

Adventist Nomads

A fairly recent book, *Confessions of a Nomad*, published by our Ministerial Association through Pacific Press, instructs the reader that we, today, can only find our rest, refreshment, and strength by keeping Sunday holy.

In the early 1980s, Carolyn Shealy Self and William L. Self, a Southern Baptist couple, wrote a devotional book on how to deepen one's Christian experience. Because they live in the Atlanta, Georgia, area, they had their book published in 1983 through a local printing house, Peachtree Publishers. They dedicated the book to their Atlanta Baptist church. Nearly all Biblical quotations are from two of the most liberal Non-King James translations.

You might wonder why our Ministerial Association would be publishing books. Keep in mind that it was this church entity that was in charge of writing the notorious book, *Questions on Doctrine*, back in 1957. It was the first doctrinal book our denomination ever printed and, although declared to be not "official," was printed by the Review & Herald under the auspices of the General Conference, so our own people could be indoctrinated and non-Adventist denominations could learn our beliefs. Hundreds of thousands of free hard-back copies were sent to non-Adventist denominations, churches, and libraries all over the world.

Unfortunately, that book contained a number of major theological errors which undermined our basic beliefs. The objective was to show the Protestant world that we held many of their beliefs, so they would give us the right arm of fellowship.

For a copy of the only complete narrative on the entire episode and its aftermath, you will want to read our 146-page *Evangelical Conferences and Their Aftermath*, now in our *Doctrinal History Tractbook* (232 pp., \$17.50 + \$2.00 p&h).

But the result only moved us closer to a denomination-wide acceptance of salvation by profession alone, without obedience to the ten commandments.

This 1998 reprinting of a Baptist book on the importance of keeping Sunday holy, by our General Conference Ministerial Association, is astounding. The assigned work of the Association is to oversee the ministers of our church, worldwide, and give them doctrinal and other forms of guidance. This book, it felt, fulfilled that mandate. One of our readers recently purchased a copy in one of our Adventist Book Centers. (A couple of others have told us they cannot find them there.) A copy is being mailed to us, but we are too close to press time to wait for it to arrive. *Here is an introduction to what you will find on the next three pages of this tract.*

1 - THE FRONT COVER—"*Confessions of a Nomad: What We Learned in Sinai's Shadow.*"

2 - TITLE PAGE—This "Devotional Guide" was published by our own Ministerial Association! Since the Association does not print many books for our ministers and ABCs, the book had to have been closely examined prior to publication. An excuse, that this was not done, would point to incompe-

tence. Surely, that could not be the case.

3 - COPYRIGHT AND DEDICATION PAGES—The book, dedicated to an Atlanta, Georgia, Baptist Church, was originally published in 1983 by a non-Adventist press and reprinted in 1998 by Pacific Press. Note that our Ministerial Association not only reprinted the book, but paid to obtain a new copyright on it; evidently this was done so they could continue to keep it in stock in our ABCs.

4 - CONTENTS—The entire book is concerned with what two Baptists learned from reading what the Old and New Testaments had to say about Mount Sinai and what was taught there. The Ten Commandments are discussed from a Southern Baptist perspective. As they see it, the Seventh-day Sabbath may have been good for the Jews, but not for the Christian. Sunday provides their resurrection celebration, their rest, their day of worship, their source of strength, the time when God talks to them, the time when they more fully know God, their great joy, their time of remembrance, their communion, their sacrament, their time for Bible study, and the day their souls are rekindled and rested. Christians are to work on the Sabbath and rest on Sunday. Sunday gives them the strength to work the next six days. By the latter part of the chapter, the word, "Sabbath," is being applied to Sunday. *It is obvious, from the following quotations, that much of the book is given over to exalting Sunday worship:*

"All busy people yearn for a day of rest. God Himself gave His permission, a command even, for a day to all the soul and spirit to be refreshed. This is God's gift to us. He will take care of us physically and spiritually if we follow His plan. Our systems need the replenishment. Sunday is a special day for this worship and refreshment."—*Confessions of a Nomad*, page 86.

"Thoreau said, if you want to destroy the Christian faith, first take away Sunday. He was right; it's a holy day, for those who know Jesus Christ as Saviour it cannot be a holiday. For those of you who have gathered around the cross and have been saved and washed clean by His blood, it's a sacrilege to do anything else on that day except to celebrate what God has done.

[This paragraph is a most powerful argument for Sunday laws!] "If we abuse Sunday, we're going to destroy something beautiful that God has given. No Sunday means no church; no church means no worship; no worship means no religion; no religion means no morality; no morality means no society; no society means no government; no government means anarchy. That's the choice before us."—Page 120.

"*Worship*: Real worship is not optional. You do not have to decide each Sunday morning whether or not you'll worship each Sunday morning; it should be programmed into your life. *Good conduct*: It's a time when you should do things that are holy. If you do a little planning, you don't have to do your shopping on Sunday. There can be time to do things like that on other days. Remember that every day is His. We are not to give Him one day and do as we please the other six."—Page 121.

Confessions of a Nomad

A Devotional Guide

Carolyn Shealy Self and William L. Self

Ministerial Association
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

A friend not far from there told us over the phone that, in order to attract more visitors, two Adventist churches in Atlanta are planning to switch over to Saturday night and Sunday worship services.

people, and then He gave a holy day. This holy day is significant. It was a day of rejoicing, a gift of God, a day of no work. The word "Sabbath" does not mean seven; it means cessation, the quitting of work.

Today, in the Arab section of Jerusalem, there is business and commerce on the Sabbath, but in the Jewish section, almost everything is boarded up. There are times when you're not allowed to go through these sections, because it's a violation of the Sabbath. There is strong feeling against anyone who would desecrate it.

The early Christians were obsessed with the fact that they came out of a Jewish background. Yet God did something new and real for them in the Easter experience, so they would have the Sabbath, and so they would gather together as the Christian sect on Sunday morning and celebrate the resurrection.

But there is a difference between the Sabbath and Sunday. You work until the Sabbath, and then you rest. Sunday is the day that gives you strength to work the six days in front of you. The Sabbath is the end of the week. Sunday is the beginning. The Sabbath is from sundown to sundown, but Sunday is from midnight to midnight. The Sabbath is a day of rest, but Sunday is a day of worship. The Sabbath has a penalty to it, if you break it. Sunday has no penalty, except that you shortchange yourself.

The Christian draws his strength from Sunday. It's a time to let God talk to the inner man. It's a time when we make real that practice which says, in effect, "Be still and know that I am God." The Christians took the value of the Hebrew Sabbath and added to it the great joy of the Christian resurrection. We have a marriage of the two in the Christian community.

The commandment said, "Remember the Sabbath Day." So we come together as a body of Christ and remember what God has done. It's a sacrament. Worship and Bible study make Sunday a day when the soul is rekindled, as well as a day when the body is rested. You may miss a dinner party or

a trip to the beach by observing the Sabbath, but you won't miss heaven. Your life won't disintegrate. It just depends on how you want to spend your time. You'll have thousands of Sundays in your adult life; how will you spend them?

Prayer: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. You are my God and I will give you thanks; you are my God and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever (Psalm 118:24, 28, 29). Amen.

Why our denomination would reprint a Baptist book, so obviously urging Sunday worship, is inexplicable. Why it would go to the considerable expense of obtaining the copyright on the book is even more so. Yet there is a third astounding mystery: Why would our leaders place "Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists" on the title page as the publisher? How often do you see that title as the publisher of any book sold in our ABCs?

I suggest this as the solution to the puzzle: Throughout the 1990s, our leaders have accelerated their meetings with other denominations in order to sign joint accords of unity and fellowship. Could it be that this book was published specifically for the purpose of being presented to other denominational leaders as an indication that we are no longer opposed to the basic Protestant position, that obedience to the ten commandments should be downgraded and Sunday worship should be emphasized? It was our consistent position, in years past, to those two points which aroused so much animosity. To yield on both of them could bring the peace our leaders so fervently desire. Our reprinting of a Baptist book, with its strong emphasis on both points and as a "devotional guide" for our people, would help bring the acceptance which the 1957 *Questions on Doctrine* (another Ministerial Association project) never accomplished.

—vj

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WE HAVE A PHOTOCOPY OF THE ENTIRE BOOK

FRONT COVER

TITLE PAGE

COPYRIGHT PAGE

Note: The Copyright Page is page two of the book, and the Dedication Page is page three. We have printed them together as one.

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