

From Sabbath To Sunday: How Did It Come About?

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Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.

Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University

Dear Members of the Endtime Issues Newsletter:

In the last newsletter No. 63, I promised to post some of the lectures that I deliver in conjunction with my SABBATH ENRICHMENT SEMINAR. I began with the lecture on "The Sabbath Under Crossfire: A Look at Recent Developments." The many positive comments I received have been most encouraging. Many of you have expressed your appreciation for the report about the recent attacks against the Sabbath, as well as the rediscovery of the Sabbath by various religious organizations and church leaders of different faiths. Several of you have asked me to keep you posted on future Sabbath/Sunday developments. This I will try to do by posting update reports from time to time.

This newsletter continues the Sabbath Seminar series, by offering the text of my lecture on how the change came about from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity. I reworked considerably this presentation in preparation for the video recording that was done at the Sacramento Central SDA Church on February 2, 3 and 4, 2001. In this lecture I attempt to compress into one hour lecture, the most significant aspects of this research on the change of the Sabbath that engaged me over a period of five years at the Pontifical Gregorian University, in Rome, Italy.

Often people ask me for a simple, concise summary of the findings of my investigation on how the Sabbath was changed to Sunday in the early church. They rightly complain that my dissertation is too demanding in term of time and concentration. They prefer a simpler explanation which they can share more readily with interested people. To meet this need, I have attempted in this lecture to present the highlights of my research, in a simple and well-structured manner. For the sake of brevity, I omitted the footnote references. Interested readers will find all the documentation in *From Sabbath to Sunday*. Feel free to print, use, and distribute the text of this newsletter in any format you deem necessary for your outreach endeavors.

The video recording of this lecture that was done at the Sacramento Central SDA Church, offers numerous close up pictures of significant documents. I am most grateful for the professional recording that was done by the Amazing Facts crew. You will find the video recording of the five Sabbath lectures, very informative and most helpful to share the Sabbath message with your friends.

In the last newsletter I offered this new recording in video and audio cassettes, together with my four volumes on the Sabbath, at a very special price. Many of you have taken advantage of the special offer. For the sake of those who have just subscribed to this newsletter, the same special offer will be posted again at the end of this newsletter.

AN IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION

The lecture you are about to read contains information that may differ from your understanding of the time and causes of the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity. In fact, a question that is invariably asked each time I present this lecture, goes something like this: “How do you reconcile your conclusion that Sunday observance began in the early part of the second century when the Roman Emperor Hadrian promulgated a most repressing anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation in A. D. 135, with the popular Adventist view that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday in the fourth century by the Emperor Constantine?”

My answer to this question is simple. Constantine did not introduce Sunday observance. He simply made the Day of the Sun a civil holiday by promulgating the famous Sunday Law in A. D. 321. The reason Constantine made Sunday a civil holiday is simply because by that time the Day of the Sun had become popular both among the pagans and the Christians. This is indicated by the very wording of the legislation: “On the venerable Day of the Sun . . .” It is evident that at that time the Day of the Sun was already “venerable,” that is, popular and respected.

The process which led to the adoption of the Day of the Sun as a civil holiday for the whole Roman Empire began in the in the early part of the second century, when the Day of the Sun was advanced from second day of the week to the position of first and most important day of the week. This process is discussed in chapter 8 of *From Sabbath to Sunday*, and briefly alluded to at the end of this lecture. There are compelling indications that when the Romans advanced the Day of the Sun to the first and most important day of the week, Gentile Christians, who came from a pagan background, were influenced to adopt the selfsame Day of the Sun, in order to show separation from the Jews and identification with the Romans. To put it differently, they chose to be politically correct by adopting the Day of the Sun, rather than to be biblically correct by observing the seventh-day Sabbath.

There are irrefutable historical testimonies attesting Sunday observance in the second and third centuries, that is, long before the time of Constantine. To ignore these testimonies in order to perpetrate the mistaken notion that all Christians observed the Sabbath during the first three centuries, means to expose our Adventist Church to the charge of plain ignorance. We have nothing to gain and much to loose by perpetrating a mistaken position.

The fact that Sunday observance began earlier than anticipated, in no way weakens the validity and continuity of the Sabbath. It only goes to show that the Devil understands the importance of Sabbath observance in the religious life of God’s people. After all Sabbathkeeping is equated in Scripture with faithfulness to God, and Sabbath profanation with apostasy. Through the prophet Ezekiel God laments: “the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness . . . my Sabbath they greatly profaned” (Ezek 20:13). The reason for this equation is not difficult to see. A person who ignores the Lord on His Holy Day, ultimately ignores the Lord every day.

In view of the vital importance the Sabbath plays in the religious experience of God’s people, it would have been most surprising if the Evil One had not tampered with the Sabbath commandment during the first three centuries. By leading many Christians to reject the Sabbath soon after the beginning of Christianity, the Devil succeeded in promoting false types of worship. We must never forget that the Great Controversy largely centers on worship: that is, true worship versus false worship. And the Sabbath is essential to worship, because it invites us to worship God by consecrating our time and life to Him in a special way every seventh day.

UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the seminars for the months of March, and April 2001. Feel free to contact me at (616) 471-2915 for a special seminar in your area during the latter part of this year. I still have few open weekends.

MARCH 2-3: WALLA WALLA CITY SDA CHURCH

Location: 2133 Howard Street, Walla Walla, WA 99362
For information call Pastor Rick Bowes at (509) 525-9540 or (509) 525-5700.

MARCH 9-10: APOPKA SDA CHURCH (ORLANDO)

Location: 305 South Highland Avenue, Apopka, FL 32704
For information call Pastor John Appell at (407) 899-2812 or (407) 880-1726

MARCH 16-17: WINTER SPRINGS SDA CHURCH (ORLANDO)

Location: 50 S. Moss Road, Winter Springs, FL 32708
For information call Pastor Gustav Scheuneman at (407) 327-1190 or (407) 862-5463.

MARCH 23-24: SPOKANE CENTRAL SDA CHURCH

Location: 828 W Spofford Avenue, Spokane, WA 99205
For information call Pastor Jeff Kinne at (509) 328-5900 or (509) 443-9961.

APRIL 6-7: RED DEER SDA CHURCH, ALBERTA, CANADA

Location: Highway 2 South to McKenzie Road, Red Deer
For information call Pastor Ian Hartley (403) 347-9201 or (403) 886-4123

APRIL 13-15: BREMEN, GERMANY

Location: GANDERKESEE near Bremen, Freizeithelm
HOEHENBOEKEN, Ammerweg 15
For information call 04223-9310222. People can book there for accommodation by tel.038784-60428 or fax 038784-90067 with church elder Georg Bunkus, president of our institution.

APRIL 20-21: SANDPOINT SDA CHURCH

Location: 2255 Pine Street, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864
For information call Pastor Ron Reed at (208) 265-0519 or (208) 263-3648

APRIL 27-28: HERMISTON SDA CHURCH

Location: 855 W. Highland, Hermiston, OR 97838
For information call Pastor Kevin Wilfley at (541) 567-7989 or (541) 567-8241

A PLEA FOR PATIENCE ON ADDRESS CHANGES

If you have requested to have your address changed or deleted, please be patient with me. It has become time-consuming for me to have to change or delete manually all the addresses that come in every day. I am in the process of purchasing software that will help me manage my mailing list. If you know of a good software to manage a mailing list that is compatible with my Mac, please advise me. I need guidance in this matter. Thank you for any information.

FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY: HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi

Retired Prof. of Theology, Andrews University

Few subjects have been so hotly debated in Christian history as that of the change in the day of rest and worship from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity. Over 3000 dissertations and treatises have been published on this subject since the time of Reformation. A major reason for this unceasing interest in the historical origin of Sunday has been the need to define the nature of Sundaykeeping in its relationship to the Sabbath. The debate often centers around this fundamental question: Did Sunday originate as the *continuation of the Sabbath* and consequently should be observed as a DAY of rest and worship like the Sabbath? Or, did Sunday begin as a *brand new Christian institution*, radically different from the Sabbath, and consequently should be observed more as an HOUR of weekly worship?

Christians have been equally divided in their answer to these questions. On the one hand there are those churches who follow the Calvinistic tradition that views Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, and thus to be observed as a HOLY DAY of rest and worship unto the Lord. On the other hand, there are those churches that follow the Lutheran and Catholic traditions that see Sunday as different from the Sabbath, and thus to be observed primarily as the weekly HOUR of worship.

The current crisis of Sunday observance has sparked a renewed interest for the question of the origin Sunday and its relationship to the Sabbath. Catholic and Protestant church leaders are deeply concerned over the alarming decline in church attendance. In Italy, where I come from, it is estimated that only 5% of Catholics attend Mass regularly on Sunday. About 95% of Catholics go to church three times in their lives: when they are hatched, matched, and dispatched. The situation is essentially the same in most Western countries where church attendance runs below the 10% of the Christian population. The strikingly low church attendance is seen by church leaders as a threat to the survival not only of their churches and of Christianity itself. After all the essence of Christianity is a relationship with God and if Christians ignore the Lord on the day which they view as the Lord's Day, chances are that they will ignore the Lord every day of the week.

Keenly aware of the implications of the crisis of Sunday observance for the future of the Christian churches, numerous church leaders and scholars are re-examining the history and theology of Sunday in an effort to promote more effectively its observance. As already stated, a major question addressed in recent dissertations, books, and articles, is the relationship between the Sabbath and Sunday.

Two Views Regarding the Origin of Sunday

Briefly stated, there are two major views today regarding the historical origin of Sunday and its relationship to the biblical Sabbath. The older and traditional view, which can be traced back to early Christianity, maintains that there is a radical discontinuity between the Sabbath and Sunday, and consequently Sunday is not the Sabbath. The two days differ in origin, meaning, and experience. The more recent view, which is articulated by Pope John Paul II himself in his Pastoral Letter *Dies Domini*, maintains that Sunday began as the embodiment and "full expression" of the Sabbath, and consequently it is to be observed as a biblical imperative, rooted in the Sabbath commandment itself.

According to the traditional view, which has been held by the Catholic Church and accepted by those Protestant denominations which follow the Lutheran tradition, the Sabbath was a temporary Mosaic institution given to the Jews, abrogated by Christ, and consequently no longer binding today. Christians adopted Sunday observance, not as the continuation of the biblical Sabbath, but as a new institution established by the church to celebrate Christ's resurrection by means of the Lord's Supper celebration.

This traditional position has been held by the Catholic Church which has claimed the responsibility for changing the Sabbath to Sunday. For example, Thomas Aquinas (A. D. 1225-1274) who is regarded as the greatest Catholic theologian who ever lived, explicitly states: "The observance of the Lord's Day took the place of the observance of the Sabbath not by virtue of the [Biblical] precept but by the institution of the church." This view has been reiterated through the centuries in standard Catholic catechisms where a statement like this is usually found: "We observe Sunday rather than Saturday because the Catholic Church by virtue of her authority has transferred the solemnity of the Sabbath to Sunday."

Recently, however, there have been both Catholic and Protestant scholars who have argued for an apostolic origin of Sunday observance. According to these scholars, the Apostles themselves chose the first day of the week as the new Christian Sabbath at the very beginning of Christianity in order to commemorate Christ's resurrection.

This view is defended at great length by Pope John Paul II in his Pastoral Letter, *Dies Domini* (The Lord's Day), which was promulgated on May 31, 1998. In this lengthy document (over 40 pages) the Pope makes a passionate plea for a revival of Sunday observance by appealing to the moral imperative of the Sabbath commandment. For the Pope Sunday is to be observed, not merely as an institution established by the Catholic Church, but as a moral imperative of the Decalogue. The reason is that Sunday allegedly originated as the embodiment and "full expression" of the Sabbath and consequently should be observed as the biblical Sabbath.

John Paul departs from the traditional Catholic position presumably because he wishes to challenge Christians to respect Sunday, not merely as an institution of the Catholic Church, but as a divine command. Furthermore, by rooting Sundaykeeping in the Sabbath commandment, the Pope offers the strongest moral reasons for urging Christians "to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy."

The attempts made by the Pope and other Church leaders to ground Sunday observance on the Sabbath commandment, raises this important question: "If Christians are expected to observe Sunday as the Biblical Sabbath, why should not they observe the Sabbath in the first place?" What was wrong with the biblical Sabbath that needed to be changed to Sunday? To apply the Sabbath Commandment to the observance of the first day of the week, Sunday, can be confusing to say the least, because the Fourth Commandment enjoins the observance of the seventh day, not of the first day. This confusion may explain why many Christians do not take the observance of Sunday seriously.

The Conclusions of My Research. To find an answer to the questions of the time, place, causes, and consequences of the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity, I spent five years at the Pontifical University in Rome, examining for my doctoral dissertation the earliest Christian documents. The results of my investigation have been published in my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*. The dissertation was published in 1997 by the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, with the official Catholic *imprimatur*—approval. Pope Paul VI awarded me a gold medal for earning the *summa cum laude* distinction in this research and school work. In this lecture I will attempt to share some of the highlights of this research.

For the sake of clarity, let me state at the outset the conclusion of my investigation. Simply stated, my analysis of the biblical and historical texts indicate that the change from Sabbath to Sunday did not come about at the beginning of Christianity by the authority of Christ or the Apostles who allegedly chose the first day of the week as the new Christian Sabbath to celebrate Christ's resurrection. Rather the change began about a century after Christ's death during the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (about A. D. 135), as a result of an interplay of political, social, pagan and religious factors to be mentioned shortly. Essentially, it was the necessity to avoid the repressive anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation promulgated in A. D. 135 by Emperor Hadrian that caused

the Bishop of Rome to pioneer the change from Sabbath to Sunday and from Passover to Easter-Sunday. These changes were designed to show the Christian separation and differentiation from the Jews at a time when Jewish religious practices were outlawed by the Roman government.

The implications of this conclusion is that the change from Saturday to Sunday was not merely a change of names or numbers, but a change of meaning, authority, and experience. To help you see how I reached this conclusion, I will take you step by step through the major parts of my research. We begin by examining first the alleged role of Christ, of His resurrection and of the Jerusalem church in the change from Sabbath to Sunday. Then we proceed to consider the pivotal influence of the Church of Rome and of Sun-worship in the adoption of Sunday.

JESUS AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

A popular view defended recently by several scholars is that Christ paved the way for the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday keeping instead, by His messianic claims and His provocative method of Sabbath keeping, which caused considerable controversy with the religious leaders of His day. A noteworthy example of this view is the symposium *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*, produced by seven British/American scholars and sponsored by the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research in Cambridge, England. The authors maintain that Christ transcended the Sabbath law by His messianic claims. He acted against the prevailing Sabbath traditions in order to provide His followers with the freedom to reinterpret the Sabbath and to choose a new day of worship, better suited to express their new Christian faith.

The fundamental problem with this popular view is that it grossly misinterprets the intent of Christ's controversial Sabbath activities and teachings which were clearly designed, *not to nullify*, but *to clarify* the divine intent of the Fourth Commandment. Christ acted deliberately against prevailing misconceptions of the Sabbath, not to terminate its observance, but to restore the day to God's intended purpose. It should be noted that whenever accused of Sabbath breaking, Christ rejected and refuted such charge. He defended Himself and His disciples from the charge of Sabbath breaking by appealing to the Scriptures: "Have you read . . ." (Matt 12:3-5).

The intent of Christ's provocative Sabbath teachings and activities was not to pave the way for the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption for Sunday keeping, but rather to show the true meaning and function of the Sabbath, namely, a day "to do good" (Matt 12:12), "to save life" (Mark 3:4), to loose people from physical and spiritual bonds (Luke 13:12,16), and to show "mercy" rather than religiosity (Matt 12:7). A careful study of these Sabbath pronouncements of Jesus, clearly show Jesus had no intent to abrogate the Sabbath. Instead He wanted to clarify the divine intent of the Sabbath, namely a day to celebrate God's creative and redemptive love by offering a living, loving service to needy people.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

The common view among Sundaykeeping Christians is that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday by the Apostolic Church in order to commemorate Christ's resurrection. This is indeed the common explanation given for Sundaykeeping. The Pope himself appeals to the resurrection and appearance of Jesus on Sunday in his Pastoral Letter *Dies Domini in order* to argue for the apostolic origin of Sunday. Numerous Catholic and Protestant scholars have written in defence of the same view.

For example, in his doctoral dissertation *Storia della Domenica (History of Sunday)*, Corrado Mosna, a Jesuit student at the Pontifical Gregorian University, who worked under Prof. Vincenzo Monachino, S. J., (the same professor who monitored my dissertation) concludes: "Therefore we can conclude with certainty that the event of the resurrection has determined the choice of Sunday as the new day of worship of the first Christian community." On a similar vein Cardinal Jean Daniélou wrote: "The Lord's Day is a purely

Christian institution; its origin is to be found solely on the fact of the Resurrection of Christ on the days after the Sabbath.”

In spite of its popularity, the claim that Christ's Resurrection on the first day of the week caused the change from Sabbath to Sunday worship, lacks both biblical and historical support. A careful study of all the references to the Resurrection reveals the incomparable importance of the event, but it does not provide any indication regarding a special day to commemorate it. The New Testament attributes no liturgical significance to the day of Christ's Resurrection simply because the Resurrection was seen as an existential reality experienced by living victoriously by the power of the Risen Savior, and not a liturgical practice associated with Sunday worship.

Let me briefly mention seven major reasons which discredit the alleged role of Christ's Resurrection in the adoption of Sunday observance.

(1) No Command of Christ or of the Apostles. There is no commandment of Christ or of the apostles regarding a weekly-Sunday or annual Easter-Sunday celebration of Christ's resurrection. We have commands in the New Testament regarding baptism (Matt 28:19-20), the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:24-25; 1 Cor 11:23-26) and foot-washing (John 13:14-15), but we find no commands or even suggestions to commemorate Christ's Resurrection on a weekly Sunday or annual Easter-Sunday.

(2) Jesus Made no Attempt to Institute a Memorial of His Resurrection. If Jesus wanted the day of His resurrection to become a memorial day of rest and worship, He would have capitalized on the day of His resurrection to establish such a memorial. It is important to note that divine institutions like the Sabbath, baptism, Lord's Supper, all trace their origin to a divine act that established them. But on the day of His resurrection Christ performed no act to institute a memorial of His resurrection.

If Jesus wanted to memorialize the day of His Resurrection, most likely He would have told the women and the disciples when He arose: “Come apart and celebrate My Resurrection!” Instead He told the women “Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee” (Matt 28:10) and to the disciples “Go . . . make disciples . . . baptizing them” (Matt 28:19). None of the utterances of the risen Savior reveal an intent to memorialize His Resurrection by making Sunday the new day of rest and worship.

The reason is that our Savior wanted His followers to view His Resurrection as an existential reality to be experienced *daily* by living victoriously by the power of His Resurrection, rather than a liturgical/religious event to be celebrated on *Sunday*. Paul expressed the hope to “know him and the power of his resurrection” (Phil 3:10), but he never mentions his desire to celebrate Christ's Resurrection on Sunday or Easter-Sunday.

(3) Sunday Is Never Called “Day of the Resurrection.” Sunday is never called in the New Testament as “Day of the Resurrection.” It is consistently designated “First day of the week.” The references to Sunday as day of the resurrection first appear in the early part of the fourth century, specifically in the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea. By that time Sunday had become associated with the resurrection and consequently was referred to as “Day of the Resurrection.” But this development occurred several centuries after the beginning of Christianity.

(4) The Sunday-Resurrection Presupposes Work, not Rest and Worship
The Sunday-Resurrection presupposes work, rather than rest and worship, because it does not mark the completion of Christ's earthly ministry which ended on a Friday afternoon when the Savior said: “It is finished” (John 19:30), and then rested in the tomb according to the commandment. Instead, the Resurrection marks the beginning of Christ's new intercessory ministry (Acts 1:8; 2:33), which, like the first day of creation, presupposes work rather than rest.

(5) The Lord's Supper was not Celebrated on Sunday in Honor of the Resurrection. In his dissertation on *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church*, Willy Rordorf argues that Sunday became the Lord's Day because that was the day in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated. This view, accepted by many, lacks biblical and historical support. Historically we know that Christians could not celebrate the Lord's Supper on a regular basis on Sunday evening, because such gatherings were prohibited by the Roman *hetariae* law—a law that outlawed all types of communal fellowship meals held in the evening. The Roman government was afraid that such evening gatherings could become an occasion for political plotting.

To avoid the search of the Roman police, Christian changed regularly the time and place of the Lord's Supper celebration. Eventually, they moved the service from the evening to the morning. This explains why Paul is very *specific* on the *manner* of celebrating the Lord's Supper, but he is *indefinite* on the question of the *time* of the assembly. Note that four times he repeats the same phrase: "When you come together" (1 Cor 11:18, 20, 33, 34). The phrase implies *indefinite time*, most likely because there was no set day for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

If, as some scholars contend, the Lord's Supper was celebrated on Sunday evening, as part of the Lord's Day worship, Paul could hardly have failed to mention the sacredness of the time in which they gathered. This would have strengthened his plea for a more worshipful attitude during the partaking of the Lord's Supper. The failure of Paul to mention "Sunday" as the time of the gathering or to use the adjective "Lord's—*kuriake*" to characterize the day as "the *Lord's Day*," (as he did it with reference to the *Lord's Supper*), shows that the apostle did not attach any religious significance to Sunday.

(6) The Lord's Supper Commemorates Christ's Sacrifice, not His Resurrection. Many Christians today view their Lord's Supper as the core of Sunday worship in honor of Christ's resurrection. But in the Apostolic Church, the Lord's Supper was not celebrated on Sunday, as we have just seen, and was not connected with the Resurrection. Paul, for instance, who claims to transmit what "he received from the Lord" (1 Cor 11:23), explicitly states that the rite commemorated not Christ's resurrection, but His *sacrifice* and *Second Coming* ("You proclaim the Lord's death till he comes" (1 Cor 11:26).

Similarly, Passover, celebrated today by many Christians on Easter Sunday, was observed during apostolic times, not on Sunday to commemorate the Resurrection, but according to the biblical date of Nisan 14, primarily as a memorial of Christ's suffering and death. Contrary to what many people believe, Easter-Sunday was unknown in the Apostolic Church. It was introduced and promoted by the Church of Rome in the second century in order to show separation and differentiation from the Jewish Passover. The result was the well-known Passover controversy which eventually led Bishop Victor of Rome to excommunicate the Asian Christians (about A. D. 191) for refusing to adopt Easter-Sunday. These indications show that Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week, did not influence the Apostolic Church to adopt the weekly Sunday and the annual Easter-Sunday to commemorate such an event.

(7) The Resurrection is not the Dominant Reason for Sundaykeeping in Earliest Documents. The earliest explicit references to Sundaykeeping are found in the writings of Barnabas (about A. D. 135) and Justin Martyr (about A.D. 150). Both writers do mention the Resurrection but only as the second of two reasons, important but not predominant. Barnabas' first theological motivation for Sunday keeping is eschatological, namely, that Sunday as "the eighth day" represents "the beginning of another world." The notion of Sunday as "the eighth day," was later abandoned because it is senseless to speak of "the eighth day" in a seven days week. Justin's first reason for the Christians' assembly on *Dies Solis*—the Day of the Sun, is the inauguration of creation: "Sunday is the first day on which God, transforming the darkness and prime matter, created the world." These reasons were eventually abandoned in favor of the Resurrection which became the primary reason for Sunday observance.

The seven reasons given above suffice to discredit the claim that Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week caused the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday. The truth is that initially the resurrection was celebrated existentially rather than liturgically, that is, by a victorious way of life rather than by a special day of worship.

JERUSALEM AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

Closely related to the role of the alleged role of the Resurrection, is the popular view that the Jerusalem Church pioneered the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday. I devoted chapter 5 "Jerusalem and the Origin of Sunday" of my dissertation to a close analysis of this view. My investigation shows that this popular view rests on three major faulty assumptions.

Sunday Began in Jerusalem because Christ Arose there

First, it is assumed that Jerusalem must be the birthplace of Sundaykeeping, because that is the place where Jesus arose on the first day of the week. It is alleged that immediately after Christ's resurrection, the Apostles "no longer felt at home in the Jewish Sabbath service." and consequently they proceeded to institute Sunday worship in order to commemorate Christ's Resurrection by a distinctive Christian liturgy.

As we have already shown, this assumption lacks biblical and historical support, because in the Apostolic Church the Resurrection was seen as an existential reality experienced by living victoriously by the power of the Risen Savior, and not a liturgical practice associated with Sunday worship. We noted earlier that nothing in the New Testament prescribes or even suggests the commemoration of Jesus' resurrection on Sunday. The very name "Day of the Resurrection" does not appear in Christian literature until early in the fourth century.

If the primitive Jerusalem Church had pioneered and promoted Sundaykeeping because they no longer felt at home with Jewish Sabbathkeeping, we would expect to find in such a church an immediate break away from Jewish religious traditions and services. But the opposite is the case. Both the book of Acts as well as several Judeo-Christian documents clearly reveal that the ethnic composition and the theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church were profoundly Jewish. Luke's characterization of the Jerusalem Church as "zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20), is an accurate description which hardly allows for the abandonment of a chief precept of the law, namely, the Sabbath.

Paul Learned About Sunday Observance from Jewish Leaders

The second faulty assumption is that Paul learned about Sunday observance from the apostolic leaders of the Jerusalem church and taught it to his Gentile converts. The reason given for this assumption is that Paul could hardly have pioneered the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday, without stirring up the opposition of the Jewish brethren. The absence of any echo of controversy is taken to mean that Paul accepted Sunday observance as taught him by the Jewish brethren, and promoted this practice among the Gentile churches which he established.

In his book on *The Lord's Day*, Paul Jewett notes, for example, "If Paul had introduced Sunday worship among the Gentiles, it seems likely that Jewish opposition would have accused his temerity in setting aside the law of the Sabbath, as was the case with reference to the rite of circumcision (Acts 21:21)." The absence of such opposition is interpreted by Jewett as indicating that Paul accepted and promoted Sunday observance as taught him by the Jewish brethren.

This assumption is correct in maintaining that Paul could not have pioneered Sunday observance without stirring up the opposition of the Jewish brethren, but it is

incorrect in assuming that the Jewish Brethren taught Paul Sunday observance. The truth is that Jewish Christians, as we shall now see, were deeply committed to the observance of the law in general and of the Sabbath in particular. The absence of any controversy between Paul and the Jewish brethren rather indicates that the Sabbath never became an issue in the Apostolic Church because it was faithfully observed by all Christians.

Only Apostolic Jerusalem Church Could Change the Sabbath to Sunday

The third faulty assumption is that only the Jerusalem Church, which was the Mother Church of Christendom, commanded sufficient authority and respect to persuade all the Christian churches scattered through the Roman empire to change their weekly day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. Less influential churches could have never accomplished this change.

The fundamental problem with this assumption is the failure to recognize the Jewish composition and theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church. Of all the Christian churches, the Jerusalem church was the only church that was composed almost exclusively of Jewish Christians who were zealous in the observance of the law in general and of the Sabbath in particular.

Attachment to the Law. The attachment of the Jerusalem Church to the Mosaic Law is reflected in the decisions of the first Jerusalem Council held about A.D. 49-50 (See Acts 15). The exemption from circumcision is there granted *only* “to brethren who are of the Gentiles” (Acts 15:23). No concession is made for Jewish-Christians, who must continue to circumcise their children.

Furthermore, the exemption of the Gentiles from circumcision, did not entail their release from the observance of the law in general and of the Sabbath in particular. This is clearly indicated by the fact that the Gentiles were expected to observe the four Mosaic laws regarding the “sojourner” who dwelt among the Israelites. These laws are found in Leviticus 17-18, and are cited in the decision of the Jerusalem Council: “You abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled, and from unchastity” (Acts 15:29). This concern of the Jerusalem Council for ritual defilement and Jewish food laws reflects its continued attachment to the Mosaic laws.

This conclusion is supported by the reason given by James for requiring Gentiles to observe the four Mosaic laws regarding the “sojourner:” “For generations past Moses has had spokesmen in every city; he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues” (Acts 15:21). All interpreters recognize that both in his proposal and in its justification, James reaffirms the binding nature of the Mosaic Law which was customarily taught every Sabbath in the synagogue.

Paul’s Last Visit. Further insight is provided by Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem. The Apostle was informed by James and the elders that thousand of converted Jews were “*all zealous for the Law*” (Acts 21:20). The same leaders then pressured Paul to prove to the people that he also “lived in observance of the law” (Acts 21-24), by undergoing a rite of purification at the Temple. In the light of this deep commitment to the observance of the Law, it is hardly conceivable that the Jerusalem Church would have abrogated one of its chief precepts—Sabbath keeping—and pioneered Sunday worship instead.

Did Sunday Originate in Palestine After 70 A.D.?

The foregoing evidences has led some scholars to argue that Sunday observance began in Palestine at a slightly later time, namely, after the Roman destruction of the Temple in A. D. 70. They presume that the flight of the Christians from Jerusalem to Pella as well as the psychological impact of the destruction of the Temple weaned Palestinian Christians away from Jewish observances such as Sabbathkeeping.

This assumption is discredited by the testimonies of both Eusebius and Epiphanius who inform us that the Jerusalem Church after A. D. 70 and until Hadrian's siege of Jerusalem in A. D. 135 was composed of and administered by Jewish converts, whom they characterize as "zealous to insist on the literal observance of the Law."

The continuity in the observance of the Sabbath among Palestinian Christians, known as Nazarenes, is evidenced by the testimony of a fourth century Palestinian historian, Epiphanius. He tells us that the Nazarenes, who were "the very direct descendants of the primitive community" of Jerusalem, insisted and persisted in the observance of seventh-day Sabbath keeping until his own time, that is, about A. D. 350. I vividly remember the joy I felt when I found Epiphanius' testimony. Eagerly I showed this document to my Jesuit Prof. Vincenzo Monachino, who read it attentively and then exclaimed: "This is the death-blow to the theory that makes Jerusalem the birthplace of Sundaykeeping."

My professor immediately understood that if the direct descendants of the Jerusalem Church persisted in the observance of the Sabbath until at least the fourth century, then the Jerusalem Church could hardly have pioneered the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday during the Apostolic time. Of all the Christian Churches, the Jerusalem Church was both ethnically and theologically the closest and most loyal to Jewish religious traditions, and thus the least likely to change the day of the Sabbath.

ROME AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

Having proven to the satisfaction of my professor that the Jerusalem Church was to be excluded as the birthplace of Sunday observance, I proceeded to look for the most likely church that could have pioneered such a change. In the course of my investigation I found cumulative evidences pointing to the Church of Rome. There I found the social, religious and political conditions which made it expedient for the Bishop of Rome to promote the abandonment of Sabbathkeeping and the adoption of Sunday worship instead.

(1) Predominance of Gentile Converts. In the first place, the Church of Rome was composed predominantly of Gentile converts. Paul in his Epistle to the Roman Church explicitly affirms: "I am speaking to you Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). This means that while the Jerusalem Church was made up almost exclusively of Jewish Christians who were deeply committed to their religious traditions, like Sabbathkeeping, the Church of Rome consisted mostly of Gentile converts who were influenced by such pagan practices as Sun Worship with its Sun Day.

(2) Early Differentiation from the Jews. In the second place I found that the predominant Gentile membership apparently contributed to an early Christian differentiation from the Jews in Rome. This is indicated by the fact that in A.D. 64, Nero blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome, though the Jewish district of Trastevere had not been touched by the fire. This fact suggests that by A. D. 64 Christians in Rome were no longer perceived to be a Jewish sect by the Roman authorities, but a different religious movement. Most likely the reason is that by that time Christians in Rome no longer participated in the worship service of the synagogue. This was not the case in Palestine where Christians attended the synagogue's services until toward the end of the first century. This is indicated by the fact that in order to keep Christians away from the synagogue services, rabbinical authorities introduced around A. D. 90, the malediction of the Christians to be recited during the worship service.

(3) Preeminence of the Church of Rome. A third important consideration is the "preeminent authority" (*potentior principalitas*) exercised by the Bishop of Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Being the Bishop of the capital city of the Roman empire, the Bishop of Rome took over the leadership of the Christian communities at large. His leadership is acknowledged, for example, by Ignatius, Polycarp, Ireneaus, all of whom lived in the second century. Tangible proofs of the leadership of the Bishop of Rome are his interventions against sectarian movements like Marcionism and Montanism.

More important still for our investigation is the role of the Bishop of Rome in pioneering and promoting the change from Sabbath feasting to Sabbath fasting, as well as the change from Passover to Easter Sunday. To this point we shall return shortly. At this juncture it suffices to note that the Bishop of Rome emerged to the leadership position after the A. D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. He was the only one who commanded sufficient authority to influence the majority of Christians to adopt new religious observances, such as weekly Sunday and annual Easter Sunday.

(4) Repressive Anti-Jewish Measures. To appreciate why the Bishop of Rome would pioneer the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday, it is important to consider a fourth important factor, namely, the fiscal, military, political and religious repressive measures imposed by the Romans upon the Jews, beginning with the First Jewish Revolt against Rome in A. D. 66 and culminating with the Second Jewish Revolt in A. D. 135. These measures, which were introduced by the Roman government to punish the Jews on account of their violent uprisings in various places of the Empire, were especially felt in the city of Rome, which had a large Jewish population.

Fiscally, the Jews were subjected to a discriminatory tax (the *fiscus judaicus*) which was introduced by Vespasian and increased first by Domitian (A.D. 81-96) and later by Hadrian. This meant that the Jews had to pay a penalty tax simply for being Jews. Militarily, Vespasian and Titus crushed the First Jewish Revolt (A. D. 66-70) and Hadrian, the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132-135). Religiously, Vespasian (69-79 A.D.) abolished the Sanhedrin and the office of the High Priest.

These repressive measures against the Jews were intensely felt in Rome, which had a large Jewish population. In fact, the mounting hostility of the Roman populace against the Jews forced the Emperor Titus, though "unwilling" (*invitus*), to ask the Jewess Berenice, sister of Herod the Younger, whom he wanted to marry, to leave Rome.

(5) Anti-Jewish Propaganda. A fifth significant factor is the anti-Jewish propaganda by a host of Roman authors who began reviling the Jews racially and culturally, deriding especially Sabbathkeeping and circumcision as examples of Judaism's degrading superstitions. These authors especially derided Sabbathkeeping as an example of Jewish laziness. Contemptuous anti-Jewish literary comments can be found in the writings of Seneca (d. A.D. 65), Persius (A.D. 34-62), Petronius (ca. A.D. 66), Quintilian (ca. A.D. 35-100), Martial (ca. A.D. 40-104), Plutarch (ca. A.D. 46-119), Juvenal (A. D. 125) and Tacitus (ca. A.D. 55-120), all of whom lived in Rome most of their professional lives.

(6) Hadrian's Legislation. The sixth and most decisive factor which influenced the change of the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday, is the anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation promulgated by the Emperor Hadrian in A. D. 135. Hadrian went as far as outlawing the practice of Jewish religion in general and of Sabbathkeeping in particular in A. D. 135.

This repressive anti-Jewish legislation was promulgated by Hadrian after three years of bloody fighting (A. D. 132-135) to crush the Jewish revolt. His Roman legions suffered many casualties. When the Emperor finally captured Jerusalem, he decided to deal with the Jewish problem in a radical way. He slaughtered thousands of Jews, and took thousand of them as slaves to Rome. He made Jerusalem into a Roman colony, calling it Aelia Capitolina. He forbade Jews and Jewish Christians from ever entering the city. More important still for our investigation, Hadrian outlawed the practice of the Jewish religion in general and of Sabbathkeeping in particular throughout the empire.

It is not surprising that the Jews view Hadrian and Hitler as the two most wanted men of their history. The two men share the infamous distinction of wanting to eradicate the Jewish religion and the Jewish people. Hadrian attempted to abolish Judaism as a religion and Hitler tried to liquidate the Jews as a people.

When I learned about the Hadrianic anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation, I asked myself: How did the Christians, especially those living in Rome under the immediate attention of the Emperor, react to such legislation? Did they choose to remain faithful in their Sabbath observance, even if it means being punished as Jews, or did they abandon Sabbathkeeping in order to clarify to the Roman authorities their separation and differentiation from the Jews? The answer is simple. Many Christians change the time and manner of observance of two institutions associated with Judaism, namely the Sabbath and Passover. Shortly we shall see that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday and Passover to Easter Sunday in order to avoid even the semblance of Judaism.

(7) Christian Theology of Contempt for the Jews. To understand what contributed to these historical changes, we need to mention a seventh important factor, namely, the development of a Christian theology of contempt for the Jews. This is what happened. When the Jewish religion in general and the Sabbath in particular were outlawed by Roman government and derided by Roman writers, a whole body of *Adversus Judaeos* ("Against all Jews") Christian literature began to appear. Following the lead of Roman writers, Christian authors developed a "Christian" theology of separation from and contempt toward the Jews. Characteristic Jewish customs such as circumcision and Sabbathkeeping were proclaimed to be signs of Jewish depravity.

The condemnation of Sabbathkeeping as a sign of Jewish wickedness, contributed to the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday observance, in order to clarify to the Roman authorities the Christian separation from Judaism and identification with Roman paganism. This historical change from Sabbath to Sunday observance was pioneered by the Church of Rome—a predominantly Gentile Church which, as noted earlier, that took over the leadership of Christian communities after the A. D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. To appreciate how the Church of Rome went about to wean Christians away from Sabbathkeeping and to encourage Sunday worship instead, we shall mention briefly the theological, social and liturgical measures taken by the Church of Rome.

Measures Taken by the Church of Rome

Theologically, the Sabbath was reduced from a creational institution established by God for mankind, to a Mosaic institution given exclusively to the Jews as a trademark of their depravity. Justin Martyr, for instance, a leader of the Church of Rome who wrote about the middle of the second century, argues in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, that the observance of the Sabbath was a temporary Mosaic ordinance which God imposed exclusively on the Jews as "a mark to single them out for punishment they so well deserve for their infidelities."

It is hard to comprehend how church leaders like Justin, who became a martyr for the Christian faith, could reject the biblical meaning of the Sabbath as a sign of covenant commitment to God (Ex 31:16,17; Ez 20:12,20), and reduce it instead to a sign of Jewish depravity. What is even harder to accept is the absence of any scholarly condemnation for such absurd and embarrassing theology of contempt for the Jews—a theology which blatantly misinterpreted biblical institutions like the Sabbath, in order to give biblical sanction to the political and social repression of the Jews.

The sad lesson of history is that the desire to be *politically correct* by supporting popular immoral policies such as the extermination of Jews, Moslems and heretics, or the perpetration of slavery, has caused some church leaders and Bible scholars to become biblically incorrect. They fabricated unbiblical theologies which would sanction popular immoral practices. It is impossible to estimate the damage done by these theologies of expediency to our society and Christianity at large.

For example, the failure of church leaders and scholars to apologize for the theology of contempt toward the Jews, has contributed, among other things, to the origin of the popular *dispensational theology*. This theology, embraced by many evangelical

churches today, teaches among other things that God will rapture the church away secretly and suddenly, before pouring out His wrath on the Jews during the final seven years of Tribulation. The popularity of the book and movie *Left Behind*, which is taking American by storm, is a tangible proof of how pervasive this deceptive teaching is today.

Socially, the negative reinterpretation of the Sabbath as a sign of Jewish wickedness led the Church of Rome to transform Sabbath observance *from a day of feasting and joy into a day of fasting and sadness*. The purpose of the Sabbath fast was not to enhance the spiritual observance of the Sabbath. Rather, as emphatically stated in the papal decretal of Pope Sylvester (A. D. 314-335), the Sabbath fasting was designed to show “contempt for the Jews” (*exsecratione Judaeorum*) and for their Sabbath “feasting” (*destructione ciborum*). The sadness and hunger resulting from the fast would enable Christians to avoid “appearing to observe the Sabbath with the Jews” and would encourage them to enter more eagerly and joyfully into the observance of Sunday.

The weekly Saturday fast developed as an extension or counterpart of the annual Holy-Saturday fast of Easter season. This was the day when all Christians who adopted the Roman Easter Sunday, fasted. The annual Holy-Saturday Easter fast, like the weekly Saturday fast, was designed to express not only sorrow for Christ’s death but also contempt for the Jews who were considered as the perpetrators of His death. For example, a third century document known as *The Didascalia Apostolorum* (*The Teachings of the Apostles* – ca. 250 A.D.) enjoins Christians to fast on Easter-Friday and Saturday “on account of the disobedience of our brethren [i.e., the Jews] . . . because thereon the people killed themselves in crucifying our Savior.”

Most scholars agree that the Church of Rome was responsible for repudiating the biblical dating of the Passover (Nisan 14), and promoting instead Easter Sunday. The change from Passover to Easter Sunday was introduced by the Church of Rome in the latter part of the second century in order to avoid, as Prof. Lightfoot puts it, “even the semblance of Judaism.” The anti-Judaic motivation for the repudiation of the biblical dating of Passover is clearly expressed by Constantine in his letter to the Christian bishops at the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). In this conciliar letter the Emperor urges all Christians to follow the example of the Church of Rome in adopting Easter Sunday, because, he wrote: “We ought not therefore to have anything in common with the Jews, for the Savior has shown us another way . . . In unanimously adopting this mode [i.e. Easter Sunday] we desire, dearest brethren, *to separate ourselves from the detestable company of the Jews.*” This letter of the Council of Nicaea represents the culmination of a controversy initiated two centuries earlier which centered in Rome.

The same anti-Judaic motivations which caused the change from Passover to Easter Sunday accounts also for the contemporaneous substitution of Sabbath keeping with Sunday worship. This conclusion is supported not only by the fact that the Jewish Sabbath shared the same anti-Judaic condemnation as the Jewish Passover, but also by the close nexus between the observance of the annual Easter Saturday fast, which was followed by the Easter Sunday rejoicing, and the observance of its weekly counterpart, the Saturday fast which was followed by Sunday rejoicing. The basic unity between these annual and weekly observances is explicitly affirmed by the Fathers, and further suggests a common origin in the Church of Rome at the same time and owing to similar causes.

It should be noted that the Pope's attempt to kill the festive gleam of the Sabbath by making the day a time of rigorous fasting, was not favorably received by all the churches. The Eastern Churches, for example, resisted the adoption of Sabbath fasting as well as Easter Sunday. In fact, their resistance to these practices eventually contributed to the historical break in A. D. 1054 between the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church.

Liturgically, the Church of Rome decreed that no religious assemblies and eucharistic celebrations were to be held on Saturday. For example, Pope Innocent I (A.

D. 402-417) declared that “as the tradition of the Church maintains, in these two days [Friday and Saturday] one should not absolutely celebrate the sacraments.” Two contemporary church historians, Socrates and Sozomen, confirm Innocent I's decretal. For example, Sozomen (about A. D. 440) tells us that while “the people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, such custom is never observed at Rome and Alexandria.”

Summing up, the historical evidences alluded above indicate that the Church of Rome used theological, social, and liturgical measures to empty the Sabbath of any religious significance, and to promote Sunday observance instead.

SUN WORSHIP AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

The foregoing discussion has focused on the interplay of social, political, and religious which have contributed to the abandonment of the Sabbath. The question that still remains unanswered is: Why was Sunday chosen to show separation and differentiation from the Jews? Why Christians did not adopt another day such as Friday, to commemorate Christ's atoning sacrifice for our redemption?

Sun Worship and Sunday. The answer to these questions is to be found especially in the influence of Sun worship with its Sun-day which became “dominant in Rome and in other parts of the Empire from the early part of the second century A.D.” The Invincible Sun-god became the chief god of the Roman Pantheon and was worshipped especially on the *Dies Solis*, that is, “the Day of the Sun,” known in our calendar as “Sunday.”

To understand how the Day of the Sun became the first and most important day of the Roman week, it is important to note that the Romans adopted the seven day week from the Jews just before the beginning of Christianity. However, rather than numbering the days like the Jews, the Romans chose to name the days of the week after the seven planets, which they worshipped as gods.

What is surprising, however, is that initially the Romans made *Dies Saturni* (the day of Saturday) the first day of the week, followed by *Dies Solis* (Day of the Sun), which was the second day. The reason is that during the first century the Saturn god was viewed as being more important than the Sun god. Consequently the Day of Saturn was made the first and most important day of the week. The situation changed by the beginning of the second century, when the Sun-god became the most important Roman god. The popularity of the Sun-god caused the advancement of the Day of the Sun (Sunday) from the position of second day of the week to that of first and most important day of the week. This required each of the other days to be advanced one day, and Saturn's day thereby became the seventh day of the week for the Romans, as it had been for the Jews and Christians.

When I learned about the advancement of the Day of the Sun from second day of the week in the first century, to first day of the week in the second century, I asked myself the question: It is possible that this development influenced Christians with a pagan background to adopt and adapt the Sun's day for their Christian worship in order to show separation from the Jews and identification with the Romans at the time when Sabbathkeeping was prohibited by roman Law?

Indirect Evidences. During the course of my investigation I found abundant indirect and direct evidences supporting this hypothesis. I found that people who had worshipped the Sun-god in their pagan days, brought with them into the church various pagan practices. The existence of the problem is evidenced by the frequent rebukes by Church leaders to those Christians who venerated the Sun-god, especially on the Day of the Sun.

The influence of Sun-worship can be seen in early Christian art and literature, where the symbology of the Sun-god is often used to represent Christ. In fact, the

earliest pictorial representation of Christ (dated about A. D. 240), which was discovered under the confession of St. Peter's Basilica excavated during a 1953-57, is a mosaic that portrays Christ as the Sun God riding the quadriga sun-chariot. Sunrise also became the orientation for prayer and for Christian churches. The *dies natalis solis Invicti*, the birthday of the Invincible Sun, which the Romans celebrated on December 25, was adopted by the Christians to celebrate Christ's birth.

Direct Evidence. A more direct of the influence of Sun-worship in the Christian adoption of Sunday, is provided by the use of the symbology of the sun to *justify* the actual observance of Sunday. The motifs of light and of the sun are frequently invoked by the Church Fathers to develop a theological justification for Sunday worship. For example, Jerome explains: "If it is called the day of the sun by the pagans, we most willingly acknowledge it as such, since it is on this day that the light of the world appeared and on this day the Sun of Justice has risen."

Conclusion. The conclusion of my investigation conducted over a period of five years in Pontifical libraries and archives in Rome, Italy, is that the change from Sabbath to Sunday came about, not by the authority of Christ or the Apostles, but as a result of an interplay of social, political, pagan, and religious factors. I found that anti-Judaism led many Christians to abandon the observance of the Sabbath to differentiate themselves from the Jews at a time when Judaism in general and Sabbathkeeping in particular were outlawed in the Roman empire. Sun-worship influenced the adoption of Sunday observance to facilitate the Christian identification and integration with the customs and cycles of the Roman empire.

Simply stated, the Sabbath was changed to Sunday because of expediency, that is, the need to avoid the anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath Roman legislation. We may ask: Is expediency a legitimate motive to change a divine commandment? Did Jesus ever say: "If it becomes difficult to observe one of my commandments, do not suffer for it! Just change it!" Obviously the answer is "No!" No such teaching can be found in the Bible. Yet, time and again in the history of Christianity, some church leaders and religious organizations have chosen expediency and compromise, rather than commitment to biblical teachings.

The change from Sabbath to Sunday was not simply one of names or numbers, but of authority, meaning and experience. It was a change from a **HOLY DAY** divinely established to enable us to experience more freely and more fully the awareness of divine presence and peace in our lives, into a **HOLIDAY** to seek for personal pleasure and profit. This historical change has greatly affected the quality of Christian life of countless Christians who throughout the centuries have been deprived of the physical, mental, and spiritual renewal the Sabbath is designed to provide. The change has also contributed to the enormous decline in church attendance which is threatening the survival of mainline churches in numerous Western countries.

The recovery of the Sabbath is especially needed today when our souls, fragmented, penetrated and desiccated by a cacophonous, tension-filled culture, cry out for the release and realignment that awaits us on the Sabbath Day.

Rediscovering the Sabbath in this cosmic age provides the basis for a cosmic faith, a faith which embraces and unites creation, redemption, and final restoration; the past, the present, and the future; man, nature, and God; this world and the world to come. It is a faith that recognizes God's dominion over the whole creation and human life by consecrating to Him the seventh day; a faith that fulfills the believer's true destiny in time and eternity; a faith that allows the Savior to enrich our lives with a larger measure of His presence, peace, and rest.

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Retired Professor of Theology and Church History
Andrews University
4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

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E-mail: sbacchiocchi@qtm.net or sbacchiocchi@csi.com
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