

# *The* SABBATH SENTINEL

Serving the Seventh-day Christian Community

DECEMBER 1987



## A Tale of Two Victories



*As we approach the end of 1987, dramatic events are taking place. Stock markets have crashed, the world economy is in turmoil, a presidential campaign is heating up, military confrontations are an almost daily occurrence in the Persian Gulf. Prophets of doom are having a heyday. Surely the end is at hand and victory is near—but what kind of victory?*

*As physical beings, we tend to glory in physical things. Wealth and power have an attraction even to us Christians. We're intrigued and fascinated by physical solutions to the physical evils we see all around us.*

*This fascination carries over into what we tend to see as the ultimate victory of Christianity.*

*Visions given to John in the book of Revelation and other Bible passages portray Jesus returning to this earth with powerful angelic hosts smashing the armies of men—destroying hundreds of thousands of people who are His enemies. One preacher rejoiced that all men will bow before Jesus—even if He has to break their knees. But consider the kind of victory this is: ultimate power uses brute force to bring defiant mortals into submission.*

*To be sure, the Bible is full of examples of just that sort of defeat for the enemies of God; but consider another kind of victory. An individual who has gone his own way and suffered the consequences of sin, cries out to God for mercy. Through belief in Jesus he becomes a child of God; he learns to love and obey His heavenly Father, accepting the Savior as victorious King in his life.*

*Which sort of victory is greater? Which appeals to you more? Which is more in keeping with God's whole nature, purpose, and plan for mankind?*

*Certainly there is a place for the conquering of a glorified Christ. But there is a greater conquering that can take place right now—in the lives of people you know—friends, neighbors, co-workers. This personal, spiritual victory may not seem as exciting as the grandeur of shining heavenly armies on white horses. It may not satisfy our fascination with power and prestige—things that are so important in the physical realm. But in the spiritual realm, it is the kind of victory that God really wants; it is the greatest of all victories—one in which we can have a part right now.*

*With world events heating up, more people than ever just might be willing to listen to the Good News of salvation; may we be more zealous than ever to lead them to this great victory—regardless of how long it is until the less preferred victory must take place.*

—Richard A. Wiedenheft

# The SABBATH SENTINEL

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**Opinions expressed in articles are those of the writers and not necessarily of The Bible Sabbath Association.**

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**The Bible Sabbath Association is a strictly nonsectarian association dedicated to helping Sabbathkeepers of all persuasions learn about and from one another and to promoting the one commandment that is repudiated by Christendom in general. BSA accepts as members all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior, who regard the Bible as the word of God, and who uphold the seventh-day Sabbath; it takes no official position on other theological issues.**

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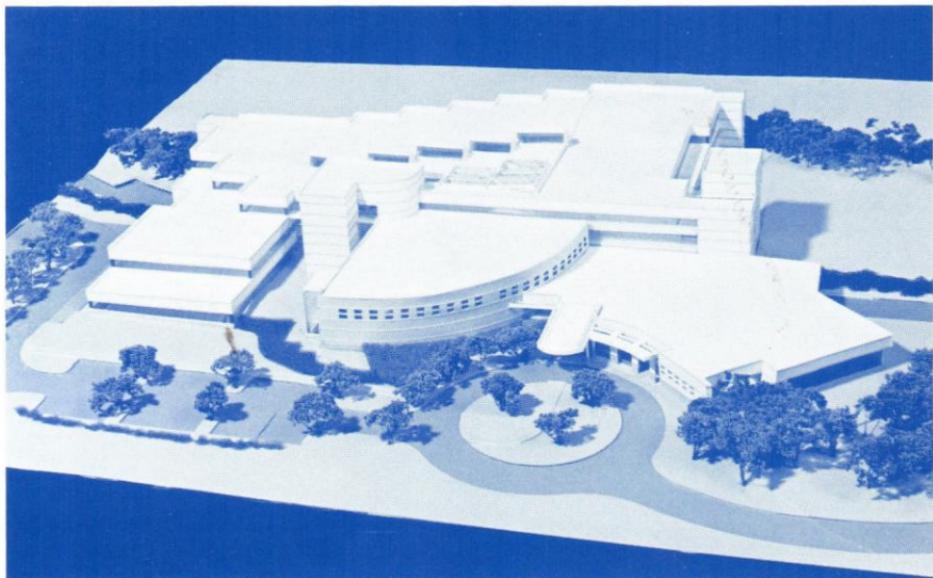
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the liberty of His Sabbath!**

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# Adventists Break Ground for New Headquarters



Artist's drawing of the new headquarters building, which will contain three floors above ground and one below.

On September 1, 1987, groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the new \$25 million world headquarters building for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To be completed by March, 1989, the complex will be located at 12501 Old Columbia Pike in Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland, on a 30-acre site which was purchased by the church in 1969.

On hand for the groundbreaking ceremonies were more than 600 General Conference workers, public officials, area businessmen, and community residents. They were celebrating an event that had been delayed for more than 30 months because of demands by various county agencies. At one point, last January, the church had decided to

build on a site in another county. Subsequently, through the efforts of Montgomery County executive Sidney Kramer, approval was given for the Silver Spring site.

The new complex will provide office space for some 650 staff members who are currently scattered among six buildings located in both the District of Columbia and Takoma Park, Maryland. This headquarters staff, under the leadership of General Conference President Neal C. Wilson, unifies the ministry and outreach of some 25,000 congregations in nearly 190 countries worldwide. Total current membership is 5.2 million, with 86% outside North America, where there are approximately 700,000 members.

(Photographs On Page 8)



Groundbreaking with old technology—used to symbolize the way farmers turned the sod in 1903 when the SDA headquarters was moved to Washington, D.C. from Battle Creek, Michigan. General Conference Secretary G. Ralph Thompson handles the reins as Treasurer Donald F. Gilbert guides the plow.



General Conference President Neal C. Wilson scoops out a quarter ton of dirt with new technology, as former missionaries and nationals, dressed as they would in other parts of the world, look on. Moments later guests released 200 balloons, each with a tag that identified the date and place of launching. (Photos courtesy SDA General Conference.)

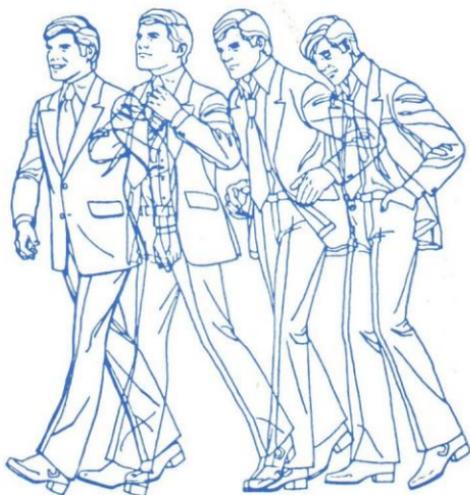
# The Sabbath: Gloom or Gladness?

By Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi

Is the Sabbath for you a day of gloom rather than of gladness, a day of frustration rather than of celebration? Do you count the hours of the Sabbath like the astronauts count the seconds preceding the firing of their spacecraft: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, sunset! Do you rush out as the sun goes down to burn up all the repression and depression of the Sabbath! If so, may I share with you five suggestions which have helped me to experience the Sabbath as a time of gladness and celebration.

(1) *Remember the Sabbath as a time to celebrate God's accomplishments.* We love to celebrate unusual accomplishments such as the winning of a game, graduation, promotion, anniversaries or weddings. The Sabbath invites us to celebrate not human but divine accomplishments, namely, God's perfect creation, complete redemption and ultimate restoration.

It is difficult to enter into the spirit of celebration of the Sabbath unless we understand what there is to celebrate in the first place. I landed in New York City on July 4, 1974 in the midst of the annual Independence Day celebration. Frankly, I spent that day in a mood of frustration rather than in celebration because I was more concerned about the customs declaration I would need to sign the next day to clear my car, than in the



American declaration of independence. In the same way a person can spend the Sabbath in a mood of frustration if he is not prepared to accept what the day memorializes, namely, that God has created us perfectly, redeemed us completely and that He will restore us ultimately. Accepting this marvellous Good News gives us reason to rejoice and be glad for what God has done, for what He is doing and what He will do for us.

(2) *Rest on the Sabbath as if all your work were done.* This sounds like an unrealistic suggestion because it often happens that the Sabbath arrives when there are still school assignments and many other

things that need to be done. Whether our best efforts have accomplished much or little, God invites us to rest on the Sabbath as if all our work were done.

Our life and work are always "unfinished," but God on the Sabbath invites us to celebrate primarily not ours but His accomplishments. The Scripture tells us that it was God, not man, who on the seventh day "finished his work" (Genesis 2:2). By resting on the Sabbath as if all our work were done, we experience the blessings of greater physical and spiritual renewal; our bodies can rest since our minds are at rest, and our minds are at rest since they rest in God.

(3) *Take time to delight in the goodness of God's creation.* The Sabbath invites us to take time to delight in the goodness of God's creation (Isaiah 58:13,14) which can still be seen in us and in the world around us. The Sabbath invites us to look at the world through the eyes of eternity; to experience in the present world a foretaste of the joy, peace, and rest of the world to come.

There is so much beauty and goodness around us that we miss in the rush of the weekdays. The Sabbath offers the climate of peace and tranquility to enjoy God, people and things. We can enjoy visiting with friends and making new friends. A complaint I have often heard from students goes something like this: "In this place it is very difficult to make friends." The free hours of the Sabbath offer a welcome opportunity to organize informal group fellowship that will help establish lasting friendship.

(4) *Cultivate the awareness of Christ's presence.* Welcoming the Sabbath essentially means to welcome our Savior, the Lord of the Sabbath, as our special guest of honor in our room, home and life.

What makes the Sabbath holy is the special experience of Christ's holy presence in our lives. This means that whatever we do on the Sabbath should be Christ-centered rather than self-centered. All our Sabbath activities should express our delight in the Lord of the Sabbath whom we have chosen to honor on His holy day.

(5) *Plan for a time of meditation.* In planning your Sabbath celebration, plan for a time of meditation. Inner peace and harmony are to be found not by constant *doing* but by *being still*: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Resist the temptation to fill the Sabbath with so many activities that little time is left for some enriching reflection that can give texture and quality to our lives.

Quite a number of young people today are attracted to Eastern forms of meditation because they sense the need to experience spiritual realities in their inner self. The Sabbath is designed to fill this very need by providing us with the time and the reasons for enriching meditation. You may wish to meditate by yourself, with a group, by reading a poem, a devotional passage, by listening to some sacred music, or by contemplating the beauty of nature. The important thing is to take time out during the Sabbath to let your mind dwell upon spiritual realities, to taste and see that the Lord is good. The time spent in thoughtful meditation will give you the opportunity to gain a fresh provision of that divine grace, peace and strength needed to meet the challenges of a new week.

May these few suggestions help you, dear Christian friend, to experience the Sabbath as a day of renewal and celebration of God's creative and redemptive love.

—The author is Professor of Theology and Church History at Andrews University.

# Revised Constant Calendar Preserves Week

About a year ago John M. Culkin of New York's Center for Understanding Media, Inc. proposed a new calendar that interrupted the weekly cycle and began each week and month on Monday. The Bible Sabbath Association's executive director called Mr. Culkin to register our objections to such a calendar change and issued a press release to over 200 periodicals (March, 1987, TSS).

We are pleased to report that the Center for Understanding Media, Inc. has proposed a new Constant Calendar that both preserves the weekly cycle and retains Sunday as the first day. In writing about the original calendar proposal, Culkin noted "The response was, for the most part, enthusiastic. The one recurring objection to the idea came from Christian and Jewish groups who had serious objections to the idea of a 'blank' or 'intercalary' day for the 365th day of the year. They said that this would interrupt the orderly and regular succession of the Sabbath at seven day intervals. My research confirmed that this was also the major objection to the earlier calendar reforms discussed first in the League of Nations and then in the United Nations."

In a personal note to BSA's executive director, Culkin wrote,

"Our lively phone conversation back in February sent me back to the basics. I had frankly not anticipated that the 'blank days' would be a problem . . . . Thanks for the stimulus."

The Center is now proposing a Constant Calendar that saves up the 365th day of each year (2 during leap years) until a complete week is accumulated. Every fifth or sixth year the extra week is added at the end of December.

Normal years consist of four quarters of 13 weeks each; all months begin on Sunday; the middle month of each quarter has five weeks (35 days); all other months have four weeks (28 days) for a yearly total of 364.

The Center for Understanding Media hopes to promote the calendar through articles in business publications, to evoke serious discussion and research on the implications of a calendar change—and eventually to present the idea to the U.N. Anyone interested can contact the Center at 69 Horatio Street, New York, NY 10014. While BSA is not in the business of promoting calendar reform, we might give thought to supporting a calendar that preserves the weekly cycle so as to preempt the adoption of one that might not.

### More Freedom for Soviet Christians

While on a visit to the U.S., Konstantin Kharchev, chairman of the Soviet Union's Council on Religious Affairs, said that he sees a bright future for Christians in his country. Kharchev and Mikhail P. Kulakov, president of the Association of Seventh-day Adventists in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, visited several Adventist institutions in southern California on September 2. Kharchev commented that there are many changes in the Soviet Union—economically, socially and in the church/state relationship.

### Coup in Burundi May Help Christians

Charles Watson, Adventist General Conference associate secretary for Africa reports that the September 3 coup in Burundi is a welcome sign for Adventists, whose churches had been closed for nearly two years. While the leader of the previous regime was in Canada for a conference, Major Peirre Buyoya took over the government. Watson reported on September 10 that confiscated church property had been returned.

### Christianity Today Surveys Top TV Preachers

Among the fifteen top television programs surveyed by *Christianity Today*, two were connected with seventh-day churches. "The World Tomorrow," sponsored by Worldwide Church of God, and George Vandeman's "It Is Written," produced by the Adventist Media Center. Some of the others included

in the survey were Robert Schuller, Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, D. James Kennedy, and James Robison.

Arbitron ratings for some of the programs were as follows: "The World Tomorrow" is seen in 1,058,000 households in 189 markets; Robert Schuller's "Hour of Power" is seen in 1,507,000 households in 157 markets; Oral Roberts, 994,000 households in 181 markets; "It Is Written" is seen in 257,000 households in 51 markets. Jimmy Swaggart, seen in 1,760,000 households in 193 markets, did not respond to the survey; neither did a number of other TV evangelists.

*Christianity Today* reported on the financial status and practices of each telecast and the salary of its speakers. George Vandeman is reported to receive a salary of \$32,000 plus \$5,000 in other benefits. In comparison Robert Schuller receives \$80,000 plus other benefits; Jerry Falwell receives \$100,000. According to *Christianity Today*, Worldwide Church of God declined to provide any financial information, but responded with a letter explaining that it does not consider "The World Tomorrow" part of the electronic church because no worship services are broadcast. The letter stated that the program does not attempt to convert viewers and does not solicit donations.

In an attempt to police its own ranks, in the wake of recent televangelist scandals, the 1300-member National Religious Broadcasters has adopted a code of ethics for its members and established an Ethics and Financial Integrity Commission.

## Worldwide Church Membership and Budget

Speaking at the Feast of Tabernacles in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Harold J. Rhodes announced that the Worldwide Church of God now has 87,540 members, a gain of 6,200 over a year ago. According to *Ambassador Report*, a front-page article in the Pasadena *Star-News* reported that, as the church's Ambassador College celebrates its 40th anniversary, the annual budget for the church has reached \$163 million.

## Seventh Day Baptists Cut Budget

At its General Conference last August, Seventh Day Baptists adopted a 1988 budget that represents an 11.34% decrease from the previous year. The reduction means that each agency must examine priorities and determine how to fulfill its mission with less funding. Hardest hit are agencies such as the Board of Christian Education that rely on current giving because they have less investment income.

In reflecting on the 1988 budget cuts, Executive Secretary Dale Thorngate urged that the budgeting process be changed so that decisions are not made by each agency individually.

Commenting on the decreased budget in an editorial in *The Sabbath Recorder*, editor Scott Smith criticized the way the General Conference "seemed to race past the budget decisions without asking the hard questions." He stated that the simple percentage cut did not allow for an examination of denominational activities and that an oppor-

tunity to evaluate priorities was missed.

SDB giving to the work of all the agencies peaked in 1984 at \$488,503 and declined in 1985 to \$371,846 and to \$359,761 in 1986. Of course, these figures do not include contributions to local church budgets.

## New Editor for General Council

Jack Fredregill of Alma, Arkansas has been named Editor/General Secretary for the General Council of the Churches of God, Meridian, Idaho. Born in 1934, Fredregill worked at Meredith Publishing Company of Des Moines, Iowa, his home town. During the latter years of the Korean Conflict, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and gained experience editing a couple of military newspapers. After 1963, he worked in advertising, graphics, and editorial work in California, and for a time he edited the *The Hour of Preparation* magazine, published at that time by the Church of God in Orange County, but now by the Association of Seventh-day Pentecostal Assemblies of British Columbia, Canada.

In his first editorial in *ACTS*, the magazine of the General Council, the new editor stated that he hoped to make the publication an evangelistic tool by publishing more articles that would witness to unsaved persons.

## Signs of the Times

Paid subscriptions to the Adventist monthly outreach magazine, *Signs of the Times*, reached 374,079 in 1987, an increase of 2.7 per cent over 1986.

## TO REPEAT

### SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS BY OR ABOUT SABBATHKEEPERS

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I have never really shared God's goodness with anyone except Christians. If I talked to anyone who was not a Christian about God, I focused upon doctrine and what our Church did or did not believe. No wonder I have never, to my knowledge, led anyone to the Lord. As I look back on it all, I wonder why I did not tell them that God loves them; that He has a plan, a great future for them if only they would believe on Him; that He would like for them to be happy and have peace within.

—A reader's letter, *The Harvest Messenger*, Jan/Feb '87,  
*Church of God (Seventh Day)*.

In 1983 the American Catholic bishops came out with a statement opposing nuclear war. In 1986, the Methodist bishops followed suit. I suppose all this should have been encouraging, but I had the same reaction to the good bishops I had to the ban-the-bombers of twenty years ago: it is good that they are opposed to nuclear war; who do they think is for it?

—Editorial by Ronald L. Dart, *Twentieth Century Watch*, Spring '87,  
*Church of God, International*.

When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me," He said something that might cause some to say that He has a very narrow view. Right! About as narrow as the mathematician who says two plus two is absolutely four! There is no room in the gospel message for admitting any other way of Salvation, than through Jesus as the One who atoned for our sins . . . . It is not a matter of Jesus or this, or Jesus plus that. It is all in Him!

—"The Way, the Truth, the Life" by Allen Bond, *The Vision*, Mar '87,  
*Independent newsletter*.

One denomination leader crystallized the issue when he reminded us that without our belief in the seventh day Sabbath, we have no reason to exist as a distinct denomination. All of us could be assimilated easily into any number of other Baptist churches.

—"God's Sabbath—Vital For A Growing Church," by Wm. E. Shobe,  
*Sabbath Recorder*, May '84, *Seventh Day Baptists*.

No greater testimony to God's love exists than a family where each member's needs are met so as to maximize individual potential. God desires that every family be a masterpiece of love, loyalty, and kindness. But He leaves the details of designing, molding, and building to us.

—"A Family Masterpiece" by Kay Kuzma, *Adventist Review*, Jan 1 '87  
*Seventh-day Adventists*

These quotes don't necessarily reflect the BSA's views. If you read concise, important statements by or about Sabbatarians, please send entire article or a copy, with quotation(s) circled, to Howard M. Mesick, Box 299-1, Hartly, DE 19953. Include publication's name and date.

**Hal Lindsey's Prophetic Jigsaw Puzzle**, a 128-page book by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, discusses five predictions that failed. \$4.95 postpaid. Order from *Biblical Perspectives*, 4569 Lisa Lane, Berrien Springs, MI 49103. (12)

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**On the Lunar Sabbath Theory**

The Sabbath which the Lord hallowed was celebrated on exactly the seventh day after the creation of the earth began, not on the seventh day after the creation of the moon began (Genesis 2:1-3). So the weekly cycle which God set in motion, and the Sabbath which He Himself sanctified and celebrated, were not measured by the revolutions of the moon, but by the revolutions of the earth.

—The Golden Clasp, 1985 edition, published by Davidian SDA Assn.

## IS YOUR NUMBER UP?

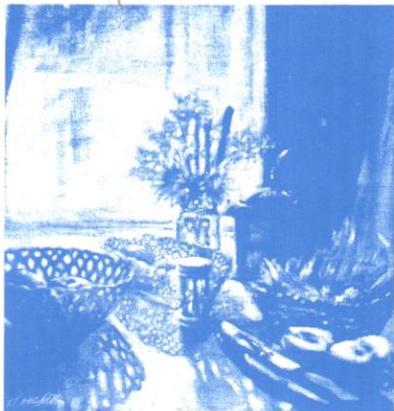
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Special features: Sabbaths in red, information about moon phases, Biblical months, dates for festivals and holidays, Bible verses. The 1988 calendar is being published as a part of the December issue of THE SABBATH SENTINEL, so all subscribers will automatically receive one.

Order extra calendars for \$1.75 each; \$1.50 each for 10 or more.

*(Because of high mailing costs, a minimum order of at least 2 calendars is deeply appreciated)*

**The Bible Sabbath Association  
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# Resources Available From BSA

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- History of the Sabbath & Sunday* by John Kiesz (64 pp.) \$3  
*From Sabbath to Sunday*  
by Samuele Bacchiocchi (372 pp.) ..... \$8  
*Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*  
by Samuele Bacchiocchi (320 pp.) ..... \$8  
*The Law, the Gospel, and the Sabbath*  
by Frank M. Walker (91 pp.) ..... \$3  
*Right Face: A Handbook for Sabbathkeepers*  
by Eugene Lincoln (30 pp.) ..... 2 for \$1
- Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups** (231 pp.) .. \$7
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*Questions for Seventh Dayists Answered*  
by Terril D. Littrell (18 pp., 30/lb.) ..... 20¢ ea.; \$5/30  
*Sabbath Truth and Sunday Fallacies*  
by George A. Main (12 pp., 60/lb.) ..... 10¢ ea.; \$5/60  
*Has Sabbath Time Been Lost?*  
by Joseph M. McGuire (10 pp., 60/lb.) ... 15¢ ea.; \$9/60

## Tracts

- Roman Catholic Confessions About Sunday*  
(8 pp., 130/lb.) ..... 5¢ ea.; \$5/100  
*Protestant Confessions About Sunday*  
(6 pp., 130/lb.) ..... 4¢ ea.; \$5/130

## *The Weekly Rest Day*

- by George A. Main (4 pp., 200/lb.) ..... 3¢ ea.; \$5/200  
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