

September 8, 2004

## Commentary — From the Margins

### *The Port Austin Sabbatarian Community*

At the tip of Michigan's geographical thumb, on a former Air Force base, a few Sabbatarians—Christians who observe the seventh day Sabbath rest—began gathering in the spring of 2004. Their purpose was to form a non-denominational community that would become a light to the world, a community that has the ability to care for elderly Sabbatarians, a community able to educate Sabbatarian youth, a community open to the public, a model community. This remains their purpose as the community strengthens through the addition of new arrivals. And though projects planned to begin during the first summer have been placed on hold as the foundation of the community solidifies, the community survives intact, with the grass mowed and the poultry fed.

The community has had its detractors, but what is of God cannot be stopped. And this community is of God. Thus, this community can be examined—it will withstand scrutiny, for if disciples will judge themselves, they stand in need of no further judgment. And the disciples within the greater community are judging themselves.

There have been many religious communities in America's history. Some have lasted for generations. Others have ended in disaster. New England was founded by Dissenters who sought to separate themselves from the polluting influence of a corrupt church with its politicized ministry. Early 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Sabbath-keeping in Pennsylvania established a community that, a half-century later, ministered to the medical needs of George Washington's army (General Washington confiscated the colony's paper, some sheets ready to be bound into books celebrating God). America's religious communities produced the simplicity of furniture design appreciated today, fueled the underground railroad, opened the desolate intermountain West. And one more community is forming that will straddle this world and the world to come.

When the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15), the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28). No longer will the world be divided between Christians and non-Christians. The kingdom of heaven can then be likened to ten virgins awaiting the arrival of the Bridegroom who seems to tarry, an archaic word that conveys the equally archaic concept that not everyone who is of Christ is known by the glorified Christ. Because many Christians do not love righteousness enough to practice walking blameless when they are given a lamp to be a light to the world, a great delusion is sent over them. They neglect to fill their lamps. The giant of obedience, they believe, is too large to defeat. When they had the chance, they lacked the faith necessary to fill their lamps with the oil of righteousness. So they are unable to attend the wedding feast—their unbelief caused them to look to Babylon for light instead of filling their lamps during the long spiritual night between when the Lamb of God was sacrificed and the spiritual nation leaves spiritual Egypt or Babylon.

The shadow or type of these ten virgins is found in the 600,000 Israelites that left physical bondage in Egypt, and the 601,000 uncircumcised children of the Israelites that left Egypt. Moses numbered these children on the plain of Moab, where the second covenant mediated by Moses was given to Israel (Deu 29:1). Under this physical second covenant, upon demonstrated obedience Israelites would receive circumcised hearts and minds or souls [*naphesh*]. The better promises of the second covenant when the mediator changed from Moses to Jesus is that

disciples receive circumcised hearts and minds prior to obedience. And with the cloak of Grace blotting out the transgression of the spiritual nation, disciples under the second covenant are to fill their lamps with righteousness so that their lights shine as the beacons of many lighthouses.

Once many lighthouses lined the shores of Michigan's geographical thumb. Global positioning satellites have turned these lighthouses into curios.

A global positioning system with Christ Jesus as its head now has returned many beacons of light to the tip of the thumb. The Sabbatharian community at Port Austin isn't one denomination, or even one church—it will feed and nurture the spiritual reality of the seven churches on that ancient mail route through Asia Minor, with these seven northern churches represented by Joshua upon his return from the promised land, represented by the seven pairs of clean animals that entered the ark, represented by individuals living as lights to the world, living as a city set on a hill.

by Homer Kizer

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