

OCCASIONAL LEAP-WEEKS NOT PRACTICAL

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RELIGIOUS opposition to a perpetual calendar like The World Calendar is limited almost entirely to Orthodox and Conservative Jewry and Seventh-Day Adventists.⁽¹⁾ These groups object to the particular placement of the two days necessary to stabilize the calendar and, at the same time, to equate the calendar with the solar year. The two days are Worldsdays, introduced at the end of every year, and Leapyear Day, introduced every fourth mid-year. These additions, according to the religious opposition, by interrupting the sequence of the seven-day week, violate “a most sacred institution.”

It is a mooted question that the sequence of the seven-day week is “a most sacred institution.” Research reveals that the uninterrupted sequence of the seven-day week arose fairly late in Jewish history—during the Babylonian captivity—as a means of solidifying the Jews, preventing them from being assimilated by their captors.

Nevertheless, in an effort not only to preserve this particular sectarian tradition but also to impose it upon the entire world, these religious groups are urging several schemes that would nullify a simpler, stabilized and comparable calendar, the purpose of the civil and scientific reform movement now (1955) before the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

One of these schemes saves up the days beyond 364 until an additional week is available. This week is then added to the year. Such a “leap-week” plan, producing years varying in length from 364 to 371 to 378 days, was rejected by the League of Nations on the ground it further complicates our already confused calendar.

Another and more recent scheme, known as the Jubilee Calendar, has been described as follows:

“A simple examination of the calendar situation will show that there are 497 “extra days in every 400-year cycle, which ‘interfere’ with the simple working of a perpetual calendar—the 365th day each year and the 97 days of the leap years (every 4th year, except the 100th year which is not divisible also by 400). Four hundred and ninety seven days are precisely 71 weeks, so that if a reasonable system of allocating 71 weeks with the 400-year period, outside the system of months, were devised we would secure precisely the same good results demanded by calendar reform, without antagonizing any one of the religious groups. By removing this objection on the part of various denominations to the effect that they may be profaning the ‘Lord’s Day,’ we must necessarily speed along the solution of the problem and the general acceptance by the United Nations of this truly epoch making adoption of a universal calendar.

“And yet, this great reform requires no drastic change from the present calendar—indeed it demands merely an acceptance of a leap year based upon an extra week rather than upon an extra month or day. The 71 (497 days) ‘extra weeks’ may be so distributed over the 400-year period as to cause the least inconvenience—even less than the leap years in the current calendar. Fifty years will be taken as the norm, and every six years within that period would contain a leap year week as would the 50th year (when the counting of six year period would recommence) except that in the 400th year (after eight cycles of fifty (50) years) there would be *no* leap year week within the norm. Otherwise, the calendar would follow unwaveringly the set-up of four months with 31 days and eight months with 30 days, each month [quarter] beginning with the same day of the week as provided for in the proposed universal calendar, while the week would be preserved as a unit throughout recorded history. With all opposition from religious groups thereby successfully surmounted, there is good reason to believe that Calendar Reform will become an established fact through United Nations action without unnecessary delay.”

Professor Cecil L. Woods of California who at one time spent six years in China as a Seventh-Day Adventist missionary, considers another type of Jubilee Calendar:

He proposes a Jubilee Calendar wherein 71 intercalary weeks are inserted in the calendar within a period of 400 years according to the following rule: A week is intercalated between the last of December and the first of January at the beginning of years which are divisible by five, except those ending in 25 or 75 or divisible by 400.

He suggests that the inserted week be known as a “Jubilee Week” with dates 1 Jubilee . . . through 7 Jubilee, and so on. The weeks are to retain the regular order of Sunday, Monday, through Saturday. Each Jubilee week is to be considered as the *first week in any Jubilee year*, but not to be counted as a part of any month or of any quarter year. He further suggests that records of Jubilee weeks be kept separately. The rest of the year is to be comparable to all other years of 364 days. This Jubilee week always precedes the first of January and is the first week of that year but not to be counted as part of January.

The intercalation of 71 weeks in 400 years would make the average year of the Jubilee Calendar 365.2425 days, by which method this calendar would keep the same scientific or astronomical accuracy as the Gregorian calendar within a period of 400 years.

Are these plans simple and practical? Two of the major defects are, first, the disregard of the *annual seasons*, integral parts of the calendar, and secondly, the exclusive emphasis upon one particular time unit—the week—at the expense of the other time-periods of which the calendar is composed.

A notable statistician points out: In forecasting business rates we use curves of normal seasonal variations and custom requirements. . . . They would have to be adjusted each year under the Jubilee Calendar to correct for the change in seasons.”

It is a striking fact that, in the two suggested 400-year cycles of the Jubilee Calendar, the required 400 years since the adoption of the Gregorian reform have not as yet been reached.* If we are to reckon on the date of adoption 1582 with 1956, for example, a period of 400 Gregorian years is short by 26 years—a quarter of a century. This gives an idea of what the Jubilee Calendar would mean. On this basis alone these propositions are impractical—as impractical as some religious calendars are in the civil and secular lives of the faithful.

* (2007 marks the 425th year anniversary of Pope Gregory XIII’s decree in 1582. –Ed.)

Mr. Walter Mitchell, Jr., former managing director of the Controllers Institute of America, who has completed a study on calendar reform states that, “every five or six tax years must contain a 53rd week. Comparison with 52 weeks can therefore be at least 2 per cent confusing. . . .” The proposed World Calendar would eliminate the necessity now confronting all “week-unit” procedures—“the insertion of a confusing 53rd week every fifth or sixth year.”

Certainly occasional leap weeks and Jubilee Calendars are not the solution. The ancient astronomer Sosigenes realized that the shorter the periods of intercalation—one or two days—the better and easier it would be for recording and measuring of Time.

We have here a striking example of how far Orthodox groups will go in order to maintain their own particular traditional idea. Self-interest blinds them to the far greater and wider concept of the calendar. They do not understand its universality. They do not realize that the civil calendar belongs alike to Catholic and Protestant Christian, to Jew and Seventh-Day Adventist, to Moslem and Hindu. The World Calendar is actually a universal system of Time in arrangement, purpose, scope and usage.

St. Paul in I Corinthians, Chapter 12, speaks of the diversities of gifts, differences of administration and varieties of operations, yet all with the same spirit. Likewise, there is no schism in the human body but all the members have the same care and regard one for another toward maintaining a whole and perfect human being.

In the realm of Time, The World Calendar also is one complete system wherein the different time-units coordinate perfectly in the year, each functioning in its own particular way, yet all agreeing at specific intervals at the close of every quarter-year. No specialization is directed to any one particular unit.

The new world holidays—Worldsday and Leapyear Day—are dedicated to the unity and brotherhood of peoples irrespective of differences, nationalities and creeds. Shall an alleged tradition of the few act as a deterrent to the many and deprive people of their universal and social advantages?

The former Assistant General Secretary of The World Council of Churches, Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, in his forthright article, “Come Now, and Let Us Reason Together,” wrote:

“Shall The World Calendar, which stabilizes our days along scientific and mathematical lines, be denied to the world because of the opposition of minority groups? Must all our days continue to wander throughout the calendar in order to prevent one wandering day for the opposition of the minority because of their own particular religion?” ⁽²⁾

It has been said “Let not the holy and sacred sabbaths be enslaved but remain free, unhampered and unfettered by manmade traditions.”

Holy Scripture frowns upon making the day subject to the letter of the law; it is the spiritual significance that is of value.

The prophet Isaiah wrote” “Bring no more vain oblations . . . the new moons [months] and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with. . . . Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me. . . .”

Jesus of Nazareth declared: “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.”

From St. Paul we hear these words: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come.” In Romans are found these ringing words: “that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” and in Corinthians the “letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

Here are words of admonition not to tie the calendar to any religious and sectarian bias but to keep it free and true to its scientific and astronomical origin whereby it can best serve the civil, social and economic activities of life. The spiritual need is being fulfilled by the observance of the various religious days of worship. Thus a harmonious balance is recognized and established.

It is believed that opposition is temporary and will quietly disappear when fuller information and understanding are had which will clarify the reform. By recognizing the value of observing the Sabbath always on the *seventh* day of every new year, the Sabbath would become strengthened and enhanced. The week itself is most carefully upheld; the familiar order of weekdays from Sunday, the *first* day through Saturday the *seventh* day remains unchanged.

When Standard Time was proposed, Orthodox groups vigorously opposed it as interfering with “God’s Time” but after adoption opposition disappeared.

Humankind will go far with this new and ordered stable calendar in daily use. It will help to unite nations and races of people in a freer service to mankind and permit more peaceful living in a spirit of cooperation and good will. The foundation and continuation of life in its many activities are based on inter-relationship, inter-dependence and inter-communication.

The world today is living in fear of the bomb—no matter what kind. Yet atomic power is vitally compelling in its vast energizing force. There is a movement now to pool fissionable material throughout the world for constructive and beneficial use. A forerunner of this stupendous, yet unknown, potential may be the universal observance of Worldsdays and Leapyear Day symbolized as “*dynamic days for*

peace.” From their far-reaching and irresistible influence good is sure to flow, beckoning all people forward and upward to brighter, happier days.

Jawaharlal Nehru has said: “Every step might well be judged according to whether it increases or decreases the element of fear in the world. If there is less fear then there is more reasoned thinking, there is more understanding.”

Pioneers of the forward look, of vision, of faith and of courage are the bulwarks of an ever enlightened civilization—*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*

⁽¹⁾ [The World Calendar Association does not intend to introduce controversy where it does not or no longer exists. This article is presented to ensure that calendar reform discussion includes all sides of the issue. In presenting their previously rejected alternatives, detractors of The World Calendar usually find the Worlds Day concept unacceptable—to others. Perhaps no other idea finds so little personal disagreement alongside predictions that “they”, allegedly “out there”, will never allow it. – Ed.]

⁽²⁾ *The American Jewish Year Book*, the Tercentenary Volume, 1955, states that the Jewish population is one-half of 1 percent of the total world population and that the United States has 6,000,000 and Israel 1,488,470 Jews. In 1953, the Seventh-Day Adventists reported a membership of 807,000 of which 265,000 are in the United States.

[2006 membership research results vary. Wikipedia.com reports: “There are an estimated 13 million to 14.6 million Jews worldwide in over 134 countries. . . the majority of which live in Israel and the U.S.A.” AND “It is believed that around 25 million Seventh-day Adventists worship in churches every Saturday and the church operates in 203 out of 228 countries recognised by the United Nations. – Ed.]

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