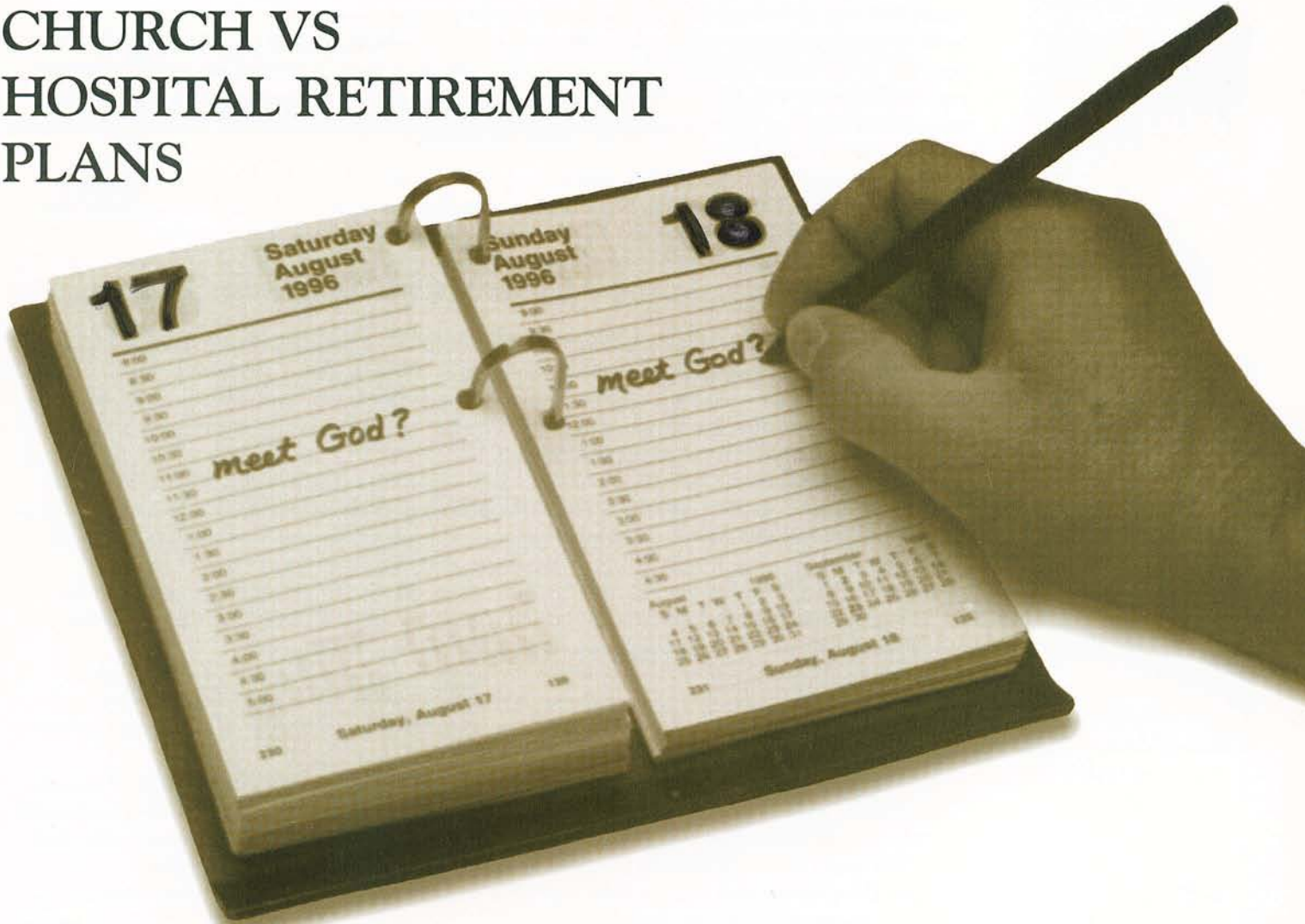


CHURCH VS HOSPITAL RETIREMENT PLANS



Desmond Ford Defends the Sabbath

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The Sabbath: A Precious Treasure

The seventh-day Sabbath has been a precious treasure in our family for 12 generations, first when we were Seventh Day Baptists and since 1851 when we became Seventh-day Adventists. Great-grandfather Roswell Fenner Cottrell listened to William Miller prior to 1844 but did not accept the 1844 message inasmuch as Miller did not observe the seventh-day Sabbath. He had always believed in the soon return of Jesus, he said, but reasoned that if Miller's message were from the Lord he would be honoring the Lord's Sabbath.

In January 1851 the first issues of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*) found their way to his home in western New York. Here were Adventists who observed the seventh day as the Sabbath! After nine months of "careful and cautious examination," he wrote James White that he "had just arrived at the decision" that "the message of the third angel" was "from heaven," and "greatly rejoice[d]" to unite with the advent people. James White invited him to become a member of the first editorial committee of the *Review*, and over the next 40 years, 1,672 articles in the *Review* bore either his name or the initials "R.F.C."

Over the past 85 years the Sabbath has been a precious treasure to me. Entering into the Sabbath hours in the way its founder intended, and appreciating the blessing with which he invested it on that first Sabbath day in the long, long ago, I find it a little foretaste of that better land to which I look forward. According to Mark 2:28 the Sabbath was made for me, and I do not know what I would do without it. Even if there were no fourth commandment I would still want the Sabbath to be an integral part of my life.

With Abraham Heschel, I find the Sabbath a memorial in time, a symbol of God's presence in time and an assurance that he is still with us. It sets us free from slavery to things, which are forgeries of happiness, and reminds us of what life is all about. It is a sheltered island of rest and refreshment in the tempestuous ocean of time where we can pause to get our bearings. It sets us free from the tyranny of the mad rush of modern life and gives us a taste of eternity.

This issue focuses on the Sabbath. Thoughtful readers will find in the lead article by Dr. Desmond Ford the most recent and impressive defense of the Sabbath of which we are aware. It reflects his book on the subject, *The Forgotten Day*, and his recent address at the San Diego chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums.

Adventist Today also asked two former Adventists, a pastor and a Bible scholar, to present their reasons for no longer considering the seventh-day Sabbath a Bible precept for modern Christians. May these two articles inspire all of us to examine our reasons for being seventh-day Adventists.

In his article "An Adventist in Exile" in our November-December 1995 issue, Dr. Jerry Gladson recounts his pilgrimage of faith. During his tour of duty at Southern Adventist College he was regarded as one of the most promising young Adventist Bible scholars. Here, he explains why he no longer considers the Sabbath an essential facet of his loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Dale Ratzlaff, formerly a pastor in the Central California Conference, is new to the pages of *Adventist Today*. His recent book *The Sabbath in Crisis*, a very readable and carefully reasoned argument against the seventh-day Sabbath, will be of interest to readers who wish to pursue his perspective further. His 1996 book *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* examines other facets of Adventist belief.

These three writers have each endured regrettable circumstances that led to their defrocking as Adventist ministers. Those who disciplined them must bear at least part of the responsibility for these events. One of the three—Dr. Ford—is still a member of the church, and his personal lifestyle is distinctly Adventist.

We believe that thoughtful *Adventist Today* readers will find this cluster of articles helpful in comparing the reasons for and against observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Raymond Cottrell is the editor of *Adventist Today*.



Raymond Cottrell

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Photo by Richard Cross.



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FIRST CLASS



Atlantic Union College: A Wake-up Call

The current situation at Atlantic Union College is unfortunate to say the least, but could have been predicted some years ago if church leaders had been willing to listen to the warnings of some professionals in Adventist higher education. In the late 1970s, several in positions of educational leadership began to suggest the need for consolidation as a means of reducing higher educational costs and thus preserving one of the church's most valuable evangelistic resources. Board of Higher Education efforts to promote cooperation among colleges as a means of reducing proliferation of courses and majors was commendable but had been only marginally successful. Competition for students intensified as the pool of college-age youth declined across the country. Tuition continued to spiral upward, whereas church subsidies declined annually as a percentage of operating costs. Community colleges close to students' homes proliferated throughout the country. These trends in higher education alone should have triggered careful attention and analysis by church leaders if they were seriously concerned about maintaining a viable, affordable system of higher education in North America.

Because North America has historically been dominated by the General Conference, the regional Union Conferences have had complete control of higher education with the exception of Oakwood College and Andrews and Loma Linda universities. At the turn of the century, regional institutions of higher education supported by regional church organizations were widespread and necessary in an age when communication and transportation was primitive. Adventist constituents strongly supported their colleges because they envisioned them as sanctuaries from the

worldly influences their children might encounter on public or independent university campuses. Ministers strongly promoted the distinctive advantages of attendance at a church-operated college. The colleges were, and continue to be, a great source of pride to their respective Union Conferences. The spiritual environment existing on a given campus was highly regarded as church and college administrators touted such advantages as rural location, degree of adherence to church doctrine, control of student behavior, and opportunities for student employment to help defray educational costs.

Organizational decentralization in North America has produced three universities, nine liberal arts colleges, and two junior colleges. Although some favor further decentralization, such as congregationalism of churches, this is not a workable solution for the higher educational system of the church. If higher education is to survive and prosper in North America, increased centralization with control shifted from regional Union Conferences to an empowered North American Division seems the best logical solution. To continue the present system will only increase competition for church funds and students and hasten the demise of other Adventist colleges struggling to survive. Business as usual can only cause proliferation of academic programs to continue, costs to rise, physical plants to further deteriorate from deferred maintenance, and enrollments to further decline as students are presented with more education options. Atlantic Union College is just the first to have reached the point where these and other factors have placed an inordinate financial burden on the resources of the Atlantic Union Conference. Hopefully, the church will not permit more Adventist colleges to reach crisis proportions and die by default. The church in North America must begin

to seriously manage its valuable higher educational resources and design a system that is within its financial means and yet retains the highest academic quality possible. This is a wake-up call that, if not heeded, could seriously affect the future growth of the church worldwide as well as in North America.

John W. Cassell, Jr.

Past President, Pacific Union College

Abuse in the Adventist Subculture

We do find it regrettable that you put in large print on the last cover "One Third of Adventists Abused" for all postal employees to see, since it travels uncovered. We really don't need that publicity.

Gladys Adams

Fredericksburg, Virginia

I wish the world didn't have to see the negative messages emblazoned across the front of the magazine.

Elsie D. Law

Ferron, Utah

What an embarrassing paper for the post offices to see! . . . *Adventist Today* is the most depressing piece of mail to be put in our mailbox. Let the daily news be negative—we need the positive!

George and Nancy Smith

Phoenix, Arizona

"As a man thinketh, so is he," says Holy Writ. If you want proof of this, ask psychoanalysts. If you want substantiation, . . . read *Adventist Today*. Ever since it was first published, each successive issue has demonstrated a downward trend toward the negative, the aggressive, nay, the sadistic. How low must a publication sink before it begins to stink?

Justus Ogembo

Natick, Massachusetts

This is to thank you for publishing the article on spiritual abuse by Edie Westphal (Vol. 4, No. 2). It is so good to know that no one can make me feel guilty just because I did not do everything just as they thought I should, like what they conceived as my "Christian duty"!

[In my own experience] as a new member in their family I was mostly uninformed of the many facets of the problem with their wayward family member. The manipulative tactics were put upon me in so many ways until the pressure became unbearable. When I found out they were part of the group called "Branch Davidians" I knew then where those tactics had come from! But the damage they had done had left an unhealed sore and had caused estrangement between us lasting these four years!

But now that I have devoured the above article I feel a freedom of conscience not known for so long! Praise God I am free! It's not my fault!

Too many people carry around excuses for someone in their family who should have been dealt with and disciplined long ago, and how convenient when they can shift the blame to someone else! They seem to forget that the wayward one made his own choices!

Many young people disrespect the older generation, as if the older ones do not know enough to serve God the "right way"! And then they have the nerve to put the guilt trip upon the older folks for not doing just exactly as they had outlined to save a hopeless brother that they failed to save themselves!

Thank you also for the bibliography of resources, a much needed discussion in our church today! We are full of spiritual abuse!

Bessie Siemens Lobsien
Redding, California

I would like to have 10 copies of *Adventist Today* Vol.4, No. 2 (March-April issue). The issue about abuse is very good and I would like to share it with my friends.

Timo Karppi
Angwin, California

We do appreciate the honesty and integrity of your magazine. . . God bless you in your work.

Alan and Alik Collins
Salinas, California

Sharing Experiences

We enjoy so much your enlightening magazine on things transpiring in the Adventist Church. We also enjoy hearing experiences of people like ourselves, who love our Church, but are disturbed by some of the things going on.

It is comforting to know that there are others, like ourselves, who are willing to cling to the Bible and the Bible only. However, in making this decision, there are several of us that have been forced from our churches, and it is wonderful to have this little paper coming to our home, bringing with it the realization that there are others that are having similar problems.

But most of all, we have that beautiful assurance of the Lord's continuing love for us and our growing love for him!

Beverly J. Stephenson-Stacy
Spokane, Washington

When President Folkenberg calls ordinations "rebellious" he acknowledges that he understands the messages. Hierarchical leaders resent rebellions. However, historically some rebellions are applauded as effective and necessary. For examples: Moses was a treasonous murderer to the Pharaoh. The major New Testament figure was crucified as a threat. Paul the apostle was seditious to unity in Rome and Jerusalem. At Lexington, Massachusetts, rebellious patriots started a revolutionary war for reasons now accepted as valid. Our future historians will note whether leaders adapted and led or dug in and widened the disparities.

Robert Lee Marsh
Glendale, California

Adventist Review as General Conference Mouthpiece

The increased General Conference authority over the *Review* represents a shift in the tension between independent journalism vs. control. This increases the need and value of independent, responsi-

ble, constructive, thoughtful publications such as *Adventist Today* and *Spectrum*.

Robert Lee Marsh
Glendale, California

Staying in the Church and Leaving It

I do have some reservations about your editorial policy. I think it is out of place to give former Adventists a platform to air their reasons . . . on why they left or are leaving the Adventist church. . . Our church has a message for this time and it is not a time for us to encourage this sifting. I believe that when we do this we are becoming a party to what they are doing.

Alten A. Bringle
Lakewood, Colorado

I really hope this magazine will be more uplifting. Many times it creates doubts about the SDA church. I hope it will get better.

Robert Forss
West Lafayette, Indiana

Thank you for providing a much needed channel of information. We are in our mid-70s and feel this open discussion is vital to the life of our church!

Earl and Elaine Munson
Battle Creek, Michigan

I enjoy your magazine very much and appreciate the timely topics you address.

Arni G. Asgeirsson
Newburyport, Massachusetts

Thanks for your excellent paper. We read it all and are stimulated and benefited. I would like some article on the positive accomplishments of the organized church. Or would that be news?

Gale Gabbert
Hogansville, Georgia

Tithing and Political Power

I am surprised that your recent articles on tithing brushed past one of the central facts about the current SDA system. Currently, the political power of the administrative clergy in the church at the Union and General Conference levels is proportional to the degree that they can

maintain control of two major elements: appointment to office and cash flow. Control of nominating committees means control of appointments. The cash flow of the church is dependent on control of the tithing dollar.

One of the great successes of the church hierarchy over several generations has been their ability to maintain the myth that to "tith" means to turn over 10 percent of income to the local conference administration. As a result of past scandals (e.g., Davenport), this myth has eroded, at least in North America. However, until a majority of church members in North America give their tithe to support local church ministries, there will be no pressure on conference administrators to eliminate the unnecessary union conferences and drastically downsize the bloated General Conference bureaucracies.

The main trick will be how to do this without harming those parts of the church that are doing something constructive, e.g., educational institutions. However, the history of bureaucracies is that they protect their own—first, last and always.

Ervin Taylor

Loma Linda, California

TITHING, BUREAUCRACY AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

Firing a pastor (May/June *Adventist Today*) or turning church members into pariahs for returning God's money to the church organization they believe most needs it is a triumph of oppressive bureaucracy over individual freedom. All we are and have and do belongs to God, of course. But all Adventists should be able to pray and return their part to the Lord as the Spirit impresses them to do.

However, there is bureaucracy... (My definition of "bureaucracy" is "people doing little or nothing holding up people who want to do something"). Bureaucracies are self-perpetuating, ever-hungry monsters—hungry for money, for more bodies, for power. In the case of our church, bureaucracy means the imposition of conformity and powerlessness down the line. In such a climate, grassroots wishes are ignored, parliamen-

tary procedures are used to stifle rather than facilitate the expression of ideas, and no one dares be different, for the nail that sticks out is swiftly hammered down. The result is that many spiritual, capable people stop contributing their money, time, and ideas, and eventually leave the church altogether.

The Adventist Church is overdue for a major reorganization aimed at eliminating much of its bureaucracy and giving far more, real power to lay people and the local churches they join into. As a first step in that direction—one that can be taken by the local churches themselves—the leadership of the local church should appreciate rather than penalize members who prayerfully decide to redirect their tithes to meet the needs of the local church rather than cater to the wishes of the conference—only one of layers upon layers of church hierarchy.

Hector Hammerly

Vancouver, British Columbia

THE IRS & THE REDEFINITION OF ADVENTIST MINISTRY

I agree with those who would say that this was a matter of policy, rather than theology. Therefore, I do not criticize the church for changing its policy in response to financial pressures. However, let us admit that this is the case. Also, let us acknowledge that this might raise some concerns.

But, I think that there is another issue which was not clearly raised in the article:

We who were licensed during these times were the ones who, in filing our IRS returns, were required to either claim a ministerial classification to which we were not entitled, or were required to act against the advice of the church and file contrary to church advice. I raised this issue with church leadership. I was simply told to file as instructed. I felt at that time, as I do now, that the church placed me in a moral dilemma, asking me to claim a classification to which I was not entitled.

I wonder, are there other areas in which we place our people in similar moral dilemmas?

Gregory Matthews

Brighton, Colorado

ADVENTIST TODAY BIASED ?

A number of readers have written *Adventist Today* to complain about the tone or bias. Allow me to attempt a response to the concerns about bias.

I think *Adventist Today* editors do have a bias on many topics, including the ordination of women. I happen to share their pro-ordination bias, but I believe the editors are making an honest effort to listen to and acknowledge other viewpoints. The antiordination arguments, of course, get ample airing through other church-run and independent media. The disagreements regarding the ordination of women, in my opinion, boil down to differences in how to interpret scripture. *Adventist Today* editors attempted to encourage discussion of interpretation at their 1995 panel discussion in Loma Linda and did invite numerous articulate representatives of the "conservative" modes of interpretation, but were repeatedly turned down. It is to Dr. Mashchak's credit that he finally accepted their invitation to the Loma Linda meeting. See panelists' papers in *Adventist Today*, Jan/Feb, 1996.

I believe *Adventist Today* is correct in attempting to recognize other points of view, however *Adventist Today* is not obliged to repeat or give equal space to what is already articulated in other journals. Rather, *Adventist Today* attempts to provide balance to the total pool of ideas and knowledge in the Adventist community.

Additionally, *Adventist Today* is addressing topics not discussed in other journals (such as the *Adventist Review*). I think some of these topics, even if they can be branded as negative and troubling to some sensitive readers, are very important to the collective and personal well-being of church members. So I would say, "Keep up the good work."

Michael Scofield

Anaheim, California

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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*Conference's Members Still Divided***California Churches Move Ahead on Ordination***by James Walters and Ervin Taylor*

Last December, two Adventist churches in Southern California ordained women pastors on their staffs. Now, a third California church, the Garden Grove/Irvine church, has ordained a woman minister, and a fourth, the Loma Linda University Church, has moved in that direction. However, on this issue, the ethnically diverse Southeastern California Conference still reflects the differing views of the world church.

Garden Grove Ordination

The Garden Grove/Irvine congregation of 1,200 members ordained its two associate pastors, Margo Pitrone and Jared Fulton, on Sabbath, July 6. Margo Pitrone holds a B.S. in social work, and a B.A. in religion and psychology, and completed her M.Div. at Princeton Theological Seminary. Over the past 10 years she served in several pastoral positions, primarily in San Diego. At Garden Grove her duties include administration, care and nurture.

Jared Fulton received a B.A. in theology from Loma Linda University, Riverside campus, and he has served for seven years as academy dean of men and youth pastor—a role he now fills at Garden Grove.

The Garden Grove service, attended by over 200 members and friends, contrasted with recent services held at the Sligo and La Sierra churches in its informality and casual tone, heavily involving family and friends of the ordinands. Some 30 ministers from several conferences participated in the ordination prayer.

The lead story in the *Los Angeles Times* weekly religion section (July 6) featured the Garden Grove ordination. Two Los Angeles television news teams covered the service.

The primary impetus for this ordination was Duff Gorle, senior pastor at Garden Grove. He surveyed his church, with 80 percent favoring ordination of the associate pastors. However the pastor's initiative survived a very close vote of the church board in mid-June.

Loma Linda University Church

In a similar move, the Loma Linda University Church, the largest Adventist congregation in the United States, voted 2-1 in a business meeting on June 17 to accept a revolutionary plan for educating and preparing for ordination all its unordained ministers, both men and women. A University Church pastoral education committee will supervise an on-the-job educational program for its full-time and part-time ministers (broadly defined to include social work, music, etc.), culminating in ordination.

As *Adventist Today* reported in March/April, the "Ministry at Loma Linda University Church" plan is both gender inclusive and congregation based. William Loveless, senior pastor and architect of the plan, which had undergone eight revisions, argued at the meeting that the ordination of women was not a moral issue, inferring that it was primarily a matter of ecclesiastical organization and local culture. Loveless stated that in such cases where the ordination of women is compatible with cultural values, the denomination should simply "grow up." Loveless characterized the plan as an example of "healthy congregationalism."

During the open discussion, the number of those speaking in support and in opposition were about equally divided.

Supporters emphasized the need to affirm the role of women, that this action would not be rebellion but simply a return to a situation that was more characteristic of the early Adventist church, and that it was "high time," in the words of one speaker, for action—"Let's just do it!" Those in opposition argued that endorsement of the plan would be tantamount to an open rejection of the decision of the General Conference at Utrecht and of "biblical authority." Further, a yes vote would be divisive and would create a precedent that would sow the seeds of schism.

The local conference officers were briefed on the church's plan, but no permission was sought. Loveless emphasized that while the conference officers did not and could not approve a document contemplating the ordination of women to ministry, the Loma Linda church was "not going against their [conference officials'] wishes." The conference's ministerial director is invited to serve on the congregation's pastoral education committee.

Opinions of Southeastern's Ethnic Groups

These two largely Anglo congregations are not typical of the conference as a whole. In May, several of the conference's Gender Inclusiveness Commission members met with four ethnic pastors' caucus groups and found great diversity among them. While the Anglo pastors appeared to be almost wholly in favor of women being ordained, the 20 Asian pastors affirmed (5-1) the world church's ban on women's ordination. The African-American pastors appeared almost as favorable as their white colleagues, but showed none of the cynicism displayed by some white pastors. The Latino pastors were not unified on the issue.

Adventist Behavioral Scientists Consider Fundamentalism

by James Stirling

In early April, 30 members of the Association of Adventist Behavioral Scientists met at Pine Springs Ranch, a mountain lodge in southern California, for a two-day discussion of their concerns for the Adventist church. They presented papers for a "Symposium on Fundamentalism and Social Issues" and took a searching look at the way the church is transmitting its core values to a younger generation. Five of those making presentations were women, and a few others, chiefly spouses or observers, helped bring a feminine perspective to an otherwise male domain.

Although the association has been in existence for more than 25 years, this was the first such meeting. Many participants were from the Loma Linda-La Sierra area, and others came from Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan, as well as places like Humboldt State University in Arcata, California, Walla Walla College, in College Place, Washington, and even Philadelphia. Most of the speakers were faculty members at Adventist schools, representing sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, social work, psychiatry, marriage and family counseling, and church history. The graduate program in clinical and research psychology at

Loma Linda University provided much of the early direction for the planning of the event. The Andrews department of behavioral science organized an entire morning's discussion on Adventist education and the problems of keeping religious commitment alive among teenagers and young adults.

The meeting focused intense discussion on the problems for society and the church which result from religious fundamentalism. Some felt that the Adventist church has been influenced by the fervor of the religious right in America. How and why, and the possible effects on family life, religious experience, intellectual growth, and mental health and well-being were analyzed at great depth in the presentations.

One observer was impressed by the frequent prayers at the beginning of sessions and by the references to God's will and work God is doing in the earth. "This group is clearly committed to the church and eager to help it deal with its problems and further its mission," she told *Adventist Today*. She was impressed with the high level of serious scholarship and professional expertise.

Especially moving was the keynote speech by Caleb Rosado, professor at Humboldt State University, Arcata, California. Rosado likened the behavioral sciences to the "left hand" of the church, largely ignored because

of the church's focus on the "right hand" of medical evangelism. Yet, as he pointed out, evangelists who hope to get favorable attention must be aware of changes in society and adapt their approach accordingly. If we are to help strengthen family bonds in individual congregations we must learn how to help people deal with stresses and tensions. And if we are to deal with people of diverse cultures we must learn how to understand such diversity.

At the end of the second day of the symposium, a business meeting was held and new officers elected. The new president is Johnny Ramirez, associate professor of theology, psychology and culture in the faculty of religion at LLU. Vice president is Katty Joy French, professor of nursing, and treasurer is Antonius Brandon, professor of marriage and family therapy, both at LLU. Secretary is James Stirling, adjunct professor of anthropology at LLU and La Sierra University. All of these are involved in preparing a volume of proceedings dealing with fundamentalism and the church.

Staff at Andrews University, led by Oystein LaBianca, are laying plans for a fall, 1997 meeting in San Diego and are planning to publish the proceedings, dealing with the transmission of values in the church.

The organization is open to all Adventists with training or professional interest in any of the behavioral sciences. Those interested should contact James Stirling, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, La Sierra University, Riverside, California 92515. E-mail: stirlingj@delphi.com.

Liturgical Service Offered at La Sierra University Church

by Roberta J. Moore

For three years a handful of members of the La Sierra University Church have gathered at 8:30 each Sabbath morning for what they think is a one-of-a-kind worship service among Seventh-day Adventists.

It follows a pattern of short readings by a leader and responses by the congregation, adapted from several sources, chiefly liturgies in the *The Book of Common Worship* and *The Book of Common Prayer*.

"I like it because the congregation takes an active part as the service moves along," says Kenneth Sutter, La Sierra University architect and a frequent homilist.

The homily, no more than 10 or 12 minutes long, is based on one of several scripture readings for the day, from the Psalms and narratives in both the Old and New Testaments.

The idea for this type of worship came from talk among a Sabbath School group, mainly university teachers. In the three years since that first

discussion, Robert Dunn, chairman of English and communication, and Fritz Guy, professor of philosophy and religion, have written the liturgies.

For several weeks last spring, the service followed a liturgy celebrating the Sabbath; it is the work of Professor Guy.

"I like it because there's no folderol," says John T. Hamilton, emeritus professor of music.

A small group of volunteers, after three years, is still rounding up service leaders, lectors, cantors and homilists. As word spreads about the inspiration of the service, some Sabbaths as many as a hundred gather to worship after the pattern of generations ago.

The Luzeiro After 62 Years

American Pastor Finds Adventure On the Amazon

by Lawrence Downing

The Luzeiro is an Adventist mission icon. Initiated by Leo Halliwell in 1932, the medical launches, now numbering 11, provide medical care to those along the rivers in the Brazilian Amazon basin. I read Halliwell's book, *Light in the Jungle*, as a high school student and once met Pastor Halliwell when he visited our home. But I wanted to see for myself how the launch program works and how it affects people—how people living in the Brazilian jungle can be helped by medical launches. Therefore I was pleased when I and my wife, a pediatrician, were able to spend two and a half weeks in the late summer of 1994 on the Luzeiro XXVI mission launch.

LIFE IN THE AMAZON BASIN

We soon learned life in the Brazilian Amazon basin is very different from what we had seen in the Amazon Basin of Ecuador. We found that even the smaller towns in Brazil have hospitals and clinics staffed by trained physicians and nurses. The most remote villagers have generators and satellite dishes. They watch the same television programs we do. However, they live in a world far different from what they see on the screen. Ninja Turtles, speaking Portuguese, may fill their screens, but the people defecate in a stream that runs



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down to the river. When the villagers, especially the children, drink the untreated water from the stream or river, they get worms and amoebae.

My wife and I had assumed that our task would be to address the public health problems, and we had ready a package of custom-designed public health lectures on how to build latrines and how to keep body and village clean. Our first day on the boat made us aware this was not to be. The Brazilian pastor/captain had no protocol for introducing even the most basic of health practices to the village people.

DOS PERSONAS, POR FAVOR

When a villager summoned the boat to shore, the crew set out the gangplank. One end of the six-inch-wide board rested on shore and the other end nested precariously in an old tire hanging over the starboard bow. We “gringos” tempted fate whenever we walked its bouncy length. The patients didn’t blink an eye as they strode its undulating length. The people at each stop crowded into every empty space. Medical examinations and dental extractions were the hottest ticket in town.

After the second or third wave of villagers inundated the boat, a triage system was established and a doorkeeper appointed. “Dos personas, por favor,” two people, please. One Spanish-speaking student interviewed those who desired medical care and directed them to dentist, physician or nurse. Another Spanish-speaking student attempted to find out the problem. Fortunately, my wife, the guest physician (and only physician on board) knows a fair amount of medical Spanish and the American nurse had, in the three months he had been in Brazil, learned a smattering of Portuguese. Working as a language team, they generally managed to diagnose and prescribe treatment. An English/Portuguese-speaking translator would have been helpful. Each person who had a confirmed symptom received some kind of medicine, along with instructions on taking the medications. For those with nonspecific ailments, the physician and nurse dispensed sympathy and instructions to eat well, stay clean and rest. Usually at least a vitamin or aspirin was dispensed to each person. Everyone returned home happy, having received something.

Most went home satisfied, pleased to have had a listening ear and, for some, “magic” medicine from America. The boat crew was happy, for they had helped people feel better, and, we suspect, felt their standing in the community was raised because they had brought the Americans.

UNHAPPY LOCAL PHYSICIANS

It was not until the third or fourth day on the river that we learned that the local physicians, at the village hospitals, were not pleased with the medical treatment offered on the boats. They were distressed that untrained boat personnel dispensed medication and drugs without knowing what they were giving nor why they gave it. They also were not satisfied that the medical launches provide no patient follow-up. It is true that the boat crew, not medically trained, had only a rudimentary understanding of disease and of the medications they freely dispensed. As we were leaving to return home the pastor/captain came to my wife and asked what was in the boxes and bottles we had brought with us and left behind with the American reg-

istered nurse. My wife had no time to explain. She wished he had not waited until we left to express interest in the medications.

When an adult or child came aboard complaining of a toothache, the standard procedure was to seat the person in a crude dental chair and pull the tooth. The boat crew practiced primitive dental techniques. The syringes looked like cast-offs from a large-animal veterinary practice. The instruments were more or less cleaned, usually with a cotton swab dipped in alcohol and the swab passed over the instrument tip. Occasionally, at the end of the day, the crew boiled the instruments.

All of the used medical products, syringes, bandages, and any other refuse, for that matter, were thrown overboard into the river. Our environmental consciences were outraged, although it was handy to toss garbage out the window and be done with it. We asked why we could not find an alternative disposal method, such as burying or burning the trash. The crew told us we could do this, but when

the rains came it would be washed into the river anyway. We said no more.

MORE EFFECTIVE MISSION WORK

Long stretches between stops provided opportunity for thought and conversation. Often our discussions focused on what might be done to make mission work along the river more effective. We concluded that the launch program is not the most effective way to provide medical care. We agreed that medical resources and personnel were not well utilized and that the follow-up was not adequate. We also knew that the boat came this way only once every five or six months. A better way, we believe, is to establish medical centers along the river, appoint and train local people in basic first aid, and instruct them to give simple treatments. The central mission office can offer regular health education programs, and when foreign experts come, let the resident caregivers and the foreigners work together. This program would bring consistent care to people where they are and would be less expen-

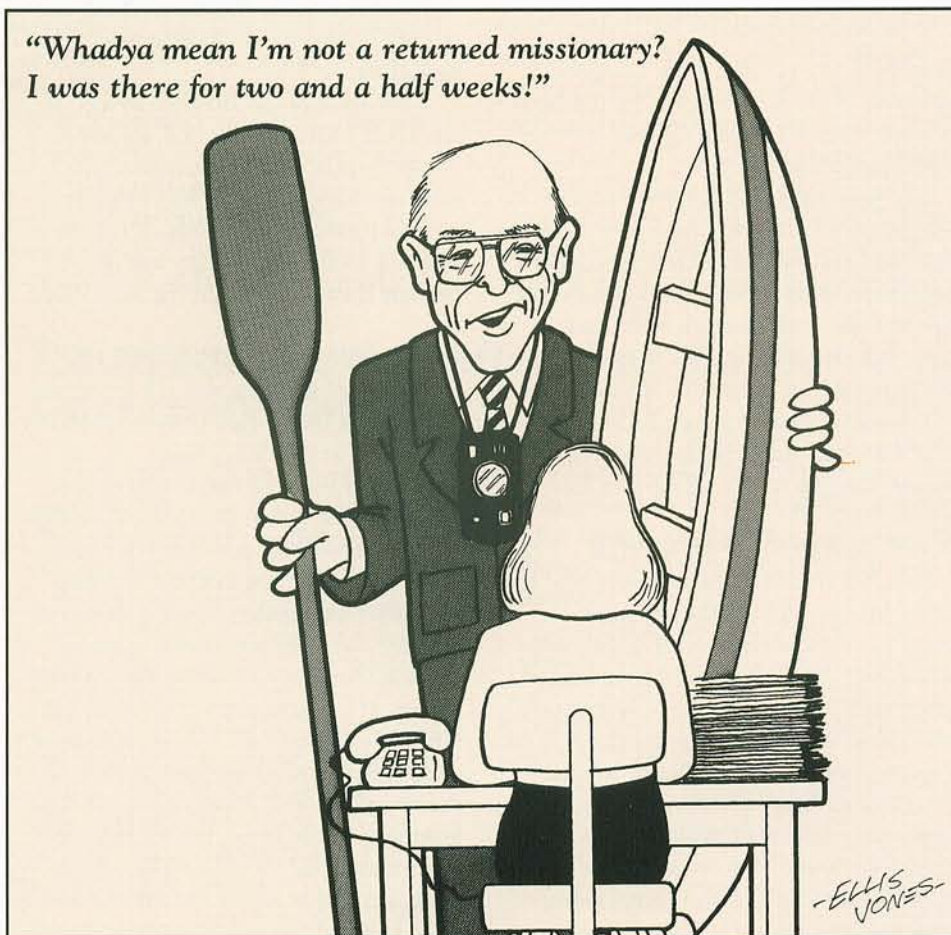
sive. We were told that the budget to maintain the medical launch program is greater than all of the tithe collected in Brazil. This money to finance the launch program comes from America.

Our trip on the launch was enjoyable. The crew was pleasant and the food poor but adequate. The actual work we accomplished was a fraction of what we might have done had there been preparation and organization and had the pastor/captain not limited our effectiveness by confining us to the towns. He also decided to keep the Luzeiro XXVI with him while sending us downriver on a barge; this meant that there would not be return trips to the villages we had previously visited. The captain and I had words over his choice. It had been my understanding that on the return trip we were to stop and see those we had visited on the way upriver. The mission director, on our return, confirmed this. But the law of the sea prevailed: The captain is boss!

NO MORE GUILT

Of the 160 patients our group examined, less than 30 lived along the river. The rest were seen in two towns, the one where we began and the other our terminus point. Most of the people we saw were Seventh-day Adventist church members. Yet no one on board was prepared to give a gospel presentation, unroll the classic Sabbath School picture rolls to tell eager Brazilians about Jesus, nor present a health talk when we stopped along the river. We think someone on each boat should at least carry some visual aids and be prepared to show people how to brush their teeth and purify drinking water.

Now, back home, I realize that despite organizational problems and inefficiencies and all of us becoming ill, our group thoroughly enjoyed our time on the river. I no longer carry quite the load of repressed guilt for not fulfilling my academy week-of-prayer pledge to become a missionary nor my campmeeting response when Eric B. Hare asked, "How many of you boys and girls want to be a missionary?" (My hand went up with all the others.) I was at least an almost-missionary. When I reflect on this experience as a short-term missionary spouse, I find I carry happy thoughts.



Desmond Ford Asks:

Is the Seventh-Day Sabbath Christian?

Many of my friends disagree with me on this topic, and some of them are certainly brighter than I. My convictions in these few pages, however, were hard won. I did not inherit the doctrine of the Sabbath. I accepted it reluctantly, in the face of pressures of culture, church, family, and employment. Many years later when my friend Robert Brinsmead gave up Sabbath observance and wrote at length against it, I reviewed the whole matter and consequently published *The Forgotten Day*.

This rest day has had no rest from controversy over the centuries. Researchers are surprised at how many hundreds of articles and books Christians have circulated on the subject of the Sabbath. The most scholarly anti-Sabbatarian book of recent times, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, reminds us that those who think the question can be easily settled don't understand the theological vastness of the issues involved. As editor D. A. Carson points out, "It is one of the most difficult areas in the study of the relationship between the Testaments and in the history of the development of doctrine." (*Sabbath to*



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Lord's Day, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, p. 17.)

Some simple Christians see no reason for making the question such a topic of debate. To them it seems obvious that at least nine of the Ten Commandments have been binding for everyone from the beginning of time and will be binding forever. Did God, they ask, slip in one temporary commandment intended only for Jews for only a short time? These believers see no reason for humans to put asunder what God has joined together. All 10 of the commandments, they conclude, are valid for all mankind forever.

Other Christians, not so theologically simplistic, contemplate the Sabbath commandment's "decisive material significance," "radical importance," and the "almost monstrous range" of this law. They link it with the doctrines of God, of revelation, of God's eternity and humankind's temporal well-being, of the biblical conception of Creation as the setting for the covenant, and of the New Testament fulfillment of the divine purpose in redemption. (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III:4, pp. 49, 57.)

Indeed, Barth goes so far as to claim that “the Sabbath commandment explains all the other commandments, or all the other forms of the one commandment. It is thus to be placed at the head.” He quotes De Quervain approvingly: “Where the holy day becomes a day of man, society and humanity wither away and the demons rule...” (*Church Dogmatics*, III: p. 53.)

The Bible refers to the seventh-day Sabbath by name approximately 149 times. The New Testament contains proportionately more references than the Old. While quantity must not be confused with quality, the statistics are nevertheless impressive when compared with the paucity of references to the Lord’s Supper and to baptism in the New Testament, or to circumcision in the whole of Scripture.

It is further validating that biblical commentaries and theological articles written during recent decades contrast significantly with similar works of the 19th century. Most earlier works assumed that the shift from Sabbath to Sunday had church approval and apostolic support. Scholars no longer take this assumption for granted. Modern Gospel commentaries, for example, freely admit that Christ was not opposing the Sabbath, but rather the Pharisaic perversions of it. The book edited by Carson acknowledges that Christ kept the Sabbath law. It also says that the book of Acts suggests that the first Christians continued to keep the Sabbath, as later church history frequently documents:

“The Sabbath was an institution too central to Judaism for it to have been tampered with without provoking hostile reaction and persecution, but there’s no record of persecution on this account. Instead, the early Jewish Christians appeared to have taken advantage of Sabbath observance to preach Jesus the Messiah” (A.T. Lincoln, “From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: a Biblical and Theological Perspective,” *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*, ed. Carson, p. 365.)

There is really only one text in the whole Bible capable of being interpreted as a negative reference actually naming the Sabbath, and that is Colossians 2:16.

Christians are thus left with the option of judging the approximately 149 references by the one, or judging the one by the 149. And let us remember that Scripture repeatedly admonishes us that “in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”

The best theologians have recognized for a long time that all the covenants of Scripture were merely topical variants of the one great everlasting covenant.

As scholars like Lohse and Francis have pointed out, the issue discussed in Colossians is not primarily *nomos* [law] (found well over 100 times in Galatians and Romans but not once in Colossians). Rather the issue is a pre-gnostic “philosophy falsely so called,” or deceptive philosophy, having to do with “human precepts and doctrines” about “self-abasement and severity to the body” and “worship of angels.” (See Col 2:8,18.) Such man-made regulations mentioned in the context of Colossians 2:16 had to do with fasting on holy times and were quite unrelated to the Torah.

Colossians 2:16 is asserting that no one should be allowed to make rules and regulations for believers concerning the way in which they observed holy times. The text takes for granted the observance of the times, but it rejects ascetic practices on such times. The verse no more wipes out all Sabbath-keeping than it wipes out all eating and drinking (referred to in the same verse).

Some interpret Paul’s relative silence

on the subject to mean that the fourth commandment is irrelevant for Christians. But that silence can mean that he took it for granted. The Old Testament revelation sometimes ignores the Sabbath for centuries, but scholars admit the Jews observed it during those years. Besides the fact that historical books which cover hundreds of years do not specifically mention the Sabbath, the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon do not mention it either. But no one doubts that the readers and writers of those books observed it.

Admitting that Scripture (with the exception of Col 2:16) endorses the seventh-day Sabbath, some have resorted to arguments on the covenants to dispose of the institution. But it has seemed to many that the best theologians have recognized for a long time that all the covenants of Scripture were merely topical variants of the one great everlasting covenant. Therefore, it is erroneous to draw hard and fast distinctions between the covenant at Sinai and the new covenant, as if to suggest they were in essential opposition.

Sinai was a replay of the Abrahamic covenant. See Psalm 105:9-11 which is quite clear on this matter.

The word “new” in relationship to the covenant actually means “renewed,” as with the “new” earth and the “new” heart. According to Hebrews 8:8-12, the essence of the law proclaimed at the Exodus is now written in the heart. 2 Corinthians 3 is certainly not suggesting that idolatry, blasphemy, disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, theft, lying, and covetousness as well as Sabbath-breaking have been sanctified by the cross. No, it is merely saying that all law (even New Testament law) becomes the ministration of death if people teach it without the message of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit.

Personal Rationale

So far I have attempted to address some broad but significant arguments that come up in discussions about the Sabbath. I would like to add my personal, four-step rationale for Sabbath-keeping.

The primary duty of life is worship

(Matt 4:10). If our attention to worship is right, all else will be right. All unrighteousness grows out of ungodliness (Rom 1:18).

Unless there is a set time for important duties, they become “buried under the stuff”—like Saul.

Unless God names the time for worship, all other suggestions stand without authority—the necessity, therefore, for the fourth commandment.

We are creatures of time and as such require regular change for mental, physical and spiritual health. Thus we have summer and winter, day and night, work and rest. Even the primitive pagans saw the necessity for holy days, and the wisest philosophers like Plato endorsed the practice. The Sabbath of Scripture harmonizes perfectly with the nature of humankind and is rightly called a “delight,” or as the Hebrew says, a “luxury.” Twentieth-century Christians living in a world of speed, information, and demands on their time have every reason to be grateful for the special church day, the family day, the rest day, “the holy of the Lord, honorable” (Isa 58:13).

I challenge any reader to conceive of a greater blessing that God could have bestowed upon his family of believers than the permission to free themselves from all secular activities and anxieties for one whole day. What could be better than having a day to be spent in adoration of him, in fellowship with one another, and in Christian service? The day of God leads to the house of God and thus to the word of God which tells of the Son of God who offers all the salvation of God. Why should believers now need this blessing less than did the faithful in ancient times?

Eden’s Sabbath Is Eternal

Some hold that the Sabbath is mentioned in Genesis 2:1-3 only to foreshadow the time when it would be given to Israel as a requirement. They maintain that the real origin of the Sabbath was when God sent the manna thousands of years later. I contend that thorough exegesis does not support this view. The following eight comments explain my viewpoint.

1. All admit that the resting spoken of in Genesis 2:1-3 is set forth as transpiring on the first seventh day, and there seems

to be no evident reason for separating the resting from the blessing by a space of millennia. Indeed, many scholars have seen the theological purpose of Genesis 1 to be a prelude to the climax of instituting the Sabbath in the first verses of Chapter 2.

2. In Genesis 1:20, 22, 24-26, and 28, we read that God immediately blessed the work he did during the first six days of creation week. Genesis 2:2-3 seems to be an obvious parallel to these verses, and, as such, his blessing and sanctifying of the Sabbath must have taken place immediately as well.

3. In the fourth commandment itself, we have another parallel between what took place during the first six days of creation week and what transpired on the seventh day. Note the tense in Exodus 20:11: “For in six days the Lord *made* heaven and earth...and *rested* the seventh day; wherefore, the Lord *blessed* the Sabbath day and *hallowed* it.” All four verbs are in the past tense. No one disputes that the first two apply to creation week. The correlation of divine acts clearly indicates that the blessing and the hallowing took place at the same time as the resting. The last phrase, “and hallowed it,” has no significance unless the Sabbath was

proclaimed and set aside for human beings at Creation. The Hebrew term in this passage occurs repeatedly in Scripture to denote a public proclamation.

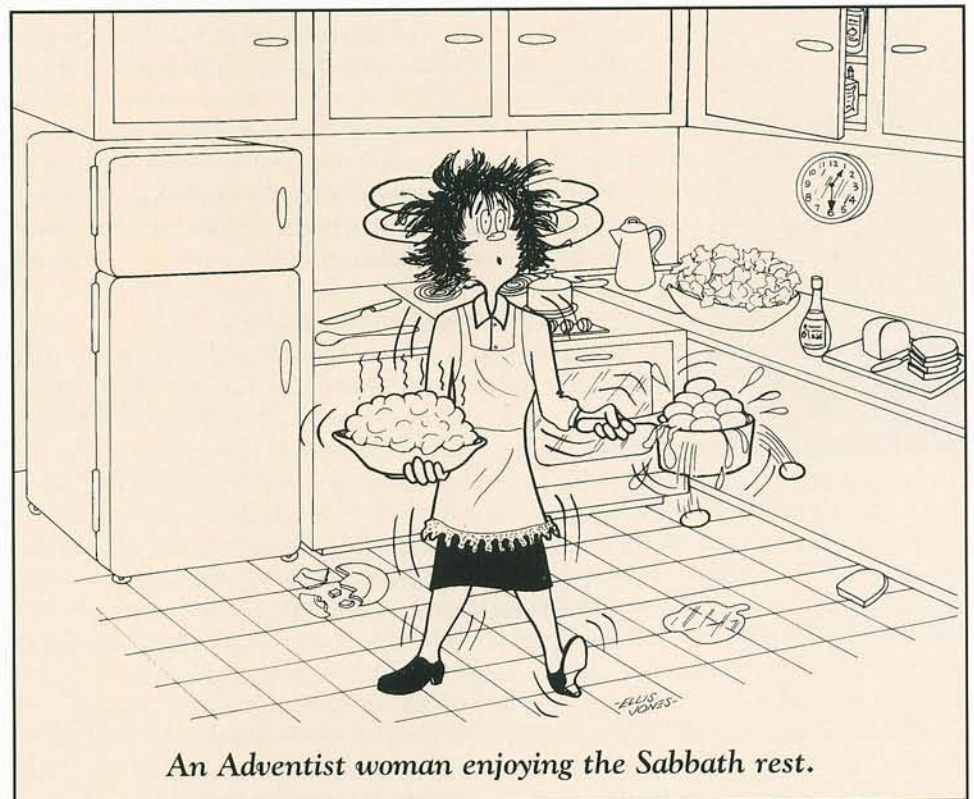
4. The fourth commandment affirms that the seventh day was already the Sabbath at the time God hallowed it, not thousands of years later.

5. The information in Genesis chapters 2-4 established the fact that humans were both workers and worshippers. They needed a special time for rest and adoration of the Creator. Why should this need be denied until Sinai?

6. There is no instance in Scripture of a memorial being instituted thousands of years after the event it memorialized. The Passover, for example, began at the time of the deliverance it symbolized.

Exodus 16 further supports the Edenic origin of the Sabbath. The reference addresses the Sabbath as if the Israelites already knew what it was. The language is far too casual to be the first introduction they had to such an important institution. (Compare it with the introduction of Passover in chapter 12.) The main theme of Exodus 16 is the provision of manna, not Sabbath observance.

7. The author of Hebrews 4 distinguish-



An Adventist woman enjoying the Sabbath rest.

es between the “rest” of Canaan and a Sabbatical rest “entered into” from the time when “the works were finished,” that is, from Creation. The argument of this section of the chapter is that “from the foundation of the world,” there has been a spiritual experience of rest offered to believers. Both the rest of the first Sabbath and the rest from pilgrimage in Canaan are symbols of the blessing offered to those who cease relying on their own works and trust instead in the finished work of Christ.

8. The moral nature of the Sabbath command indicates it originated in Eden. The test of an eternal moral law is whether or not it grows out of relationships between God and humanity. All agree the other nine commandments grew out of God’s relationships with man and woman and were binding on humanity from the time of creation. Certainly the Sabbath grows out of God’s relationships with humanity also. The fact that we are God’s creation is the foundation of all worship and morality. If people had faithfully observed the Sabbath from the beginning, there would never have been an atheist or a pagan.

It is interesting to discover that in the original Hebrew text, the center of the Ten Commandments is the phrase “the seventh day is the Sabbath.” Furthermore, the stated reason we are to remember this day is that God made heaven and earth. This is certainly not a Jewish reason. The commandment does not include any ceremonial features or rituals such as sacrifices. It merely invites humanity to rest from secular activities and to hallow the day that God has appointed.

Additionally, wherever the New Testament alludes to the Decalogue, it takes for granted that it is still in force (Eph 6).

Only the fourth commandment explains the right of the Creator to legislate. It alone gives the foundation of all worship and obedience. Without this commandment, the law could have been the product of any pagan deity or wandering nomad who claimed to be God. Only the fourth is prefaced by “Remember...” It is the most detailed, lengthy, and comprehensive of the ten and amounts to one-third of the Decalogue.

The first table of the commandments

tells us who to worship, how to worship (not with images but in spirit and in truth), the approach of worship (reverence), and the time for worship. Do not Christians need all of these still?

Even the placement of this law is important. Those who wish to eradicate it

The Sabbath is an acted-out parable of the blessings of the Gospel.

must clamber over three other obviously eternal laws if they come from one direction, or clamber back over six other obviously eternal laws if they come from the other direction. It is fenced in by divine inspiration and divine proclamation.

A law proclaimed by God himself and written with his own finger can be abolished only in as definite a manner as he first gave it. Such a retraction does not exist. Also, observe that the only positive commandments, the fourth and the fifth, refer to the two institutions of Eden which are the source of all the ten.

Jesus and the Sabbath

Christ himself kept the Sabbath in life as well as in death. The only whole day he spent in the tomb was the seventh-day Sabbath. During his life he risked his whole ministry to show how the Sabbath should be kept. He did for the Sabbath what he did for the other nine commandments—he freed it from unscriptural distortions. He worked seven miracles on the Sabbath and proclaimed it a day to celebrate God’s redemption.

Form criticism reminds us that the Gospels preserved only details which were relevant for the church after the cross. And they had many references to the Sabbath.

Consider the amazing range not only of people concerned in the Sabbath miracles but also of the arguments Jesus used to explain his actions. The miracles included men and women, young and old, people in church (synagogue), at home, and in other settings. In defending his reforms Christ argued from the Sabbath’s beginning in Eden (Mark 2:27), from the Sabbath laws of the Old Testament, from Old Testament history, from the later prophets, from God’s providential working, from everyday experience, from human reason, and from his own Lordship. In addition, he appealed to conscience. (See Mark 2:27,28; Matt 12:3-12; John 5:17; Mark 3:4; Luke 13:15-16; Matt 12:6-8; Luke 14:3; John 5:16,17; 9:13-16.)

Furthermore, in his last sermon when he referred to both the fall of Jerusalem and to the end of the world, Jesus admonished the disciples to pray regarding Sabbath observance at a time of persecution and crisis (Matt 24:20).

We have no record of any other institution that Christ labored so hard to defend and perpetuate as the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. How could he have done more?

The Sabbath as Parable

Now we come to perhaps the most important point of all. The Sabbath is an acted-out parable of the blessings of the Gospel. Our physical rest on the seventh day is but the sign of the rest of heart we have all week long because of the finished work of Christ. “We who have believed do enter into rest” (Heb 4:3). Just before the New Testament’s first allusion to the Sabbath, we have Christ’s great invitation to receive his rest that results from faith in him and in his finished work. (See Matt 11:28-30.)

For Christians Today

The Sabbath of Judaism, with its oppressive laws and its rituals applying to sacrifice and temple, has gone forever. So have the additional laws that surrounded most of the Ten Commandments as found in the Torah. But the Sabbath of Eden remains. It was for the first man and woman; it is for the last man and woman, and it is for every man and woman of all time.

The Sabbath in Christian Life:

A Reconsideration

Since early times, Christian tradition has called Sunday the “Lord’s day.”

Jerry A. Gladson

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has invested considerable energy in promoting the view that Saturday continues to be the Sabbath, that all people are obligated to observe this Sabbath, and, further, that the final, decisive crisis for humanity will focus on the issue of the Sabbath. Partly because they formally observe the seventh-day Sabbath, Adventists identify themselves with the Christian “remnant” in the Apocalypse (Rev 12:17) and therefore as the primary bearers of the authentic Christian tradition. (See *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 149-202.)

Bible students who have not grown up with this claim find it bewildering, for it seems to shift the emphasis of the New Testament from the *kerygma*, or gospel message of Christ, to an entirely different platform—a specific cultic obligation. It seems to turn the Christian church back toward a legalistic form of Christianity out of harmony with the freedom in Christ. (See Acts 15:1-11).

It is no wonder, then, that non-Adventists have many questions about Sabbath-keeping. Adventists have made numerous attempts through the years to make their views on the Sabbath more Christ-centered, but still their understanding of the Sabbath stands in tension with the Gospel of the New Testament.

This situation, in my opinion, warrants a closer

look at Adventist claims about the Sabbath. I do not intend to analyze here the alleged eschatological role of the Sabbath. Rather, I want to look at the deeper Adventist claim that the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is a Christian obligation. Obviously, if there are problems at this level, it is not necessary to proceed into eschatology.

Bible students readily admit that Saturday, the seventh day of the week, appears as the Sabbath in Scripture. Sunday is not presented as the Sabbath, nor is it a substitute for the Sabbath. Seventh-day Sabbath-keeping, in fact, has much to commend it, not the least being its continuity with the Hebrew roots of Christianity. Furthermore, setting apart a day of the week for rest underscores our dependence upon a Creator.

Since early times, however, Christian tradition has called Sunday the “Lord’s day.” There are 13 instances in the post-apostolic literature dating from as early as the second century where the term *kuriake hemera*, “Lord’s day,” or *kuriake*, “Lord’s,” appears associated with Sunday. Some of these sources may be disputed, but this is a weighty body of material that indicates a growing conception of how the early Christians viewed Sunday. We must also be open to the possibility that Revelation 1:10, “I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day (*kuriake hemera*),” is a late first century reference to Sunday. The Lord’s day, however, is an insti-



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tution completely distinct from the Sabbath even though it has assumed some of the Sabbath's characteristics.

The question, though, is whether or not the seventh-day Sabbath is a requirement. Here equally devout Christians part company. There are at least three considerations Adventists ought to ponder.

The Diversity of the New Testament

Adventists' interest in the seventh-day Sabbath stems from their roots in the Restoration movement of the early 19th century. In the 1800s many religious movements developed. They shared a common goal: to purify the church by recovering the practices and beliefs of the New Testament church. Such widely differing groups as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons); the Church of Christ, Scientist; the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

What Adventists need to hear in all this is that the New Testament may be honestly read in support of at least three views of the Sabbath, all of which may claim roots in the primitive church.

the Church of Christ; the Jehovah's Witnesses; as well as Seventh-day Adventists, are all results of the Restoration movement.

The diversity of all these denominations, however, illustrates a profound problem with Restorationism. The New Testament itself is not a single theological piece. Within the early church, people held different viewpoints and practices, including varying understandings of the Sabbath. We can think of these early understandings as "trajectories," because they eventually extend across history into the convictions about the Sabbath we see today.

Adventists readily identify with those early Christians who continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. From the beginning, before Christianity became a separate movement, it was quite natural for Christians from a Jewish background to continue to attend Jewish synagogues. They no doubt observed other feast days, such as the Passover, as well. Some Jewish Christians insisted that Christians must "be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5 New Revised Standard Version). From the Jewish Christian sector in early Christianity arose the practice of Christian observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

A different approach emerged from the non-Jewish Christian populations. Because the Gentile converts

were not used to Jewish practices, the early church did not expect them to submit to Jewish laws, including the Sabbath. The Jerusalem council in Acts 15 greatly reduced what was expected from Gentile converts, and none of the expectations included the Sabbath (Acts 15:19-21). All the references to the Sabbath in Acts are situated in a Jewish context.

From these Gentile or Hellenistic Christians arose an indifference to the seventh-day Sabbath. The Sabbath assumed a symbolic or typological function (Col 2:16-17; Heb 4:1-11). [This same view is reflected in the second century Justin Martyr, who equates refraining from perjury, theft, and adultery with the keeping of a "true and peaceful sabbath" (*Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, 12,3)]. Colossians seems intended for such persons: "Do not let anyone condemn you in matters of...observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths" (Col 2:16 NRSV). Jesus' words about the Sabbath in John may also reflect these views: "My Father is still working, and I also am working" (John 5:17 NRSV).

A less visible trajectory seems to be inherent in an embryonic respect accorded to Sunday as the day of the resurrection. This respect may lie behind Luke's reference to Paul's first day meeting to celebrate the Eucharist (Acts 20:7-12), and in the tendency to place the post-resurrection appearances of Christ on the first day (Matt 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-6, 13, 36; John 20:1, 19-23, 26-29). Eventually a full-blown theology of Sunday as the Lord's day grew out of this trajectory (Rev 1:10), possibly influenced by the pagan use of Sunday. (See Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance* pp. 303-21, and R.J. Bauckham, "The Lord's Day," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*, ed. D.A. Carson, pp. 221-50.)

What Adventists need to hear in all this is that the New Testament may be honestly read in support of at least three views of the Sabbath, all of which may claim roots in the primitive church.

Is the Sabbath a Test?

In the Pentateuch and during the years of Israel's exile and the post-exilic period, the Sabbath appears as a litmus test for Israel. (Exod 16:25,26; 31:13-17; Jer 17:24-27; Ezek 20:12, 20; Neh 13:15-18). Nowhere, however, does the New Testament say the Sabbath functions as a test. The Adventist construing of the mark of the beast (Rev 13:11-18) as enforced Sunday observance does not withstand good exegesis of the text. Someone reading Revelation 13 against its late first century background would never imagine it could be talking about Sunday versus the Sabbath as the eschatological test of Christian obedience.

On the contrary, this passage focuses on the Roman Empire, as study of almost any commentary

will show. The chapter entitled “The Revelation to John” by S. MacLean Gilmour in *Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary* (ed. C.M. Laymon, Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), clearly explains this understanding.

Other New Testament passages seem to insist the Sabbath is not a test for Christian faith. Paul’s reference in Colossians to “festivals, new moons, or sabbaths” (2:16) is like his rebuke to the Galatians for “observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years” (Gal 4:10).

These two passages employ a technical formula frequently used to designate all the Jewish sacred days. The full formula, which uses a chronological pattern, *annual...monthly...weekly*, invariably includes the weekly seventh-day Sabbath. For example, look at Hosea 2:11 “I will cause to cease all her mirth, her festivals [annual], her new moons [monthly], her sabbaths [weekly], that is all her appointed festivals” (literal translation). This formula also appears in an abbreviated form in a text which Adventists often quote, Isaiah 66:23, “From *new moon* to *new moon* [monthly] and from *sabbath* to *sabbath* [weekly], all flesh shall come to worship before me.”

The Colossians and Galatians passages are using this same formula with the same meaning in mind: the yearly, monthly and weekly sabbaths.

Adventists have tried to avoid this conclusion by suggesting the “sabbaths” in Colossians 2:16 are actually the annual, liturgical sabbaths found in Leviticus 23. In view of the fact that Paul uses the same formulaic style found repeatedly in the Old Testament, however, we must reject the Adventists’ suggestion.

Samuele Bacchiocchi, a leading Adventist sabbatarian scholar, agrees that Colossians is referring to the seventh-day Sabbath, and he has received sharp criticism within the denomination for this conclusion. He explains his viewpoint, however, that the Sabbath in Colossians was a perversion of the day which the local church practiced. “Whatever is said about the perverted use of an institution like the Sabbath,” he says in his book *From Sabbath to Sunday*, “cannot be legitimately used to challenge the validity of the commandment per se” (p. 355).

The scriptural passages, however, are straightforward. In Romans also, Paul counsels against passing judgment against someone because they observe or do not observe a day (Rom 14:1-7). To make the Sabbath a test of loyalty to Christian faith seems to move beyond the New Testament text.

The Kerygma Revisited

A final consideration for Adventists is the relationship between the *kerygma* (gospel message) and the Sabbath. The New Testament is rather consistent in maintaining faith in Jesus Christ as the test of loyalty

for Christians. “We receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him” (1 John 3:22 NRSV). What are these commandments, according to this writer?

“This is his commandment, that *we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another*” (v. 23). Belief in Jesus and a love of one’s neighbor are the tests of Christian loyalty in 1 John. Notice also that the command is to believe in Jesus, rather

What must be challenged is the claim that the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath constitutes a badge of divine approval and a way of separating Christians.

than to keep the law. To be sure, the Ten Commandments in the New Testament still help define how one is to live, but even the Ten Commandments must be interpreted by the gospel of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. The commandments have reached their goal (Rom 10:4), namely Christ.

Christ is the Centerpiece of Christian faith, not the Sabbath or any other observance. If someone confesses faith in Jesus, we as Christians are to receive that person as sister or brother, regardless of the day he or she observes (Acts 15:9-11).

The difficulty Adventists have had in showing how sabbatarianism correlates with the centrality of Jesus Christ should sound a note of caution. Perhaps the tension exists because Adventists have not accorded Jesus Christ the proper place in Christian faith.

The considerations in this article have shown how well-known Bible texts may be read differently from the way Adventists have traditionally interpreted them. In truth, the Bible—especially the New Testament—is vague on the question of Christians observing the seventh-day Sabbath. No one really questions that Saturday may be identified as the seventh-day Sabbath, nor that there are many advantages to observing it. Nor would many contest a person’s right to keep it.

Just as in early Christianity, however, there should be room in the contemporary Christian church for a variety of practices around this issue. What must be challenged is the claim that the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath constitutes a badge of divine approval and a way of separating Christians. Christ alone has that privilege.

Post-apostolic References to “Lord’s day”

Beginning early in the second century, the post-apostolic literature contains 13 references in which the term *kuriake hemera*, “Lord’s day,” or *kuriake*, “Lord’s,” appears associated with Sunday:

Didache 14:1
Ignatius, *Magnesians* 9:1
Gospel of Peter 35, 50
Dionysius of Corinth
Acts of Peter 29ff
Acts of Paul
Melito of Sardis
Irenaeus, *Fragment* 7
Valentinian
Clement of Alexandria
—Jerry Gladson

The Sabbath: A Shadow of Grace

by Dale Ratzlaff

The seventh-day Sabbath rest of Sinai prefigured the rest of grace experienced by the new covenant Christian. It was the repeatable sign or seal of the Sinaitic covenant by which Israel was to “remember,” and it was uniquely linked to that covenant.

The new covenant also has a repeatable sign Christians are to observe—the Lord’s supper. Now, we are to celebrate this service “in remembrance” of Christ.

The New Testament clearly teaches that the old covenant observances no longer apply to the new covenant Christian. It is also clear that God’s moral laws apply to all people, but the Sabbath is not a moral law. Why, then, is the Sabbath in the very center of God’s (moral) law of Ten Commandments? There is good reason.

God’s covenants with his people in the Old Testament closely followed the structure of ancient Near Eastern treaty covenant documents.

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Each had a sign, unique to that agreement, which was arbitrarily assigned by the suzerain, or ruler (God in this case), and placed in the very center of the covenant document. The ruled party was to keep or display the sign of the covenant as a symbol of obedience to the covenant stipulations. Failure to display the sign was considered a sign of rebellion and elicited drastic consequences.

God promised to give Israel the land of Canaan and to bless them in many ways. Israel, in turn, was to obey the law and observe the Sabbath as a sign of loyalty to the covenant. In order for us to understand this covenant relationship between God and Israel, we must understand three facets of the Sinaitic covenant:

First, the Ten Commandment law is the basic Sinaitic covenant. Moses “was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights...And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments” (Exod 34:28, New American Standard Bible). “He declared to you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, that is, the ten commandments; and he wrote them on two tables of stone.” (See Deut 4:13, also Deut 9:9, 11, 15 and Exod 40:20.)

Second, the “other laws” (Exodus through Deuteronomy) are an expanded version of the Sinaitic covenant. These explain how the people

were to interpret and apply the basic words of the covenant—the Ten Commandment law.

Third, the seventh-day Sabbath is the Sinaitic covenant reduced to a sign: “The sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he ceased from labor, and was refreshed” (Exod 31:16, 17).

We may see the Sinaitic covenant, therefore, in three dimensions: (1) The Ten Commandment law is the basic covenant; (2) The “book of the law” is the expanded version of the covenant; and (3) the Sabbath is the covenant reduced to a sign, or seal. All three dimensions, however, are part of the one Sinaitic covenant.

Scripture is very clear that the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai did not cancel the covenant he had made with Abraham. In Galatians 3:17 Paul says, “The law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.” For the nation of Israel these two covenants operated side by side from Sinai to the cross. While the Sabbath is the sign of the Sinaitic covenant, the Sinaitic covenant also incorporates the covenant sign of circumcision. Because the Israelites at Sinai were descendants of Abraham, they were included in the Abrahamic covenant.

Circumcision was the one-time entrance sign to the covenant community for the sons of Abraham. The seventh-day Sabbath was the continuing sign. Resting on the seventh day was a way of expressing loyalty to the Sinaitic covenant relationship.

It is important to recognize that the Sinaitic covenant existed between God and Israel alone. No other nation or people was involved. “The sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the sons of Israel forever” (Exod 31:16, 17). The Sinaitic covenant partners were God and the Israelites only. Others could join the covenant community, but only if the males were circumcised and all kept the Sabbath (see figure 1).

We now turn to the new covenant. It is a better revelation of truth. The revelation of God through Christ far surpasses the revelation of God through the Ten Commandments! While the old covenant existed between God and Israel, the new covenant is between the Father and the Son: “I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness...And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations” (Isa 42:6).

“Behold, I have come to do thy will. He takes

away the first [covenant] in order to establish the second [covenant]” (Heb 10:9).

“I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou has given me to do” (John 17:4).

The fact that the new covenant is between the Father and Jesus has profound implications for Christian assurance. Jesus fulfilled the covenant stipulations for us. He accomplished the Father’s will! We enter into the blessings of the new covenant promise by faith—belief and trust in the finished work of Christ.

The new covenant has a better law. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). “This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you” (John 15:12). This new commandment is expanded and applied in the gospels and epistles.

Baptism is the one time entrance sign for new covenant believers (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:38). The Lord’s supper is the repeatable sign of the new covenant:

“And when he had taken some bread and given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ And in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood’ (Luke 22:19-20). There is no question that the early church understood and observed these two signs of the new covenant as all true Christian churches do today (see figure 2).

<p>GOSPEL SHADOWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrifices • Rituals 	<p>COVENANT SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumcision • Sabbath
<p>CIVIL LAWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretations • Applications 	<p>MORAL LAWS</p>

Figure 1. Old Covenant

<p>MORAL PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>CIVIL LAWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretations • Applications
<p>COVENANT SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism • Lord’s Supper 	<p>GOSPEL OF CHRIST</p>

Figure 2. New Covenant

OLD COVENANT:	NEW COVENANT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written with ink • On tablets of stone • Not of the letter • The letter kills • Ministry of death • Ministry of condemnation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written with the Spirit • On tablets of the heart • But of the Spirit • The Spirit gives life • Ministry of the Spirit • Ministry of righteousness

Figure 3.

What does the New Testament teach about the old covenant? “When he said, ‘a new covenant,’ he has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear” (Heb 8:13). To what covenant is the writer of Hebrews referring? “Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary,” which he goes on to describe and concludes with “the tables of the covenant.” (Heb 9:4)

Here, the writer of Hebrews states that when God said “a new covenant” he made the first “obsolete.” He then goes on to say that the first covenant had regulations for divine worship, one of which was the Sabbath, and specifically includes the “tables of the covenant” in his definition of the first covenant which was ready to disappear and was becoming obsolete.

When I finally gave up trying to explain away this text and accepted it at face value, suddenly I saw a new paradigm. A new harmony in the New Testament opened up to me. I was truly able to put Christ at the center of my theology and keep him there. I was able to see grace in a new light, with new appreciation. My assurance took a giant leap forward (see figure 3).

The chart below (figure 4) illustrates Paul’s teaching.

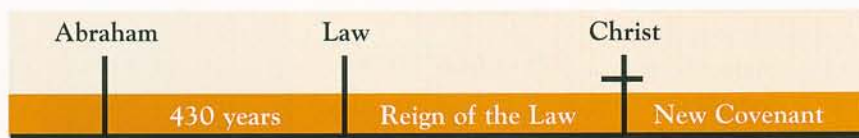


Figure 4.

Here, in contextual teaching, Paul calls the Law our tutor, then says we are no longer under a tutor. In other words, he is saying that the old covenant no longer has authority over the life of a Christian. But can we be sure this is what he

means? Yes. Note carefully his powerful allegory in Galatians 4:21-31 (see figure 5).

In clear, contextual teaching over several chapters in the book of Galatians, Paul states in three specific ways that Christians are not under the authority of the old covenant: (1) God gave the law 430 years after Abraham and it was in effect until the coming of Christ. (2) With the coming of Christ we are no longer under the law. (3) Christians are to “cast out” the old covenant and those who promote keeping it.

Colossians 2:16 teaches that the seventh-day Sabbath, along with the food offerings, the drink offerings, the yearly festivals, and the new moon celebrations of the Sinaitic covenant were only a shadow of Christ. Abundant evidence exists to show that the seventh-day Sabbath is in view in this verse.

It is well established that the Sabbath rest in Hebrews cannot be the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Likewise, there is abundant biblical evidence that the “sabbath rest” of Hebrews refers to the rest of grace which a person experiences when one believes the gospel. (See *Sabbath in Crisis* by Dale Ratzlaff, pp. 235-246.)

The Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15 settled the issue of old covenant observances for new covenant Christians. The topic of debate centered on circumcision because circumcision was the entrance sign into the old covenant community. None of the old covenant laws applied unless one was circumcised. Circumcision, therefore, stood for the whole law, including the Sabbath.

Some have said that the fact that the Epistles are silent regarding Sabbath controversy is evidence that the early Christians continued to keep the Sabbath. That some of the Jewish Christians continued to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, as well as many of the other observances of the old covenant, is undisputed. In his statements about the old covenant in Colossians, Galatians, Romans, and elsewhere, however, Paul clearly addresses the principle of why the Sabbath is no longer a requirement. The fact that Paul never instructed the Gentile Christians about proper Sabbath keeping is highly significant.

Jesus clearly took issue with the way the Jews kept the Sabbath. Many Gentile Christians were converted on the doorstep of the synagogue. These Gentiles knew how the Jews kept the Sabbath. Why did Paul not instruct Gentile Christians regarding proper Sabbath observance? Why did these Christians need no instruction on Sabbath law? Why did these Christians never ask

how they should observe the Sabbath? They asked for instruction on almost every other subject of the Christian life, why not the Sabbath? The answer is obvious. It was not a part of Paul's gospel.

I have no argument with those who continue to worship on the seventh day, but I do strongly disagree with historic Adventism in three areas:

First, the Sabbath is not the seal of God in the new covenant. The Holy Spirit is the seal of new covenant believers. "In him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of Promise" (Eph 1:13). The remembrance sign in the new covenant is the Lord's supper, not the Sabbath. It is by celebrating the Lord's supper that new covenant Christians demonstrate their loyalty to Christ: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26).

Second, the Sabbath is not a sign of the true church. Revelation 14:12 does not even have the Ten Commandments in view. In his writings, John never uses the word *entole* (commandment) to refer to old covenant law. When John uses the word "commandments" it usually is in the context of the new covenant law of love or to something other than old covenant law. When John wants to refer to old covenant law he always uses the word *nomos* (law).

Third, I strongly object to the way the Sabbath is used as a manipulative tool in traditional Adventist evangelism. Adventists often assert that the Sabbath is going to be the final test of loyalty for all Christians. They say something like this: Those who continue to worship on Sunday will receive the mark of the beast. Therefore, if you don't want to receive the mark of the beast, you better keep Sabbath and join the one and only true, remnant church.

This reasoning is foreign to New Testament theology and evangelism. It is outright cultic. The New Testament clearly teaches that belief in Christ is the testing truth for all Christians from the cross to the second coming. The sign of our loyalty to Christ will first be our baptism, then our repeated celebration of the Lord's supper, and finally, our living a consistent life of Christian love.

I do not believe one can make the example of Jesus normative in every respect, including Sabbath observance. He lived while the old covenant law was still in effect. He was circumcised and attended the yearly feasts of Passover and Hanukkah (John 10:23). He wore tassels on

OLD COVENANT:	NEW COVENANT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hagar = Bondwoman • Sinai-Jerusalem • Son of the bondwoman • Born of the flesh • In slavery • Persecuting • Like Ishmael • Born according to flesh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah = Free woman • The Jerusalem above • Son of the free woman • Born of promise • In freedom • Persecuted • Like Isaac • Born according to Spirit

Figure 5.

the bottom of His garment as prescribed in the old covenant law (Num 15:38; Matt 9:20). Jesus' teaching includes demands to hallow the temple (Mark 11:15-18) and to present old covenant sacrifices (Matt 5:23-24).

In summary, I see the seventh-day Sabbath grouped with all the other old covenant convocations. They all pointed forward to Christ. Now that he has come they are no longer required or needed. The shadow has been replaced by the reality of the risen Son!

Unless new covenant Christians understand and experience the role of the Holy Spirit, they will long for Sinai.

Those who have grown up believing that the Ten Commandments and especially the Sabbath are essential for their salvation may have trouble letting go of those convictions. The beauty of the new covenant, though, is that instead of the old written law directing our lives, the Holy Spirit reveals eternal principles of truth to us. Unless new covenant Christians understand and experience the role of the Holy Spirit they will long for Sinai. It is only the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit that can write the new covenant law of love on our hearts so that we have an ever-present Person who will teach us all things (John 14:26), guide us into all truth (John 16:13), and testify to us of Christ (John 15:26).

Sabbath in a New Key

by James Walters, Executive Editor

The Sabbath debate is more sophisticated than in the old days. Formerly, the issue was whether the Bible supports Saturday or Sunday as the Sabbath (Adventists won). Today the key issue is whether the Sabbath should remain the litmus test for genuine Christian belief, as the Adventist church has long taught. This discussion is only beginning.

Two former Adventist ministers argue in this issue of *Adventist Today* that faith in Christ must be the sole defining issue for the Christian, and ironically it is Desmond Ford, perhaps the Adventist theologian best known for his Christ-centered preaching, who also defends the biblical basis for continued obligatory observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Regardless of which of the three authors is "right," contemporary Adventism needs to repackage the Sabbath so that it may continue to delight not only the traditional Adventists (the vast majority), but also the intellectual Adventists, who bring different needs, interests and criteria to their Sabbath experiences. For them, the Sabbath truth must be sung in a new key—a key with notes that are biblically based, theologically informed and ecumenically inclusive.

Biblical

This country has 250 denominations, most very small. The great majority believe that they themselves are closest to biblical teaching. It's all a matter of selection and emphasis. For good reason, Adventists have long viewed the Sabbath as a memorial of divine Creation, and this emphasis should not only continue, but be broadened and infused with new life. For example, we are invited to be co-creators in devising solutions to the gargantuan problems now faced by our Father's world.

Unlike other Christians, Adventists give great emphasis to the Sabbath. But

this does not mean we are less Christian than mainstream Christians or even evangelical Christians, only that our Christian faith is enhanced by a healthy adherence to a creation-oriented Sabbath. We pursue a wholistic lifestyle, with six days of work each week and a

SABBATH ANALYSIS

day of physical and spiritual rest. Of course we must be sure to uphold Christ as the hub of our doctrinal wheel.

Theological

Theology is the enterprise of constructing words about God for our own time. Because times change, our theology must progress—it's the old Adventist idea of progressive truth.

Our view of the Sabbath has progressed dramatically. A hundred years ago we held knock'em-dead-with-Bible-texts debates on Sabbath/Sunday. Today, leading Adventist theologians emphasize the Sabbath as spiritual rest and celebration of life. Same day, different perspective.

Further progress in reflecting on the Sabbath may result in our humble recognition that, historically, we have been bound up in behavioral taboos. And perhaps we have been preoccupied with our own—and our Sabbath's—centrality in God's plan. (Early church pioneers reached a bit far in seeing the Sabbath as *the* definitive test in a world that has billions of inhabitants, many of whom don't even know the name Jesus.)

Inclusive


Adventism can build bridges in a world where anti-Semitism is still a vivid reality in some regions. We are New

Testament Christians who have solid roots in the Hebrew scriptures. We are not Jewish Christians, but our Sabbath and clean/unclean meat regulations demonstrate our appreciation of two badges of Judaism. We, perhaps more than any other Christian denomination, could lead the way in bridging the millennia-old rift between Jews and Christians, and thus we might begin to reverse the sad history of hate and violence that culminated in the Holocaust.

Further, we Adventists can rejoice with our fellow Christians who observe Sunday, a day commemorating the resurrection of Christ. Some of our congregations hold special Easter-weekend celebrations. Such observances, in addition to our observance of the Lord's Supper, enhance the importance we attach to Jesus. We need not agree with other Christians' interpretations of Scripture, but we can understand and appreciate their reasons for observing Sunday, including the apostle Paul's emphasis on Christian freedom. As we learn more about early Church history, we can see how Sunday became the preferred day for Christian worship.

Does this mean Adventism ought to change to Sunday? Absolutely not. For good reason, Adventists draw particular attention to divine Creation, and with our Sabbath observance, we complement other Christians' Sunday observance.

The seventh-day Sabbath is not obligatory as a work for salvation. But Adventist Christians possess the freedom in Christ to continue observing a day pointing to Creation, a day observed by believers throughout the entire biblical era.

Christ alone is Savior; the seventh day is our special holy time for celebrating that free salvation. 

Coming in future issues of *Adventist Today*

- What are the concerns of Adventist college students?
- God as a garbage picker
- Adventists and the Christian right

A Table Before Me

Last month I was watching a cooking show on television when the chef said something that really shocked me. This is not easy to do; the only other time I was shocked by a cooking show was when *The Frugal Gourmet* made soup out of whole chicken feet and ate some on camera.

Caprial Pence didn't do anything so indelicate. She merely said she had recently had a significant learning experience. She had been asked to bring a casserole to a potluck at her daughter's school, and was abashed to realize she had never made a casserole and didn't know where to begin. This is a professional, European-trained chef who runs her own restaurant and has her own television show. And she'd never made a casserole!

That got me thinking about the central role of the casserole in what I call "Adventist liturgical eating." For, just as Adventists substitute the sermon for the Eucharist as the focal point of worship, so too, the casserole, rather than roast beef or chicken, is the foundation of a traditional Adventist meal. If Norman Rockwell had painted Adventists at Sabbath dinner, he would have shown the head of the table spooning up cottage cheese loaf instead of slicing a huge turkey.

At least until very recently, before so many Adventist women began to work away from home, it was impossible to overstate the central place of Sabbath dinner in our overall Sabbath experience. When I was growing up, who we were could not be separated from how we ate. And how we ate on Sabbath afternoon was around a heavily laden family dinner table, or at a large potluck, with lots of vegetarian food, which meant lots of casseroles.

Sabbath dinner came to mean many things to me, almost all of them to do with abundance. We had to put two leaves in the table to make room for guests and extra family members. We had to bring in extra folding chairs from the garage. With all the plates and cutlery, there was barely room on the table for the food, most of it special dishes that were served no other day of the week. In a family of talkers, there was an overabundance of talk, most of it congenial. Sabbath dinner came freighted with feelings of pleasure and fullness. It was an oasis of peace and plenty in an often turbulent household.

by Bonnie L. Casey

Some of us had close encounters with concoctions like Wham Noodle Dandy; others recall certain unspeakable crimes against Jell-O.



Bonnie Casey writes from Maryland, where she devotes herself to her family, her work and gourmet vegetarian cooking.

Among Adventists of my generation, most of whom were raised in the church and went to church schools, I've noticed how often memories of our upbringing are connected with food. We recall corn dogs in the school cafeteria, vegeburgers and boysenberry juice at campmeeting, our mothers' favorite Sabbath casseroles. Not all our memories of Sabbath fare are pleasant, of course. Some of us had close encounters with concoctions like Wham Noodle Dandy; others recall certain unspeakable crimes against Jell-O. But for most of us, Adventist worship and Adventist eating shared a primal connection whose influence still colors our adult lives.

One of my friends and I have fun imagining the menu for *The Ultimate, Ideal, Wholly Nostalgic Sabbath Dinner*. The centerpiece would, of course, be a casserole, either cashew nut loaf or *Dinner Cuts Deluxe* (vegesteaks breaded and fried, slathered with sauteed onion rings, Campbell's mushroom soup and sour cream. It is not health food, but it is absolutely delicious). We argued about the vegetable; she said corn, I said peas and carrots. For good measure we added green bean casserole (once again, the ubiquitous mushroom soup). But we agreed on lime Jell-O made with cottage cheese and crushed pineapple, and those little brown-n-serve rolls that separate into buttery layers. There would be a relish dish with pickles and pitted olives, and a homemade dessert that was creamy, fruity and incredibly sweet.

It's not surprising that food and spirituality mingle freely in our imaginations. The Bible makes these connections explicit—in laws, blessings, cursings, even miracles. The health message trained those of us raised in the church to think of food as more than something to assuage hunger. It was integral to our salvation. It could forge or destroy a link to heaven.

I no longer see food as a sacrament; I'm not eating my way to heaven. But it's still an essential part of my spiritual, creative being. When people ask me if I enjoy cooking, I say, "Yes, but what I really love is feeding people." All those Sabbath dinners and potlucks made a connection between food and community that still shapes my relationships. Chef Caprial should be so lucky. 🍴

Hospital Retirement Plans Dwarf Church Plan

Covering 45,000-plus employees, the Adventist hospitals' five retirement plans held assets over \$1 billion, on March 31, 1996. At that time the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan of the North American Division (NAD), serving over 18,000 ministers, teachers and other workers, stood at \$188 million. The reason for the difference is that the hospitals' plans cover more employees, have a lower percentage of retirees, are funded differently, and the four newer ones are a different type of plan. The full explanation is complex.

Until 1981, all church and hospital employees were covered by the same retirement plan. Because of government regulations the NAD formed a separate plan for hospital employees, known as the Seventh-day Adventist Hospital Retirement Plan (\$743 million, March 31, 1996). This plan, like its mother, is a "defined benefit" plan which accepts only employer contributions to pay for the benefits. It grew to triple the size of the other plan because hospitals aggressively contributed so as to meet a goal of 100 percent actuarial funding within 30 years. They are almost there after 15 years, says hospital liaison to the plan, Durward Wildman.

In 1991, a major change was made for hospital employees. The NAD froze the defined benefit plan, new employees could not be covered, and old employees would get only previously earned benefits. The hospitals established four "defined contribution" plans, meaning the amount of the employer contributions, rather than the benefit, is pre-defined. These plans also allow employees to make contributions and are portable to other employers. The four plans, covering the nine hospital regions, are similar to one another.

The largest, the Adventist HealthCare

Retirement Plan, covers six of the nine regions and had assets of \$235 million as of March 31, 1996, according to Wildman, the plans' administrator. The hospitals in that plan annually make a basic contribution of 2 1/2 percent of earnings plus a variable amount favoring lower paid employees. The employees make the investment choices and may contribute up to 20 percent of their eligible earnings, subject to IRS regulations. This allows them to build up larger retirement accounts.

The SDA Retirement Plan, established in 1911, held \$188 million as of March 31, 1996. Although a defined benefit plan like the old hospital plan, it never had a goal of 100 percent actuarial funding. Its goal is to have a reserve funding equal to three years of benefits being paid to current retirees, a goal that it has come close to, but never met. Currently each conference in the NAD, other than Canada, contributes 10 1/4 percent of tithe to the plan. However, as *Adventist Today* previously reported

(September/October 1995) the SDA Retirement Plan administrators are planning to recommend that the NAD follow the hospitals' lead and go to a defined contribution plan. There are several reasons for changing to such a plan: the number of retirees is going up and tithe is slumping per capita though not in total dollars; fewer employees are spending their whole careers as denominational employees and so desire portable retirement plans; and government expectations could change (Canada recently demanded that all retirement plans—including church-operated ones—provide full funding and follow new regulations).

Although the \$188 million to \$1 billion ratio of church to hospital plans seems drastic, the church plan covers only 40 percent of the number of employees in the hospital plans. Further, the church plan is largely pay-as-you-go, as is the U.S. government's Social Security, and therefore the benefits to ministers and teachers need not be drastically below those of hospital employees because the benefits are paid for largely from current tithe. The down-side is that such benefits may be less sure than those based on \$1 billion in the bank. The up-side is that retirees have always received benefits without fail for 85 years. ☺

Correction

The title and first sentence in a news story on the back page of our March-April issue inadvertently implied a rather recent change in the relationship of the *Adventist Review* to the General Conference. In fact, the General Conference became its owner and publisher as of January 1, 1983. We regret this inaccuracy.

The *Review* began publication in 1850, 13 years before formation of the General Conference. Prior to January 1, 1983, the *Review* and Herald

Publishing Association was its owner and publisher. It operated independently of the General Conference, but always loyal to it.

Prior to 1983, by the independent choice of its board and editors, the *Review* had operated within freedom of the press guidelines of the Associated Church Press. Under the 1983 arrangement, by dictionary definition the *Review* became a "house organ" of the General Conference.

—Editors