

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SACRED NAME MOVEMENT

Submitted by: Robert Wells

The Sacred Name Movement began in the 1930's among the Church of God, 7th Day members who pondered the question of Proverbs 30:4, "What is His name and His Son's name if you can tell?" The Church of God 7th Day is a Sabbath-keeping group which came out of the Millerite movement of 1844 as did the 7th Day Adventists.

Up to that time there was little teaching or discussion of the return of the Messiah. The general understanding was that upon dying one went either to heaven or hell, or in the case of the Roman Church, to purgatory. Those who became known as Millerites came from various religious denominations including the 7th-Day Baptists.

Most churches in Christianity taught that the Son's name was Jesus. They could not answer the first part of Proverbs 30:4. The Son said that He came in His Father's name. Would not His name be much the same or very similar?

Titles such as "God" and "Lord" certainly are not names, as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 8:5, "there are gods many and lords many" in heaven and in earth. A title is different than a name, it was freely admitted, but didn't the Heavenly Father have a name of His own? What was our heavenly Father's true name? Some of those precious few who can remember back to those early years contend that an initial discussion of baptism raised the question of which name is the candidate to be immersed into according to Acts 2:38.

Noteworthy of the early pioneers of the Sacred Name persuasion in the 1930's were John Briggs, Paul Penn, Joseph Owsin, William Bishop, Larue Cessna, Ralph Kinney (who had a radio broadcast at that time), Angelo B. Traina, Clarence O. Dodd, William Bodine of Arkansas, L. D. Snow of Oklahoma, James Roley of Ohio, Pearl Smith of Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

When these Bible students researched various reference books, they found the Heavenly Father's name represented by the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, four letters which were transliterated in various ways such as YHWH, YHVH, IAUE, JHVH, JHWH, but pronounced Yahweh, Yahveh, Yahueh, Yahvah, Jehovah, Jahahveh, Jahweh. Scholarship had not yet agreed at that early time that the proper English transliteration is YAHWEH.

Elder Clarence O. Dodd began publishing "THE FAITH" magazine in March of 1937. He promoted the keeping of the Feast days of Leviticus 23. He was asked to resign from the Church of God 7th Day with headquarters in Salem, West Virginia, of which he was secretary-treasurer. His introduction and teaching of the Feast days brought this about.

The following filler article Elder Dodd placed in "THE FAITH" magazine created a stir of interest: "It is interesting that throughout His life, Jesus Christ never heard Himself called by that name. 'Jesus' was the Greek word for the Hebrew 'Joshua' or 'Jeshua;' and 'Christ' or 'Christus' was the Greek word for 'Messiah' or 'Redeemer,' page 241, "Man's Great Adventure," by Edwin W. Pahlow, professor of history, Ohio State University."

In October 1938 "THE FAITH" magazine carried an article by A. B. Traina, "What is His Son's Name?" In this article he used Jahovah for the Father and Jah-hoshua for the Son. Included in this issue was an article by Wm. Bishop and John Briggs "The King James Version Regarding Sacred Names." Combing various resource books, they showed the

various forms in English for the four Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton: IHVH, JHVH, JHWH, YHVH, YHWH, JAHAVEH, JAHAVEH, JAHVAH, JAHVE, JAHVEH, YAHVE, YAHVEH, YAHWE, YAHWEH, etc. Apparently the "Kadesh Name Society" of Detroit, Michigan authored this article. The Kadesh Name Society started as early as 1936.

It is interesting to see Elder Dodd's growth in grace and knowledge as he first began to use the popular hybrid but erroneous "Jehovah." Upon discovering that Jehovah was a philological impossibility, he then used Jahweh. When he learned there never was (nor is there now), a letter J in the Hebrew or Greek, he began using Yahvah. Finally, upon further diligent research he ascertained that the best spelling was Yahweh. His growth and understanding is evident as we trace his acceptance of truth and his putting into practice each new piece of knowledge and understanding that Yahweh gave him.

The October 1941 issue of "THE FAITH" magazine commented that Elder Herb Armstrong would be holding the Feast of Tabernacles in Oregon. Although he kept the Feast days and the Sabbath, Mr. Armstrong, like the COG 7th Day, apparently decided the Third Commandment was not important and did not accept the Sacred Name. However, Kenneth Whitney and a few early Sacred Name believers contend that Mr. Armstrong did use Yahweh's name for a short while in his Radio Church of God broadcast in the early 1940's but lacking good response, he soon dropped the Sacred Name.

Now thoroughly convinced of the Name, in November of 1941 Elder Dodd placed the names of Yahweh and Yahshua in the masthead of "THE FAITH," and stated that in referring to the Father and the Son, the titles Lord, G-d, and Jes-s Christ would no longer appear in his publication.

Many were persuaded by the sound teaching of Elder Dodd's presentation of Bible truth. A group of Sabbath-keepers rallied around his deeper teaching of truth and supported his efforts in publishing "THE FAITH" and other Bible literature. Following his death in December 1955, his wife continued to print and distribute his Bible-based literature. Today his daughter, Mary Dodd Ling, continues the distribution of tracts from Ohio.

The first charter in the Sacred Name Movement was issued in Michigan on July 11, 1939 to the Assembly of YHVH. Not being certain of the correct name at the time, the organization decided to include YHWH, YHVH, JHVH, and also Yahweh, Yahvah, Yahveh in their application. The organizers evidently felt they would include these forms and names and settle on the correct and proper form when Yahweh provided proof for the correct name.

According to Richard Nickels, it was under Elder A. N. Dugger in the 1920's that the Church of G-d 7th Day had its biggest growth upsurge. Traveling by train in those early days and selling his book, "THE BIBLE HOME INSTRUCTOR," Elder Dugger financed his evangelical work and left a legacy of Bible truth.

Elder Dugger joined with Elder Clarence Dodd in writing a history of the Sabbath-keeping groups. He was deeply interested in the Sacred Names and actively promoted them in this country before moving to Israel where he published the Mount Zion Reporter. Hindered from proclaiming the Sacred Name from Jerusalem, he nevertheless carried out an extensive ministry in Israel and Asia. He died in late 1975. His wife, Effie, died the following year. Gordon Fauth, their son-in-law has taken over publishing the Mount Zion Reporter, but does not use the Sacred Name.

The Sacred Name groups are growing in number and actively promoting both the Sacred Names and the weekly and Annual Sabbaths. Malachi prophesies that the last message to be given to mankind is the name of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua. This message is being proclaimed at the end of the age by Sabbath-observing groups.

Elder Angelo B. Traina published a pamphlet called "The Deed" in 1940 in which he used the Holy Name Yahweh. In 1950 he published the Sacred Name New Testament, and in 1963 the complete Holy Name Bible based on the King James Version. He started the Scripture Research Association, 14410 S. Springfield Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613, for the distribution of the Holy Name Bibles. The Bibles are no longer available from Maryland today. Elder Traina died in 1971 in his 82nd year. His wife, Ida Mae, ran a nursing home to provide for their family while Elder Traina labored in the vineyard. She passed away 11 years later.

Currently the Assembly of Yahweh in Eaton Rapids, Michigan is in the final production stages of a current Sacred Name Bible edition called "The Word of Yahweh." This edition is based mostly on the KJV, with footnotes in the New Testament from the Aramaic Peshitta. The amount of money to get this new Bible into print is way above our means. For this reason, we are asking all who are interested in purchasing a copy to order and pay for it in advance. You must keep in mind when you order that we will not send this Bible to the printer until we have enough advance orders and donations to cover production costs, so please be patient. If you are interested, see page 6 (next page) of this issue. You can copy that page, fill in the blanks, and mail it in.

The Assembly of Yahweh, Eaton Rapids, Michigan, began with a Bible study class meeting in a private home in the late 1920's where the Sabbath and the Commandments were stressed. Sister Pearl Smith felt moved to establish a "Camp of Yah," where from the early 1940's the Feast days were observed for many years. Eventually the Eaton Rapids Assembly acquired the present property at Gunnell Road. About 1969 they took over the publication of "THE FAITH." The Assembly continues with the magazine to this day.

Today there are many autonomous groups, as well as organizations, that promote the Sacred Names and the whole word of Yahweh. Most of them have their roots, in one way or another, in the brief history described above.