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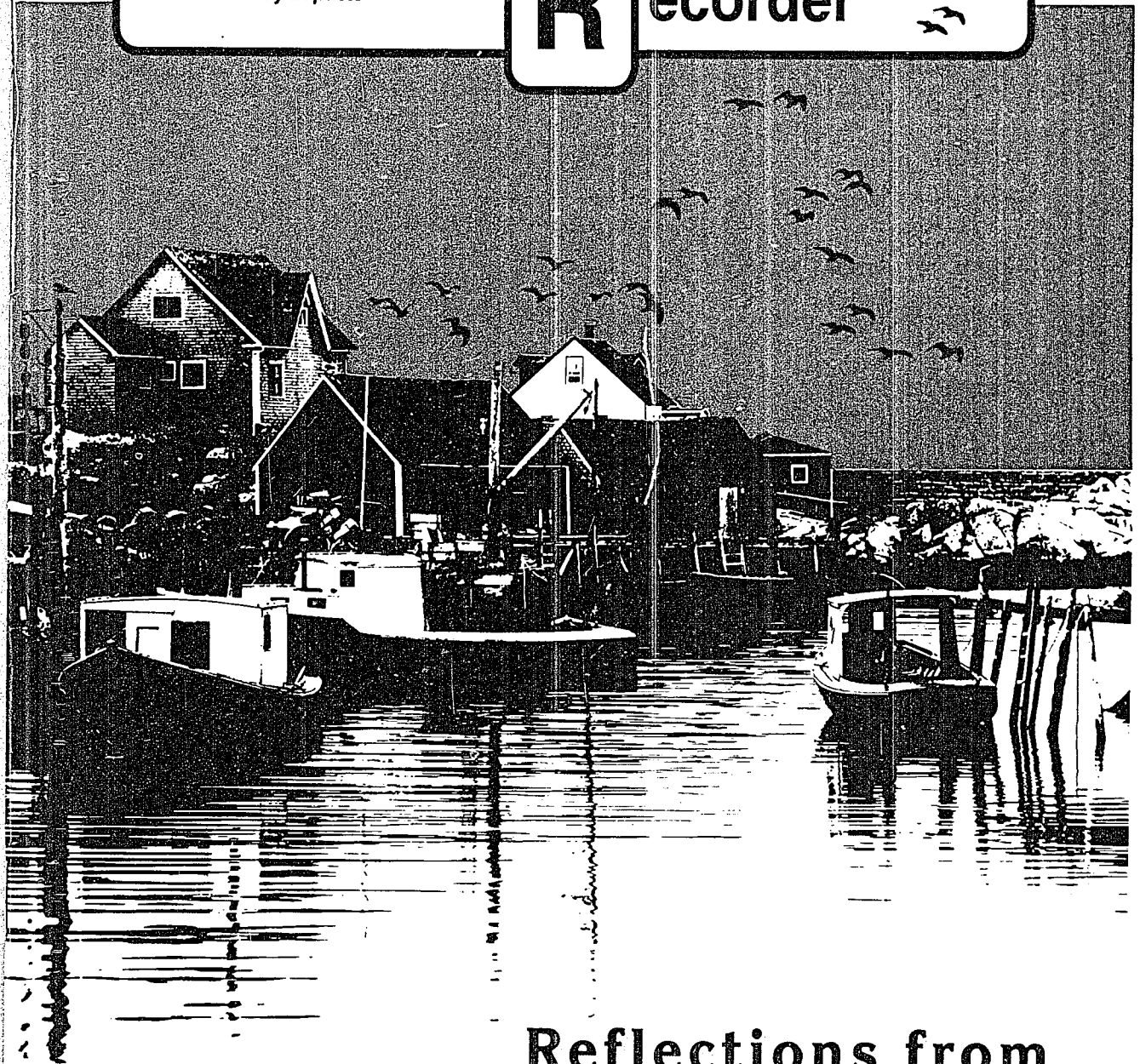
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*News for and about  
Seventh Day Baptists*

November 1997

R

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**Reflections from  
General Conference**

## Hey, Young Adults!

Come to the  
Young Adult Retreat

**When?**  
Dec. 30 - Jan. 2

**Where?**  
Camp Paul Hummel  
in Colorado  
(No cost, except  
your transportation)

\*\*\*

*Come Hang Out and  
spend the New Year  
with your SDB  
Friends!!*

## Robe of Achievement

The Women's Society is accepting nominations for the Robe of Achievement for 1998. Please be considering a woman in your church who meets these criteria for nomination:

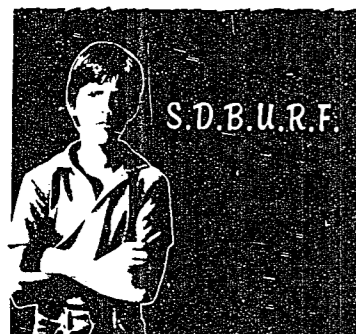
- Must be a committed Christian
- Must be an active member of a local Seventh Day Baptist church
- Was/is active as a volunteer in some phase of denominational effort
- Has shown evidence of special service with her family and/or community

A complete resumé must be submitted containing a life history including her achievements and activities. Without a resumé in hand, the committee cannot make a competent choice among many nominees. If an individual has been nominated before, and you still want that person considered, please re-submit the name as well as the resumé.

Send all nominations to:  
Elizabeth Bidwell, P.O. Box 136, Shiloh, NJ 08353

Deadline: March 31, 1998

*"Class, how do you  
spell relief?"*



*"Correct!  
Your gift  
to the SDB  
United Relief  
Fund pro-  
vides help for  
medical and  
emergency  
needs both  
here and  
abroad."*

Give generously to the SDB United Relief Fund through your local church on Thanksgiving Sabbath, or mail your gift directly to:

SDB United Relief Fund  
3120 Kennedy Road  
P.O. Box 1678  
Janesville, WI 53547-1678

## Summer Christian Service Corps 1998

Are you...

- 17 and a high school grad? (by June '98)
  - a member of a local SDB church?
  - wanting to serve God?
- or-
- a church wanting an SCSC team?
  - a church looking for a camp staff?

To apply to SCSC, write to:  
Charlotte Chroniger  
Box 145, Shiloh, NJ 08353  
Ph. (609) 455-0488

*Worker training: June 12-19*  
*Director training: June 11-15*  
*Project dates: June 20 — July 19*  
(Dates are tentative.)

**Application Deadline:**  
**February 1, 1998**

# The Sabbath Recorder



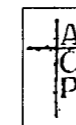
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## Who are Seventh Day Baptists?

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 SDBs 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; E-mail: sdbgen@inwave.com

# Tuned in to the Trinity

## "Triumph through totally trying togetherness"

by Stephen Osborn

*Pastor Steve Osborn, of the Lost Creek (W.Va.) SDB Church, presented this message at General Conference in Lindsborg, Kan. His text was Ephesians 4:1-6.*

Since I'm a seminary grad, fresh out of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, I'm sure that's the biggest reason why President Probasco came to me and asked me to definitively explain, beyond any shadow of a doubt, how the Trinity works.

### Three simple statements

Here's what the Bible teaches us about the Trinity. First, God is three persons. Three distinct and individual persons. The Father is



**If we are tuned in, really tuned in, to the three-in-one God, we will eagerly and actively pursue unity in the Body of Christ.**

not the Son, nor is the Son the Father. The Father is not the Spirit, nor is the Spirit the Father. And the Son is not the Spirit, nor is the Spirit the Son.

Second simple statement: Each one of these three persons is fully God. Now, if we stop there, we don't

have a problem. We have three persons, each one of them is fully God—thus three Gods? Not so good.

We need our third simple statement from Scripture: There is one God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one."

How do these three simple statements fit together to form the Trinity? I come to you with all of my theological expertise and I tell you, beyond a shadow of a doubt: I dunno!

Do you know why seminary students have slumped shoulders and flat foreheads? Because when you ask them a question, they shrug their shoulders and say, "I don't know." And when you tell them the answer, they slap their foreheads and say, "Oh, yeah!"

I don't know! *I don't know* how

a little concerned if I could understand God completely.

You may say, "But, Pastor Steve, it's not fair. It's not fair that I don't understand; that I don't know. I want to grasp this." You know what? You've got a long time to get over it.

The Trinity. The word means "tri-unity," three in one. And it's interesting that Paul teaches us, in the book of Ephesians, chapter 4, that the Triune God has called us to unity.

### Called to unity

This God, who somehow unites three persons into one, has called us, His people, to unity. That's the key to our total triumph. That's what holds us together. That's what tears down walls, tears

the Trinity works, or how it fits together. And do you know what? I'm okay with that.

### God is not like us

You see, there are some things about God we can't grasp because He is not like us. We can only grasp what we've experienced. And there's nothing on this earth that is like the Trinity.

Analogies can help us to grasp it, but none of them are complete. That should really add to the mystery of God, the fact that we don't understand Him completely. I'd be

down strongholds. That's what baffles the enemy; what baffles the rulers and authorities of evil.

It's one of our strongest weapons, if we allow it to be. Or one of our strongest shortcomings, if we allow it to be.

If we are tuned in, really tuned in, to the three-in-one God, we will eagerly and actively pursue unity in the Body of Christ.

Now, I know how much President Probasco enjoys alliteration, so I've translated for you: The Trinity tells us to "triumph through totally trying togetherness."

### Why walk in unity?

In Ephesians 4:1-6, Paul gives us the reason to walk in unity. Why do we do this? Why would we want to stand firm in our unity?

He says, "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, [or therefore] I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." Paul is pointing back to chapters 1 through 3, back to the doctrine, to the beautiful wealth of the salvation to which we've been called. It's everything that we've inherited—the riches of salvation, the riches of heaven, the riches of Christ, the riches of the Spirit.

Because of that, he says, "I urge you." I urge you. Strong word, Paul. It's not "Hey, you know what? Here's kind of a neat idea. If you're not too busy, if you can get around to it, you might want to try this..."

That's not what Paul's saying here. It's more like, "I beg you! I fall flat on my face and beg you to live a life worthy of the calling you've received."

So what is the reason for unity in the Body of Christ? Everything. Everything that we've received, everything we've been called to, everything that we've inherited in Christ Jesus. Our salvation, our future hope, our eternal life, all these things pile up to give us a pretty good reason for wanting unity.

And here the Trinity ties in again. Because from whom does our calling to salvation come? From the Trinity.

### Called to salvation

Paul tells us in the very beginning of Ephesians how all three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are involved in our salvation.

First, the Father chose us. He chose us to be made holy and blameless. He chose us to be adopted as His own sons. He chose us to be His own.

Then there's Jesus Christ, the Son, through whom we receive re-

demption; through whom we receive forgiveness of sins.

And then there's God the Spirit—not to be left out—who comes to us as a seal (a promise, a depositor, a down payment) of our full and complete inheritance, through which we can live the Christian life on this side of glory.

The Trinity is involved. The Trinity calls us to these riches, to our salvation. And so our calling is unbelievable. It's beyond our conception. Paul is begging us to do everything we can, not to let anything stand in the way of letting our lives measure up to the standard of what we've been called.

Remember, the Trinity tells us to "triumph through totally trying togetherness." How can we say "no"? And yet, how can we measure up? How can we live it if we say "yes"?

### How to keep unity

Paul moves on to his second point, in the second verse, about the way we can keep our unity, verses 2 and 3: "Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

"Make every effort." Leave no stone unturned. Go all out. "Go for it," Paul's saying. Do it! Don't let trivial matters get in the way of this. This isn't a passive action; this is an active and eager pursuit of unity.

Why does Paul so desperately want us to do this? Because unity is a matter of life and death in our churches. We know that. We've seen it; we've felt it; we've tasted it.

For some of you who have been through some of the same experiences I have and seen churches split apart, you feel that pain. You know how important unity can be.

Now notice, it doesn't say we have to create unity. We're not responsible for creating unity because we're not capable of creating unity. We're people, we're fleshly, we're

human and sinful. As a result, we get on each other's nerves. Too bad.

But you see, we have been given unity, we have been blessed with unity, through the Holy Spirit. Through the bond of peace that unites us together as the Body of Christ.

As we come together, and as we allow the Spirit to fill us, and as we commit our lives to Jesus Christ and to following God the Father, we can do something beyond our own ability. We can be united.

Our responsibility is not to create the unity, but to keep the unity that's already been given to us. Or, in some cases, we need to resuscitate the unity because we have killed it. But we can do it. We can do this.

How can we do it? Paul gives us four good answers.

### Be humble

First he says by being humble or exhibiting lowliness. The whole concept of lowliness was unpopular in the Greek culture of that time. You didn't want to be lowly; you wanted to be great. You wanted people to notice you. That was what you strove for, not lowliness. Why would anyone want to be lowly? That is, until a carpenter came along from Nazareth and taught us the meaning of being lowly. He taught us that it can be "cool" to be lowly.

How can we be lowly? How can we be humble? Well, we have a neat song out at Camp Joy:

"Jesus and others and you. What a wonderful way to spell 'JOY.' Jesus and others and you, in the life of each girl and each boy. 'J' is for 'Jesus,' for He has first place; 'O' is for 'others' we meet face to face; 'Y' is for 'you' in whatever you do. Put yourself last and spell 'JOY.'"

Put yourself last. If you put yourself first, you spell "YOJ." And "YOJ" doesn't mean anything! Put yourself last. You don't have to push forward with your own impor-

tance. You don't always have to get your own way met.

That's what we're urged to do in Phillipians 2:3—"In humility, consider others better than yourself." Consider others' needs more important than your own.

### Be gentle

The second instruction is similar: be gentle. Be gentle or exhibit meekness. Now note, we didn't say "weakness." Meekness is not weakness.

In the book of Numbers, we're told Moses was meek. In the book of Matthew, we're told Jesus was meek. And I want to meet the man who will stand up and tell me that those two men were weak. Those men were not weak. Those were strong men.

You see, the word "meekness" means "power under control." It's a willingness to submit, even though you have the power to do it on your own. Even though you have the ability to do it, you submit for the sake of others.

The *New Century Bible* describes it this way: "Meekness is the spirit of one who is so absorbed in seeking some worthy goal for the common good that he refuses to be deflected from it by slights, injuries, or insults directed at himself personally, or indeed by personal considerations of any kind."

Meekness focuses in on the common purpose of the Body of Christ. Meekness knows there's something more important than me.

And so, when that "geeky" kid in your Sabbath School class makes a joke about your nose for the 87th consecutive week, you let it slide off. It doesn't matter because you're focused in on your common goal. You're focused in on the purpose of the church. You're focused in on your unity.

### Be patient; forebear

Third thing Paul tells us: be patient, or exhibit the characteristic of long-suffering. Now, being

patient or long-suffering is tied in with meekness. It involves the ability to take a lot of abuse without having to seek revenge. It's being able to endure.

Fourthly, Paul lays on us bearing with one another in love, or forbearance. Again, closely related. It's putting up with the weakness of others. It's putting up with flaws. It's loving them unconditionally, regardless of their faults, no matter how annoying they may be. "Bearing with one another in love." John Stott calls it "a mutual tolerance" of each other.

I like that. In fact, all four of these instructions are related. The basic point is, put aside yourself, your own agenda, your own needs, desires, wants, your own pride for the sake of the common cause. This is how we're to strive to maintain our unity.

After all, the Trinity tells us to "triumph through totally trying togetherness."

### The source of unity

What, then, is the source? That's where Paul finishes up. In verses 4

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through 6, he tells us the source of our unity. The source of our unity is our Triune God. (And I hope you like this, Mr. President...) Paul gives us a "tantalizing trio of triads" describing the Trinity: "There is one Body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called."

One Body—the Body of Christ. Not many, many, many little tiny bodies, scattered all over around the course of the earth, and we all serve the same God. We have one body, and we are a sub-set of that one body. No better, no worse than any other. We have one Body.

We have one Spirit who dwells in all believers and makes us one Body.

And we have the one hope; the hope of eternal life. The hope that there's something better in store for us. The Spirit is the guarantee of that.

So God the Spirit is involved as the source of our unity.

God the Son is also involved. We have one Lord, he tells us—Jesus Christ. And we all have the same allegiance to that one Lord.

There's "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." We all trust in our one Lord through the one faith. And we're baptized as an outward sign of our faith and our acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

So God the Son is involved as a source of our unity.

And God the Father is a source of our unity. There is one God, one Father, who is over all, through all, and in all. We were all created by Him. We were all created in His image. And He is supreme. We worship Him, together.

See, we are to commit to unity. Unity throughout the Body of Christ. And that takes place on a lot of different levels.

### Promote the Gospel

Do you know what the purpose of unity is? The purpose of unity in the Body of Christ is to promote the Gospel. We need to allow other people to see Jesus Christ glorified and to come to receive the salvation, the riches, and wealth that God has in store for all people.

If we go back to chapter 3, verse 10, we'd see that God's intent is that, "through the Church, the

manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."

In other words, God wants Satan and his angels to look at the Church and say, "Gee, boss. How do they do that? They're all so different, and they all are annoying each other, and yet they're united in one body, and they're all working together for the same cause, and I just don't get it. How does it work?"

"I dunno."

God wants Satan to say, "I dunno." He wants him not to get it! He wants him to be baffled. He wants him to be confounded and say, "This is tougher than I thought. We've thrown everything we could at them. How do they do that?"

### Commit to unity, Word

We can do that if we'll commit ourselves to unity. We can tune ourselves in to our Triune God and allow Him to unite us through our own humbleness, gentleness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love.

"So then, what would you have us do, Pastor Steve? Would you have us throw doctrine out the window and just everybody love each other? Is that what we're looking for?" No.

We can't throw out the basic tenets of our faith, because any faith that's built on anything but this (the Bible) is junk! So we commit ourselves to the study of God's Word, we commit ourselves as students of His Word, and we do the best we can. And sometimes we say, "I dunno." But we don't allow the smaller things to come in the way of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We can't. We've done it for too long.

### We can be different

The point is, we can have differences. We can be different from one another. Praise God! We are unique individuals. That's the way God made us, and we don't deny it.

But we have to recognize that we're all on the same team. We can disagree with each other and still have the same common purpose.

The point is, we have to recognize when to stop. We have to recognize when to let some of these things take a second place.

We are all individuals but we're part of a local church body; a splinter of the Body of Christ. Each of our local congregations must have unity. And each local congregation is a part of the Seventh Day Baptist denomination. And so we need unity among Seventh Day Baptists.

### God models unity

But Seventh Day Baptists, corporately, are a part of the larger Body of Christ—the one Body of Christ. And we need unity in the Body of Christ.

God models it for us. In the "three-in-one," the unity that God has, He models unity for us.

We have individuals, completely different from one another, yet

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sitting next to each other and worshipping the Lord together in a local church body, needing to unite for the sake of the Gospel.

We have churches that are different. Think about the diversity we have. We have some churches that are completely white, farming

community churches. We have Jamaican churches. We have Hispanic churches. We have churches that are over 200 years old, and we have churches that are less than one year old.


We have churches that are charismatic, and we have churches that are liturgical and conservative. We have some churches that are a little bit more liberal, theologically, and we have some churches that are staunchly conservative, theologically. And you know what? We're all part of the same Body of Christ.

### Unity, Gospel first

We can discuss our differences, and we can try to help each other see the light, but we can't let that stand in the way of the Gospel. You have to let these things take their proper place. You have to let them stand in the back.

That's true of Seventh Day Baptists, too. As we unite with other denominations in the Body of Christ—and I may be struck by lightning for saying this—sometimes we may have to allow the Sabbath to take a back seat. Not that it's any less important to us; not that it's any less true. But sometimes we allow the Sabbath to stand in the way of people coming to the Lord, when we could unite together with other church bodies, with other denominations, in corporate efforts in bringing people into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let's do that first, and then we'll worry about helping them to understand the truth of the Sabbath. Let's not let these things stand in the way of the purpose of the Body of Christ.

Because the Trinity tells us to "triumph through totally trying togetherness." Or, in other words, if we are tuned in—if we are dialed in and focused on our Triune God—we will eagerly and actively pursue unity in the Body of Christ. 

# Practically turned on

by Kevin Butler

Rev. Kevin Butler, director of the Tract and Communication Council, presented this message at the 1997 General Conference. His text was Acts 4:23-31.

A Buddhist king once undertook to teach a young man the secret of spiritual freedom.

The young man was given a good-sized cup, filled to the brim with oil, which he was to carry through the main street of town.

He thought that would be pretty easy.

"But," said the king, "you must not spill one drop of the oil."

"Yes, my king."

"Oh, and it must be done today," ordered the king.

"But, my Lord, this is the day of the Fair."

"Yes, and you must not spill a drop of oil. And I will send someone behind you to see if you are successful."

That 'someone' happened to be the court executioner, with a drawn sword, and orders—known to the young man—to strike off the lad's head upon the first drop of spilt oil.

The youth carefully wound his way through the town, through all the people, and finally carried the cup safely back to the king—without having lost a drop.

The king congratulated the lad and asked him, "As you walked through the town, whom and what did you see?"

"Sir," said the young man, "I kept my eyes fixed on the vessel of oil, and saw and heard nothing else."

Then the king told him that such was the secret of spiritual freedom: to be so intent on keeping one's own soul that one was blind to the affairs of others.

Quite a story; but it's a Buddhist story of spiritual freedom.

For contrast, look at the Christian picture. Right after Pentecost, those who had that deep personal experience of being turned on by the Holy Spirit were described this way: "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had."

Here's the progression of getting there, both in Acts 2 and Acts 4—The believers:

- Gathered together
- Prayed fervently
- Were filled (turned on) by the Holy Spirit
- Spoke the Word (testified boldly)
- Shared everything in common

Chapter 4 begins with Peter and John stirring up the crowds, preaching of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead. This does not please the priests and guard and the Sadducees. The apostles get tossed in jail.

Peter and John are brought before the religious council the next day, but the council can't decide how to punish the apostles, so they let them go.

The text says that Peter and John "went back to their own people."

They're gathered together, they're about to pray fervently—but who are these people?

Several years ago, an American pastor was ministering over in Great Britain, and he took in an English soccer match.

During the game, one of the players was found guilty of a flagrant infraction of the rules. He was immediately ejected from the

game, and his fate was turned over to league officials.

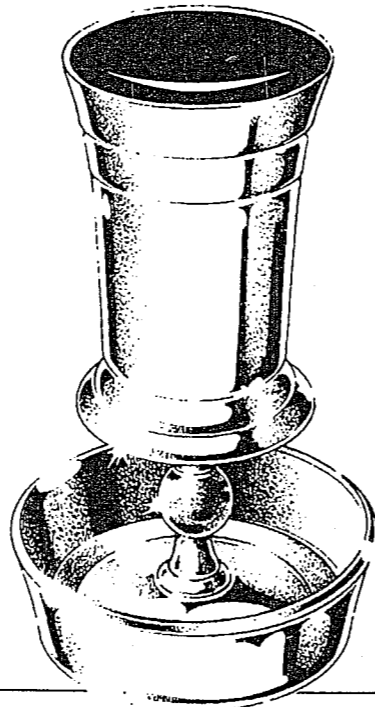
A few days later, the newspapers announced his fate: the league had levied one of the stiffest penalties in English soccer history.

When the press interviewed the player, they asked, "What will you do now?"

The pastor never forgot the answer: "When you're in trouble," the player said, "the only thing left to do is to go home to those who love you."

If "blood is thicker than water," then the blood of Christ is thicker than anyone else's. In fact, many believers find their relationships with fellow Christians stronger than those with their own family.

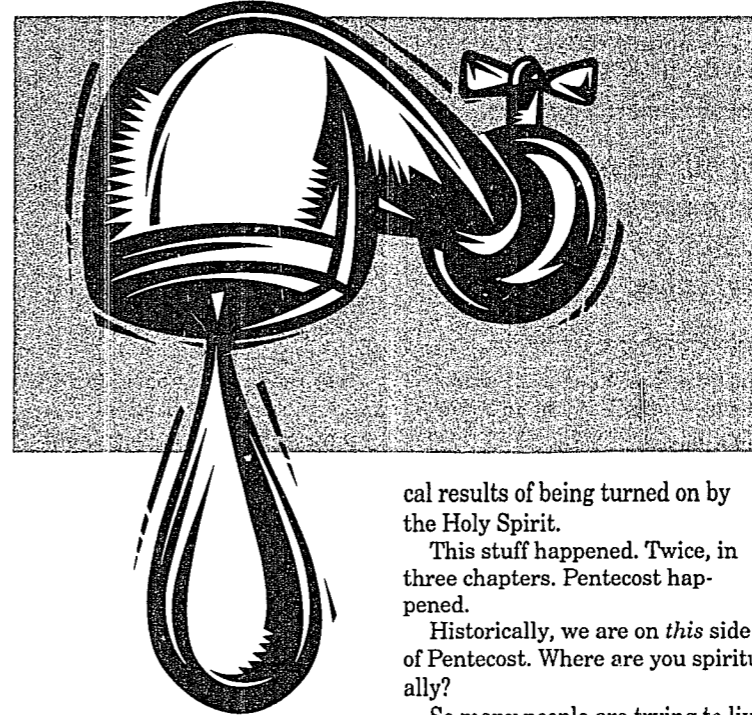
When Peter and John were released from the officials, and "went back to their own people," where did they go? Back to the church, not to their relatives. They went "home" to those who loved them—



their brothers and sisters in Christ.

In their prayer, they review some Scripture, review some recent history regarding their enemies, and they pray up a storm. In fact, (v. 31) the whole place where they

- They gathered together
  - They prayed
  - They were filled with the Holy Spirit
  - They spoke the Word of God
  - They shared their possessions
- Miraculous? These were practi-



cal results of being turned on by the Holy Spirit.

This stuff happened. Twice, in three chapters. Pentecost happened.

Historically, we are on *this side* of Pentecost. Where are you spiritually?

So many people are trying to live their Christian lives without the Holy Spirit. And I believe a lot of that is fear: "I don't want to get shaken—I get car sick." "I don't want to have a tongue of fire land on my head—I just got a perm!"

There is fear, and maybe a lack of understanding of the simple, practical ways the Spirit can lead us.

Pastor Brian Harbour makes a case for *wanting* to be turned on by the Holy Spirit. If we're open to that leading, the Spirit can guide us and empower us:

- The Holy Spirit guides us through God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16).

The written Word is the guidebook for our lives.

We need to read it, study it, learn it—and allow the Holy Spirit to use it to guide us.

- The Holy Spirit guides us through our circumstances.

If we really look deeply into those "coincidences" of our lives—those "chance encounters" that fell together so perfectly—I think you'd see that it was the Holy Spirit guiding through circumstances.

- The Holy Spirit guides us through sanctified common sense.

The Jerusalem Council faced the delicate problem of how to relate the Gentile believers with Jewish Christians. In Acts 15, they came to a decision, saying "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials."

That's sanctified common sense.

- Sometimes, the Holy Spirit guides us through closed doors.

Twice in Acts 16, the Holy Spirit closed a door on Paul's mission trip. He wanted to head to Asia, but they were "kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word" there.

**Instead of waiting passively, maybe we should begin pursuing the Spirit and the commitment of those early disciples.**

And the next verse, when they wanted to go to Bithynia, "The Spirit of Jesus would not allow."

Sometimes the guidance of the Holy Spirit means a closed door.

- The Holy Spirit guides us through our companions.

When Paul first got turned on

by the Holy Spirit (by "turning off the lights"), he cried out, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord led him to Damascus, to find a new friend named Ananias, to be healed and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus has given all of us the Holy Spirit, to guide us into His truth. He guides us through His Word, through our circumstances,

**Let our Heavenly King fill our cups with oil that we may share the fellowship of being turned on by the Holy Spirit in living, loving, practical ways.**

through our sanctified common sense, through closed doors, and through our companions. These are the benefits.

Yet when we grieve the Spirit, or quench the Spirit, or neglect the Spirit, we're going to wander in the desert.

Living without the Spirit leads to wandering and to weakness. We need Him to guide us and to empower us. Acts 1:8—"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."

That power can change our attitudes which will change our actions.

Yet the big question remains: "How can I be turned on by the Holy Spirit?"

Four steps.

**Step One: Believe.** You've got to believe that the Holy Spirit exists.

We may not be able to see the Holy Spirit, but we can see His work. We can experience His power and His purpose in our lives.

You gotta believe.

**Step Two: Desire.** Jesus said that whosoever hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled. To be filled with the Holy Spirit—to be turned on—you must not only

believe He exists, but overcome those fears or those preconceptions and be willing to ask God to let the Spirit fill you and control you.

You gotta desire it.

**Step Three: Repent.** After Peter preached that sermon at Pentecost, the people cried out, "What must we do?" Peter's answer: "Repent, and be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Repenting is a changing of your attitude—a turn-around to be turned on.

**Step Four: Appropriate.** By faith, we need to appropriate the Holy Spirit who is available to us. When we believe the Holy Spirit exists, when we desire to be filled, when we confess our sins—all practical things—we've done what the Bible says we should do.

Then, just appropriate the Holy Spirit. Allow Him into your life and start to live under His control.

Practical steps leading to practical Christian living results.

We need to be turned on by the Spirit and encounter the living God. And instead of waiting passively, maybe we should begin pursuing the Spirit and the commitment of those early disciples, whose faith could not be weakened even by prison or the threat of death.

What response have you made to the Holy Spirit?

The question is not: "How did Jesus relate himself to the Holy Spirit?"

The question is not: "How did the early Church treat the Holy Spirit?"

And we don't need to ask, "How do other contemporary disciples of Jesus relate to the Holy Spirit?"

The real question is: "What have I done with the Holy Spirit?"

There may be a lack of scriptural understanding of the Spirit. But even more sadly, because of the apparent fanaticism of others who have made an overly emotional response to the Spirit, many have avoided making any response at all.

What is being turned on by the Holy Spirit? Practically?

It's being faithful in gathering; going to church, having that fellowship—it's "going home to your own people" and worshiping together.

That's being turned on by the Holy Spirit.

It's praying. Yes, sometimes for the miraculous, the healings. But also the quiet intercession for others; it's obeying God's prompting as He leads you to pray for someone or a situation.

That's being turned on by the Holy Spirit.

It's picking up the phone and calling that person who "just came to mind." It's writing that note of encouragement or cheer.

That's being turned on by the Holy Spirit.

It's preparing and sharing that hot dish at a funeral of a friend, or helping a neighbor who's going through a tough time.

That's being turned on by the Holy Spirit.

They gathered. They prayed. They were filled. They spoke. They shared.

These are not hard things!

Can we do them today? Can we be turned on *to* and *by* the Holy Spirit today?

Let our Heavenly King fill our cups with oil—may our "cup runneth over"—that we may share the fellowship of being turned on by the Holy Spirit in living, loving, practical ways. *SR*

## Activities of Calvin Babcock, August 1996 – July 1997

# Executive Secretary's Annual Conference Report



Executive Secretary Calvin P. Babcock

### Conference President's theme

The theme of the 1997 Conference program is "Tuned in, Turned on, and Triumphant" based on Acts 20:27-28. As Seventh Day Baptists, we must realize that we are nothing unless we seek God's direction and power through His Word and prayer.

### God answers prayer

Too many times we see our denomination as small and powerless—but with God all things are possible. There is nothing too difficult for Him.

The *Spirit Ship* operates out of the Houston, Texas, area. The crew members have seen tremendous answers to prayer for things that may seem insignificant. For example, they prayed for brussels sprouts, and someone dropped two cases on the pier. They prayed about a gangplank and received an even better one than they imagined.

They needed paneling for the pilot house, and planking from a bill-

board showed up in the dumpster that they were able to use. God answers prayer!

We just need to keep asking, keep making our requests known to God, and believe that there is nothing too big or too small for our God to handle.

### Center operation

We were all saddened by the death of Muriel Osborn this spring. During the years she worked at the Center, she served in many capacities. Many of the tasks assigned to her have been added to the work load of other part-time employees. Efforts are being made to use new technology more effectively for communications and correspondences.

The Web Page on the Internet continues to generate interest in Seventh Day Baptists. On the average, the Center receives ten

to the Seventh Day Baptist page. Upon request, your church can have a link from our page to your page.

### Denominational Budget

During the calendar year 1996, the Denominational Budget fell short of projected income. This shortfall was partially offset by an increase in Memorial Fund income.

Giving so far in 1997 is approximately \$30,000 less than is needed to meet the Denominational Budget. Please join me in seeking the Lord's leading as we pray for His direction and guidance in meeting our budgetary commitments.

### New church to be added to General Conference

This year I am pleased to recommend to General Council that the

**Too many times we see our denomination as small and powerless—but with God all things are possible.**

to fifteen inquiries a week related to our beliefs, polity, or history.

In the near future, the Web Page will be expanded to provide more information to those seeking information about Seventh Day Baptists for the first time.

Look us up at:

<http://www.seventhdaybaptist.org>

Our e-mail address is:

[sdbgen@inwave.com](mailto:sdbgen@inwave.com)

Many churches now have Home Pages, e-mail addresses, and links

*Bible Outreach Seventh Day Baptist Church in Portage, WI*, be received into full membership at this Conference. We are pleased that several other churches are in the process of completing their applications for General Conference membership.

### Memorial Fund annuities

During 1996, the Memorial Fund was licensed in Wisconsin to issue annuities. If you have any interest in the benefits of annuities

## Secretary's Travel

It was my pleasure to visit several churches, attend North Central Association, and meet with boards and agencies. Travel included going to Canada and Jamaica. Greetings and presentations were made in each location, when possible, on behalf of the Conference.

### Travel in 1996

**October**  
North Central Association - Milton, WI  
SDB Fund Raising Seminar - Milton, WI  
Memorial Fund Trustees - Janesville, WI  
Board of Christian Education - Alfred, NY

**November**  
Senior Saints Project - Daytona Beach, FL  
Paint Rock, AL  
Riverside, CA  
Doniphan, MO

### Travel in 1997

**January**  
Memorial Fund - Daytona Beach, FL  
Senior Saints Project - Daytona Beach, FL

**February**  
Tract & Communication Council - WI  
North Loup, NE  
Lindsborg, KS

**March**  
Dodge Center, MN

Daytona Beach, FL  
-World Federation  
-General Council  
-Council on Ministry  
-Faith and Order Committee  
-Coordinating Leadership Team  
-Pastors' Conference

Blountville, TN  
Portsmouth, VA  
Salemville, PA

**April**  
Memorial Service for Muriel Osborn  
Memorial Fund Trustees - Toronto, Canada  
Leonardsville-Brookfield, NY  
Little Genesee, NY  
Board of Christian Education - Alfred, NY

**May**  
Historical Society - Janesville, WI  
Houston, TX

**June**  
Portage, WI

**July**  
Jamaica  
-Met with Governor General  
-Radio Interview - Kingston  
-Mountain View SDB Church  
-SDB World Federation Sessions  
-Jamaican SDB Conference  
General Council Meetings - Lindsborg, KS

for you, your church, family, or the General Conference, be sure to speak with one of the Memorial Fund Trustees.

### World Federation

Six delegates and a large number of observers represented our Conference at the World Federation sessions recently held in Jamaica. Successes and concerns about church outreach programs were shared by representatives of each Conference in attendance.

Many delegates and observers also attended the Jamaican Seventh Day Baptist Conference the following week and were asked to lead worship services.

### Conclusion

This has been a year where flexibility has been essential because of personnel changes and budget-

**God has been  
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ary concerns that occurred at the Center.

God has been faithful in answering our prayers as we have asked for His guidance, wisdom, and strength to provide what He wants for us. I ask that you join me as we pray for the Lord's leadership in the work Seventh Day Baptists are doing for Him. *SR*

*"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:27-28 KJV)*



Women's Society page by Donna Bond

## A chosen generation

*"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).*

What does it mean to be a part of a "chosen generation?"

Adopted children are created by God and then "chosen" by their parents who then have a powerful tool for assuring their children of their place in the family. Biological par-

ents can say, "If I could have chosen, I would have chosen you," and rely on non-verbal cues to prove it.

I was born into the post-war Baby Boom generation. Later, we Baby Boomers and those who followed us were called the "Me Generation," with a philosophy of "If it feels good, do it" and an emphasis on my rights. I was shocked to learn that my children (ages 18 and 19 and wishing to remain anonymous in this column) had been assigned to "Generation X," allegedly an unknown quantity with no long-term goals or inter-

nal resources for responsible living.

Is it any wonder that those of the "Me Generation" who emphasize self-fulfillment have begotten "Generation X," and often left them in the hands of aging Baby Boomers or to fend for themselves?

Whether we are parenting or otherwise influencing youth today, we are a "generation chosen" to lead our progeny "out of darkness into the marvelous light" of godly values toward adulthood—even at the risk of being labeled "peculiar." *SR*

## A reunion of generations

Our Conference is often thought of as a giant family reunion. This phenomenon was exemplified by the descendents of James L. and Hettie (Whitney) Skaggs in Lindsborg, Kan., last August.

For the first time in 29 years, all four of the living Skaggs "children" and spouses were reunited with each other, some of their children and grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. (Brother Al had already joined the family reunion in heaven.)

It was pointed out that all five of the Skaggs "children" had enjoyed 55-year-plus marriages.

They gathered from seven states and one foreign country to "show forth praises," eat, receive awards, carpool, laugh, reminisce, compare family pictures, and cuddle the baby.

"Royal Priesthood" and other Skaggs descendents (and in-laws) spanning four generations included:

**Generation I**—Ken and Evalyn (Skaggs) Camenga, J. Leland and Mary (Bond) Skaggs, Margaret

(Skaggs) Bond, Rev. Victor W. and Ardale (Coon) Skaggs.

**Generation II**—Rev. C. Justin and Sue (Johnson) Camenga, Rev. John H. Camenga, James A. Skaggs, Ronald R. Bond, Donna (Sanford) Bond, Janice (Skaggs) Kenyon, Patrick Skaggs.

**Generation III**—Rev.-to-be Andrew J. Camenga, Mark and Faith (Camenga) Green, John Mark Camenga, Ward Bond, Chris Bond, Sylvia Bond, Amy

Skaggs, Stephanie Sholtz.

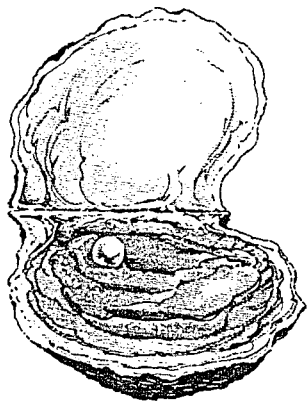
**Generation IV**—Conor Alexander Green (4 months).

Ironically, attempts at getting a complete family picture were unsuccessful due to Conference responsibilities among the Baby Boomers and (so-called irresponsible) Generation Xers.

James L. and Hettie Skaggs would have been proud of all of their succeeding generations! *SR*



Front row, kneeling (l. to r.): Ken Camenga, John Camenga, Andrew Camenga, Ron Bond. Second row: Mary Skaggs, Janice Kenyon, Stephanie Sholtz, Ardale Skaggs. Third row: Margaret Bond, Donna Bond, Sylvia Bond, Amy Skaggs, Evalyn Camenga, Victor Skaggs. Back row: Justin Camenga, Jim Skaggs, Chris Bond, Ward Bond, Sue Camenga, Leland Skaggs, Pat Skaggs.



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

## Personal reflections of Associations

Last month, I was privileged to attend the 50th anniversary of the founding of the North Central Association.

As the historian for the SDB Historical Society, I researched not only the last half century, but the previous century when the old Northwestern Association was founded (in 1847) and the prior years which triggered our forefathers' decision to have a system of Associations.

I have attended many Association meetings and even preached in each one of the Associations over the years of my ministry. However, my first memory of going to an Association was when I attended the Southwestern Association meeting in Fouke, Ark., in 1932. I was not asked to preach at that session, though at age 6, I may have spoken extemporaneously from the back pew.

The occasion for that visit was a practice adopted by several Associations of sending delegates from one Association to a sister Association. Since this was the 10th anniversary of my parents teaching and pastoring in the denominational school in Fouke, Dad and Mother were chosen to represent the Western (N.Y.) Association.

That was the first time I had ever been over 50 miles from home. I have only a few memories of the trip itself, beyond the little Sterno stove we used to cook meals beside the road, and Dad remarking with some glee that we had gone 300

miles that day without a single flat tire.

But I do have vivid memories of the reception that Dad and Mother got in each of the homes we visited. Some of that attention even spilled over onto my older brother, Gordon, and myself. The covenant bond which had been established a decade previously was evident even to a first grader.

As I grew older, the local Association gatherings began to take on more meaning. Growing up on a single-family farm did not allow an annual trip to General Conference that later became a regular part of my schedule. Even when Conference was held at Alfred (N.Y.) University, some 30 miles distance from Little Genesee, we were only able to attend a few sessions. Harvesting the crops and milking the cows came first.

So, in a sense, the Association was a very personal link to the denomination in which I had been reared. I did not realize how fortunate we were to be in an Association of nine churches with no two churches further than an hour and a half drive. We could attend nearly every session and still get our chores done.

One unforgettable experience as a child was the story hour at Association led by Mizpah Greene, who edited the children's page of *The Sabbath Recorder* for nearly 30 years. We developed friendships among our peers, attended the youth camps at Eggleston Park, and went swimming in the Genesee River—before the Association developed Camp Harley Sutton.

The Western Association (now the Allegheny Association) had another advantage which had a greater effect upon my personal life than

I was aware of at the time.

The School of Theology was located in Alfred. During my upper elementary grades and high school years, I was able to meet many of the future ministers of our denomination. Most of these students used the churches in the Association to "practice what they preached," and often would spend some time after church in our home and on the farm. I particularly remember Alton Wheeler donning some coveralls and helping with the chores.

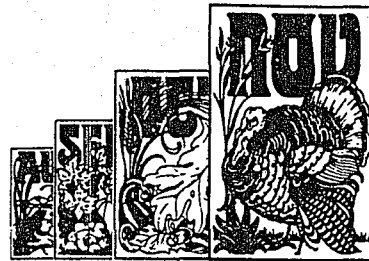
Aside from these personal encounters, I was privileged to attend and even participate in the ordination services for close to a dozen future pastors in the denomination. Forty-five years ago, I was ordained at one of the meetings of that Association. When I moved into the North Central Association, I was present or participated in eight other pastoral ordinations.

One does not forget the kinship of these high experiences of recognizing the Call of God.

When I first left New York to attend college, I was unable to attend sessions of the old Northwestern Association of which Milton, Wis., was a part. (The boundaries of that Association extended from Ohio on the east, to Colorado to the west; from Kansas on the south, to Minnesota in the north.) But I found a Quarterly Meeting which provided some of the same experiences that I had found at home.

While at Milton, General Conference in 1947 recommended the division of the old Northwestern Association into three geographic units: the North Central, the Northern, and the Mid-Continent Associations. Yet the even smaller groups continued, and in many ways had

cont. on page 26



# SR Almanac

A look at where we have been from the pages of *The Sabbath Recorder*

### One year ago—November 1996

Rev. Kenneth Smith's Conference sermon presented, "The Tie that Binds."

Executive Secretary Calvin Babcock shares an "open letter to our Baptist brethren," encouraging other Baptists to reexamine the biblical Sabbath and its need in today's world.

"Blessings in disguise" reveals Linda Lawton's feelings as she ministered to her dying friend, Irene Rood.

Conference details: Karen Payne, Dodge Center, Minn., honored as Sabbath School Teacher of the Year; the Toronto church receives the Scripture Memorization Award.

A North Carolina family shares their short-term mission experiences in the Ukraine.

### Five years ago—November 1992

Conference sermons by Pastor John Bevis and Jim Ayars presented.

Baptist women gather in Phoenix for the North American Baptist Women's Union (NABWU).

"Pearls" column looks at the history of the Newport, R.I., meeting house.

Robe of Achievement recipient, Myrna Cox, highlighted.

Allegheny Association (N.Y.) sponsors county fair booth.

The Hope Church in Philadelphia celebrates 10th anniversary.

### 10 years ago—November 1987

Two Sabbath-oriented features: David Thorngate's Summer Institute paper, "The Sabbath: Its Relationship to God and Mankind"; and Don Sanford's "Why I Keep the Seventh Day Sabbath."

Rev. B. John V. Rao sends update on his ministry in India.

Milwaukee, Wis., church holds first baptism.

Southern Baptist Convention's Public Affairs Committee votes to dissolve its ties with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Conference President Herb Saunders invites readers to "Enter the Joy of Giving."

### 25 years ago—November 1972

A bright yellow cover graces special youth edition, "Step Into the Light." Linda Smith is guest editor.

Conference address of President Edward Horsley presented.

Five members of the SDB Women's Board attend NABWU in Toronto.

The Eugene Fatato Memorial Recreation Court is dedicated at Camp Holston in Battle Creek, Mich.

Dedicated worker Elizabeth Maddox to remain in Malawi, Africa, another six months.

Evangelistic efforts continue in the Philippines.

### 50 years ago—November 1947

The SDB group in Indianapolis, Ind., moves from "fellowship" to "church" in just eight months. Pastor Leland and Gertrude Davis are the workers in this new field.

During September and October, the "Promoter of Evangelism," Rev. Elizabeth F. Randolph, works with churches in Rhode Island and Washington, D.C.

E. Wendell Stephan installed as pastor in Plainfield, N.J. Former pastor Hurley Warren now edits the *Sabbath Recorder*.

Death of Rev. Sylvester Stephen Powell reported.

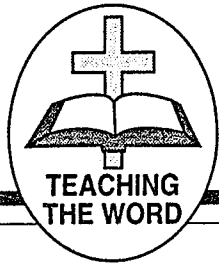
September Conference of German SDBs held at Braunschweig, Germany. July's Dutch Conference held in Haarlem, Holland.

### ...where are we headed?

#### Pray for—

- our role in the larger Baptist world
- positive repercussions from General Conference
- those involved in fair booth ministries
- World Federation officers and Conferences
- our National YF officers and future plans
- members and families of General Council
- your pastor and family





## Christian Education

by Ernest K. Bee Jr.

# 1997 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year is Jan Bond from Shiloh, New Jersey

Janis Marie Bond of the Shiloh, N.J., Seventh Day Baptist Church, received the *Crystal Apple Award* as the 1997 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year.

The Rev. David S. Clarke, a member of the Sabbath School Committee of the SDB Board of Christian Education, made the presentation during the General Conference award ceremonies on August 9, 1997, at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kan.

Former Christian Education Executive Secretary Clarke make these comments prior to presenting the award:

"Olin Davis, chair of the Sabbath School Committee of the Board of Christian Education, guides the Committee in choosing one Sabbath School teacher who represents Christ-like qualities of all teachers that nurture their pupil's discipleship. Olin keeps us sensitive to the

goals of this Crystal Apple Award for the Sabbath School Teacher of the Year.

"Throughout the United States and Canada Conference, we seek to lift up the significance of all our Sabbath Schools. While one award represents all teachers in the Conference, all of the churches should bestow thanks and encouragement—and adequate resources—upon all their teachers.

"Our Sabbath School Teacher of 1997 is one whose nomination started out, '(She) puts a lot of herself into her teaching. She is very knowledgeable of the Bible... is a good Christian role model.'

"Later in the nomination, the Sabbath School Superintendent said, 'The students that (she) teaches learn a lot from her because she cares about them and truly believes in what she is teaching them. She loves the Lord and is very willing to be a teacher for Him.'

"Her home church must be very grateful for all this teacher does in the church and community besides teaching juniors! The list of active Christian service on her nomination sheet is long and varied. She has taught children in Sabbath School for more than 20 years.


"Her pupils say such things as, 'She encourages and works with us

in the Bible Memorization Program and makes it fun.' Another said, 'I think (she) is a great Sabbath School teacher because she makes the lessons fun...'

"Yet another child told this: 'While we were studying about the Sabbath this year, we made up a game. Each week we would make up two or three questions about Seventh Day Baptist history and our (local) church's history. (Our teacher) brought extra things to help us with this...'

"(Jan's) Sabbath School Superintendent said that the game was used as a competition between the two sides of the seated congregation during the Children's Day Service. The 'Super' says that details of the game may be obtained by contacting Mrs. Phil— Oops! We didn't mean to inform those of you who hadn't already guessed the winner!

"As a member of the Board of Christian Education, I am honored to present the *Crystal Apple* to this teacher—and for many reasons. One personal reason is that I was in her happy camp family at the Creative Camping Project where we called ourselves *The High Sounding Cymbals*.

"But I can't personally present the 'shining apple' for one reason—Phil and Jan are not here. Since she can't hear your applause, you can send it with Chris and Ward Bond, who will take the *Apple* and Certificate to their favorite teacher, Janis (Skinner) Bond of the Shiloh church and Sabbath School." 



David Clarke has Ward and Chris Bond deliver the *Crystal Apple* to their mother, Jan Bond.



## FOCUS on Missions

# Making changes despite hardships

by Kirk Looper

How we praise God for the opportunity to serve Him! Each of us has a specific way in which we serve Him best. When we attend church, we are able to use the gifts of the Spirit and the talents God has given us.

### Feeling pressure from other authorities

Sometimes the use of these gifts and talents can place us in an unpopular position. In the United States, our leaders may "feel the heat" from those within the church. In our sister Conferences and church groups, the local leaders often come under greater pressures. Fortunately, the American government has not taken their disagreement with Christian morals and activities as far as some of the governments in other countries.

Last November, Brother Kwabena Opoku of The Gambia began serving five months in prison for meeting without a permit. He completed his prison term in April, but he continues to pay retribution for meeting without a permit. We need to pray for him as he works on obtaining the correct registration and permit to allow them to meet. (See *Mission Notes* from the October *Lead-Line* for more information.)

### Restrictions on meeting, building, and travel

In Rwanda, opposition to the Seventh Day Baptist work there is evident by the way other churches, especially Seventh-day Adventists, refuse to allow our groups and churches to meet in their buildings. This forces SDBs to meet in the open air or in partially completed

buildings that need roofs. Although this is a hardship, it also allows them to show their love for God.

In Myanmar (Burma), the government inhibits the influence of SDBs by restricting ministerial travel and prohibits our churches from owning buildings and property. Also, the Conference is required to pay high taxes on money that is brought into the country.

### Some authorities do cooperate

In some countries, the government and other church leaders are neutral toward the work of Seventh Day Baptists, as long as they are registered and have the proper permits. There is little or no resistance.

### We can still make a difference

The work of Seventh Day Baptists can be very productive and effective for a country. Even though we are a small denomination, we can make a difference in the lives of people.

However, we do need to consider the people within a particular country and work being done there. We cannot ignore the fact that the leaders and workers in our sister Conferences and churches are from very poor backgrounds. They do not have the funds to do extensive work.

### Be impressed, be in prayer

It is easy to be impressed with the work that has been done by

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**We want to abide by the countries' laws as long as they do not require us to disobey God's will.**

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In Zambia, the government is very cooperative. They recognize that the farm produce program is a viable work, and the Conference is respected for the ways in which it helps the community.

When starting churches in different countries, we strive to obtain the proper government registration. We want to abide by the countries' laws as long as they do not require us to disobey God's will.

most, if not all, of the leaders in these churches. Consider the time some of them have been working, and all the other jobs they are required to do as they minister to their congregations.

We praise God for the dedication and sacrifice that these leaders and their families have made to spread the Gospel to their brothers and sisters. 



# the BEACON

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

November 1997

## SDBYF of USA and Canada 1997-98 officers

### President—Whitney Rogers

Whitney is co-president of her Youth Fellowship and sings in the choir at her home church, Salem, W.Va., Seventh Day Baptist. She has attended one Pre-Con, eight General Conferences, and several Southeastern Association youth retreats and summer camps.

A senior at Belpre (Ohio) High School, Whitney is a member of the National Honor Society and is active in Spanish Club, choir, Student Council, and Drama Club.

### Vice-President—Marissa Van Horn

Marissa is active in the Youth Fellowship at her home church, Columbus, Ohio, SDB. She has served as Assistant Sabbath School Superintendent, substitute Sabbath School teacher, and worked in the nursery. She has attended three Pre-Cons, six General Conferences, and several Southeastern Association youth retreats and summer camps.

Marissa is a senior at Reynoldsburg (Ohio) High School, where she is vice-president of the National Honor Society, a Media Center helper, and president of Christians in Action.

### Secretary—Jennifer Martin

Jennifer is co-president of the Youth Fellowship of her church, Salem, W.Va., SDB. She has attended two Pre-Cons, five General Conferences, and several Southeastern Association youth retreats and summer camps.

A senior at Doddridge County High School, Jennifer is a member of the National Honor Society and Student Council, and is active in choir, drama, and volleyball.

### Treasurer—Andrea Davis

Andrea is treasurer of the Youth Fellowship and a member of the Facilities Committee at her home church, Salem, W.Va., SDB. She is a junior at Doddridge County High School.

She has attended Camp Joy for eight years. Andrea has also attended five General Conference sessions, including this year's in Kansas.

### At large member—John Pethtel

John is a member of the Youth Fellowship at his home church, Salem, W.Va., SDB, and is Audio Visual Committee chairperson and a member of the Building Fund Committee. John sings in the choir and has done summer dedicated service for three years. He has attended one Pre-Con and three General Conferences.

A freshman at Salem-Teikyo University, John is president of Tiger Alliance and a member of the Student Athletic Trainers Association and the Baptist Campus Ministries.

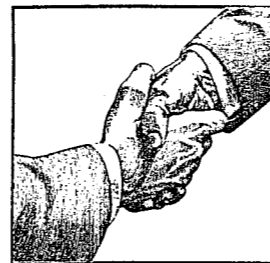
### At large member—Tiffany Bond

Tiffany is a member of the Youth Fellowship at her church, Lost Creek, W.Va., SDB, and sings in the church choir.

She is a freshman at Robert C. Byrd High School where she is a member of the Show Choir and class representative. Tiffany has also signed for the hearing impaired for the past six years.

### Advisor—Pastor Steve Osborn

Pastor Steve ministers at the Lost Creek, W.Va., Seventh Day Baptist Church.



Seeking Spiritual Maturity: COVENANT BUILDING  
An annual emphasis of the SDB General Council

## Societies and Covenants

From Don Sanford's historical study, "Establishing a Church Covenant."

In a number of Seventh Day Baptist churches, a distinction was made between the Society and the Covenant Church. Sometimes a Society preceded the formation of the formal organization of the church; sometimes it was formed at the time of the organization of the church; and sometimes it was not formed until property was involved.

For example, Nancy Goodrich recorded the events of the first Sabbath that the Joseph Goodrich family spent on DuLac Prairie which is now known as Milton, Wis.

"It had been a subject of earnest ardent prayer that God would give us grace and wisdom to erect an altar to God and keep holy His Sabbath in this great western land.

"There was a small society of Congregationalists not far distant. They kindly invited us to join with them. We resolved to treat them kindly and meet with them when reasonable, but God had said the seventh day was His Sabbath and now this Sabbath had dawned on us.

"O what a responsibility rested on my soul... I felt that consequences reaching into eternity rested on the course we might take that day. I said to them, "This is the Sabbath and how shall we spend it?" I could say no more, my heart was full. There was silence for a moment, then someone said it was an important question.

"Mr. Goodrich rose from the table and said he would go over to Mr. Crandall's and get them to come over and see what course

we had better take. Bro. Crandall and all his family came over, and we talked the matter over and finally adopted a plan which Elder William B. Maxson had suggested when at our home in

### In a number of Seventh Day Baptist churches, a distinction was made between the Society and the Covenant Church.

Alfred, which was to have a written agreement, as resolutions were quickly forgotten.

"We appointed 3 men to draft articles for a Society which was to watch over each other for good, to maintain good morals, and attend meetings on Sabbath when prudent. The professors of religion signed them. The young men hesitated, examined the articles one by one, saw that it was a moral society, not a church, and finally signed their names. The children all had their names put down. The number all told was 22."<sup>1</sup>

The original record of that meeting was signed by Henry B. Crandall as chairman and Joseph Goodrich as secretary. It specifies that the new settlers from the State of New York met "for the purpose of forming into a society for the pur-

pose of promoting good morals." Eight articles were adopted as follows:

• Article first: This Society shall be called the seventh day Baptist Society for the promotion of good morals.

• Article second: We believe the seventh day of the week to be the Sabbath which God has appointed and we agree to endeavor to observe it as such.

• Article third: We agree to use our best endeavors to promote good order and good morals by Obeying the law of God and the laws of this territory.

• Article fourth: We agree to meet on the Sabbath at eleven o'clock if circumstances will reasonably admit for the purpose of promoting Christianity.

• Article fifth: We agree to watch over each other for good, to reprove in love and rebuke each other for good.

• Article sixth: Any moral person may become a member of this Society and have a right to withdraw by giving one month notice to the Society.

• Article seventh: Any person belonging to the Society who violates the rules of the Society may be expelled by a majority vote of the Society.

• Article eight: These Articles may be altered or new ones added by a majority of votes of this Society.  $\text{SR}$

<sup>1</sup>Manuscript copy of Mrs. Nancy Goodrich, "Description of First Sabbath in Wisconsin" from SDB Historical Society files.



## The President's Page

by John D. Bevis

"But you are God's 'chosen generation.' His 'royal priesthood,' his 'holy nation,' his 'peculiar people'—all the old titles of God's people now belong to you. It is for you now to demonstrate the goodness of him who has called you out of darkness into his amazing light" (1 Peter 2:9 Phillips).

As a Chosen Generation—as God's chosen people—we are called to be a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. We find in the Old Testament record that among the Hebrew people, the tribe of Levi was called by God to serve as priests.

The Levites, in effect, became mediators between God and mankind. They ministered daily in the temple before God for the people.

Part of the good news of this passage is that God has chosen believers, you and I, to be a royal priesthood in this generation. We are priests but, praise God, we have a great High Priest.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way—just as we are—yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

And today this priest stands at the right hand of the Father God where he makes intercession for his people.

Like many other Christians, Seventh Day Baptists affirm the teaching of the priesthood of each believer. Our SDB *Manual of Procedures* says it well: "Seventh Day Baptists believe that all Christians are called to minister in Christ's name, that each believer is responsible before God to use his God-given abilities as a good steward, in the worship, work and witness

"The Reformation recovered the truth of the priesthood of all believers. The Scriptures were given to the common people, singing by all was encouraged, prayers were spoken in a language all could understand, and sermons were preached to build up the people of God."

—Leadership, Spring 1986, p.32.

of the church in the world."

That's our statement. Do we believe it?

I am told that one interpretation of the Latin word for priest is "bridge-builder." God has called us to be bridge-builders from the people to Himself.

A royal priesthood is a high calling. It is a challenge and a responsibility that we must accept. SR

### BRING A BANNER TO BUCKHANNON!

Conference 1998

A CHOSEN GENERATION — 1 PETER 2:9

West Virginia Wesleyan College

Buckhannon, West Virginia

July 26 – August 1

All churches are invited to create a Banner for display using the theme verse 1 Peter 2:9. You may use any materials you choose that conform to the following rules:

1. Banner must not exceed 3 ft. wide by 5 ft. long.
2. Banner must have a 3-inch pocket sewn at top to hang on pole.
3. Be sure to identify your Banner with the church name either on front or back.

If you have questions, contact:

Pat Cruzan, 39 Manners Rd., Ringoes, NJ 08551  
Phone 609-466-3702 or FAX 609-466-8249.



*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

— 1 Peter 2:9

## Australasian delegate: "Get on with it!"

This interview with Dorothy Goulding, delegate from the Australasian Seventh Day Baptist Conference, took place at General Conference in Lindsborg, Kan. "Conference Crier" editor Larry Graffius conducted the interview.



Dorothy Goulding of the Australasian SDB Conference.

**Conference Crier:** What is your role in the Australasian SDB Conference?

**Goulding:** I'm here as a fraternal delegate, although I don't really have an official role or office in the Conference right now. I was president of the Conference for four years and have been an officer or executive in the Conference since its inception in 1981. My son, Andrew, is now the president, and he is also the pastor of the Brisbane SDB Church in Australia.

**CC:** What is God doing among Australasian Seventh Day Baptists?

**Goulding:** Well, He's working really well. In the early 1940s, we had just two churches in New Zealand. In the 1970s, we began a work in Australia. Now there are two new churches in New Zealand and a branch church to be received into the Conference next year. And that branch church has its own branch church.

In Australia, there are three churches—in Melba, Sydney, and the new church in Brisbane. They sent people there as missionaries seven years ago, and that church has grown from just four people to where it is now a flourishing church.

It is hard for us to get it all together because of the distances. It is approximately 600 miles between the churches in Australia, and about 800 miles between churches in New Zealand, plus a three-hour ferry

trip. So our Conference is just biennial.

But in between, we have Association. While I was president, we set up the Australian Association, and also the yearly pastors' retreats. Even though they are spread out, the pastors try to get together regularly.

**CC:** What missions projects do you have?

**Goulding:** The people of our Conference are very evangelistic and missionary minded, I can tell you that! Pastor Ron Barrar went to Malawi for 16 years, and then recently went back again for two more terms at the Bible College. Then Ian and Trudy Ingoe served there for two years. That was a joint project with your Conference.

We also have had Jose Alegre, who went to Argentina to start a new work. There have never been SDBs in that part of the world before. So we raised a lot of funds for the work there, for a building and for furnishings. And now it will soon be handed over to the Brazilians. They feel that it is just about ready for them to take it over.

**CC:** How are Australasian SDBs similar or different from us here in the U.S.?

**Goulding:** Well, they're not really much different. I think our basic beliefs and practices are very much like yours here. We enjoy the freedom of thought, just as you do. One difference: some of our churches do not have communion each quarter or each month, but they observe it only at the time of Passover.

Like here, our women are very active, especially in service and missions projects. At Brisbane, they do a lot of work with what they call the "ferrel"—it means "wild"—people; the ones who are on drugs, the alcoholics, and those who are in prison. They are really rough ones, but when they give their lives to the Lord, then you see a big change.

Also in Brisbane, there are huge flea markets. We have a store at the flea market where we give out Bibles. There's also a band, and signs, and we hand out tracts.

We have lots of home study groups. There's a weekly women's group, a senior women's group, and a weekly youth group.

In our Conference, none of the pastors are paid; it's all voluntary. They earn their own income and give their service to the church.

**CC:** What message would you like to share with the General Conference of USA and Canada?

**Goulding:** I am very excited to see more youth here. It shows that you are an alive church. It is so good to see so many new faces and younger people. It shows growth, new evangelization. I notice their enthusiasm. If they can be utilized for the Lord's service, that is so important. I would just say to tune in to the Lord and get on with it! Praise God. SR

# World Federation meets in Jamaica

by Janet Thorngate

Over 70 people attended the fifth quinquennial session of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation held at Passley Gardens, Jamaica, July 14-20, 1997. Thirty official participants from 14 different countries conducted the business, but delegates and observers alike shared in rich experiences of worship and fellowship on the theme, "Christian Certainty."

From the opening welcome by Pastor Naval Harley, president of the hosting Jamaica Conference, to the closing prayer and praise service led by Rev. Jacob Tyrrell of Guyana, each program element—sermons, Bible studies, reports, seminars, even committee work—illustrated the cross-cultural, barrier-breaking nature of our Christian faith and hope.

All was seasoned with Jamaica's unique flavors: ackee and codfish (the national dish) for breakfast, refreshing tropical fruits and breezes off the Caribbean to cool hot, humid afternoons, and the infectious hand-clapping rhythms of happy songs and choruses into the evening.

Delegates noted that four of their number had attended the founding CoWoCo sessions 33 years ago (Jacob Tyrrell, Leon Lawton,

Naval Harley and Joe Samuels). But a clear theme throughout the week was youth—the future and the new century. Many member Conferences reported age-related changes: younger pastors, younger Conference leaders, more interest and activity on the part of young people.

Rev. Eric Davis' seminar on Youth Ministry received enthusiastic response. Input to and from the restructuring committee focused on how to involve more young people in the Federation's own activities and how to encourage increased communication and exchanges between Seventh Day Baptist youth in different countries. Result: the next Federation session is to include a youth component—perhaps the first SDB World Youth Congress.

Pastor Herbert (Ben) McLean of Jamaica was appointed Youth Coordinator. An action group made up of the seven regional vice presidents, chaired by Executive Secretary Dale Thorngate, will work between sessions on how to build this and other restructuring ideas into the Federation's official framework.

Another focus was on development of more regional contacts and activities between five-year sessions. New regional vice presidents were elected as follows: Africa—N. James Siwani; Caribbean—Prudence Robinson; South Pacific—Ian Ingoe; South America—Jose Dirceu de Andrade Cruz; North America—Joe Samuels; Asia—Sossama Philip. (Europe—yet to be named.)

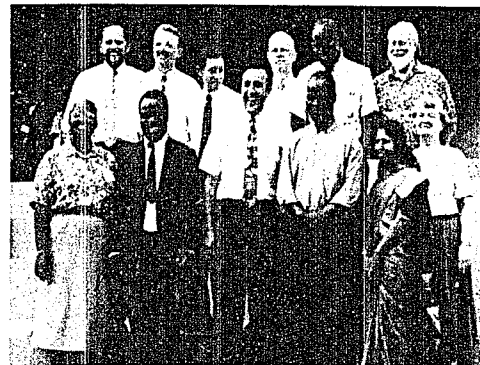
In-person reports from the Conferences; displays of photos, maps,



A colorful banner, bordered in Jamaica's green, black, and yellow, welcomed delegates at Kingston Airport, then stood sentinel over the sessions at the Passley Gardens campus.



Over 70 delegates and observers representing 14 member Conferences gathered at Passley Gardens, Jamaica, for the fifth international session of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.



World Federation officers, past and present. Back (l. to r.): Frits Nieuwstraten, Ian Ingoe, Jose Dirceu de Andrade Cruz, Calvin Babcock, Joe Samuels, Dale Thorngate. Front row: Prudence Robinson, Royal Mkandawire, Gabriel Bejjani, James Siwani, Sosamma Philip, Jean Lewis.



Listening to a variety of English accents, or checking with one's translator, requires intense concentration during Federation sessions. Center front: Stefan Kube from Australia. Right front: Andrew and Paul Bujok from Czech Republic (Polish Conference).

and publications from each country; musical ensembles in many languages; colorful national flags and native dress; an international communion service—these enriched the week's experience.

The Jamaicans treated their guests to special field trips: thrilling travel on winding mountain roads to Maiden Hall (the Conference camp and farm), and a relaxing afternoon at the Ocho Rios beach and waterfall.

Back to business. Delegates re-elected Rev. Gabriel Bejjani and Rev. Dale Thorngate as president and executive secretary, respectively. Calvin Babcock is the new recording secretary, and Luan Ellis the treasurer. Special appreciation was expressed to Jean Lewis for her five years as treasurer.

Given two invitations for the next sessions (Brazil or USA & Canada), the delegates chose Brazil. They will meet there in January, 2003.

Meanwhile, projects approved at the sessions will be publicized so that people around the world may share in the work of Seventh Day Baptists on six continents. The Federation's newsletter, *Seventh Day Baptist WORLD*, will carry regular news from each member Conference.

The annual *Week of Prayer* booklet will continue to provide opportunity to begin each new year united

in spirit. The 1998 booklet, written by Rev. Royal Mkandawire of Malawi, will review the session's theme, "Christian Certainty," based on 1 John:1-5.

Delegates missed several who had hoped to attend the 1997 sessions, particularly Rev. Lawrence Uchegbuonu of Nigeria and Rev. B. Kishor Kumar of India, who experienced visa problems. For the first time they welcomed delegates directly from Kerala, India: Mrs. Sosamma Philip and Mrs. Susamma Koshy.

Other first-time delegates included two young men from Brazil, Pr. Jose Dirceu de Andrade Cruz

and Elder Joao Maria Alves Correia; Mrs. Barbara Eldred from Australia; Mrs. Elnora Andries from Guyana; Pastor Herbert (Ben) McLean from Jamaica; Pastor Al B. Paypa from the Philippines; and Andrzej Bujok from Poland.

Two fraternal delegates were also received: Manuel R. Salera of the Philippine Conference and Pastor Jean Lucas Julien from Haiti. Observers came from Guyana (5), Australasia (7), USA & Canada (19) and Jamaica (15 plus).

Photos of official delegates will be featured in next month's *Sabbath Recorder*. SR

## Annual Berlin picnic a growing success

by Ellen Olson

On Sunday, August 24, 1997, the Berlin, N.Y., Seventh Day Baptist Church hosted its second annual Sabbath School/Youth Fellowship picnic.

This event combines the church's traditional Sabbath School picnic with an outreach activity for the community Youth Fellowship and their families.

This year's picnic was a huge success. Food flowed freely, as did conversation.

Last year, 35 people attended the picnic. This year, there were 61

attendees, from babies to seniors. The large Youth Fellowship contingent challenged the adults to a volleyball game.

After the adults won the first game, the youth requested another, and another... until five games were played in all. The adults ended up undefeated champions.

The youth were heard to say, "We'll win the next one for sure." But, alas, the adults were all tucked out.

Oh well, there's always next year! SR

## E-mail Prayer Group back on line for young adults

For many, another stressful time of life has begun—often referred to as SCHOOL. Going back to school means long boring lectures, homework, and hard tests.

To assist in the everyday ups and downs, "Chain Links," the e-mail prayer group is back online.

This is the second year for "Chain Links," and we invite all who are interested to not only send in your prayer requests but to join the group by becoming a prayer partner.

Members of the prayer group include: Cathy Rogers, Kecia Thompson-gordon, Karen McPherson, Lara Packard, John Pethtel, Amy Skaggs, and John Mark Camenga. Interested in joining? Please contact Kecia.

**Kecia Thompsongordon**  
gwendoline@juno.com \*  
klthomps@stetson.edu

**Karen McPherson**  
km1177@messiah.edu

**Cathy Rogers**  
mr875496@oak.cats.ohiou.edu

**Lara Packard**  
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skag1335@blue.UnivNorthCo.EDU

**John Pethtel**  
JJPETHEAD@aol.com \*  
Pethtel@salem.wvnet.edu

**John Mark Camenga**  
micaiahcamenga@hotmail.com

(\*) preferred address

## Accessions

**Alfred Station, NY**  
*Kenneth Chroniger, pastor*  
Joined after baptism

Melinda Barnes  
Joined by letter  
John Brundage  
Elaine Brundage

**Lake Elsinore, CA**  
*Leland Davis, pastor*  
Joined after testimony

Chantel Breshears  
Wanda Cerrillo  
Mary Zinn  
Valerie Zinn

**Paint Rock, AL**  
*John Bevis, pastor*  
Joined after baptism

Ellen Matos  
Aspen Montgomery

## Obituaries

**Simkowski.**—Ezra John Simkowski, infant son of Heidi (Otto) and Samuel R. Simkowski of Stevens Point, Wis., died shortly after birth on June 27, 1997, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Wis.

Along with his parents, survivors include grandparents Tom and Ginny Otto of Stevens Point, and Jerome and Gladys Simkowski of Junction City, Wis.; great-grandparents Margaret L. Burdick of Milton, Wis., and Leonard and Shirley Simkowski and Frances Raykowski, all of Junction City; many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Private funeral services were held on June 30, 1997, at the Boston Funeral Home in Stevens Point. The Rev. Calvin Seban of Menomonee Falls officiated. Burial was in the Lynwood Union Cemetery, Lynwood, Wis., near the home of Ezra's parents.

**Cornish.**—Audrey Almy Cornish, a 70-year member of the Battle Creek, Mich., Seventh Day Baptist Church, died on August 13, 1997, at the Faith Medical Nursing Home in St. Clair, Mich. She was 94.

Audrey was born on May 23, 1903. She was active in the Battle Creek church for many years and was a very willing worker in the church's Ladies Aid Society. She also served as a Gray Lady at Percy Jones Army Hospital during and after World War II. Audrey was a member of the Grand Trunk Railroad Conductors and Engineers Auxiliary, and a member of the Order of the Eastern Star.

She moved to St. Clair about 10 years ago to be near her son, John Edward Cornish. Her husband, John R. Cornish, died years ago.

In addition to her son, survivors include two grandsons and three granddaughters.

The funeral was held in St. Clair, with burial in Battle Creek's Oakhill Cemetery. The committal service was conducted on August 24, 1997, by Nello Carmichael, student pastor of the Battle Creek SDB Church.

**Wheeler.**—Merlin E. Wheeler, 79, of Winchester, Kan., died on August 22, 1997, at St. Francis Hospital.

He was born on October 6, 1917, the son of Ernest and Edna (Lugibihl) Wheeler. He graduated from Nortonville (Kan.) High School and attended Milton (Wis.) College.

Merlin worked for Beach Aircraft in Wichita, and was a farmer near Nortonville. He also worked for the Leavenworth (Kan.) Federal Prison, the State Highway Department, and for his son at Wheeler-Lowe Automotive, Leavenworth.

He was a World War II veteran and a member of the Nortonville SDB Church, where he served as a trustee. He enjoyed traveling.

On May 17, 1941, he married Juanita Opal Woolworth in Nortonville. She died on May 12, 1992. He was also preceded in death by one sister, Louise Sullivan, and two grandchildren.

Survivors include one son, Mark, of Leavenworth; one daughter, Carol Bond of Topeka, Kan.; three brothers, Charles of Nortonville, Rev. Edgar Wheeler of Wake Forest, N.C., and Dr. Edward R. Wheeler of Weiser, Idaho; four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on August 24, 1997, at the O'Trimble Funeral Home, Nortonville, with Chaplain Clifford Bond officiating. Burial was in the Nortonville Cemetery.

**Soncrant.**—Janet Lee Soncrant, 51, died on September 4, 1997, of

heart disease in Riverside, Calif. She was born on March 17, 1946, in Riverside, where she was a lifelong resident. She was a day-care provider from her home.

Mrs. Soncrant graduated from Riverside Poly High School in 1964. She also attended Riverside Community College.

She was a member of the Riverside Seventh Day Baptist Church, where she taught Sabbath School.

Survivors include two daughters, Kathie and Lorie Hoskins, both of Riverside; one son, Fred, of Moreno Valley, Calif.; her mother, Stella Grieshaber of Riverside; two brothers, Arden Leroy and Eugene; one granddaughter, and aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews.

Services were held on September 12, 1997, at the Riverside SDB Church, with Rev. Gabriel Bejjani officiating. Interment was in Evergreen Memorial Park, Riverside.

## Births

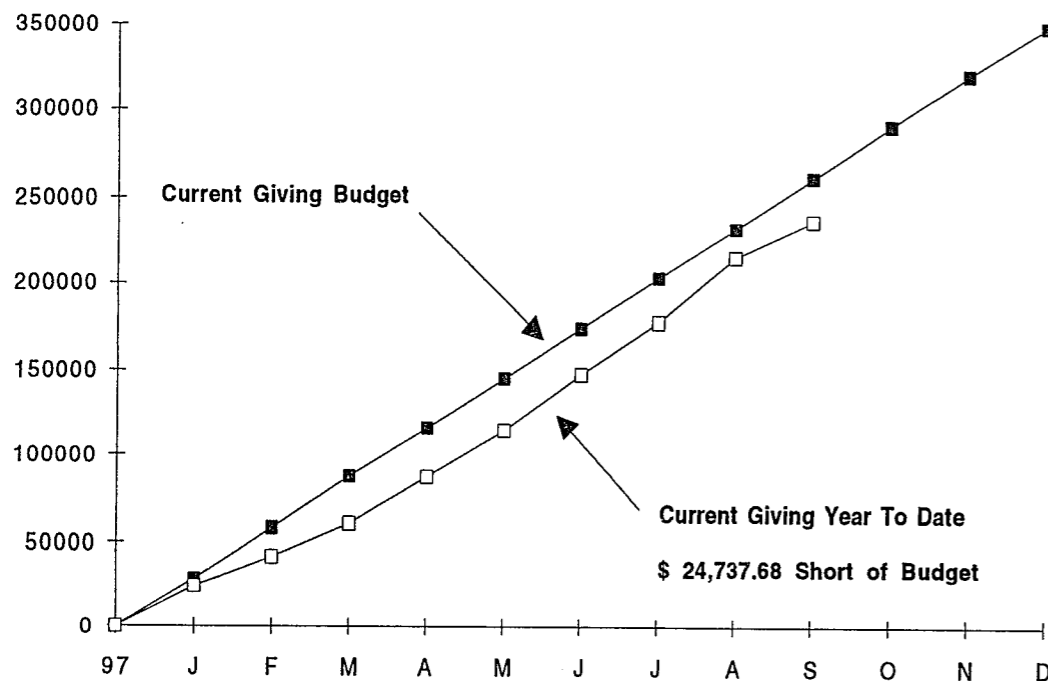
**Johnson.**—A daughter, Ivy Taylor Johnson, was born to Ronald and Laurie (Allen) Johnson of Wells-ville, NY, on October 17, 1995.

**Ellis.**—A daughter, Dominique Josephine Ellis, was born to Terry and Kristine (Lawson) Ellis of Lackawanna, NY, on April 25, 1996.

**Chroniger.**—A daughter, Elianna Rose Chroniger, was born to Kenneth and Peggy (Sutton) Chroniger of Alfred Station, NY, on November 22, 1996.

**Noel.**—A daughter, Abigail Ruth Noel, was born to Rod and Melissa (Snyder) Noel of Corning, NY, on September 15, 1997.

## Current Giving 1997



# Central church exhibits at county fair

by Ruth Hazen

"How are you different from Seventh-day Adventists?" "Where do you worship?" "You mean you go to church on Saturday? Why?" "Why do you believe in the Bible?" "Why don't you play the Redskins game on that TV?"

These were some of the many questions members of the Central SDB Church of Mitchellville, Md., fielded from fairgoers and fellow exhibitors during the Prince George's County Fair. It was held at the Showplace Arena in Upper Marlboro, Md., the first weekend in September.

Along with the other commercial exhibitors, the fair committee provided us with a table, electrical connection, two chairs, and a small sign. We added a second table, a banner sign, a TV/VCR and stand, a floral arrangement, and a poster with the SDB logo. We also added Sabbath tracts, Gospel tracts, and tracts explaining the difference between us and Seventh-day Adventists.

Our members added maps showing the church's location; fliers highlighting our worship services, Bible study, and prayer groups; and cards with our Statement of Beliefs.

To attract attention, we played the SDB video adjacent to the water cooler in the next booth. We also provided candy, fresh grapes, and free pens with the church's name.

Those who passed or stopped by were encouraged to sign up for a drawing of either a child's or an adult Bible. On the card, we provided a check space for those interested in more information, or those who wanted the pastor to visit them.

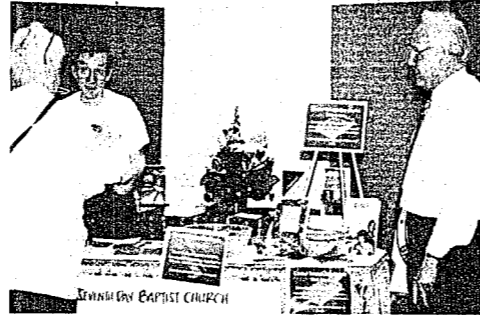
The church has followed up with letters announcing the winner of the Bibles and thanking people for stopping at the booth. We have also sent the additional

information to those asking for it.

For several years, we at Central have been praying for ways to reach out to those around us. The fair booth allowed us to share our faith with others who might never have heard of Seventh Day Baptists. We continue to pray that our efforts will bear fruit in those who need to hear the Gospel or who are looking for a Sabbathkeeping church. *SR*

## CENTRAL SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS

Meeting You At Life's Cross Roads



Cliff Gordon (left) and Pratt Chroniger man the booth.

## Personal reflections, cont. from page 14

more direct impact than the larger Associations.

While pastor at New Auburn, Wis., the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin and Minnesota churches brought not only close fellowship, but much needed encouragement to build our new church. "Work-bees" drew from the area on several occasions. It was at one of these Semi-Annual Meetings that the cornerstone of the New Auburn church was laid, and a year later the North Central Association took part in the dedication of that building.

Two years later, the Association gathered at Dodge Center, Minn., for that church's Centennial celebration.

Such milestones of history are

too precious to keep to oneself, and thus the Associations and their subgroups provide the occasion for enrichment.

A pastoral move to White Cloud, Mich., brought me to the Northern Association, where my growing family shared in the camping experience of Camp Holston at Battle Creek. The dedication of new buildings on the shore of Cotton Lake was an experience to be shared.

In 1969, the Northern Association merged with the Mid-Continent Association. Though now living in Milton, I found continued interest and participation in the Association and its subgroups.

I am quite certain that the General Conference in 1834 could not have envisioned the extent to which

individuals have been influenced by their action. Their idea of a federal-type system, in which the Conference would be composed of delegates from the Associations, was not accepted by some churches which did not want to give up their direct participation in Conference. Yet the formation of Associations has provided an important link in the person-to-person aspect of denominational life.

Each Association has been able to develop its own identity and its own mission. I count it a privilege to have shared in these continuing adaptations to both personal and interpersonal relationships. It is a mark of Seventh Day Baptists to foster such self-directed diversity within our denominational unity. *SR*

# K E V I N ' S C O R N E R

It did not begin like any other September Sunday morning.

Generally I'm up and gone to my preaching responsibilities before any other Butler (at least, the female variety) emerges from under their covers.

This Sunday was different. Little did I know *how* different it would become.

Jenny was scheduled to help out at "Harvestfest"—an outdoor function for families. Well, every other Butler was on his or her feet, supposedly planning to help Jenny with that service project.

It was a busy household, especially with only one shower and six bodies.

As I said, a different Sunday morning.

Then it got *way* different.

Rushing into the miraculously empty bathroom, I happened to glance out the window as minty floss massaged my gums. And there they were—a line of people standing by the curb in front of our house, dressed in dark suits, wearing dark formal hats.

"Must be Jenny's friends, here to pick her up," I smiled and surmised.

My surmise turned to surprise as I moved to the living room and stared more closely out the picture window.

My jaw nearly scraped the carpet when I began to recognize the faces. The faces with devilish smirks. These were no high-schoolers. These were my "sheep" from the St. John's church.

They came to surprise their pastor one week before a certain milestone birthday. Oh, the humor...

One church leader was decked out in a big black sweatshirt, hood fully extended over his head à la the "ghost of things to come."

He slithered toward the house, shakily wielding a walker, which would soon become my prop to reach that morning's vehicle of choice—a vehicle which I could not see until opening our front door: a brand new, 1997, \$60,000 black Cadillac!

A black Cadillac hearse!!!

(You were expecting maybe a limousine?)

Ever been chauffeured to church, pastors?

Would they offer me the front seat? Nooo!! The whole family (minus Jenny—she *did* go to her school event) piled into the back of the hearse. This, of course, after reassurances to the boys that it would not smell. Spreading out on the supplied sleeping bags, we embarked on the 22-mile journey.

The "procession" of five cars (with lights on, mind you) wound through Milton, the hearse leading the way, honking its ocean liner-like horn a few times. A station wagon followed with a fancy handmade sign, "Flower Car." It proudly transported a potted dead tree in the back.

The hearse was rather comfortable, as expected, but I must say I was disappointed at the stereo system. No speakers back there. And the driver kept saying that he wasn't used to talking to passengers—or, at least having them answer back.

Meanwhile, at the church, a clued-in crowd anxiously awaited the "grand opening." How did they know about it? When I was at Conference the month before, the announcement was made at church; they even turned off the recorder during the declaration, fearing I might hear the tape before the big day. What strategy!

No, four men did not carry me out when we arrived, but I was forced to use the chair-lift up the stairs.

Most folks donned black for the day, including one woman in full mourning dress with thick veil, dabbing her eyes of fake tears. Everyone sported black arm bands, made of crepe paper joyfully supplied by the female mastermind behind all this.

I actually encouraged this church member to attend a women's seminar, where she got the hearse idea from a Luci Swindoll story. (Shirley said it helps to have a father in the funeral business.) This stunt had been in the works since May! I was clueless.

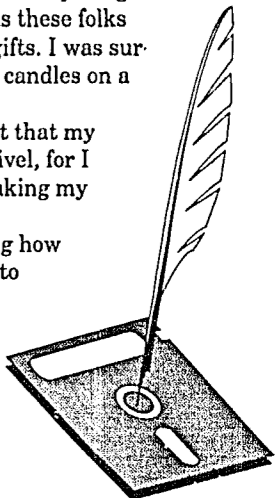
A luncheon followed the worship service. More black decorations, more dead bouquets graced the tables as centerpieces, as these folks shared gag (and generous) gifts. I was surprised at how much heat 40 candles on a cake could put out.

People must have thought that my head was on a perpetual swivel, for I spent the rest of the day shaking my noggin in disbelief.

I do remember mentioning how the church is often referred to as a "hospital" for sinners.

I pointed out that they were "sick" indeed.

The big question remains though: What in the world is going to happen when I hit the big 5-0?



Doris Fetherston, 92, formerly of Valley View Retirement Community, died in Lynchburg, Va., on September 30, 1997. She was the wife of the late Robert T. Fetherston.

She was born on April 3, 1905, in Walworth, Wis., the daughter of Edward M. and Helen (Clarke) Holston.

Doris was the first woman president of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, 1964-65. She also was president of the SDB Women's Society, 1952-1955; served as SDB Ex-



**Doris Fetherston**  
1905 - 1997

ecutive Secretary, 1956-1961; chaired the Budget Promotion Commission; and was a member of the Board of Directors of Salem (W.Va.) College, 1960. In 1964, she received the Robe of Achievement from the Women's Society.

Survivors include one son, Robert E. Fetherston, of Lynchburg; four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on October 4, 1997, at Rivermont Presbyterian Church, with the Rev. John Mabry officiating.

*From a prayer given for Doris as she assumed her Conference presidential duties in 1964:*

We are grateful to Thee, our Father, for the life service of this first lady who has been chosen to guide Thy church through the coming year. Give Doris wisdom and understanding; give her patience and courage; give her enthusiasm and strength; give her direction and purpose. Come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, dwell within her life that her labors may continue to glorify Thee, that she may rightly lead Thy people, and that she may find joy and satisfaction in her spiritual service.

May we who labor with Doris offer ourselves unreservedly in the kingdom tasks to which together we have been called. May we strive with her to usher in the day when God's love will prevail among men to the glory of His Son Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. Amen.

—Rev. C. Rex Burdick

*From a 1964 Women's Society booklet honoring Doris for "her work and continued interest in the Seventh Day Baptist denomination through the years."*

As Executive Secretary of the General Conference, Doris instituted new procedures and broadened the development of the conception of that comparatively new office. In that capacity she served as the Recording Secretary of the Commission of the General Conference.

Here her quick wit and wide experiences, her ability to draw together varied opinions, and her facility with words which put difficult ideas into clear and concise sentences served the denomination well.

Clearest and most valuable of all her services with the Commission was her constant reminder of God's presence and power, the living reality of her faith.

—Rev. Victor W. Skaggs