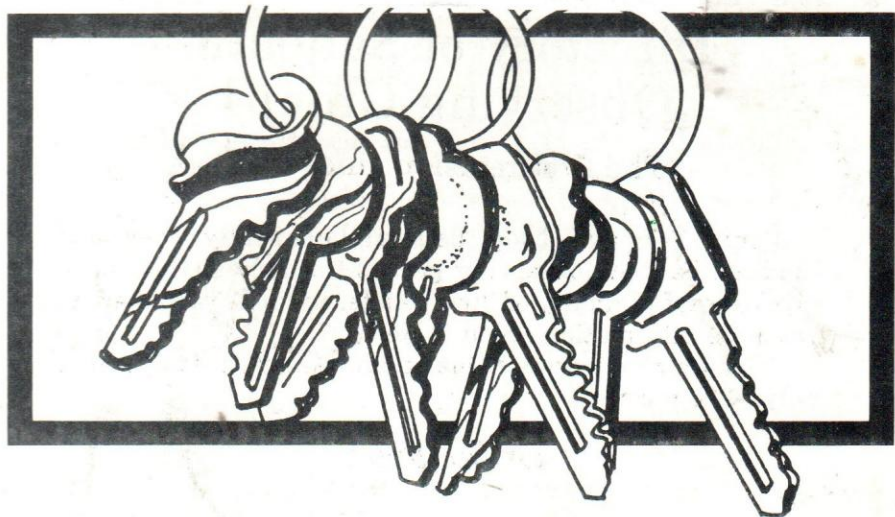
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