

The **S**abbath **R**ecorder
News for and about Seventh Day Baptists
March 1996

Seeking
Spiritual Maturity



through
BIBLE STUDY

**1996
Summer
Institute**
*SDB History
and Polity*
May 28 - June 14

At the SDB Center
in Janesville, Wis.,
taught by
Janet Thorngate
and
Rodney L. Henry.

All pastors are invited.

**SDB
Historical
Society
1996 Annual
Meeting**
.....

*The Annual Meeting
of the
Seventh Day Baptist
Historical Society
will be held at the
SDB Center in
Janesville, Wis.,
at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday,
April 28, 1996.*

**Robe of
Achievement**

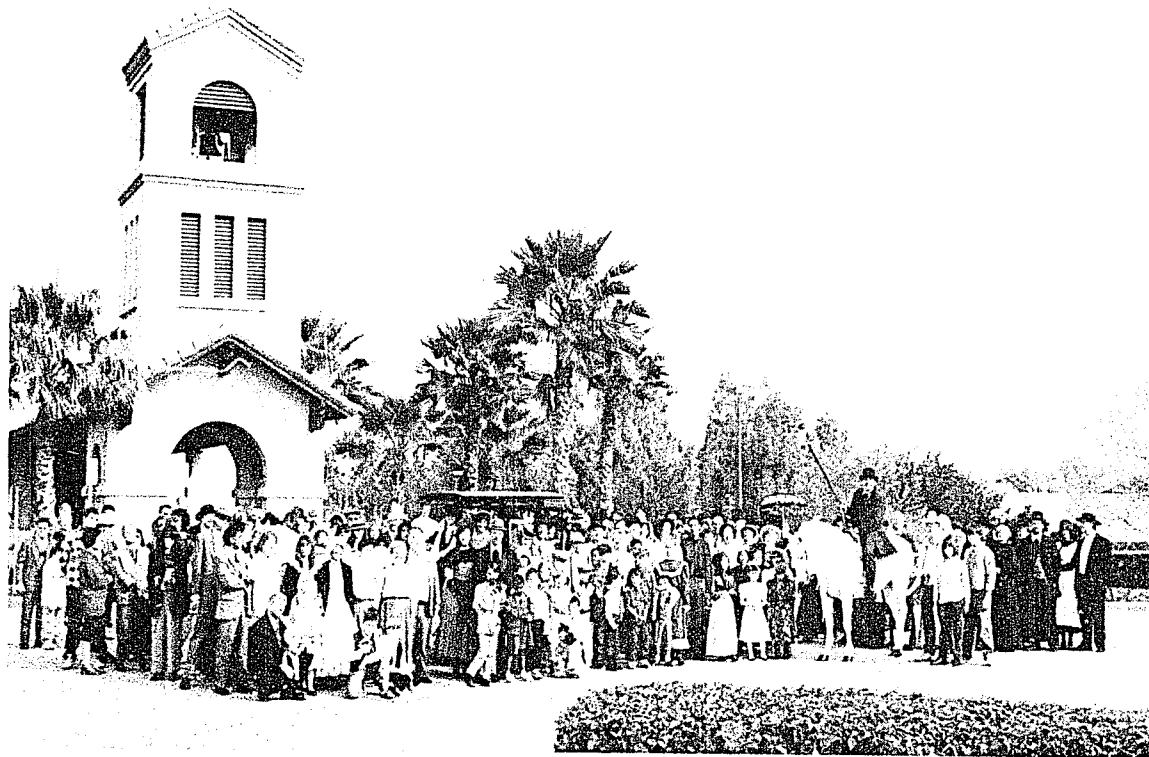
The Women's Society
is still accepting
nominations for the
Robe of Achievement
for 1996.

Please send all nominations
with complete resumé to:

Elizabeth Bidwell
P.O. Box 136
Shiloh, NJ 08353

Deadline:
March 31, 1996

Riverside celebrates century of service



The Riverside, Calif., SDB Church celebrated its 100th anniversary on January 27, 1996. A full day of worship, dining (with opera and band music), and grateful sharing of memories in period dress kicked off this centennial year. More photos and details to appear next month. (Yes, that is Pastor Bejjani atop a white steed—with a "peacemaker." No wonder so many showed up.)

The **S**abbath
Recorder



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Who are Seventh Day Baptists?

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

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

The seventh day

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

It is the joy of the Sabbath that makes Seventh Day Baptists just a little bit different. If you would like more information, write: Seventh Day Baptist Center, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678. Phone (608) 752-5055; FAX (608) 752-7711

The Bible survival

by Jonas E. Christner

The Bible is the most peculiar book.

Its words were crafted in another language. Deeds done in a distant era. Events recorded in far-off lands. Counsel offered to a foreign people.

It, indeed, remains the most unusually peculiar book ever put together!

It's amazing that anyone even bothers to read its contents. It is very, very old. Some of the writings

date back to over 5,000 years.

The book has incredible contents. A worldwide flood, fires, earthquakes, disasters, people with unusual and supernatural abilities. It's a very radical book because it calls for undying devotion to a carpenter who called Himself God's Son!

The Bible is one book that shouldn't even have survived. Too old, too bizarre, too radical, and certainly outdated literature!

The Bible has been burned, banned, scoffed at, and ridiculed. Scholars have mocked it as foolish. Kings and rulers have branded it as illegal.

Many thousands of times over, the grave has been dug, the dirge begun, but somehow the Bible has managed to survive and never remained in the tomb in which it was placed.

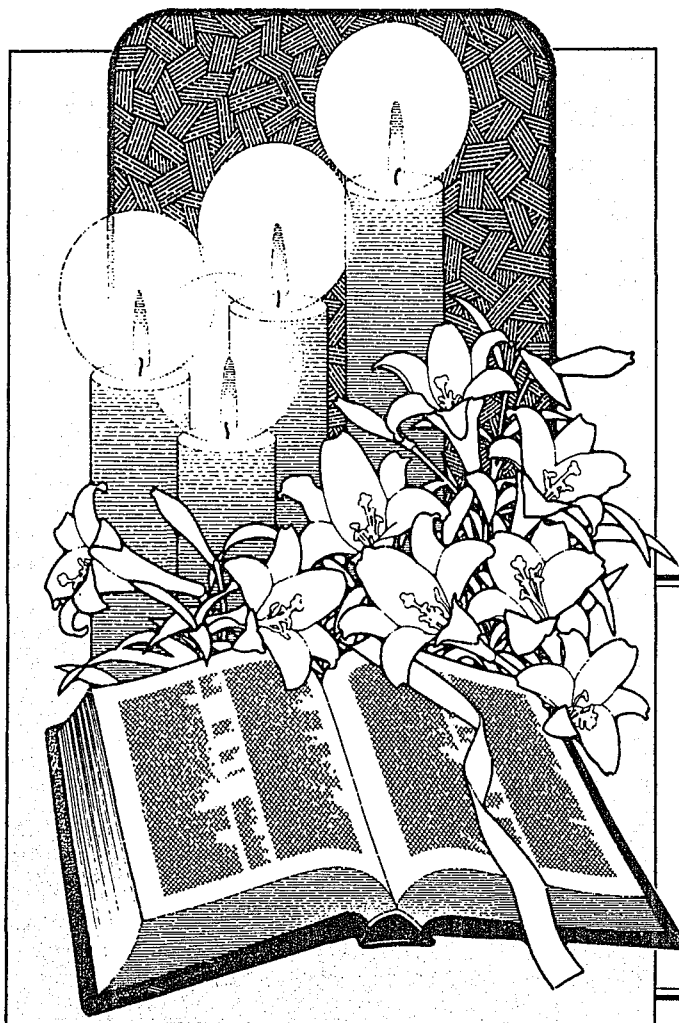
Not only has it survived, but it has thrived. The Bible is the single most popular book in all of human history. It has been the world's best seller for well over 300 years!

There is no way on earth to explain it. Which is perhaps the only explanation. The answer? The Bible's durability is never found on the earth; it is exclusively found in heaven.

For millions who have tested its claims and then claimed all of its promises, there remains but one answer... The Bible is *God's Book* and remains *God's Voice* in the past, for the present, and will be that for all future generations!! **SR**

Rev. Jonas Christner is the Southwestern Contact for SDBs in Prescott, Ariz.

Not only has it survived, but it has thrived. The Bible is the single most popular book in all of human history. It has been the world's best seller for well over 300 years!



Did Jesus rise from the dead?

by William Lane Craig

*(Is the historical Jesus something less than the Bible says he is, as the highly-publicized Jesus Seminar and other modern scholars contend? Or is he in fact everything the Bible says he is? The following is taken from the new book, **Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus**, by Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, general editors, available at your local bookstore, or by calling 800-727-3480.)*

I was more than mildly surprised last year, while reading an account of the Jesus Seminar in *Time* magazine, to "learn" something. According to John Dominic Crossan (cochairman of the Seminar), after the crucifixion, Jesus' corpse was probably laid in a shallow grave, barely covered with dirt, and subsequently eaten by wild dogs. Crossan says that the story of Jesus' entombment and resurrection was the result of "wishful thinking."

Having carried out fairly extensive research into the historicity of Jesus' resurrection (two years as a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at the University of Munich), I was well aware that the wide majority of New Testament critics affirm the

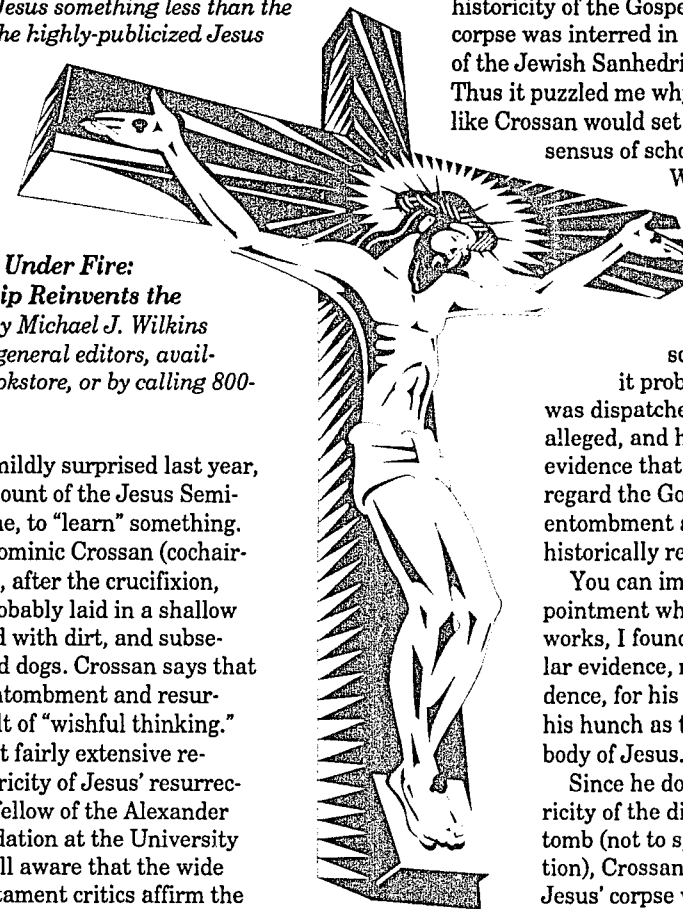
historicity of the Gospel's assertion: Jesus' corpse was interred in the tomb of a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea. Thus it puzzled me why a prominent scholar like Crossan would set his face against the consensus of scholarship on this question.

What hitherto undetected or unappreciated evidence had he discovered, I wondered, that had escaped the notice of critical scholarship? What made

it probable that Jesus' body was dispatched in the way Crossan alleged, and how did he nullify the evidence that has led most critics to regard the Gospel accounts of Jesus' entombment as fundamentally and historically reliable?

You can imagine my sense of disappointment when, consulting Crossan's works, I found that he had no particular evidence, much less compelling evidence, for his allegation. It was just his hunch as to what happened to the body of Jesus.

Since he does not accept the historicity of the discovery of the empty tomb (not to speak of the resurrection), Crossan merely surmises that Jesus' corpse was laid in the grave-



Bible Q & A: What is heaven like?

When Revelation speaks of heaven, it does not give us a picture of what heaven will *look like*. Rather, it conveys images about God's nature and His relation to creation.

We can learn bits and pieces about what heaven might be like throughout the Bible, however. For instance, we are told that Christ will gather the elect there (Mark 13:27). We know that he will receive honor (Phil. 2:10), and that his glory will be revealed (John 17:24). We are told that he poured out the Holy Spirit from heaven (Acts 2:33). The Bible also says we will be reunited with loved ones in heaven, an especially appropriate message for the churches in Revelation during this time of martyrdom (2 Samuel 12:23; Luke 20:37-38; 23:43).

The things we learn about heaven in Revelation are:

- 1) Heaven is the full and complete expression of God's kingdom. It is a place where God is on His throne (4:1-3).
- 2) Heaven offers rewards for those who overcome in this life (2:7; 3:21).
- 3) Heaven is God's judgment seat, the place where He pronounces judgment against sinners (8:1-9:21; 16:11).
- 4) Heaven is full of God's presence and overwhelming glory (4:1-11; 21:1-10).
- 5) Heaven, because of God's power and holiness, is a place of worship and praise (4:1-11; 19:1-7).

From The Quest Study Bible (Zondervan, 1994).

yard reserved for executed criminals. Moreover, he does not engage the evidence that prompts most scholars to accept the historicity of Jesus' entombment. Instead, he seeks to undercut the credibility of the Gospel accounts by means of a general analysis of texts and traditions that is so bizarre and contrived that the overwhelming majority of New Testament critics find it wholly implausible.

It is sobering to think that it is this sort of idiosyncratic speculation that thousands of lay readers of magazines like *Time* have come to believe represents the best of contemporary New Testament scholarship concerning the historical Jesus.

"There ain't gonna be no Easter this year," a high school friend once remarked to me.

"Why not?" I asked incredulously.

"They found the body."

Despite his irreverent sense of humor, my friend displayed a measure of insight that is apparently not shared by the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar. They seem perfectly willing to maintain that although Jesus died and rotted away, the resurrection still has value as

a symbol of Christ's "continuing presence" with us.

According to these scholars, Christianity can go on quite nicely as if nothing were changed. My friend's joke, on the other hand, implied that without a literal resurrection, the Christian faith is worthless.

How did he nullify the evidence that has led most critics to regard the Gospel accounts of Jesus' entombment as reliable?

The earliest Christians would have agreed with my friend (1 Cor. 15:14,17,19). Without the historical resurrection, Jesus would have been at best just another prophet who met the same unfortunate fate as others before him. Therefore, faith in him as Messiah, Lord, or Son of God would have been stupid.

It would be no use trying to save the situation by interpreting the resurrection as a symbol. The cold, hard facts would remain: Jesus was dead, and that's it.

I suspect that the average layperson today also has too much

common sense to be impressed by theological salvage operations like that advocated by the Jesus Seminar. After all, why should I let a Christian myth about a dead man be determinative for the meaning of my life today? Why not a non-Christian myth? Why follow myths at all?

Fortunately, the Christian faith does not call for us to put our minds on the shelf, to fly in the face of common sense and history, or to make a leap of faith into the dark. The rational person, fully apprised of the evidence, can confidently believe that on that first Easter morning a divine miracle had taken place. *SR*

William Craig (Ph.D., University of Birmingham, England; Th.D., University of Munich, Germany) is a Visiting Scholar at Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.

Bible Q & A:

Does God speak through visions and dreams?

God used visions and dreams to communicate with many throughout the Bible, from Abraham (Gen. 15:1) to John (Rev. 1:9-11). But there was no regularity to these events. Apparently God communicated through whatever means served His purposes—including visions, angels, prophets, the written Word, and even a talking animal (Num. 22:21-31).

God still can communicate in any way He chooses. Some believe He continues to send special revelations, especially to those with the gift of prophecy, and that these must be interpreted within strict guidelines (1 Cor. 14:26-33). Others believe that the need for such revelations stopped after the early

days of the church, when every Christian began to be guided personally by the Holy Spirit and the written Scriptures (John 16:13).

Evaluating people's claims that they have had dreams or visions from God must be done carefully. The Law of Moses demanded the death penalty for false interpreters of dreams who tried to mislead God's people (Deut. 13:1-5). Even Daniel knew his abilities were limited; he had to ask God for the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:18-19) and needed help to interpret his own visions (7:15-16; 8:15-16).

From The Quest Study Bible (Zondervan, 1994).

Will the real Jesus please stand up?

Book review by Judy Waggoner

"Jesus did not conquer death and rise from the dead. His body, laid in a shallow grave, was eaten by dogs." "He never preached the Sermon on the Mount. He never cured anyone or fed thousands." "Jesus' deity is on the same level as that of Augustus Caesar. He was a wise man, however, who overcame illiteracy and low-class birth."

Starling conclusions like these are the result of a group of diverse thinkers known as the Jesus Seminar. This eclectic band of 74 academics, which numbered around 200 at its beginning in 1985, meets twice a year to investigate what the historical Jesus said and did.

The Jesus Seminar contains a broad mix in several areas—Protestants, Catholics, and atheists; professors, pastors, and at least one filmmaker; three women and two Jews. Most are North Americans.

The intent of the Jesus Seminar is to "liberate Jesus," Seminar cofounder Robert Funk, a New Testament scholar and Greek grammar-

ian, told the *Los Angeles Times*. "The only Jesus most people know is the mythic one. They don't want the real Jesus, they want the one they can worship. The cultic Jesus." Seminar cofounder, John Dominic Crossan, professor of New Testament at DePaul University, has published several books which declare his views that "Jesus' pedigree—including his virgin birth in Bethlehem—is myth-making by the Gospel writers, and the stories of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection were latter-day wishful thinking of first century Christians."

However, a new book, *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus* (Zondervan, 1995), concludes that "when the evidence is evaluated on its own terms, and when such an evaluation is combined with the rigorous case for supernatural theism already available in the literature, then the claims of historic, orthodox Christianity can be reasonably judged to be true."

"In our view, the arguments

in *Jesus Under Fire* combine to answer sufficiently the salvos launched against Jesus of Nazareth by radical critics like those in the Jesus Seminar," say Michael Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, general editors of *Jesus Under Fire*. "To put the matter in its simplest terms, the New Testament claims about Jesus of Nazareth are true, and it is reasonable to believe this is so."

Ten contributors, all having earned doctorates, deal with such topics as "Who Is Jesus?" "What Did Jesus Do?" "Did Jesus Perform Miracles" and "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" They deal with the intellectual aspects of a quest for God as well as the accompanying spiritual implications.

"Jesus Christ provides the only truly satisfying solution to the dilemma of the modern person," say the editors. "This is why the ideas of the Jesus Seminar are so devastating. They are not only intellectually insufficient, but they leave people spiritually bankrupt and hopeless." *SR*

Bible Q & A:

Christmas questions

When was Jesus born? (Luke 2:1-2) Perhaps a year or so before Herod the Great's death in 4 B.C. (Matt. 2:19). The actual date of Jesus' birth was not discussed until the fourth century, the delay leading to some uncertainty.

The Italian monk who devised the Christian calendar complicated matters by making a miscalculation. Confusion also exists because the only census by Quirinius as yet found in other historical sources occurred too late (A.D. 6) to be the first one Luke mentions here.

Why announce the birth of Jesus to shepherds? (Luke 2:9-12) Perhaps the common shepherds were more

receptive to God's plan than, say, the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The more orthodox members of society despised shepherds for being unclean by strict ceremonial standards. Their reputation was that they were untrustworthy—a shepherd's testimony was not valid for legal matters.

Yet God chose them to be the first witnesses to the birth of Christ (vv. 17-18)! Shepherds may have been chosen because they represented all who needed cleansing. Jesus was a king for all those humble enough to see their need for a Savior.

From The Quest Study Bible (Zondervan, 1994).

More Bible Q & A

The following questions and answers are taken from *The Quest Study Bible, NIV* (Zondervan, 1994), available at your local bookstore, or by calling (800) 727-3480.

Jeremiah 30:22-24

Why couldn't God's love have overcome His wrath?

Since God's character demands that justice must be satisfied, God does not vent His anger as a tantrum, but to preserve the integrity of His holiness. The ultimate satisfaction of God's wrath toward sin occurred with the death of Christ upon the cross.

Mark 10:1-12

Is divorce always wrong?

Women in the days of Jesus had little legal protection. They could be divorced simply for displeasing their husbands. Jesus teaches that divorce is contrary to the will of God, and it's his intention that marriages last a lifetime.

This is not the Bible's last word on divorce, however. Jesus acknowledges that in the case of adultery, divorce may be a sad necessity when one partner refuses to stop his or her unfaithfulness. Later, Paul suggests another such situation, when a believer is deserted by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:15).

Revelation 2:1

Why write to an angel?

Some say these were the guardian angels for each of the seven churches. Others say they were human leaders, ministers in these churches serving as *messengers* of God. Still others see them symbolically, as the spirit of a congregation—the collective personalities of the believers.

Esther 4:16

Is the book of Esther "Godless"?

Why isn't God mentioned at all in this book? This question has been a source of controversy for centuries. Some have even questioned the book's place in the Bible because of it.

However, at several points in the narrative, the author alludes to God's hand in the events. For example, Mordecai's contention that deliverance would come from another place (4:14) is probably the author's way of saying the Lord would intervene for His people. Esther's request that they all fast (4:16) was no doubt a reference to prayer to the Lord on her behalf. The Jews' refusal to plunder their enemies (9:10,16) indicated that they fought for the Lord, not themselves.

In addition, the writer shows God's involvement through an incredible string of "coincidences":

- 1) Esther selected from among many to become queen.
- 2) Mordecai "accidentally" discovering a plot against the king.
- 3) Esther defying the law to gain uninvited entrance to see the king.
- 4) Mordecai given Haman's position of power by which he could turn an unalterable law upside down and deliver the Jews.

The reader is left saying, "Nobody could be so lucky. Something else must have been going on." The story points to God as the one behind the scenes, orchestrating the events.

Esther, too, is in the mold of other Old Testament heroes who were clearly guided by the Lord. She, like Joseph, was imprisoned but found favor with her captors and rose to a position of power to save the Jews (Gen. 39-50). In addition, Mordecai, like both Joseph and Daniel, came to a position of power second only to the king (Gen. 41:41-44; Dan. 6:2).

Still, the question remains: Did the writer deliberately edit God out of the story? We can only speculate. Perhaps the author was employing the literary device of understatement to emphasize that nothing short of God's direct intervention could possibly explain the way things worked out.

More importantly, since the book was written in Persia, the author may have been aware of certain laws against non-Persian religions, or may not have wanted to risk having the book destroyed by the government.

God's Holy Day

by Lester G. Osborn

"God's Holy Day," first written by Lester Osborn in 1956, is now in its ninth edition. This is the last of seven lessons. Copies of the study booklet are available from the SDB Center for 75 cents each (plus postage). Send no payment, we will bill.

A Dozen Common Excuses

We have covered, rather sketchily, the Biblical basis for the Sabbath.

We saw in the Creation account that God set aside the seventh day as the Sabbath. We also learned that the Fourth Commandment specified that the seventh day was the one to be kept holy, and that Jesus and His followers observed the seventh day, as did Paul and the New Testament Church.

To review, we will consider a dozen common excuses, advanced by Christians today, for not keeping the Sabbath. Although the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Bible, the majority of Christians today observe the first day of the week, not the seventh.

Will these excuses hold water?

1. "It's Jewish."

So are the other nine Commandments. So is the Bible. So was Jesus Christ. More than that, salvation is of the Jews. Shall we discard all of them?

But is the Sabbath Jewish? It existed prior to the Jewish nation being organized at Sinai. It also antedates the Hebrew people by centuries.

What nationality was Adam? None! He was man, the head of the race. Jesus said, "The sabbath was made for man."

Besides, other people who existed long before the Hebrews knew and observed the Sabbath.

"The fourth commandment was

based not on something done for Israel in particular, but on something done in the creation of the world. This is important, for with it stands or falls the general validity of the commandments for all mankind."—Vos.

If this claim is true—that the Sabbath was given to the Jews,

Hebrew has a little word, "eth," which is the sign of the definite and direct object.

In Genesis 2:3, it is "God blessed [eth] the seventh day and made [eth] it holy." In Exodus 20:8, it is "Remember [eth] the Sabbath day," and in verse 11, "the Lord blessed [eth] the Sabbath day."

**Is the Sabbath Jewish?
It existed prior to the Jewish nation being
organized at Sinai. It also antedates the
Hebrew people by centuries.**

and the Jews only, at Sinai—then there is no Sabbath for the Gentile world. And yet God established it in the beginning of time for the benefit of mankind.

2. "The Majority Keep Sunday."

"I don't want to be different." Since when did majority make things right? The majority of the world is pagan. The majority of Christendom is Roman Catholic. Christ's call is to separation.

The Bible says, "Come out from them and be separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17); "Enter through the narrow gate" (Matthew 7:13); "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world" (Romans 12:2).

3. "The Fourth Commandment Means One Day in Seven."

"It makes no difference which day I keep, just so I keep it right."

"The principle was universal, the seventh was Jewish."

But... the Fourth Commandment says *the seventh*. Not only is the definite article used, but the

Verse 10 has the definite article: "day the seventh."

This defines the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week, dated from Creation. The seventh day was made holy and blessed with God's presence. Just as God formed man out of "the dust of the ground," He formed the Sabbath out of the seventh day.

4. "The Calendar Has Been Changed Several Times."

"We don't know which is the seventh day."

We can trace it back to Jesus, who certainly knew which day was the seventh. God showed the seventh day in the wilderness by the miracles of the manna.

The Jews are very exact in their chronology, and their calendar shows the same seventh day as ours—the weeks coincide.

True, the *calendar* has been changed—from the Julian to the Gregorian in 1582—and in England, in 1752. But it was simply the *date*, the day of the month, which was changed and *not* the *order* of the days of the week.

The weekly cycle has never been broken.

5. "Cross the Pacific Going West and You Lose a Day."

So, if twins traveled around the world in opposite directions, when they came back to the starting point, there would be two days difference in their ages. In other words, according to this reasoning, they would no longer be twins.

The loss of a day at the International Date Line makes no difference in civil and business dates. Those who claim a definite first day for worship have no difficulty knowing when it is.

The fallacy of this argument is that the Sabbath is not the seventh day of man, but of the earth. Days travel around the earth from east to west. It is like getting on a train at different points. People are in the Sabbath when it is with them.

6. "The Sabbath Was Done Away."

"Christ is our Sabbath."—Yes, but that does not do away with the weekly day of rest and worship.

"Jesus fulfilled the law."—True, but fulfill does not mean to end. (See Matthew 4:14; Romans 13:10; Galatians 5:14; 6:2.)

"Paul teaches that the law, including the Sabbath, was done away."—But in the passages usually quoted, "law" means the ceremonial system, not moral principles. The "days" and "sabbaths" referred to are the festival and ceremonial days, not the weekly day of rest and worship.

7. "We Keep the Day of Christ's Resurrection."

"Sunday is a new institution."—But the Sunday Resurrection cannot be proven.

The record tells only of the discovery of the empty tomb. In Matthew 28:1, we are told that the tomb was empty "in the end of the sabbath" (KJV)—literally, "late on the sabbath day."

Even if the Resurrection had been on Sunday, there is no command or example for observing it. Our celebration of the Resurrection is in baptism (see Romans 6:3-4).

"The sacredness of the Sabbath has been transferred to Sunday." This idea arose during the English Reformation. It might hold if: Jesus rose on the first day; if the Sabbath commandment was abolished; if the Apostles and New Testament Church observed it; and if Christ sanctioned it. But these "ifs" never occurred.

8. "Jesus Appeared to His Disciples on the First Day."

It was only natural that Jesus should go to His followers to bring them hope and courage to replace their gloom and despair.

Jesus appeared to them on other days, also. His appearance in John 21 was not on the first day. Acts 1:3 says, "He appeared to them over a period of forty days." There is no significance to this claim unless every one of Jesus' appearances was on the first day. Even then we would wonder.

9. "The New Testament Church Kept Sunday."

This is not true. Only two specific first-day gatherings are mentioned. One is recorded in the Gospels and deals with the discovery of the Resurrection. The other is mentioned in Acts and involves a worship service that was actually held on "Saturday night."

Paul preached on the Sabbath, "as was his custom." Although there are repeated references to meetings on the Sabbath, there is not even a *hint* of Sunday sacredness.

10. "I Can't Make a Living and Keep the Sabbath."

What sort of a God do you believe in? Would He, who is all goodness, ask you to do the impossible? Where is your faith? If God demands, He will enable.

Why not steal to make a living? The God who wrote, "You shall not steal," is the same God who wrote on the same tables of stone, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."

11. "Great Bible Teachers and Ministers Teach it Is Right."

Does that make it right? See Hosea 10:13; 1 Corinthians 1:25-27; Proverbs 19:27. The question is not what *man* says, no matter how earnest and educated, but "What does Scripture say?"

12. "I Can Render a Greater Service by Keeping the Day the Rest Do."

"Think about how many more people I can reach, and how much greater my influence will be." That might be true, in a sense. However, when God commands, it is for us to obey, and leave the results to Him.

Conclusion

Excuses, boiled down, in almost every case mean: "I don't want to." Excuses are just props to bolster a practice which we do not wish to change.

We must realize that the Sabbath law is on a par with the laws against murder, and adultery, and the rest. To break the Sabbath is just as grievous a sin as stealing, adultery, or murder. It is startling, too, to see how God ranks Sabbath desecration with dishonoring parents, murder, lewdness, idolatry, and child sacrifice. (See Ezekiel 22:7-9; 23:37-38).

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Hear the heartbreak and pleading in God's voice as He says, "Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them" (Deuteronomy 5:29). \mathcal{R}



Women's Society page by Charlotte Chroniger

Groups, guides enhance study

"Thy Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11 NASB).

The first Bible study I ever attended was a high school group led by a Junior High math teacher and his wife. We met each Thursday evening, and used a series from the Navigators, which included the topic, "New Life in Christ."

I remember my excitement as I looked forward to each Thursday and learning more from the Bible.

During my first years of teaching in Iowa, I led a youth Bible study on Sunday evenings using the Serendipity series published by Word. One particular book that was meaningful was "Rap," a mini course in a personal Christian lifestyle.

During our first pastorate, I met with other young mothers each week as we studied God's Word using "A Woman's Workshop" series published by Zondervan.

Every study was helpful to me for each specific stage of growth. As a participant or a leader, it was exciting to learn the Bible truths in a group setting.

There are so many excellent guides to help us in our study of the Bible. Some that I have found very meaningful in my growth include:

• "A Woman's Workshop" series (Zondervan). Each book is written by a different person or team. The topics include: "Mastering Motherhood," "Bible Marriages," "Faith," "Forgiveness," "James," "Proverbs," "Beatitudes," "Romans," and others.

• Gene A. Getz's series, "The Measure of a Woman," "The Measure of a Man," "The Measure of a Family," "The Measure of a

Church," and "The Measure of a Marriage" (Gospel Light).

Getz examines the Scriptures that speak to how we can apply these five principles to our lives.

• "Living That Counts" by William Krutza and Philip DiCicco (Baker Book House). An excellent study of James.

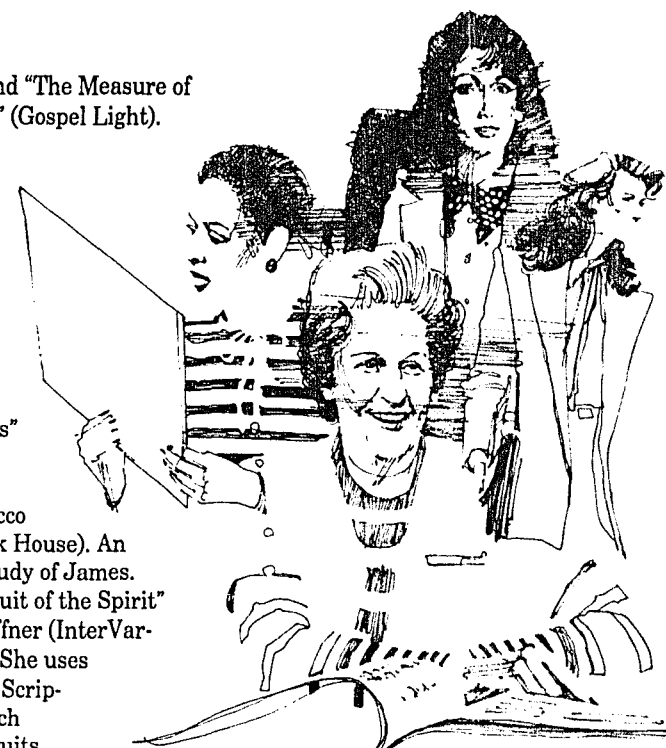
• "The Fruit of the Spirit" by Hazel Offner (InterVarsity Press). She uses a variety of Scriptures to teach about the fruits.

• Joyce Landorf's books "He Began With Eve" (Word), a look at five Old Testament women, and "The Fragrance of Beauty" (Scripture Press), the outward and inward beauty of a Christian woman, were interesting and helpful.

• "Her Name Is Woman," books one and two by Gien Karssen (NavPress) studies various women from the Bible and what we can learn from their experiences with the Lord.

Besides small group Bible study during the week, we can also feed on God's Word during Sabbath School, the worship service, Vacation Bible School, youth groups, summer camp, and personal devotions.

Are all the members of your church involved in a Bible study sometime during the week? Is your church providing enough opportu-

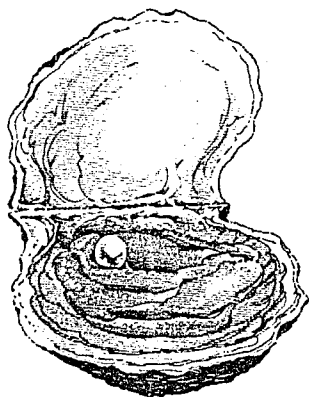


As a participant or a leader, it was exciting to learn the Bible truths in a group setting.

nities for people to learn about the Bible, to learn its truths and teachings? Are you taking the time to study the Bible?

Visit your local Bible bookstore and get some ideas for Bible study guides. Invite someone to join you in your home, or become a part of a Bible study group already meeting.

Join a group and really get into His Word! \mathcal{R}



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

A true Helping Hand

For over 111 years, *The Helping Hand* has been seeking to bring spiritual maturity to Seventh Day Baptists in Bible study. The first issue was published in January 1885 under the editorship of Rev. A.E. Main.

The actual writing was done by 12 different ministers during the first year. That first issue carried the preface:

This quarterly, with its short studies of the International Lessons, aims to give help to all scholars who can read; to parents in home study and instruction; and to all grades, with the expectation that their methods of using the materials here furnished, in teaching, will be adjusted to the needs of their pastors, superintendents, and other Bible-school workers.

The International Lessons (from the ecumenical Committee on Uniform Series) provided the basis for the Sabbath Schools even before the first edition of *The Helping Hand* appeared. *The Sabbath Recorder* for October 16, 1873, recorded the Sabbath School Board's proposal to publish a journal and lesson papers for use in our Sabbath Schools the next year:

We need such a work to call out and employ persons among us, now deeply interested in the Sabbath Schools. Our young people should realize that we have the ability to supply them publications, to be used in their Sabbath Schools, as interesting

and instructive, at least, as those which they obtain from other denominations. The work will make us more respected at home. A stronger regard for the Sabbath will be created in the minds of our children if their weekly lessons are connected in these publications with the Bible Sabbath, and not with the Sunday Sabbath of other denominations.... Those who have used the lesson papers supplied us by Sunday School Boards for the past five years, have felt the lack of proper aid in this direction.

Each quarter's issue of the early *Helping Hands* contained an editorial or suggestions for the benefit of the Sabbath School or improved Bible study. The editorial from the first quarter of 1885 stated:

Every year's experience deepens our conviction that one of the most important parts of our work, as churches, is to seek to serve our children and youth in Christ the Lord, and to teach them all things that he has commanded. The Bible-school is one place and means for accomplishing this end. We have, therefore, long believed in the need of more Sabbath-school literature, edited and published by ourselves, that we might not be obligated to depend on publications touching Pedobaptist, First-day, or un-denominational "sentiments."

The conclusion of the third quarter's lessons contained a page entitled, "Questions for Oral or Written Examination," similar to unit tests used in the public schools. The fourth quarter's lessons contained a Sabbath Catechism each week, even though it was not particularly related to that week's lesson. Other articles touched upon the role of the pastor

as being more directly considered as the pastor of the Sabbath School, rather than his being restricted to a particular class as a teacher.

A unique summary review service was prepared by Preston Randolph of Salem, W.Va., for the third quarter of 1897 (vol. 3, no. 3). It made use of an acrostic Review Chart summarizing the training and early teaching of Christ as found in the first seven chapters of Matthew:

T raining from birth
R escuing from danger
A wakening to repentance
I mmersion into Christ
N ecessary tests

T eacher's first call
E xemplary character
A ll law to be fulfilled
C onsistent piety
H ighest aim in life
E ssential rules
S aving the few

Throughout its history, there has been an attempt to bring variety to the lessons of *The Helping Hand*, without missing the focal point of the biblical texts. Fourteen different people have served as primary editors, with Rev. Erlo Sutton having the distinction of serving the longest—25 years.

Both ministers and lay people have been invited to share in the writing of all or part of the lessons. Sections for children and youth have been used. The writer of these "Pearls from the Past" got his start as a denominational writer during his years as editor 1954-1970.

Some have been critical of the *International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching*, developed by the Committee on Uniform Series, because it may appear to skip around in the Bible, repeating many passages while neglecting

cont. on page 26



SR Almanac

Where we
have been...

One year ago—March 1995

Issue introduces many SDBs to the Chapel of the Air's 50-Day Spiritual Adventure, "Facing Down Our Fears." Lou Diaz, George Calhoun, Leon Lawton, and Anna Cruzan Hickman are feature writers.

Concert of Prayer format shared.

Youth activities among our sister Conferences in Africa highlighted.

General Conference Publicity Committee promotes the Salem, W.Va., area as a "Heritage Pilgrimage" for SDBs.

Board of Christian Education page announces vacancy in the *Helping Hand* editorship.

Five years ago—March 1991

Conference President Althea Rood promotes her theme, "Called to Obedience." Others writing on that topic: David Taylor, Mayola Warner, and Trevah Sutton.

Jean Steir reports on annual Women's Fall Refresher held in Connecticut.

Salem, W.Va., church proposes new Family Life Center building project.

Tributes honor the recent passing of Dr. George Thorngate III and Pastor Doyle Zwiebel.

Farewell reception held in Alfred Station, N.Y., for Pastor Mel and Yvonne Stephan, who accepted a call to Marlboro, N.J.

10 years ago—March 1986

Report shares details of Leon Lawton's trip to Australasia.

"Getting Acquainted" column introduces readers to African delegates for upcoming SDB World Federation meeting.

Sixteen members of the Board of Christian Education—representing 165 years of dedicated service—are honored at their retirement.

Nortonville, Kan., Youth Fellowship featured in *The Beacon*. Church also hosts farewell reception for retiring Pastor Edgar Wheeler and family.

25 years ago—March 1971

Special issue emphasizes the successful programs and facilities of SDB camping. Writers include David Clarke, Mary Clare, and Elmo Fitz Randolph.

Salem church dedicates new parsonage.

The "Tercentenary Stalwarts" series (used during this 300th anniversary year of SDBs in America) honors Dr. William C. Daland. Several churches make anniversary plans as the Host Committee prepares for Conference at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Leroy Bass shares reflections of a missionary on furlough.

50 years ago—March 1946

Group of men with agricultural interests agree to form "Seventh Day Baptist Rural Fellowship." Most members are from West Virginia.

Rev. C. Harmon Dickinson, DeRuyter, N.Y., accepts call to First Hopkinton Church in Ashaway, R.I.

"The Second Century Fund" promotes the SDB medical mission in Shanghai, China.

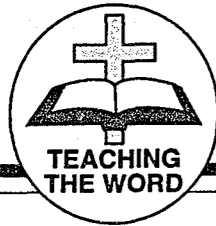
Rev. Alton Wheeler asks the laity to be involved in pastoral calling.

Editorial describes other SDB publications: "Gospel Messenger" from Christchurch, New Zealand; and "Sabbath Observer" from London, England.

...where are we headed?

Pray—

- to grow daily on life's spiritual adventure
- for our youth worldwide
- for new *Helping Hand* Editor Linda Harris
- that pastoral changes would go smoothly
- with thanks for our Board of Christian Education
- for our Associational camping programs
- for new missions opportunities in Mexico



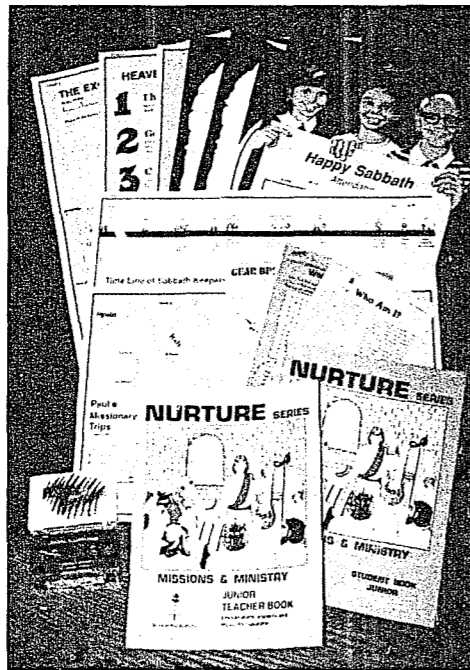
Christian Education

by Ernest K. Bee Jr.

The Children Committee of the Board of Christian Education takes pleasure in announcing the publication of the

MISSIONS & MINISTRY NURTURE SERIES for Junior Sabbath School children

RuthAnne Peil, *editor & graphics*
Victoria Burdick, Lannette Calhoun, Steven Crouch
Dede Mackintosh, Jane Mackintosh, Ralph Mackintosh, *contributors*



Thirteen lessons in three units: *Witnessing at Home, Witnessing in the Community, Witnessing in the World*

Bible and Missionary stories, memory verses, the *Mission Accomplished* musical and featuring "S.D. Bee"

Teacher Book (incl. posters & audio-tape): \$7.00
Student Book (incl. take-home papers): \$3.00

To order contact:
Seventh Day Baptist Center
P.O. Box 1678
Janesville, WI 53547
Phone: (608) 752-5055



FOCUS on Missions

Funds going for roofs, bikes, wells

by Kirk Looper

When funds are sent to the SDB Missionary Society, people often wonder what happens to their donations. In many cases, not enough money is initially received to complete a project or purchase equipment. Consequently, the project coordinator must set aside those funds until additional money comes in.

For example, a bicycle costs about \$100 in Zambia. If the Missionary Society receives \$25, that donation will have to be set aside until the total amount of \$100 is raised. This practice is especially necessary when the needs cost several hundreds or thousands of dollars.

It is a blessing that the coordinators in sister Conferences and churches are willing to allow these funds to sit untouched until the needed totals are reached.

Periodically, project coordinators send financial reports to the Society office. The following report from Malawi was sent by Rev. R.J.B. Mkandawire:

On the previous money sent for the roofs, we matched it with our funds raised here for roofing iron on a 50/50 basis. The churches that have benefited from the funds are as follows:

Thomas Seventh Day Baptist Church at Thomas SDB Station in Thyolo, 50 12-foot sheets.

Muloza Seventh Day Baptist Church in Mulanje, near the border with Mozambique, 52 12-foot sheets.

Matola Seventh Day Baptist Church at Balaka in the central region, 50 12-foot sheets.

Nolo Seventh Day Baptist pastor's house in Mulanje, 40 12-foot sheets.

Manjanja Seventh Day Bap-

tist Church in Ntcheu central region, 48 12-foot sheets.

Ekwaiweni Seventh Day Baptist Church in Mzimba district is under construction. The church will need 50 sheets of 12 feet each when completed.

Also a watchman (guardhouse) at the Makapwa fish pond. We used 34 sheets of 10 feet each. May God continue to bless those individuals and churches who donated their funds for these projects. The current cost of iron sheets for

In 1995, they were able to purchase 12 out of the needed 21 bicycles. The bikes are used by pastor/evangelists who travel between the churches. They also received enough money to buy roofing supplies for four churches.

The work on the farm in Zambia has continued because of seeds that were sent. They also received desperately needed funds to purchase fertilizer, tools, and other gardening supplies. One well has been drilled, and some funds have been set aside for another.

Rwanda reports that several boxes of clothing, blankets, and living supplies have arrived and have been distributed. All of the sister Conferences and churches in Africa still need these supplies. They also need funds to purchase medical supplies. Needy areas have extended into Zimbabwe, Zaire, Mozambique, The Gambia, Kenya, Ghana, and The Camerons. Reports of increased church activity come from Tanzania and Angola.

The Missionary Society is thankful that so many members of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of the U.S.A. and Canada have been moved by the Holy Spirit and have acted on that leading. Because of you, we are able to do so much more for our sister Conferences and churches. Let's pray that God will continue to provide income for our members, enabling them to continue the work that is started, while increasing donations to meet new needs.

Also, please pray that the work being done through the Missionary Society will continue to grow, and that God will give wisdom and understanding—to those on the Board of Managers, and to those working in the Society offices. ✠

a standard-size church of 50 sheets of 12 feet is \$1,184.21 in U.S. dollars.

The wells which have benefited from donations are: Makapwa, special protected well; Thomas, two wells; Kasinje village, one shallow well; Ekwaiweni, one shallow well; and Ganeti village in Chiphe area, two shallow wells protected with simple hand pumps.

We are digging wells in Nkhokotakota and Nthinda areas. For the relief food money, I gave the names of beneficiaries earlier this year. The US \$48.69, plus US \$59.46, have started the next reserve for roofing sheets.

The Missionary Society has also received word from Zambia.

**Because of you,
we are able
to do so much more
for our sister
Conferences and
churches.**

Helping the new become the known

by Rev. John Peil

The General Conference theme this year is, "At the Crossroads." Many Seventh Day Baptists have been thinking about what kinds of crossroads we face.

The idea is not new, and we are not the only people facing choices. For SDBs, the major push is that as our families are being destroyed, so is our church kinship system.

What are our options? We have two primary choices.

We can do nothing and simply wait, assuming that whatever change occurs will be the right one. Or we can begin to direct the change. Change will come; the only option is whether we will direct it instead of it directing us.

By taking an active stance, we open many other possibilities rather than being the passive recipients of whatever happens.

How do we preserve what we have and yet bring in enough change to survive? We could encourage building systems that are not related, yet function like a family. First, each group would have to decide that this is okay for their church. The next step would be to set up the internal structure to accomplish the task. This would not be simple, but we are not a simple people.

A few years ago, here was the usual manner for someone to come into the SDB denomination: a person studied his or her Bible and decided the Seventh Day Sabbath was the truth. Then they began to search for a Sabbathkeeping church. After a time, they ended up with us.

These new people were self-taught and found their way. This is rarely happening anymore. We now have to start with the basics and teach commitment to Christ, Believers' Baptism, Sabbath and Sabbathkeeping. How can we do

this? What options can we find together?

We could actively pursue those with a need that we can meet, e.g., single parents. Here is a family that needs our aid.

Where will we find these people? They will not walk up to us and tell us their needs. They may be co-workers, neighbors, new hires on the job, grocery cashiers. How will we find their needs? Church Growth concepts will not help.

How do you get a new member into your family? Probably with great difficulty. And if that person has needs, why would you take the risk? It is not safe to bring the person in since you do not know how everything is going to turn out. On the other hand, it is not safe to not bring the person in since your house is slowly becoming empty. So you set up ways to ensure that the new person is not going to burn down your home.


Already this begins to sound unlike Seventh Day Baptists. Are we going to have two classes in the

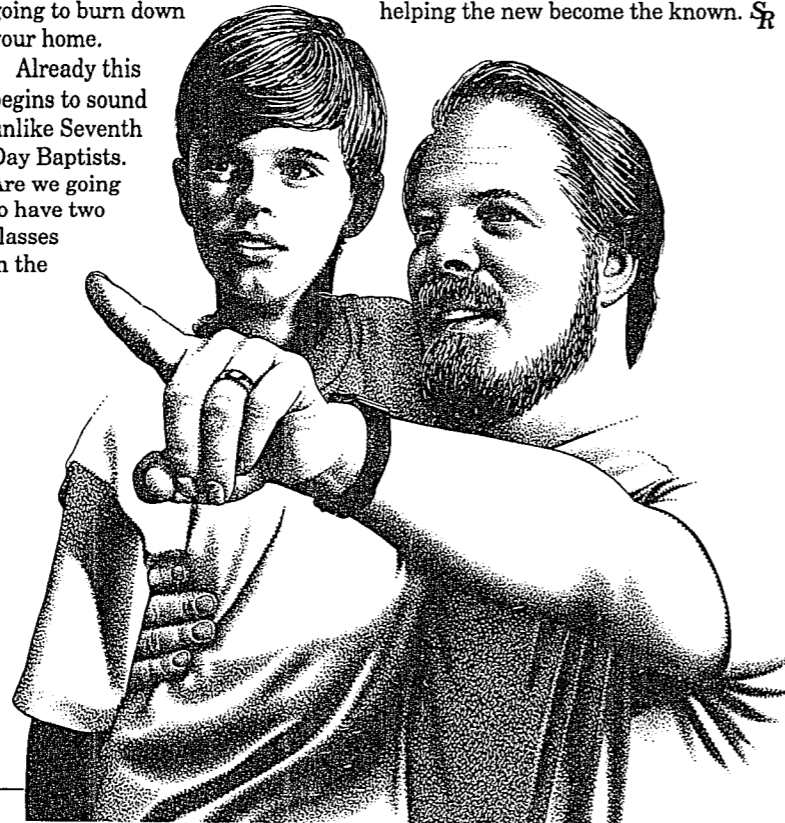
home? Yes. Those who are known, and those who are new, and someday the new will be the known.

Seventh Day Baptists used to have a catechism, and we will probably need a curriculum to teach the new again. Beliefs taught, family values taught, church manners taught, how to live together in love taught... For those who learn and remain, we can relax since the person is now part of our family.

It is a tremendous amount of work. It is more than work; it is a risk. And it is something we may not want to do.

The entire family has to agree to the change. Be careful here. Families become dysfunctional if only part of the family agrees to do something, and the part that wants it plows on ahead.

After we agree on a solution and how to implement it, we can go out and begin working with people, helping the new become the known. 



Seeking Spiritual Maturity: BIBLE STUDY

Video-based Bible study helps parents instill Christian values

All the major news programs have covered it. Time and Newsweek have dedicated cover stories to it.

Today, it is common knowledge that values in America are declining. And while the secular press is drawing sides on how to solve the problem, Christians across the country know that God holds the key.

But what values are most important? And how are values instilled into others? Many parents deliberate over how to raise their children to have a godly value system.

Parenting with Values from Concordia Publishing House (CPH) is a new video-based Bible study course that helps parents show their children that God's values are the best values of all.

The non-denominational course covers six values using an interactive learning format: responsi-

their children. Participants will see these values in action through three fictional video families.

Parenting with Values is a follow-up to the best-selling video-based course from CPH, *Parenting with Purpose*. It is written by Roger Sonnenberg, a pastor, author, and family counselor.


Sonnenberg has written and led workshops, seminars, and courses in marriage enrichment and parenting for more than a decade. He also wrote *Parenting with Purpose* and co-authored *Living with Purpose*.

The *Parenting with Values* course includes one VHS videocas-

While the secular press is drawing sides on how to solve the (values) problem, Christians across the country know that God holds the key.

bility, courage, kindness, fidelity, honesty, and respect. Each of the six sessions fosters discussion by incorporating dramatic vignettes and interviews with parents who are currently teaching values to

sette containing 100 minutes of course material, a Leaders Guide, and 19 Participant Guides. It is an excellent resource for adult Sabbath/Sunday School, small groups, and retreats.

The course has been available since November 1995 through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118. 

For additional information about *Parenting with Values* (Stock # 87-0725, \$199.99) contact Doris Engstrom by calling 1-800-774-0274 or FAX 314-268-1329.





the BEACON

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

March 1996

The continuing mission

Article and poem by Duane B. Taylor

Christ's death on the cross is the root of salvation. Without it, none of us would be saved. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6 NASV).

There are millions of people out there who need Jesus, and they

need someone to help them take those first steps to get to know Him. We need to introduce them.

You don't have to start a Bible study, or be a mighty evangelist, or be some super Christian to do it—just share what you know.

Please don't hold that awesome

gift of Life to yourself. You don't have to go far to find the dying.

Don't let the pressures of this world consume your thoughts. God tells us not to worry about it (Matt. 6:19-34). Focus on God, share His love, and be part of the *continuing mission*.

A view through the cross

I was fashioned from a dogwood tree
Left unfinished, jagged, and harsh;
I was made specifically to be the end
Of this man's final earthly march.

I was laid aside to be ready
As they lashed and beat him with hate;
Never before had I seen such cruelty
Yet I could do nothing but sit and wait.

They pulled his beard and slapped his face
Pain and agony shot through his voice;
Yet through it all in his eyes I saw
He had come here by his choice.

Then they forced a crown upon his head
And blood flowed from the flesh torn;
For it was not a crown of gold and gems
But one of jagged thorns.

They mocked him "king of Jews"
Treated so spiteful—who was this man?
What had he done, who had he wronged?
I longed only to understand.

Then suddenly I was lifted up
And placed heavily on his back;

Carried by him through the city gates
And down the winding path.

He stumbled and fell under my weight
His body so broken and weak;
So a man named Simon chosen from the crowd
Carried me to Golgatha's peak.

The man hung on me by feet and hands
Flesh and bone pierced by nails;
I felt the warm blood upon my sides
As it flowed to the ground in trails.

I heard his name called Jesus
Shortly before his death;
And the land grew dark and the heavens rumbled
As he drew his final breath.

Even then in his final words
His love shown pure and true;
I'll never forget his quivered voice
"Father forgive them; they know not what they do."

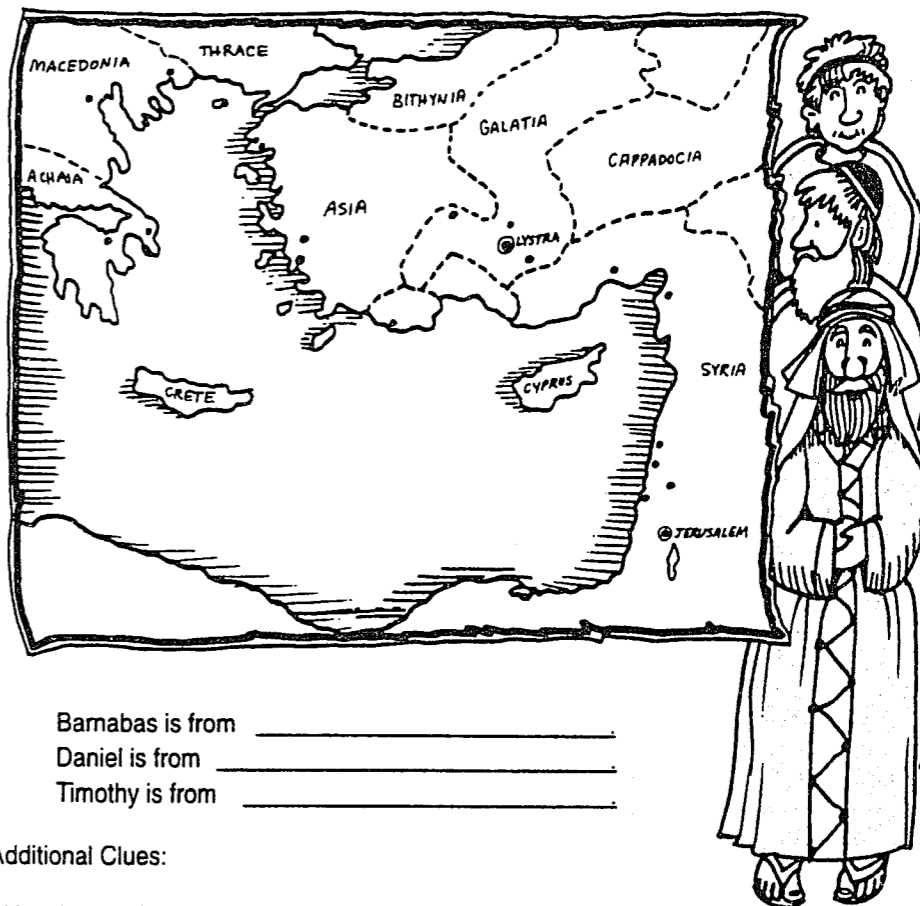
It was then I realized who he was
And why he had done this thing;
I was but a cross of wood
On which they hung the King of Kings.

WHOSE HOMETOWN?

Barnabas, Daniel, and Timothy are from three different towns. One is from Jerusalem, one is from Cyprus, and one is from Lystra.

- Barnabas is not from Lystra.
- Daniel is not from Cyprus
- Timothy is not from Jerusalem.
- Daniel is not from Lystra
- Barnabas grew up on an island.

Given these clues, can you discover the hometown of each man?



Barnabas is from _____
 Daniel is from _____
 Timothy is from _____

Additional Clues:

- * Use the map!
- * If you're stumped, read Acts 4:36; Daniel 1:1, 3, 6; and Acts 16:1.

Source: *Solving Bible Mysteries* by Joy MacKenzie (Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), available at your local bookstore or by calling 800-727-3480.

The Mexico trip: An introduction

by Luis Lovelace

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'the righteous will live by faith' " (Rom. 1:16 NIV).

I thank God for the opportunity to step out in faith in accepting the call as missionary to Mexico—a call from the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society, the churches in Mexico, and also a call from God.

A trip to Mexico in November 1995 was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Mexico Missions Committee chaired by Daryl White of the Denver, Colo., SDB Church.

The purpose of the trip was to: 1) meet and encourage as many of the congregations as time and circumstance would permit; 2) evaluate the overall church situations; 3) more accurately assess the requirements of supporting a missionary family in Mexico.

The 10 days I spent in Mexico were quite full. Arriving on the night of the 10th into Mexico City, I spent the night before taking the first flight out to Tampico early the next morning. In Tampico I was greeted by Pastor Rosalio Camacho along with his wife, Norma, and daughter, Normita. Pastor Lucas Hernandez and Deacon Gervacio Marquez of the Cerro Dulce church also greeted me there.

A tale of first impressions

My first impressions of Mexico City were of how cordial and friendly the airport personnel were, yet they also had a business-as-usual air about them. I was feeling a bit

out of place trying to look like I knew where I was going.

After passing through customs and baggage check, I wandered into a lobby where a hotel information booth was stationed. Wonderful! I soon had reservations for a night's stay at a hotel about 20 minutes from the airport. At another booth I bought a taxi fare to get me to the hotel. Great!

Armed with my taxi ticket and hotel reservation, I was beginning to feel like a *seasoned* tourist. Yet I was about to encounter a much more forceful impression of Mexico... the traffic.

Sitting in the back of the taxi—a tiny thing with bright markings—I was trying to make a mental note of my recent expenses when the cab driver pulled into traffic and asked me where I was headed. I told him the name of the hotel and even showed him the brochure. He took off like a bullet down the street, competing for the best position with other vehicles (most of which, to my amazement, were driving in the same manner!).

While we sped along, weaving through traffic, coming within inches of sideswiping other cars or rear-ending the one in front (or vice versa), I was busy bracing myself in the back seat while fidgeting around for a safety belt! There wasn't any. So I resorted to praying for our safety. What a car ride that was! It sure felt good to relax when we finally reached the hotel.

(For anyone interested in sharpening their defensive driving skills, visit Mexico City... and bring a crash helmet!)

Meeting the Mexico churches

Madero: *Iglesia del Arbol Grande*
Officially known as Le Iglesia de

Cristo del Septimo Dia (the Church of Christ of the Seventh Day), this church is the oldest existing SDB church in Mexico. My first meeting with this congregation was on the Sabbath, November 11th.

The congregation was composed of about 25 people, some visiting from the church in Alta Mira (the Kilometer 20 church), and some as far away as Cerro Dulce. The people were friendly and warm, as Latin Americans usually are, and received me graciously.

I was given the opportunity to speak during a portion of the morning worship service. I brought greetings from the SDB Missionary Society, friends in Christ they had met earlier (such as Daryl and Barbara White), as well as my home church in Atlanta, Ga.

The Mexicans have a custom of standing up in church to "receive" a greeting from someone. I was not aware of this custom and after I brought my greetings, the congregation, to my surprise, stood up! Was I supposed to lead them in a song? I didn't know what to do or think, but something told me to be cool and just continue. I soon caught on to what was happening.

The Madero church has two services on Sabbath (morning and evening), as well as a Sunday and Wednesday evening service. They are in the last phase of a hymn book project (it is going to press soon). Also, an accompaniment cassette of songs/hymns is complete. This taped music is the result of many hours of collaboration from the musically talented members of the Madero church.

The church building in Madero is to undergo roof repair. As of my visit, the work had not begun. The building in general looked old (like most things in Mexico), but cared

for. The supporting walls have to somehow be reinforced and sealed from further rain water damage.

I enjoyed the opportunity to spend much time with Pastor Camacho. We experienced a oneness of mind and spirit as we talked about different aspects of ministry.

Alta Mira: The Kilometer 20 church

Pastor Camacho brought me to the site of the Kilometer 20 church group, pastored by lay leader Apolinar Hernandez. This church began construction of a concrete block building, but had to knock down much of the standing walls. The work was done primarily by unskilled labor and without constant supervision.

As the work neared completion, Pastor Camacho noticed that the walls were leaning out toward the top. After considering the danger of such a structure, as well as concern for compliance with building codes, he strongly advised the church to tear down the upper half of the walls. This was certainly a painful and costly decision, particularly in their economy.

The church currently meets in a wooden shack-like building also located on the church property. They gather regularly on Sabbath for Bible study and worship service. Some of the members join the church in Madero for Sunday evening or Wednesday night service. The church is small now—eight to ten—but with strong potential for growth.

Cerro Dulce

The third church site I had the privilege of visiting was in the state of Vera Cruz. Together with the Camachos, I visited the Cerro Dulce church on Sabbath, November 18th. We were joined for services by some church members from Mira Mar (a few hours journey). Pastor Lucas Hernandez is

leader at Cerro Dulce.

The small congregation of about 10 people, primarily of Aztec Indian descent, meets regularly in the home of one of the members (a one-room, mud-walled hut with dirt floor, open ceiling, and tin roof).

On this particular Sabbath, a group of close to 30 people met for Sabbath School and worship. The outdoors meeting place was adjacent to the one-room house, with a makeshift awning covering a set of wooden benches that served as pews.

In spite of the rainy weather (with the plentiful mud that resulted), and the rather chilly temperatures, I experienced a special warmth of Christian fellowship that made me feel at home.

I also met the lay pastor of the Mira Mar church, Pastor Alexandro. He is an older farmer, with a quick mind and zeal for the Lord. Alexandro expressed his joy and interest in my visit, and shared his desire to address some of the needs as he saw them—especially in the area of encouraging the brethren through visitation. I assured him that God would supply their need for a laborer, and by His help I would return to work alongside of them.

Other contacts

Sister Aorelia Jimenez also came to the Sabbath service in Madero. She told me of the little group that meets in Monterrey (outdoors in good weather) for Bible study and worship each Sabbath. I appreciated the effort she made to meet me (about a 12-hour trip), and I look forward to seeing them all some day.

I also was privileged to visit with some members of the Mexico City fellowship on the 19th, the day before I was to depart for home. Maria Camacho, Rosalio's sister, acted as host and tour guide during my brief visit there. The Mexico

City church no longer has a meeting place. They meet in a member's home for prayer and Bible study.

They have no pastor and do not have a worship service with singing because they fear trouble from government authorities if someone were to complain. All churches in Mexico must be registered with the government, and only groups with a physical church building (property) can register.

Reflections

There are nine active churches in Mexico. They are as follows:
Vera Cruz: Cerro Dulce*, Mira Mar*, Poza Rica;
Tamaulipas: Alta Mira*, Madero*;
Nuevo Leon: Monterrey*;
San Luis Potosi: Buena Vista, San Luis Potosi;
Mexico: Mexico City*

*Churches I had contact with

I feel that the following "evaluation" is quite incomplete in that I did not spend as much time as I would have liked in order to paint the most accurate picture. Also, I was not able to make contact with three of the churches, and only minimal contact with the Monterrey church. In summary fashion, I present the following:

Strengths:

- Willing and dedicated leadership (in all the churches with a pastor)
- A sense of loyalty among the people to their leaders
- A willingness/desire expressed to grow in ministry

Needs:

- Basic training in goal setting and "follow through"
- Classes and activities for children and young adults (geared more to their level of interest)
- Strengthen ministry within and outside the church (the community) **SR**

A strong past meets a bright future

by Benjamin Cruzan

The past few months at the Marlboro SDB Church in Bridgeton, N.J., have held some familiar and fun events, along with some new and exciting changes.

On the more familiar side, we held a fellowship dinner in September. It was followed by a program planned by the youth to honor the church's dedicated Sabbath School teachers.

One of these teachers, Diane Cruzan, helped the young people spend several weeks becoming familiar with the history of Seventh Day Baptists through a series of Sabbath School learning sessions. As part of this, Diane guided them through the archives of Marlboro church history and planned several mini field trips to accompany the lessons.

As is annual tradition, the Ladies Aid packed Christmas boxes of fruit for friends and members of the Marlboro church who needed encouragement. The boxes were delivered individually by the Ladies

Aid members, who enjoyed the opportunity to visit.

Also in December, "Christmas by Candlelight," a cantata arranged by John Randall Dennis, was presented during the Christmas Sabbath worship service. The many hours of rehearsal, led by Thomas Davis, were evident in the beautiful singing. Jeanne Dickinson and Steve Graffius performed solos.

Later that day, many of our members went Christmas caroling. The carolers returned to the church to enjoy a supper of homemade soup from the kitchen of one of our best cooks, Mary Davis.

A program of hymns and Scripture readings followed the supper. The program was concluded with a chalk drawing by Pastor Larry Graffius, accompanied by the guitar and voice of Scott Graffius, who was home from college for the holidays.

As you may have noticed, the name "Graffius" has arisen repeatedly in the description of the past

months' events here at Marlboro. This brings us to the new and exciting. Our new pastor, Rev. Larry Graffius, arrived with his family in early October. As part of our call to him we spelled out our plan to "actively participate in his ministry."

Since his arrival, we have not been made to forget that phrase. It has even been gladly revised in our hearts and minds to be *our* ministry. We at Marlboro feel a new enthusiasm for the Lord and His work, and are excited to see where He will lead us.

Pastor Larry quickly began helping us to see how we can capitalize on this enthusiasm. He delivered a five-part series of messages on the characteristics of a healthy church—worship, evangelism, fellowship, spiritual growth, and service.

Pastor Larry is also leading two Wednesday Bible Studies on the topic, "How to Keep the Sabbath," which, by some not-so-amazing coincidence, happens to be the topic of a book he is currently writing.

On Friday nights, he attends and helps to guide a newly formed group of community young adults at the Shiloh SDB Church.

We are also very happy to welcome his family. His wife, Jan, and sons, Scott and Steve, have quickly made friends with the members of the community and are valuable additions to the enthusiasm felt in the church.

At Marlboro, practicing traditions and experiencing new developments in the last several months have helped bring about a recognition of a strong past meeting a bright future.

What we had first phrased as "Pastor Larry's ministry" has become our own, because it is our Lord's. Through this understanding, the familiar customs of the church are met with the same enthusiasm as the wonderful new events. *SR*

Sibling pairs celebrate half-century mark

by Margaret Stevens

On November 12, 1995, 75 friends joined the families of Marion and Ruth Cruzan, and Donald and Shirley Cruzan, in celebrating their 50th wedding anniversaries. The grooms are brothers, and the brides are sisters.

The celebration was held in the newly decorated dining rooms of the White Cloud, Mich., Seventh Day Baptist Church and was hosted by the children of the happy couples.

The wedding of Marion and Ruth was held on October 26,

1945, in the Boulder, Colo., SDB Church with her pastor (and his cousin), Earl Cruzan, officiating. Pastor Cruzan also officiated at Donald and Shirley's wedding, which was held on November 17, 1945, at the bride's home.

We are lucky to have Donald and Marion as the church's very own "Senior Saints." They made extensive repairs in the parsonage, and paneled the dining rooms in the church. Thanks to these brothers, both buildings are greatly improved.

Blizzard inspires creative meeting space

by Ruth E. Hazen

For Marylanders, it had been a week to remember—the Blizzard of '96.

Sunday, January 7, brought a furious snowfall and swirling winds. Newscasters told us the nearly two feet of snow was the fourth worst storm recorded in the Washington, D.C., area. Since Maryland doesn't

and many businesses closed once again.

Sabbath dawned bright and sunny with temperatures near freezing. Members of the Central Seventh Day Baptist Church inched out of their neighborhoods, negotiating slush and narrow driving lanes. Main roads were wet, but

us that the church was meeting in the parking lot of a nearby shopping center. Four families had arrived, some having driven 20 miles or more. The discussions began.

Several had shovels, but that would be an awful lot of shoveling. We could meet in someone's home, but piles of snow eliminated extra parking spaces in everyone's neighborhood.

Then someone had the idea that we might meet in one of the restaurant banquet rooms. A delegation walked down the line of stores, only to find most of the restaurants and businesses closed.

When they returned, several people were ready to go home. However, one person persisted, and found the McDonald's restaurant open. The heated play area was not being used, and was separate from the other customers. A manager agreed that we could use the room if we would purchase beverages.

Filling most of the tables, we conducted four Sabbath School classes for different age groups. Following class, we purchased beverages and had a short time of sharing and fellowship before returning home.

Praise the Lord for giving us persistence and a creative solution to a

difficult problem! *SR*

Sabbath dawned bright and sunny. After spending the week at home, it was great to be going to church!

receive a significant snowfall every winter, we have inadequate equipment and manpower to remove deep snows quickly.

Monday saw nearly everything at a standstill as the winds continued and plows struggled to keep the main roads open. On Tuesday, the snow started again at noon, with four to six more inches accumulating before dusk.

Plows continued working on the main roads while ignoring subdivisions and local streets. Schools and the federal government remained closed.

People started digging out on Wednesday, and realized their cupboards were bare. Grocery stores were overtaxed as people lined up, first to obtain a cart, then to strip shelves of milk, bread, and other essentials, and finally to wait half an hour or more at the checkout counter.

By Thursday, most neighborhoods were plowed. Many businesses opened, and the area started to revive. But Friday saw another four to eight inches of snow, sleet, and freezing rain. The government, schools,

clear and open. After spending the week at home, it was great to be going to church!

As we approached our meeting place, Hope Presbyterian Church, we saw the driveway and parking lot were packed with snow. Closer inspection revealed a four to five foot drift between the parking lot and the door. What to do?

No one from Central appeared to be around. Had everyone else stayed home? Why hadn't they let us know?

After a few moments of hesitation, another member came to tell



Accessions

Doniphan, MO
Ronald Elston,
interim pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Amy D. Burgard
 Sandy Johnson

Carla Portwood
Jeanna L. Stratton
 Joined after testimony
 Dr. Fred Cox
 Micah Stalions
 Dr. Philip D. Stalions

West Palm Beach, FL
William Vis, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Shirley Jean-Louis
 Laurence Jean-Louis
 Jerri Jean-Louis

Correcting Cupid's aim

"I cannot tell in a mere four lines
 How for Jean Pierce my heart
 pines..."

Remember those words from
 last month? I know that I will never
 forget them. And neither will **Joan**
 Pierce, the intended recipient.

When the typo was pointed out
 to me (right after all the *Recorders*
 were mailed out) I quickly got on
 the phone. Husband Steve, a re-
 tired attorney, took the news fairly
 well. He only mentioned "lawsuit"
 a couple times. (Just kidding.) I

begged for forgiveness and asked
 Steve to make sure he got to the
 mailbox first to fix my boo-boo.

Then I had to call a real Jean
 Pierce in Alfred Station, N.Y. She
 and husband Don were glad to
 be forewarned so they could quash
 the inevitable rumors.

We all had a laugh over one little
 letter. I'm sorry, Joan! And, Presi-
 dent Peil, I'm thankful that our kin-
 ship system is still intact. Other-
 wise, a lot more than Cupid's ar-
 rows could be flung my way.

Births

Hentges.—A daughter, Hanna
 Karen Hentges, was born to
 Gary and Lori Hentges of
 Battle Creek, MI, on October
 2, 1995.

Minear.—A son, Jacob Edward
 Minear, was born to Jack and
 Cyndi Minear of Battle Creek,
 MI, on November 28, 1995.

Rivera.—A son, Kyle Jacob Rivera,
 was born to Luis and Jessica
 (Fatato) Rivera of Battle Creek,
 MI, on January 11, 1996.

Hentges.—A daughter, Heather
 Ann Hentges, was born to
 Nick and Alice Hentges of
 Battle Creek, MI, on January
 12, 1996.

Obituaries

Garrison.—Roy Garrison, 90,
 died on October 9, 1995, in Los
 Angeles, Calif.

He was born on July 9, 1905, in
 Goshen, N.J. Roy was a Merchant
 Marine, an honorable man who
 served his country well for 38
 years, traveling around the world
 29 times.

While in the military, Roy min-
 istered to whomever he could be-
 cause of his love and commitment
 to the Lord. One way he chose to
 minister was to put tracts in bottles
 and throw them into the ocean.
 When he heard about a Hawaiian
 who had "caught" a tract while fish-
 ing and testified that he had "found
 God in a bottle," Roy was sure it
 was one of his.

After his retirement, Roy lived
 in Honolulu, Hawaii, and married
 Cecilia. The couple moved to Los
 Angeles in 1980. In California, Roy
 continued to distribute tracts and
 literature via a special box he left
 on the Santa Monica Beach.

Roy and Cecilia, who were mar-
 ried for 20 years, became members
 of the Los Angeles Seventh Day
 Baptist Church in 1983. They later
 joined the All Nations SDB Church.
 Roy's love for the Sabbath was very
 significant in his life, and he re-
 joined in it. His passing is mourned
 by many, and he will be greatly
 missed.

Interment and graveside ser-
 vices were held on October 13,
 1995, at Green Hills Memorial
 Park.

Steele.—Virginia Marie
 (Saunders) Steele of Loveland,
 Colo., died on November 20,
 1995, in the Poudre Valley
 Hospital, Ft. Collins, Colo.
 She was 76.

Virginia was born in Alfred,
 N.Y., the daughter of Dr. Paul
 C. Saunders and Edna (Burdick)
 Saunders. She graduated from

Alfred High School in 1937, and at-
 tended Alfred University for two
 years and Maryland General Hospi-
 tal School of Nursing in Balti-
 more. She worked at the Walter
 Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.,
 and then at New York City Hospi-
 tal for many years. She also worked
 at the Johns-Hopkins Hospital in
 Maryland.

On April 12, 1968, Virginia mar-
 ried Richard L. Steele and moved
 to Colorado. In 1974, they moved
 to Oregon, where they lived for 13
 years. In February of 1988, they
 moved back to Loveland, and began
 attending the Seventh Day Baptist
 Church of Boulder, Colo.

Virginia loved the Rocky Moun-
 tain National Park, especially its
 towering peaks, elk, deer, and oc-
 casional bighorn sheep.

Survivors include her husband,
 Richard; four stepchildren, Darwin,
 Gisele, Valerie, and Fay; two broth-
 ers, Dr. Steve Saunders and Philip
 Saunders; two sisters, Harriet
 Saunders and Hannah Crump;
 10 grandchildren, and one great-
 grandchild.

Graveside services were held
 just north of Loveland on Novem-
 ber 24, 1995, and a memorial ser-
 vice was held in Boulder the next
 day. The services were conducted
 by Pastor David Thorngate of the
 Boulder SDB Church.

Hartman.—Leora Hartman, 93,
 died on December 29, 1995, at
 the Rock County Health Center,
 Janesville, Wis.

She was born on August 20,
 1902, in Milton, Wis., the daughter
 of Carl and Annabelle (Vincent)
 Gray. She lived her entire life in
 the Milton area.

Leora worked as a secretary at
 the Burdick Corporation in Mil-
 ton for many years. On October 6,
 1945, she married Oscar Hartman.
 He died in 1974.

She was a member of the Milton
 Junction, Wis., Seventh Day Bap-
 tist Church until it closed, and then
 transferred her membership to the
 Albion, Wis., SDB Church.

Survivors include five nieces,
 two nephews, and cousins. She was
 predeceased by two sisters, Evelyn
 Rabiola and Lillian Campbell
 Tucker; and by one brother, Don-
 ald Gray.

Funeral services were held on
 January 2, 1996, at the Albrecht
 Funeral Home in Milton. Burial
 was in the Milton Junction Cem-
 etery.

Babcock.—Laura Babcock, wife
 of Rev. Orville Babcock, passed
 away on January 18, 1996, at
 their home in White Cloud,
 Mich.

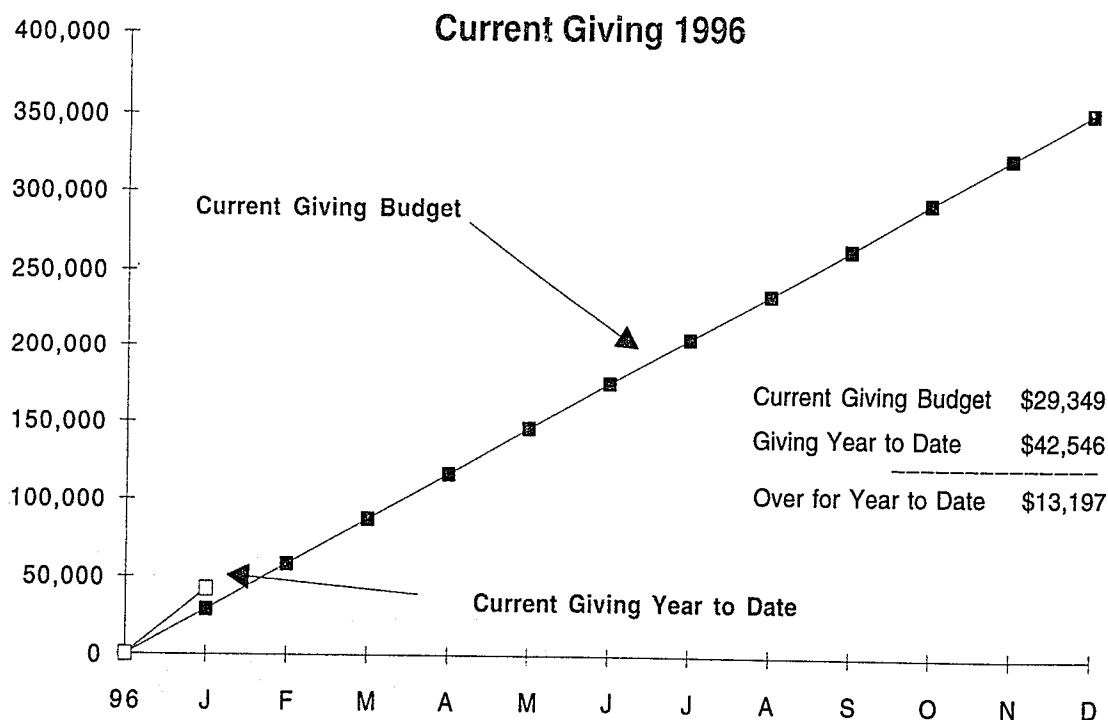
Funeral services were held on
 January 22, 1996, at the Methodist
 Church of White Cloud, with three
 ministers officiating: Rev. Bernie
 Wethington, Orville's pastor at the
 White Cloud Seventh Day Baptist
 Church; Rev. Don Fry, Laura's
 cousin; and Rev. Jerry Jaquish,
 Laura's pastor.

Since their marriage on January
 6, 1990, both Laura and Orville
 have been valuable assets to both
 churches, especially through their
 musical talents. Laura will be
 greatly missed.

Rev. Charles H. Bond passes away

Longtime SDB pastor, the Rev.
 Charles Bond, died at a Bridgeton,
 N.J., hospital on February 19,
 1996. He was 80. Pastor Bond's
 obituary will appear in next
 month's *Recorder*.

Gifts will go toward the Charles
 H. Bond Memorial Seminary Schol-
 arship.



others. Yet there is a definite system in the Committee's selection of topics.

In many churches the composition of classes changes from year to year. Thus a six-year cycle has often been used during which at least one quarter's lessons have been centered around the life and teachings of Christ as found in the

tee on Religious Life asked the Sabbath School Board in 1934 to devote a quarter's lessons to a study of denominational belief. This study contributed to the drafting of the 1937 Statement of Belief, used for the next 50 years.

When the General Conference was involved in the five-year Program for Advance, the second

a 1966 issue of *The Helping Hand* which brought both scriptural and historic perspective to some of the social concerns of the day.

On occasion, single lessons have been substituted, or at least developed, within the scope of the Uniform Lessons in order that *The Helping Hand in Bible Study* may serve its stated purpose. It is to be a "helping hand" in "Seeking Spiritual Maturity in Faithful Bible Study" through these objectives in its statement of purposes:

—to provide for adults and older youth a quarterly for personal or group use in gaining a continually renewed knowledge of the Bible, Christian beliefs and church life, particularly that characteristic of Seventh Day Baptists.

—to enable such study of Christian convictions as will develop the students' abilities to share their faith.

—to strengthen appreciation of Seventh Day Baptist heritage and conviction of the Sabbath's truths.

—to nurture moral and spiritual aspects of daily living and decision-making.

—to provide resources for daily devotions.

—to encourage the educational ministry of Seventh Day Baptists around the world. *SR*

"A stronger regard for the Sabbath will be created in our children if their weekly lessons are connected with the Bible Sabbath."

Gospels. During a typical cycle, lessons cover periods of Israel's history, balanced by lessons on the development of the Church.

For a number of years, one lesson per quarter was labeled as a temperance lesson.

There has remained a perceived need for publishing our own material for the very reasons that were expressed in the *Recorder* of 1873. This helps develop stronger Sabbath convictions as well as other SDB distinctives.

Several times substitutions have been made to accomplish this goal. The General Conference Commit-

tee on Religious Life asked the Sabbath School Board in 1934 to devote a quarter's lessons to a study of denominational belief. This study contributed to the drafting of the 1937 Statement of Belief, used for the next 50 years.

When the General Conference was involved in the five-year Program for Advance, the second

by Rev. Gordon Lawton

Eye-opening banquet held

On December 10, 1995, 20 people attended a Third World Tureen Banquet at the Community Center in Little Genesee, N.Y.

Each person was assigned to one of three tables. Before the blessing, the folks at table one were told that they were from a poor Asian country, so their meal would be a bowl of rice and drainage water (powdered drink mixed to look brown).

Table two was a poor country from South America, and their

bountiful meal was squash and water leaching from a garbage dump (more brown drink mix).

Table three was the United States, and so they got all the rest of the food. Following the blessing, we were all told that this was done to show us how desperate many people in the world are for food and good drinking water; even some here in the U.S. All were then invited to the banquet—beginning with table number one.

This banquet was the kick-off for

the Youth Fellowship's (YF) participation in World Vision's "30 Hour Famine." In February, members of the YF went 30 hours without solid food to help raise money for world hunger relief. Last year, about eight youth participated in the Famine and raised enough money to feed one child for an entire year (about \$180). *SR*

From "The Belfry," newsletter of the First SDB Church of Genesee, Little Genesee, N.Y.

KEVIN'S

ORNER

Fix. Tie. Bind. Teach.

This year's journey toward spiritual maturity focuses on Bible study. Four words from one powerful Scripture verse can be our guide: fix, tie, bind, and teach.

In Deuteronomy 11:18, God said, "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands, and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Susan Lingo, in her book *Written on Our Hearts* (Zondervan, 1995), expands on these four commands.

• *Fix God's Word* in our hearts and minds.

"Fix" in this verse comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to place or put." God desires us to place His Word in our hearts and minds, to fix and lock it deep in our innermost parts, and cradle it close to the very essence of our lives. God wants us to memorize His Word!

• *Tie God's Word* to our hands.

God has commanded us to put His holy Word into action. Only when we have fixed Scripture in our hearts and minds can we apply God's Word in our lives. Jesus used Scripture to actively rebuke Satan's temptations.

• *Bind God's Word* to our foreheads.

God commands us to keep Scripture foremost in our minds. When we know what His Word says, we're able to make godly choices in our daily walk and to readily proclaim God's truth, wisdom, and love to others.

• *Teach God's Word* to our children.

God commands us to teach Scripture to our children in all we do and wherever we go! And this teaching is threefold: memorizing, comprehending, and applying His Word in our lives every day.

Ms. Lingo says that these actions are part of one big package. "Fix, tie, and bind are words of commitment and memory; they precede teaching, which is where application begins. We don't have to choose between comprehension, memorization, and application. There simply isn't a hierarchy of importance among these aspects of Scripture—they're meant to be inseparable and integral parts of one another."

Fix, tie, bind, and then we teach. Maybe that's why this SR theme precedes next month's focus on Sabbath School.

One of the disciplines for this year's 50-Day Spiritual Adventure is Scripture memorization. We are challenged to commit two of God's precious challenges to memory during each of the seven weeks. I invite you to follow the Board of Christian Education's Scripture Memory program. One verse a month, following the Conference theme, will encourage you all year long.

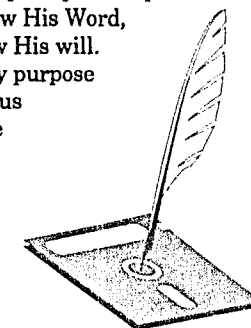
We will also encourage your growth by reviewing various Bible study books and presenting more "Bible Q & A" features.

Perhaps one of the verses you study and memorize will eventually direct you toward God's desire for your life. This quote from a great new booklet by Chuck Swindoll, *God's Will: Biblical Direction for Living* (Zondervan, 1995), will encourage you to study the Bible to discover God's purpose.

"The Bible tells us that the entrance of God's Word gives light (Psalm 119:30). God has placed His Word in our hands and allowed it to be translated into our tongue. Both were His determined will so we could have an objective set of guidelines to follow.

"Sixty-six books filled with precepts and principles. And the better we know His Word, the more clearly we will know His will.

"Remember this: a primary purpose of the Word of God is to help us know the will of God. Become a careful, diligent student of Scripture. Those who are will be better equipped to understand His desires and walk in them."



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Saint Martin's College

Saint Martin's is remarkable. More than a college, it is a community within a community, home to both students and a Roman Catholic Benedictine monastery.

Through most of its 1,500 year history, the Benedictine Order, the oldest monastic order in Western Civilization, has dedicated itself principally to education and the arts. In 1895, the Benedictine founders of Saint Martin's College came to the Pacific Northwest, where they built their monastery and school in what is now the city of Lacey. Celebrating its 100th year, the Abbey remains at the heart of the 380-acre campus.

Saint Martin's takes its name from Saint Martin of Tours, a 4th century Christian considered during his lifetime to be the holiest man in France. Saint Martin figured prominently in the development of Christianity and was noted not only for his legendary charity, but also for his work with leading teachers and scholars of his era.

Set among sheltering evergreens and meadowlands, Saint Martin's is as picturesque as its Pacific Northwest setting. While the campus itself is pastoral, a shopping center, restaurants, and theaters are just a short walk away.

In addition to traditional dormitories, there are a limited number of RV hook-ups and a large dry camping area on the campus, which is located just off Interstate 5, the major West Coast arterial, and near Washington Highway 101. An Amtrak depot is just four miles from campus, while Sea-Tac International Airport is about an hour's drive away.