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*I love to think  
 of nature  
 as an unlimited  
 broadcasting station  
 through which God speaks  
 to us every hour  
 if we will only tune in.*

—George Washington Carver

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 816 State St  
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The **S**abbath

News for and about  
Seventh Day Baptists

**R**ecorder

December 1989

1686.  
14<sup>th</sup> Eighth  
(Oct.)

An  
Historical Record  
of  
the Principal matters  
that have occurred  
in  
The Church that was  
formerly gathered  
by Mr Francis  
Bamphield  
(Deceased)  
Upon & since their  
Reunion, taking date  
from (only) the  
14<sup>th</sup> day of the  
Eighth Month  
in y<sup>r</sup> year  
1686

## A Covenant People

This Congregation having been in a scattered & unsettled condition, & destitute of that spiritual sustenance which they sometimes enjoyed from the Ordinances of God, since they were dispersed & then by his Prudence, Pastor Mr Francis Bamphield left by his Improvement & then by his Prudence, & continuing their Assemblies for the exercise of Sabbath-Worship till, we were separated by the Major part of the Members of the Society; they (at one of their meetings) agreed, solemnly to set apart (viz) the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month, 1686, for a Day of Fasting & Prayer; to humble their Souls before the Lord with Confession of their sins whereby they had provoked him to withdraw & withhold from them those means of Grace which he had formerly favoured them, & to beg Spreading Grace from him; & that he would lay their iniquities to their charge, nor remove their Candlestick out of its place, but that he would give them obedient & willing Minds to receive his Blessing, & that he would Reunite & Reestablish them, & bring them again into the enjoyment of those precious Ordinances which they had long wanted, & which they thirsted for; & likewise direct & instruct them in the way of Obedience to God, & the performance of those Duties which are necessary to the obtaining of his Blessing.

This Day was accordingly, by Appointment solemnized; & after a Conference of the Day had been spent in Prayer & Confession of sin to God, & entered into Consultation together to consider of some Expedient which should be taken for the Administration of those Ordinances, they had so long been deprived of; & to secure their Union & Stability for the future; After some Time agreed to write to Mr Edward Stennett Pastor of the Congregation, & to request him to be about Wallingford to desire the Assistance of his Keys in as might with Convenience be obtained; And Appointed to write up a Letter to that Purpose; which was accordingly written, & Read to them & Approved of by them at another Meeting.



### Happy Time

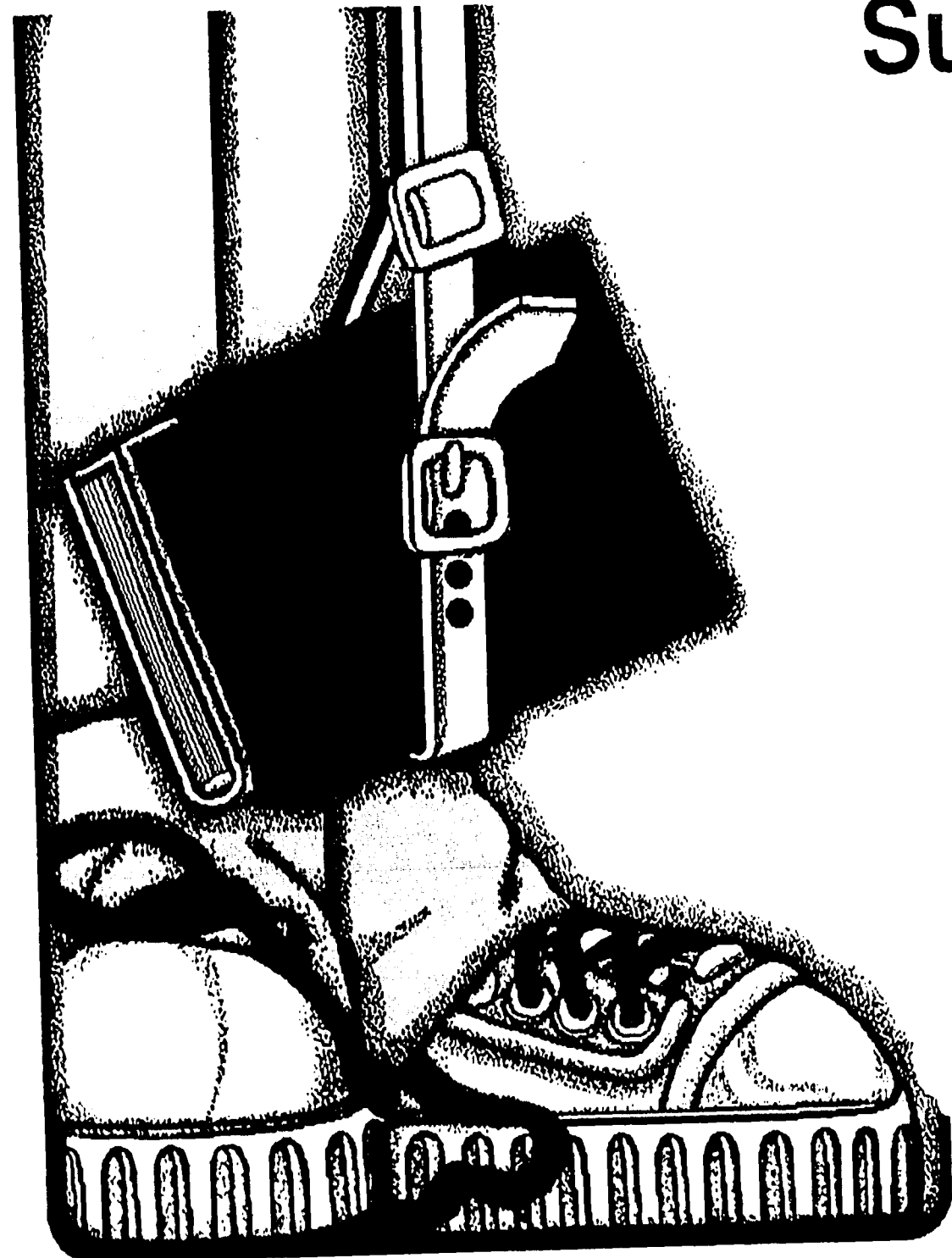
Happy time! O happy time!  
For merrily the bells are ringing  
And faithful worshipers are singing  
The Good News of the angels'  
bringing  
That Christ was born in Bethlehem.

Happy time! O Happy time!  
For joyful news our ears are hearing  
That, now, the world knows less of  
fearing  
While knowing more of Christ's  
appearing  
For to all a Saviour was born.

Happy time! O happy  
time!  
For here, love cheerfully  
is flowing  
And elsewhere, too, there's  
love a-showing  
For everywhere there is  
more knowing  
Of peace on earth, good will  
to men.

Happy time! O happy time!  
We thank You, God, for this happy  
time.

Mabelle Wiard Willmarth



## Summer Christian Service Corps 1990

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For Applications, write:

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## The Sabbath Recorder



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#### On the cover:

Church covenant from Pinners  
Hall SDB Church, London, England, 1686.  
(Words on page 7.)

#### Who are Seventh Day Baptists?

If you've never read The Sabbath Recorder before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are. Like other Baptists, we believe in:

- the saving love of Jesus Christ.
- the Bible as the inspired word of God and a record of God's will for man. The Bible is our authority both for our faith and our daily conduct.
- freedom of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- the congregational form of church government. Every member of the church has the right to participate in the decision making process of the church.

#### The seventh day

God commanded that the seventh day (Saturday) be kept holy. Jesus agreed by keeping it as a day of worship. We observe the seventh day of the week (Saturday) as God's Holy Day as an act of loving obedience—not as a means of salvation. Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ.

It is the joy of the Sabbath that makes Seventh Day Baptists just a little bit different. If you would like more information, write: Seventh Day Baptist Center, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678

## Christ's covenant: "My heart bleeds for you"

by Rev. Herbert E. Saunders

**T**hink about the covenants that God has made with us. God made a covenant with Adam. He had given Adam a garden in which he could live. But the one stipulation to the covenant was that he and Eve were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). They broke that covenant. That covenant is still symbolized every Sabbath as we

sky" (Genesis 22:17). The sign of this covenant that God made with Abraham and the children of Israel was circumcision (Genesis 17:1-11). The covenant that God made with Abraham comes to us as the spiritual children of Abraham—his children who discover that God is with us (Romans 4:12-16).

God made with us through our Lord Jesus Christ, the new covenant. In Hebrews, it says that Jesus was "the mediator of a new covenant" for us (Hebrews 12:24). God provides a new covenant that makes it possible for us to be here—makes it possible for us to live our lives as Christians—makes it possible for us to be what God chose for us to be in the beginning.

That covenant is symbolized every time we come to the communion table. As we join together in a covenanting fellowship, we promise each other that we will work together to fulfill the law and the responsibilities Christ gives us in the world. Communion—the Lord's Supper—is the symbol of this new covenant—the bread and the wine, the symbols of His broken body, and shed blood. This is really and truly the covenant of blood.

We don't like to talk about blood. It's not exactly the most wonderful kind of thing to think about. Actor Michael Douglas was interviewed by Bryant Gumbel on the "Today Show" about his new movie, "Black Rain." Bryant said, "You know, that was an awful bloody movie." I probably made the decision, right at that moment, that I would not go and see "Black Rain." We witness tragedies and we look at programs on television and are reminded over and over again of just how disastrous it is when someone gets hurt and their blood flows.

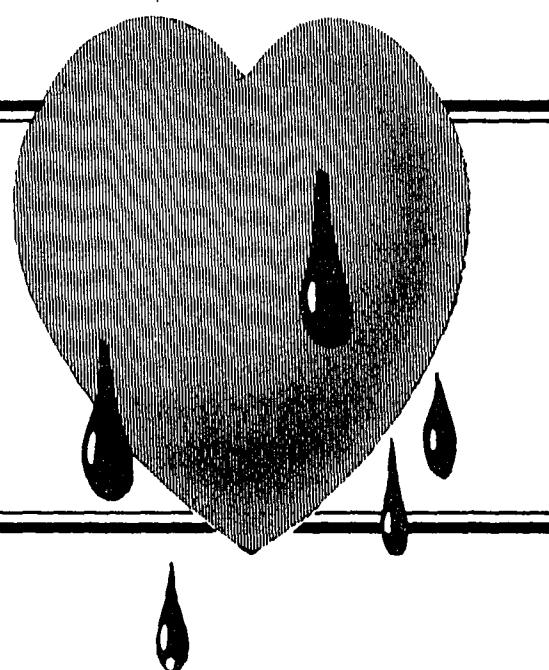
Our son Brian, when he realized that Heidi was going to have our grandson, Aaron, by caesarian section, thought to himself, "You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to faint dead away when I see

God made a covenant with Moses. God made the covenant with Moses as he led the children of Israel out of the land of bondage. God brought them into the Sinai Desert and gave them the Ten Commandments which today are a part of the very visible reality of God's presence in our lives (Exodus 19:3-6; 20:1-17).

God made a covenant with David the king, a "man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22). David committed sins just as we do and yet God called him His own. He was given the responsibility and told by God that in his line, in his kingly line, would appear the Messiah (2 Samuel 7:8-16).

There is a sixth covenant that God has made with us. All those other covenants are fulfilled in this special covenant, the covenant that

*We don't like to talk about blood.*



come together to experience the love of Christ. It was the Sabbath that God gave to identify that covenant he made with Adam (Genesis 2:2-3).

Consider the covenant that God made with Noah, a man who "found favor in the eyes of the Lord." Noah was one who, amidst all the anguish that was going on around him, could spend time in the midst of all those ridiculing people and build an ark in the middle of nowhere. He was saved, he and his family, because of his obedience to the covenant. That covenant is symbolized very vividly to us in the rainbow that we see from time to time (Genesis 9:12-17).

God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). God said that Abraham would live in a land all his own, and his children would be as "the sand on the seashore" and as "the stars in the

that blood!" Isn't that the way it is? It's something we don't particularly like to talk or think about. But it's important for us as Christians to do so today. Blood is the life within us, it's the very thing that makes us who we are.

When I was visiting Wellsville, New York, recently I took my camera and I went into the Catholic church. I photograph symbols in stained glass and as I was taking pictures of the windows, I came across two symbols that were unique. I'd never seen them before. One was a heart with a row of lilies around it, and a fire and cross coming out of the top. The other one was a heart with a sword through it and a crown of thorns around it. Fire and a rose came out of the top. I had no idea what these symbols meant at all. None of my books on symbolism identified them.

I asked Sister Francis of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Milton about the symbols. After describing them to her, she identified them as "the Sacred Heart" and "the Immaculate Heart."

The Sacred Heart, with the lilies around it and the fire and the cross emerging from the top, represents the heart of Jesus. And the Immaculate Heart with the sword through it and the crown of thorns represents the heart of Mary, since "a sword would pierce" her soul (Luke 2:35). But Sister Francis told me something else. She informed me that it is becoming more and more the custom to discourage the use of these two symbols in the Catholic Church, because they are often placed on the outside of the body of Jesus and the body of Mary. Since we've come to realize that the heart is within, that it is the life's

blood of who we are—to picture those hearts outside of the body of our Lord and the body of Mary changes our whole concept of what we know of Jesus and what we know of His mother. You see, the blood is the life within us.

So Jesus, at the Lord's Supper, said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). This is what Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me" (John 6:53-57). All of us share in this covenant. The covenant that we have together as the body of Christ is the shed blood of Christ.

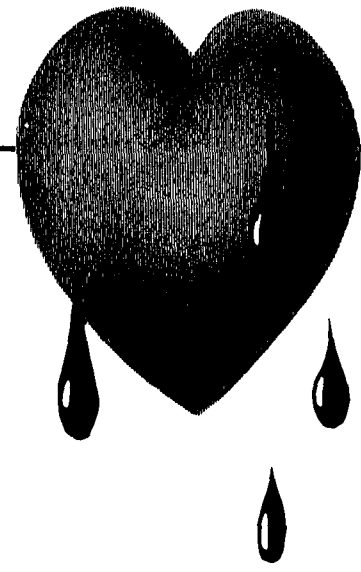
Remember some of the incidents that occurred during Jesus' Passion. When he was in Gethsemane "his sweat was like drops of blood" (Luke 22:44). Judas, after he had betrayed Jesus and had come to some remorse over what he had done, went back to the priests, threw the money at their feet, and said, "I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4). The priests themselves said, "It is against the law to put (this money) into the treasury, since it is blood money," and they used it to buy a potter's field so that people who were unidentified could be buried. It was called in the Scriptures, "the Field of Blood" (Matthew 27:6-8). Pilate, when he washed his hands, said, "I am innocent of this man's blood," and the people cried out, "Let his blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:24-25).

It is important for us to understand just how crucial and how wonderful the blood of Christ is. It

*The covenant that we have together as the body of Christ is the shed blood of Christ.*







reminds us of the forgiveness of our sins. I like what Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). And when he wrote to the Romans, "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:9) To the Ephesians, he wrote, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). And to the Colossians, "making peace through his blood" (Colossians 1:20). The covenant that God made with us—the new covenant—is the covenant in His blood which was shed for many for the forgiveness of sin; which washes our lives clean; which makes us whole once again; and which gives us the hope and the joy of being a Christian in a world that doesn't know Him.

John encouraged us to confess our sins and as he wrote, "The blood of Jesus, his Son purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). How much we need to know that this new covenant is within us! The author of the book of Hebrews writes, "Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary" (Hebrews 9:1). We know these first covenants are important. It is important for us to remember the Sabbath. It is important for us to remember the

Ten Commandments and keep them. It is important for us to understand that God throughout history has never changed His mind. But it is important for us to also know that there is a "new covenant."

"When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect taber-

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**We are restored to  
spiritual health  
simply because  
Christ gave his own  
blood for us.**

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nacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.... For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:11, 15). That's why Christ came. That's what the new covenant means. It means that once again we are restored to spiritual health simply because Christ gave his own blood for us from his body on the tree. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22b).

As we remind ourselves of this wonderful covenant, let us remember these words, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:19-25).

You see, the covenant that Jesus gave us through his blood makes it possible for us to covenant with each other. As we realize how important it is for us to share together, let us accept the forgiveness of God, let us permit the blood of Christ to redeem us from all sin, and let us join together as Christians who are forgiven and made one with Christ as we covenant together what we have covenanted before.

The covenants of the Old Testament remind us of God's love. The new covenant comes to take away our sins. The covenant we share as the family of God is the covenant of fellowship brought on by the gift of Christ. ✠

*Herbert Saunders is pastor of the Milton SDB Church, Milton, Wisconsin.*

## Covenant examples

### 1671—Newport, Rhode Island, Seventh Day Baptist Church (now extinct).

*"After serious consideration and seeking God's face among ourselves for the Lord to direct us in a right way for us and our children so as might be for God's glory and our souls' good, we ... entered into covenant with the Lord and with one another, and gave up ourselves to God and one to another, to walk together in all God's holy commandments and holy ordinances according to what the Lord had discovered to us or should discover to be his mind for us to be obedient unto: with sense upon our hearts of great need to be watchful over one another did promise so to do, and in edifying and building up one another in our most holy faith; this 7th day of December, 1671."*

### 1686—Pinders Hall Seventh Day Baptist Church, London, England (now extinct).

*This congregation having been in a Scattered and unsettled Condition & Deprivation, & Destitute of that Spiritual Sustenance which they sometimes enjoyed from the Ordinances of God, since they were deprived of their Faithfull & Carefull Pastor Mr. Francis Bampffield, first by his Imprisonment & then by his Death; Yet continuing their Assemblies for the Exercise of Sabbath Worship still which were frequented by the Major part of the Members of the Society; They (at one of these meetings) agreed solemnly to set apart the 14th Day of the 8th Moneth, 1686, for a Day of Fasting & Prayer, to Humble their souls before the Lord with Confession of their Sins whereby they had Provoked him to withdraw and withhold from them those means of Grace with which he had formerly favoured them, & to beg Sparing Grace from him, if he would not lay their iniquities to their charge, nor remove their candle-stick out of its place; but that he would give them obedient and willing minds to Serve him, & that he would Reunite & Reestablish them, & Trust them again with the enjoyment of those Precious Ordinances which they had long Wanted, and Ardently Thirsted for. &*

*Likewise Direct ye means of obtaining of these Great Blessings.*

They then appointed a day of prayer and confession followed by consultation together to consider some means to procure the administration of these ordinances.

Mr. Edward Stennet agreed to administer the Lord's Supper to the group. Thus:

*On the Evening of the Twenty fifth Day of the Eight Moneth, the Holy Supper was accordingly Solemnized by them, when almost all the Persons that had before given their Consent to the forementioned Reunion, were Present, & Communicated together with much Comfort and Satisfaction.*

*Those that renewed their engagement and freely offered themselves to Walk before God & towards One another in the Near Relation & Strict Union of Church-fellowship, being Reunited together as formerly have, for the Greater Confirmation thereof, here subscribed their Names as follows...*

Thirty-six names are then affixed to this covenant document.

### 1816—First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Alfred, New York.

*Art. 1st. We the subscribers do covenant together as brethren and sisters and bind ourselves that through the assistance of God we will continue our meetings on the Sabbath Days as far as the hand of Providence will admit and try to worship God as the Lord may persuade our souls and try to live weekly as becomes Christians.*

*Art. 2nd. We agree to watch over each other jointly and severally for good, that is to try to admonish all disorder of conduct, in whatever way it may appear, by scriptural measures and with a Gospel spirit and try to live in obedience to the Law and Gospel of God and to encourage holiness and perseverance. This will we do if God permit.*

## The covenant: Our family shield

by Rev. John Peil

**S**ince I am a marriage and family therapist as well as a pastor, I think of people gathering for worship as a family, the family of God.

There are our nuclear families and extended families which are related by blood. When we gather in the church we are related not by our blood, but by the blood of Jesus Christ. At that moment we become the family of God because we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. This gives us personal

This type of family invites people in to stay the night whom they have never met before. The guest may leave the next morning; he may stay a month or ten years. They don't know how long he will stay. Once a depressed 13-year-old girl was brought to see me and as I talked with her I found she had lost her room, her closet, and her dresser drawer. She had lost everything because her mother had brought in a friend and put the child on the couch. "How long will

charge. There is no hierarchy. There is no discipline because there is no one there to enforce the rules.

Every family, whether it's nuclear or extended or the family of God, has a set of beliefs or a set of rules. If there is no one to enforce those beliefs or rules, the family will start to disintegrate. Even if it were able to hold together or to gather occasionally, there will still be no joy. If you want to talk about joy, then you have to talk about definition and hierarchy and enforcing the values, beliefs and traditions that make us a people.

Our text is II Corinthians 1:23-2:11. We find Paul writing to a specific group of people. He knew who was in the church and who was out of the church. Paul didn't just send a letter out into the air and hope it ended up in England or Rome or somewhere; he sent it to the church at Corinth. He knew the people to whom he was writing, and those people knew who was in the church and who wasn't. They had boundaries and they understood their boundaries.

As Seventh Day Baptists we also have a boundary—it is called a covenant and it is God-given. We usually think of our covenant as something that holds us together. It does, but it is also our shield against the world. It is the covenant that says, "Here we are and there you are; we are not you and you are not us." Without this boundary we will begin to lose our definition and cease to exist.

New people come into my church and they want to join, but they always bring a lot of baggage with them. They have all kinds of an-

swers. Have you ever seen a person come into your church from another denomination who didn't have all the answers? They've got them all. They have the answers, but they don't yet understand the question.

We must begin to deal with these people. We are not going to become like them. They must become like us. This covenant that we have has kept us strong and in God's will for 300 years now. And we know that if we keep it we will exist for at least another 300 years. Other people may have brilliant ideas and they may go down the road, and maybe they'll build a monolithic church that will last 1000 years, I don't know. All I know is what God has given me. I know I have this covenant and if I am true to this covenant, we will last another 300 years. Therefore, I am going to serve my God and you are going to have to accept this covenant and become like us in this church, or you are going to have to leave.

Some people say that is too hard-nosed. But what happens if we say this covenant is not a shield? Human beings want to be safe. If we do not have a shield, we create one. We pull close together. We become so tight that no one can get in. Our tightness becomes our boundary.

There has to be some kind of shield or we will disintegrate. Somehow we must protect ourselves and have a way of making boundaries so that those who are inside are one with us. I remember in one church I attended, a man came into the church and declared himself to be a prophet, which is a good thing to declare. He came in and said, "You see those pictures of Jesus Christ? They are idolatry, get them off the walls." So everybody

hurried to please and took them down. Then this man left; he was unhappy, they always are, and so we put the pictures back up. And then he came back and said "idolatry" so we took the pictures down again. This went on a couple of

### What happens if we say this covenant is not a shield?

times and then we lost the pictures. You know, you put stuff up and down enough times, you lose it.

I tell people, "You come in here and sit down, do you like what you see?" They say, "Well, we have to make some modifications." "No," I say, "do you like what you see? You

sit here until you either like it or you hate it so much you leave."

We have the covenant and that is our boundary and our protection. Why wouldn't someone be able to come into a group like that and share the joy of worship? It is probably the only place on the face of the earth where he or she can be safe.

We are safe in the hands of God and God has given us a boundary, a covenant: our commonality of intention as a people. For two hours each Sabbath we are the family of God. **SR**

*John Peil pastors the SDB Church of Faith, San Gabriel Valley, California. This is part of a sermon at the 1989 General Conference. Other sections of this challenging talk will be presented in future issues.*

### As Seventh Day Baptists we also have a boundary.

joy that we are saved and God's children. It should also give the gathering joy, but that is not always true.

So what does it take to have joy together? That doesn't just happen. There are family gatherings which have no joy. There is chaos and fighting and when it's over everyone says, "I'll never go to one of those again!" But they always do. We don't want to be like that. How can we gather and really have joy? Let's look at some families and draw some conclusions.

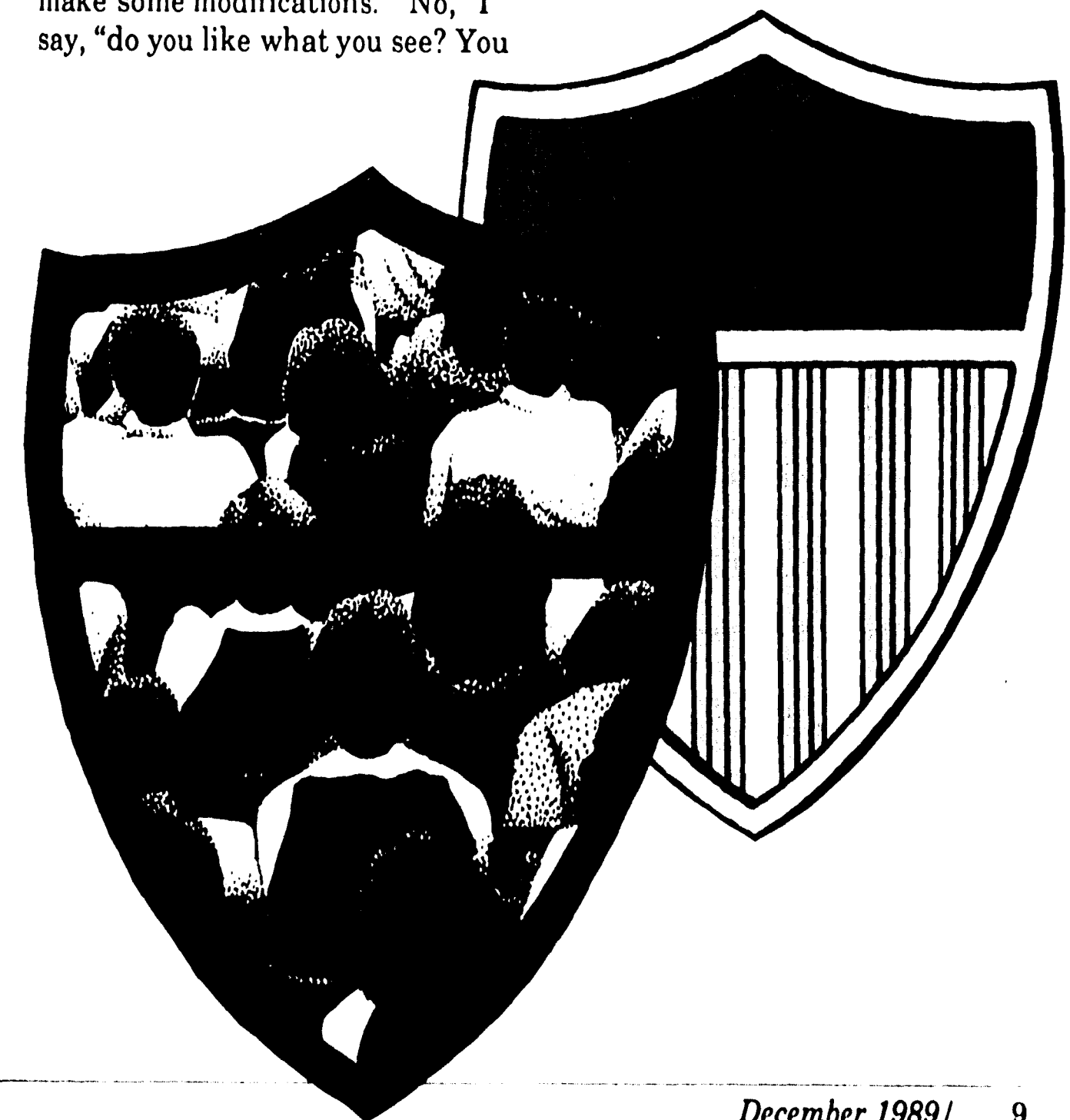
I work with many families who don't have joy. If you work with them long enough, several patterns begin to emerge that you can recognize.

For instance, they don't have boundaries. A person can be walking down the street and become a member of the family.

the friend be there?" I asked. She said, "I don't know, maybe forever, she's been there for six months now."

So here is a family who doesn't have joy because they don't know who belongs there. People come in; people go out. Stepbrothers and sisters come and go, and no one knows who really belongs in that household.

Some families don't have joy because they don't know who's in charge. Sometimes there's no one in charge and no rules. So you get together and instead of having joy, you have absolute chaos. You don't know when you're going to eat, you don't know when you're going to play, or when you're supposed to go to bed. You don't know what time you're supposed to bathe or get up or go to school—you don't know anything because no one is in





## Expand your covenant

by Rev. Don A. Sanford

**A** covenant has been described as a formal document by which consenting believers enter into an agreement with one another in the sight of God to obey God's law.

Donald Lutz, in his book, *A Covenanted People*, points out four basic characteristics of a covenant, whether that of a church or civil government:

- 1) Covenants define a covenanted people.
- 2) Covenants create a body politic out of that covenanted people.

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### *Is there a boundary which includes some, and excludes others?*

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- 3) Covenants describe the common goals and values that bind the people together.
- 4) Covenants outline the institutions through which the people will act collectively.

I would like to look at this idea of covenant in an expanded view. Who is included within your covenant? Is there a boundary which includes some, and excludes others? Or to put it more pointedly, is your covenant limited to just those who happen to be members of the local Seventh Day Baptist church?

The early history of Seventh Day Baptists shows a wider sense of covenant as they spread out from the mother church at Newport, or Piscataway, or the Philadelphia area. Their distinctive beliefs defined them as a covenant people,

and their goals and values bound them together. As new churches were organized, and new covenants were established in separate locations, there remained the old longings and the spirit of a covenant relationship as seen in their correspondence and their efforts to share in the sacraments.

The concept of independence and local autonomy, which later generations claimed as an essential to the Holy Spirit's workings, cannot be found in the earliest history of these churches. They believed that the Holy Spirit worked in commu-

nity and in their covenant relationships.

However, there developed among many Baptists about the middle of the 18th century what William Brackney has called "church protectionism."

"Although there was cooperation among the churches for matters of ordination and political advice," he wrote, "there was a growing local church protectionism among the Separate Baptists in New England following the Great Awakening." I believe that this had a tremendous effect upon our own denomination in later time, and even to the present.

The birth of our General Conference in 1802 grew out of the proposition for a concerted action in missionary outreach. As Rev. James Bailey wrote in his 1866 *History of the Seventh Day Baptist*

#### *General Conference:*

"The several Yearly Meetings would have served all the purposes of social and spiritual reunion, of home-gatherings, and season of worship at the common altar; but a unified effort, under some established rules, seemed necessary to carry out the benevolent designs of the brethren and churches."

I think that sometimes we have lost something of a covenant relationship on a denomination level. For a number of years the various societies all met in conjunction with the sessions of General Conference. This gave rise to the notation in the minutes for 1826 which read: "Immediately after the rising of Conference it was followed by the sitting of the Missionary Board."

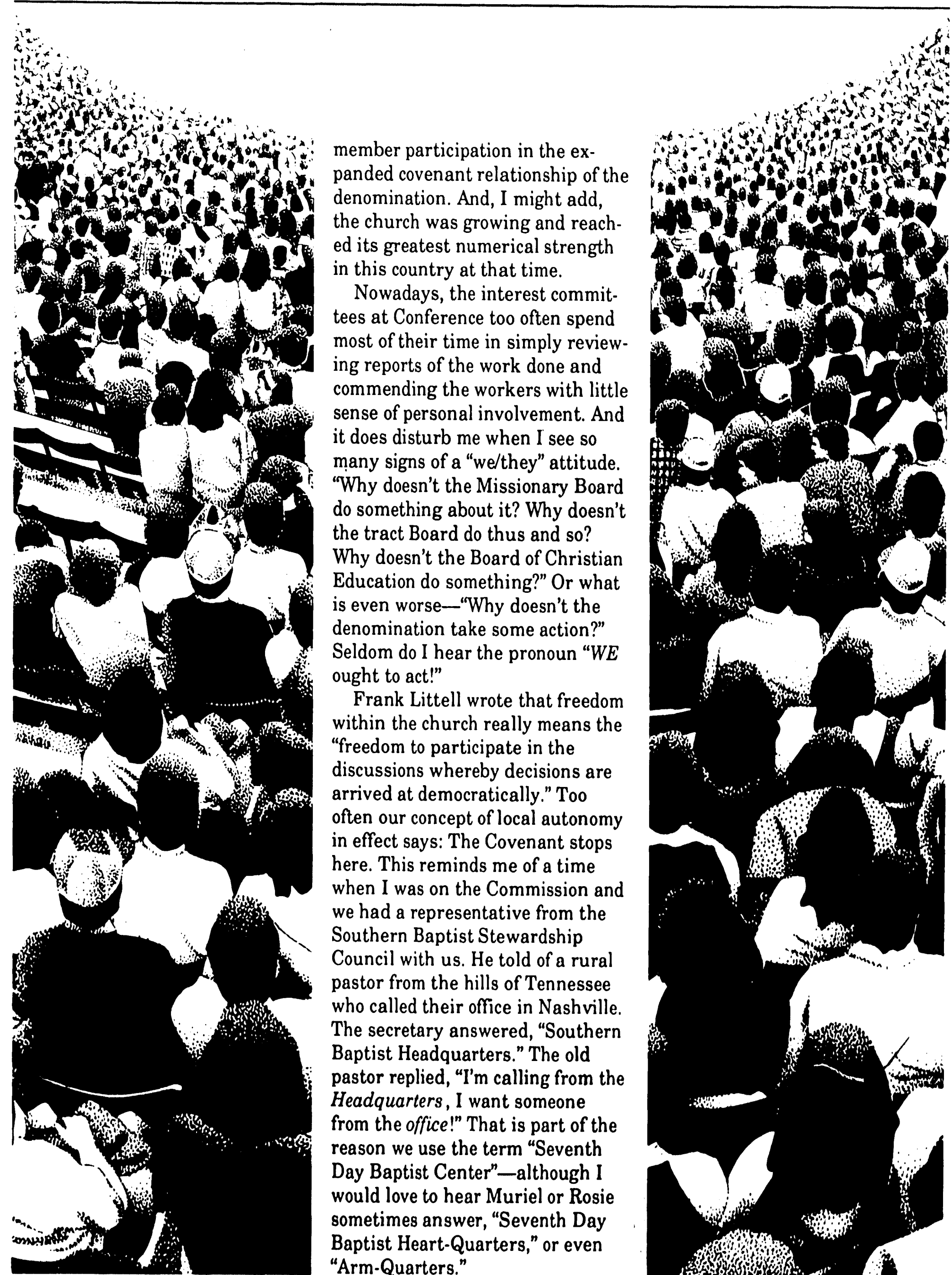
The plan was more specifically spelled out when it was: "Resolved that hereafter Fourth-day and Second-day following be devoted to the work of General Conference; and that we give the whole of the Fifth-day to the Missionary Society, Sixth-day to the Education Society and First-day to the Tract Society."

In other words, Wednesday was reserved for General Conference, Thursday for the Missionary Society, Friday for the Education Society, Sabbath Day for God, Sunday for the Tract Society, then Monday was wrap-up day for General Conference. This was changed in 1903 when competent legal authorities determined the societies ought to hold their annual meetings in the state of their incorporation (my personal memory of those days 90 years ago is a little hazy on how this worked). But I get a feeling from reading the minutes that there was more feeling of

member participation in the expanded covenant relationship of the denomination. And, I might add, the church was growing and reached its greatest numerical strength in this country at that time.

Nowadays, the interest committees at Conference too often spend most of their time in simply reviewing reports of the work done and commending the workers with little sense of personal involvement. And it does disturb me when I see so many signs of a "we/they" attitude. "Why doesn't the Missionary Board do something about it? Why doesn't the tract Board do thus and so? Why doesn't the Board of Christian Education do something?" Or what is even worse—"Why doesn't the denomination take some action?" Seldom do I hear the pronoun "WE ought to act!"

Frank Littell wrote that freedom within the church really means the "freedom to participate in the discussions whereby decisions are arrived at democratically." Too often our concept of local autonomy in effect says: The Covenant stops here. This reminds me of a time when I was on the Commission and we had a representative from the Southern Baptist Stewardship Council with us. He told of a rural pastor from the hills of Tennessee who called their office in Nashville. The secretary answered, "Southern Baptist Headquarters." The old pastor replied, "I'm calling from the *Headquarters*, I want someone from the *office*!" That is part of the reason we use the term "Seventh Day Baptist Center"—although I would love to hear Muriel or Rosie sometimes answer, "Seventh Day Baptist Heart-Quarters," or even "Arm-Quarters."



But this attitude of extreme local autonomy, whether it be by an autonomous church or an autonomous Board, often limits action to that of advisory power only. And even here the advice is given only when it is asked for. For example, churches call pastors on their own, but then if problems arise, you should see the phone button light up for Rod Henry as Director of Pastoral Services.

I think we had better be denominationally minded. We should have an enlarged concept of our covenant which includes all of our churches of like faith—since many members transfer from one SDB church to another. I am not suggesting that you alter your church covenant, but I would like to see some way in which we could more positively include our wider covenant relationships when one joins the church. Or when we renew our covenant, I would like to see us renew our commitment to the total body of Christ and particularly to that portion which is found in our own denomination. Without this larger body, the local church could not exist. Such expanded covenant emphasis would not lessen our commitment to the local church, but would enhance it.

William Temple emphasized this principle in his book, *Christianity and the Social Order*:

"The rule here should be that we use our wider loyalties to check the narrower. A man is a member of his family, of his nation, and of mankind. It is very seldom that

anyone can render a service directly to mankind as a whole. We serve mankind by serving those parts of it with which we are closely connected. And our narrower loyalties are likely to be more intense than the wider, and therefore call out more devotion and more strenuous effort. But we can and should check these keener, narrow loyalties by recognizing the prior claim of the wider. So a man rightly does his best for the welfare of his own family, but must never serve his family in ways that injure the nation. A man rightly does his best for his country, but must never serve his country in ways that injure mankind."

Substitute in this statement the local church for family, the denomination for nation, and the church universal for mankind, and the same priorities ought to hold forth. But it seems to me that the concept of complete local autonomy which we as Baptists prize so highly sometimes causes us to reverse our ultimate loyalties. In this we are at times but reflecting much of modern society which has reversed its sense of obligation. We have seen the concept of individual rights taking precedence over the rights of society in general. Students know their rights; even the rights of criminals can take precedence over those of the victims.

When I was teaching American history in the eighth grade we spent considerable time on the Declaration of Independence. If you ask the average person what is

included in that document, most, if they have any answer at all, will quote the phrase in the second paragraph which says:

"We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Although I did have a girl in one of my classes who, on a test misread the answer on her neighbor's paper, and put down as the unalienable rights: life, liberty and the happiness of pursuit, which as I observed by her actions in the halls she truly did enjoy.

But the point is that this statement of equality and individual rights would not have secured our independence if it were not for the closing affirmation:

"And, for the support of this declaration with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

It was following this covenant declaration that John Hancock and the others signed their signatures.

I am of the conviction that we as a covenant people will find our unalienable rights in Christ's kingdom when we likewise are willing to mutually pledge to each other and to God in this wider context of Christ's total body, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. **SR**



## Covenant examples

### 1797—First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Brookfield, New York.

*We do most solemnly and sincerely, as in the presence of God, our Savior, of Angels, and of men, confess the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Redeemer: and cheerfully to enter into a solemn covenant to devote to Him our lives, our talents, and our substance; and to obey Him in all things, as by grace we may be enabled, as our rightful Lord, who has purchased our ransom with his own most precious blood: to whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, we ascribe dominion, and honor and blessing. Amen.*

*And we do covenant with each other, that we will endeavor, by the grace of God, to maintain the profession we have made, by a holy walk and Godly conversation, and regulate our lives in all things by the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, on the principles described and acknowledged in our general declaration of faith. Avoiding at all times all manner of communication of whatever nature, contrary to the law of love, such as evil speaking, slandering, evil surmising, railing, tattling, envying and strife. But should any grievance take place, we agree to follow the directions of our Saviour, recorded in Matthew xviii, 15th, 16th, 17th verses. "Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee," etc.*

*And we further covenant with each other to endeavor, mutually to build up the cause of religion by a consistent observance of the calls and appointments of the church as God in his Providence may enable us, suffering no ordinary circumstance or trivial pretense to hinder us from thus doing our acknowledged duties.*

*And we further agree to concede to the church, under Christ, the right of jurisdiction over our spiritual interests, and pledge ourselves to be in subjection to all her scriptural requirements and reasonable injunctions; and will ever pray for her peace and prosperity; and assist in bearing her burdens, as God has prospered us, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.*

*We also agree to forbear going to law with each other, and as much as in us lies, to live at peace with all men — to participate with the church in her afflictions, her offices of kindness, and charity — in supporting the poor members of the church — in sustaining*

*a gospel ministry, so far as we are able, and according to our several abilities to bear our proportion of all the pecuniary expenses which may devolve upon us. All of which may the Lord give us grace to perform for His Son's sake. Amen.*

### 1873—Seventh Day Baptist Church, North Loup, Nebraska (notice temperance issue).

*We covenant and agree to watch each other for good — to Submit to Scriptural discipline of the Church. To aid any brother or sister who may be found in want or distress as we may be able. To regularly attend Sabbath meetings when practicable — To bear our proportion of all necessary expenses of the Church according as God shall give us means — To refrain from the use of Spiritous Liquors as a beverage and to keep the Commandments of God and abide in the faith of Jesus.*

### 1896—Riverside Seventh Day Baptist Church, Riverside, California.

Article I.

*We do solemnly covenant, in the presence of God, with each other, to serve the Lord in all things as His grace may enable us to do, Keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ.*

Article II.

*We also covenant to keep the appointments of God's house by a regular attendance upon the Sabbath service, also the covenant and business meetings allowing no excuse to deter us that we do not believe our Master would approve.*

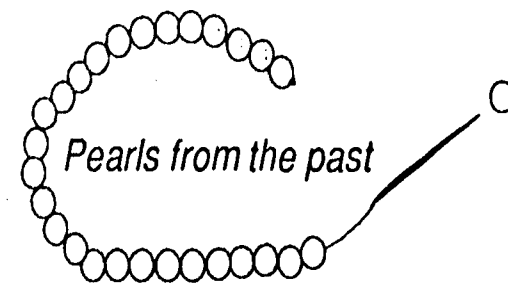
Article III.

*We also covenant to do our part, as God may prosper us, in bearing the burdens of the church; such as helping the needy, caring for the sick and meeting all financial expenses.*

Article IV.

*And further, we covenant to watch over one another for good, to pray for each other, and if we see and feel the necessity to admonish, to admonish in the spirit of Christian love and kindness.*





## Half-Way Covenant

by Don A. Sanford, historian

The Old South Church in Boston traces its beginning to a serious dispute over the meaning of the church covenant.

In 1667, against the wishes of nearly half of the congregation, John Davenport, a bitter foe of any form of theocracy which linked church and state together, was called to the pastorate of First Church of Boston. He died a year later, but the opposition to his call and his ideas had gone so far that a secession from the old church became inevitable. Thus in 1669, the advocates of the "Half-Way Covenant" organized themselves into a new society under the title, "The Third Church in Boston."

The "Half-Way Covenant" theory of church membership grew out of a problem faced by colonial churches which held to Calvinist teachings that the only true church members were the elect of God who had experienced conversion. Yet problems arose in trying to operate a church when only God knew who the real members were. As some of the intense fervor and zeal of the Puritan fathers cooled, there were fewer members who bore witness that they had "experienced religion." Many churches and even their ministers accepted the Half-Way Covenant of 1662. Dr. Lyman Beecher explained the Half-Way Covenant in these words:

Persons of a regular deportment, though destitute of piety, might be considered as Church members, and offer their children in baptism, without coming to the Sacramental Supper, for which piety was still deemed indispensable. The effect was that *owning the covenant* as it was called, became a common thoughtless ceremony, and baptism was extended to all who had sufficient regard to fashion, or to self-righteous doings, to ask it for themselves or their children. As to the

promise of educating their children in the fear of the Lord, and submitting to the discipline of the Church, on the one hand, or of watchful care on the other, they were alike disregarded, both by those who exacted and by those who made them.<sup>1</sup>

A council held in Boston in 1657 first approved the principle, but not without considerable opposition. Five years later a synod was called of all of the clergymen in Massachusetts to reconsider the question. The synod substantially confirmed the decision of the council.


Most people recognized the validity of the old definition that "a company becomes a Church, by joining a Covenant." The difference lay in who could join that covenant. Some argued that the only fit persons to enter into a covenant—and thus become church members—were those who had had a personal religious experience. Others compared the covenant with that promised to Abraham which became the inheritance of all his descendants for generations (Genesis 17:7).

H. Leon McBeth, in his book, *The Baptist Heritage*, describes the effect of this Half-Way Covenant:

The zeal of the first Pilgrims had cooled, and the new generations expected to inherit the kingdom along with the family pewter. Earlier the New England churches had allowed infants of church members to receive baptism, and thus church membership, though they were expected to make their own profession of faith later. A question arose about the status of infant children of the next generation whose parents had never made the expected profession of faith. The question involved more than religion, for social and economic benefits were attached to church membership. The decision of 1662 allowed the third generation, infants of moral parents

who claimed no religious conversion, to be received into the church by infant baptism. They had all the social privileges of church membership but could not receive communion unless they made their own profession of faith. Thus they were "halfway" members, and most never went beyond that status.<sup>2</sup>

Some historians point out that many in Massachusetts who could not accept the principles of a "Half-Way Covenant" became Baptists where the sacrament of believer's baptism rested upon a profession of faith. It is possible that Seventh Day Baptists thus benefited from this discontent with the Half-Way Covenant, for their beginnings in this country were during this period, and included people who left Massachusetts for Rhode Island and New Jersey.

The old term "Half-Way Covenant," which was revived in the 19th century in connection with the revivals of the Great Awakening is no longer used. Yet some of the same ideas may still persist. The old phrase, "God has no grandchildren, only children," may still be used, but are there not those who still hope to get to heaven on the coattails of godly parents? A recent membership report from one Seventh Day Baptist church used the term, "Layaway Members," to distinguish the people whose names are still on the roll but whose actual participation may be reserved for the time when they are finally "laid away" and their obituary can read that they were members of the church. 

<sup>1</sup>cited by J.M. Cramp, *Baptist History* (London, 1875), p. 453.

<sup>2</sup>H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, Broadman Press:1987) pp. 201-02.



# SR Almanac

Where we have been...

### One year ago—December 1988

After-effects of Hurricane Gilbert reported from Jamaica: six SDB churches completely destroyed, three with roofs gone.

Margaret Bond Allen of Lost Creek, West Virginia, honored as Sabbath School Teacher of the Year.

Plainfield, New Jersey, church celebrates 150th anniversary.

History of the Bay Area, California, church highlighted.

New editors—Jane, Adam, Eric, and Alicia Mackintosh—announced for *The Sabbath Visitor*.

### Five years ago—December 1984

Active and joyous Youth Meeting reported from Gorki, Poland.

Shiloh, New Jersey, church's youth study program continues effective outreach and nurturing.

Women's page offers Christmas devotional program. Pastor Joe Samuels accepts call to Plainfield.

Health center in Thomas, Malawi, officially dedicated.

### 10 years ago—December 1979

Denominational leaders, traveling in "teams," cover 100,000 miles to present a call to discipleship.

Historian Tom Merchant continues series on SDB China mission.

Pastor ordinations abound: Kenneth Burdick, John Rau, Kenneth Chroniger, and Stephan Saunders.

Editor of *Christianity Today*, Dr. Harold Lindsell, featured speaker at New England Yearly Meeting.

Atlanta, Georgia, organizes new fellowship.

Fire destroys garage and damages parsonage in Alfred Station, New York.

### 25 years ago—December 1964

New Director of Evangelism Leon Lawton travels over 7,000 miles at about 2¢ a mile for gas, oil, and tolls.

Pastor Elmo Fitz Randolph and family move into brand new parsonage in Milton, Wisconsin.

Many happy reports of Homecomings around Sabbath Heritage Day in November.

Sarah Becker visits many western churches telling of her mission work at Makapwa, Malawi.

Christian Education Secretary Rex Zwiebel explains the four divisions of the National Council of Churches.

Origin of the White Cloud, Michigan, church outlined.

U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's policy paper on education presented.

### 50 years ago—December 1939

"Extending Seventh Day Baptist Horizons," an historical paper by Karl Stillman, presented to Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island.

As the war wages, an article urges readers to become "aggressive Christians—not with military power, but with spiritual powers."

Salem College radio broadcast salutes the new Ehret Outdoor Theatre.

A larger Christmas day issue has all the regular departments focus on the Christ of the holiday.

### 75 years ago—December 1914

Good attendance reported at Medical Missionary Conference in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Readers shocked by sad news of fire destroying Salem College's "old building."

Strong call to "enlist" in the Young People's Army of SDB volunteers to make the 1915 Conference a "Young People's" Conference. "Be patriotic to your denomination...No cowards need apply."

A plea for a sane Christmas sent out in card form from Battle Creek.

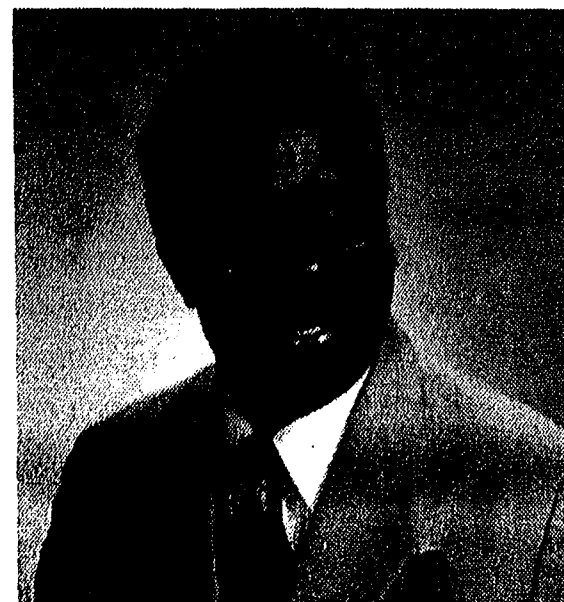
### ...where are we headed?

### Pray...

- for victims of recent natural disasters
- for your Sabbath School teacher
- for the ministry of *The Sabbath Visitor*
- for our young people
- that more accept the call to church leadership
- for true peace in 1990
- that our focus remains always on Christ



The President's Page  
**The Vision**



Rev. Joe Samuels

You may be questioning in your mind, "Who is he," to bring us a Vision? You know something, that is a good question.

As John the Baptist explained, "I am nobody, I am just a voice." The purpose of a voice is to be heard and not to be seen. John was just a voice. How is that for one's self-esteem? I believe God wanted the emphasis to be not so much on how John looked, but on what he said. Therefore he came to God's people merely as a "voice."

I ask myself that very important and humiliating question, "Who am I?" The Lord replied, "Just a voice I picked up from the gutter of Kingston, Jamaica, washed it clean in the precious blood of my dear Son, sanctified it that I may send it to my people, Seventh Day Baptists, with a Vision of my will for them in the closing decade of this 2000 years." Seventh Day Baptists, that's my only credential, no rank, no station, just a voice in these closing years; a voice with a Vision from the Lord to you. Believe me, that is all the credentials I really need. We can respond to the challenge of the Vision, or we can ignore it and continue our perennial wanderings in the wilderness of frustration and despair.

I firmly believe that by the grace of God we can respond positively to

the challenge of this Vision. Therefore I have chosen as our Conference Theme for the ensuing year: "All One In Christ, Let's Practice It"—Galatians 3:28

Song: "We Are One In The Spirit"  
 I think as we enter the year of "MORE 2000," it is fitting that we be challenged to join together in what could very well be the last leg of the "Gospel Race," and our final opportunity to bring in the harvest of souls that the Lord has so patiently reserved for Seventh Day Baptists over the past decades.

As we develop this theme through the year, I hope to share with you in much greater detail, the areas in which we need to more actively demonstrate our togetherness as a people of God. The following is an outline of my *Vision of unity and togetherness*: In our—

1. **Relationships** among people
  - a) Between multiracial and multicultural fellowships
  - b) Between denominational Boards and Agencies
  - c) Between our administrators and executives.
2. **Resources**, with which God has blessed us for Ministry
  - a) Resource materials: In Christian Ed.; video; literature and music; Sabbath School materials
  - b) Men/Women who have valuable skills: In experience, professions and leadership
  - c) Money with which to support joint projects: National and local; ministry for outreach; greater visibility; any other
  - d) Our love, agape love Especially among our SDB family.
3. **Recognition** and utilization of gifts for Ministry  
 This is the age of video and cassette taping. We need to make

by Joe A. Samuels

- available to the public:
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  - a) In significant SDB programs and projects
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# Pastor Profile

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 August 10, 1950, Beirut, Lebanon

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 Riverside, California

**Family:**  
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 Daughter Salma, age 15  
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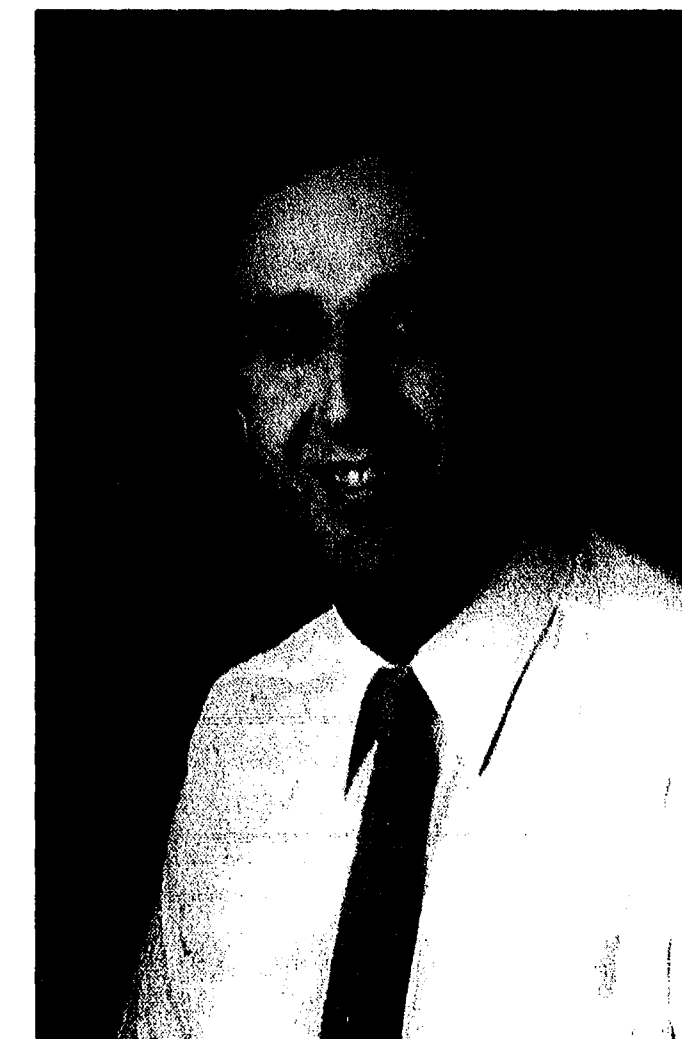
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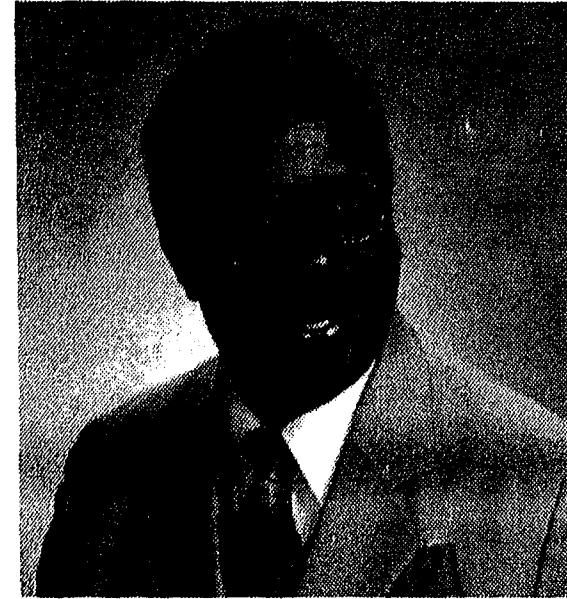
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From the executive secretary's desk

## What does the covenant have to do with me?

by Dale D. Thorngate

Words from the covenant of the first Seventh Day Baptist church in this country (see page 7) have been going over and over in my mind the last several months. For some time I have been concerned about the Christian church in general and Seventh Day Baptist churches in particular.

As we approach the beginning of a new decade and a new century, people in the United States who claim to be "born again" Christians are saying they don't need the church. It doesn't do anything for them or have any relevance for their lives.

As we look at the concept of the covenant in this issue of *The Sabbath Recorder*, I want to

*the Lord and with one another and gave up ourselves to God and one to another."*

A covenant is a formal, solemn and binding agreement; a written agreement or promise, pledge or contract. From the Old Testament through the New, God entered into many covenants with His people. It seems very appropriate to me for Christians, especially Seventh Day Baptists, to enter into a covenant. I think, however, that we need to be reminded that these agreements are formal, solemn and binding. That, to me, means we who enter into this agreement with other members of our church are obligated and responsible to hold up our part of the contract. We are,

church. In many cases we just go through the motions that get our names on the church roles.

My second concern is that since we enter into this agreement so lightly it really doesn't have much to do with our relationship or functioning within the church. When was the last time you were confronted by the pastor or a deacon for not tithing, or not attending Sabbath worship, or not participating in a mission project of the church? Or when was the last time you sought the face of God with at least one other member of your church?

Since Seventh Day Baptists believe that we enter into our relationship to God through Christ as individuals, we don't have a creed or set of rules to which our members must adhere. However, we do have a covenant. And if we take it seriously, we are obligated to God and to one another to participate fully in the life of the church.

I believe people think they don't need the church because it doesn't make any difference if you go or not, give to it or not, get involved in it or not. There are more requirements to be a member of the Kiwanis or Lions Clubs than there are to be a member of the church.

What does the covenant have to do with me? I believe it has everything to do with me. If I am not willing to give myself up to God and to the other members of my church then I shouldn't be wasting my time or theirs.

Your agreement to covenant together with God and with other Seventh Day Baptists is important. It has everything to do with your Christian life in obedience to God and cooperation with other Christians. It has a lot to do with you. **SR**

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### ***We should be held accountable to the other members of this contract.***

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consider some of the concepts in the Newport church covenant and think about our own covenant with our church and our God.

*"After serious consideration and seeking God's face among ourselves for the Lord to direct us in a right way for us and our children..."*

Before joining the church, I wonder if most of us sat down with some of the members to seek God's face together and ask him to direct us the right way. I don't mean to belittle the process of any individuals, but my own experience didn't include a specific of "seeking God's face" with others.

Of course, I was a child when I first joined the church, but now as a grandfather, I am impressed with the significance of "seeking the right way for us and our children."

*"We entered into covenant with*

and should be, held accountable to the other members of this contract.

The covenantal phrase that impresses me is, "we gave ourselves up to God and to one another." I would really have to think and pray a long time before I could sign this covenant. I think I could give myself up to God; in fact, I believe that I have done that, although I have this feeling that this implies obedience—and like most Americans I resist the idea of obeying. And I know that it would be even harder to give myself up to many of my fellow church members.

Most church covenants today share many of the same ideas (if not the same words) as this early one. My concern is two-fold. First, I don't think we give enough thought to what a covenant should mean to us and to the other members of our



**FOCUS**  
on Missions

### **Finland, Europe**

Missionary Thomas McElwain writes: "I felt impressed to hitch rather than take the bus to Helsinki to make plans with Pastor Sorsa. A young man picked me up and took me all the way to Helsinki. He had just returned from Spain where he had been convicted of the Sabbath by a tract in Spanish. He said that he had begun keeping Sabbath, but needed more knowledge about it. We talked and studied all the way. When he let me out, he said it was clearly providential that he had met me. He promised to keep in touch. Although this is the most dramatic of my contacts this month, it is not the only one."

In September McElwain went to both Stockholm, Sweden, and Oslo, Norway, to meet with contacts and assess opportunities for new witness. Contacts with the reported Seventh Day Baptist churches in Moscow and Leningrad, USSR, with Pastor Sorsa were also planned for this fall.

### **Miami, FL, USA**

The summer months are usually difficult for our church as many of the members go on vacation, our assistant Pastor, William Vis, goes north and our Pastor, Andrew Samuels, attends Summer Institute and General Conference. However, the seats left vacant by our members were filled with visitors from other SDB churches and the community. Our visitors totaled 171 for the third quarter; about 71 of these were repeat visitors. We have started the radio program, "Share The Joy" in Miami on Tuesday morning, 6:00-6:15 a.m. on WVCB, 180AM, and we hope this outreach on a secular radio station will bring fruit.

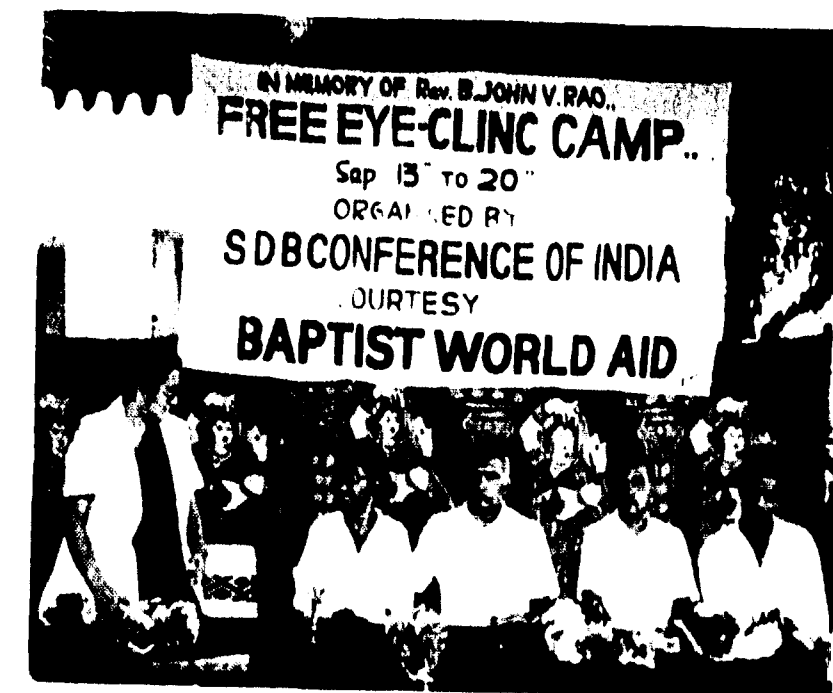
### **Rapid City, SD, USA**

Extension Pastor Larry Graffius continues to make phone and personal contacts with new people in this area, using information obtained by their phone company. He reports, "The first week out I visited five homes and had one new decision for Christ, and one other young man who is interested in coming to church. The second week, one of the individuals who received the pre-call letter called me and we set up a time to visit. They, too, are very interested in coming to our church. Praise God!" He also shares that "one of the goals set in my extension work is developing a time management seminar to use as an outreach tool. 'Under New Management' would be a bona fide seminar, but would also include a challenge to commit one's life to Christ and to the Sabbath."

by Leon R. Lawton

### **Nellore, India, Asia**

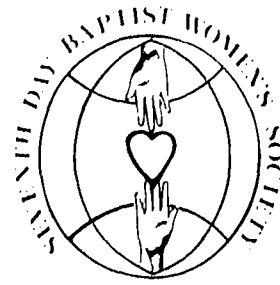
It is through God's grace that the Seventh Day Baptist Free Eye-Clinic Camp was successfully held at the local Government Headquarters Hospital, September 13-19. Funded by a special grant from Baptist World Aid, the plans were laid by Executive Secretary Kishor Kumar and were in memory of Rev. B. John V. Rao. Immediately after the opening function the three government doctors, specialists who extended their unreserved cooperation, went to work with nurses and SDB volunteers guiding patients in an orderly manner for their tests. A total of 607 were examined with 100 given an operation: 92 for cataracts, 2 for glaucoma and 6 minor operations. Of the 607, 370 were SDBs and 67 of these were operated upon. The outpatients were given medicines as prescribed and all received necessary food. Sight-glasses and medicines were distributed to the discharged.



(left) Dr. Edna C. Rao gave the opening address. To her left, B. Kishor Kumar, SDB India Conference.

(Below) Eye patients at the closing ceremony.





Women's Society *News & Ideas* by Marilyn Merchant

## Season of attention—or tension?

Dear Ones All,

Another year is winding down and what a beautiful, warm and loving time it can be. For some, however, it is a time of tension, loneliness and pain.

I have heard that ministers and pre-marital counselors would do well to put more emphasis on family traditions in holiday celebrations. If, for instance, *her* family celebrates the Christmas season with religious concerts, the church play/cantata, caroling and the Christmas story, with everything centered on Christ's birth and the joy surrounding it; and *his* family is commercially oriented with mounds of gifts, a skiing holiday with very little thought given to the real meaning of the season, there will have to be a great deal of commitment for both of them to work out a happy family tradition. This may be part of being unequally yoked, for the deeply committed Christian will want to keep Christ in Christmas where He belongs.

Growing up, we were very family-oriented when it came to holidays, and that has

continued to be a tradition with us. Our biggest conflict in that area, was whether to leave home on Christmas day for a big family gathering, or concentrate on our little family and save the big gathering for another time? Should we leave the gifts out to show to friends dropping by, or put them away immediately? Thankfully, not very serious problems compared to the next-door neighbors. They had a real battle every year: he hated the whole season, and she adored every aspect—*except* for the Christian aspect.

One of the first articles I wrote for *The Sabbath Recorder* was back

union and Testimony service, standing and starting their words with the wish to renew their covenant with the Lord. It always seemed to me that the Covenant made by Christians was like the marriage ceremony, intended to last a lifetime. But in these days of disposable everything it is probably a very good idea to reflect and renew our commitment. If you have not done so recently, why not put that on your Christmas list? I can think of no other gift the Lord would appreciate more.

**From your society**  
One of the joys of the society

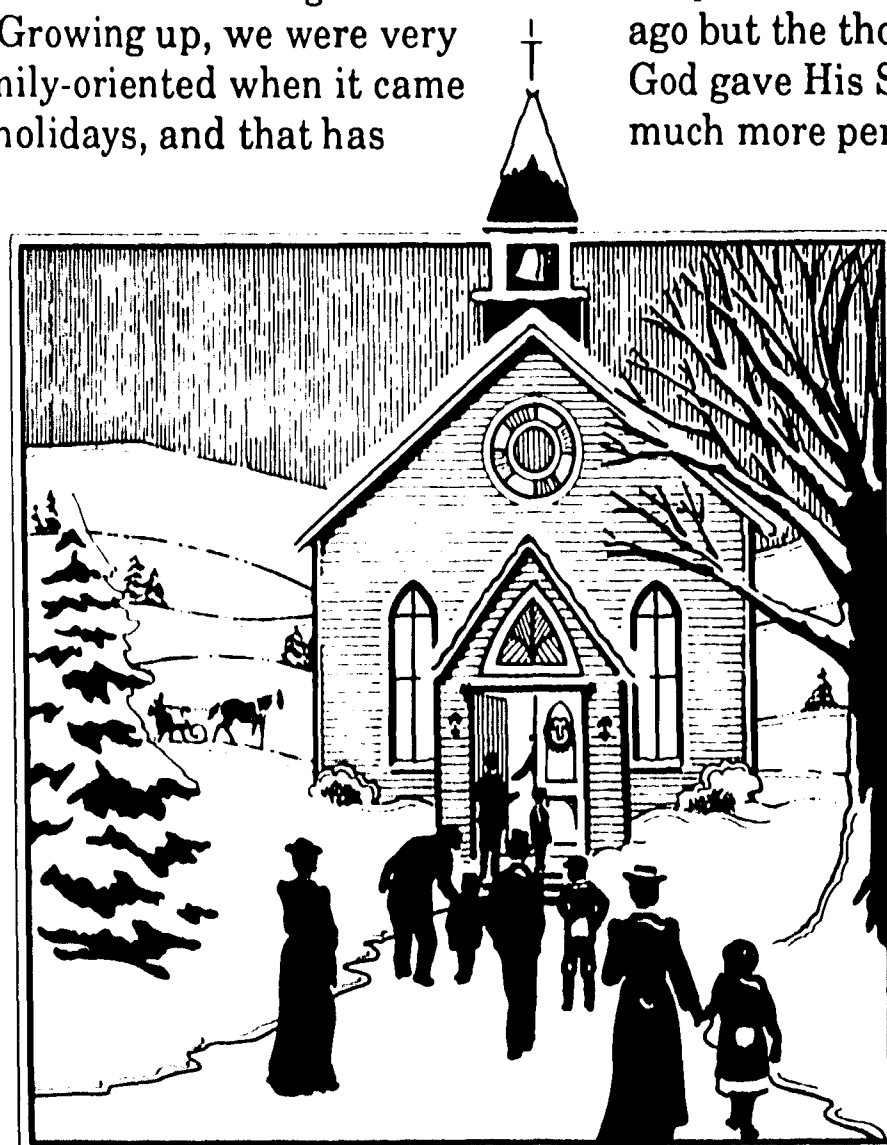
### *The deeply committed Christian will want to keep Christ in Christmas where He belongs.*

in the 40s. It was about putting yourself into your gifts and how much homemade could mean to the recipient. That was a lot of years ago but the thought still holds true. God gave His Son; you can't get much more personal than that.

From several church bulletins, I find them having Covenant Renewal Sabbaths. Is that a program followed by your church? When we join our churches, we make a covenant with God and it should be a lifetime pursuit. As a young person, I remember hearing the older members at the annual Candlelight Com-

reports is finding out how the ladies share themselves with others. There are the usual Christmas baskets supplied to the poor and sometimes these gifts take a different twist.

In Salem, West Virginia, the ladies adopt an "Angel Tree" child and supply them with a complete Christmas. I first saw this custom down in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Prisoners are asked for the names and sizes of their children, along with a picture, and what one gift they would like to give their child. This information is placed on construction paper stars or angels which are hung from a huge tree in the church foyer. Families choose as many children as they wish, purchase and wrap the gift, and the church committee makes sure the father has it in time for Christmas. (Speaking of angels, did you see the Family Circus cartoon where little Dolly wants to know how the angels get their nighties over their wings?)



Back to projects. Salem also provides a fund for Sabbath School teachers to purchase gifts for their students. What a help that would be! For many years Battle Creek, Michigan, has participated in a "Sock Drive," providing new socks for poor children through the local Charitable Union. For many years the ladies of White Cloud, Michigan, knitted mittens and hats for an area children's home. They did not mention it this year but I hope they continue as long as their nimble fingers can manipulate the needles.

The Alfred, New York, church (not strictly the Union Industrial

Society—isn't that an intriguing name?) held a series of Advent Luncheons following church. They were held in individual homes with the host/hostess providing the meal for all comers. It seems to me that reservations would be necessary. The light meal is followed by a free will offering, and the money donated to the host's chosen charity.

Have you ever read Arthur Gordon's Christmas short story, "The Miraculous Staircase?" Kathryn Thompson of Hebron, Pennsylvania, shared that with her women's group last year at their special Christmas celebration, which was postponed because of

weather. A good Christmas Story is good any time of the year.

While touring the Christmas Bazaars, keep your eyes open for craft ideas that you can produce for the SCSC Craft sale at Conference 1990. Keep them portable, timely, and not too costly. Also another reminder to be thinking about your nomination for the Robe of Achievement.

Have a wonderful, warm and joyous holiday season filled with the love of Christ and His peace.

Agape,

*Marilyn*

## LABEL-GRAM

Dear Camp Joy friend,

We are participating in Campbell's® "Labels for Education Program." Their labels and other purchase proofs represent a valuable resource for our Camp. **So please don't throw them away!**

When you send these labels to us, you'll be helping to improve the quality experience at our Southeastern Association camp. We can obtain free educational/recreational materials we might not otherwise have.

Thank you for sending us those valuable labels, and for helping to continue the excitement at Camp Joy!

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**Campbell's® Soup labels:** Chunky, "Soup for One," Low Sodium, Gold Label, Home Cookin'®, Special Request

**Campbell's® labels:** Beans Products, Tomato Juice, Fresh Products, Juice Bowl Juices

**Other labels:** "V8"™ Vegetable Juices, Franco-American Products, Swanson® Canned Food Products, Prego® Spaghetti Sauces

**UPC Symbols:** All Pepperidge Farm Products, Campbell's® Souper Combos and Quality Soup and Recipe Mix

**Safety seals** from Marie's Salad Dressings; **Lids** from Vlasic Pickles; **Proof of Purchase seals** from Swanson Frozen Foods; and the "Quality Pledge" panels from Mrs. Paul's Frozen Foods.

Thank you for sending your collection to:

Doyle Zwiebel  
Camp Joy, Inc.  
192 Liberty Street  
Salem, WV 26426

Deadline for mailing is **February 25, 1990**

*The  
Excitement  
Continues  
at  
Camp  
Joy*





# the BEACON

Produced by the Youth Committee of the Board of Christian Education  
For and by members of the SDB Youth Fellowship

December 1989

## The Reason

by Erin Burdick

Ahhh, such memories have I: the smell of roast turkey floating delicately by; the sweetness of a baking apple pie assailing the senses; the sight of children sticking wet, half-eaten crackers back into the orange cheese balls—they ignored their parents' warnings about contracting deadly diseases by sticking wet, half-eaten crackers into the cheese, of course—giggling as they dodge adults' mercilessly disciplining hands. It's THANKS-GIVING!!!! The next day as avid women go crazy in sale-decked malls, children of 8 or 9 years start counting down to Christmas.... So do I.

I'm the type of person that starts singing carols in October, dreaming helplessly of present-strewn floors in November and by December I'm in such a state of impatience I go into happy, heaving spasms at even the mention of "Santa Claus." Okay, so I put up Christmas decorations kind of early, but I figure that if Nordstrom's can put theirs up in mid-September, I can start mine in ohhh..., say, October. I mean they are *the* authority, aren't they? It's not entirely my fault though; I'm 15 and my mother still puts "From Mrs. Claus" on my presents and thinks she's getting away with it. At least she's putting things like make-up and candy in my stocking now. Last year my brother, Jeremy, got G.I. Joe action figures (you know, Lady Jane and Hawk something-or-other).

Christmas morning calls for a ribbon taped across the doorway to

the livingroom so we won't see the presents (Jeremy always goes under it anyways), a merry wake-up carol sung by my parents slightly off tune, a robe and slipper-clad family and a fire, which usually either goes out and smokes us out of the room, or gets too hot, making us wish for a cold snow drift. (Okay, so I live in southern California.) Then the joy begins.

Now, let me first say that long ago Jeremy and I figured out exactly how to prolong this happy experience. If done correctly, one can stretch exactly fifteen minutes of present opening into an hour—to make it seem like you have more presents. General "ooooos" and "ahhhs" are heard as the delicious sound of ripping paper is drowned out by exclamations of delight at a particularly good present. Each person takes a turn at a gift as all the rest look on, and in the end my parents are left with one or two unopened ones because we (meaning Jer and I) would skip their turn in the excitement of a big package. So we sit there, fidgeting slightly as they take 40 minutes to finish the rest of theirs. Have you ever noticed that it takes anybody over 30 years of age a half-hour to take one piece of paper off of *one* seemingly simple rectangular box? You'd think they were old or something. "Oooo, Mom what did you get? Reeboks? Wow, now you have yellow, pink, blue and green ones. You daredevil, you." And then it's all over for another year. On to Grandma's for lunch, and wet, half-

cont. on page 23

## Thank you, Matt Olson

Three years ago Matthew G. Olson, Milton, Wisconsin, became denominational Director of Youth Ministry and editor of *The Beacon*. Travelling across the North American continent, and even to the Philippines with his wife, Ellen Green Olson, Matt taught the Gospel story, helped organize and revitalize youth groups. Matt completed his Director's work following General Conference and is studying for the ministry at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Thank you, Matt, for your dedication, enthusiasm, and creativity.

Articles and photos for *The Beacon* may be sent to the office of the Board of Christian Education, P.O. Box 115, Alfred Station, NY, 14803.

## My true meaning of Christmas

by Teresa Basile

Christmas in the 20th century is covered up with lights, trees, and a fat jolly man who gives away toys to little children on December 25. To small children, Christmas is receiving toys, but as we get older, we learn that Christmas is supposed to be a celebration of the birth of Christ.

The word Christmas, in Old English, is *Cristes maesse*, which means "mass of Christ." This has nothing to do with giving Christmas presents, yet the concept is not totally commercial. I like to think that when we give Christmas

presents to those we love, or even people we hardly know, we are giving selflessly, in the spirit that God gave Christ to us.

Personally, Christmas is the giving of gifts, but it is also visiting relatives, eating Grandma's stuffed turkey, hearing the story of the birth of Christ, and sitting around singing hymns. Whenever I hear the story, I always marvel at the conditions under which He was born. The Christ child was born in a manger, among the cows and donkeys. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes with only hay for

a bed. This is where our Saviour was born. You would think that the "Prince of Peace" would be born under more majestic conditions, but He was born and raised in poverty so that He could relate to His people. He was always superior, but He acted humbly towards those He came to save.

I guess that this is what I believe the true meaning of Christmas to be: acting humbly toward others, giving without expecting anything in return, and celebrating the birth of Christ with those you love.

## Christmas

by Heather Van Horn

What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word, "Christmas?" Is it food, presents, nativity scenes, singing carols, Christmas trees, or shiny ornaments, just to name a few?

When I think of Christmas, I think about getting together with my family and friends to share the day.

Each year my Christmas starts out with our traditional soup supper at Grandma's with a few of my cousins, some aunts and uncles, and others that might need a place to have Christmas eve dinner. The smell of hot cider and coffee, baked goodies and chili soup fills the air.

After we've had all the soup, salads and other goodies we can

eat, my family and I go to the church in North Loup, Nebraska, for the candlelight Christmas eve service. It's fun to see if our whole family can fill up a pew, or more. By the time we have joined with others in the congregation reading Scriptures, singing carols and hearing the wonderful story of the Savior's birth retold once again, we feel our Christmas celebration has really begun.

To finish off the evening we all go back to Grandma's for playing with cousins, visiting with the adults and maybe even opening a present or two. That fills me with all kinds of excitement and I'm not sure if I will be able to wait for

Christmas morning.

Finally, Christmas is here and the day starts out with my family all together in the living room to open our gifts. We try to savor every moment so it will last for a while. Aunt Merle comes over and opens her gifts with us too, because it's more fun when you can share the Christmas activities and be with others instead of all alone.

After the pies are baked and the salads made, my family and I go back to Grandma's for dinner. There are always lots of people there and lots of hustle and bustle. I feel especially rich with lots of love in my family as we celebrate this special time of the year.

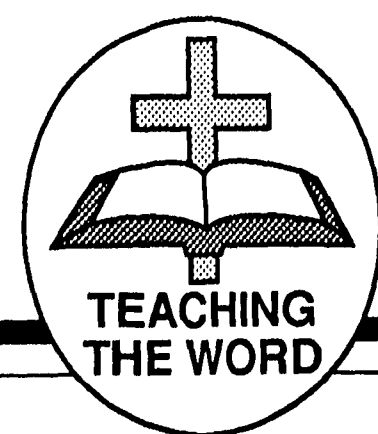
## Reason, cont. from page 22

eaten crackers. (Some things never change.)

Christmas is a time of happiness, but are the gifts the only reason we celebrate? For many people this, or something like it, is their only view of Christmas. Over the years commercialism has enveloped this season and almost covered up the true reason—our

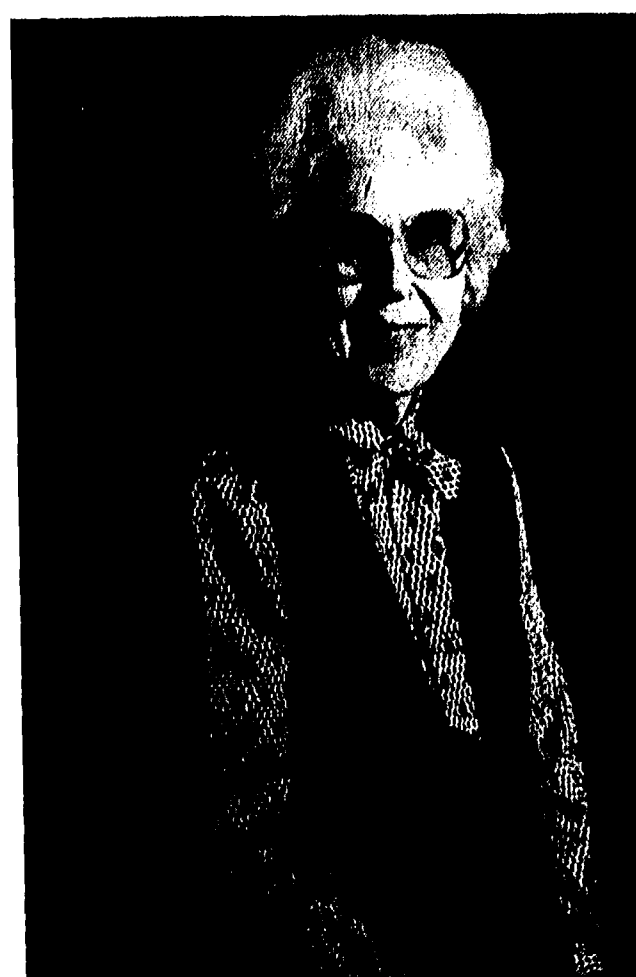
Savior's birth. At times, even we Christians forget, and in our love for gifts and passion for gay, happy times we don't remember what happened so many years ago in a cold, stone stable amidst farm animals, and possibly a few dirty, smelly shepherders. In Jesus' birth a prophecy was fulfilled, and a promise made—a promise of

everlasting life and a forever omnipotent love surrounding us. So lest we forget, or accidentally don't remember in this the season of good tidings and peace, keep this well-known and well-repeated message in your hearts, minds and souls—"Jesus is the Reason for the Season."



## Christian Education

### 1989 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year



Helen Kennedy Bond

Deaconess Helen Kennedy Bond, a charter member of the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Columbus, Ohio, was honored as 1989 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year at the General Conference sessions held in Portland, Oregon. Pastor David Thorngate accepted the crystal apple and study Bible for Mrs. Bond during the award ceremony on August 12. The home church presentation was made by Pastor Thorngate on August 26.

Helen Bond was born in Lost Creek, West Virginia, and baptized there when she was 11 years old by her pastor, the Rev. H.C. Van Horn. Her interest in Christian Education was sparked by the Christian Endeavor movement. Helen was active in the local society and especially inspired by regional and state meetings. She began teaching Sabbath School when she was in her teens.

Helen attended Salem College, West Virginia, following her graduation from high school in 1934 and earned a Standard Normal Degree. She married Ernest F. Bond in 1939 and they are the parents of a son, Richard, and three daughters: Karen, Doris, and Rebecca.

The family returned in 1943 to Lost Creek from Morgantown where Ernest had been studying at West Virginia University, and Helen had been teaching part-time in elementary school. Immediately she became a Primary Sabbath School Teacher and served as director or teacher of the annual

Vacation Bible School. In 1962, Helen, along with her husband and Paul and Mary Beebe, directed the first Daily Vacation Bible School at Crites Mountain, West Virginia, a ministry of the Lost Creek church.

Later that year, Helen and her family moved to Galena, Ohio, after her husband had been transferred. Here she began teaching first grade at Galena Elementary School where she taught for 13 years. During this time she earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education from Otterbein College. The last seven years Helen served as teaching Principal of Galena Elementary.

In 1964 she was instrumental in beginning a Sabbath School class in her own home, consisting of all but one of her family. The Ohio Seventh Day Baptist Fellowship was established from this Sabbath School Class which grew to include other classes. Helen taught the children's class. With the organization of the Columbus, Ohio church, of which Helen was very much a part, she became the primary teacher and has continued to teach this class.

Helen's dedication to teaching young people about their Savior, Jesus Christ, and how He can influence their lives for good, is evident by her life and her teaching. Helen's letter of nomination from her church expressed their appreciation for her Christian life. "When we...want a compassionate ear and good Scripture-based advice, we can always feel free to consult Helen Bond."

### 1989 Scripture Memorization Program

The Scripture Memorization Program for the 1988-89 Conference year featured President Luan Ellis' theme, *Share the Joy*. The Sabbath School Committee of the Board of Christian Education selected monthly Scripture verses for Primary, Junior and Youth/Adult age groups. Sabbath School students who completed the program were presented certificates at the General Conference sessions in Portland, Oregon.

**Adams Center, New York**  
Nellie P. Barbur  
Delberta Greene

**Alfred Station, New York**  
Arlene Bee  
George Bottoms  
Mae Bottoms  
Gretchen Burdick  
Susie Butts  
Tandy Davis  
Lucas Flaitz  
Rachel Flaitz  
Kim Gesner  
Kelly Jones  
Amanda Snyder

**Ashaway, Rhode Island**  
Thelma Tarbox

**Boulder, Colorado**  
Charity Heath

**Bradenton, Florida**  
Leland W. Bond  
Martha Scull  
Betty Strawser

**Columbus, Ohio**  
Brett Greene  
Marjorie Patrick

**Dodge Center, Minnesota**  
Kris Bonser  
Ryan Bonser  
Brian Payne  
Cathy Payne  
Marcy Payne  
Angelyn Neher  
Jacinta Neher

**Hebron, Pennsylvania**  
Ruth Brock  
Edna Gaines  
Ben Hauber  
Evelyn Hauber  
Rachel Kenyon

**Houston, Texas (First)**  
Suzy Black  
Sara Hightower  
Toby Hightower  
Krystal Livingston  
Jamie Rahn  
Stephen Rounthwaite  
Mary Shepard  
Joshua Shobe  
Shelley Shobe  
Tammy Shobe  
Sharon Steele

**Lake Elsinore, California**  
Emily Davis  
Gertrude Davis  
Holly Davis  
Nathan Davis  
Irene Howard  
Leah Nelson

**Lost Creek, West Virginia**  
Margaret B. Allen  
Stanley K. Allen  
Adrienne Ash  
Roberta Ash  
Betty Bond  
Chet Bond  
Nichole Amber Bond  
Susan Davis Bond  
Tiffany JoLynn Bond  
Jamie Bonnett  
Jennifer Boyajian  
Rebecca Boyajian  
Brent Fenstermacher  
Carrie Fenstermacher  
Denise Fenstermacher  
Joey Fenstermacher  
Richard Fenstermacher  
Jason Fincham  
Jennifer Fincham  
Jerry Garrett  
Susan Garrett  
Rita Hickok  
Bridget Lawrence  
Cindy Lawrence  
Larry Lawrence  
Luke Lawrence

Mary Beth Lawrence  
Abbi Marteny  
Marian Marteny  
Nelson Marteny  
Lorna Perry  
Leora Pinder  
David L. Taylor  
Dina Taylor  
Duane Taylor  
Margaret Taylor  
Edgar Wheeler  
Xenia Lee Wheeler

**Milton, Wisconsin**  
Frieda Burdick

**Plainfield, New Jersey**  
Dumiso Campbell  
David Maltby  
Colena Samuels  
David Samuels  
Joe A. Samuels  
Joyce Samuels  
Myron Samuels  
Rudolph Samuels  
Mavis Taylor  
Lucy Tyler

**Raritan Valley, New Jersey**  
Steven McPherson  
Bethany Thompson-Gordon  
Drew Weber  
Jeanne W. Yurke

**Richburg, New York**  
Rebecca Browning  
Steven Browning  
Elaine Brundage  
John Brundage  
Roxanne Brundage  
Ruth Bottoms  
Sue Bucher  
Andrew Camenga  
Bob Cartright  
Lydia Cartright  
Sue Cartright  
Vivian Cass  
Willard Cass

Carla Fellers  
Maurice McCrea  
Wesley McCrea  
Eric Pitts  
Jamie Pitts  
David Ritcher  
David Saunders  
Irene Saunders  
Jonathan Saunders  
Onnalee Saunders  
Stephan Saunders  
C. Robert Stohr  
Maureen Zilker  
Michael Zilker

**Seattle, Washington**  
Maude Posey

**Shiloh, New Jersey**  
Elizabeth Bidwell

**Sunshine Mountain, Mississippi**  
Willie Ray Grace  
Linda Hays  
Ralph Hays  
Charles Meche  
Ted Meche  
Theodore Meche  
Elsie White

**Verona, New York**  
Jo Anne Johnson

**Westerly, Rhode Island**  
Denise Fallon  
Keith Kenyon  
Nicole Krynick  
Tamatha Miller  
Thomas J. Palmer, Jr.  
Ellen Paster  
Jeffrey Rood  
Crystal Stone  
Christen Thorpe  
Ashley Whitehead  
Michelle Whitehead



December		\$749,433
November		\$686,983
October		\$624,530
September	Oct. Giving	\$562,077
	Investment Income (est)	
	September Giving	\$499,624
August	Investment Income (est)	
	August Giving	\$437,171
July	Investment Income (est)	
	July Giving	\$374,718
June	Investment Income (est)	
	June Giving	\$312,265
May	Investment Income (est)	
	May Giving	\$249,812
April	Investment Income (est)	
	April Giving	\$187,359
March	Investment Income (est)	
	March Giving	\$124,906
February	Investment Income (est)	
	February Giving	\$62,453
January	Investment Income (est)	
	January Giving	

1989 income needed—\$749,433.  
 Per month gift income needed—\$33,300.  
 Total needed each month—\$62,453.

## The Denominational Budget... Our partnership in ministry

*How is the money being used?*

### United Relief Fund reaches around the world

**Hurricane Hugo, South Carolina**  
 It was rather cryptic, that first relayed telephone message that came through: "We must cancel the ordination. We have no place to meet. I am living in three places." The next report, as water reached the third floor of the pastor's work place was, "We assume Mr. Winborne is tending his flock." More complete reports documented the needs for assistance to repair the church, individual homes and property.

Hurricane Hugo had indeed directly affected the Charleston, South Carolina, SDB congregation (Low Country Christian SDB Church). The SDB United Relief Fund sent an initial \$3,000 to assist recovery; another \$2,000 came after the committee had opportunity to meet, assess needs, and plan a special appeal to help meet the estimated \$10,000 needed.

The Hugo disaster is one example of how the Seventh Day Baptist United Relief Fund works. Over \$24,000 was disbursed from the fund in the past year and a half for relief of acute human need among SDBs and others worldwide.

At Thanksgiving time each year, churches are asked to take a special offering to replenish the fund to meet the quick-response needs of emergencies, along with thoughtful, prayerful involvement in meeting long-term relief needs. Contributions can be made to the fund at any time. They are part of a church's contribution to the total Denominational Budget.

**Jamaica churches receive help**  
 Over \$12,000 from the Relief Fund went to the Jamaica SDB Conference for recovery from Hurricane Gilbert's severe damage just a year ago. That Conference's July 1989 account of

disbursements lists repairs to six churches and direct assistance to families in 27 churches; repairs at Crandall High School and Maiden Hall camp facilities; plus costs for transportation and distribution of relief supplies (food, clothing, etc.) Our Conference President, Rev. Joe Samuels indicates the need for help continues.

**Assistance to Africa, Armenia**  
 Other major allocations from the Relief Fund during the past year included \$2,500 to Malawi SDBs, some of it for Mozambique relief assistance plus \$4,000 more to other overseas needs including South Africa relief through African Enterprise and Armenian relief through World Vision.

In the USA, a total of \$5,000 helped two pastors and a retired pastor with family health emergencies. General contributions may be made to the fund, or designated for a specific need.

**Committee manages Fund**  
 The Christian Social Action Committee of the General Conference acts on requests for assistance from the SDB United Relief Fund. The core group, just recently relocated to West Virginia after being in the Daytona Beach, Florida, area since 1977, is led by new chairman, Susan Bond of the Lost Creek, West Virginia, church. Executive Secretary Thorngate and former committee chairman, Rev. Leon Maltby, met with the new group on October 22.

Core members are Margaret Taylor, Melvin Nida, Susan Bond, Richard Brissey, Stephen Rogers, and Donald Richards. Other members of the full committee are Kenneth Camenga, Helen Green, Jeanne Yurke, Vivian McNeme, and Leon Wheeler.

## Around the Seventh Day Baptist world

by Janet Thorngate

**Goede Sabbat<sup>1</sup> Chanhni Hlimawm<sup>2</sup> Szczesliwego Sabatu<sup>3</sup> Manchi Sani Varam<sup>4</sup> Bon Sabado<sup>5</sup> Maayong Adalawang<sup>6</sup> Ezi Ubochi Izuke<sup>7</sup> Iloista Sapattia<sup>8</sup> Isabatha Elungileyo<sup>9</sup> Guten Sabbat<sup>10</sup> Good Sabbath<sup>11</sup> Ke Ki Abasi<sup>12</sup> Feliz Sabado<sup>13</sup> Sabata La Bwino!<sup>14</sup>**

Good Sabbath! Can you say it in the many languages of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation? Try it! How many of the languages can you identify? Can you name the six continents, the 17 member groups, the twenty-some countries represented? Try it! Now, pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world.

### World Federation to observe Week of Prayer

Seventh Day Baptists around the world will again begin the new year with prayer. "Prayer Patterns" is the theme for the 24th Week of Prayer, January 7-13, 1990, sponsored by the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation. Rev. and Mrs. Leland and Gertrude Davis are the authors. The leaflet contains a "prayer pattern" theme, with Scripture references, meditation, and prayer thoughts for each day.

### Malankara joins Federation

World Federation member groups increased to 17 in March 1989 as ballots were returned from around the world to welcome the Malankara Seventh Day Baptist Church of Kerala, India. A recent report from Secretary K.S. Zachariah lists four churches (Pathanamthitta, Thannithodu, Nedunganam, and Kannara) with 143 members. Believers in the latter two meet in homes, he reports, and

"two new stations have been located for intensive gospel work in the near future."

### Jamaica receives help

Also from around the world, money was sent to the Jamaica Conference for help in recovering from Hurricane Gilbert. The storm destroyed three churches and severely damaged six others plus the high school, camp facility and many homes of members. Report from Jamaica's 66th annual General Meeting in July gives account of disbursement and of continuing need. The conference was held at the Albion Mountain church with 270 attending on Sabbath. Report of the Jamaica Bible Institute, a pastor's training project receiving World Federation support, indicates that five seminars have been held and two modules completed by the eight students, four student pastors and four church planters enrolled.

Note: Leadership training in Jamaica and Brazil were the two major projects approved at the 1986 World Federation sessions for cooperative support. Contributions may be sent to World Federation treasurer, Leon Lawton, 308 Washington Trust Building, West-erly, RI 02891 USA.

### Inter-Conference visits

Several Seventh Day Baptists visited different countries in 1989. Jan Lek, World Federation Vice President in Europe, traveled again to Poland from the Netherlands to deliver a variety of needed supplies. The Stefan Kubes from Australia and Dorothy Goulding from New Zealand attended sessions of the USA & Canada Conference in August, along with Ian and Trudy Ingoe who were commissioned there to go to Malawi as missionaries in a cooperative project among

the three Conferences. An American medical doctor, Lewis May of Riverside, California, attended the South Africa Conference sessions in October (see his report in the January SR), and Rev. Rodney Henry attended sessions of the Central Africa Conference in Malawi in September.

### SDBs represented at Baptist World Alliance

Three SDB conferences are members of the Baptist World Alliance. Two of these groups sent representatives to the BWA General Council meetings in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, the first week of August. Dorothy d'Alpuget, one of three women on the 120-member council, represented the Australasian Conference. Rev. Thomas McElwain, American missionary in Finland, represented the USA & Canada Conference. The Myanmar (Burma) Conference was unable to send a representative.

An exciting outcome was the news from the Soviet delegation that there are Sabbath-keeping Baptists in Moscow. McElwain, already interacting with the SDB churches in Estonia, planned to visit in the Soviet Union in the fall or winter to seek out those purportedly of like faith in Moscow and Leningrad. **SR**

*Good Sabbaths in the order listed above: 1) Dutch (Netherlands), 2) Luchai (Burma/Myanmar), 3) Polish (Poland), 4) Telegu (Andhra Pradesh, India), 5) Portugese (Brazil), 6) Cebuano (Philippines), 7) Ibo (Nigeria), 8) Finnish (Finland), 9) Zhosa (South Africa), 10) German (Germany), 11) English (England, Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia, Guyana, USA, Canada, and many of the others), 12) Efik (Nigeria), 13) Spanish (Mexico), 14) Chichewa (Malawi)*

## Denver finds "joy" in evangelism training

by Daryl D. White

The Denver Seventh Day Baptist Church would like for you to share in the joy we received by conducting evangelism training classes, using the NET evangelism training materials published by the SDB Board of Christian Education.

Over a year ago, our evangelism committee, wanted to revitalize the evangelism efforts in our church. We began to sense the need for "reality" in the sense that all members of our church find Jesus real in their lives every moment of every day, and "success" in the sense that members would find fulfillment as they share their testimony and faith in Christ on a consistent basis and leave the results to God.

As we reviewed our needs, as well as the perceived needs of our community and city, we realized that everything we knew and understood about evangelism caused us to remain optimistic that it could be done. Perhaps not easily, nor inexpensively, and certainly not without training, but it could be done. We determined that it was not the *way* that was lacking—but the *will*. For the more we understood God's plan of salvation, the more we concluded that Jesus Christ has given every believer the power, the authority, and a commandment to "go" and carry the message to those who do not know it. Soberingly we realized that having the knowledge and capacity to evangelize, to relieve suffering and oppression, to show others the way of salvation—if we refuse to do it, then that would be part of our judgement.

As we began to plan, concepts from the Scriptures became vivid in our hearts and minds. Even though we could visualize many ap-

proaches for outreach, the Holy Spirit directed us to the basics. The foundation of any evangelistic program is "training." Training should reinforce the concept that every believer is first called to be a witness for Jesus Christ, secondly to be an ambassador and carry the "King's" message, and thirdly to be actively involved in the ministry of reconciliation (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:17-20).

In our search for training material, we found value in the Natural

### *Many testified that the natural approach was very helpful for them.*

Evangelism Training (NET) materials prepared by the SDB Board of Christian Education. We determined that the simple modular format would become the base training material. Additionally, its well defined emphasis on "making the witnessing experience natural" was especially attractive. We found these program characteristics to be of great value because what is natural for one may not be natural for another. Many who took the training testified that the natural approach was very helpful for them.

We used the NET program to make a strong emphasis on evangelism. We left the church membership portions in our diaconate-sponsored membership classes, and introduced other witnessing approaches that best fit the member's Christian experience.

Like other metro churches, the Denver Seventh Day Baptist Church serves the whole metro

area. Thus, time and traveling distances were very important planning factors. We desired to train as many people as possible, so the metro area was divided into three geographical areas to hold three training classes each week. Mrs. Myrna Cox taught the class in the north area, Pastor Ralph Grosser the class in the central area, and Daryl White the class in the south. We trained 20 people in the evangelism approaches and required everyone to—

1. Write and memorize a three minute testimony of their Christian experience of how they came to know Jesus personally.
2. Learn the gospel presentation to lead a person to Christ.
3. Memorize and know where in the Bible the Gospel Scriptures are found.

The last week of June, a team of workers traveled to Rapid City, South Dakota, to help the Black Hills SDB Church in a week-long calling program. We went door-to-door and put into practice the knowledge gained in the Denver Training Program.

Concurrent with the Evangelism training, our church acquired metro area advertising in a local "Metro Church and Synagogue Directory." The directory is mailed to all new telephone subscribers in the metro area, plus it is placed on the "New Resident Information Stands" in the local supermarkets. In addition to the 8 1/2 X 5 1/2 church ad, we receive a list of all the new area residents every month. This comes in a label format in zip code sequence. In July we received a list of 2,034 names, and in August 1,914. There is now

no doubt why the Holy Spirit is leading us into an evangelism thrust.

The Evangelism Committee plans to implement a form of telemarketing survey to see if these people have found a church home. If they have not, then we will establish appointments, and teams of trained "witnesses" will call on these people.

We plan to repeat this training and continue to use NET and other

evangelism training material.

We recommend evangelism training for every Seventh Day Baptist church in our denomination, and suggest that in your review of training material, that you consider the NET program. In NET you will find lessons on SDB heritage, history and distinctives that cannot be found elsewhere. These proved to be very important to new members who had little knowledge of earlier SDBs. Many

were amazed to learn that organizationally Seventh Day Baptists are older than our nation and that we hold to doctrinal truths that date back to the apostolic church of the first century.

Our goal in these days, as God is pouring out His Spirit in abundance, is to become effective "witnessing ambassadors for Jesus Christ in a ministry of reconciliation." *SR*

## After the disasters—Reprinted from *Lead-line*

Hurricane Hugo directly affected the Charleston, South Carolina, congregation (Low Country Christian SDB Church). The SDB United Relief Fund sent an initial \$3000 to assist recovery with the expectation that more will follow; an estimated \$10,000 is needed. The meeting place at 1551 Regmount Road sustained serious wind and water damage—windows blown in and roof partially blown off—and

several families' mobile homes were destroyed. Pastor Ray Winborne's ordination service, scheduled for October 28, was postponed to March 31. Designated gifts are encouraged through the SDB United Relief Fund.

Members of the Bay Area, California, church shared a time of rejoicing on Sabbath, October 21 as they confirmed that no members

had experienced personal injury or serious property damage during the week's earthquake and aftershocks. Their pastor, Rev. Steven Crouch, expresses appreciation for the prayers and concerns voiced by so many SDB friends. The congregation, scattered throughout the San Francisco metro area, meets in a rented church in El Cerrito, just north of Berkeley and Oakland. *SR*

## More than an octogenarian

by Norma Rudert

On September 17, 1989, Orville W. Babcock, Pastor Emeritus of the White Cloud, Michigan, Seventh Day Baptist Church, was guest of honor at an open house marking his 80th birthday on September 14. This happy event was hosted by his son and daughter-in-law, George and Emma Lynn of Allegan.

Orville has been a very respected and well-liked member of this community since he arrived in White Cloud in 1948 to begin 10 years of pastoral service. Following this he taught Junior High science classes for 15 years, retiring in 1972. His wife Mabel, in addition to being an important part of the

church work, was employed nearly 30 years at Gerber Products Company in Fremont. Mabel passed away in September 1985.

Newaygo County United Way has had the benefit of Orville's leadership for 30 years, 20 of these as its president. He is also an active member of the White Cloud Rotary Club, currently serving as a "recycled" secretary.

On many days Orville still logs up to 10 miles on his bicycle. For the past few years he has been singing with the choir of the United Methodist Church, where his fine tenor voice is a welcome addition.

The open house was attended by

some 80 well-wishers (one per year!), a nice tribute to a nice man. We in White Cloud are proud to say he's "one of us." *SR*



Orville Babcock, White Cloud, Michigan, on his 80th birthday.



## Old Stonefort looking new

by Jeanette Appel

The Old Stonefort church building, Old Stonefort, Illinois, has undergone major repairs, beginning in August 1988, when our roof was torn off. The south side of the church was straightened. We now have a complete new roof, lowered



sanctuary ceiling, stained glass windows removed (due to decayed sills), new bathroom upstairs, carpeting, new basement steps and ceiling. A new audio system was installed by Rev. Ron Elston. Sue Bethel donated her electric organ, which, combined with the piano, adds much to our worship services.

In May, our annual Homecoming was observed on the third Sabbath. Rev. and Mrs. Ron Elston, Dr. and Mrs. Jon Warren and daughter were special guests from Missouri. They brought us greetings and messages, and also conducted the Communion service. After fellowship dinner, Pastor Joiner led us in a dedication service for the church renovation. There was much recalling of former Third Sabbaths.

Mr. and Mrs. Al Stewart, and Deacon Leigh and Thelma Stewart were also present for the day.

Pastor Ron Elston conducted evangelistic services July 9-15, with challenging and thought-provoking messages. Guests and our local congregation provided special music. After fellowship dinner, we convened at a nearby lake for a baptismal service, with Bart Bethel as the candidate.

We were all very much encouraged and uplifted by Pastor Elston's messages. Our own pastor Joiner continues to bring us wonderful sermons, in spite of eye problems and two hard falls. We are starting a Wednesday evening prayer service and hope many can attend. *SR*



Pastor Joiner (top) and Pastor Elston (bottom) greeting the congregation.



Gathered for a baptism (left to right): Thelma Stewart, Jeanette Appel, Kim Bethel, Leland Lewis, Leigh Stewart, Evelyn Todd, and Sue Bethel.

## A gift from Seventh Day Brethren

(Ed.—This past summer, we were pleasantly surprised by a generous donation to *The SR* from some folks in Nebraska. Trouble is, we didn't know who they were. Along with my thank-you I asked for some background information.)

A sketch of the United Seventh Day Brethren of Arthur, Nebraska: Mr. Carl C. Crouse organized a Sabbath School in 1931, and built a

small chapel on his ranch in eastern Arthur County. Also included was the Ralph M. Soper family, who later moved to New York and became Seventh Day Baptists.

In 1947 the chapel was moved to Arthur, and continued to hold services until after the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Crouse in 1966. Since then, the church has been without a pastor, and mostly inactive.

Local members met in June and voted to dispose of the church property and money. Each member was asked to designate to what church or charity his or her share should be given. Several members chose *The Sabbath Recorder*. The church did not disband but reelected the old officers. They are: Philip Crouse of Keystone, president; and Robert Crouse of Arthur, secretary/treasurer. *SR*

## Testimony of a thankful member

by David Shipp

(Note: I am so grateful that the Methodist church which we use is wheelchair-accessible. David Shipp, a 28-year-old man with cerebral palsy, has been attending the Bay Area, California, church and has found a home in our church family. On September 9, 1989, David requested, and was granted, membership in our church. His testimony and request for membership follow, as dictated to me the following week.—Pastor Steven Crouch)

During my freshman year at the University of Arizona, my roommate, who also took care of me, was a Christian. One day in February, 1981, he shared a pamphlet with me called "My Heart—Christ's Home." After sharing this, he asked me if I felt my heart was Christ's home. My reply was, "No."

The subject of Christianity was dropped for a couple months—until April 3. On that day I came back to

my dorm room from a really exhausting algebra test. I had Paul (my roommate) lay me down. Then we got to talking, and I said, "Paul, let's play Bible Roulette," which is a game where you close your eyes and open the Bible to wherever it opens. It opened to Romans 10.

Knowing that I wasn't a Christian, Paul decided to focus on verse

**He asked me if I wanted to be saved.**

9, which says "If ye believe in thy heart and confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord, ye shall be saved!" He asked me if I wanted to be saved. He told me the blessings and the obligations I would be making. I decided to pray with Paul and accept Jesus into my life.

Four or five months later I got

baptized at an interdenominational church. I had been baptized before I was a Christian, but I did not know what I was doing. So I felt I needed to do it again.

The reason why I chose to be a Seventh Day Baptist is that since becoming a Christian I have been a Southern Baptist, because I believe in the basic Baptist doctrines. But I also have been a Seventh-day Adventist, because I believe in the Sabbath. But I had trouble with some of their doctrines. So I thought Seventh Day Baptists would be a perfect halfway point.

Also, at this particular church people see me, not my wheelchair. I feel that I can ask just about anyone for feeding, taking me to the bathroom, and giving me a ride, and they say, "No big deal." I also believe they don't do it out of pity, but they do it as if they were helping each other. *SR*

## This tree has meaning

by Leta DeGross

Many people do not believe in having a Christmas tree in their church, and I can understand that if the tree has only secular ornaments. I think having religious symbols on the tree teaches the children what they stand for.

At our church in Little Genesee, New York, we have had the children hang the symbols on the tree and tell what the symbol means. They love to do that at the Community Party and at Sabbath School.

The symbols we have used are:

- Stars—leading the wise men to Jesus.
- Doves—peace; and Jesus' baptism.
- Ball—God's world.
- Circles—eternity with God.
- Lamb—symbol of Christ.
- Fish—feeding the multitudes.
- Butterfly—the chrysalis: we can be changed through Christ.
- Loaf of bread and grapes—the Lord's supper.

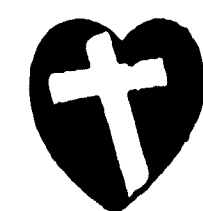
- Candle—Jesus, the light of the world.
  - Angels—announcing the birth of Jesus.
  - Cross—Christ's death for our salvation.
  - Tree itself—everlasting life.
- All the symbols are white for purity. *SR*



## Computer Games for Christians

New Covenant Ministries now has available Bible-centered computer games that can be played on most home computers such as Apple, TI, Atari, Commodore, Kaypro & TRS-80 (color computer), and now IBM. Accounting, word processing and mailing address programs also are available for TRS-80 (color computer) & Commodore.

Order the BASIC nine game **ELIJAH'S QUAIL** set for \$10.00 or send \$1.00 for catalog and sample game. Be sure that you mention computer type and send order to:



**BIBLE BYTE SOFTWARE**  
New Covenant Ministries  
2269 Field Street  
Denver, CO 80215

You've received a substantial inheritance. Now comes the choice:

- Something new and exciting**
- Take care of some old debts**

General Conference faced this head-on in August. Sure, we wanted to forge ahead with new projects; and we are with a designated portion. Then we were led to—

## Give to those who gave so much.

The Pastors' Retirement Offering Project (PROP) needs more propping. Our retired pastors, widows, and unordained retirees may remain on a very fixed income, unless we give.

This year's Conference delegates felt that we had a moral obligation to increase PROP payments.

### Triple your money

A gift of \$50 will become \$150. The Sue McMillan Fund will match every dollar donated with two dollars up to \$100,000. You can triple your investment toward those who invested their lives for you and God's church.

### Give to those who gave so much.

Please make your tax-deductible checks payable to:  
**SDB Memorial Fund (PROP)**  
 PO Box 1678  
 Janesville, WI 53547

## Accessions

<b>Alfred, NY</b> Leon A. Wheeler, pastor	<b>Fouke, AR</b> Mary-Esther Jones, pastor	Betty Calaman Michelle Lamoureux Semnia Rice Charlie Rice	<b>Shiloh, NJ</b> Don Chroniger, pastor
Joined by Letter Katherine Crandall Joanne Droppers (Assoc.)	Joined by Letter Kay Monroe	<b>Milton, WI</b> Herbert E. Saunders, pastor	Joined by Letter Donald Chroniger Charlotte Chroniger
<b>Centertown, MO</b> Branch church of Doniphan, MO Jon Warren, pastor	<b>Junction City, KS</b> Branch church of Nortonville, KS Steven James, pastor	Joined after Testimony Jane Pagel	
Joined after Testimony Charles Sarber	Joined after Baptism Marsha Calaman Christina Calaman	Joined by Letter Janette Loofboro	

## Births

**Uhland.**—A son, Kyle Uhland, was born to Terry and Karen (Sheppard) Uhland of Bridgeton, NJ, on July 18, 1988.

**Davis.**—A son, Roy D. Davis II, was born to Roy D. and Cathy S. Davis of Bridgeton, NJ, on October 1, 1988.

**Russell.**—A son, Benjamin Bert Russell, was born to David and Fay (Moncrief) Russell of Boone, NC, on March 8, 1989.

**Layton.**—A son, Matthew Layton, was born to Jay and Sandy (Davis) Layton of Bridgeton, NJ, on April 25, 1989.

**Powers.**—A son, Michael John Powers, was born to Michael and Lori (Harris) Powers of Pennsville, NJ, on April 30, 1989.

**Uhland.**—A son, Joel Travis Uhland, was born to Terry and Karen (Sheppard) Uhland of Bridgeton, NJ, on May 16, 1989.

**Kuhn.**—A daughter, Tiffany Kuhn, was born to William and Joann

(Scull) Kuhn of Bridgeton, NJ, on June 5, 1989.

**Sermershein.**—A son, Matthew Alan Sermershein, was born to Steve and Mary (Fogg) Sermershein of Goshen, KY, on August 30, 1989.

**Burns.**—A daughter, Sara Ashley Burns, was born to Pastor Michael and Jill Burns of Washington, D.C., on September 13, 1989.

**Saunders.**—A son, Aaron Eugene Saunders, was born to Brian and Heidi Saunders of Fort Atkinson, WI, on September 23, 1989.

## Marriages

**Young-Harris.**—George Young and Pauline Harris were married on April 29, 1989, in the chapel of the Shiloh Seventh Day Baptist Church, Shiloh, NJ. Pastor Everett Dickinson officiated.

**Loper-Anders.**—Steven J. Loper and Regina Anders were united in marriage on August 4, 1989, in Bridgeton, NJ.

**Oyler-Loper.**—Russell B. Oyler and Ruth Loper were married on September 3, 1989, at the Shiloh Seventh Day Baptist Church, Shiloh, NJ. Pastors Charles Bond and Don Chroniger officiated.

### Meet the President

Your president, Joe Samuels, welcomes invitations to speak at our churches for Sabbath worship or other special celebrations.

A visit could include: bringing the morning message; sharing his Vision for SDBs; plans for Conference, August 5-11, 1990; and answering your questions.

Please contact President Samuels to set a time. He is especially anxious to visit those groups who have not had a presidential visit in the last two or more years.

Be assured that you are all in his heart and prayers, ever keeping in mind that we are "All One in Christ Jesus."



## Obituaries

**Uhland.**—Joel Uhland, infant son of Terry and Karen (Sheppard) Uhland, died on June 13, 1989. Surviving are his parents, a sister and brother.

**Mixner.**—Charles J. Mixner, 81, of Bridgeton, New Jersey, died on August 24, 1989, following a prolonged hospital stay.

Charles was born on February 16, 1908, the son of the late Harry and Florence Collins Mixner. He was the husband of the late Sadie (Wingate) Mixner, who died in 1985. A lifetime area resident, he lived at his present address for 13 years.

Charles was employed by the Wheaton Glass Company as a mold maker for 40 years, retiring in 1972. He previously was employed by the Ferracuta Machine Company for several years.

A member of Brearley Lodge No. 2 F&AM, he also belonged to Brearley Chapter No. 6 Royal Arch Masons and was its principal sojourner. He was a member of Bridgeton Forest No. 7 Tall Cedars of Lebanon and the former Cumberland Chapter No. 145 Order of the Eastern Star. He was also a member of the Shiloh (New Jersey) Seventh Day Baptist Church.

Survivors included Darlene Boner, a daughter from his first marriage to the late Mary (Gant) Mixner, who died in 1962; a brother, Lewis, of Biloxi, Mississippi; and three grandchildren. He was predeceased by a sister, Irene Davis.

Services were held on August 28, 1989, at the Carll-Peterson-Ilacqua Funeral Home, Bridgeton. Officiating were his former pastor, the Rev. Charles Bond; and the Rev. Donald Chroniger, pastor of the Shiloh Seventh Day Baptist Church. Burial was in Greenwood Memorial Park, Millville, New Jersey.

**Wood.**—Catherine D. Wood, sister of Sandy Lupton of Bridgeton, New Jersey, was born on January 2, 1930, and died on September 4, 1988.

**Milks.**—Earl Perry Milks, 98, of Scio, New York, died on September 6, 1989, in the Wellsville Highland Nursing Home following a long illness.

Born on December 30, 1890, in the town of Amity, Allegany County, New York, to B. Frank and Laura (Gillett) Milks, Earl was a life-time resident of Scio and among the first class to graduate from the Scio Union School in 1911.

He married Dorothea Carpenter on November 24, 1916, in Jamestown, New York, and she died on June 13, 1968. On October 24, 1970, he married Ethel Hildreth Gee, who died on August 27, 1981.

Farming the homestead a mile north of the village, he also served as postmaster in the early 1930s. He purchased the local hardware store in 1936, and it bore his good name for many, many years.

Earl was a long-time member of the Scio United Methodist Church, and also had a satisfying associate membership in the Alfred (New York) Seventh Day Baptist Church of which Dorothea was a member.

He was a former member and past-president of the Scio High School Board; a former trustee of the Scio Free Library, associated with it since its beginning; a life-member of the Genesee Valley Grange of Scio, and a retired member of the Scio Fire Company.

His body was laid to rest in the Fairlawn Cemetery of Scio.

His survivors include two nieces, Lydia Butts of Alfred, New York, and Marguerite Matteson of Bradenton, Florida. A memorial service was held in the Scio United Methodist Church on September 10, 1989, conducted by Pastor David

Clarke and Pastor Stephen Yeaney of Scio. DSC

**Crandall.**—Carol (Davis) Crandall, 74, of Milton, Wisconsin, died in her home on September 20, 1989, after a long illness.

She was born on February 11, 1915, in Walworth, Wisconsin, the daughter of Rev. H. Eugene and Mary (Ross) Davis. She spent most of her early years in Shanghai, China, where her parents served as Seventh Day Baptist missionaries. She graduated from the Shanghai American School and from Salem College in Salem, West Virginia.

She married Burton B. Crandall on February 15, 1939. They lived in Alfred and Syracuse, New York, and in Milton, where Burton was a college professor. Carol was an active member of the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church and, until her illness, was an active member of the diaconate. Especially remembered were Carol and Burton's visits to shut-ins and elderly members of the church.

Carol is survived by her husband, Burton, of Milton; four children: Barbara Saunders of Milton, David of Chicago, Illinois, Brandon of Janesville, Wisconsin and Stephen of Alfred; a sister, Marcia Kreiser of Pittsford, New York; a brother, Winthrop Davis of Berkeley, California; 11 grandchildren; nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her brother, Richard, and her son, Brian. Her first great-grandson, Aaron Saunders, was born three days after her death.

A memorial service was held at the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church on September 24, 1989, with her son-in-law and pastor, Herbert E. Saunders, officiating. Moments of remembrances were shared, and her sons sang together as a quartet in honor of her memory. HES

# KEVIN'S

## CORNER

Our young church was celebrating one of its first anniversaries, so I quizzed the congregation about who we were.

"Seventh Day Baptists are a \_\_\_\_ people... Fill in the blank."

Someone said, "peculiar" (thanks to the title of a recent SDB mailing). I had to give a clue: "It begins with a 'c'!"

I heard a couple say, "crazy!" (Is it true that a congregation is a reflection of its pastor?)

"No, no, no. Seventh Day Baptists are a covenant people!" "Oh, yeah," they responded. But did they really understand what that meant?

We proceeded to review and renew our local covenant, to be reminded of our personal pledges to God and one another.

The church anniversary was noted, the words were said, but did anything really change? Were we closer to each other in our commitments to live for the Lord? Perhaps.

Covenants are intimate things, not to be taken lightly. Yes, we make those pledges freely, but there are "strings" attached.

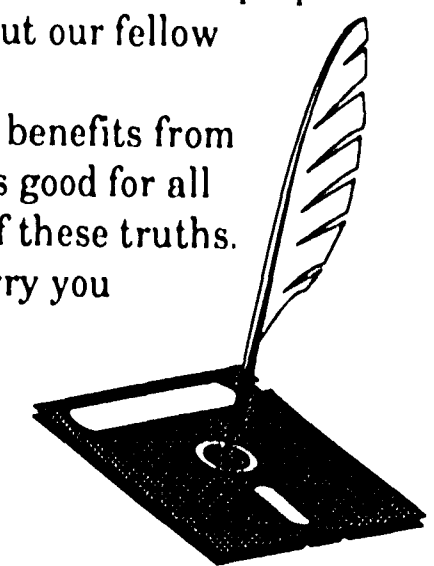
That contract, that promise, is meant to work within our church family. We are a family made up of individuals, yet within a covenant group, what each of us does will affect other members.

It's like a delicate string mobile, hanging from the ceiling. It has different shapes and weights and make-up, yet it is organized to balance. If just one of those pieces is affected by a well-placed breeze or touch, the whole mobile is affected.

That's God's family. I can try to just "hang around" as an individual, concerned only with my relationship with the One who holds the main string. But, if I choose to make a big move on my own, it affects the wider family. I need to be concerned with my family—covenant—relationship.

This tight, intimate covenant also has some freedoms. Seventh Day Baptists have covenanted together to express freedom of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We can differ on viewpoints even within our little groups. You may notice some differences within articles in the SR because we have that freedom. Yet we remain a covenant people—continuing to care about our fellow covenant members.

As the local church benefits from covenant renewals, it's good for all of us to be reminded of these truths. May this reminder carry you through the new year, the new decade, and beyond.



### In the next SR:

#### Missions—

Updates from Malawi; Finland  
Testimony of Ian Ingoe  
Mays' visit to South Africa  
Henry's visit to Camerouns

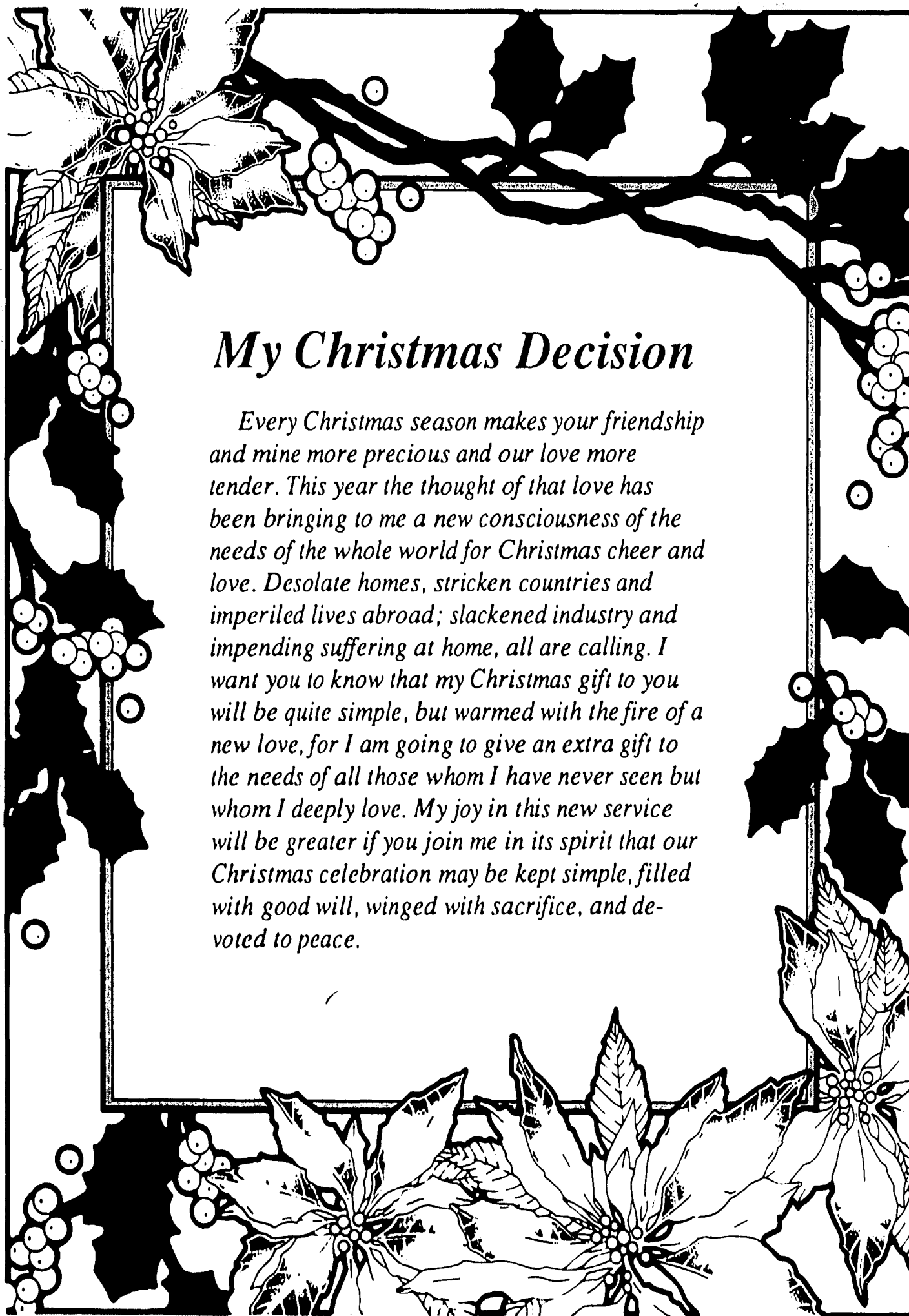
## Plea for a sane Christmas

The various churches of Battle Creek, Michigan, published a decision card "for extensive circulation" back in 1914. *The Sabbath Recorder* printed the words saying, "We heartily approve of this step and sincerely hope the movement will be crowned with success."

Those sentiments remain—75 years later.

The Sabbath Recorder (ISSN 0036-214X) (USPS 474460)  
3120 Kennedy Road  
PO Box 1678  
Janesville, WI 53547-1678

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### *My Christmas Decision*

*Every Christmas season makes your friendship and mine more precious and our love more tender. This year the thought of that love has been bringing to me a new consciousness of the needs of the whole world for Christmas cheer and love. Desolate homes, stricken countries and imperiled lives abroad; slackened industry and impending suffering at home, all are calling. I want you to know that my Christmas gift to you will be quite simple, but warmed with the fire of a new love, for I am going to give an extra gift to the needs of all those whom I have never seen but whom I deeply love. My joy in this new service will be greater if you join me in its spirit that our Christmas celebration may be kept simple, filled with good will, winged with sacrifice, and devoted to peace.*

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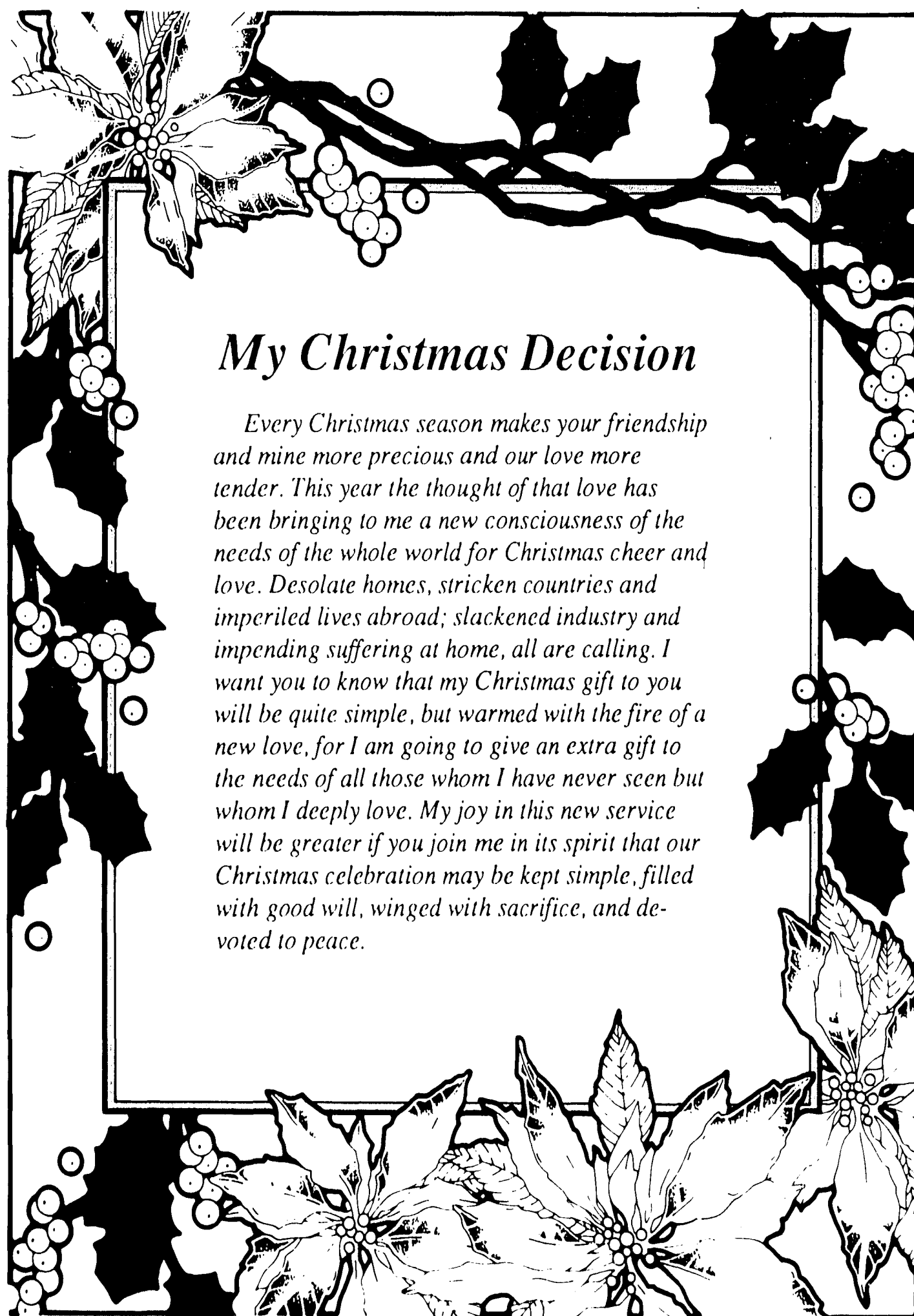
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