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Justin Martyr’s Sunday Worship Statement: A Forged Appendix

William H. Shea

There is a famous passage in the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr that has commonly been taken as clear evidence for weekly Sunday worship conducted by Christians in Rome in the middle of the second century A. D. The passage in question, Chapter 67, reads as follows:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things, Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And those who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn [Saturday]; and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them those things, which we have submitted for your consideration.¹

¹ *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1:186.

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As far as I am aware, all Sabbatical advocates² and Dominical advocates³ accept this passage as genuine; they simply interpret its connections in different ways. The position taken here is that this passage does not come directly from Justin, but was interpolated into his work at some later time by some unknown later writer. If this important passage is an interpolation, then the purpose of that interpolation is evident: it was used to further support the transition from Sabbath to Sunday by projecting that transition back as early as the middle of the second century, thus gaining further prestige for Sunday.

There are a number of lines of evidence, mostly unexplored, that point to this passage as a later interpolation. These lines of evidence are considered in order under the rubrics of literary context, literary style and literary relations.

Literary Context

The problems of the context of Chapter 67 lie in three areas. First, there is the problem of the location of this chapter itself in relation to the document of the *Apology* as a whole. The second problem has to do with the relation of this passage to what follows it, especially the nature of that writing. The third problem is the way in which this passage relates to what precedes it

1. Location in the Document. Chapter 67 is the last full statement in the *Apology*. It is followed by a short paragraph of conclusion (Chapter 68), and then come three letters from other authors, appended to the document. This means the statement about Sunday is the last full statement of the document, concluding the body of the *Apology* proper.

This is the location where an insert or interpolation fits with the very least amount of difficulty. An insertion in the middle of a handwritten document causes a much greater displacement of text. Attaching an unoriginal addition to the end of the manuscript does not require such a displacement.

A literary critical parallel commonly cited against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is the epilogue in Deut 34, telling of Moses' death. Since Moses obviously did not write of his own death prophetically, it had to be appended by someone else, probably Joshua. A parallel suggestion can be proposed for the location of Chapter 67 in this document.

2. Relation to What Follows. After only a short paragraph of conclusion (Chapter 68), three letters were appended to this document following the Sun-

² Representative of this view is R. L. Odom, *Sabbath and Sunday in Early Christianity* (Washington, D. C., 1977), 128; S. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome, 1977), 230-232; K. A. Strand, "The Sabbath and Sunday from the Second Through Fifth Centuries," *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, (Washington, D. C., 1982), 323.

³ Representative of this position from this viewpoint are Willy Rordorf, *Sunday*, tr. A. A. K. Graham (Philadelphia, 1968), 262-273; R. J. Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, 1982), 273.

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day-keeping passage. Those letters are labeled as epistles from the Emperor [H]Adrian, the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. The *ANF* editor of Justin noted that the first of these three letters is "generally credited as genuine" (1:186). The second and third letters are regarded as spurious (1:186, 187). The third letter is most clearly so, for in it Marcus Aurelius credits one of his victories to the prayers of Christians, thus vindicating them.

The purpose of these appended letters was to enhance the acceptance of the contents of the *Apology*. The last of these is clearly spurious, the middle one is most likely spurious, and the initial letter, from the Emperor [H]Adrian, has been accepted as genuine. Given its relation to the other two letters, it seems just as likely to me that the first of these three letters is also spurious.

What this does on the larger scale is to place the Sunday-keeping passage directly up against two or three spurious letters appended directly after it. Occupying that strategic position casts some doubt upon the authenticity of Chapter 67, also. Not only is it located at the end of the main body of the manuscript, but it is also located directly in front of a series of letters which are, for the most part, not genuine. We have here a potential case of guilt by association. The most obviously false of these three letters is the last one, supposedly from Marcus Aurelius. It stands in the same relation to the appended letters that the Sunday-keeping passage does in relation to the body of the document.

3. Relation to What Precedes. Chapters 65 and 66, preceding the Sunday-keeping section, deal with the Lord's Supper. Chapter 65 starts with the offering of the bread and wine at the occasion of a baptism of a new believer. The rest of Chapter 65 tells of the order of this brief service. Chapter 66 is a parenthetical discussion of the significance of the Lord's Supper: it is a special meal with a special meaning, not an ordinary meal. This chapter concludes with a brief notice of the imitation of this rite in Mithraism. The first part of Chapter 67 is actually the conclusion to Chapter 65, after the inclusion of the parenthetical discussion of Chapter 66. This conclusion tells about how the wealthy help the needy and how thanks is given to God for all things. There is no element of timing connected with the Lord's Supper or Baptism in Chapters 65 and 66.

It is only with the discussion of the Sunday service that the element of timing comes in. There are some major parallels between the contents of Chapters 65 and 66 and Chapter 67. There are also a few elements of major difference.

a. Differences. Chapter 65 begins with the observation that these things took place following the baptism of a convert. Chapter 67 says these things took place on Sunday. There is no mention of a baptism in Chapter 67. Chapter 65 clearly describes a local meeting, whereas Chapter 67 describes a large common gathering of Christians from all of the cities and the countryside round about Rome.

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b. Aside from these two major differences, however, these two passages share much in common. Some of these features may be compared in parallel lists.⁴

Chapters 65 & 66

1. "The apostles, in the memoirs composed by them . . ."
2. "That we may offer hearty prayers in common . . ."
3. "There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water,"
4. "And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings,"
5. "All the people present express their assent by saying, 'Amen'."
6. "Those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced"
7. "And to those who are absent they carry away a portion."
8. "And the wealthy among us help the needy"

Chapter 67

1. "The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read."
2. "Then we all rise and pray together"
3. "bread and wine and water are brought and the president . . ."
4. "The president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings"
5. "And the people assent, saying 'Amen',"
6. "There is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given."
7. "To those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons."
8. "And they who are well to do, and willing, gives what each one thinks fit" [extended expansion on the work for the needy].

Some of these similarities have been noted before, but their complete parallelism has not been spelled out previously as is done in the list above. One scholar holds that this means the Sunday service was modeled after the baptism and eucharist that are described previously.⁵ Indeed he thinks the former service was conducted on the day mentioned in the latter passage.

The difficulties with this position become evident when it is noted how directly the first passage, Chapter 65, has been paraphrased in the second passage, Chapter 67. When the previous passage is utilized, as is the case in most if not all of the passages listed above, it is paraphrased in such a way as to show the paraphrase has taken place. Often elements are inverted in their word order, a common sign of plagiarism. For example, deacons come at the beginning of the statement on distribution in Chapter 65, but at the end of the statement on the

⁴ I am accepting here the view that the English translation in *ANF* follows, at least approximately, the word order of the original Greek.

⁵ Rordorf, 262.

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same subject in Chapter 67. Other instances of the same phenomenon can be noted above. This is not a case in which two services were alike, but a case in which clearly identifiable elements from the first service were borrowed to create an impression that a second service also took place, when in actuality it had not.

Two irregularities may be noted in the parallel lists given above. The reference to the "memoirs of the apostles" comes from Chapter 66, but it too has been used in Chapter 67, along with all of the other material from Chapter 65. The statement about the wealthy taking care of the poor actually comes from the beginning of Chapter 67, before the Sunday service is identified. This is really the end of the statement in Chapters 65 and 66. The Chapter division has been put in the wrong place. It should have been located immediately preceding the statement about the Sunday service.

It is also of interest to see how that statement at the beginning of Chapter 67 concludes, since it ends with a benediction,

"And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things [i.e., the Eucharist]. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Ghost."

This is a benediction, a doxology. That is probably where the original text of the *First Apology* ended. It is probable that everything that follows after that has been forged. This includes:

1. The Statement about Sunday worship (Chapter 67)
2. The Introduction to the Letter of Hadrian (Chapter 69)
3. The Letter from the Emperor Hadrian (Letter No. 1)
4. The Letter from the Emperor Antoninus Pius (Letter No. 2)
5. The Letter from the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Letter No. 3)

All of these follow the final statement upon the subject of the Lord's Supper in Chapter 65 and 66. The doxology to that extended statement comes at the beginning of Chapter 67. That probably is where the original manuscript of Justin ended. The plagiarized (reduplicated with modifications) statement was then added as the rest of Chapter 67. Three letters with the introduction to the first were then added to give the emphasis of the Emperors' endorsement of Christians, specifically, their worship on Sunday. Only in a general sense could it be said that these three letters were for the purpose of enhancing the general content of Justin's *Apology*. More specifically, they were forged for the purpose of stressing the Sunday-keeping statement. Having once presented a false proposition, the anonymous author then backed it up with the authority of three forged letters from three emperors. The evidence of the connections present here is that this entire bloc of material was forged at the same time and added to the end of Justin's *Apology* at the same time. The forger of the three letters is also the forger of the main statement in Chapter 67 on Sunday keeping.

The literary architecture of this forgery can be outlined as follows"

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Chapters 65 and 66

Statement about baptism of a local candidate celebrated by a local group.

Points 1-8 listed above

Parenthetical explanation of the Lord's Supper

Negative judgment on the imitation of Lord's Supper in Mithraism.

Positive statement about how the Christians reminded each other of these things "continually."

Chapter 67

Statement about Baptism deleted. Statement about worship on Sunday by a large general congregation added.

Points 1-8 adapted

Parenthetic statement about the Lord's Supper deleted. Replaced by expanded statement for the poor and needy

Sunday, the day of God's creating light and matter, the day of worship

Emphasis: "Sunday," "First day," "The same day," "Day after that of Saturn," "Sunday"

The writer of the spurious passage in the last half of Chapter 67 really did not want his readers to forget about Sunday. Aside from the statement about Sunday at the beginning of the passage, he mentioned it five times in four different ways at the conclusion to this passage, and a sixth reference describes Friday as the day before that of Saturn. This is not an incidental mention of a meeting held on Sunday, but is driving the point home as hard as possible by overemphasis. In the parallel passage at the beginning of Chapter 67 with which the discussion of Chapters 65 and 66 end, there is no mention of Sunday, only that Christians reminded one another of the meaning of the Lord Supper "continually." That is what has been expanded into this chronologically specific statement.

Literary Style

The question then is, how characteristic of Justin's writings is this explicit attention to detailed chronology. This subject can be examined from two different points of view. First there is the question of how much attention he paid to chronology in general. Then there is the matter of how much attention he paid elsewhere to the chronology of the passion week. If attention to those chronological details are characteristic of his word usage, that would tend to support Chapter 67 as authentic and genuine. If this attention to chronological detail is not characteristic of his other writing, then that would tend to support the idea previously advanced above that Chapter 67 is not original with Justin.

I have chosen here for purposes of comparison only Justin's *First Apology*. Since this is the work in which Chapter 67 appears, it provides the most direct literary example for comparison. A survey of his other works probably would yield the same results, but this particular document provides the most immediate grounds for comparison.

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1. General Chronology. It readily becomes apparent from a survey of the *First Apology* that chronological statements are uncommon there. There is one case where Justin hypothesizes about persons who would live in a certain way for "one year" (Chap. 57). He gives the interval between David and Christ as 1500 years (Chap. 42), inaccurate by half a millennium. He talks about the prophets who prophesied of the coming of Christ 5000, 3000, 2000, 1000, and 800 years before Christ (Chap. 30), evidently going back to Enoch or Noah in the LXX for the highest of those figures. He mentions that 150 years have passed since Christ's birth under Cyrenius and his death under Pontius Pilate (Chap. 46). In his very first chronological statement, he holds that Plato said that a special period of punishment for the wicked would last 1000 years (Chap. 8).

These constitute the sum total of the chronological statements I have been able to locate in Justin's *First Apology*. From this survey three conclusions emerge: First, Justin is not very interested in chronology, since this is all of that kind of material that can be found in the work. Second, his chronological statements were very round and approximate, usually being given in the thousands or hundreds. He does not even differentiate chronologically between the date for the birth of Christ and his death, even though they were separated by over thirty years. He measures both off with the general figure of 150 years. Third, I have not found any other dates in this entire work that deal with days of the week or days in a month. That type of detailed chronology is not part of his concern.

2. Crucifixion Chronology. Justin is very much a cross-centered philosopher. His entire *Apology* is permeated with references to Jesus crucifixion. It is interesting to see that he is so bold as to hold up the cross of Christ before the emperor with such frequency and vigor. The following are the chapters in this work that refer to the crucifixion of Jesus: 13, 21, 22, 32, 35, 36, 38, 42, 46, 48, 50, 51, 53, 55, 60, 61, 63. Some of these statements are brief, while others are more extended. Some of these add the resurrection. Others add the resurrection and ascension. A few of them give the whole series of birth, death, resurrection, and ascension.

It is interesting to survey these passages to see what Justin says about the chronology of the cross. He never mentions the day of the week or the day of the month on which Jesus died or was resurrected. He does not identify it as the 6th day, the preparation day, the 14th of Nisan, or the Passover. None of these references carry with them any specific date for the resurrection. In other words, the specific chronology of the days when Jesus died and was resurrected are not of great concern to Justin. He is far more interested in demonstrating these as historical events and drawing from them their meaning for salvation.

The closest Justin ever comes to giving a date for the crucifixion is to say Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate (Chaps. 13, 35, 46, and 48). Once he mentions that he was crucified during the reign of Tiberius (Chap. 13). These are very broad, bold chronological strokes that have nothing to do with the specific chronology of the Sunday resurrection found in Chapter 67. That type of

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writing is quite different from Justin's approach both to chronology in general and to the chronology of Christ's death and resurrection. That passage does not look like any of Justin's other writing on these subjects. It looks rather as if it has come from another hand.

Literary Relations

Thus far only the internal contents of the First Apology have been considered in evaluating the Sunday-keeping statement of Chapter 67. There are, however, other materials outside of that work that bear upon the question of the Sunday-keeping mentioned in it. That proposal can also be evaluated by these external sources. One source for this kind of external evaluation comes from Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Trypho was a Jew, and thus he looked at Justin's Christianity from that point of view. Another source that bears upon this investigation comes from the record of Justin's martyrdom.

1. *The Dialogue with Trypho*. It was apparently at Ephesus that Justin met the Jew Trypho and engaged him in dialogue. (He says it took place on the walks of Xystus, which Eusebius locates at Ephesus). The dialogue does not start out as a dialogue, but as a monologue in which Justin tells of his history, including his conversion to Christianity (Chaps. 1-9). Then, beginning with Chapter 10, the true dialogue begins. Justin first complains that Christians are blamed because they do not follow Jewish teachings: "Is there any other matter, my friends, in which we are blamed, than this, that we live not after the law, and are not circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers were, and do not observe sabbaths as you do?" Then he goes on to say that Christians are also accused of cannibalism because of their observance of the Lord's Supper and that they also are accused of immoral conduct. Thus there were five accusations levelled at the Christians: 1) they did not keep the law; 2) they did not circumcise; 3) they did not keep Sabbath; 4) they practice cannibalism; and 5) they practice immorality. Trypho virtually dismisses the final two charges, but he does concentrate on the first three issues. It is interesting to see that these three issues of the law, circumcision, and the Sabbath come up right at the very beginning of this dialogue, for they are at the heart of their differences. Trypho goes on to spell out these differences.

But this is what we (Jews) are most at a loss about: that you, professing to be pious, and supposing yourselves better than others, are not in any particular separated from them, and do not alter your mode of living from the nations, in that you observe no festivals or sabbaths, and do not have the rite of circumcision; and further, resting your hopes on a man that was crucified, you yet expect to obtain some good thing from God, while you do not observe his commandments. (*Dialogue*, Chap. 10).

Trypho puts the challenge straight to Justin:

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If, therefore, you can defend yourself on these points, and make it manifest in what way you hope for anything whatsoever, even though you do not observe the law, this we [Jews] would gladly hear from you, and we shall make other investigations. (Ibid.)

Justin comes back with the defense that the old law of the ten commandments was just Jewish, but that Christians have a new law in Christ,

For the law promulgated on Horeb is so old, and belongs to yourselves alone; but this is for all universally. Now, law placed against law has abrogated that which is before it, and a covenant which comes after in like manner has put an end to the previous one; and an eternal and final law---namely Christ---has been given to us, and the covenant is trustworthy, after which there shall be no law, no commandments, and no ordinance. (Ibid., Chap. 11).

Then Justin makes the application of this principle to the questions about law, circumcision, and Sabbath.

You have now need of a second circumcision, though you glory greatly in the flesh. The new law requires you to keep perpetual sabbath, and you, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious, not discerning why this has been commanded you; and if you eat unleavened bread, you say the will of God has been fulfilled. The Lord our God does not take pleasure in such observances; if there is any perjured person or a thief among you, let him cease to be so; if any adulterer, let him repent; then he has kept the sweet and true sabbaths of God." (Ibid.)

For Justin, then, keeping Sabbath does not consist of observing the seventh day of the week without working thereon, but of doing good deeds and repenting of sins that are past. In this way one keeps a perpetual Sabbath that is no longer tied down to any one day, but is ever ongoing in a spiritual way.

Is there any sign here that Justin was keeping Sunday? Not if Trypho's testimony is to be credited. According to Trypho, Justin not only does not have any law or commandments or covenant, but he does not keep any Sabbath or ordinances or festivals. Trypho does not say Justin is keeping Sunday instead of Sabbath. It is not a question of two different days of worship. It is a question of one day versus no day at all. If Justin has been observing a weekly Sunday, as is proposed in Chapter 67 of Justin's First Apology, Trypho surely would note it, but he makes no such accusation. The issue lies in not keeping Sabbath, not in keeping Sunday instead.

We are faced then with an internal contradiction in the writings of Justin. Either he is keeping Sunday, as Chapter 67 of the *Apology* states, or he is not keeping it or any other day, as Trypho states in the *Dialogue*. Do we have a case here of Justin against Justin? No, not if we acknowledge that Chapter 67 of the *Apology* was not written by Justin. Then Trypho's position stands out clear and readily recognizable in view of Justin's own response and testimony about the Law and the Sabbath without mention of or allowance for Sunday.

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But one might argue that this dialogue occurred in Ephesus, where Christians did not keep Sunday, whereas Justin's *First Apology* was written in Rome, where Christians later in Justin's career may have been keeping Sunday. If that is the case, there is evidence that Sunday-keeping in the mid second century was only geographically sporadic. But the evidence against such Sunday-keeping in Rome, as posited by Chapter 67 of the *Apology*, is even more direct. It comes from the record of Justin's martyrdom.

2. "The Martyrdom of Justin Martyr." The story of Justin's martyrdom comes from a larger work entitled "The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs." This includes, along with the story of the martyrdom of Justin, stories of the deaths of Chariton, Charites, Paeon, and Liberianus. The story focuses especially upon Justin because he was the teacher of the others. There is an apocryphal addition to this text which tells of Justin's death by drinking the cup of hemlock. This he was supposed to have been given because he was a philosopher. In actuality, the body of the text tells of the way in which Justin and his fellow martyrs died. They were scourged and then led away to be decapitated (Chap. 5).

The author of this work is not known, but it is generally accepted as a genuine account of the actual martyrdoms. Of the historicity of this account the *ANF* editor of it has stated, "Though nothing is known as to the date or authorship of the following narrative, it is generally reckoned among the most trustworthy of the Martyria." In contrast to the theory of two Justins, one who was decapitated and the other who drank hemlock, the editor states, "But the description of Justin given in the following account, is evidently such as compels us to refer it to the famous apologist and martyr of the second century" (*ANF*, 1:303).

Given the generally accepted authenticity of this document as describing the death of Justin the Apologist, it is of interest to see what he has to say during his defense before Rusticus, the prefect who tries him and sentences him to death. One of the questions that comes up during Rusticus' examination of Justin has to do with the assemblies of Christians. The exchange between these two individuals runs as follows:

Rusticus the prefect said, "Where do you assemble?" Justin said, "Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful." Rusticus the prefect said, "Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?" Justin said, "I live above one Martinus, at the Timiotinian Bath; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his. And if any one wished to come to me, I communicated to him the doctrines of truth." Rusticus said, "Are you not, then, a Christian?" Justin said, "Yes, I am a Christian." ("The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs," Chap. 2, *ANF*, 1:305).

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The contrast between this statement and that of Chapter 67 of the *Apology* could not be greater. That other text says that all Christians of the countryside and the cities come together in one great assembly on Sunday. Here Justin says he has never attended any such meeting. The only meetings he has ever attended were in the house of Martinus, down the stairs from his room. When anyone else sought counsel from him they had to seek him out personally.

The testimony of the "Martyrdom" rings true. A huge gathering of Christians on a weekly basis as is posited by Chapter 67 of the *Apology* could easily have looked threatening to the emperor. That is why Rusticus asked him twice about it and after that sentenced him to death. Meetings such as those proposed by the Sunday-keeping passage would surely have looked subversive to the emperor and consequently been treated as such.

In addition, this was not a popular time to declare one's Christianity publicly. One can see the result of this in the case of Justin and his friends. A similar but earlier execution of Christians appears to have been the occasion for Justin's *Second Apology* (*ANF*, 1:188-189). This was not a healthy time to appear in mass crowds for public worship on Sunday or any other day, for it could easily have resulted in the rounding up of some Christians and their execution.

On two grounds, then, such public meetings are very unlikely: because they would have been seen as a threat to the emperor, and because they probably would have resulted in bodily harm to the Christians who assembled in such a way. For good reason Justin says he knows of no such public assemblies, but only the house church where he lived. This local house church meeting is perfectly compatible with the type of meeting described in Chapters 65 and 66 of the *First Apology*. It is not compatible with the type of public meeting described in Chapter 67. Justin says he knows nothing of such a meeting. Since his life is at stake when he gives this testimony, and he dies for his faith immediately thereafter, we may take this recorded testimony as accurate. Chapter 67 of the *Apology* has been written by somebody else at some later time. It was not written by this Justin who was martyred in this way.

Chronology

While Justin's chronology is generally non-specific, and while he does not date the death and resurrection of Christ specifically in any other passage in the *First Apology*, he does make use of an unusual chronology to refer to the day upon which Christ was resurrected as the eighth day. That being the case, it is interesting to review the three passages in which these references occur.

1. *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapters 33-34. In this passage Justin returns to the issues with which the dialogue began in Chapter 10: Sabbath, circumcision, and the observance of the Law. His argument in the first part of Chapter 33 is that the Sabbath did not precede Moses; therefore, the people of that time were not obliged to observe it. As a consequence, we are not obliged to observe it,

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either. He also argues that the elements of nature do not keep Sabbath, so we do not need to keep it, either.

From that point he turns to the subject of circumcision. In good Pauline fashion he argues that Abraham did not receive righteousness because he was circumcised, but rather circumcision was the sign of the righteousness that he had already received from God. Circumcision cannot be commanded of the whole human family for women, who can be just as righteous as men, for they are unable to receive circumcision like men do. The purpose of his discussion thus far is to dispose of circumcision and the Sabbath. He continues his dialogue about circumcision in Chapter 34,

"Now, sirs," I said, "it is possible for us to show how the eighth day possessed a certain mysterious import, which the seventh day did not possess, and which was promulgated by God through these rites. But lest I appear now to diverge to other subjects, understand what I say; the blood of that circumcision is obsolete, and we trust in the blood of salvation; there is now another covenant, and another law has gone forth from Zion. Jesus Christ circumcises all who will--as was declared above with knives of stone; that they may be a righteous nation, a people keeping faith, holding to the truth, and maintaining peace." (*Dialogue with Trypho*, Chap. 34, *ANF*, 1:206)

The illustration here is taken from the fact that circumcision occurred on the eighth day. But, Justin says that old circumcision has been done away with. But there is a new circumcision. It is not a circumcision of the flesh, but of the heart, and in this way Christ can make us new persons living in righteousness, truth, and peace. This was prefigured typologically in the circumcision on the eighth day. It is not a prefiguration of the resurrection, but a prefiguration of the circumcision of our hearts.

2. *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 41. Here Justin finds a type of the Lord's Supper in the meal the leper offered. Since the leper offered this after he was cleansed, we offer the Lord's Supper to God as evidence of our cleansing from sin. Then he turns to the subject of circumcision again.

The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, being [7] the first of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all of the days of the cycle, and [yet] it remains the first. (*ANF*, Chap. 41, 1:215, utilizing the marginal reading from footnote 7)

Once again, Justin's typological application of the eighth day of circumcision is that it symbolizes our spiritual circumcision and cleansing. The event which facilitates this spiritual circumcision is the resurrection of Christ, which also occurred on that eighth day. It was the eighth day according to the normal

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human cycle (either the Jewish week with inclusive reckoning or the Roman *nundinae* or market days). The eighth day could be reckoned according to a normal human cycle, as he says in his last statement, but it could also be reckoned spiritually the first of all of the days thereafter. This does not mean Sunday is to be celebrated on a weekly basis. It means exactly the opposite. After the resurrection of Christ, all the days are the same. They are the spiritual and perpetual Sabbath-keeping that occurs when anyone repents or when a Christian does good works. All of the days after the resurrection, according to Justin, have been smoothed out into one great spiritual continuum. There is no day above another, neither Sabbath nor Sunday. The important thing is that we be spiritually circumcised, which was typified in the Old Testament legislation.

3. *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 138. In this part of his dialogue with Trypho, Justin draws out lessons from the experience of Noah. He refers to the eight persons in the Ark and indicates that he believes that this typifies the eighth day upon which Christ was resurrected and delivered the human race from sin, just as Noah delivered the eight with him in the Ark.

By this which God said was meant that the mystery of saved men appeared in the deluge. For righteous Noah, along with other mortals at the deluge, i.e., with his own wife, his three sons and their wives, being eight in number, were a symbol of the eighth day, wherein Christ appeared when He rose from the dead, for ever the first in power. For Christ, being the first-born of every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated by Himself through water, and faith, and wood, containing the mystery of the cross; even as Noah was saved by wood when he rode over the waters with his household. (*Dialogue*, ANF, Chap. 138, 1:268)

Here Justin draws several lesson's from Noah's experience, not just one. The wood of the Ark prefigured the wood of the cross. One saved the eight persons in the Ark and the other saved all who come to him after he came forth on the eighth day. Aside from the strained nature of the typology here, there is no warrant for Sunday-keeping in this passage. On the contrary, the eight people in the Ark do not prefigure the Christian keeping of Sunday. They only prefigure one event that happened once, when Christ came forth from the tomb, so that he could now minister to us and become the head of a new regenerated race, just as Noah became the father of all the human beings on the earth after him.

4. Summary. It is interesting to see that the eighth day references only occur in Justin's dialogue with Trypho, not in either of his Apologies to the emperor. That is because only Trypho the Jew, being familiar with the Scriptures, would understand the illustration from which the eighth day lessons were drawn. Trypho knows infants are to be circumcised on the eighth day of their life, but the emperor probably does not. Trypho knows the Hebrew Scriptures say there were only eight persons present in the Ark, but the emperor probably would not know that fact. Thus, the typological illustrations used for the eighth day are only meaningful for a Jew like Trypho.

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None of these typologies are very meaningful to us today. We agree that spiritually speaking, we need to be circumcised of heart, but the eighth day, on which literal, physical circumcision took place, is no longer very meaningful to Christians. We acknowledge that the Flood Story of Genesis tells us there were eight people in the Ark, but it would be difficult for us to say that each one of those persons stood for a day and the total took us to the eighth day. Only in a vague general sense can the wood of the Ark be compared with the wood of the cross, in that both were in instruments of deliverance.

It is interesting to see that to which Justin applies the eighth day. The circumcision performed on that eighth day typologically represents what Christ does for us, not what we do for Christ. It represents his circumcision of our hard heart, not our service to him on the eighth day. In Noah's case the deliverance of eight people in the Ark represents our deliverance by Christ with his resurrection on the eighth day. Again, it is something Christ does for us, not what we do for Christ. There is no warrant here for keeping a weekly eighth day to Christ, for our circumcision of the heart takes place on any day at any time, no longer on the old physical and literal eighth day. The theology expressed here is in harmony with what Justin has said elsewhere in his dialogue with Trypho: there is no warrant for keeping any day, Sabbath or Sunday, for all have spiritually become the same since the death and resurrection of Christ. This theology argues against the idea that Justin would have taught that the Christians in Rome in his time were keeping Sunday. That passage in the *Apology* was the product of another hand.

Conclusions

There are a number of lines of evidence which demonstrate that Chapter 67 of Justin's *First Apology* did not come from his hand. First, this passage comes at the very vulnerable juncture at the end of the body of his document. Second, it immediately precedes three letters from three emperors, all of whom endorse Christianity, indicating the false nature of these writings. Third, one can see where the author of this passage copied his material from the immediately two preceding chapters of the *Apology*. The borrowed phraseology can be traced through the whole passage when it is compared with those two preceding chapters. The paraphrasing and the inversion of elements present in the copy demonstrate the nature of the borrowing for the purpose of enhancing the acceptance of Sunday-keeping in the latter passage.

The specific dated elements in Chapter 67, emphasized over and over again, are obviously not typical of Justin's writing when they are compared with similar elements or the lack of them in the preceding portions of the document. Justin has very little interest in chronology, and that lack of interest extends to the dates of the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. He is more interested in typological numerology than he is in historical chronology. The nearest date that he gives for the crucifixion is that it occurred during the reign of Tiberius, when

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Pontius Pilate was in Judea, and that was about 150 years past. This lack of interest in chronology, general and specific, presents a direct contradiction with the contents of the Sunday-keeping passage, where those elements are made very, very specific.

Then too, Chapter 67 contrasts with what we know of Justin's practice from his dialogue with Trypho and the story of his martyrdom. Trypho says, in essence, that Justin does not observe any day, and Justin agrees with him. That testimony becomes all the more direct when the examination of Justin by Rusticus is viewed for the light that it sheds upon Christian assemblies, or lack thereof. Justin twice denies to Rusticus that Christians have ever held any general assemblies like those hypothesized in Chapter 67 of the *Apology*. To have done so would have threatened the emperor and endangered the Christians participating.

Justin does employ a curious kind of eighth day typology, but even that does not support the idea that Christians of his time kept Sunday. On the contrary, that eighth day typology symbolizes the circumcision of the heart, not any keeping of the eighth day by Christians. Justin's teaching in dialogue with Trypho is that from the cross and the resurrection all days are equal spiritually and neither Sabbath nor Sunday are to be kept literally. When one does good works or repents, one keeps the perpetual Sabbath, no matter when those events occur in the week. Justin's theology on this point actually undermines the practice advocated in Chapter 67 of the *Apology*.

These lines of evidence demonstrate that Chapter 67 does not belong with Justin's *First Apology*. It was placed there later by some anonymous author who wished to enhance the acceptance of Sunday by reading it back into the time of Justin in the middle of the second century. We do not know who did this or when it was done, but one might estimate that it occurred sometime during the third or fourth centuries A. D., when the spread of the Christian Sunday took on greater proportions. That was not the case in Justin's time in the second century.

William H. Shea retired recently from a long-held position as Associate Director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Prior to that he taught in the Old Testament Department of the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University and was a missionary in Latin America. He holds an M.D. degree from Loma Linda University and a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from the University of Michigan. Shea has authored over two hundred articles and four books, with special attention to the book of Daniel. A festschrift in his honor was published in 1997. shea56080@aol.com