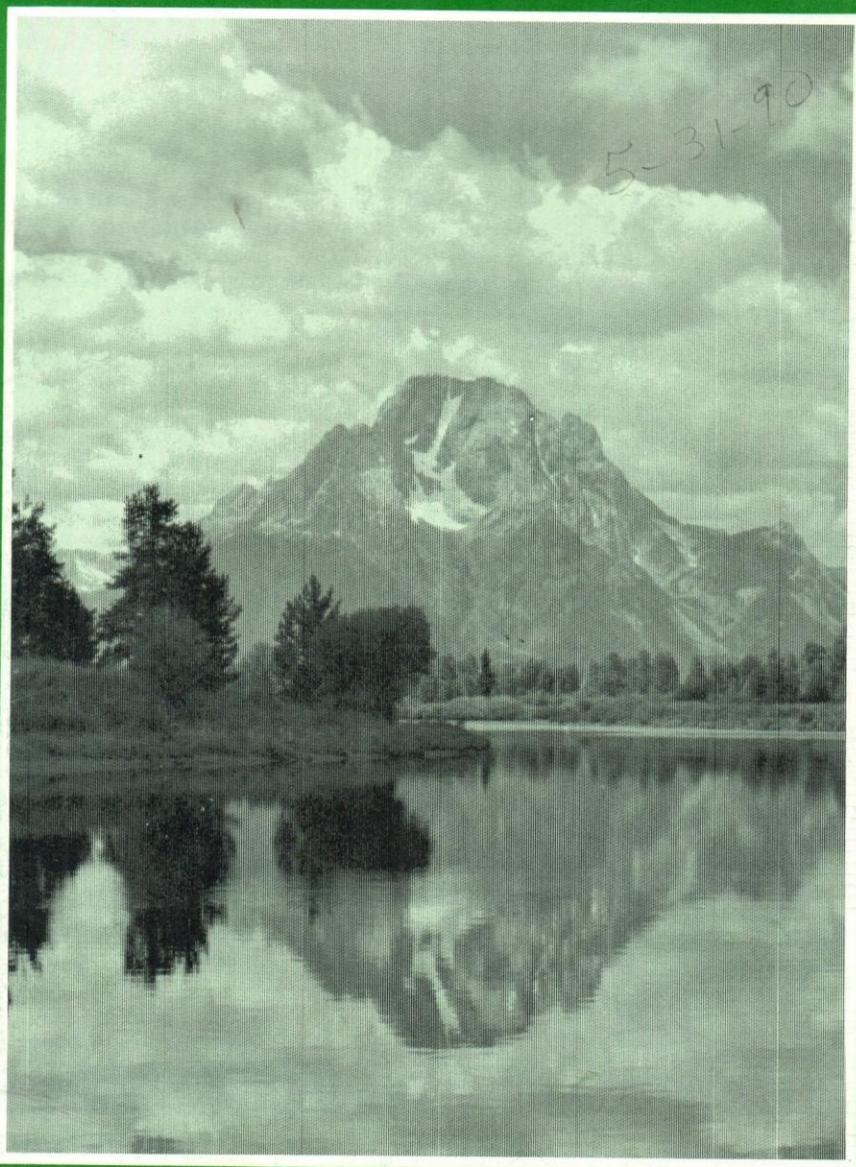


The SABBATH SENTINEL

Serving the Seventh-day Christian Community

June, 1990



EDITORIAL



Acts—Ancient and Modern

It falls on the editor to be recipient of an incredible number of periodicals—in my case, periodicals published by Seventh-day groups. In reading these, I can't help but notice general themes and trends in what groups report about their meetings, conferences, and festivals.

Some reports emphasize all the wonderful recreational activities and Christian fellowship that was enjoyed during the gathering—swimming, boating, hiking, talent shows and teen fun nights. And, oh, yes, there was wonderful spiritual food in the sermons.

Other reports list the various speakers and give a short synopsis of each message. And, oh, yes, there was wonderful fellowship enjoyed by all who were present; the weather was spectacular.

Some reports focus on the organizational business that was transacted during the meetings—resolutions passed, officers elected, plans for the future. And, oh, yes, there were moving sermons and good fellowship.

Compare these “acts of the contemporary church” with the Acts of the early church as reported by Luke. To be sure, a report of a single church event doesn't present all that a church is or does; it doesn't cover the high points of several decades as Acts does. But the comparison is worth noting. Luke wrote about the mighty deeds of God, about the power of the Holy Spirit guiding and directing evangelism, about the preaching of the gospel in city after city with the manifestation of God's power. There is an account of one conference at which a major theological dispute was settled—but the concern was that the preaching of the gospel would not be hindered.

Certainly, there is a place for social activities, business matters, and for sermons (and reports on the same). But when these are the primary events to be recounted month after month and year after year, something is missing. Oh, for more reports on evangelistic activities and the fruit thereof! Oh, for more reports on church outreach and missionary activities and converted lives! Oh, for more reports on ministries to the sick, the poor, and the homeless! Oh for more reports on the dramatic power of God—working through His servants for the preaching of the gospel!

I can't say that my reports on activities of our local church are any different than most—they certainly don't read anything like the book of Acts. But I offer one small suggestion. Make sure that virtually every church social and recreational event is an outreach activity—an opportunity for inviting unsaved and unchurched friends and relatives to participate with the church—and thus come in contact with God's people. How about your suggestions on how our church activities can be changed so that our reports read more like the book of Acts and less like the society page of the local newspaper?

—Richard A. Wiedenheft

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And now abide
FAITH,
HOPE, LOVE,
these three, but the
greatest of these is
LOVE.

The Old Testament Sabbath

by Rodney Nelson

Editor's Note: In the previous article the author discussed the origin of the Sabbath and its function as a time of rest. In this one, he focuses on the Sabbath as a sign—a sign of remembrance, of redemption and deliverance, and of election. The next article will deal with the Sabbath as a sign of Yahweh's covenant with Israel and as a time of worship. The works cited by author and page number are listed at the end of the article.

The Sabbath as a Sign

The second function of the Sabbath is that of a sign. This is indeed a significant theme in Sabbath theology in the Old Testament. The Sabbath as a sign stretches from the earliest mentioning of it to the prophetic writings of later time. The sign function relates to several areas. First, we see it as a sign of remembrance. Second, it served as a sign of redemption followed closely by deliverance. Third, it was a sign of election or being a chosen people. Finally, it was a sign of the covenant made with Israel. Many of these themes are interrelated, yet we shall approach each one separately to ascertain its meaning for the Sabbath in the Old Testament.

The first word used in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20 is "Remember. . . ." This is very significant in understanding the initial function of the Sabbath as well as its relation to the Decalogue. The Sabbath in the Decalogue acts as a vehicle of remembrance for the people of Israel. There written in stone by the very finger of Yahweh was a perpetual reminder that God was with them in His Sabbath. To "remember" meant that Israel was to always remember

the God who not only created the world, but who also delivered them from Egypt.

To 'remember' means to keep or to observe. The memory of the past (retrospective aspect) is to lead to right action in the present and to faithful obedience in the future (prospective aspect). Past, present, and future are united in the pregnant opening word of Exodus 20:8 (Hasel 30).

For Israel, the past was God's guarantee of her future, so long as she remembered. It is no mere coincidence that when Israel would later apostatize, Sabbath desecration became symbolic of her apostasy.

God's work of creation is in view in the injunction to "remember." The Sabbath became a fitting reminder of that creation and would give to Israel a perpetual symbol of His sovereignty and power over creation. The Sabbath, along with the commandment against idolatry, was an effective reminder to Israel not to put the creation over the creator (Dressler 25). It has been said that if men were Sabbatarians there would be no atheists. Remembering the Sabbath as a memorial of creation would hold in

check any disposition to forsake God in favor of another deity or creature. Remembrance also has another aspect. The Sabbath also acted as a mechanism to remember the God who delivers (which will be discussed below).

On every sabbath God's people are to remember that their God is a Savior who has put an end to all bondage and who is the superior of all who wield power in the world. The fundamental significance of the Sabbath is both to remind us of God's creation and to bring to remembrance the freedom from servitude of any form, achieved by God and extended to all human beings. (Hasel 32)

No institution within Judaism could import the ideas of freedom and liberty as could the Sabbath. Rather than being a law of bondage it was a celebration of freedom. Eichrodt is certainly correct when he states that "the Sabbath. . . forms a continual remembrance of God's act of love, and is meant to lead to the expression of grateful joy" (2: 297). The Sabbath becomes for Israel what the Fourth of July means for Americans. The difference, however, is that the Sabbath is a weekly reminder that the God who creates is also the God who liberates and frees from bondage. For Israel, the Sabbath becomes a practical means by which she seeks to understand her position in the world as a freed people.

We conclude this section by stating that "remembering" the Sabbath guarantees for Israel a safeguard from apostasy, idolatry, and bondage to anything or anyone except God. Truly, the remembrance of the Sabbath for Israel was simply to remember that the God who gave them this commandment was the God who saved them as well.

A second Sabbath sign is that of redemption and deliverance which

was discussed somewhat above. The text which deals specifically with this theme is the second rendition of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5. It should come as no surprise that it is here the theme of redemption and grace is connected with the Sabbath more specifically. Deuteronomy 5:12-15 begins by saying to simply "observe" the Sabbath. There is no wording suggesting remembrance, yet it is certainly present. The rationale for observing the Sabbath in Deuteronomy is not creation, but redemption. Whereas the Exodus account of the giving of the Decalogue only begins with the phrase "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery," the Deuteronomic account both begins and *includes* this initiatory phrase in the Decalogue. There is no doubt that one reason for this is that the later writer of Deuteronomy wished to hearken Israel back to the true intent of the Sabbath. However, the fact here is that we see a development in Sabbath theology, even to the point of changing the wording of the commandment itself. This alone is very significant.

Perhaps the example to illustrate this point is to see that the word "Remember" is included in the Deuteronomic commandment. However, notice should be made as to where it is located. As pointed out above it is not at the beginning. The commandment to simply observe the Sabbath implies that the people already knew their duty to observe it. However, the word "Remember" is taken from its Exodus position at the beginning of the commandment and moved to the end regarding the rationale for observing it—redemption from Egypt. This theologically relates to the position of the Sabbath as it relates to God's grace and deliverance. Perhaps what is being communicated here by the Deuteronomic writer is that Israel had

forgotten her place in relation to obedience and election. The Sabbath had been desecrated and the spirit of its observance had been perverted. Therefore, the Deuteronomic writer sought to place the emphasis of remembrance not on the pre-Sinai creation, but on the post-Exodus election and redemption. The Sabbath would then become not only a remembrance of God's creation but also personally of His deliverance. No other commandment in the Decalogue ties in such themes.

The Sabbath became for Israel a sign of her deliverance from Egypt, from bondage, and from slavery. Through the Sabbath God wished to emphasize to Israel that He was her Savior and Redeemer. Dressler comments on this point.

In this year (Jubilee) the sign of the covenant emphasized the covenant God as Redeemer, Liberator, and Savior; He restores His people and the land on which they live. . . . Thus every jubilee year was highlighting the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant leading the people to special worship of the God of the covenant as Redeemer and Savior (31).

The ideal motive for Israel to observe the Sabbath was as a memorial of her own redemption.

Trained by the regular recurrence of this gracious gift of the Sabbath, Israel was to be able to stand before the Creator in freedom, responsibility, trust, and gratitude; she worshiped Him, the Lord of the Sabbath, and looked forward with joy and anticipation to the coming of the final Rest (Dressler 35).

There definitely is an eschatological ring to the Deuteronomic passage. The Sabbath not only hearkens back to the time of creation, Israel's redemption, but also to the final

salvation awaiting all mankind. The Sabbath therefore becomes a central focus of past, present, and future realities.

The Deuteronomic Sabbath commandment also relates to another area of concern, social justice. As in Exodus, the Deuteronomic writer wished to emphasize that the Sabbath was for *all* people in the fold of Israel, including animals. Rest was necessary for them as well, but this rest was to be grounded in the deliverance from Egypt. Redemption is a theme with universal connotations and the Sabbath commandment recognizes that.

Here the reason for observing the day of rest is that affirmation which was absolutely fundamental for Israel, namely, that Yahweh had liberated Israel from Egypt. On every sabbath Israel is to remember that her God is a liberator who had put an end to all slaveholding and who is the equal of all who wield power within and without Israel, who might still seek to afflict His people (Wolff 500).

Affliction is a universal phenomenon and is addressed in the Sabbath. This day of supposed legalism was in fact to be a day of liberation from affliction—a day of freedom! "The fundamental significance of the seventh day is therefore this: rest from our work is to remind us of the freedom we have already been given" (Wolff 500). With this theology of social justice in mind, how was Israel to demonstrate this to those around her?

The Sabbath not only reminds us of our deliverance, but it commands us to extend the blessing to those under oppression or servitude. It is not enough to rejoice in and enjoy one's own salvation. . . Sabbath observance has integral social and

humanitarian aspects that we dare not forget. The Sabbath as sign of redemption points in two directions—to our own redemption and to that of the oppressed (Kubo 46).

We feel Hasel sums it up well when he states the social ramifications of Sabbath observance.

(The Sabbath) brings liberation and freedom; it is a pointer to do away with all inequalities in the social structure. Before God all men are equal. Man's original status before God is to be reenacted in society. The Sabbath is an institution that is designed to bring this about. This amplification of the purpose of the Sabbath with its social or humanitarian aspect, its emphasis on liberation from work and freedom in society, is captured in Jesus' own words: Mark 2:27 (32).

If only Israel had remembered this, which is what the Deuteronomic writer agonizes over. Israel was to extend grace to others because of the grace shown to her from God as demonstrated in the Exodus. However, Israel took this grace and favored position and kept it to herself. She did not seek social justice, but forgot it. She made the Sabbath of freedom into a burden even she could not live up to. What Israel forgot to recognize is that "from the experiential point of view, we encounter God as Redeemer before we recognize Him as Creator. One merges naturally into the other" (Kubo 45). It is this which God wanted to impress upon the Israelites.

To conclude this matter, it should again be emphasized that the Sabbath was originally meant to be a day of deliverance. By observing this one day Israel would be reminded that she was indebted to the unmerited favor of God for her election

and blessings. She was to remember that the covenant made with her by God "was rooted in His gracious election and eternal covenant that was formally established on Mount Sinai" (Hasel 36). Israel forgot this fact and made her covenant a mockery before God and the earth which the Sabbath demonstrated by its perversion.

The author, a social studies teacher, is working toward an M.A. degree in religion at Northwest Christian College. He resides with his wife, Sherry, in Corvallis, Oregon.

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Let Freedom Ring!

by Peter Cimpoeru

Editor's note: A native of Romania, the author is an assistant professor of history at Loma Linda University; he holds master's degrees from University of Bucharest (history, 1963) and California State University, San Bernardino (national security, 1986).

The news coming from the Eastern block these days is breathtaking. Epithets like "unbelievable," "unthinkable," "unimaginable" are not exaggerations anymore when used in connection with the pace of changes in this part of the world.

For over 40 years, I looked at this region as a place of political immobility. Communism looked very well entrenched, and because nothing could stop its march I believed that it was going to be around until the Lord comes.

The decision to leave Romania with my entire family taken nine years ago was in direct connection with the lost hope in any positive changes. Escaping from the "Communist Paradise" strictly guarded by soldiers with automatic weapons, dogs, barbed-wire, and watchtowers was not easy because, like it or not, you had to be part of it. Barely escaping imprisonment for the underground publishing of Adventist literature, I needed all the help I could get from Amnesty International, Radio Free Europe, and the American Congress to leave my homeland.

When the ruthless totalitarian communist regimes were imposed and maintained in power by the Red Army, against the will of the people of Eastern Europe, the slogan "Who is not with us is against us" became part of our daily life. The slightest

opposition was repressed without mercy. In this climate of terror, insecurity, lies, and deceit the Christian church had to fight a terrible battle for survival. Those who wanted to render to Caesar what was Caesar's and to God what was God's, had to go through immense trials and tribulations. Among the most persecuted and discriminated against were the Seventh-day Adventists. The reason was the steadfast belief of many in God and in keeping the Sabbath. I lost my job twice and was treated as insane for my belief in Jesus Christ.

The Rise of Gorbachev

But in this dark hour of history of Eastern Europe an unexpected thing happened: Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in the Soviet Union. Like in the Greek mythological story of Pandora lifting the lid of Epimetheus' pot and releasing all ills into the world, Mr. Gorbachev opened the box and exposed the evils of the communist system, encouraged changes, and inspired hope in the hearts of millions of oppressed people in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Transformations that are taking place in the Eastern bloc are so startling that the unimaginable has become routine. The Soviet Union is a state in transition. Poland has established a noncommunist govern-

ment. Hungary has declared itself a non-communist state. East Germany is tearing down the Berlin Wall and has opened its borders. The new leadership of East Germany is talking about free elections and is introducing noncommunists into its government. In Czechoslovakia the hard-line communists have given up their monopoly on political power. Here Marxism-Leninism, as a compulsory course in the university, was dropped because of the pressure of millions of demonstrators.

Even in Bulgaria, the staunchest ally of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, the old leader Todor Zhivkov resigned in favor of a more reform-oriented leader who also entertains the possibility of free elections. There is only one country today in Eastern Europe which is not affected yet by reforms: Albania. But with every day that passes the Albanian regime is becoming a relic of the past. The people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have spoken and their leaders have to listen.

All these sweeping changes made in Moscow's empire under the pressure of millions of dissatisfied people show clearly that the desire for freedom transcends barbed-wire boundaries.

Faced with all these thrilling changes I cannot escape the question why Mr. Gorbachev started his *glasnost* and *perestroika*? My personal belief is that we have to look beyond the serious economic problems and political and military overextension which obligated the Soviet Union to subsidize its satellites in Eastern Europe and the communist revolutions around the globe.

I see the hand of God at work in the history of this planet. He acted in the past to free Israelites from Babylonian captivity, raising up Cyrus, and He is intervening today encouraging and supporting Mikhail Gorbachev to open the gates of

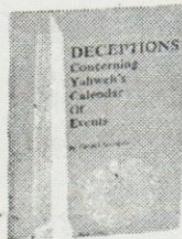
freedom for the good news of the gospel to more than 400 million people behind the Iron Curtain.

Faced with the "new thinking" and the new realities in the Eastern block, the religious leaders, including the Seventh-day Adventists, living in this part of the world are going through embarrassing times after having praised for decades the great religious "freedom" which the church had under communism. This is particularly ironic when Gorbachev and other communist leaders are making "mea culpa" for the injustices which the communist regime inflicted on the church.

Freedom is marching beautifully on the streets of Prague, Warsaw, Sofia, Bucharest and Moscow. The people have spoken. Let freedom ring everywhere.

Reprinted from *Christians in Crisis*,
January-February 1990.

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Adventist Leader Visits Romania

Editor's note: Ulrich Frikard, an administrator of the Euro-African Division of the Seventh-day Adventist church, visited Romania for a week following the revolution there last year. The following article, reprinted from *Adventist Review*; is the diary he kept during the days leading up to and during his trip to this country that suffered horrendous oppression under the regime of Nicolae Ceausescu.

Friday, December 22, 1989.

Driving home by car, I listen to the news: Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu has fled; the army is on the side of the rebels; the Committee for National Rescue has taken over authority in Romania. At home on television I watch courageous people battle the dreaded Securitate (secret police).

I think of our 60,000 Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Romania. How will they fare? How may we best help them?

Sunday, December 24. I make the first telephone contacts to organize relief work.

Monday, December 25. Christmas. I have a long telephone conversation with Edwin Ludescher, Euro-Africa Division president.

Tuesday, December 26. Edwin Ludescher, division treasurer Erich Amelung, division health and temperance director Herbert Stoeger, and I analyze the situation and make preparations. Despite continuous attempts, it proves impossible to establish telephone communication with our Romanian Union headquarters in Bucharest, the capital. We decide to send a division representative to Romania to coordinate

relief work. The division makes available 100,000 Swiss francs (\$64,500) from its catastrophe fund. The Austrian Union prepares to send a convoy with food, clothing, blankets, and medicine to Bucharest. From all countries of the division, individuals and churches offer help.

Wednesday, December 27. Information reaches us that the Bucharest airport is closed until further notice. The Securitate is still fighting and killing opponents. Finally, through the Swiss Embassy in Bucharest, we are able to send a message to our union leaders. Union president Dumitru Popa calls the division office in Bern, Switzerland, and we decide that I will go to Bucharest the next day.

Thursday, December 28. I travel by plane to Vienna, Austria, and then by train to Bucharest. While in Vienna I am able to coordinate the final details of sending the relief supplies from Austria. Meanwhile, in Bern Elder Stoeger organizes relief supplies from West Germany, Yugoslavia, and Russia. Trucks are already on the way to the Romanian cities of Timisoara and Cluj.

Forty-Hour Trip

Friday, December 29, 10:00 p.m. After a 40-hour trip I arrive in Bucharest. It is snowing. The streets are empty; no public transportation is running. I speak to two doctors from the Medicine Without Frontiers organization, who offer to take me downtown in their vehicle to the Intercontinental Hotel. From there a young volunteer policeman leads me through the snowy, deserted streets (except for an occasional army vehicle) to a small hotel.

It is now 11:00 and snowing harder. I try without success to contact our union office in town and Elder Ludescher in Bern. Toward midnight I hear machine guns firing from an adjoining house. I turn off the light and hear three armored vehicles, then screams and commands that die away in the night. I think of my fellow believers. Will I be able to meet with them tomorrow for Sabbath worship?

Sabbath, December 30. Six to eight inches (15-20 centimeters) of snow cover the city. At 8:00 a.m. I am able to reach my wife by phone. She will inform Elder Ludescher of my safe arrival. By 9:00 I find a young Romanian who will take me in his car to the Adventist church on Labyrinth Street. Twice we get stuck in the snow, but are able to shovel out. We arrive at the church at 10:00, in time for Sabbath school.

The 900 members receive me with joy and make me feel at home. They report that two Adventists have been killed in the fighting: a 32-year-old brother shot in Bucharest during the battle between the army and the secret police, and another man shot by a terrorist in front of his house in Krajova. Despite the dangerous situation and the weather, all the church members are present except for the children, who have been kept safe at home. I bring them greetings from division headquarters and assure them of our support.

At 3:00 p.m. it is still snowing. Nelu Dimitrescu, the union secretary, and I walk for an hour to the Grant church, where union president Popa and about 1,000 members await us. They are already exchanging New Year's wishes. A card drawn by a child and containing the text of Isaiah 55:12—"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace"—is presented to me.

Thinking of Others

In the evening our leaders meet at the union office to discuss the most urgent relief needs. In spite of their own tremendous needs, they are more concerned with how they can take advantage of the new situation to witness for Christ more effectively. What a spirit of consecration and devotion!

They have already come up with

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some new measures for strengthening the churches and their outreach. Instead of the 1,000 copies of the Sabbath school lessons that were allowed by the government for our 60,000 members, we will now publish 30,000. The 500 Romanian Adventist churches will begin to use Sundays for public evangelism. Until now only Sabbath meetings were permitted in our churches. Many more ministers will be trained in the SDA seminary, with 20 new students already enrolled as of January. The church has ordered a new printing of 20,000 copies each of *The Desire of Ages* and *Christ's Object Lessons*.

At 11:00 p.m. I reach my hotel after being stopped several times by the army and police. It is still snowing. Now and then shots can be heard. A young soldier tells me that terrorists have again shot pedestrians in the Metro.

Sunday, December 31. After a day of discussions and negotiations with Nelu Dumitrescu and Nicolae Popescu (union treasurer), we take a night train to the city of Timisoara. We buy two newspapers from Gypsy children. A group of singers opens our compartment door and sings, "*Ole, ole, ole, Ceausescu nomma e!*" ("Ceausescu is no more!") Their faces reflect joy and relief. We give them the V-for-victory sign.

Gifts for Timisoara

Monday, January 1. It is 6:30 a.m. in Timisoara. Darkness, dense fog, armored vehicles, and soldiers are all around as we walk to the conference office. The brethren have been waiting for us there and greet us with great joy. We learn that the trucks with eight tons of clothing and food from Yugoslavia have arrived safely. The church members and general population greatly appreciate these first relief supplies.

We have an hour to look around the city. Devastation everywhere

testifies to the brutal attacks of the Securitate troops. One Adventist brother who experienced it all sums up the feelings of the people: "We are free at last; the new year will be a good and joyful one!" I ask God to answer their prayers.

Tuesday, January 2. All is quiet now in Bucharest. The army has gained control of the situation. The Metro functions once more, but hundreds of armed citizen volunteers check every passenger. This evening I was held in custody for more than an hour in an improvised police post at the University Square Metro station.

We have shoveled away the snow in front of the union office so the trucks from Austria can unload there.

Wednesday, January 3. The health minister, Dr. Victor Ciobanu, meets with us. His report on the situation in Romanian hospitals moves us deeply. With tears in his eyes he thanks the Adventist Church and ADRA for their relief work, present and future. The government has agreed that our churches shall have complete freedom from now on to conduct health seminars and other programs. It will even support such initiatives. What a turning point! What possibilities for the future!

Thursday, January 4. As I say goodbye to our brethren, they ask me to convey their greetings and gratitude to fellow believers everywhere. We cannot forget them, for they need our continued help and prayers.

When you read these lines, many tons of relief goods from our division office will have arrived in Romania. We will continue to support our members there through visits and counsel as they seek to restructure their activities.

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Sabbath — in a Larger Context

by Steve Brightbill

Without a doubt, man needs rest — and on a regular, weekly basis. That's why God created the Sabbath in the first place. But the weekly Sabbath is but a part of a larger picture.

As God prepared the Israelites for entering the Promised Land, He provided a comprehensive set of laws and instructions which was to guide their worship, conduct, and their relationship with the Him. Many of these laws and regulations are detailed in the book of Leviticus. Chapter 23 speaks of a *Sabbatical Year* and the *Year of Jubilee*.

The sabbatical year was a year of rest for the land itself. "But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards" (verse 4). As explained later in verses 20 and 21, the sixth year would produce three years of abundance, which would be more than sufficient to offset the sabbatical year when nothing was to be planted. The modern day prac-

tice of letting land lay fallow lends credence to the idea that agricultural land must also rest and be rejuvenated.

The Year of Jubilee was celebrated after seven cycles of seven years (forty-nine years), and commenced on the Day of Atonement, a holy day God instructed the Israelites to observe. The fiftieth year was the consecrated Year of Jubilee, at which time land and property were restored and slaves were released.

It is evident that the essential intent and result of both the sabbatical year and the Year of Jubilee was to provide needed rest and restoration. The theme of rest, of course, is what the creation of the Sabbath is all about. It would appear that God created the earth with a built-in need for periodic refreshment. Observation tells us that people and animals get tired, land isn't always as productive from year to year, and the physical universe is always in a state of "running down." In terms of their spiritual origin and dimension,

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it appears God provided a means or recovery from the natural process of deterioration.

The various benefits of Sabbath rest have meaning and relevance to those who choose to appropriate them now. But, the Bible also speaks of a future time when ultimate rest will be supernaturally provided. At the end of this age and when Jesus Christ returns to the earth, all things will be restored and made new. The writings of the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament authors describe this time as a period of peace and restitution (see Acts 3:18-21; Matthew 19:28; Isaiah 65:17-25; Micah 4:1-5, and others). The history of man's sin and rebellion will come to an end, and those who have chosen Jesus Christ as their Savior will reap the eternal blessings and benefits in the family of God. When that great day comes, the Sabbath lessons of Scripture

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will be fulfilled and the earth and universe will enter ultimate rest.

Reprinted from a "The Blessing of God's Sabbath," a booklet published by Bible Advocate Press. The author, who lives near Denver, has handled the layout and design of BSA booklets during the last several years.

Advertisement

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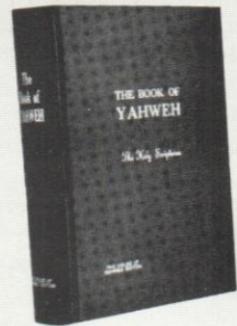
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NEWS FROM THE BSA

BSA Meeting In Indianapolis

On July 7 the executive director will be speaking at a special BSA-sponsored meeting in Indianapolis. For information regarding time and location contact the executive director at (717) 378-2056; or Mike at (812) 829-4952; or Cosden at (317) 638-9986.

Changes in Summer Travel Plans

The executive director will *not* be speaking in Hendersonville, N.C. on July 28. Contacts with Church Publishing Company in Cleveland, Tenn. (where TSS is published), with past BSA president Dr. Terril Littrell in Chattanooga, and with the Lord's Day Alliance in Atlanta will, hopefully, be made on July 2 and 3. Other summer travel plans include: July 4-5, Church of God (Seventh Day) district conference, Collegedale, TN; July 7, meeting in Indianapolis; July 8-11, SDA general conference in Indianapolis; July 17-21, NE district conference in Ohio. BSA will also be represented at the SDB general conference at Linsborg, KS, Aug. 5-11.

Survey of High School Blue Laws

The executive director has been writing to high school athletic associations in all 50 states to determine which ones have restrictions on Sunday activities. A preliminary compilation indicates that 17 states have virtually no restrictions (though many local school districts do); 20 prohibit almost all contests and practices on Sundays; 7 have some restrictions; 7 have still not responded

after three inquiries. A full report will be published in TSS when the survey is completed.

Editorial Future of TSS

Currently, the BSA staff and directors are evaluating our association's magazine. Our basic concern is that *The Sabbath Sentinel* reach the greatest number of people with the most pertinent information for the least cost. Some of the options being considered: begin to cover controversial issues—presenting various points of view without taking a position; begin to cover a wider range of non-controversial topics of interest to Sabbathkeepers; make TSS a free publication; make TSS a much less expensive (but good quality) association newsletter. We welcome your input.

Your Support Welcomed

Literature is our primary means of sharing the truth of the Sabbath. As we continually work to provide the best possible materials, we thank all who use BSA literature in reaching out to others; we thank all who share in this ministry through prayers, donations, and encouragement; and we welcome your continuing support.

Just a Subscriber?

Being a subscriber to THE SABBATH SENTINEL is a blessing, but there's more. You can also be a full voting member of THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION and have an active part in this important ministry. Annual membership: \$20. For more information write to us.

ON THE LEGAL FRONT

Jews who accept Jesus are not automatically given Israeli citizenship and emigration rights, the Supreme Court of Israel ruled, ironically, on Dec. 25. Most other hereditary Jews are, even out and out atheists. The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America has strongly protested the decision, claiming it is dangerous to say to any Jew, "You are not a Jew." Justice Menachem Elon said Messianic Jews "do not belong to the Jewish nation and have no right to force themselves upon it." A 1970 law denies the Jewishness of an ethnic Jew who is "a member of another religion"; but Jews for Jesus feel they are being denied their birthright. Additionally, the New Testament has been banned from Israeli schools by the Religious Education Ministry.

Parents can sue for "wrongful birth," if doctors do not inform them of possible fetal defects in time to have an abortion. So said the Delaware Supreme Court, Dec. 12. Charles and Efser Garrison, can now try to recover more than \$1 million from Medical Center of Delaware and others to pay for the lifetime costs of raising their Down's syndrome child. The ruling has ominous implications for proliferators in the healthcare field.

Rulings on censorship recently benefited and hurt religious people. The Supreme Court of Virginia said that the Virginia Real Estate Commission cannot force realtor Paul Lotz to remove from his adver-

tising the Christian fish symbol and the words "Christ is coming." Also, a federal district court struck down a Pennsylvania law that would have forced Philadelphia public school teacher, Alima Dolores Reardon, not to wear Islamic garb on the job. In Denver, however, a court prohibited teacher Kenneth Roberts from reading a Bible while sitting at his desk and censored two books about Christianity from his classroom library. Books about other religions were not censored.

Home schools, in which parents teach their own children, may be educating over one million students, according to home school advocates. The number is difficult to estimate, since many kids have never been registered with local school boards. Home schoolers object to poor education, the lack of values, and negative peer pressure in public schools. Many such parents cannot afford private schools. Laws vary; but generally courts and legislators have been allowing more educational freedom. In some areas home schoolers can still be fined or jailed. Slowly gaining favor are vouchers which allow parents to use tax money to enroll their kids in any local public, sometimes even private, schools. While vouchers present problems, such as state involvement in religious schools, they do make it easier for children to get good educations. Where they have been used, vouchers seem to have improved education through competition. Bad schools either improve or die.

FROM THE SEVENTH DAY COMMUNITY

Christianity Today Gets Letters on Adventist Piece

In the March 19 *Christianity Today*, two letters addressed an article on SDAs by Kenneth Samples (covered in this column in May). The first, by Esther Jones of Leominster, MA, declared "The Recent Truth about Seventh-day Adventism" to be just the author's opinion and not very accurate. The second, by Desmond Ford, who was mentioned in the article, challenged both Adventists and evangelicals. Dr. Ford asked Adventist leaders to publicly prove their belief in the 1844 Investigative Judgment. He prodded evangelicals to come up with even one scripture supporting the sanctification of Sunday, and one showing that "soul or spirit functions without a body." He felt the article was accurate.

SDA Trademark Case

More information regarding the battle between the SDA General Conference (GC) and John Marik, whose independent Hawaiian church uses the SDA name, has come to this column. An article in the November 27, 1988 *Los Angeles Times* and a secretly taped conversation between SDA President Neal C. Wilson and a church member reveal that the GC attempted to settle with Marik and his SDA Congregational Church, saying that Marik could use the names "Adventist" or "Seventh Day," but not the two together. Other churches already use those names. Also, the GC claims Marik not only broke away from the main body of Adventists; but he spent much of his

time attacking the GC.

During the taped conversation, Mr. Wilson allegedly said, "We are not going to let the name of this church be dragged in the mud. . . I have no problem about a person who says, 'I don't agree with the church. I think they're doing everything wrong, and we're doing to set up our own church.' But when you try to fly under the flag of the Seventh-day Adventist church and run that church down at the same time; that, you know, is . . . what we call in our state 'denying our country.'" Mr. Wilson admitted that SDA leaders had not done a good job of explaining their side of the case: "And. . . it's unfortunate at times that we don't publicize these things, probably, and give everybody the facts; but it's not a credit to the church, either—to be involved in this type of activity."

A picture emerges of a church reluctantly pursuing a court case against a former member, wrestling with Paul's injunction not to take brethren to court and Christ's sometimes conflicting command to treat as a heathen and publican someone who will not listen to repeated admonitions.

Medical Missionary's Trial —Is It Trademark Related?

Ede Koenig, a former Adventist who until recently ran the Radiant Health Institute of Angwin, California, was arrested last November for practicing medicine without a license. For years this proponent of natural and biblical remedies outlined by Ellen G. White has criticized establishment physicians on local

and network TV and in the press. Then last year undercover agents for the California Board for Medical Quality Assurance came to her clinic, one of them pretending to be ill. Ede talked to them; but denies that either entered her program or that money changed hands. Thereafter she was arrested on one misdemeanor and one felony count.

Mrs. Koenig is also a supporter of John Marik, the former SDA ministerial trainee who broke away and founded the SDA Congregational Church, which is fighting the General Conference over the use of the SDA name. Ede says Marik was seriously ill from breathing volcanic ash in Hawaii. He made an appointment at her clinic. Before he arrived, the FBI called to find out if he was there. She told them, no. Later Marik did come, was treated, and released. She did not inform authorities.

Ede feels her subsequent arrest may be related to her treatment of Marik. There's no evidence that the Adventist General Conference has any knowledge of or interest in Ede's actions; and any such conclusion would be extreme. Yet the FBI may have suggested that California lean on Mrs. Koenig for her non-cooperation. Stranger things have happened.

The Sabbath Sentinel takes neither side in Ede Koenig's case. Those wishing to write her may do so at 36057 Ruth Hill Rd., Squaw Valley, CA 93675.

Ghana Sabbath Association

This column reported in March that church groups in Ghana, West Africa, affiliated with the Churches of God (7th Day) of Meridian, Idaho, were concerned about the government's requirement that all Christian

churches reregister. They felt that home meetings, such as theirs, would be outlawed. More than a dozen small sabbathkeeping organizations, however, have now registered as part of a new Bible Sabbath Association of Ghana (BSAG) inspired by our own BSA. Since many large Sunday churches have refused to register, relations have improved between the government and the small 7th-day groups. Indeed, authorities complimented the BSAG on the excellence of its application. BSAG's address and leader are found among the many new listings in the just-released *Supplement to the Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups*, advertised in this magazine.

Nigerian Church's 50 Years

In 1939 the late Elder B.I. Tikili founded the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Nigeria. On December 7-10, 1989, many of the brethren—affiliated with the COG (Seventh Day) headquartered in Denver, Colorado—celebrated its 50th Anniversary in a camp meeting in Okomu Town, Rivers State. In addition to speakers and choirs, celebrations included marches throughout Okomu Town to witness to the people. Another campmeeting held in Imo State on December 15-17 drew 1500 worshipers.

Victor Burford, Northeastern District Coordinator for the US church has been named Director of Missions Abroad, the office of liaison between the American church and foreign COGs, such as the one in Nigeria. He replaces long-time director Robert Coulter, who also served many years as President of the US church. Elder Coulter recently traveled to Kenya, where the church has 3500 members.

TO REPEAT

Only when we listen to *why* women seek abortions can we identify the whole range of problems that Adventists need to address forthrightly—including the abysmal lack of sex education in our homes, schools, and churches. . . . Questions about abortion touch deep concerns in Adventist theology and lifestyle. I believe these should lead us toward careful, gracious policies—and actions. At the very least, we should honor women's conscientious decisions in the same way that we honor men's decisions about military service.

"Abortion and Conscience" by Kit Watts, *Adventist Review*, Jan. 25, '90

Some Christians seem to think that God, like some mythical genie, has given mankind a set of magic words. . . . To receive [everlasting life and contentment], nothing more is required than uttering the magic sounds, "I accept Jesus," and basking in the shower of spiritual blessings. But. . . Jesus and the apostles taught a message of *life-changing* faith. The "just as I am" Christian needs to remember Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven" (New International Version).

"There Are No Magic Words" by Joseph W. Tkach, *The Plain Truth*, Jan. '90

If your concern is that the perspectives of a male-centered church are being questioned, then have no fear. In the kingdom of God, there is neither Jew nor Greek (no racism), neither free nor bond (no classism), and neither male nor female (no sexism), for we are all one in Christ Jesus. This is God's vision for the chosen people. . . if your concern is that the male hegemony in the church is being overturned, you have nothing to fear except that we might fail in bringing this task to a successful conclusion.

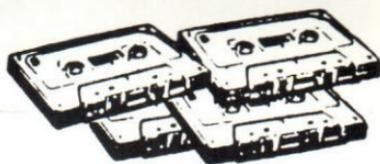
Iris M. Yob answering a letter to *Ponderings*, a magazine by feminist SDAs

Obviously we all fall far short in showing the love of God in our day-to-day activities—and that's one reason, I believe, that we tend to emphasize and hold up other things as measures of spirituality. Because we are so inadequate in showing forth the character and nature of God in our daily lives, we emphasize technical obedience to legal requirements, or religious activities, or spiritual experiences, or dedication to a church. In these we can attain some measurable, observable degree of success.

"What Is True Spirituality?" by Richard A. Wiedenheft
Focus on Truth, Nov. 18, '89

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

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

New Sabbathkeeper

I am new to Sabbathkeeping. Could you help me find other Sabbathkeepers in this area? Please enroll me as a member so that I may receive your fine publication. I had borrowed a copy.

Stanton, Texas

Warning About Acceptance

I agree with much of your article "Acceptance Without Compromise" (TSS, May '87) as long as you have only those "differences" in mind which you mention by name. But there is an urge today to include practically everything in the term "acceptance." This is exactly how the ecumenical movement operates. We must therefore be watchful. When I look into the "Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups" I get confused. There are Sabbathkeepers who believe in the inspiration of Ellen White or even the book of Mormon, i.e. they have different sources of inspiration than I have. There are various Churches of God; there are Pentecostal groups displaying the same spirit as their Sunday-keeping counterparts, which cooperate with Rome. What a family! Or is it a family? Should BSA link them together? Since BSA is bound by its statutes not to speak out on these subjects vital for salvation, there are Sabbathkeepers (including myself) who have not subscribed to BSA. Such "family ties" would surely tie us down.

Dieter Heimke
Schopfloch, West Germany

Praise for Editor

Enclosed is my check for the renewal of my subscription. I think the editor is doing an excellent job with his handling of the magazine. The editorials are superb.

Coconut Creek, Florida

Appreciates Calendar

I received the free calendar which you sent. It is now on my wall and I agree that it is better there than on your shelf. Thank you. I am interested in learning of any Sabbathkeeping believers in the Book of Mormon. Do you know of any that are not listed in your directory or the 1989 supplement?

Wisconsin

From Australia

Thank you so much for your latest edition of *The Sabbath Sentinel*. It was a delight to receive. Could you please put me in touch with the several sources of information on the sacred calendar mentioned in the Dec. '89 issue? Do you know of anyone who has done a recent study on the history of Sabbath groups and also the origins of the Catholic church? Do you have a representative in Australia (or do you want one)? And do you know of any groups in the Sydney area?

Sydney, Australia

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Scranton, PA: Dr. Desmond Ford to speak on Monday evening, June 25th. United Church of God meets every Sabbath. Local contact: Richard W., (717) 378-2056 or Adam W., 378-3528. (5,6)

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Greetings from the Independent Church of God of Ft. Payne, Alabama. You are invited to attend services with us on the 1st and 3rd Sabbaths of each month, starting at 10 a.m. For additional information call (205) 672-2581 or (205) 492-7565. (3-9)

Lantana, FL: The Christian Church of God holds weekly Sabbath services. Serving southeast Florida (West Palm Beach area). For information write P.O. Box 3827, Lantana, FL 33465. (4-3)

Good News Unlimited Meetings featuring Dr. Desmond Ford: New York City, June 22-24; contact, Angel C., (212) 736-4045. Scranton, PA, June 25; contact Dick W., (717) 378-2056. Toronto, June 22-23; contact, Frank J. (416) 665-4985. Riverside, CA, July 6-8; contact Gabriel B. (714) 781-8432. Asheville, NC, July 13-15, contact Sue Smathers (704) 452-2881. For full schedule, write GNU, 11710 Education St., Auburn, CA 95603. (2,3)

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A Sabbath storybook for families

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With all the ideas and materials in this finely illustrated book, you'll never have to wonder about what to do with children on the Sabbath. Co-published by The Bible Sabbath Association and Words of Jesus Ministry, *Sabbath at Sommerhase* can be ordered from BSA for \$7; the activity packet is \$3. Please add \$1 to your orders to cover the cost of postage. Quantity discount information is available on request.

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