

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

September 1, 1949

Mr. N. L. Meager
Morris Apartments
Wood Avenue
Big Stone Gap, Virginia

Dear Mr. Meager:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of August 19 relative to the effect of proposed reform calendars on the traditional cycle of Sunday.

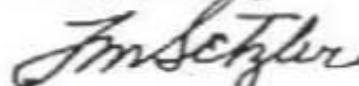
In reply, your attention is directed to the well known fact that the seven day week, independent of the month and the calendar year, was well established in the Roman world long before the beginning of the Christian era. Although the names of some of the days of the week have undergone changes, it is believed that each of them, including Sunday, has preserved its traditional place in the week cycle. No historical event is known to have interfered with their sequence. The Gregorian calendar established in 1582 and accepted by England in 1753 radically changed the calendar, but did not disturb the position of Sunday.

The evaluation of Sunday, the traditionally accepted day of the resurrection of Christ, has varied greatly throughout the centuries of the Christian era. From time to time it has been confused with the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath. English-speaking peoples have been the most consistent in perpetuating the erroneous assumption that the obligation of the fourth commandment has passed over to Sunday. In popular speech, Sunday is frequently, but erroneously, spoken of as the Sabbath.

The reform of our calendar and the introduction of a fixed calendar such as that sponsored by the International Fixed Calendar League would destroy the traditional sequence of the days of the week through the introduction of a "leap-day" for the 365th day of the year. It is proposed to establish a year of thirteen months, modeled after that of February, 1925, with Sundays falling on the 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd of each month.

We are enclosing a brief, selected bibliography on the calendar.

Very truly yours,



F. M. Setzler
Head Curator

Department of Anthropology