

The

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*Unit for World Missions*

*Celebrating 150 Years  
1844-1994*

February 1994

R

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## Eternal Salvation



*Once saved...*

*...always saved?*

## Upcoming Events

**Feb. 26—March 1**  
General Council meeting  
Daytona Beach, FL

**March 20**  
Missionary Society Annual  
Meeting, Westerly, RI

**March 31**  
Robe of Achievement  
nominations deadline

**May 1-2**  
Historical Society Annual  
Meeting, Janesville, WI

**May 21**  
Sabbath Emphasis Day

**May 31—June 17 (tentative)**  
Summer Institute (History  
and Polity) Janesville

**June 13**  
*Sabbath Recorder*  
150th Anniversary

**June 17-26**  
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Boulder, CO

**August 3-7**  
Pre-Con camps, Kansas

**August 7-13**  
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## The Sabbath Recorder



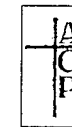
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## Features

Eternal salvation for Christians by Timothy L. Bond	4
Choosing by Kenneth Chroniger	7
or Chosen? by Matthew Olson	7
Keep the candles burning brightly by K. Duane Hurley	20

## Departments

Women's Society	13	President's Page	19
Pearls from the past	14	Local news	22
SR Almanac	15	SR Reaction	25
Christian Education	16	Family flux	26
Focus	17	Editorial	27
The Beacon	18		

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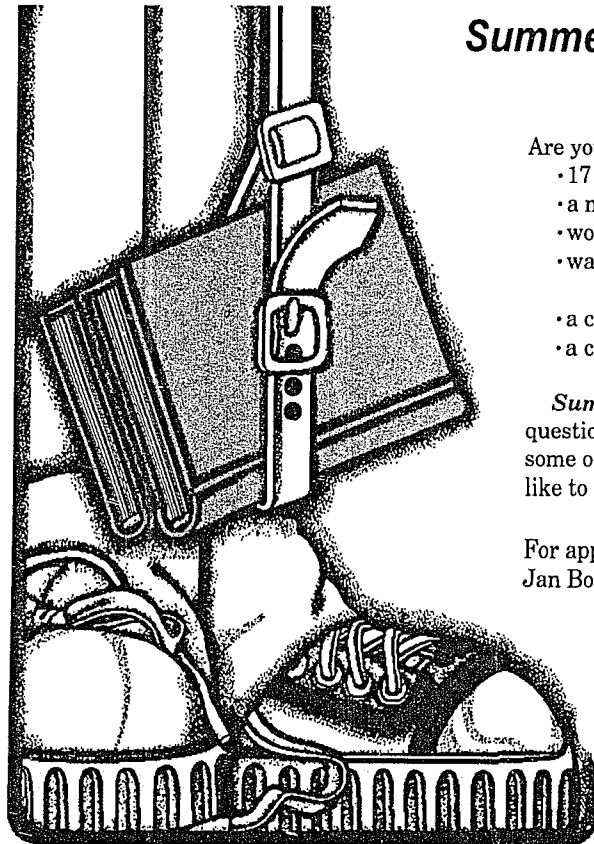
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# Eternal salvation for Christians

## A debate in play form

by Timothy L. Bond

### Cast of characters:

Arbitrator  
Mr. Always  
Mr. Temporary  
(Scripture quotes from *Revised Standard Version*)

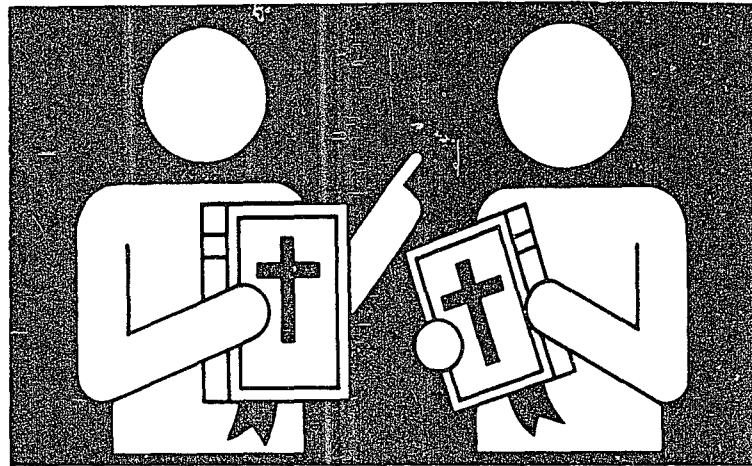
**Arbitrator:** In opening today's debate, I would like to set the stage by giving a little background on our discussion topic. Then I'll present the question to our debaters and allow them to give an opening statement on where he stands on the issue.

Most people who grew up in a church which practices baptism of believers are taught that sin separates them from God. If they will confess their sins and accept Jesus as their Savior, they will have their sins forgiven, and also receive eternal life in heaven following physical death here on earth.

The place where many churches are weak in their teaching relates to that time-honored Protestant tradition of holding revival meetings where backsliders (born-again Christians who turned back to the ways of the world) rededicate their lives to Christ. Today's question for discussion relates to these backsliders, and whether they would go to heaven or hell if they died before rededicating themselves to Jesus.

The topic we are debating is, "Is a person who is once saved, always saved—or can that person be saved and then be eternally separated from God through sin?"

First, we shall hear the position of Mr. Always.



**Mr. Always:** Thank you. Let's put one thing to rest by giving an explanation which will help keep us debaters from "playing God" and judging other people.

When this "once saved, always saved" question arises, those discussing it often argue over the point that the individual must not have really accepted Christ as his Savior, or he would not have backslidden. If Mr. Temporary will agree, I would like to stipulate that, for this debate, we shall assume that, yes, the individual was *really* saved when he accepted Christ and was baptized. Then we will avoid arguing the point that the person went back to his old ways because he was never really saved anyway. Does that meet with your approval, Mr. Temporary?

**Mr. Temporary:** Yes, I am quite willing to go along with that.

**Mr. Always:** Thank you. My position on this question is that once a person is saved and becomes a Christian, there will never be any doubt of him spending eternity in heaven with God.

**Arbitrator:** In other words, you are in agreement with the "once saved, always saved" part of the question.

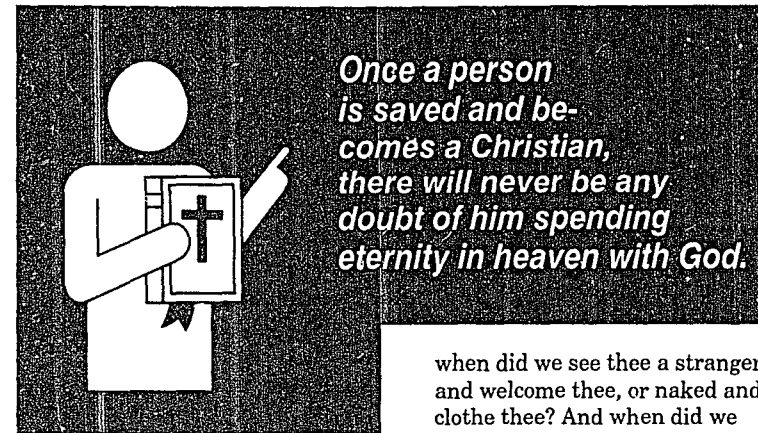
**Mr. Always:** That is correct, sir.  
**Arbitrator:** Mr. Temporary, would you explain your viewpoint on the issue at hand?

**Mr. Temporary:** I believe that a person *does* receive eternal life at the time he accepts Christ as his Savior. But if he allows sin to come into his life, it will cause a rift between God and himself which can cause him to lose his eternal life.

**Arbitrator:** Mr. Temporary, can you illustrate your point to make it clearer to our audience?

**Mr. Temporary:** Yes. Let's think for a minute of an insurance policy. Jack buys a policy that will pay his wife \$50,000 when he dies. The policy has a monthly premium and is in effect as long as Jack pays the premium each month. If Jack fails to pay the premium, the policy will lapse and will not pay off upon his death.

It's the same way with salva-



*Once a person is saved and becomes a Christian, there will never be any doubt of him spending eternity in heaven with God.*

tion. If you don't do the will of God, you are failing to pay your premium, and your policy will lapse.

**Mr. Always:** When you say, "You don't do the will of God," it sounds as if you are talking about failing to do Christian works as well as committing overt sins. Is that right?

**Mr. Temporary:** Yes, I believe there are sins of omission as well as sins of commission. Let's read the parable of Jesus presented in Matthew 25:31-46.

"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And

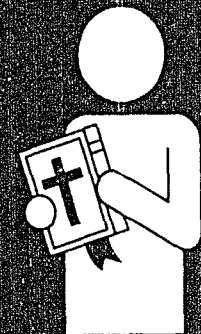
when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.'

"Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

"Then they also will answer, 'Lord when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to thee?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

According to this parable, those who failed to do works for their fellow man went on to eternal punishment, while those who

*But if he allows sin to come into his life, it will cause a rift between God and himself which can cause him to lose his eternal life.*



did the works received eternal life.

**Arbitrator:** Mr. Always, what do you think of the argument Mr. Temporary just presented?

**Mr. Always:** Without thinking too hard, I can come up with two obvious flaws in Mr. Temporary's logic. First of all, the parable does not say whether those who failed to welcome the strangers and do other acts were originally saved. Therefore, that Scripture doesn't necessarily apply to our topic here today.

Secondly, Mr. Temporary seems to have gotten off the subject at hand because he's using an illustration which might mislead some people to think that salvation is the result of works. We find that theory contradicted by the passage in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works lest any man should boast." This Scripture affirms that salvation is based on grace, not works.

**Mr. Temporary:** If you would read the entire Scripture passage instead of taking a couple of verses out of context, I think our listeners would get a different view of the place of works in the Christian life. Verse 10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for *good works*, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." This shows that although good



# Choosing



by Kenneth Chroniger

**B**y now you have read Tim Bond's play, "Eternal Salvation for Christians" (page 4). The topic presented is a concern that just doesn't go away. From the first generation of believers until today, Christianity has had its share of doctrinal struggles which the faithful have sought about and fought about. The subject at hand has been couched in popular terms like "once saved, al-

by Matthew Olson

**T**here was a time when had you asked me whether or not I was an Arminian, I would have replied, "No, I am Norwegian, French and German." Unfortunately, such innocence is gone. I now look at the world with the jaundiced eye of a theologian. The fact that I understand the word "supralapsarian" marks me as a man not only with too much time on his hands, but also as an initiate into mysteries most sane people avoid. I now know that "Arminians" believe that salvation is possible for all who choose it. That idea sounds so good, so American, that people are often surprised to learn that I don't agree. Instead, I take the position commonly called "Calvinism."

# or Chosen?



Mr. Always, did you pay particular attention to verse 4? It indicates that the person who was first saved and had "tasted of the heavenly gift," and then committed apostasy, could not be forgiven.

**Arbitrator:** While the dictionary says that *apostasy* is "the act of renouncing one's faith or principles," the Bible tells us that this rejection is a mortal sin which can cause a saved Christian to spend eternity in hell.

Mr. Always, what is your response to this?

**Mr. Always:** I could list a thousand sins that born-again Christians can be forgiven for, yet it appears that my worthy opponent has discovered two which are not forgivable. I'm probably correct in saying that these are the only two instances where a saved person can lose his salvation.

**Mr. Temporary:** It takes only one exception to prove that the "once saved, always saved" concept is a misinterpretation of Scripture.

**Arbitrator:** Mr. Always has conceded that Mr. Temporary has poked two holes in his theory of permanent, irrevocable salvation for the Christian. Therefore, the winner of our debate is Mr. Temporary.

To recap our findings, I would say that as a general rule, the "once saved, always saved" theory of salvation is *almost* always true. But we must admit two exceptions: blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and apostasy.

We would like to thank our audience for attending today, and we hope that your understanding of salvation has been broadened by this discussion. *SR*

*Tim Bond operates the GED program at Faith Farm, a rehabilitation center in Bridgeton, N.J. Tim, his wife Donna, and family are members of the Shiloh, N.J., SDB Church.*

the same abominable things that the wicked man does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds which he did shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, he shall die."

**Arbitrator:** Point and counterpoint. Mr. Always, are you able to refute the implications of that Scripture passage?

**Mr. Always:** Now who's taking verses out of context? It just so happens that Ezekiel is found in the Old Testament. That's when the Children of Israel were living under the law, not under grace, which came with the new covenant Jesus established.

**Mr. Temporary:** You want to throw out the teachings in two-thirds of the Bible just because it predated Jesus!

Well then, let's hear you refute these New Testament passages. I believe these two "blasts" from my "double-barreled shotgun" will put an end to your theories. We'll start in Matthew 12:31.

"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven."

This certainly makes it clear that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is an unforgivable sin regardless of whether it is committed by a saved individual or one who is unsaved.

My second reference will put to rest the "once saved, always saved" theory for good. It is found in Hebrews 6:4-6.

"For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt."

works alone don't save a person, he is expected to do them once he is converted. Therefore, if a Christian fails to do these, as well as actually doing other sins, he may jeopardize his eternal life.

**Arbitrator:** It appears that Mr. Temporary is developing a pretty strong case. What support do you have for your viewpoint, Mr. Always?

**Mr. Always:** 1 John 5:11-12 says, "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son has not eternal life."

This passage doesn't put any limits on eternal life. If a person is saved, he has the Son, Jesus Christ. More light may be shed as we look at Romans 5:18-6:2.

"Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. Law came in, to increase trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?"

This obviously doesn't encourage Christians to sin, but it does indicate that through God's grace, the sins of Christians are forgiven. Also take note that there is no comment about sin jeopardizing the salvation of the Christian.

**Mr. Temporary:** How can you reconcile those Scripture passages with Ezekiel 18:24?

"But when a righteous man turns away from righteousness and commits iniquity and does

ways saved," or expressed with theological heaviness as the "perseverance of the saints." In this discussion, the issue is framed with the question, "How free is a person in choosing and maintaining a relationship with God?"

As a fifth grader attending Camp Joy, I sat in a pickup truck between Pastor Kenneth Davis and Pastor Edward Sutton. As they shared from the Bible how to know Jesus Christ as Lord, it never occurred to me that "this is not a free choice." It was my decision to "ask Christ in."

Some who knew their Bibles better than I told me that I hadn't chosen God, but that God had chosen me. They said that I was "dead in my trespasses and sins" and couldn't choose God even if I wanted to, all because of my "total depravity." Then they conveyed that a long time ago, "before the

foundation of the world," God had individually predestined me for salvation. I was "elected" to be a "vessel to honor."

These assessments seemed to be biblical, yet they didn't match with my experience of "free choice." I am committed to the principle that a believer needs to allow the Bible to inform our experience, rather than experience determining the final meaning of Scripture. Was there a way that Scripture might be examined in a different light?

Conclusions drawn from that examination provide the answer to our question: Persons are completely free. We are free in our pre-conversion relationship, in our conversion relationship, and in our post-conversion relationship with God.

We can be declared free in our pre-conversion relationship through knowledge we gain from

"natural law," knowledge through the "moral law," knowledge through the "Image of God," and knowledge through consequence of "the Fall." The apostle, in Romans 1:18-20, assumes an understanding of God that comes from nature, particularly in verse 19: "Because that which is known of God is manifested in them." Knowledge gained from "natural law" leads to an accountability for the decision to accept God.

In Romans 7, the apostle points to his struggle with living under a "Law System." Yet at the same time, he understood the purpose of the Law. It is this understanding that leads to the events, decisions, and choices of Romans 8:1—"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

There is a special relationship with God in the pre-converted relationship which bears on the issue of

freedom. "Mankind was created in the image of God and is therefore the noblest work of creation." It is this relationship, stemming from creation, that Jonathan Allen pre-

earthly parent are reproduced in the child (not so much in the physical as in the inner and more essential nature, of which the outward or physical is but a faint expression),

If we are similar to the Father (in His image), and the Father is free, then we, too, are free. And with that freedom comes choice concerning relationship.

A question may be raised, "Didn't humanity lose choice in the 'Fall'?" Though humankind was expelled from Eden, with death as a consequence, individuals also received "Knowledge of Good and Evil," and "their eyes were opened." Choice with understanding was a biblical part of pre-converted humankind. Cain had the ability to choose after the offerings were presented to God. Man in his pre-converted relationship is free.

Can man freely say "no" to God as it relates to salvation? Can he say "no" or "yes" to God only through a God-decided choice? Does man experience freedom at the point of conversion? Is there a rela-

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***We are free in our pre-conversion relationship, in our conversion relationship, and in our post-conversion relationship with God.***

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sented to the graduating class of Alfred (N.Y.) University on June 19, 1892:

"By this divine fatherhood, God is the originator of man, spiritually from his own nature in his own image, after his own likeness. As the image of God and likeness of the

the image and likeness of God in man are not in his animal, but *spiritual* nature, and in the attributes of this nature. As like can beget like only, whatever is the essential nature of God, the Father, such must be the essential spirit nature of man, the child."

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**Or Chosen?** *cont. from page 7*

That's kind of an interesting name, since Calvin borrowed much of his theology from Augustine. All Calvin did was put it into a nice book with a proper index, and then he waltzed away with all the credit and considerable royalties. So perhaps I am an "Augustinian," except that is harder to say and my computer spell-checker doesn't recognize the word. But I digress.

Given the fact that I attended Calvin Theological Seminary, it is not surprising that I am a Calvinist. You are what you eat, and after consuming a steady diet of Calvin, Berkhof, and Berkouwer, I ended up digesting their teachings and leaving the seminary's table feeling satisfied. (I also ended up weighing 20 pounds more than when I started, but I *think* that's unrelated.) Yet by ending up a Calvinist, I merely returned to where I had begun.

I say that because I am more a product of my experience than I am of my schooling. That is, the events leading up to my conversion led me

I do not believe that salvation is available to all who choose it, because I do not believe that any of us are free to make such a choice.

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***In that state of total depravity, God chose us. God elected us to salvation. That election began the process of our conversion.***

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to embrace Calvinism long before I knew what it meant.

For me, the ultimate question regarding my release from death's sure grip has always been, "What role did I play in my salvation?" My answer, then as now, is *none*. Again and again the apostle Paul assures me that I am right in this; that there is nothing I can do to save myself.

When I stood up in a gym at a Nicki Cruz crusade in 1980, I did not "choose" to be saved. I finally realized that *Christ* had chosen *me*. I did not choose to be free from sin. God, through Christ's blood, freed me from sin. Up to that point, I was hopelessly bound by sin, unable to exercise my will in a meaningful way.

This is the core belief upon

which Calvinists build their theology. This belief is commonly called "Total Depravity." This is not the same, by the way, as being unable to do any good thing. Nor is it the same as being unable to tell right from wrong. Nor does it mean being guilty of committing every sin known to man—few have enough time to do that. What it simply means is that everything an unconverted person does is tainted by sin. Sin has infected the mind, emotions, and will of all people to the extent that none are able to save themselves.

This was the state that all of us found ourselves in prior to our conversion. We were, without exception, totally depraved. We may have been nice people. We may have been generous people. We may even have been snappy dressers. But we were all guilty of sin, as Romans 3:10-18 tells us, and that sin was deadly.

Sin, like an uncontrolled cancer,

infiltrated every part of our being, leaving nothing we said or did untouched by the sin in our lives. Our very best was not good enough.

It wasn't just our actions and words that were affected, however. Our mental and emotional faculties were also impaired, as Romans 1:21-27 so ably demonstrates. Even if we were able to keep up our outward appearances, our inner selves could not escape sin's grasp.

Those who do wretched things aren't the only ones who need salvation. Everyone who thinks and feels wretched things needs salvation from sin just as much. A tomb may look pretty, but the door is shut for a good reason.

According to Ephesians 2:8-9, no one is able to save himself or herself. There can be no talk of free will amongst those mired in sin. Its chains are heavy. What limited freedom we have only serves to remind us of how tightly we are bound. Sin, you might say, only

gives us enough rope to hang ourselves. Romans 6:17-18 help us to see that we were indeed bound by sin. Nothing we could do or say would free us. We were lost, without God and without hope.

In that state of total depravity, of being utterly lost, God chose us. God elected us to salvation. That election began the process of our conversion.

Our election by God to salvation is commonly called "predestination." Calvinists, knowing that using the word "predestination" among Christians is tantamount to yelling "Fire!" in a crowded theater, use the term "Unconditional Election." That is to say, God chose us without requiring us to do anything to earn it. Which is a good thing, I suppose, since we couldn't do anything to earn it in the first place.

Since we could not choose God, given the fact that we were not free to choose properly because of sin,

*cont. next page*

tionship of free choice in the experience of conversion?

Three areas need to be developed to give an answer: the operation of grace for salvation; the misuse of the doctrine of predestination; and the nature of God being Love. To whom does God give prevenient (antecedent) grace so that choice can be made freely? To whom does he give effectual grace for salvation?

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave..." Titus 2:11—"For the grace has appeared bringing salvation to all men." 1 Timothy 4:10—"For this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe." 1 Peter 3:9—"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some count slackness; but is long suffering toward you, not wishing that

any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Grace is really offered, grace is really extended.

Many have presented the Gospel with the person's response being "no," "not now," even "never." You may have been at an altar call and observed people struggling, not with the emotion of the moment, but rather with the decision, the choice being made. What of the doctrine of predestination? Did God make a decree in times past announcing individual and personal salvation? Is it the *decree* of God that saves, giving us no choice? If we are to hold such a position, we must grapple with several concerns.

Preordination, or predestination, means to be "marked"; "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29); to be adopted as sons (Ephesians 1:5). These are



consequences of conversion. The prevalent interpretation of Romans 9 needs to be considered. Does it

refer to personal design for individuals, or classes, groups, types?

Another concern related to the preordination teaching is that God has no past or future, dwelling only in the present. Any preordination from God's point of view is done in God's present, making man's choice real. The doctrine of predestination must declare where the power of the Gospel lies—in the decree or in the cross.

Further, the very nature of God is love. It is this nature which is the greatest evidence for man's free choice. Love doesn't settle for puppetry, even in human-to-human relationships. In relationships between husband and wife, parent and child, sibling to sibling, friend to friend, love is different from a lock step, goose-stepping, saluting obedience. Since human love requires freedom of choice, would not this be true where God is love?

In the pre-converted relationship, humankind is free. In the conversion decision, humankind is free. It is reasonable and logical to conclude that in the post-conversion relationship with God, there

**The very nature of God is love. It is this nature which is the greatest evidence for man's free choice.**

also is freedom. There must even be the ultimate freedom to say that I want "out" of the relationship.

Realizing that we have become slaves to righteousness, realizing

that we are now indwelt by the Holy Spirit, realizing that Jesus said "no one shall snatch them out of my hand," can a person still willfully choose to say, "I want out"? Can a person say that "the faith" is no longer for them?

When we raise this question, the conversation must move away from issues that cause us to "joust with windmills." The question of freedom in the post-conversion relationship is not concerned with broken fellowship, grieving the Holy Spirit, slipping in and out of salvation, or the so-called "Unpardonable Sin." Our focus is the question, "How free is a person in choosing and maintaining a relationship with God in the post-conversion relationship?"

Are there Scriptures that point to the salvation experience, and include the possibility of breaking *cont. next page*

### Or Chosen? *cont. from page 9*

God chose us. That can be seen in John 15:16 and all over the place in Romans 9. A common objection to this says that it seems awfully "calous" of God to pick one person and to reject another. How odd of God, how unbelievably "unfair" of Him, to do such a thing.

Yet God does not consciously reject people. In His sovereignty, He simply does not choose them. God is free to do that, for He is God. He is the vineyard owner who "overpays" those who have worked but an hour. He is the potter who molds the clay as He sees fit.

We cannot question what God does with what belongs to Him, or begrudge His generosity. Certain people, by God's grace, have been chosen by God to be saved. It has nothing to do with what a person has or hasn't done. When God wants to save a person, He chooses

to do so, and it is done.

Some Calvinists then go on to say that God's atonement is limited. You may have noticed that, in spite of our evangelistic efforts, many are not led by the Spirit to salvation. Some Calvinists use the term "Limited Atonement" to explain this. It refers to the belief that Christ's atonement, though sufficient for all, is effective only for those enabled by God to accept His salvation offer through Christ. Those passages which appear to make salvation a universal offer are said to refer only to God's chosen people.

My understanding of limited atonement, however, is not quite the same. I understand atonement to be limited in the sense that atonement is not universal. That is, not everyone will be saved. I would join Millard Erickson, a well-respected Baptist theologian, in understanding that God first decided to provide for salvation, and then

elected certain people to that salvation, thus "limiting" the extent of the atonement. Not everyone on earth is saved.

This is the mildest form of Calvinism—but Calvinism just the same—for the basis of salvation is left to the free and sovereign choice of God. In no way does it allow our meritorious choice to be the basis of salvation. I would be less than honest if I were to claim that this particular point does not come across as tap-dancing on the head of a pin. It does. But such are the lengths professional theologians will go to in order to explain themselves. (Kids, don't try this at home.)

Once God decided to provide for salvation and then elected certain individuals to be saved, He had to go out and get 'em. Calvinists call that process "Irresistible Grace." This has to do with God's determination to see His will carried out in regard to the election of His people. If God chooses someone to be saved,

Calvinists believe, that person *will* come to salvation.

We have all heard the riddle which asks, "Where does a 900-pound gorilla sit?" The answer is, "Anywhere he wants." Now God is not a 900-pound gorilla who crams His will down our throats. Rather, the offer of salvation provided to God's chosen people is made so appealing that they respond positively to it. God knows, as well as we do, that more flies are caught with honey than vinegar. But now I've managed to imply that you, the reader, are a fly, and I find myself in ever-deeper analogical trouble. So perhaps I'd better move on before I offend you further.

So let us consider the very thing this issue of *The Sabbath Recorder* is focusing upon: the question of the permanence of our salvation. This can be summed up in the question, "Is a person who is once saved, always saved?" To which this Calvinist is apt to reply, "You

bet your sweet bippy!" And it just so happens that this is the fifth of the five pillars of faith for Calvinists: "Preservation of the Saints." Those chosen by God will be preserved by Him, so that none among the elect will fall away.

The condition of people prior to their salvation is one of total depravity. Then, through the grace of God and the imparting of faith, individuals are elected by God without condition. They are, in other words, saved.

But what happens to them afterwards? Do they necessarily continue on in the process of sanctification until their death, resurrection, and glorification? Or can they be derailed from that path by the reemergence of sin into their lives? Perhaps the two passages most pertinent to this debate are John 10:27-30 and Hebrews 6:4-6.

It is obvious why John 10:27-30 can be used to defend the idea that those chosen by God are secure in



their salvation. Jesus used phrases like "never perish" and "no one shall snatch them from My hand or *cont. next page*

that personal relationship with God? Consider well Romans 11:20-21—"By their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee." Consider Jesus' words in John 15:2—"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away..." In verse 6, "If a man abideth not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered..." Consider Colossians 1:22-23, verse 23 concluding, "If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel..."

These passages point to the possibility of ending the relationship, even in the post-conversion state. Is it done by free choice? 2 Peter 2:20-22 seems to indicate so: "For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge

of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse than the first. For it is better not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandments delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the proverb. The dog turning to his own vomit, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire."

Then there is the passage which has become the standard explanation, the "locus classicus" of this discussion, Hebrews 6:4-8. It tells in verse 4 the state of the individual, in verse 5 the spiritual strength of that person, and in verse 6 the possibility of falling away, with its accompanying consequences. These Scriptures announce freedom of choice in the post-conversion relationship.

Are there biblical examples of individuals who chose to walk away from the relationship of conversion? Yes, but only through implication, or suggestion. 2 Timothy 4:10—"Demas forsook me having loved this present world." And the words of Jesus concerning Judas in John 17:12—"...and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, save the son of perdition."

The conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that the decision made at Camp Joy was freely made. Freedom has not been taken from me, including the ultimate freedom of living out the converted life. People are completely free to choose and maintain a relationship with God in pre-conversion and post-conversion relationships. *SR*

*Ken Chroniger is pastor of the Alfred Station, N.Y., SDB Church.*

Or Chosen? cont. from page 11

My Father's hand." Such statements make our security in Christ seem pretty cut and dried. And if that were all the Bible had to say on the matter, the case would be closed, and we would all believe that Christians can't fall away. But that is not all there is, so the issue cannot be easily laid to rest.

Hebrews 6:4-6, for instance, seems to cloud this issue considerably. But only if one assumes that the writer refers to people who are genuinely saved, and who have in fact lost their salvation. If, as Thomas Hewitt points out, it is possible to understand the writer as referring to a hypothetical situation, this helps clarify things considerably. I understand the apostasy (renunciation of faith) of the people in Hebrews 6 to be hypothetical in nature.

Thus the RSV is correct in rendering verse 6, "if they fall away," which suggests the possibility that the people in question would not. That possibility was confirmed in verse 9, where the writer expressed confidence that those he was writing to would not fall away. Hebrews 6 merely indicates that there is the possibility that believers can fall away. John 10 emphatically denies this as ever coming to pass.

The end result of these doctrines is absolute assurance. We can know that we are saved because Christ chose us, and we are promised that nothing and no one can snatch us away from Him. Our salvation is not based upon what we have done, but what God has done for us in His sovereign, unconditional election of us. Nothing we can say or do will reverse God's decision to elect us to salvation. Calvinism's

strength is the certainty that it is by the grace of God alone that any of us are saved.

For that reason, I believe that though Calvinism has its problems, it is superior to Arminianism. But through the gracious input of my wife, I have come to understand that Calvinists and Arminians are working for the same thing. We are called by Christ to the work of spreading the Gospel.

The theological framework we use for approaching that work is important. But ultimately it is less important than the act of undertaking the work itself. In that work, Arminians and Calvinists are united. May we all work, then, for the night is coming. *SR*

*Matt Olson is pastor of the Berlin, N.Y., SDB Church.*



# Ready for God's final call?

*"... and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15, NASB).*

Recently our family was returning home after a shopping trip. In the middle of a casual conversation, our 6-year-old daughter, Bethany, asked Don and me, "What will happen if I forget to ask Jesus to be my savior?"

We explained to her that people who believe in Jesus will go to heaven, and people who don't believe in Him will spend eternity in hell. We also told her that since she is already thinking about spiritual things and wants to accept Jesus in

her heart, she won't forget to commit her life to the Lord.

We were a bit amazed by Bethany's question, but have seen her concern for schoolmates who

savior. They can neglect to call upon the Lord with repentance in their hearts.

In their busy lives, people can forget to allow time for spiritual

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***We have been called to help people remember to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.  
The sooner they do, the better.  
There will come a time for every person when it will be too late to accept Christ.***

---

don't go to church. She invites them to church or youth group from time to time, and has even talked to

them about Jesus during lunch or recess. Don and I cannot claim credit for her spiritual sensitivity. Even though all of our children have been exposed to the Lord, the Creator has given Bethany a special awareness of spiritual things.

Since that conversation, I've thought a lot about Bethany's question. Can people really forget to accept Jesus as Lord and savior?

Yes, I'm afraid they can. People can either intentionally or unintentionally overlook their need for a

matters. Even those of us who have accepted God's wonderful gift of salvation can take that gift too lightly. Do we treasure our salvation? Do we guard it as a thing of value? Do we live as though we're happy to be saved?

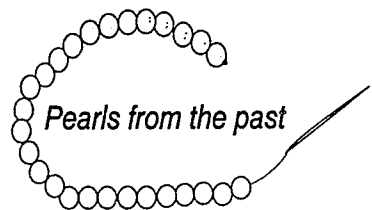
We have been called to help people remember to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The sooner they do, the better. There will come a time for every person when it will be too late to accept Christ. The words of a John W. Peterson song illustrate that point very clearly:

*Some day you'll hear God's final call to you,  
to take His offer of salvation true.  
This could be it, my friend, if you but knew:  
God's final call, God's final call.*

*If you reject God's final call of grace,  
you'll have no chance your footsteps to retrace.  
All hope will then be gone, and doom you'll face:  
O hear His call, O hear His call. *SR**







## Scared from death to life

by Don A. Sanford, historian

The publication, *Seventh Day Baptist Memorial*, was discontinued after three volumes. Several articles solicited in 1850 were not printed, but bound in a manuscript form. I have deciphered the handwriting and entered them into the computer. Following are portions of the autobiographical sketch of Rev. Samuel Davison, a convert to the Sabbath in 1844, and pastor in Plainfield and Shiloh, N.J., before becoming field missionary in the western frontier under the direction of the Missionary Board.

### The story of my youth

My parents were pious; they loved God; they loved His house, and early accustomed their children to go there. I never thought of becoming a man without a wish to be a good man. The thought of being a wicked man was intolerable to me. But alas, I knew not how deceitful and desperately wicked was my heart.

My First Alarming Sin that I remember occurred when I was six years old: I was playing in my father's yard with a neighbor's child, when a trifling that annoyed me made me so angry that I burst into a profane oath too dreadful to relate. My playmate instantly rebuked me and said, "You will be sent to that place that burneth with brimstone and fire!" I, too, had learned and believed this awaited the wicked, but all at once I was sure and skeptic too.

I replied, "That will be after death, and we shall not feel it!" But oh, none can tell the horrors that seized my guilty soul. It was as though the brimstone and fire kindled even then. It was near evening and my mother soon heard

of it; she took me into a chamber and reproved and wept over me. I entreated her forgiveness, but she shortly left me to pray for pardon of God. If I ever prayed in sincerity in my whole life, I did so that night. I prayed and wept until I sobbed myself to sleep.

In the morning, my distress was abated, but an indescribable seriousness accosted upon my mind which continued for some time. I hoped I was forgiven and should not sin thus any more. But repeated fresh proof of my depravity occurred so often as to make me truly miserable...

My sins made me afraid lest some accident would befall me and I die under the wrath of God. I dreamed that I was drowning and sank down to the chambers of hell, and some infernal spirits tormenting the soul of wicked men; but just as I was falling into their power, a venerable man with a book in his hand rescued me from their grasp. This much affected me with fear and hope.


At about twelve years of age, I was assaulted with skepticism. I tried to believe that I was one of the elect and should be saved in some way. I could not tell how. But I had no better foundation for this fancy than the other, and I was sinking in deep waters where the billows were washing angrily around me. The terror of being banished to hell at length made my knees smite together.

When about fourteen years of age, having whipped a boy of my own age for trespassing upon one of my father's enclosures, his sister, a young woman grown, came with a horse whip to punish me. My anger instantly kindled into fury; and seizing a hay fork with a dreadful oath, I threatened to run it through her if she touched me, which I

verily think I should have done had she not desisted. This was the only time I ever repeated the awful sin of swearing. I was now self-convicted of murder and swearing. Such things made me wish there were no hereafter. Whoever wished for it under any other circumstances? How awful eternity appeared. I often wished to be converted.

In my seventeenth year I was effectively awakened to realize my danger. I sat under a truly spiritual ministry, and at that time my pastor delivered a course of lectures upon the deformity of the human heart. He led me to see the cause of all my pollution misery. One sermon particularly affected me. The text was, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in the heart while they live, and after, they go to the dead." This sermon opened up the great deep of human depravity. I saw myself ruined and undivine. I began to pray as I have never done until then. I do not remember that I made any particular resolution, yet my heart was surrendered as it never had been before. Without a single regret, I bid adieu to sin and vain amusement, and made a decided and full surrendering of myself to the Lord.

Many years have passed away since that time, but all has tended to confirm the reality of experience, of religion, and the blessings of being on the Lord's side. The joy of his salvation is still my chief good.

Readers, what regard will you pay to this subject? Neglect it you can, and perish in so doing. Trifle with it you can, and be a fugitive all your days! Attend to it and you can find peace with God and hope of eternal life by Jesus Christ. "But how can you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" 



# SR Almanac

Where we have been...

### One year ago—February 1993

Issue is devoted to the history, and future, of the Summer Christian Service Corps (SCSC). Testimonies shared by the first workers and directors of the 1964 project.

Other SCSC memories related by Florence Bowden, Althea Rood, Keith and Jennifer Bond, Rodney and Camille Henry, Kim Baker, and Ruth Ryschon.

Christian Education department notes the retirement of Onnalee Saunders, and the appointment of Mae Bottoms as the new assistant to the Executive Director.

"Pearls" page remembers the early student evangelists and musical quartets of the late 1800s.

### Five years ago—February 1989

Architectural student Morgan Shepard shares his vision of an expanded SDB Center and campus. Morgan used this dream for his bachelor's degree thesis.

Janet Thorngate tells the story of John Comer (1704-1734), Baptist pastor who collected valuable historical information on the SDBs of Newport, R.I.

Five areas targeted for SDB outreach: New York City; Santa Barbara, Calif.; Rapid City, S.D.; Miami, Fla.; and Naylor/Doniphan, Mo.

Publishing ministries expand in Poland and Brazil.

Editor D. Scott Smith presents his final editorial and last regular issue. Scott gives thanks to many, and an inspiring challenge to all readers.

### 10 years ago—February 1984

Pastor Larry Graffius writes article on baptism.

Pastor Alton Wheeler, recuperating from a serious stroke, shares his thoughts about streamlining church committee work.

Denver, Colo., church marks 55th anniversary.

Mary Clare, Executive Director for the Board of Christian Education, resigns; Linda Harris named new *Helping Hand* editor.

"The building within the building" features Don Sanford's scale model of the SDB Building in Plainfield, N.J. The model is housed in the new SDB Center in Janesville, Wis.

### 25 years ago—February 1969

Pastor Leland Davis moves from Schenectady, N.Y., to Los Angeles, Calif.

Ethel Dickinson guest-edits outreach issue. Many contributors write on the theme, "Christ, Our Rock."

Billy Graham's inauguration prayer for President Richard Nixon printed.

Promotion increases for Conference meetings to be held in Nyack, N.Y.

Esther Burdick, Youth Field Worker, leaves for an extended field trip into the South and West.

"Religion an important factor" as crew members of the U.S.S. Pueblo reflect on their 11-month North Korean captivity.

### 50 years ago—February 1944

Recorder Press prints new "Sabbath Calendar."

"Who's Who Among SDB Young People" features Rex Burdick and Darrell Barber.

Pastor Lester Osborn prepares two new Sabbath tracts: "An Entering Wedge," and "Something New? No, Old as the Creation."

SDB missionary to China, Dr. George Thorngate, held in a Japanese concentration camp for three years, continues to relate his ordeal: "We were served 1,800 calories of questionable food, when 2,400 calories are needed to maintain life in a man confined to his bed. However, American Red Cross cracked wheat saved our lives. We had a bowl of it for breakfast every other morning."

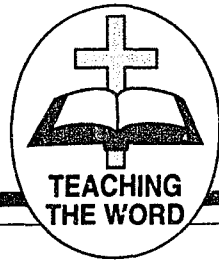
...where are we headed?

### Pray—

- for students and churches involved with SCSC
- for our various outreach ministries
- that we would catch God's vision anew
- for God's blessing on former denominational workers
- for those in governmental authority
- for our men and women in the military
- that the Sabbath remains a special delight

*Entered*





## Christian Education

by Ernest K. Bee Jr.

### Servants of a New Covenant

Mrs. N. Decision was puzzled that Pastor Jus Start would ask her and the members of the church's diaconate to read 2 Corinthians 2:14—3:6 prior to their meeting. She didn't understand what the Apostle Paul's comments had to do with the discussion she had experienced at General Conference, dealing with the Bible being "without error in the original writings."

Did Paul mean that the *letter* was the Old Testament, and that staying with it would lead to death? Did Paul mean that the *Spirit* was our guarantee of salvation, given to "servants of the new covenant"? Mrs. N. Decision thought, "Pastor will explain the connection and, hopefully, what all this business about the Bible means."

Following the opening prayer, Deacon Faithful asked the diaconate to give their attention to Mrs. N. Decision. She began by explaining that while at the Conference sessions last August, she heard delegates talking about the Bible being "without error in the original writings" and being "inerrant."

"Does this mean that my Bible isn't reliable or true?" she asked the diaconate while holding up her Bible. "If only the original writings are without error, then who has the original writings and how do I get a copy? Pastor Start, I wish you and the diaconate would just tell me which is the true Bible! This is all so confusing."

Deacon Willing then shared a personal experience which had hap-

pened almost 30 years ago. "A new pastor came to the First Day Baptist Church in town," he began, "and being a friendly sort of fellow, I enjoyed talking with him. The new pastor had a habit of raising theological topics during our conversations. One day while eating

**"I believe that we know God through Holy Scripture, which is our guide to Him. That's where I find Him in my meditations and prayers."**

lunch together, he asked me if I believed the Bible to be *'the word of God, cover to cover.'*

"Since he always carried his Bible, I asked to see it. I turned to the concordance in the back and asked if that was the word of God. He quietly explained that the concordance was man-made. I asked if English was the language of *the word of God.* He responded that the original manuscripts were not written in English.

"I asked if the chapter and verse divisions were from God, and he replied that they were not. I asked if Psalm 137:9 was *the word of God,* and he indignantly explained that certain passages of the Old Testament were the words of human beings.

"I asked about the Ten Commandments, and he reluctantly agreed that they were *the word of God.* When I asked why he kept Sunday rather than the Lord's Sabbath, he replied that the seventh day was the old covenant, and we were servants of a New Covenant. When I read Luke 4:16 to him, the pastor explained that before the resurrection, Jesus kept Jewish customs, such as the Sabbath.

"I suggested that his interpretation of Scripture was, for him, *the word of God,* which made *him* the final authority, not the words of Scripture. We never had lunch together nor a conversation after that day.

"Pastor Start, I believe that the inerrancy issue has nothing to do with discovering the earliest textual witnesses of the Bible, but really deals with the interpretation of Scripture. Do you agree?"

Mrs. N. Decision interrupted, "The pastor of the church across the street from my house has shelves of books and must have every Bible commentary in print. He told me that he is presently buying another. Why would anyone need so many? Isn't just the Bible sufficient by itself?"

Pastor Start responded, "I was just explaining to Deacon Faithful, before our meeting began, that the New Testament of his King James Version is based on the 16th century Greek text, the so-called *Textus Receptus,* compiled by the Dutch scholar and humanist Desiderius Erasmus.

cont. on page 25



## FOCUS on Missions

### Stress, size grows in The Gambia

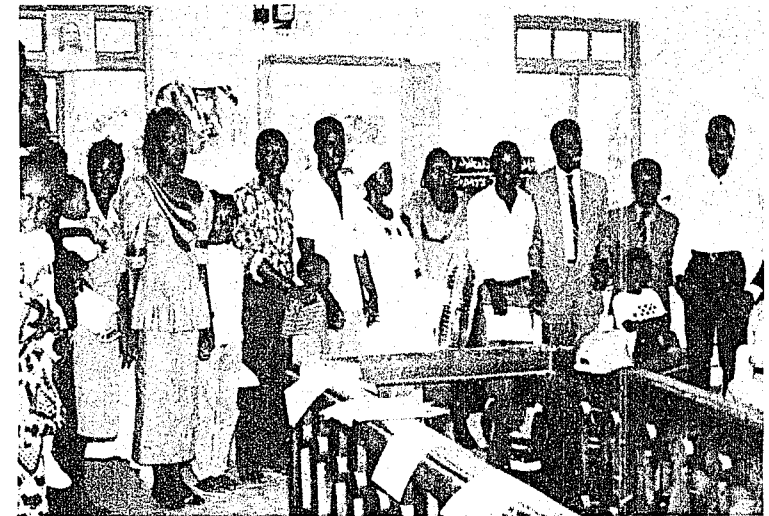
by Kirk Looper

I recently received a letter from our church group in The Gambia, Africa. It had been several months since I had received any word from them.

At that time, they were having trouble with the government's church registration process. Apparently, some of the other Protestant churches in The Gambia would not give their consent to allow the Seventh Day Baptists to register.

It appears, however, that the situation was not a deterrent to their meeting together. According to their most recent letter, they are growing. They feel that they could use some education on Sabbath theology and SDB polity.

I am sure that they are receiving some negative consequences since they continue to meet. They could really use some strong prayers. In the accompanying photograph, the pastor is the third man from the right. As you can see, several age groups are represented.



Church members hold hands after a Sabbath service in The Gambia.

cult for many of us to realize the amount of religious harassment taking place in certain countries of the world.

The Gambia is a small country inside the borders of Senegal, on the west coast of Africa. Since we

One American church gathered all the Bibles that were laying around the church and shipped them to The Gambia. Another church collected their old *Helping Hands* and sent them. The Missionary Society has sent some tracts. Now, it seems they have used all the materials we have sent and would welcome some more.

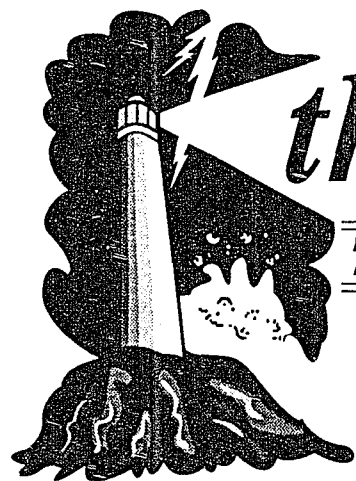
If you are interested in sending materials to The Gambia, we can supply you with the pastor's address. I know they would be happy to receive anything. Please do not send items that refer to Sunday as the Sabbath or the Lord's Day.

Continue to pray for our SDB churches in other countries. Some of them are passing through a very trying period and need your prayers for protection and to bring others to a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, and His Bible Sabbath. ✠

**It is difficult for many of us to realize the amount of religious harassment taking place in certain countries of the world.**

Many in the church are teachers. They taught in the Adventist school in Banjul. Some have indicated having trouble at their work places because of their worshipping as Seventh Day Baptists. It is diffi-

began corresponding with Pastor Kwame Boakye-Acheampong; they have requested Bibles, tracts, and study materials. Their primary language is English so it was not difficult to find materials.



# the BEACON

Produced by the Youth Committee of the Board of Christian Education  
For and by members of the SDB Youth Fellowship February 1994

## Fun times—fund times

Conference is coming sooner than you think, and the officers of the SDB Youth Fellowship of USA and Canada need your help!

Unfortunately, money is always a consideration when planning

raiser to help defray the costs of Conference activities. Any individual contributions are also welcome.

If you are coming to Kansas, please remember that the amount of money we have at our disposal affects the types of activities we can

**We would like to encourage youth groups to hold some type of fund-raiser to help defray the costs of Conference activities.**

youth activities for the week. We would like to encourage youth groups to hold some type of fund-

plan. We are going to be working hard here in Colorado, and we need you to work hard, too. Please contact us if you have any questions or suggestions. We look forward to seeing you in August.

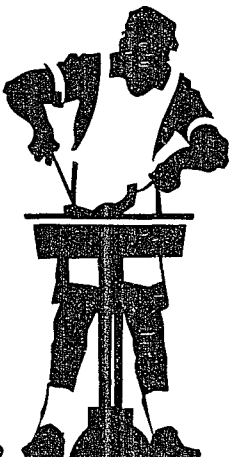
(Conference week is August 7-13,

at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kan.)

Send Contributions to:  
Anna Parker, Treasurer  
1091 Russell Blvd.  
Thornton, CO 80229

### 1994 officers SDBYF of USA and Canada

- Callie Moore—  
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- Tim Rood—  
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- Stacy Wagner—  
Advisor



### The President's Page

## God's will encouraged by Clinton

by Leon Lawton

### His Will for His Way—Knowing and Doing

The freedom we have in America has enabled Christians to escape the religious oppression found in many other societies. But this freedom is constantly threatened by our indifference and certain legal decisions.

One such decision, made by the Supreme Court in 1990, greatly weakened our religious freedom and prompted the formation of a Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion. Under the leadership of attorney Oliver Thomas, General Counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, this coalition represents all religious faiths that supported the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). The Act was finally passed by Congress in November.

The following are excerpts from

remarks made by President William J. Clinton at the RFRA signing ceremony on November 16, 1993:

"We all have a shared desire to protect perhaps the most precious

can seek to do God's will as political actors. I would like to come down on the side of encouraging everybody to act on what they believe is the right thing to do... I encourage all Americans to reach

**"It is high time we had an open and honest reaffirmation of the role of American citizens of faith."**

of all American liberties, religious freedom. This event assumes a more majestic quality because of our ability together to affirm the historic role that people of faith have played in the history of this country, and the constitutional protections of those who

profess and express their faith have always demanded and cherished...

"This act will help... by honoring the principle that our laws and institutions should not impede or hinder, but rather should protect and preserve fundamental religious liberties...

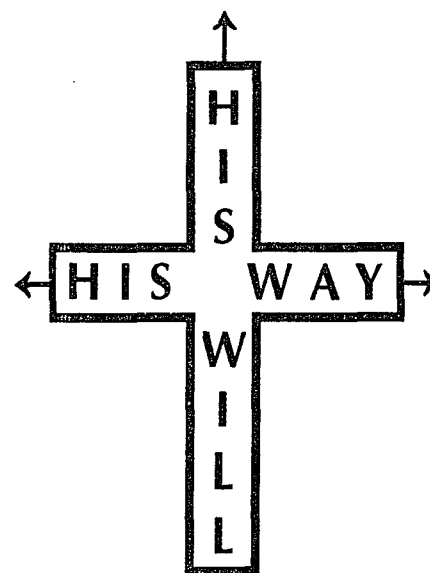
What this law basically says is that the government should be held to a very high level of proof before it interferes with someone's free exercise of religion... There is a great debate now abroad... about the extent to which people of faith

deep inside to try to determine what it is that drives their lives most deeply.

"Steven Carter's book, *The Culture of Disbelief*, makes a compelling case that today Americans of all political persuasions and all regions have created a climate in this country in which some people believe that they are embarrassed to say that they advocate a course of action simply because they believe it is the right thing; because they believe it is dictated by their faith, by what they discern to be, with their best efforts, *the will of God*."

"It is high time we had an open and honest reaffirmation of the role of American citizens of faith—not so that we can agree, but so that we can argue and discourse and seek the truth and seek to heal this troubled land... But let us never believe that the freedom of religion imposes on any of us some responsibility to run from our convictions. Let us instead respect one another's faiths, fight to the death to preserve the right of every American to practice whatever convictions he or she has, but bring our values back to the table of American discourse to heal our troubled land." ✠

### HIS WILL for HIS WAY



### KNOWING and DOING

Philippians 2:13

# Keep the candles burning brightly

by K. Duane Hurley, *Sabbath Recorder* editor 1945-1947

My, oh my! *The Sabbath Recorder* will soon be celebrating another birthday! The first issue was published on June 13, 1844. That was 150 years ago. Amazing!

So, the time has come to bake a cake—a huge cake. Place 150 candles on it. Light every one. Then gather around the cake and bask in the light and warmth created by that many candles, every one of them representing some significant event, achievement, decision, commitment, advancement...

As one of the former editors, I've been asked to share some of my personal observations and reflections (along with hopes and aspirations) in connection with the *SR*. This I am pleased to do, based on several points of contact.

## Points of contact

When I ponder the influence of the *Sabbath Recorder* on my life, I am again "amazed" to realize that my lifetime spans more than half of its years of publication. I grew up in a home where the *Recorder* was prominent among the reading materials always available, subtly but persistently exerting a powerful influence on my thinking.

Later on, my perception of the magazine's influence outside of our family was sharpened by several experiences: first, my participation on the Commission, followed by serving as editor from 1945 to 1947; membership on the General Council; and, ultimately, as one of the contributing editors while serving the denomination as Executive Secretary for General Conference and World Federation. It became increasingly evident to me that *The Sabbath Recorder* (as one of the oldest and most respected denominational publications in the coun-

try) has had an ever-increasing potential for worldwide readership and influence.

Yes, the "birthday candles" do burn brightly—and rightly so!

## Reflections

As I review various eras in *Recorder* history, I'm struck by the fact that some emphases have remained constant. Among them are: adherence to basic Christian convictions, as expressed in our Statement of Belief; support for missionary endeavors; encouragement of specific projects among women, children, and youth; interest in educational endeavors—schools, Sabbath School, home Bible study, etc.; and, of course, promotion of Sabbath observance.

Through the years, the *SR*'s editorship has inevitably changed. Accordingly, editorial styles have differed, size of the publication has fluctuated, and it has been distributed sometimes weekly, sometimes monthly. But the *Recorder's* message and spirit have remained constant—praising God for His goodness and greatness, and challenging readers to live productively and victoriously, in keeping with His Will and Way.

The following "flashbacks" substantiate this consistency in *Recorder* content and message.

A Youth Week essay by Kenneth Smith was published in the April 7, 1947 *Recorder*. At the time, Ken was a member of the Pawcatuck SDB Church in Westerly, R.I. He later became an SDB minister and, at one time, was president of Milton (Wis.) College.

Both by his participation in the contest and by his words, Ken emphasized the importance of youth participation in the activities of church and society. He wrote:

"Standing proudly, white and clean, in the center of a busy little community, a church points its steeple to the sky. Of course, it is nice to have a tiny church in a rural section, but this church better typifies the life of the Master it serves. It is not set apart, but it is a working part of this community. It stands 'where cross the crowded ways of life' as does Christianity in a tired and war-torn world..."

"The importance of youth training can be seen to a certain degree as the child grows, but what becomes of that training when the youth becomes a butcher, a baker, or a candlestick maker? It is then the basis of his character..."

"The future of the Christian movement must be dealt with in terms of youth. We must have leaders who are not just Christian vote-getters for high office, but born-again officials with a thrill in their responsibility."

Rev. Marion Van Horn (long-time SDB minister) provided a "guest editorial" for the Easter-time *Recorder* in 1947. It highlighted the heart of the Good News:

"...We do not believe that Christ remained on the cross. Neither do we believe that he remained in the tomb. The cross could not kill that which was the image of the Almighty. Nor could the tomb hold that which was endued with power from on high.

"These two facts are the foundations of our faith. They are the elements of the promise that sustains us in life, whatever our lot..."

"We can understand now why Paul said that while there abideth faith, hope, and love, yet the greatest of these was love. Faith is ours. Hope is ours. But, and thanks be to God for it, love is Christ's. No won-

der that the greatest of these is love, compassionate love."

In September of 1971, the *Recorder* printed a condensed version of an address I gave at Conference that year on the subject: "In Maternity—a New Mission" (Ephesians 4:11-14).

My remarks at that time were centered around "the modern day educational opportunities represented by the SDB-inspired institutions..." I said, in summary:

"To this very day, the Seventh Day Baptist-inspired institutions have tended to make service to mankind and concern for individuals their main emphases.

"All of our denominationally-inspired institutions have, from time to time, been at the cutting edge of educational development."

Because of my long affiliation with Salem (W.Va.) College, now Salem-Teiyko University, I can attest to the fact that Salem is living up to its heritage. Today, the school has evolved into a worldwide institution that still operates in the "all-faiths" tradition, providing students of many races, creeds, and colors, educational opportunities that they would not otherwise enjoy. Seventh Day Baptists can take pride in having taken the initiative in founding the school and nurturing it through the years.

In a special issue of *The Sabbath Recorder* (which I had the privilege of editing) dated November 12, 1962, the Honorable Jennings Randolph wrote about "Responsibility of the Individual." Jennings is a long-time, highly respected SDB Senator from West Virginia, now retired. What Senator Randolph wrote applied then—and now—to "victorious" living and service:

"In government, as in our church activities, it is the effort and individual integrity of each member of the team or the church that dictates the degree of success to be achieved. It remains for us today to

overcome the temptation to sit back and allow others to carry our burdens—to take a passive part in the activities of our denomination, and to merely give passing attention to its current problems and programs.

"The action of the individual SDB contributes to the action of the whole. If we are lackadaisical in support of our religious convictions, then the overall effectiveness of the church will be seriously hampered. An enlightened and dedicated membership is needed, alert to the opportunities for service in their support of the denomination."

The many subjects covered in the old *Recorders* can be visualized as the "candles" burning brightly on the 150th anniversary cake.

## Goals and dreams

What an interesting and challenging experience it is to participate in a birthday celebration marking 150 years of a meritorious "printed ministry"; to look ahead with anticipation while simultaneously turning back the pages of the calendar with fond memories!

When I accepted the assignment as *Recorder* editor, I was determined to try to maintain the high quality of performance exemplified by my illustrious predecessors.

In due time, it was my ambition to add some personal touches, particularly related to the appearance and readability of the publication: varying sizes and faces of type; catchy headlines and sub-headings; attention-getting "special" features in each issue; regular columns ("For the Scrapbook," "Thumbnail Sketches," "Study to Show Thyself Approved," "The Old-Timer Sez," etc.); pictures, illustrations, and drawings; lots of open "white space" on every page—and, when possible, color. My desire was to "catch the eyes" of readers and call attention to the important printed content.

Furthermore, I wanted the *SR* to be more than just a "house organ" among SDBs. I wanted it to become

an attractive, effective "witness" to the public at large. During my editorship, one issue out of the four each month was designated specifically for wider distribution. Each monthly special issue featured a cover using color to frame an appropriate, attractive picture, while the date and denominational orientation was minimized. Inside, the material was mostly "timeless and universal," presented in such a way as to answer questions about the distinctive beliefs, convictions, and practices of SDBs. Many church members distributed the special editions to friends and prospects.

I began my tenure as editor expecting that it would be a long one, since journalism had been an area where I had a sense of "calling." But God had other plans for my life. The rigors of constant reading and writing proved to be more than my weak eyes could tolerate.

With regret, I had to terminate—for medical reasons—my relationship with the wonderful "team" of dedicated people related to the Recorder Press, the American Sabbath Tract Society, and the other denominational agencies contributing to the publishing of *The Sabbath Recorder*.

To be sure, circumstances have changed considerably since 1844—from "print-shop to desk-top" publishing. But the overall objectives remain the same. With great commendation for those who currently carry on the printed ministry, I suggest that all Seventh Day Baptists gather round the 150th birthday cake. As we sing "Happy birthday, many happy returns," let's make a resolution: Instead of blowing out the candles, let's replace them as needed and keep them burning brightly.

And, let's join hands, symbolic of our unity (even in diversity), rededicating ourselves to the ideals that make us ONE.

May God bless us in our endeavors, together, for Him! *SR*



## Southern churches in Bradenton

by S. Kenneth Davis

The fourth annual meeting of the South Atlantic Seventh Day Baptist Churches met in Bradenton, Fla., on November 19-20, 1993.

The Bradenton church (branch of Daytona Beach, Fla.) made the arrangements. Fifty-six attendees came from as far north as Charleston, S.C., and from as far south as Miami. It was the first time the Bradenton church had hosted a meeting of this extended family.

From beginning to end, it was

a rewarding experience. Using the facilities of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the Sabbath began with a supper prepared for early arrivals. For vespers, the Rev. W.H. (Ray) Winborne, pastor of the Low Country Christian Center SDB Church in Charleston, challenged his listeners with a sermon based on Jesus' encounter with the demon-possessed man in Luke 8. It was a thought-provoking message which led to many reasons

to be thankful. The theme for the weekend was "Thanksgiving," appropriate for the Sabbath before Thanksgiving.

Sabbath morning worship centered around the message, "Nurturing a Thankful Heart." Inspired by Luke 12:13-21, the message was brought by the Rev. John Camenega, pastor of the Daytona Beach church. Instead of experiencing a superficial kind of thankfulness, he led us to a deeper appreciation of all that God has provided.

After enjoying a catered dinner in the church social room, Bradenton's pastor emeritus, the Rev. Leland W. Bond, led an interesting program. It included greetings and news from the churches, interspersed with special music, skits, recitations, etc. The program began with a song service conducted by David Charles, who knew how to bring out the best and most joyful praise from all participants. The program was highlighted with a challenging skit given by Leland and Lettie Bond.

Following some free time for rest, sight-seeing, and chatting, the participants reconvened for supper. Not enough can be said in appreciation of the Bradenton church ladies, who amply provided all of the meals except Sabbath noon.

On Sunday morning, about a dozen attendees who had not gone home the previous night met at the Cafe on the Beach for breakfast. SR

*Beginning in March, the Bradenton church will meet at a new location:*

**The Church of the United Brethren in Christ  
3505 5th Street East  
Bradenton, FL**

*The mailing address and phone number remain the same.*

## Putnam County hosts visitors

The Putnam County Seventh Day Baptist Church of Palatka, Fla., gathered for worship on November 20, 1993, with Lieutenant Jeremy L. Spencer as guest minister. Spencer, an American Baptist, is the Navy Chaplain for the USS Vicksburg based at Mayport, Fla.

His sermon was entitled, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back." Worship was followed by Sabbath School, then a fellowship dinner in East Palatka at the home of church friends.

The church also held a service on Thanksgiving Day with "dinner on the grounds" afterwards. Present

acting pastor is Joseph H. Price. The church was organized in the 1940s when the Rev. Elizabeth F. Randolph directed an SDB mission outreach in Putnam County.

Chaplain Spencer is the son of the Rev. and Mrs. George J. Spencer, of the First Baptist Church, Central Square, N.Y., who were present for the November 20 service. Pastor Spencer has been a long-time friend of Seventh Day Baptists. During his ministry in Rhode Island in the 1950s, he occasionally conducted worship at the Rockville and Second Hopkinton SDB churches. SR



The congregation of Putnam County SDB Church. Chaplain Jeremy Spencer, third from right in back row; Pastor Joseph Price, far left; and Pastor George Spencer, far right.

## Discovering needs in West Palm Beach

A report from the National Field Development Team

by Dorothy Parrott

We read in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and I will heal their land." Jesus came later with the message of loving one another and bearing one another's burdens.

As the National Field Development Team (NFDI) worked with the West Palm Beach (Fla.) Fellowship, we were convinced that the mission of the local church is to go into "Judea" and minister to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those people surrounding the church. For too long, we have waited for people to come to us, to worship with us, and learn God's message of love and grace.

Believe me, it's hard work to go out into the world and minister to others! But God didn't promise us a rose garden. As in most endeavors that are entered into with purpose and commitment, the rewards of this outreach ministry were unbelievable.

The team members usually spent their mornings preparing materials and doing other work, such as tabulating and evaluating survey results. Packets which included a brochure describing the tutoring program, an invitation to the Christmas program, and a small refrigerator magnet (imprinted with the church logo and phone number), were left at 2,000 homes. Actual interview responses of 413 (22%) have been sent to the addresses that were off-limits for personal interviews.

In the afternoon, three or four hours were spent surveying door-to-door, using questionnaires. This technique was very rewarding because we often learned of specific needs. These needs, which varied

from place to place, included a play area for children; more discipline for children; increased traffic control; additional police protection; and community organization to know one another better. Good community values included good

tional time. Sometimes the people of the church joined us.

We felt God's leading, and experienced His answers to prayer. We appreciate those throughout the denomination, family, and friends who gave their prayer support.

**As we talked to people,  
without actually saying anything about  
their need for Christ and the Church,  
the presence of Christ seemed  
to be evident.**

neighbors, upkeep of property, safety, churches, schools, jobs, and shopping centers.

There was an element of this outreach that is difficult to put into words. It concerns "touching" people. Occasionally, we were rebuffed. Many people were not home, and we simply left the information packet.

Usually, people were very cooperative in responding to the survey. Sometimes it began with a closed door. But invariably, the door was opened, and the interview was "eyeball-to-eyeball." Many times, the person invited the interviewer inside the home.

The element that is most difficult to describe was the presence of Christ. As we talked to people, without actually saying anything about their need for Christ and the Church, this presence seemed to be evident. People were friendly, willing to talk, expressed concern for our safety and success, and thanked us for caring enough to make the survey.

We usually returned from surveying about 5:00 p.m., would eat, work on surveys, and have a devo-

We enjoyed getting to know and working with the people of the West Palm Beach church. They, too, spent much time and effort in preparation and in doing surveys. They provided comfortable housing that was quite adequate for our needs. Several members invited us into their homes for meals and relaxation, or brought prepared meals to us. Occasionally, we ate out; many times we fixed our own lunches.

There seems to be great potential in the church area. The people are enthusiastic, committed, and hard working. Most have good jobs and are committed to financial support. The "people supply," in close proximity, is enormous.

Our prayer is for God's blessing on this fellowship and our efforts. We pray, too, that those who do not know Christ's love will feel led to come to the church for ministry.

I would urge anyone who would like to be a member of NFDI and experience God's wonderful blessing, to get in touch with Russ Johnson, Director of Extension of the Missionary Society. SR

*interested*

December	December Giving	\$760,698
	Investment Income (est)	
November	November Giving	\$697,306
	Investment Income (est)	
October	October Giving	\$633,915
	Investment Income (est)	
September	September Giving	\$570,523
	Investment Income (est)	
August	August Giving	\$507,132
	Investment Income (est)	
July	July Giving	\$443,740
	Investment Income (est)	
June	June Giving	\$380,349
	Investment Income (est)	
May	May Giving	\$316,957
	Investment Income (est)	
April	April Giving	\$253,566
	Investment Income (est)	
March	March Giving	\$190,174
	Investment Income (est)	
February	February Giving	\$126,783
	Investment Income (est)	
January	January Giving	\$63,391
	Investment Income (est)	

1993 income needed—\$760,698.  
Per month gift income needed—\$27,783.  
Total needed each month—\$63,391.50

# Thank You!!

## Budget amount at 101%

For the second year in a row, Seventh Day Baptists have rallied together to meet the challenge of raising the denomination's annual budget. In fact, through your sacrificial giving, the 1993 budget of \$333,399.00 was exceeded by one percent!

Churches as well as individuals once again demonstrated their commitment to the Great Commission—communicating the Gospel of Christ to a world desperately in need of God's love and saving grace.

Although words are often inadequate, your denominational leaders and support staff would like to offer a heartfelt "THANKS" to you, our loyal Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We are thankful for your generosity, and we are especially thankful for your faithfulness.

*Calvin P. Babcock*

## SR special issue "A marvelous piece": Associated Church Press

(Editor's note: Let's allow the Associated Church Press' newsletter, "Newslog," do our advertising. Reprinted from the November '93 issue.)

### Denomination pub does outreach

The June '93 issue of *The Sabbath Recorder* is a four-color, glossy, 24-page overview of the Seventh Day Baptist Church. Photographs abound with limited text in large, bold, easy-to-read type and empty spaces that emphasize the photos and text.

The publication answers the question, "Who are Seventh Day Baptists?" with the reply: "People just like you, who love Christ, and

love others; people with tradition; people who worship; people who call the Sabbath a delight."

It includes the Statement of Belief (the only long section of text in comparatively small type). It's a marvelous piece for readers to show to friends and neighbors, and an excellent tool for introducing people to a local church and the denomination in general.

Thanks, "Newslog"!

Quantities of this special issue are still available at 75¢ each. Tear-out postcards invite your friends to get more information about this "Choosing People."

Please contact us at the SDB Center for your copies, and spread the Good News!

## New Covenant, cont. from page 16

"The story is told that Erasmus could not find a complete Greek New Testament manuscript, so he used several, but ignored the oldest available to him. When he could not locate the last six verses of the Book of Revelation in the Greek manuscripts he had, he translated these verses from the Latin Vulgate into Greek. This became the source text for most English New Testament translations during the next 400 years. Should we base our faith on this process as the word of God?"

"Some say the King James Version is the most faithful. I particularly like the New American Standard, but others favor the New International Version. I feel that the Apostle Paul had a clear understanding when he said the Gospel

is not in a written code, but in the spirit written in human hearts.

"Those who speak of Holy Scripture as without error in the original writings may mean they believe God is perfect. I don't understand if they believe that a particular version of the Bible is without error. Some evangelicals hold to a limited inerrancy regarding the Bible. They feel that biblical principles are without error, but that the cultural and language components of Scripture are imperfect."

Pastor Start continued, "I have read that over 5,000 Greek manuscripts of part, or all, of the New Testament exist. Scholars are still sorting through them to evaluate their significance to our Holy Scriptures.

"Personally, I feel that to know God is the Christian's highest goal. I feel that we only indirectly know God in this less-than-perfect world, and what we do know is partial, incomplete. I believe that we know God through Holy Scripture, which is our guide to Him. That's where I find Him in my meditations and prayers."

Mrs. N. Decision commented, "You have helped me understand that we are to follow the Apostle Paul's instructions and be 'a letter from Christ, servants of a New Covenant,' living from the heart. I now understand that Christ asks us to know the Scripture and the power which comes from permitting God's Holy Spirit to work in our lives." SR

## SR Reaction

Dear SR,

The Nov. '93 "Focus" says, "Pride in where you worship brings about pride in what you worship." It sounds like priorities are way out of whack!

American over-emphasis on appearance is hardly something we should be encouraging our African sisters and brothers to emulate. Does who we worship care?

Roberta Ellis  
Queensbury, NY

Dear Editor,

Re: the article "SDBs and SDAs Compared" (Sept. '93) and Murray Zealor's reaction to it (Jan. '94).

The Seventh-day Adventists believe in the word of God and view the Bible as the only absolute authority over their church. They believe, as we do, in salvation by faith, not by works. They believe that good works are done in obedience as a result of the love we have for our God, not as a means to salvation. They do

not believe theirs is the only denomination going to heaven.

Yes, SDAs have a prophet in their history. Her name is mentioned during sermons, Bible lessons, etc. Her teachings, however, are not presented as an alternative to the Bible nor do they hold equal authority with the Bible.

Seventh-day Adventists are Christians. They are people who, like us, are doing their best to follow God and love Him and each other.

I was raised a Seventh-day Adventist (now SDB) and invite anyone to study SDA doctrines. Before making blanket statements about any group, let's be informed by going to the source—the church doctrine, their covenant. And let's learn to love and accept each other in spite of differences.

Summer Holmes  
Columbus, Ohio

first issue of *The Sabbath Recorder* that arrived last week. I found that this issue is every bit as high quality as any other Christian magazine. My compliments and congratulations to all involved.

*The Sabbath Recorder* not only testifies about Jesus Christ but informs its readers about the SDB Church.

We Seventh Day Baptists need to quit hiding in safe obscurity and get out on "the battle line" for Christ. We must let the world know who we are and what we stand for!

Our video, "A Choosing People," is an excellent tool and should be used to its fullest extent, but we should not ignore what we already have. How many people are out there waiting to hear about the Baptist church that truly believes "The Bible says it, I believe it, that settles it"?

David L. Cutshall  
Whitehall, WI

Dearest Brothers & Sisters,  
I want to thank you for my

## Accessions

Bay Area, CA  
Steven Crouch, pastor  
Joined after baptism  
Leona Simms  
Joined after testimony  
Mori Simms

Dodge Center, MN  
Dale Rood, pastor  
Joined after testimony  
David Cutshall  
June Cutshall

Joined by letter  
Robert Appel  
Cheri Appel

Milton, WI  
George Calhoun, pastor  
Joined after testimony  
Howard Severance  
Mildred Severance  
Joined by letter  
Florence Baker  
Faith Green  
Eleanor Johnson

## Births

Sperry.—A daughter, Chelsie Leigh Sperry, was born to Veronica (Zwiebel) and Richard Sperry of Jacksonville, FL, on November 2, 1993.

Riverside, CA  
Gabriel Bejjani, pastor  
Joined after testimony  
Kenneth Browning  
Bill Pimple  
Christene Pimple  
Jane Lewis-Carey

## Marriages

Marinakies - Marinakies.—Efstathios Marinakies and Cindy Marinakies were united in marriage on September 26, 1993, at their home in New Berlin, WI. The Rev. Earl Cruzan officiated.

Landrum - Brooks.—James Matthew Landrum and Paula J. Brooks were united in marriage on December 18, 1993, at Main St. United Methodist Church in Alton, IL. The Rev. William Fester officiated.

Paula is the granddaughter of the late Rev. and Mrs. Carlos L. McSparin.

## Obituaries

Jeffrey.—Leona Hoffman Jeffrey, 99, of Holly Hill, Fla., died on August 8, 1993, at Halifax Medical Center in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Born in Shiloh, N.J., Leona moved to Holly Hill from De Land, Fla., in 1971. She received a bachelor of arts degree from Alfred (N.Y.) University in 1917, and a master's degree from Columbia University. She taught science and chemistry at high schools in Mount Morris, N.Y., and in Shiloh and Bridgeton, N.J. She retired in 1955, after 35 years of teaching.

Leona was a member of Seventh Day Baptist churches in Daytona Beach and Shiloh. She was also a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the New Jersey Retired Teachers Association.

Survivors include one brother, John B. Hoffman, of Exeter, R.I.

Johnson.—Helen Marie Johnson, 82, died at San Francisco (Calif.) General Hospital on November 15, 1993, following a massive stroke.

She was born on April 10, 1911, in Kansas, the youngest of six children born to Samuel and Anna Petty. The family also lived in Oklahoma and Arizona, where Helen met her husband, Earl Johnson. They were married on April 30, 1930, in Phoenix, and eventually relocated to San Francisco. They had four sons: Samuel, Earl Jr., Charles, and Gerald.

Helen worked as a licensed vocational nurse, and also at San Francisco International Airport.

About 1934, Helen came to the Sabbath and joined the Seventh-day Adventist church. For years, she was an effective Bible worker, bringing many to Christ and to the Sabbath. In 1962, she and Earl

learned of the Seventh Day Baptist fellowship meeting in the Bay area. They visited and helped organize the new church later that year.

In 1963, the couple took a great interest in SDB mission work in Malawi, Africa. They sent financial support to the Watson Mataka family during the years of Watson's study for the ministry. The Matakas named two of their children Helen and Earl.

Three of Helen's four sons preceded her in death. Survivors include her husband, Earl; one son, Gerald; four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Following cremation, a memorial service was held on November 19, 1993, at the Rainbow Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Francisco. The service was conducted by Elder Peter Jones, assisted by Pastor Kevin Rhamie, Pastor Steven Crouch, and Oscar Burdick.

# KEVIN'S

## CORNER

We couldn't have been more diverse—or united.

I recently attended a spiritual growth seminar. Pastors from a wide range of theological backgrounds came to represent their churches.

As the different groups were asked to raise their hands to identify themselves, some good-natured comments followed:

"We only raise *one* hand!"

"Hey, you folks can raise BOTH your hands!"

"We SIT on our hands..."

"We're *independent*. We'll do what we want!"

"Oh, we were *predestined* to be here."

Lots of laughs and loving fellowship.

All of us knew that we had some differences in our theology or practices. But the cause—united spiritual growth—overshadowed those differences and allowed us to work together harmoniously.

As SDBs discuss topics which have varying viewpoints, I pray that we can agree to air those views in love and allow some room for disagreement. We are united on the basics of our faith. Let's remain united as we strive to advance His kingdom.

(Are there some theological topics you would like to see discussed in the pages of the *Recorder*? I'd like to hear from you, along with your ideas for the discussion and suggested authors.)

The seminar referred to above was for the 50-Day Spiritual Adventure, sponsored by the Chapel of the Air radio ministry. Several of our churches have been involved in this program, so I wanted to learn more, first-hand.

During the seven weeks preceding Easter weekend, individuals and congregations will once again join in a period of accelerated and measurable spiritual growth. It is a time to form healthy spiritual habits of Bible reading, journaling, and practical steps of faith.

This year's theme is intriguing: "Daring to Dream Again—Breaking Through Barriers that Hold Us Back."

As I read the 1989 SR article about Morgan Shepard's dream of a larger SDB Headquarters and Retreat Center, one line stuck out. Morgan examined the current site and interviewed the staff about the needs for expanded space in case the denomination really grew. His biting assessment: "It sure is hard for these people to think bigger!"

The "Daring to Dream Again" adventure pushes us toward a vision. (This fits in wonderfully with our MORE 2000 plan—the SDB Mission of Revival and Evangelism.)

But it doesn't merely jump into a future vision. The theme's subtitle, "Breaking Through Barriers that Hold Us Back," makes us confront the past and present. What, or who, has been weighing us down?

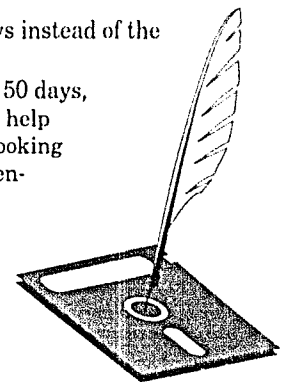
The adventure's plan lists eight steps to break down barriers:

- Let go of a painful past
- Track God's involvement in the everyday
- Break out of comfort zones
- Become world-class Christians
- Confront the scandal of prejudices
- Empower activities with prayer
- Make God's dreams for us our dreams as well

• Major on the Good News instead of the bad

During the course of the 50 days, five specific disciplines will help confront our barriers. I'm looking forward to joining this adventure.

For more details on the program, and to find out if the Chapel of the Air is on a nearby radio station, you may call 1-800-2CHAPEL.





## Hobo with a heart



"Harry" the Hobo loves to ride the rails—for Jesus.

"Born" just a couple of years ago, "Harry" has become the door-opener into ministry that Jim Fetrow has been waiting for.

Fetrow, a member of the Waterford, Conn., SDB Church, says that "Harry" reaches all ages and breaks down barriers that other ministries might not.

One of "Harry's" trademarks is a small red balloon heart he loves to give away.

"There's such a starvation of love out there," Fetrow says sadly. "As I blow up the balloon, I talk about the air we breathe and how a part of me is going into the balloon.

"I hand them the little red heart and



*Jim Fetrow as "Harry" the Hobo*

say, 'Here. I want to take a little of myself and give it to you.' Wow! The person really lights up—or really melts! It's a powerfully emotional moment."

A member of "Good News Clowns," an ecumenical clown ministry group, Jim has appeared as "Harry" locally, and in several other states.

"I love reading stories and talking to kids in schools, churches, hospitals—wherever! The books help build their self-esteem and teach good values."

"Harry" has been in the Waterford and Westerly, R.I., SDB churches. This past fall, he traveled to Denver, Colo., for the Mid-Continent Association meetings, and actually rode the train (as a paying passenger) to minister in Milton, Wis.

Jim is available for Vacation Bible Schools, camps, and other major events. He can also help set up clown ministries in local churches.

If you are interested in having Jim Fetrow "tramp" into your church, you may contact him at (203) 440-0765. **SR**



Photos by Janette Loofboro