

Sacred Name Movement History

[Editor's Note: There is a resurgence of truth in these last days, but that does not mean that Yahweh's name is something new. Yahweh's name has been from the beginning unto each generation (Ex. 3:15, Ps. 135:13, Hos. 12:5).]

The Sacred Name Movement began in the 1930's among the Church of G-d (COG), 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 G-d, 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 about 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, almost with one voice, taught that the Son's name was Jesus. What about the Father's name? Did not the Son say He came in His Father's name, and would not His name be much the same or very similar?

Titles such as god and lord certainly were not names. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 8:5 that there are gods many and lords many in heaven and in earth. A title is different than a name. It was freely admitted, but did not 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, and James Roley of Ohio. Researching commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias and various reference books, these Bible students found the Heavenly Father's name represented by the Hebrew Tetragrammaton's four letters were transliterated in various ways such as YHWH, YHVH, IAUE, JHVH, JHWH, but pronounced Yahweh, Yahveh, Yahueh, Yahvah, Jehovah, Jahahveh, and 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 in which he promoted the keeping of the feast days of Leviticus 23. He had been 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 about his dismissal.

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 which 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." Combining various resource books, they showed the various forms in English for the four Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton such as 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, having 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 monstrosity, he then used Jahweh. When he learned that 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 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.

An October 1941 issue of The Faith magazine mentioned that Elder Herbert 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 Mr. Armstrong did use Yahweh's name for a short while in his Radio Church of G-d broadcast in the early 1940's. But lacking good response, he soon dropped its usage.

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 magazine, 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.

The sound teaching of Elder Dodd's presentation of Bible truth persuaded many. A group of Sabbath-keepers rallied around his deeper teaching of truth and supported his efforts in publishing The Faith magazine 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 (now deceased), 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, followed by his wife Effie in the following year. Gordon Fauth, their son-in-law, has taken over publishing the Mount Zion Reporter, but does not use the sacred name.

Author Nickels states the COG, 7th Day is in a state of decline much like the Seventh Day Baptists. The sacred name groups, spawned by the dormant COG, 7th Day, are growing in number and actively promoting both the sacred names and the weekly and annual Sabbaths.

Malachi prophesied that the last message to be given to mankind is the name of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua. Sabbath-observing groups are proclaiming this message at the end of the age.

The Assembly of Yahweh, Eaton Rapids, Michigan, began with a Bible study class meeting in a private home in the late 1920's in which the Sabbath and the Commandments were stressed. Sister Smith felt moved to establish a Camp of Yah where during 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 magazine, which seemingly moved around a bit following the death of Elder Dodd. Pastor Sam Graham and George Kinney continue with the magazine to this day.

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 the 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.

In the early 1960's, Jacob O. Meyer became interested in the sacred name. With his wife Ruth, the family drove to Maryland almost weekly to learn and study with Elder Traina, continuing for almost a year. His move to Idaho in 1964 to be associate editor with Elder Earl Boyd in publishing the magazine The Sacred Name Herald was short-lived. He also visited William Barton in California, but they did not agree doctrinally. After keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in Turner, Oregon, Elder Jacob O Meyer returned with his family to Bethel, Pennsylvania. He apparently kept Tabernacles in Nevada, Missouri, in 1965 and

was ordained into the Ministry by several Elders (Probably elders Joseph Owsen, Paul Penn, Lloyd Parry).

During the first weekend of February of 1966, Elder Jacob O. Meyer began broadcasting over WBMD, Baltimore, Maryland, and soon added other stations. Waterloo, Iowa's KXEL radio station brought in the Donald Mansager family. Both he and his wife were baptized in 1968 at the Feast of Tabernacles gathering with brethren of the Holt Michigan Assembly. With the help and blessings of the Assembly of Yahweh of Morton, Pennsylvania, Elder Jacob O. Meyer began his Assemblies of Yahweh of Bethel, Pennsylvania.

Growth continued and the radio broadcast expanded bringing more people in contact with the truth of the sacred name. His organization, The Assemblies of Yahweh, was chartered in 1969 at the urging of brethren from Pittsburgh. Brethren felt the farmhouse where taped broadcasts were being done from the kitchen table were woefully inadequate. Yahweh's work needed room to grow, and Elder Donald Mansager urged acquisition of the Whitehall Motel during the Feast of Tabernacles in 1970 at Brightbill's grove in Bethel, Pennsylvania.

Before the Feast came to an end, sufficient pledges were made for the down payment to secure the motel as a base for meetings and offices. Elder Jacob O. Meyer's reluctance to purchase the Whitehall Motel was overcome by Bro. Paul Penn (a converted Jew) who noted the motel's construction was similar to a Hebrew dalet, which is the letter D, meaning "door." Bro. Penn convinced Elder Jacob O. Meyer this was the door for a greater work proclaiming Yahweh's name. The contract to purchase the motel was signed early the next year and the Meyer family moved into the owner's quarters and lobby, and remodeling began. Later the adjacent Spayd's Motel was for sale, and again, Elder Mansager sent letters urging brethren to help purchase this motel also. Thus, adequate space was assured for setting up a viable working ministry which included a meeting hall, printing and radio broadcasts, and eventually television.

The Meyer family soon bought a house in Bethel, and moved from the motel lobby and in a short time both motels were entirely utilized by the Assemblies of Yahweh for the growing outreach from Bethel. Administration differences brought about a separation among some of the elders.

In March of 1980 Elder Mansager, along with several other elders and deacons, resigned from their association with the Bethel group and later that year formed Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah (YAIM) at Rocheport, Missouri. At the Feast of Tabernacles that year, at the recommendation of the assembled brethren, additional elders were accepted into YAIM. Initially, the new organization began in Olathe, Kansas, when some of the brethren insisted we continue to hold meetings and send out cassette tapes of these meetings.

At the Feast of Tabernacles of 1980 at Blackwater, Missouri, future growth and outreach were discussed. In May of 1981, the defunct Lewis and Clark campground at Rocheport, Missouri, was purchased and Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah had a home. Because three of the elders had been on Bethel's

Ministerial Board, the teachings are substantially the same, as they had helped establish Bethel's "Statement of Doctrine."

Another separation was forced upon the Rocheport group when two leaders of the Rocheport group admitted to adultery, but refused to step down from the ministry. Such behavior is not acceptable according to Yahweh's word.

At the 1988 Feast of Tabernacles, Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly (YNCA) came into being with Elders Ralph Henrie, Dennis Bitterman, Donald Mansager, and Roger Meyer, along with a number of dedicated brethren. Eugene Rodgers was anointed an elder during this feast.

YNCA purchased land three miles west of Kingdom City, MO on the north service road of I-70, 17 miles east of Columbia and built a main office and meeting hall. A billboard was built to show its location on Interstate 70.

Several elders, along with other lay members, left for a variety of doctrinal reasons and at different times. There have even been divisions among those who left. At the beginning of 2007, Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua (YAIY) came into existence with Elders Donald Mansager, Eugene Rodgers and Roger Meyer. In a short period of time David Brett, Dick Vaow and John Fisher were anointed as elders. YAIY occupies the same land and buildings as YNCA did.

The literature and the articles placed in the YAIY Beacon magazine are in full agreement with the YAIY Fundamentals of Faith, which corresponds to the same named study produced by YNCA. Freedom of growth must be allowed for new precepts and deeper understanding. Those seeking truth should be aware that more Scriptural truth will be given just prior to the close of the age. Restitution of all truth at the end of the age is foretold in Acts 3:19-21. Yahweh's people are to strive to be the Israel of Yahweh, Galatians 6:16.

[Closing Editor's Note: If you are interested in deeper spiritual truth, we invite you to contact Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua and request our YAIY Beacon magazine. We also have other literature on various Bible topics, which are seldom taught in churchianity today, with new topics periodically being added.

There is no charge for our magazine or our literature as YAIY members and others want to share this scriptural and therefore spiritual truth with others through their tithes and offerings. To find out more about Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua you can go to our web site, www.yaiy.org.]

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