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News for and about
Seventh Day Baptists

June 1996

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The role of the Diaconate



What is
your D.Q.?

Following strict
building codes

A pastor's
perspective

President John Peil
invites you
to come to
**General Conference at
St. Martin's College**
Lacey, Washington
August 4-10, 1996

For complete registration information,
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Seventh Day Baptist Conference:
The SDB Center (608) 752-5055
FAX (608) 752-7711

Host Committee chairpersons:
David and Doreen Davis (206) 255-3999

Registration:
Debbie Alldredge (206) 854-4766

Career opportunity! Director of Christian Education (Half-time position)

The Milton, Wis., Seventh Day Baptist Church, a spiritually alive, active, growing congregation, has an immediate opening for a Director of Christian Education. The incumbent will be responsible for the development, implementation, and supervision of our Christian Education program. This will include direct activity with our youth ministries, Sabbath School initiatives, and our camping experience.

The ideal candidate will be a mature, growing Christian with particular gifts in working with youth. The successful candidate for this vital leadership role will be expected to embrace the covenant and vision of the Milton church and join in active membership. Interested candidates should send a resumé and cover letter to:

Search Committee, Milton SDB Church
720 E. Madison Ave.
Milton, WI 53563

Application deadline is July 10, 1996.

The Sabbath Recorder



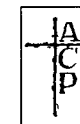
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Who are Seventh Day Baptists?

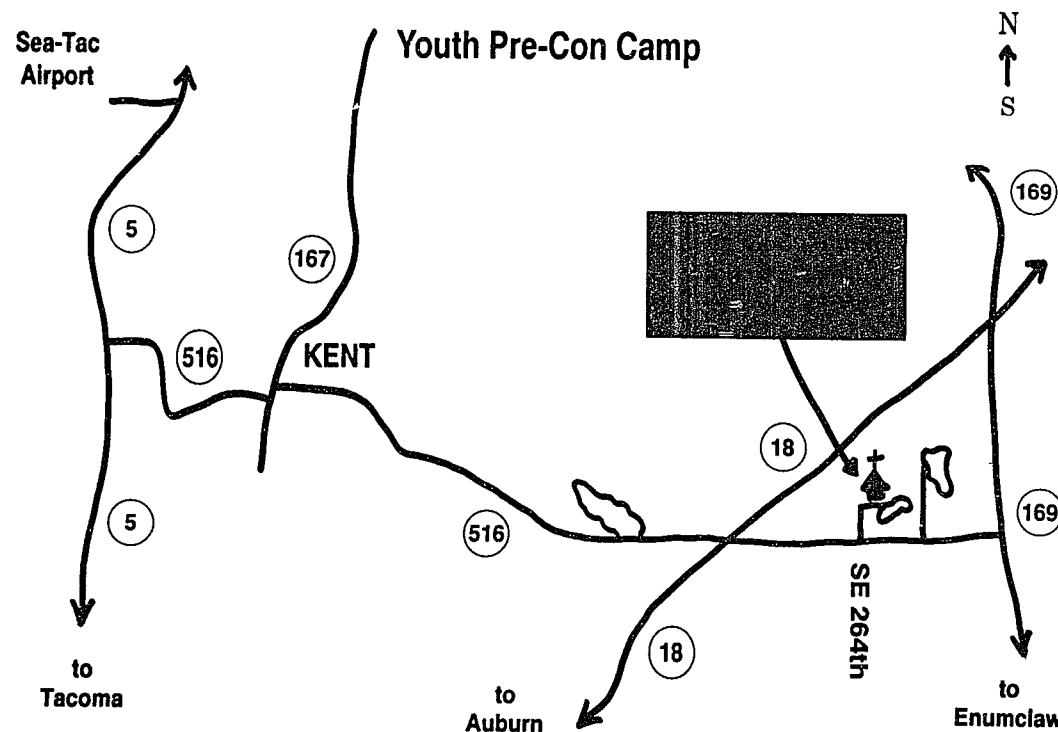
If you've never read *The Sabbath Recorder* before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are. Like other Baptists, we believe in:

- 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.

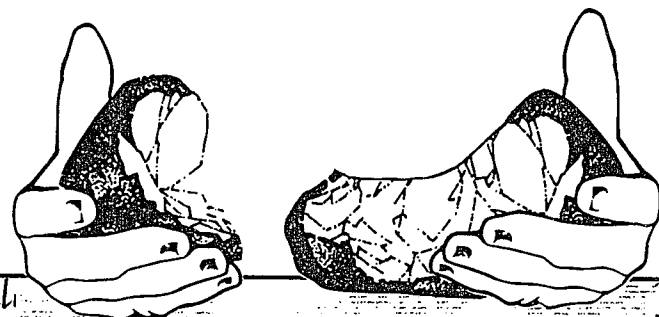
The seventh day

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

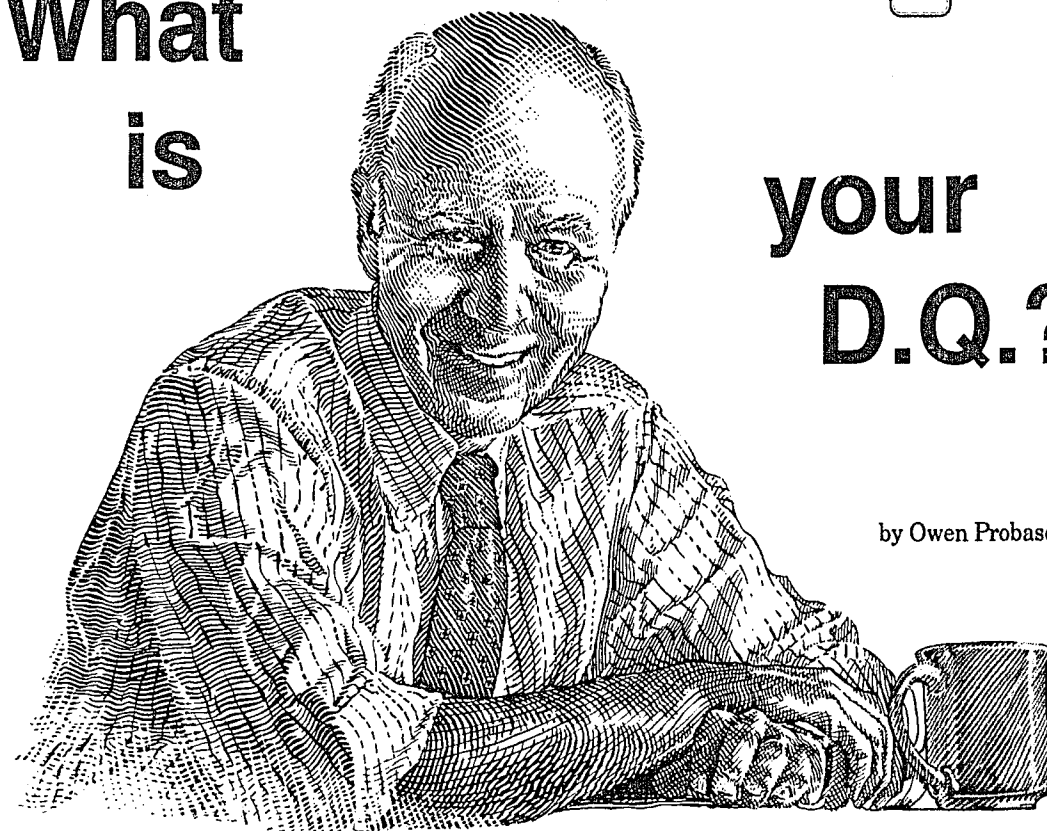


The role of the Diaconate



What is

your D.Q.?



by Owen Probasco

What is your D.Q.? No, I am not referring to Don Quixote; I am referring to your *Diaconate Quotient!*

What or who is a deacon? What is their purpose? Their role? How well do our deacons fulfill this function? What sets a person aside, or how is he/she different "just" because they have been asked to serve their local church in this manner?

Going beyond a "set list"

Yes, the Shiloh, N.J., church has a clearly defined list of "responsibilities" that we expect our deacons to fulfill, but such a list represents only the "skeleton" of unlisted but understood responsibilities.

In many ways, any task is what you make of it. And I am sure that a member of the diaconate could

correctly and with good conscience limit his or her activities to meet the items set forth in any such list! But I am also convinced that each

Ordination is a sobering, soul-searching experience that signifies a holy bond between the individual, the local church body, and our Lord.

person so-ordained has accepted a special mantle of responsibility from the hand of God. This com-

pels them to go beyond such defined lists and to be responsive to the needs and responsibilities that open to them.

Willing to serve

The ordination process is a sobering, soul-searching experience that signifies a holy bond between the individual, the local church body, and our Lord. It implies a dedicated willingness to serve and to support one another in the work of His Church.

As deacons, we help with the preparation and serving of communion. In so doing, we become active participants, sharing the love, beauty, and truth of Christ's salvation for all who love and confess our Lord and Savior.

We participate in and rejoice

with the church when a new Christian and/or church member is baptized, thereby indicating a life-changing, life-committing decision through the act of baptism. We uphold the pastor and his family in our private and corporate prayer life. (We have even been known to encourage and/or admonish—as age and Christian love gives us the opportunity or assumed need!)

Other duties

The Shiloh diaconate also prepares for and leads out in our Friday evening Bible study service. Leading up to the pastor's Bible study, it is our task to center our thoughts on a theme through Scripture, music, poetry, readings, or related materials. Additionally, several members of our diaconate host mid-week Bible study groups in their homes.

Thankfully, we are not expected to "preach" in the pastor's absence (nor when he is present); however, we do arrange for pastoral or pulpit supply when situations call for such action.

A natural follow-up for many members of the diaconate is their willingness to accept the role of Sabbath School teacher. Most members are called upon

to provide this leadership and accept it as a humbling yet enriching experience.

Meeting real needs

As most churches do, our church has a relief fund. The responsibility for its distribution and use falls under the direction of the diaconate. The joy of sharing from our church family in situations of hurt, need, and disappointment gives us a glimpse of the love Christ provides each and everyone! His love, His church, His people become agents of joy and relief for the extended family of loved ones or neighbors.

Meeting the needs of our church members, as well as friends and neighbors in the community, is a concern that weighs heavily on the hearts and minds of the diaconate. Our desire is to help others through counseling, visitation, phone conversations, or an attitude of "being available."

Overwhelming challenge, overwhelming Resource

Many times, and perhaps the majority of the time, members of the diaconate feel inadequate and overwhelmed by the awesome responsibilities our

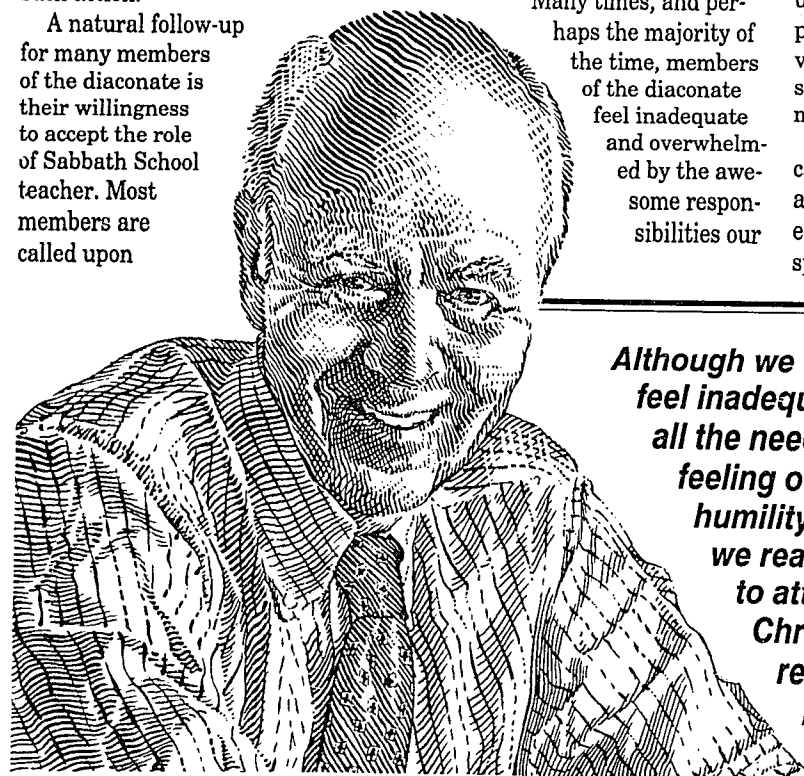
fellow church members have placed upon us. We prayerfully accept the challenge, the burden, the expectation, the mantle of leadership.

Although we often feel inadequate to meet their needs, a far greater feeling of concern and humility engulfs us when we realize that we are asked to attempt these things in Christ's name! He is the reason, He is the cause, He is the justification. He is the one calling for our response to His purposes.

Yet, in our inadequacy, He is also the Rock, the Surety, the Hope, the Love, and the center of our Christian walk! It is then we realize that although some of us have a different "job title" or given first name, our surname is "Christian."

Each member of our church and denomination has the same major responsibilities. Aside from the few duties designated for deacons, the name "Christian" carries a far greater assignment for each of us. Christ-like qualities of hope, love, service, dedication, honor, respect, dependability, and truth are expressed through acts of serving, visitation, encouragement, duty, spreading the Good News, and more.

So, what is a deacon? Perhaps it can best be stated that a deacon is a servant of God! A Christian, asked by fellow Christians, to serve in special ways—but to serve! **SR**



Although we often feel inadequate to meet all the needs, a far greater feeling of concern and humility engulfs us when we realize that we are asked to attempt these things in Christ's name! He is the reason, He is the cause, He is the justification.

Following strict building codes

Sometimes deacons are put through the fire

by Mayola Warner

In preparing to write this article, I kept coming back to the metaphor found in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.

"And no one can ever lay any other real foundation than that one we already have—Jesus Christ. But there are various kinds of materials that can be used to build on that foundation. Some use gold and silver and jewels; and some build with sticks, and hay, or even straw! There is going to come a time of testing at Christ's Judgment Day to see what kind of material each builder has used. Everyone's work will be put through the fire so that all can see whether or not it keeps its value, and what was really accomplished. Then every workman who has built on the foundation with the right materials, and whose work still stands will get his pay. But if the house he has built burns up, he will have a great loss. He himself will be saved, but like a man escaping through a wall of flames" (TLB).

I asked, "What are you saying to me Lord?" Finally I sensed Him saying, "Don't you understand? I'm the master builder, the chief

engineer, and judgment day is coming. Will I find that you, my worker, have used the best materials and followed my blueprint?"

"I have a plan for you. I have always had every day of your life scheduled out even before you began to breathe. (Psalm 139:16 TLB.) Among other things, I have called you to be a part of my diaconate team in Verona, N.Y. Your job description is in the Bible. Enough strength and energy will be supplied.

"And, oh yes, remember that there will be great satisfactions now and rewards to follow, but only if you do it My way. Remember, the fire will test it out!"

Wow! Living out the Christian life and called to be on the spiritual leadership team besides. That is probably the most demanding and re-

warding challenge there is. (Even more than being in the Marine Corps, someone said.)

How does this translate into the building codes for deacons?

First, we must realize that we are "called."

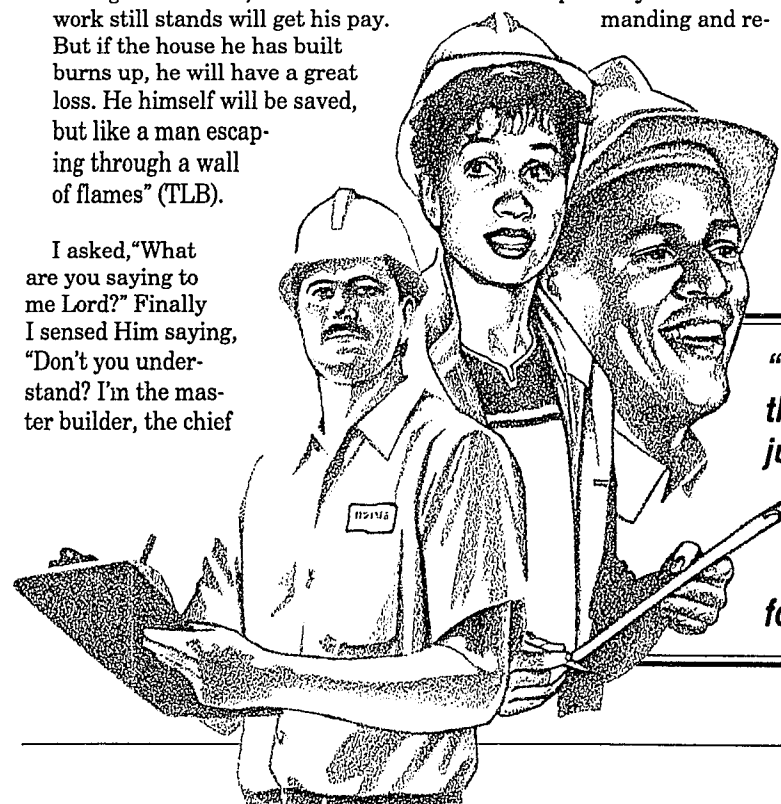
I thought about Esther in the Old Testament who was "called for such a time as this." Have you ever thought about being called to serve in your specific time and place? Praise God for personally choosing His builders, and for the privilege of being among them.

Of course, we know that since God is sovereign, he could get along without us. Mordecai told Esther that "if you keep quiet at a time like this, God will deliver the Jews from some other source" (Esther 4:14). However, that deliverance would come after her execution.

Second, we must have the right motivation. If I focus on simply pleasing Jesus with my time, talents, and gifts, that's all the motivating force I need.

Recently, I dug out some old Sabbath School pictures that our church used when I was a

"I'm the master builder, the chief engineer, and judgment day is coming. Will I find that you, my worker, have used the best materials and followed my blueprint?"



child. Among them are pictures of Jesus loving the children. The one that spoke so strongly to me shows Jesus sitting, surrounded by several children. One little girl is eagerly offering him a handful of flowers, and I could identify with her. "Here, Jesus, here I am. I want to give you all of myself. Whatever I can do to please you. I want to, and I will! Do you want me to play the organ for you, or go to encourage and pray with someone... or clean the church?"

If our focus for service is simply on pleasing a loving Father, then the motivation, energy, and the time to do it will be there. And let's remember this includes serving others. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these," Jesus said, "you have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40 KJV).

And besides all that motivation, the Lord tells us that He will be our helper. "Come to me and I will give you rest—all you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke—for it fits perfectly; and let me teach you; for I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest for your souls; for I give you only light burdens" (Matt. 11:28-30 TLB).

Sometime ago I inherited a wooden plaque that had hung in

my parents' dining room for years. Underneath a picture of Christ are the words, "Only one life, t'will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." A wise person corrected that by saying "only what's done *through* Christ will last." Yes, it is the Holy Spirit who really does the work through our willing hearts and hands.

Thirdly, we must be obedient. Are we sensitive to the needs

If our focus for service is simply on pleasing a loving Father, then the motivation, energy, and the time to do it will be there.

around us? How are we going to respond to change?

In the Verona church, the diaconate role has enlarged and changed during my lifetime. My dad was a deacon for many years. To my recollection and observation, that diaconate mostly served communion and assisted in baptisms. However, I know that they were all godly people who quietly and effectively led out by example. They were supportive to the pastor and prayerful for the whole body.

These days there seems to be a need for more active participation. Our diaconate team now has monthly meetings. We have also had counsel and weekend seminars from our denominational leadership, as well as concentrated Sabbath afternoon Bible studies with our pastor to seek God's answers to specific issues.

I believe that we

need to be more obedient in our personal and group prayer life. I remember someone watching a huge jet airplane take off. "Boy, what power!" they said. "But you know when we pray, we have the power of the universe within!!" Do we sense that?

And how about being more obedient to Bible study and applying what we learn? If we want to "abound more and more" (1 Thess. 4:1), then we need to come often

and come hungry to the Scriptures. Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (KJV). It is the "manufacturer's handbook," and we in America are so blessed to have unlimited access to it. The Word tells us how to live until Jesus comes.

Leaders must be especially alert and faithful to discover and apply the Lord's teachings, both on a personal and corporate level. Then, like a rolling snowball, the more we respond to pleasing and serving Jesus, the more he will creatively open up new opportunities. Remember what he said in Matt. 25:21? "You have been faithful over this small amount so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Begin the joyous tasks I have assigned to you" (TLB).

The calling to be a spiritual leader is an awesome privilege and responsibility. Sometimes we may be tempted to pull back and retreat because of shallow commitment, criticism, burnout, etc. But like Esther of old, we must have

cont. on page 11

The Diaconate

Adapted from A Manual of Procedures for Seventh Day Baptist Churches

Historically, Seventh Day Baptists have set apart two groups by ordination: the pastorate and the diaconate. The diaconate is composed of individuals, chosen by the church, who have agreed to serve the church. The very name, deacon, means "to serve."

Historical roots

The diaconate has its roots in the early Jerusalem Church. The ministry of the diaconate arose because the Hellenistic widows were being neglected by the apostles (the Hebraic Christians of the new Church). The twelve apostles decided that their priorities were to be the "ministry of the word of God and prayer." However, they realized the necessity to help these widows in need. (See Acts 6:1-6.)

In order to meet this need, seven men, "full of the Spirit and wisdom," were chosen to become the first "deacons" of the church. These deacons were chosen for service, thus freeing the apostles for other ministry of word and prayer.

Very soon we see these "servers" or "deacons" doing more than waiting tables. Stephen takes on a preaching ministry and becomes the first Christian martyr. Philip moves out in a ministry to the Ethiopian eunuch. Later in the writings of the Apostle Paul, deacons become church officials with specific qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8ff).

A deacon's duties

Their duties may be summarized in the time-honored phrase: "the deacons are to assist the pastor" in every branch of the church's work. Deacons are to serve as advisors to the pastor. They are to be leaders of the church in the absence of the pastor, as well as assuming major

roles of leadership in his presence.

Scripture is not specific about the responsibilities of the diaconate. However, deacons have traditionally taken on the responsibilities of visiting church members, the sick, and shut-ins; caring for the sick and needy; recommending individuals for church membership; and taking over the pastoral office in the absence of a pastor.

The deacons also assist the pastor in the administration of the sacraments. Our churches have differ-

The deacon is not appointed to rule, but to serve and to make the fellowship of the church more truly a fellowship in Jesus Christ.

ing patterns of administering the sacraments, but all are agreed that the members of the diaconate should serve in this capacity.

Deacons are responsible for the mechanical furnishing and setting of the table, passing the emblems, and assisting in baptisms as needed. However, in cooperation with the pastor, the diaconate must ensure that communion and baptism are spiritual and uplifting experiences.

In the absence of a pastor, the diaconate may be directed by the church to conduct the service of communion or to administer baptism. If not, they should take the lead in asking the church to designate an individual authorized to perform these services.

Because a deacon or deaconess has such wide responsibilities, he/

she will serve best when others in the church are also led into active service. The deacon is not appointed to rule, but to serve and to make the fellowship of the church more truly a fellowship in Jesus Christ.

Choosing a deacon

Deacons and deaconesses are chosen by election of the church. In modern times, a variety of practices have developed. Usually they are nominated by the existing diaconate and presented to the church, with the assurance that the nominees will serve if elected.

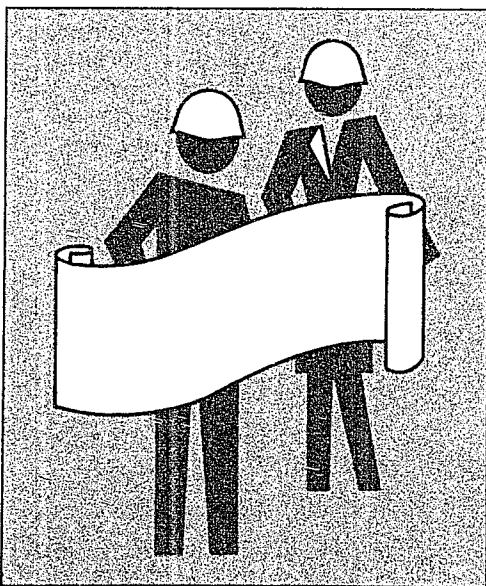
Many churches follow the traditional custom of ordaining the newly elected deacons and deaconesses for life, or as long as they remain members of the church. In most cases, the churches following this pattern are satisfied that it is suitable and adequate.

Some churches simply elect deacons and deaconesses, as above, for a definite term of years. Election is all that is required. Ordinarily, in this case, they are not ordained.

Other churches choose to elect and ordain deacons and deaconesses for life, but rotate their periods of service in a cycle: five years active, five years inactive, five years active, and so on.

Whatever the pattern of election and installation, the church has the responsibility to select the diaconate with care. The characteristics to be sought are clearly stated in the First Letter to Timothy, and they are almost identical with the characteristics to be sought in the selection of pastors.

The church, whatever its methods, must give serious consideration to the selection and preparation of deacons and deaconesses for service. \mathcal{R}



Utilize your deacons— a pastor's perspective

by David Taylor, Westerly, R.I.

Unrealistic expectations of the ministry and role of pastors can exist in the Church today. This can also happen in the ministry and role of the diaconate.

These expectations, if not recognized and dealt with, will cause the long-term health of the local church to suffer. This happens when pastoral care and the spiritual nurture of the congregation falls upon the pastor alone.

Charles A. Ver Staten states in his book, *How To Start Lay-Shepherding Ministries* (Baker Book House, 1983), "Care by a trained lay person may be more effective than by the senior pastor himself. The member needing nurture identifies more readily with a lay person than a professional clergy person, who may be regarded as too busy to spend extra time.

"If the pastor leaves for another church, the lay shepherds will be there to provide continuity. The laity will be blessed when in direct service as God's instruments."

It has been my experience that deacons and deaconesses are generally untrained (formally) when it comes to helping nurture the congregation. Their role is seen as primarily serving communion and helping with baptisms.

Many serving on the diaconate have full-time jobs, so over the years some of their duties have gradually shifted to the pastor. There is an unfair expectation, therefore, that pastors should do all the in-home calling. In smaller churches, that may be possible, although it is not desirable.

I'm not saying that pastors shouldn't make in-home visits; I am saying that he/she should not

be expected to do all the visitation. In churches of 50 and above, to remain healthy, it is even more critical that the diaconate be involved in that ministry.

Even though they are called by God, the local church should encourage their deacons and deaconesses to be trained for ministry. Church after church has had an

One area of church life that has suffered seriously in recent years is prayer. To have 10 percent of the church membership attend a prayer service is said to be "average." Many will not respond to the pastor's appeal to attend this service. But when deacons and deaconesses attend and set their hearts on encouraging others to do the same,

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active pastor under whose leadership progress has been made. Then comes the day when the pastor leaves.

The time between pastors is critical. Failing to train lay leaders to maintain the group, spiritually and otherwise, may leave that church with little inherent capacity for holding to a high level of living and working. The next pastor may then spend months, even years, regaining ground lost in that interim. If the diaconate refuses to be trained to know and to do their work, one must question whether God has called them to that high office.

It is important that the diaconate be willing to set apart at least the same time, talent, energy, and planning that they would give to an important business enterprise. If lay leaders will put a full share of their best into church tasks, all the work will be done with greater efficiency. The diaconate should take the lead in this.

more will attend, and the whole life of the church will be lifted up. Corporate prayer is essential. Prayer is the work of the church.

Besides serving communion and helping with baptisms, I believe the diaconate should also call upon the sick and those house-bound. They should welcome visitors to the church's worship service, and follow up with a phone call or personal visit. In the absence of the pastor, the deacons should meet with the visiting minister so that details of the service will be understood, even if the visiting minister has been there before.

The ministry of the diaconate needs to be elevated in our churches. It is a vital part of every congregation's overall health. A church will grow in its spiritual power when the members, in love, are trained and nurtured in developing a disciplined Christian life. How can this be done? Utilize your deacons and deaconesses. **SR**

Building codes, cont. from page 8

courage, be willing to take risks, and be persevering with faith, hope, and love.

Bruce Larson, in his book, *Wind and Fire*, illustrates so well leaders who can handle turbulence. Writing about sandhill cranes, he says, "These large birds, who fly great distances across continents, have three remarkable qualities. First, they rotate leadership. No bird stays out in front all the time. Second, they choose leaders who can handle turbulence. And then, all during the time one bird is leading, the rest are honking their affirmation."

Larson comments, "That's not a bad model for the church to follow. Certainly we need leaders who can handle turbulence and who are aware that leadership ought to be shared. But most of all, we need a church where we all are honking encouragement."

Larson also says that "schisms, disputes, unkind criticisms, and defamation of character are contrary to the Spirit of Christ." How true! Spiritual warfare is a reality.

As in any battle, we need to correctly identify the enemy first! Who is it? It is Satan and his powers of darkness using men and women as pawns to frustrate and negate the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and churches. We need to employ the spiritual weapons in this warfare and pull down the strongholds in the name and with the mighty power of Jesus Christ!

Finally, we need to persevere. Luke 12:48 says that "much is required from the person to whom much is given" (KJV).

Please read these closing Scriptures and meditate on the blessings and rewards for the faithful:

1 Timothy 3:13—"Those who do

well as deacons will be well rewarded, both by respect from others and also by developing their own confidence and bold trust in the Lord."

1 Peter 5:2—"Feed the flock of God; care for it willingly, not grudgingly; not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve the Lord."

1 Timothy 3:13—"It is quite true that the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter. But the answer lies in Christ."

And lastly, Matthew 21:34 says, "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

Deacons, Christians everywhere, are we fulfilling the purpose for which we were created? If not, why not start now? **SR**

New people, pressures, policies

by Daryl White

There was a time when our church diaconate in Denver, Colo., was relatively inactive, except for serving communion, and occasional pulpit supply. Of course, being a body of constant caregivers, the diaconate performed many behind-the-scene activities.

But our focus has changed now. This decade has brought new challenges and new responsibilities due to the differing views on moral values, issues, and goals that today's society has placed upon us.

Rarely a Sabbath goes by without the Lord bringing new people to our congregation. What a joy to be able to welcome them to our church



**Along with the new people
come the responsibilities, challenges,
and changes.**

family! However, along with the new people come the responsibilities, challenges, and changes.

Add to this the pastoral role that a diaconate serves when a church is without a regular pastor. When

a new pastor arrives, the diaconate must serve in a leadership and counseling role.

It behooves us, then, to view this decade of the '90s as a time when the best must come from all of us, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Today's diaconate members must see their ministry as the ministry of Christ through the whole church.

The diaconate of our church recognized that it needed to update existing policies. Plus, we needed to develop new ones that would help us deal with the issues and responsibilities of our day.

We revised, clarified, and improved the procedures dealing with membership, its orientation and training, as well as baptism, pulpit supply, and licentiate status. Two issues that we spent a lot of time on were "Management of Conflict and Discipline," and membership.

We noted in the SDB Manual of Procedures that it is rather rare for matters of conflict and discipline to arise among Seventh Day Baptist churches. However, as a diaconate,

oped a procedural policy to use in new membership orientation and training, which we can also reasonably follow during this growth period.

The greatest blessing we received in all our effort was to see the Lord's hand in the process. He worked through our combined spiritual gifts.

we believed that we should be proactive on this matter, and that we should have clear policies and procedures in place beforehand.

We drew knowledge from these sources: 1) The section on discipline found in the *SDB Manual of Procedures*; 2) Material prepared by Rod Henry on conflict management and church discipline; 3) A study of Scripture passages, especially Matthew 18; and 4) Dialogue among our diaconate members. We devel-

- Spiritual gifts
- SDB doctrine and beliefs
- Local church organization and procedures

- Denominational polity and organization

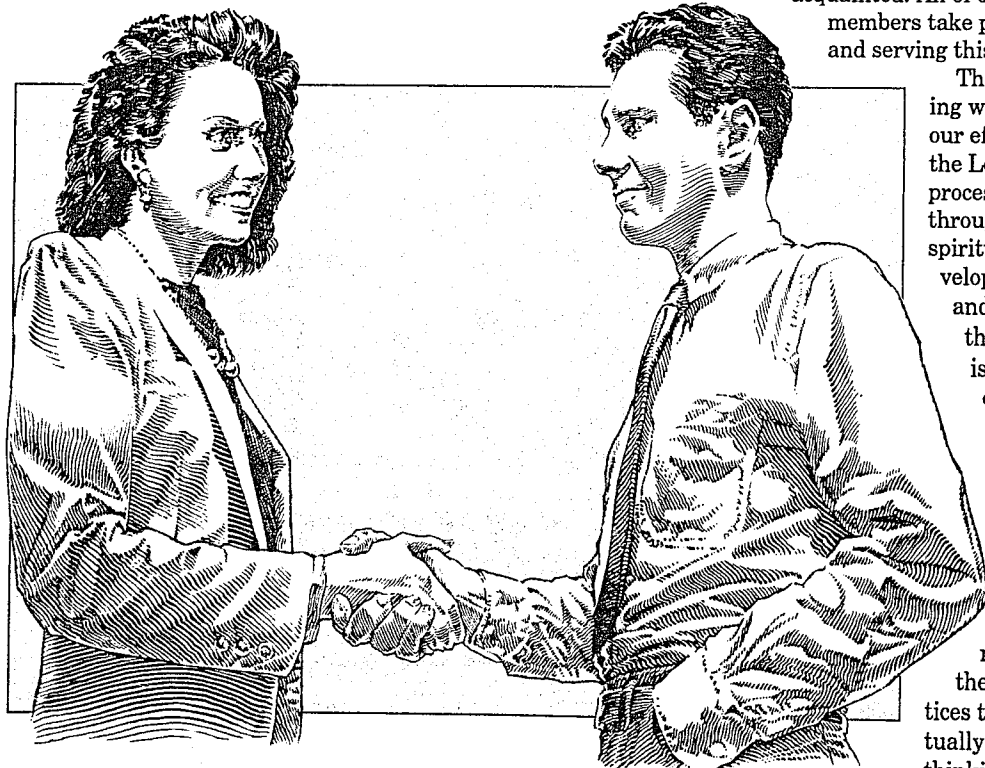
- Bible understanding

A special diaconate-sponsored meal for all membership candidates and their immediate families has proven to be a real blessing. We use this occasion for fellowship and the opportunity to become better acquainted. All of our diaconate members take part in hosting and serving this meal.

The greatest blessing we received in all our effort was to see the Lord's hand in the process. He worked through our combined spiritual gifts to develop new policies and procedures

that help the ministry of the diaconate be an integral part of Christ's ministry in the church.

We would encourage other churches and diaconates to review their current practices to see if they actually reflect current thinking and actions. *SR*



Women's Society page by Charlotte Chroniger

SCSC teams, projects set

"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe" (1 Timothy 4:12 NASB).

This summer, 23 Seventh Day Baptist young adults are going to practice Paul's admonition to Timothy—to be a Christ-like example in their speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. They will represent the Lord as they give of their time and talents to serve our congregations as Summer Christian Service Corps (SCSC)/Dedicated Service workers.

The workers and projects for 1996 are:

Battle Creek, Mich.—Emily Davis (Hemet, Calif.) and Kristin Rood (Dodge Center, Minn.), with PD (Project Director) Ruth Bennett.

Boulder, Colo.—Kellie Mazza (Shiloh, N.J.), David Stall (Berlin, N.Y.), and Becky Young (Hopewell, Pa.), with PD Pastor David Thorngate.

Dodge Center, Minn.—Betsy Boyd (New Enterprise, Pa.), Cindy Dickinson (Bridgeton, N.J.), and Rachel Parker (Thornton, Colo.), with PD Karen Payne.

North Loup, Neb.—John Mark Camenga (Daytona Beach, Fla.), Donnah Eldred (Queenslands, Australia), and Jaci Neher (Dodge Center), with PD Helen Goodrich.

Riverside, Calif.—Amanda Graffius (New Enterprise), Brian Heath (Loveland, Colo.), Cathy Rogers (Belpre, Ohio), and Daniel Van Horn (North Loup), with PD Vicki Burdick.

Westerly, R.I.—Lora Dickinson (Bridgeton) and Amy Skaggs (Longmont, Colo.), with PDs Terri and Danny Shea.

Milton, Wis.—Nicole Cruzan (Milton, Wis.), Tanya Henry (Janesville, Wis.), Adam Mackintosh (Half Moon Bay, Calif.), Margot Walker (Janesville), with PD Pastor George Calhoun.

Shiloh, N.J.—Chris Bond (Shiloh) and Debbie Moncrief (Bridgeton), with PDs Sandy Layton and Charlotte Chroniger.

Training for 19 of the workers will be held June 21-30 at Jersey Oaks Camp near Shiloh. The training staff includes Althea Rood and Linda Greene (both of Dodge Center), Jan Bond (Shiloh), Mary Jane McPherson (Lebanon, N.J.), Pastor Bill Shobe (Washington, D.C.), Vivian Looper (Westerly), and Shari Severance (Brighton, Colo.).

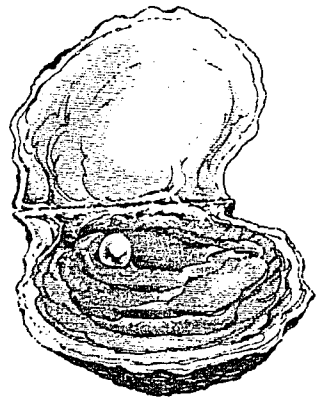
Training for the Milton church's four dedicated service workers will be held in Milton in conjunction with training for Stained Glass. (Stained Glass is the six-member singing group that has toured the country the past two summers.)

The training staff in Milton will be Pastor George Calhoun, Rev. Rod Henry, Jon Cruzan, Jane Mackintosh, and Pastor Steve Osborn.

An exciting first for the SCSC program is having a young lady from Australia, Donnah Eldred, participate in the program. Another first is that the workers will be serving their fifth week at Conference. Because so many schools had to make up snow days, training dates were moved up a week to give more young people a chance to participate this summer. To get in the five weeks of training, the workers will serve in a variety of ways dur-

ing General Conference (teaching, leading recreation, office-related jobs, etc.).

This year the SCSC Committee has had to make different kinds of decisions affecting the program and our young adults. We have sought the Lord's guidance and tried to make the best decision for each situation. Keep praying for the Committee as they make some final decisions; for the workers as they prepare to serve our churches; and for the project directors and host churches as they prepare for an exciting summer of blessings and challenges. *SR*



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

Farmer sneezes for luck

From *The Sabbath Recorder*, June 13, 1889, by M.H. Jaquith

One day last week, Farmer Jones sat on his stone fence to let his horses rest after an hour's steady plowing. Mentally, Mr. Jones is very like his horses, slow but sure. Out of the hazy nebulae of facts and figures, it takes a long time for him to formulate an idea. But once evolved, it has come to stay, and if action is required, it means action for him.

"Kee-hash! Kee-hash!" sneezed Mr. Jones six times in succession.

"Sneeze on Thursday, they say that's for luck," said Mr. Jones to himself. "But it would be a good deal more like my luck this year, to have a bad cold coming on in my head, so as to stay the whole winter. But come to think, Mr. Rankin said in his Thanksgiving sermon there wasn't any such thing as luck, and that every simple little thing was ordered by God. It's a hard doctrine."

His next remarks seemed totally irrelevant, yet his train of thought had logically led to, "And next Sabbath, they are going to take up an extra missionary collection, to make up for what's behind, and pay back what the head offices in New York have borrowed, so as to keep their word good to the home missionaries out west here, and not have them suffer all winter. And that's business too, but fifty thousand dollars is a big lot of money these hard times." And there was another long pause.

"And the summer, let me see, in July it must have been I gave five dollars, one for me, and one

for wife, and one for Jane, and the other two for some poor members, so as to make a dollar a head for every member of the Shiloh church. Seems to me I did my share then, and if other folks had only done theirs..."

Another silence, and then his remarks took the form of a discussion between two persons. It reads as if he rudely interrupted himself, but each dash represents a season spent in thought.

"And now the preacher and the Lord want me to give some more—

"But I had such bad luck with my crops this year, wheat falling so, and corn only half a crop—

"But the oats I put in where the wheat was got a bumper good stand, and brought most as much money as the wheat would, and the corn is so good a price that the half crop sells for most as much as a full one—

"But stock is so low, and grass was so scarce—

"But what hay there was is better than most years, and not a head of horses, or hogs, or cattle have been lost by sickness, or strayed, or been stolen—

"And it has been so dry, there's been no sickness in the family and no doctor's bills, and when I set that against what I paid Dr. Green two years ago, when we had a wet season, and big crops, and lots of money for them, but every one of us down with malaria, and a hundred dollars clean cash out of pocket for it—

"And then no death among all my kinfolk, far and nigh, the whole year, and father and mother both spared to me and both over eighty—

"Simeon Dobson Jones," said he, springing excitedly to his feet, "you've had good luck all this whole year, and have been going around and whining about it, and com-

plaining against the Lord all the time. You haven't been dealing as fair with the Lord as you have with your neighbors! You call yourself a Christian, and you haven't even been honest toward God!

"If I live till next Sabbath, I'll put five dollars for a sin-offering, plant that down!" (He stuck the butt end of his whip stock sharply into the ground.) "And five for a trespass-offering, and plant that too! And five more for an offering of first-fruits, and another five for a thank-offering. And I'll tell the wife she can give all she feels like, and I'll be good for it. And then I'm afraid it isn't half what I ought to pay, but it makes me feel good already."

He strode with an unusually quick pace to his plow and, seizing the handles, started up his horses. Then he said with a laugh, "These six sneezes did mean good luck after all."

Will somebody else please sneeze? *SR*



SR Almanac

Where we have been...

One year ago—June 1995

Testimonies explain, "What the SR means to me." Writers include Chris Mattison, Elmo Fitz Randolph, Lannette Calhoun, Cormeth Lawrence, Ruth Burdick, Thelma Tarbox, Glen Warner, Ethel Dickinson, Jean Jorgensen, Mayola Warner, Norma Rudert, Scott Hausrath, and Beth Wallstrom.

"Focus" page relates how the *Recorder* is an "evangelistic gold mine" overseas.

Lora Dickinson shares in "The Beacon" about her Habitat for Humanity spring break project.

Local church news items come from Riverside, Calif.; Battle Creek, Mich.; and Shiloh, N.J.

Five years ago—June 1991

Several writers (Steve and Vivian McNeme, Gary Thomas, and Dan Gregg) reflect on the "Sanctity of Life."

Missionary Ian Ingoe reports on Phalombe Plains flood disaster, along with encouraging news of baptisms in Malawi.

Plainfield, N.J., congregation forced to say goodbye to their historic ceramic tile roof.

Coverage of Pastor's Conference in Battle Creek, led by Rodney Henry, Sidney Draayer, and Larry Graffius.

10 years ago—June 1986

Yvonne Stephan compiles special anniversary sections to celebrate 50 years of "The Beacon." Many reprints from past issues are shared, plus reminiscences from early participants K. Duane Hurley and Nancilu Rankin.

"SDBs around the world" highlights the Netherlands, Germany, and Poland.

Pastor Ron Elston reports on church growth in Naylor, Mo.

The first T.I.M.E. (Training in Ministry by Extension) seminar, held in Salemsville, Pa., attracts nine leaders from Pennsylvania, New York, Canada, and Tennessee.

Bill Tamburrino writes tribute to recently deceased grandparents, Rev. and Mrs. Grover Brissey.

25 years ago—June 1971

Marlboro SDB Church, Bridgeton, N.J., hosts SCSC (Summer Christian Service Corps) training.

New feature announced: "If I Had One Sermon to Preach." SDB pastors to prepare the messages.

Pastor Paul Maxson retires after serving Berlin, N.Y., church for 31 years. Rex Burdick to serve beginning September 1.

Karl Stillman, Westerly, R.I., receives Community Service Award for 1971.

Associations held in Shiloh, N.J.; Verona, N.Y.; Washington, D.C.; and Texarkana, Ark.

50 years ago—June 1946

Three SDB colleges—Salem, W.Va.; Alfred, N.Y.; and Milton, Wis.—list their summer session courses.

Rev. Hurley Warren returns to pastor the Plainfield, N.J., SDB Church after serving two years in the Army Chaplain Corps. The church thanks Victor Skaggs for serving as acting pastor in the interim.

Work continues on new Community Center in Little Genesee, N.Y., following 1943 fire at the Old Town Hall.

Pastors' Conference meets in Alfred with the theme, "Prayerless Pews make Powerless Pastors."

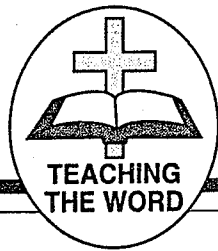
Pastor Orville Babcock agrees to direct Pre-Con retreat in Milton.

Many churches list their Vacation Bible School schedules.

...where are we headed?

Pray—

- for our leaders in diaconal ministry
- for the "connecting" outreach of the SR
- for youth involved in local missions
- with thanks for "The Beacon"
- a blessing on T.I.M.E. leaders
- for all of this year's school graduates
- for SCSC trainers, workers, and projects



A dedicated diaconate

My church—Alfred Station, N.Y.—is presently involved in the initial stages of seeking new members for its diaconate. Church members were invited at the last quarterly meeting to pray for God's guidance and suggest possible candidates to serve as a deacon or a deaconess.

The present diaconate will prayerfully consider these individuals and, using this list, commend to the membership appropriate candidates. The church will make the choice, representatives of the diaconate will convey the church's call to the selected individuals, and the pastor will plan the ordination service for those who have accepted the church's call.

Why do we have diaconates? Who is qualified to serve as a deacon or deaconess? What do diaconal members do?

Where do we get the idea for a diaconate?

The first church in Jerusalem had a problem, according to Acts 6:1-7. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the early church had grown beyond the capacity of the twelve apostles to handle all the people's needs. The inclusion of members who spoke different languages may have created a natural division which could result in inequalities.

One inequality apparently arose in the distribution of food to the widows. Scripture tells us that the apostles heard the murmuring of the Hellenistic converts, acknowledged the unfairness in church

practice, evaluated their own ministry calling—"We can't do everything!"—and proposed a solution to the problem.

The apostles called the church together and defined their own vision for ministry as preaching the Gospel and prayer. They suggested that a specific number of members be appointed to attend to the needs of the church's widows.

With a clear understanding of the problem, the apostles asked the church to select "seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3 RSV). The church didn't wait for a committee to be established to hold hearings on the issue, but acted on the leadership's understanding of the problem and solution.

The whole congregation chose Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, who was a convert. We are told only the function the seven were to perform. Though traditionally regarded as the first deacons, the task to which they were commissioned is not mentioned by a position title. We have taken the position name, "deacon," from the Greek word for their appointed task—to serve, *diakoneo*.

Deacons are identified as a church position in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3. The Greek word, *diakonos*, is translated as "deacons" in these two references in our English Bibles. Deacons are identified as church leaders and closely linked in the Philippian and Timothy passages with the Greek word, *episkopos*, which has been tradi-

tionally translated as "bishops" ("overseers" in the NASB, NIV).

Seventh Day Baptists have stressed the shepherd responsibilities of the church leader described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 by using the title "pastor" (Ephesians 4:11) rather than the title "bishop."

The word of God spread, and the number "obedient to the faith" increased as a result of the expanded organizational structure and the zeal of the new converts. I feel that this occurred because the seven had the spiritual gifts and commitment to expand their ministry tasks.

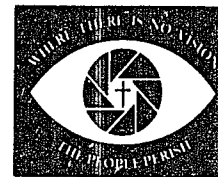
Stephen was a convincing speaker (Acts 6:10) who became a martyr for the faith. I like to think that Stephen's defense of the faith and his forgiveness of his killers before he died was a contributing factor in the conversion of the apostle Paul.

Philip, another of the seven, was an evangelist (Acts 21:8) who performed signs and miracles in Samaria where he was instrumental in the conversion of a renowned magician, Simon. Philip's witness to the Ethiopian court official and his subsequent conversion and baptism are an important example of the deacon's or deaconess' power to witness through knowledge of the Scriptures.

Why do we have diaconates?

The New Testament (Acts 6) is quite clear that the early deacons were commissioned to fulfill a specific need in the covenant commu-

cont. on page 26



Do you know where Sri Lanka is? It's not difficult to locate. It's an island off the southern coast of India, relatively large compared to other islands that have Seventh Day Baptist Conferences. I'd like to share some excerpts (quoting closely as possible) from a letter I recently received from that country.

"We want to tell you very happy news about our group. We were founded 'Baptist Association of Sri Lanka' last Feb. 2, 1995. At the moment, we have four main branches in various areas. Besides that, we formed another branch in the mid up-country areas. There, majority of the population is Indian origin, Tamils. They are professionally estate plantation workers. They are very suppressed people in Sri Lanka. We want to work for them very hard because of their poor situation. They have a lack of facilities.

"We have some literature that you sent us before. Now we try to do some other translation work. At present, the people want to know the real difference of 7th Day Baptist theology. So we have to do some translation to the main local languages.

"The last couple of years we have faced a very tragic situation of ethnic problem. My family also was affected by these problems. That is the reason we could not properly do our communications."

Here is a country where the people have gone through a civil war and have lost confidence in the churches that were available to them. They reached out and discovered the Seventh Day Baptist Convention. They contacted the Missionary Society office, and obtained

study materials and tracts. During the past year, they have translated a couple of our tracts into the languages found in their area of Sri Lanka. They have also started some church groups.

How do you feel about people in other countries who start looking into another denomination after a tragic situation or ethnic war? Is the purpose of their search simply to get away from those other denominations? Do we, as a "new"

with little or no sacrifice. But what is going to happen when they begin to ask for things that cost more, that demand more sacrifice?

Isn't it wonderful that God places us in the position to help people in other countries?

I look at the conditions in which these people live, and I marvel at the survival rate. They live with the fact that they'll survive. But they assume that "survival" is all that they have in their future.

These people need to know God to a fuller extent than other denominations have allowed. Perhaps by helping them, these new contacts will see a God worth following.

denomination to their country, want the responsibility of nurturing them out of their trauma? I believe that the answers to these questions will help determine "if" and to "what degree" we are to assist them.

Can we overlook the problems that brought them to us? Are we able to admit that this may be God's way of bringing them to us?

We need to look long and hard at the opportunity being extended to us. These people need to know God to a fuller extent than other denominations have allowed. Perhaps by helping them, these new contacts will see a God worth following. After all, unbelievers judge God by the way His followers act.

Presently, Walter Jayewardene has requested only tracts, books, and other written materials so the people of Sri Lanka can better understand what Seventh Day Baptists believe. We can supply these

Think of how often we become dissatisfied when we don't get even the frivolities of life. These people are happy just to have shelter and some food each day. We could learn a lot from them!

Paul states it well in Philippians 4:11 (NIV): "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."

How can we learn to be content in whatever circumstances we find ourselves? What benefit is there if we live to be 100 years of age, and have a large house with a lot of possessions, if we have done so little to encourage each other and enhance the lives of those really in need?

Maybe we need to do some praying—and earnest talking with God—about the intended purpose we have here on earth. God is great, and He is an awesome God. Listen to His small quiet voice speaking to us. *SL*



the BEACON

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

June 1996

Youth activities for Conference

Sunday
9:00 p.m.—
Annual Business Meeting
9:30 p.m.—
Movie Night/Recreation*

Monday
9:30 p.m.—
Roller Skating (This is our private party. Bring your pastor or youth advisor-approved tape or CD.)

Tuesday
9:30 p.m.—
Crazy Bowling*

Wednesday
9:30 p.m.—
Youth/Pastor Basketball Game*

Thursday
5:00 p.m.—
Youth Banquet: *Olympic Closing Ceremonies*
9:30 p.m.—
Stained Glass Concert

Friday
9:30 p.m.—
Praise and Worship

Sabbath
9:30 p.m.—
Waterballoon Olympics

*(Activity sites to be confirmed)

Attention Pre-Con Campers

1996 Youth Pre-Con Camp

Dates:
July 31, 4:00 p.m.—
August 4, 1:00 p.m.
Campers:
Ages 15-18 (or compl. 9th)

Location:
Camp McCullough, 20665
SE 264th, Kent, Wash.
Theme:
Winning the Gold

Director:
Pastor Scott Hausrath
Montrose, Calif.

Staff:
•Pastor Eric Davis
Riverside, Calif.
•Pastor Stephen Osborn
Milton, Wis.
•Pastor David and Christina
Thorngate
Boulder, Colo.
•Todd and Tammy Royer
Riverside, Calif.

Fee: \$90.00 (Medical Form required—in May SR)

1996 Young Adult Pre-Con Camp

Dates:
July 31, 4:00 p.m.—
August 4, 1:00 p.m.
Campers:
Ages 18-29 (or in SCSC)

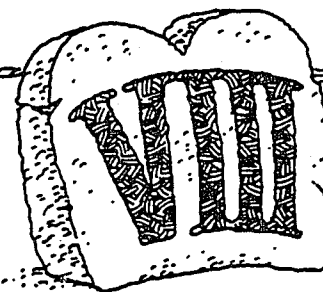
Location:
St. Martin's College,
Lacey, Wash.
Theme:
Who Are You?

Director:
Pastor David Taylor
Westerly, R.I.

Staff:
•Margaret Taylor
Westerly, R.I.
•Pastor Bernie
Wethington
White Cloud, Mich.

Fee: \$124.00

Mail your
Registration Form
from the
May Sabbath
Recorder

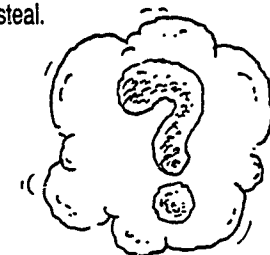


You Shall Not Steal

Directions: Fill in the blanks below. Find the words you wrote in the blanks hidden in the puzzle. Words go up, down, right, left, and diagonally.

- God says, "You shall not _____."
- _____ is one way to steal from a store.
- Keeping extra _____ when the clerk makes a mistake is stealing, too.
- God says not some, but _____ stealing is wrong.
- Cheating when playing a _____ steals the other person's chances to win.
- Taking _____ from Mom's purse without asking is stealing.
- You can steal _____ and _____ from your parents by not doing your jobs and by saying bad things about them.
- You can _____ God to meet all your needs.
- If you trust God, there's no _____ for you to steal.

NGSHOPLIFTINGT
GETAMYTRUCRSTR
EKEERENGSETUEE
EMAGANCHMPANSC
GALLEOOINSEYRT
ESPECMTRREASON
CHANGEISORNEAL



Source: *Ten to Grow On: Teaching the Ten Commandments to Today's Child* by Sandra Klaus (ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1992), available at your local bookstore or by calling 800-727-3480.

Answers: 1. Steal 2. Shoplifting 3. Change 4. All 5. Game 6. Money 7. Time, Respect 8. Trust 9. Reason



Bible studies offer positive solutions

With one life-giving touch, Jesus changed the lives of men and women. Today, Christians can receive the Master's healing as they study God's Word with fellow Christians.

Four new Christ-centered, Bible-based studies from the *Master's Touch* Bible study series are now available from Concordia Publishing House (CPH).

The new studies address topics such as a Christian perspective of AIDS, workaholism, overcoming depression, and surviving financial crisis. Each study deals with an event or situation that needs heal-

ing. The studies help participants strengthen their relationship with God as they build relationships with others.

All of the four to six-session studies help participants apply God's Word to their lives by relating Scripture to everyday life.

Master's Touch Bible studies are ideal for church or in-home adult small groups and individual study. They can be an effective outreach tool to non-Christians who visit or join the Bible class or small group.

The four new studies are:
Overcoming Depression

AIDS: A Christian Perspective
Living with Workaholism
Surviving Financial Crisis
Four to six lessons each (5 3/8" x 8 3/8"), 64 pages each, paperback, \$3.99 each. Available directly from CPH, phone 1-800-325-3040, or through your local Christian bookstore.

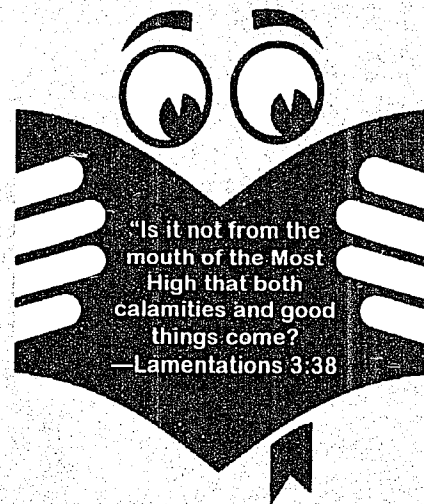
Four previous studies are also available:
Living with Too Little Time
Coping with Stress
Living with Grief
Living with Terminal Illness SR

Bible Q & A: Why does God send calamity?

All of this world's suffering can be traced back to one tragic event: the disobedience of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:6-7). Consequently, sin and its result—suffering and evil—entered the world. But God's hands were not tied as a result.

In working out His purposes, God often uses suffering to discipline us. When the people sinned defiantly, God wreaked havoc by raining catastrophe upon them. God was not capricious or whimsical. Their sin had to be punished; God's holiness demanded it. When they refused to repent, only suffering remained as a way to bring them to repentance.

Not all suffering, though, can be traced to specific sin. Some disasters are the indirect results of a broken world. Certain weather patterns can form a tornado



"Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?"
—Lamentations 3:38

that strikes a city... destroying the property and lives of believers and nonbelievers alike. Highs and lows are a part of the atmosphere; when they collide, destruction is inevitable.

While appearing to be senseless, disasters can have meaning. Suffering can pry our attention away from the trivial to the eternal, from making money and acquiring possessions to our relationship with God. Pain can be an effective tool to raise our sights to God's level and cause us to live more like Christ.

Taken from *The Quest Study Bible*, NIV (Zondervan, 1994), available at your local bookstore or by calling 800-727-3480.

Australasian Conference held in Wellington, New Zealand

Reprinted from "The Link," SDB newsletter of Australasia

Right from the start, two contributing factors made this 10th Australasian Conference session such an unforgettable experience: the natural beauty of Upper Hutt valley, where Camp Akatarawa is situated; and the mild, sunny weather which lasted throughout its duration.

Add to that the warm Christian fellowship and the well-presented program from January 16-23, then you can see why those 81 registered participants, plus 10-15 day visitors, were greatly blessed and encouraged in the Lord. Sister Barbara Wood from Auckland even commented, "This was the best Conference ever!"

Past President Ian Ingoe, his wife, Trudy, and their co-workers, must be congratulated for the great effort they put into the smooth running of the Conference. The theme was based on Matthew 6:33, "But Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God." The following speakers expanded on this subject:

• Pastor Daniel Barrar spoke on Matthew 22:1-14, pointing to the fact that the wedding is ready, but many people have excuses not to come.

• Brother Andrew Peters quoted 1 Corinthians 4:20, that the Kingdom of God is not a matter of words but of power.

• Pastor Ronald Barrar told how Jesus is healing not only the body, but the soul also. There is no sickness in God's Kingdom. Compare Luke 7:21-22.

• Brother Terry Rudd spoke on Matthew 25:13, how the peace of God can reign in our hearts even amidst the uproar and danger in today's world.

• Sister Esperanza Cardona based her address on Matthew 19:16-24, how we have to be prepared to sacrifice our all to enter the Kingdom of God.

• Brother Stefan Kube presented the vision of Christ's Return from Matthew 25:31-34, when Christ will reward the righteous with the entry into His Kingdom, while the wicked will face a judgment of condemnation.

• Brother Theo Hawkins expanded on Mark 4:11, how Jesus

The highlight of the Conference was the baptism of three precious young people who gave their lives to Christ, and one infant was dedicated.

used parables to teach the people the mysteries of God's Kingdom.

• Brother Carl Rudd presented a skit, "The Eye of the Needle," based on Mark 10:23-27, showing how hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God.

• Sister Dorothea Shettel used the same chapter 10, verses 14-15, to show Christ's great love and concern for the children, this being another aspect of God's Kingdom.

• Finally, Senior Pastor Edward Barrar appealed to all to uphold Christian values in conduct and dress, show discernment, and be methodical in the study of God's Word.

The Conference program included six sessions of Natural Evange-

lism Training (NET) conducted by Pastor Charles Graffius and his wife, Lorna, our special guests from the USA. This was a valuable road of discovery.

Firstly, we were led to see what is the Good News. And, further, we were trained to discover the "where and how" God wants to use us as His witnesses. However, it is most important "to be" before you can "do."

The highlight of the Conference was the baptism of three precious young people who gave their lives to Christ, and one infant was dedicated.

Our new President is Pastor Andrew Goulding from Brisbane, who chose his theme from Romans 1:16: "I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

The next Conference is planned for the Sydney region in January 1998.

Our new Office Bearers are:

- President:* Pastor Andrew Goulding
- Vice President:* Pastor Daniel Barrar
- Secretary/Treasurer (N.Z.):* Nicole Westerdaal
- Secretary/Treas. (Australia):* Barbara Eldred
- Youth Leader:* Angela Peters
- Executive:* Terry Rudd, David Hill, Barbara Wood, Esperanza Cardona, and Chris Westerdaal
- Board of Christian Education:* R. Barrar, D. Hill, I. Ingoe, D. Barrar, S. Kube
- Board of Evangelism and Youth:* R. Barrar, I. Ingoe, A. Peters, D. Shettel, B. Eldred, V. Kube SR

Pastor Edgar Wheeler retires—again!

by Margaret B. Allen

The Lost Creek, W.Va., Seventh Day Baptist Church is so grateful to Pastor Edgar F. Wheeler and Xenia Lee for coming out of retirement. They left their home in North Carolina to spend six and one-half months serving and ministering to *all* of our congregation.

(I might add that they were privileged to witness a West Virginia winter that broke some records in snowfall. Flooding in many parts of the state followed because of rapid snow melting with rain.)

Pastor Edgar and Xenia Lee were loved and respected by all, from the very youngest (9-month-old Tyler Ash, who was cared for in their home some days while Momma Roberta worked at the church), to the elderly shut-ins who were visited on a regular schedule.

Those of us who were able to be up and out appreciated his time spent in conducting two weekly Bible studies, and his excellent, thought-provoking, inspirational sermons. One of his favorite re-

mindings to us was, "A Christian is a thinking person."

Pastor Edgar was always ready to talk, to counsel, to listen to any of us who had something to discuss. He was not pushy, but was persis-

"We love you, go in peace, and come back often."

I believe Pastor Edgar and Xenia Lee have prepared us for our new interim pastor, Bill Bowyer and wife, who arrived May 1. They will

**Pastor Edgar
was always ready to talk,
to counsel, to listen to any of
us who had something
to discuss.**

tent in helping us overcome any troubles or situations that needed to be faced.

When we met for our Quarterly Business Meeting on April 13 (the night before their departure), Pastor Edgar gave his final report as our interim pastor. At the conclusion, he received a standing ovation. This was our way of saying,

be with us until our new pastor, Steve Osborn, Angie, and Seth begin their ministry after Conference.

We offer our praise and thanksgiving to God for carrying us through a difficult time and sending the right team to us. May we be a blessing to God and to those who have ministered to us, and those in the future. *SR*

Successful NET Retreat in Sydney

Taking advantage of the fact that Pastor Charles and Sister Lorna Graffius from the USA were visiting Australia, the Sydney SDB Church asked them to present their Natural Evangelism Training (NET) here. This was especially for the benefit of those who were not able to attend the Australasian Conference in New Zealand.

The venue of the retreat was "The Ark," a unique pole and mud-brick convention center in the picturesque Upper Colo Valley, approximately 100 kilome-

ters northwest of Sydney.

The retreat, held February 9-11, was well attended. Those who took part were keenly interested in learning the basic principles of NET, which are: To be a Christian—living an exemplary life—is more important than *knowing* the doctrine. But knowing the Gospel is essential to be able to effectively share it with others, especially when supported by personal testimony. One of the most successful tools of evangelism is presenting the Gospel in an orderly

way, like "The Roman Road."

Other aspects of the retreat dealt with discovering one's spiritual gifts, which should be developed and used to God's glory.

We take this opportunity to thank Pastor Chuck and Lorna for their dedicated ministry. Thanks also to the SDB Board of Christian Education (USA) for providing the valuable 50-page retreat manuals. *SR*

Reprinted from "The Link."

Waiting for winter to wane in Westerly

by Cindy Nadeau

After a long, white winter, we in southern New England have finally finished digging out! Those of us in Westerly, R.I., continued to meet and minister to each other via Bible studies, Sabbath School, and small groups, despite more than 100 inches of snow.

Our Sabbath School meets weekly with six graded classes and two adult classes. Class subjects range from our children learning familiar Bible stories, up to those using *The Helping Hand*.

Four Bible study groups meet in homes and at the church meeting house. Each group chooses its own topic and format.

Of great note is the blossoming of our small groups. As always, our Women's Society continues to meet regularly and also to work on various projects around the church. A new addition, our Men's Fellowship, meets once a month for breakfast and Bible study.

And we haven't forgotten our young folks. The Senior Youth Fellowship meets under the direction of Eric and Deanna Fallon. Due to the hectic schedules of our many young adults, they meet on an irregular basis.

Two new Youth Fellowships have joined them. Our Junior Youth Fellowship meets twice a month after church services, under the direction of Helen Brayman, Barbara Grove, and Julianne

other, we continue to witness outward. We support our local Teen Center and homeless shelter, as well as denominational projects. In addition, through Pastor Dave Taylor's participation in the Clergy

**We praise the Lord
for raising up these able leaders
as we enjoy watching our children
grow in His grace.**

Grove. Meeting each week during our Sabbath welcoming service is the Intermediate Youth Fellowship, under the guidance of Danny and Terri Shea. We praise the Lord for raising up these able leaders as we enjoy watching our children grow in His grace.

Along with ministering to each

Association, we have hosted special services for the community during the holidays.

As summer turns our way, we look forward to camps and Vacation Bible School. We pray that we can remain an effective, positive witness for Him here in Westerly and Pawcatuck. *SR*

Births

Yarberry.—A daughter, Caitlin Raquel Yarberry, was born to Shane and Lori Yarberry on October 2, 1994.

Davis.—A son, Christian Paul Davis, was born to Grant and Theresa (Basile) Davis on July 22, 1995.

Davis.—A daughter, Andrea Meagan Davis, was born to Chris and Corina (Soper) Davis on February 7, 1996.

Yarberry.—A son, Nicholas Ryan Yarberry, was born to Shane and Lori Yarberry on Feb. 26, 1996.

Marriages

Burdick - Hart.—Ian Burdick and René Hart were united in marriage on March 23, 1996, at the Little Chapel in the Woods in Denton, TX. Dr. David Sparks officiated.

Accessions

Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX
Earle Holston, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Alan Brosam

Denver, CO
Jim Galanaugh, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Samantha Dixon
 Sean Dixon
 Don Elwood
 Ryan Galanaugh

Doniphan, MO
Ronald Elston Sr., interim pastor
 Joined by letter
 Arthur D. Burkhamer

Emily Burkhamer
 Jane Burkhamer
 Martha Burkhamer
 Rachel Burkhamer
 Tim Kulik
 Heath Moffett
 Heather Moffett

Lost Creek, WV
Edgar Wheeler, interim pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Brittany Bond
 Alex Boyajian
 Jennifer Boyajian
 Natalie Boyajian
 Rebecca Boyajian
 Amy Davis
 April Davis

Salemville, PA
Christian Mattison, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Eric Blough
 Joined after testimony
 Jeffrey A. Baker

Westerly, RI
David Taylor, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Julianne Grove
 David Ray
 Laura Ray
 Joined by letter
 Walter F. Mills IV

Obituaries

Fletcher.—John R. Fletcher, 67, of New Enterprise, Pa., died unexpectedly on July 29, 1995, at the Nason Hospital in Roaring Spring, Pa.

He was born on January 26, 1928, in Woodbury, Pa., the son of Thomas P. and Esta (Keagy) Fletcher. He married Lois K. Kagarise on December 11, 1952.

John was a driver for E.F. Smith of Roaring Spring, and was an Army veteran of the Korean War. He attended the Bell Seventh Day Baptist Church in New Enterprise.

In addition to his wife, Lois, survivors include three children, Karen Davis of Lancaster, Pa., J. Raymond of Sunbury, Pa., and Rory J. of Williamsburg, Pa.; his father, Thomas, of Woodbury; one sister, Nada Russell, of Everett,

Pa.; and seven grandchildren. He was preceded in death by two children, Jared R. and Jocelyn K. Ernst; and one brother, Vance L.

Funeral services were held on July 31, 1995, at the Bell SDB Church, with the Rev. Christian R. Mattison officiating. Burial was in Salemville Cemetery, New Enterprise.

Swerediuk.—Thomas S. "Sam" Swerediuk, 63, of Verona, N.Y., died on December 2, 1995, in Rome (N.Y.) Memorial Hospital.

He was born on August 26, 1932, the son of Semon and Katherine (Evcanciew) Swerediuk. On November 15, 1958, he was united in marriage to Janice M. Sholtz in Churchville, N.Y.

Sam was employed at the New York State School for the Deaf for 15 years, retiring in 1988. He had also worked for Montgomery Ward and at Parts Supply. He was a U.S. Army veteran who served with the 17th Infantry Regiment in Korea.

Sam attended the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Churchville. He was the sexton of New Union Cemetery, and a member of the Henry P. Smith Post American Legion.

Survivors include two daughters, Amy Bartels of Moore, Okla., and Doris Wheeler of Ashtabula, Ohio; one son, David, of Columbus, Ohio; two sisters, Ann Konowich of Rome, and Helen Chilkotowsky of Philadelphia, Pa.; four brothers, Joseph and Michael, both of Rome, Andrew of Whitesboro, N.Y., and John of St. Petersburg, Fla.; five grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by two sisters, Mary Giardino and Sophie Jones.

Funeral services were held on December 5, 1995, at the Verona SDB Church. Interment was in New Union Cemetery.

VanHorn.—Aurabeth E. VanHorn, 80, of Alfred, N.Y., died unexpectedly on December 30, 1995, at St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell, N.Y. She

was taken there after being stricken while attending services at the Alfred Seventh Day Baptist Church.

She was born on December 20, 1915, in Adams Center, N.Y., the daughter of A. Clyde and Clella (Ford) Ehret. On August 24, 1942, she married Eugene T. VanHorn in Alfred. He died in 1989.

Aurabeth lived most of her life in Alfred, where she and her husband were co-proprietors of the Sun Publishing Company of Alfred. She graduated from Alfred University in 1938, and was a lifelong member of the Alfred SDB Church. She was also an active member of the church's Ladies Aid Society.

Survivors include one daughter, Christine Brothmarkle of Reston, Va.; two sons, Eric of Cleveland, Ohio, and Roger of Alfred; one sister, Gretta Potter of Mystic, Conn.; five grandchildren, and eight nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held on May 4, 1996, with the Revs. David Clarke and Leon Wheeler officiating.

Kagarise.—Randy L. Kagarise, 39, of Claysburg, Pa., died unexpectedly on February 24, 1996, in the emergency room of Nason Hospital following a heart attack.

He was born on April 18, 1956, in Roaring Spring, Pa., the son of Robert W. and Edna (Leach) Kagarise. He married Deborah Claar on June 12, 1982, in East Freedom, Pa.

For the past five years, Randy was employed as a concrete finisher at New Enterprise Stone and Lime Co., Roaring Spring. He was a 1974 graduate of Northern Bedford High School, and served in the Army for two years. He was a member of the National Rifle Association, and the Bass Anglers Sportsman's Society. He was also a member of the Bell Seventh Day Baptist Church in New Enterprise, Pa.

In addition to his wife, Deborah, survivors include three sons,

Michael, a Marine at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jeffrey of New Enterprise, and Kyle, at home; one daughter, Lori, at home; his mother, Edna, of New Enterprise; one brother, Robert, of New Enterprise; and three sisters, Debbie K. and Denise Baker, both of New Enterprise, and Doreen Peterson of Warsaw, Ohio. He was preceded in death by his father.

Funeral services were held on February 28, 1996, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church of East Freedom, Pa. Rev. Martin A. Milne officiated.

Burrows.—Myron "Mike" Burrows, 71, of Wolcott, N.Y., died on March 19, 1996.

Mike was the husband of Dorothy and father of six. During his career years, he was a postal clerk and then postmaster in Macedon, N.Y., from 1972-1980. He was involved in Boy Scouting, serving as scoutmaster from 1956 to 1979. He and his family lived in Macedon for 40 years before moving to Wolcott one year ago.

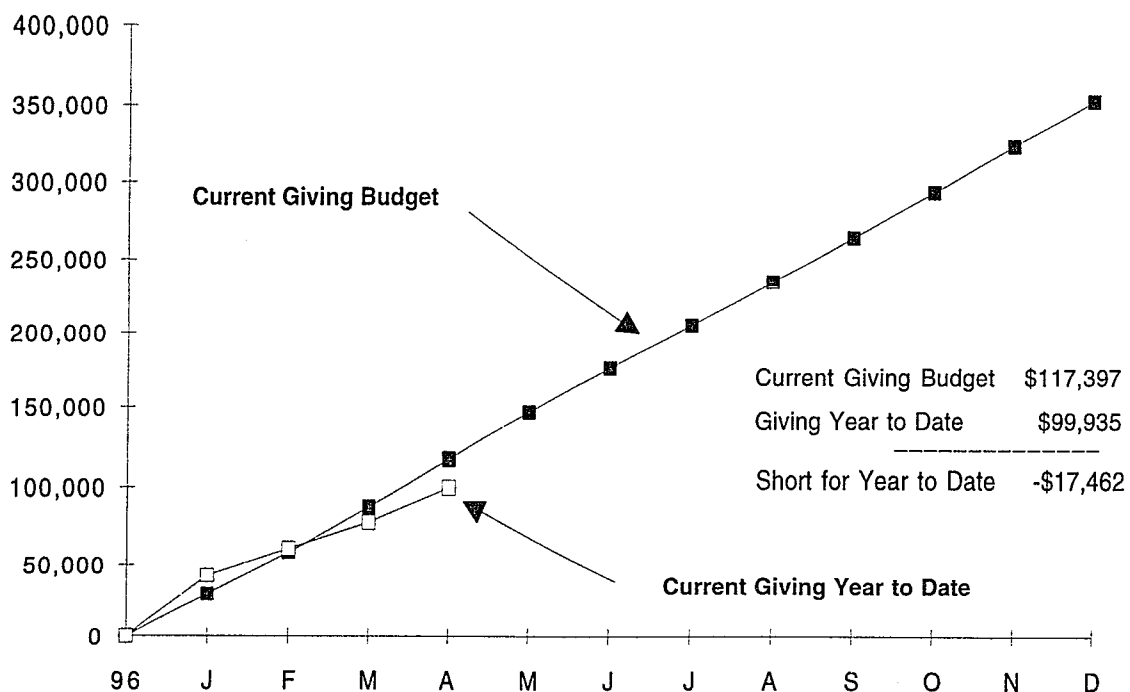
Mike helped pastor the flock of North Ontario United Methodist Church, Ontario, N.Y., by making home visits, taking tapes of worship services to shut-ins, and sharing the Word of God with those no longer able to get to regular services. He was on the Steering Committee that formed Flower City Habitat for Humanity in Rochester, N.Y., in 1984, and then extended his interest in Habitat to Wayne County.

Another of Mike's passions was salvaging and recycling. He would see to it that anything that could be reused was shared with others.

Survivors include his wife, Dorothy; four sons, Ronald, Marvin, Paul, and Robert; two daughters, Linda Hale and Amy Reid; five brothers, one sister, 10 grandchildren, one great-grandson, and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held on March 23, 1996, at North Ontario United Methodist Church.

Denominational Budget 1996



nity: the distribution of food to the Greek-speaking widows. Through their spiritual gifts and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, some of the early deacons were noted preachers and evangelists.

Seventh Day Baptist churches have diaconates because we recognize that the ministry of the local church is more than one leader can manage. Just as growth in the first church in Jerusalem compelled the apostles to expand their leadership group, so our growing churches require an expansion of leadership.

Our churches acknowledge that an individual leader, even a multi-gifted leader, is able to reach only a limited number of contacts, teach a limited number of new disciples, and serve a limited number of needs. The growing church requires a team leadership structure to fulfill its God-given mission. The church calls out gifted and dedicated individuals to join the church's leadership team as deacons and deaconesses.

Early Seventh Day Baptists ordained deacons. The First Hopkinton church of Ashaway, R.I., which was formed as a church in 1708 after meeting for over two decades as a mainland branch of the old Newport church, chose deacons.

Deacons in the first century of the Hopkinton church served as appointment leaders. William L. Burdick observed in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, "The office of deacon meant much in that day, as the deacon was authorized to baptize, and it was understood that he was to become an elder in due time."¹ The second through the sixth pastors (1720-1802) of the Hopkinton church were deacons at the average age of 40, and then elders before becoming pastors at the average age of 57.

Traditionally, the diaconate of the local Seventh Day Baptist church has functioned "to assist

the pastor in every branch of the church's work."²

Church members are commissioned or ordained to diaconal duties—traditionally for life, though some churches prefer limited-term election—so that there will be continuity within the local church's leadership. The pastor typically serves the local church for only a few years while the diaconate preserves the covenant community's defining customs and its identity throughout a lifetime.

Who is qualified to serve?

A church once chose a respected church member to serve as a deacon. He declined their invitation, saying that he might not be able to serve in "a worthy manner."

Who is qualified to serve as a deacon or deaconess?

Deacons and deaconesses shall be immersed faithful members of the local church which has issued them a call to serve (Mt. 3:13-17; Acts 2:38). Scripture suggests that diaconal candidates be tested before being ordained by being responsible for various ministry tasks in the church (1 Tim. 3:10).

To be chosen a deacon, a person will have a good reputation, be full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3).

Individuals being considered for diaconal leadership seek a personal life which provides for prayer (Lk. 11:1-4) and Bible study (2 Tim. 3:14-17). The candidates maintain good communication within their families (1 Tim. 3:12).

They worship each Sabbath day with God's people to remind themselves they belong to Christ and to encourage one another to live the Christian way (Mt. 18:20; Heb. 10:23-25). Deacons or deaconesses know they belong to Christ and God.

What do diaconates do?

Diaconal leaders assist the pastor in helping to make disciples of

Christ by using their spiritual gifts as teachers, evangelists, preachers, and witnesses. (See "A deacon's duties," page 9, in this SR.)

The diaconate members may assist the pastor in instructing, examining, and briefing the baptismal candidate. When a church is without a pastor, a member of the diaconate may be delegated the responsibility to teach the church membership classes. The diaconate is responsible for the physical arrangements prior to baptism and, in some churches, is responsible for recommending new members to the congregation.

The diaconate prepares the sanctuary for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and assists the pastor with the serving of the bread and cup to the membership.

In some of our churches, members of the diaconate serve as the pastoral advisory group and will mediate, if necessary, any differences which a member may have with another member of the covenant community.

We all remember deacons who were known for their lifelong ministries: Mark Sanford for his worship and preaching gifts; Burton and Carol Crandall for their caring and visitation gifts; Helen Ogden for her gift of mercy.

We also remember Harley Bond and George Parrish for their teaching and administrative gifts; Jesse A. Burdick for his gift of encouragement; Orville Bond and Orla Davis for their teaching ministries. There were many others, my father and yours.

Your local church is blessed if it has a dedicated diaconate. **SR**

¹William L. Burdick, "The Eastern Association," *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, 1910, II, 616.

²Victor W. Skaggs, "Ministry," *Manual of Procedures for Seventh Day Baptists*, 1972, 47.

K E V I N ' S

O R N E R

During a Monday night football game between the Chicago Bears and the New York Giants, an announcer observed that Walter Payton, the Bears' great running back, had rushed over *nine miles* in career yardage. The other announcer quipped, "Yeah, and that's with someone knocking him down every 4.6 yards!"

Everyone—even the best—gets knocked down. The key to success is to get up and run again just as hard.

Sounds a lot like church leadership, except that we don't do it on our own strength. We cannot depend on strenuous physical training, a high-power diet, or 290-pound helmeted monsters paving the way for us.

Having heard or read my share of diaconal ordination statements, not one of them appeared like they could move mountains or part the local waterways. Deacons are fellow humans on a tough journey. Yet they are set apart since they have allowed the Lord to direct them toward this special ministry.

I see the diaconate (and pastorate) as a ministry and lifestyle of perseverance. Oswald Chambers writes about this in his devotional classic *My Utmost for His Highest*:

Perseverance means more than endurance—more than simply holding on until the end.

A saint's life is in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, but our Lord continues to stretch and strain, and every once in a while the saint says, "I can't take any more." Yet God pays no attention; He goes on stretching until His purpose is in sight, and then He lets the arrow fly.

I can imagine that's how deacons and deaconesses might feel as they first step into their "ministry shoes." And for many, those shoes are a-shakin' as they present their ordination testimonies. Why? Because they are used to serving—and serving well—behind the scenes. They do not accept their position on the diaconate to be in the limelight.

For those who think that only the up-front people can serve on the diaconate, here's one more gem about perseverance.

John Killinger retold this tale from the *Atlantic Monthly*. It hails from the days of the great western cattle ranches.

A little burro sometimes would be harnessed to a wild steed. Bucking and raging, convulsing like drunken sailors, the two would be turned loose like Laurel and Hardy to proceed out onto the desert range.

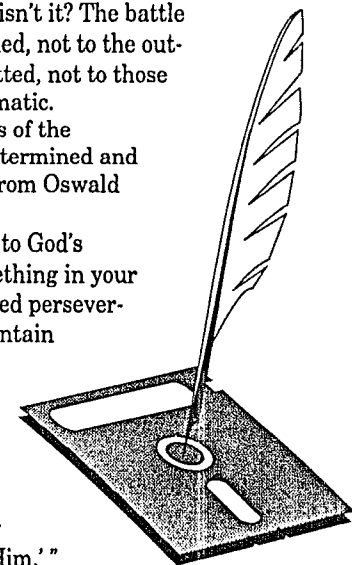
They would be seen disappearing over the horizon, the great steed dragging that little burro along and throwing him about like a bag of cream puffs.

They might be gone for days, but eventually they would come back. The little burro would be seen first, trotting back across the horizon, leading the submissive steed in tow. Somewhere out there on the rim of the world, that steed would become exhausted from trying to get rid of the burro, and in that moment, the burro would take mastery and become the leader.

And that's the way it is with the kingdom and its heroes, isn't it? The battle goes to the determined, not to the outraged; to the committed, not to those who are merely dramatic.

How can members of the diaconate remain determined and committed? Again, from Oswald Chambers:

"Entrust yourself to God's hands. Is there something in your life for which you need perseverance right now? Maintain your intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through the perseverance of faith. Proclaim as Job did, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.'"



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