

The

S

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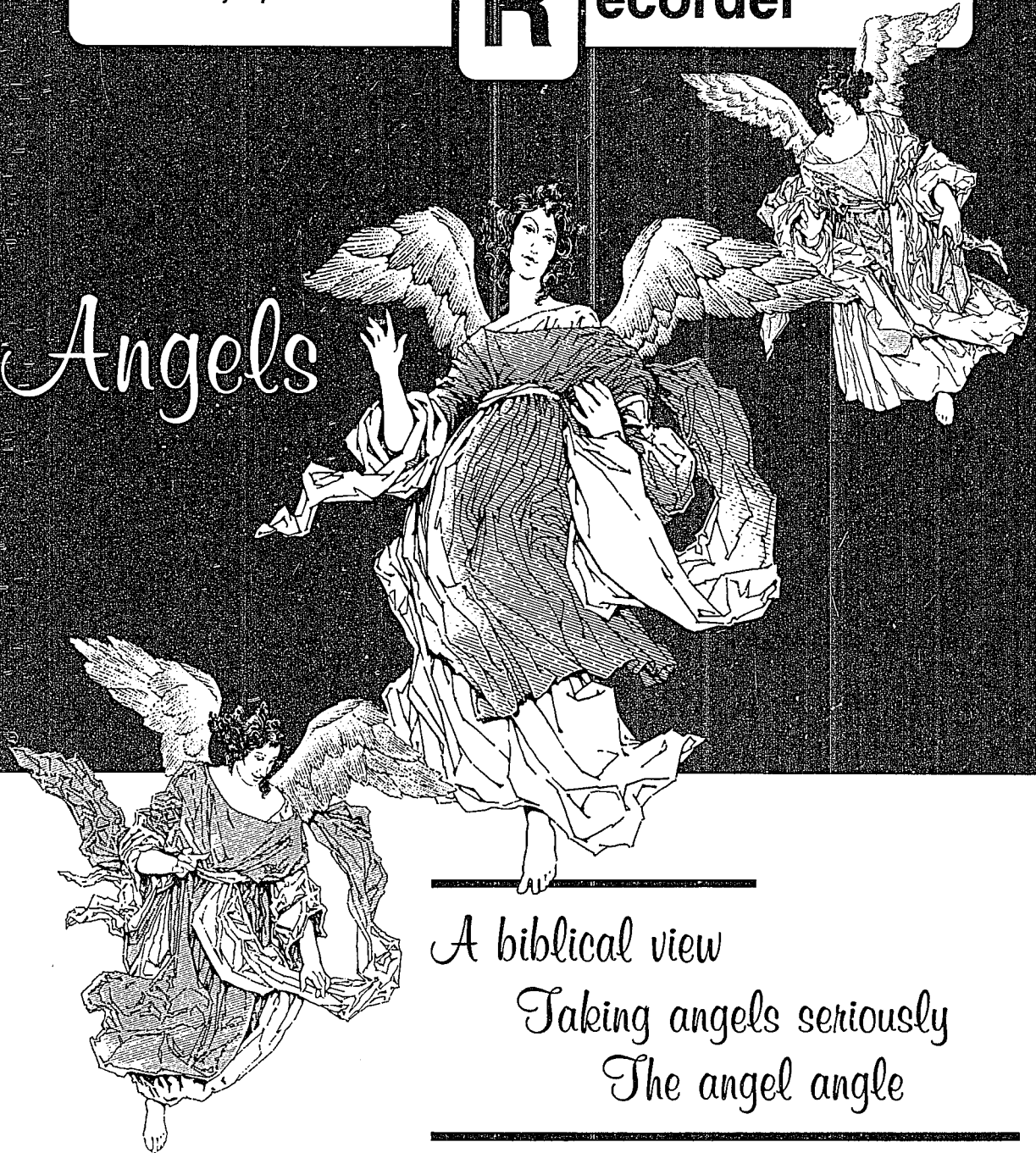
News for and about
Seventh Day Baptists

December 1997

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Angels



A biblical view

Taking angels seriously

The angel angle



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:

- salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- the Bible as the inspired word of God. 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: The 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 and the SDB Web site: www.seventhdaybaptist.org

Young Adults!

Come to the
Young Adult Retreat
Dec. 30 - Jan. 2
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in Colorado
(No cost, except
your transportation)

Summer Christian Service Corps 1998

To apply to SCSC, write to:
Charlotte Chroniger
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Ph. (609) 455-0488

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

Application Deadline:
February 1, 1998

To quote newspaper advice columnist Ann Landers, "Give me eight lashes with a wet noodle!"

Chester and Rachel Bonham also represented Shiloh, N.J., at Conference in Lindsborg, Kan. Their names were inadvertently omitted from the text even though they both appear in the picture. (See "Shiloh supports president," page 21 of the October SR.)

I have no excuses, only regrets and an apology to the Bonhams.

—Donna S. Bond

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. 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

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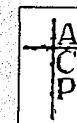


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Angels: A Biblical view

by Paul Manuel



If the common portrayal of angels is so inaccurate, it would be beneficial to examine the reliable source of information on this subject. What does the Bible say about angels?

Many depictions of angels in art and modern caricature portray them as women with long, flowing hair, or as cute, chubby infants with wings. These are images people find attractive and non-threatening.

In the Bible, though, angels always have the form of adult males, never females or children.¹ Moreover, their appearance generally elicits a troubled response from those who encounter them, usually fear (e.g., Judg. 6:22-23; 1 Chron. 21:16, 20; Luke 1:11-12; Matt. 28:2-4).

Other heavenly creatures, cherubs and seraphs, are even more unusual. Both possess human form

with human hands, but there the resemblance ends. Cherubs have four wings and four different faces (Ezek. 10:14, 20-21). Seraphs have six wings and, presumably, one face (Isa. 6:2-3, 6). The "living creatures" in Revelation seem to be a composite of cherub and seraph, each one with six wings and a different face (4:8).

Similarly, the devil's image is often a comic figure in a red union suit with horns, a pointed tail, and a pitchfork. Again, the biblical description is quite different and not at all humorous. He is a deceiver who "masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) yet "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

Another popular myth depicts Satan as God's evil twin, presiding over hell as God presides over heaven. The reality, of course, is quite different. Satan can do nothing without God's permission, and hell will be the place of Satan's

judgment, not his domain (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10; cf. 2 Pet. 2:4).

If the common portrayal of angels is so inaccurate, it would be beneficial to examine more closely the reliable source of information on this subject. What does the Bible say about angels, especially about their nature and work?

The nature of angels

We sometimes use the term "angel" broadly, referring to various heavenly beings that differ in kind as well as in position (Eph. 3:10). The majority are angels, proper, whose ranks are vast, "numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" (Rev. 5:11).

As with the existence of God, the Bible assumes the existence of angels and does not explain their origin, other than to indicate that they were part of God's early creative activity (Psa. 148:1-5). Job says "the angels shouted for joy"

when God laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4, 7), so they existed before man.²

• Angels are spirit beings (unlike man)

Angels are incorporeal, that is, without physical form. The author of Hebrews calls good angels "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (1:14). Paul makes clear that evil angels, the true opponents of the believer's service to God, are not "flesh and blood" but "spiritual forces" (Eph. 6:12). Nevertheless, angels may appear in physical form, as they did to Lot (Gen. 19:1) and to Gideon (Judg. 6:11).

• Angels are superior beings (to man)

Angels have greater longevity than man, but they are still created entities, dependent on God "who alone is immortal" (1 Tim. 6:16).³

They have greater status than man, whom God made "a little lower than the heavenly beings" (Psa. 8:5), but they do not have pre-eminence, a position that belongs only to God and His Messiah (Col. 1:15-16).

They have greater knowledge than man (Luke 4:34), but they are not omniscient, for elements of God's plan are a mystery to them (Matt. 24:36; 1 Pet. 1:12).

They have greater strength than man (2 Pet. 2:11), to help or to hinder (Acts 12:7; Job 1:12), but they are not omnipotent and cannot act outside God's control (Job 1:12; Rom. 8:38).

They have greater mobility than man, with access both to heaven and to earth (Job 1:6-7), but they are not omnipresent and can be in only one place at a time (Dan. 10:13).

• Angels are imperfect beings (like man)

As with all of God's creation,



"Apparition to the Shepherds" by Ploekhorst.

angels were originally good, but some sinned and now work in opposition to the divine plan (2 Pet. 2:4; Eph. 6:11-12).⁴ The biblical writers often refer to fallen angels as demons (compare Matt. 25:41 and 12:26). Despite their rebellion, however, evil angels are still part of a celestial authority that God has established and, thus, are subject to Him.

"For who in the heavens above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him" (Psa. 89:6-7).

Does the false image our culture presents of angels' appearance and

nature also extend to their work? Do they, for example, occupy themselves by sitting on clouds and playing harps? Is their busiest time of the year Valentine's Day, when they fly around looking for people to shoot with love-potion-tipped arrows? How does the Bible describe angelic activity?

The work of angels

• Good angels serve God (like good men)

The words for angel in Hebrew (*mal'ak*) and Greek (*anggelos*) mean "messenger." Hence, angels are emissaries of God "who do his bidding" (Psa. 103:20). Good angels perform a variety of tasks, mainly for the benefit of God's people:

• delivering (Dan. 3:28)

- supporting (1 Kings 19:5-6)
 - encouraging (Matt. 28:5-6)
 - guiding (Acts 8:26)
- and, in the end,
 • gathering (Matt. 24:31).

Toward the unrighteous, even in Israel, angels are also the instrument of divine judgment (Gen. 19:12-13; Ezek. 9:6), a role they will have to a greater extent in the last days (Matt. 13:41; Rev. 16:2-17).

The highest of the angelic host is the archangel (or "prince" in Daniel 10), whose earthly responsibility is at the national level. Michael, the only "one of the chief princes" named in Scripture, is the protector of Israel (Dan. 10:13, 20; 12:1; Jude 9).⁵

The Bible says less about other heavenly creatures. Cherubs are guardians for God. After the fall, He stationed some at the entrance to the Garden of Eden to prevent man's return (Gen. 3:24). Their images in the sanctuary—over the ark (Exod. 25:18), on the curtains

The Bible's depiction of angels is quite different from the way our culture portrays them...

(Exod. 26:1), on the walls and doors (1 Kings 6:29, 32)—mark them as protectors of God's holiness. They are also part of the divine entourage that accompanies His appearance, perhaps as an honor guard (Ezek. 10:20).

Seraphs are ministers before God. They proclaim His holiness and tend the heavenly altar (Isa. 6:2-3, 6).

Evil angels oppose God (like evil men)

Led by Satan, evil angels are the enemy of believers, as Paul states.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against

the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12).

They attempt in various ways to hinder or disrupt a person's relationship with God:

- accusing (Rev. 12:10)
- deceiving (1 Tim. 4:1)
- tempting (Matt. 4:1)
- obscuring (Matt. 13:19)
- harassing (2 Cor. 12:7)
- hindering (1 Thess. 2:18)
- oppressing (Luke 13:16)
- possessing (Matt. 4:24)
- even killing (John 8:44)

Angelic activity divides celestial beings into two clear and contrary forces. Angels either serve God or

poets follow suit. In their corporeal form, angels were thought to be made of air, sometimes condensed. So **John Donne**, in "Air and Angels," describes them as appearing in a "shapeless flame," as well as wearing a face and wings of air.

In "Hymne of Heavenly Love," **Edmund Spenser** is not content to describe angels as "full of beautie... All glistening glorious in their Makers light." He also suggests that they wait upon God, deliver His messages, or sing His praises in ranks of "trinall triplicities" (three groups of three).

Church Fathers had developed a nine-rank angelic hierarchy, often arranged in groups of three as well: seraphim, cherubim, thrones; dominations, virtues, powers; principalities, archangels, angels. **Dante**, in *Paradiso*, describes those same groups and their duties.

Theologians cautioned against specifying ranks, but such schemes remained popular. Though *Paradise Lost* portrays specific angels with specific duties—such as guarding heaven or carrying divine messages—**Milton** is aware of biblical silence and refuses to be dogmatic,

cont. on page 9

...and it is important we not allow the latter to influence our understanding.



oppose Him; there are no neutral factions, no non-combatants. In this way, the spiritual realm mirrors the situation in the physical realm, for Jesus will recognize only two groups of people in the end: those who served him, and those who did not (Matt. 25:31-32).

Some people think they can avoid the unpleasantness of the conflict through passive non-involvement—at least, as they see it—but such a stance actually plays into the hands of the enemy; for by not serving God and advancing His cause, they are providing tacit support to the opposition. As Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30a).

If God has our support, it means that we take an active role in advancing His cause, despite the resistance we may encounter from forces of the rebellion. Moreover, understanding what angels do, especially as they aid God's people, makes us realize that we are not alone in our struggle.

Though we face powerful spiritual forces, we have the cooperation and active support of equally powerful allies. Most important of all, we have the assurance that our side wins in the end (1 Cor. 15:24-25).

The Bible's depiction of angels is quite different from the way our culture portrays them, and it is important we not allow the latter to influence our understanding. We must not adopt the false impression of angels which either demeans them as cartoon figures or deifies them as God's equal. That is not to say we cannot appreciate renderings of them in art or carica-

For a well-organized and detailed treatment of this subject, see *Angels, Elect and Evil* by C. Fred Dickason (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975).

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ture, merely that we know the difference between imagination and reality. $\text{\$}$

Footnotes:

¹The two women with stork wings in Zechariah 5:9 are probably symbolic figures and not angels. Contrary to popular depictions, no mention of angels indicates they have wings, although they do fly (Rev. 14:6).

²The description of the nature of angels that follows probably extends to other heavenly creatures as well.

³Gabriel and Satan, for instance, have existed for thousands of years (Jude 9; compare Dan. 9:21 and Luke 1:26; Job 1:6 and Mark 1:13). As spirit beings, they are not subject to physical death. Nevertheless, evil angels will suffer spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God (Matt. 25:41).

⁴The account of an angelic fall does not appear in the Bible. Peter and Jude mention the event but offer few details (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). From Genesis 6:1-2, several Jewish writers in the late Second Temple Period trace the fall to angelic intercourse with human women before the flood, an interpretation early Christian writers followed as well,

but the Genesis passage is too vague to bear such an interpretation with any certainty. Isaiah 14:12-15 refers to Satan's rebellion, according to the *Life of Adam and Eve* (a first century pseudepigraphic document), but the context in Isaiah is a "taunt against the king of Babylon" (v. 4). Others have seen a similar allusion in Ezekiel 28:12b-17, which supposedly places the angelic fall shortly before man's fall. Again, the context indicates otherwise, for Ezekiel states clearly that his utterance is "a lament concerning the king of Tyre" (v. 12a). Nevertheless, the prophet's description is quite specific, and he may be drawing an analogy to the king using a well-known tradition about the devil.

⁵Except for Michael and Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; Luke 1:19), the biblical writers do not identify angels by name. The term Satan is not a proper noun but a title ("the accuser"; cf. Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10), as is another appellation, Lucifer (from "morning star" in Isa. 14:12), which may not even refer to the devil (see note 4).



Angels in Christian literature

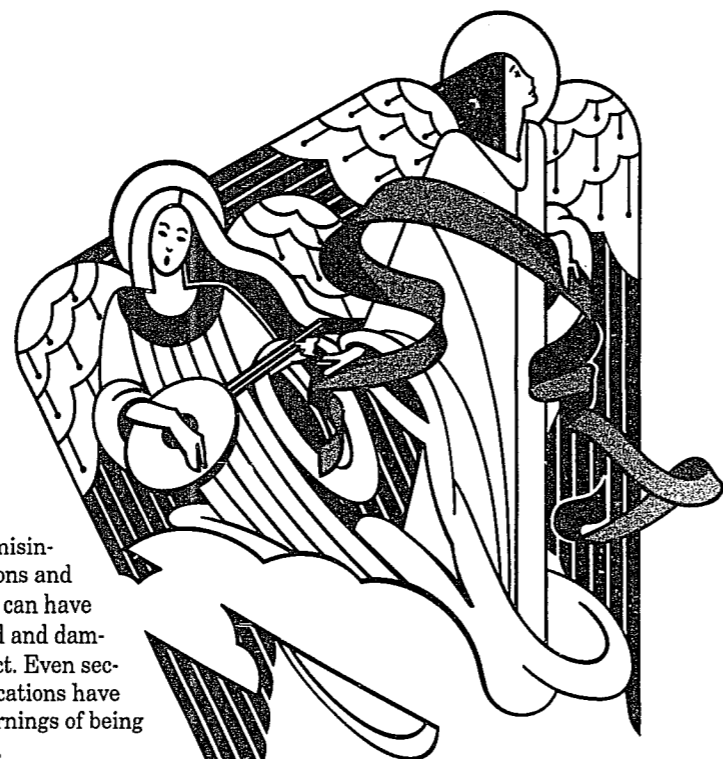
by D.E. Manuel

Fact and fancy mingle in the popular portrayal of angelic beings, so that even from the fanciful we find elements of biblical truth. We tend to exercise our imaginations to supply information the Bible omits because, like Adam in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, we are curious of "things above [our] world."

The Bible associates angels with fire and light, and

The ANGELE

by
Gretchen
Zwiebel



To say that angels have become popular is the understatement of the decade. If you read books or magazines, watch TV, or go to movies, chances are you have been exposed to many differing views and beliefs about angels.

This media blitz began six or seven years ago and is ongoing. Angel merchandise can be found in most stores. And I admit that I enjoy reading stories about personal encounters with angels.

There is no denying that Christians and non-Christians alike are thinking about angels. The question is, are angels accurately portrayed?

I remember the first time I noticed an angel pin on a friend's collar. When I asked where she had gotten the pin, she said it was a gift given with the sentiment that her guardian angel would keep her safe.

It's always good to remember God's angels and how they do what God commands, but I wonder if my friend believes that the pin has additional powers of protection. In reality, a pin is powerless, and I'm hopeful that my friend's perspective is sound.

Many ideas about angels are

based on misinterpretations and myth that can have a profound and damaging effect. Even secular publications have issued warnings of being led astray.

Time magazine stated, "For those who choke too easily on God and His rules, angels are the handy compromise; all fluff and meringue, kind, nonjudgmental. They are available to everyone, like aspirin" (*Time*, "Angels Among Us," December 27, 1993).

"Angels offer a form of spirituality devoid of Jesus and God," wrote Joan Webster Anderson in her book, *Where Angels Walk: True Stories of Heavenly Visitors*. We are warned that belief in God has been so depopularized in America that now belief in anything can happen.

People are searching for spirituality, but without God. *Life* magazine attached the label "God Lite" to these less intimidating celestial beings.

The Internet has thousands of Web sites available on the subject of angels. The choices range from inspirational stories of "sightings" to a disturbing choice of being able

to have "a real psychic give you your very own angel reading."

It's not surprising to find an angel horoscope service available on the Internet, but what if someone you care about has been taken in by this empty, superficial, and potentially dangerous "angelism"? Would you be able to influence them by showing them God's truth about angels?

One of my first memories about angels came as I listened to my Sabbath School teacher reading Bible stories of the angels constantly worshipping and praising God. I wondered how the angels were able to be God's messengers if they were constantly worshipping Him.

Those were the thoughts of a child. Maybe the type of question we need to ask is, "Are we limiting spiritual realities, or are we creating our own?"

We are "looking through a veil" as far as understanding the ways of the spiritual world. But with searching the Bible and reading books like *What the Bible Says About Angels*, by Dr. David Jere-

have an appropriate fear and reverence for Him at all times. We know that our focus should be the same, but we allow distractions of everyday life to pull us away. Contemplating how the angels respond to

is sovereign. He can use the mistakes of mankind to accomplish His will.

"Is it possible that God is using angelmania—though it's often extreme and fanatical—to give His people a new angle on angels? Does He want to sharpen our sensitivity toward spiritual realities? After all, angels will be a big part of our eternal lives, which will be considerably more significant than our short presence on this earth.

"Angels have a greater claim to reality than our homes and jobs. And unlike our homes and jobs, the holy angels are always pointing us in the right direction: toward God." SR

What if someone you care about has been taken in by this empty, superficial, and potentially dangerous "angelism"? Would you be able to influence them by showing them God's truth about angels?

miah, we can come to a better understanding of God's purpose for angels.

Understanding this purpose can help us clarify our own objectives. For example, because angels live in the spiritual world with God, they

God in the spiritual world allows us to sharpen our own focus.

Angels are an exciting subject, and Dr. Jeremiah's book is a wonderful place to start comparing "angelmania" with truth. He states on page 17, "One thing is sure: God

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Christian literature, cont. from page 6

sometimes suggesting five orders of angels, sometimes four, sometimes nine.

This fascination with angels extends also to fallen ones. A common Renaissance view was that hellish orders corresponded to the heavenly. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton describes a nine-rank demonic hierarchy in which each class has a set of diabolical duties and a demonic prince whom Burton identifies as a pagan god (e.g., Beelzebub, Belial, Mammon).

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton gives fallen angels the names of pagan gods. They also get dramatic roles in the debate about Satan's plan to exact revenge upon God. If heavenly angels reflect God's glory, Milton's fallen angels echo Satanic deception. Each demon argues with questionable reasoning and rhetoric, just as Satan in the Gospels tempts Christ with perverse biblical interpretation.

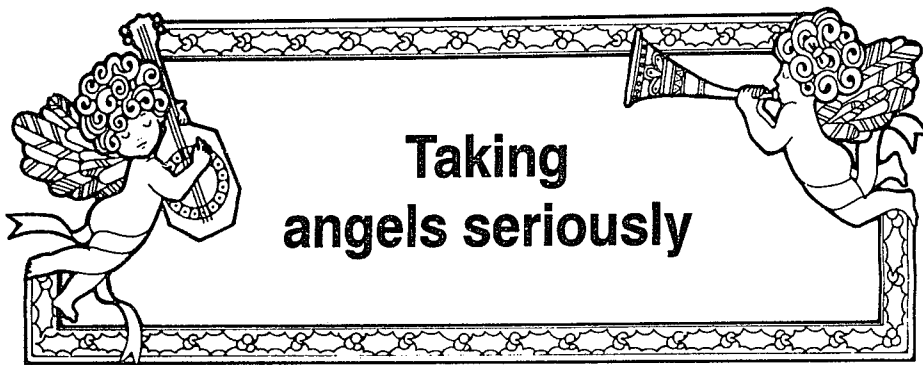
Rhetorical deception is accompanied by physical deception. Milton's Satan can appear even with counterfeit angelic beauty (as in 2 Cor. 11:14), the hints of which

he retains through most of the epic.

So fallen angels are often invested with attractive qualities—even wit and humor. Medieval English drama represented Satan and the demons as grotesque figures, yet often made them fascinatingly comic. Milton's Satan is not comic, but he presents a more troubling problem. He seems heroic—despite his change "in outward luster" and his final metamorphosis into a hideous serpent.

It is a problem of dramatics: God, omnipotent, need only speak to triumph; Satan must attempt heroic acts. Repulsed as we are or should be, we cannot help admiring him. The truth in this fiction is that evil's attractiveness—of reason, of action, of beauty (though specious, vain, and counterfeit)—has always captivated our will, as well as our imagination. SR

D.E. Manuel is a deacon at the First Baptist Church of Freeport, N.Y., and a Ph.D. candidate in English Renaissance Literature at Rutgers University.



Taking angels seriously

by
Jeanne Yurke

"We're going to study *what*!?" "Angels," I replied matter-of-factly. I could tell just from the look on the church member's face that she was sure her pastor had lost some degree of sanity.

Up until then, our Sabbath Eve Bible Study had focused on a specific book of the Bible for a series of lessons. We had held serious discussions on such books as Isaiah, Amos, John, and Revelation. Now the group had decided to do something different and try a "topical" study for a change.

Rather than looking at only one book of the Bible, we would explore one subject by reading pertinent passages throughout Scripture. It was something new for us, but why would we want to start by studying *angels*?

Interest, bewilderment

When the subject was first suggested, it was met with a mixture of interest and bewilderment. People who had faithfully participated in lessons from one of the prophets or on a Gospel were definitely interested in learning about angels. The bewilderment was mostly mine—trying to find suitable lesson materials.

Take a quick tour of almost any bookstore these days, whether it be secular or religious, and it becomes quite obvious that the subject of angels fascinates many would-be authors. There are art history books

filled with depictions of heavenly beings, autobiographies which attribute miraculous happenings to angels, and books which claim to be definitive works on the subject. Within that last category, the books range in content from ancient mythology to Bible stories to New Age or pop psychology.

Some "fairly" good material

While looking through the many volumes available, I found two books which provide interesting background material on the subject.

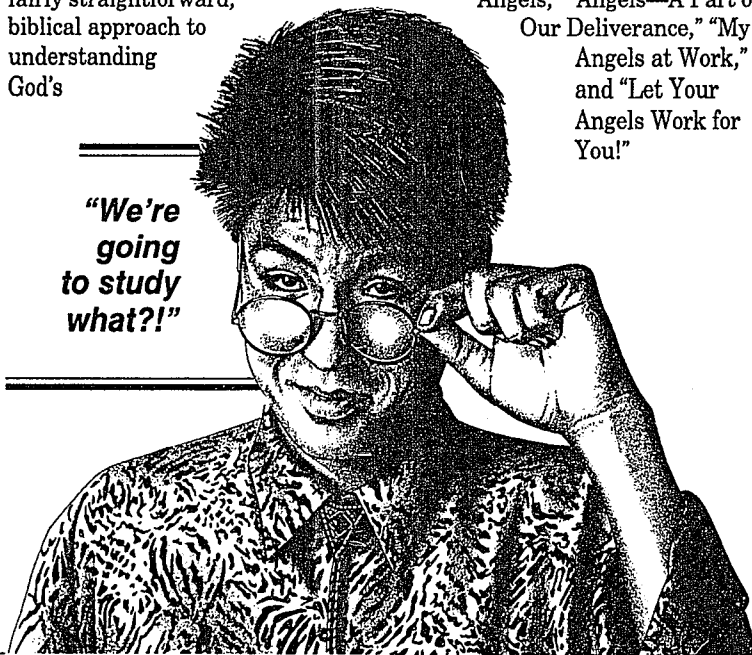
The first one, *Angels*, by Charles and Annette Capps, takes a fairly straightforward, biblical approach to understanding God's

special messengers. The key word here is "fairly," because in some places the authors go far afield.

At first, I was impressed with the apparent thoroughness of this book as some of the chapter titles would indicate: "Angels, Good and Bad," "Angels and Supernatural Manifestations," "Jesus and the Angels," "Angels Ministering for Heirs of the Promise," "Angels in the Old Testament," and "Angels in the New Testament."

Unfortunately, there are other parts of the same book which made me realize that this has to be used carefully and selectively, since these chapter titles also appear: "Releasing Angels," "Judging the Angels," "Angels—A Part of Our Deliverance," "My Angels at Work," and "Let Your Angels Work for You!"

"We're going to study *what*!?"



Biblical and extra-biblical settings

The second book, *The Nature of Angels*, by Alexander Whyte, discusses the presence of angels in extra-biblical as well as biblical settings. It is an older book, consisting of "eight addresses" among some previously unpublished works which the author's widow was able to get into print.

The bibliography lists 17 sources, starting with "The Bible" and

We have such a geographically-scattered membership that it is not practical for everyone to be part of the discussion group which meets on Friday nights. So, we distribute study guides and let everyone participate in the lessons, either on their own or at the church building.

Study guide: angels plus

Connelly's book on angels is written as 12 separate lessons, but we usually covered two lessons per

The study's success in large measure is due to the fact that the Bible portions we read included sections on real-life applications of our Christian faith.

including "Goethe's *Faust*," "The Works of Swedenborg," and "The Works of Blake."

Again, I realized the need to proceed with caution when using this book. There are, however, worthwhile chapters on "The Nature of Angels" (with material from Hebrews), and "Gabriel Comes to Mary and to Joseph" (from Matthew and Luke).

Helpful, but we still need a study guide

Although I consider these books to be helpful supplementary reading materials for anyone preparing to lead a group like ours, neither book is completely satisfactory content-wise. And neither book is set up as a hands-on study guide.

Then, with help from one of the group members, I discovered Douglas Connelly's *Angels* which is part of the Lifeguide Bible Study series produced by InterVarsity Press. The chapters are set up as lessons for individual or group study, making this book an ideal workbook for our situation.

group meeting. By planning ahead, we were able to have the necessary reading done and the workbook questions answered so that we could have some lively discussion on the material when we met together.

In addition to reading different Bible stories which feature angels (such as Genesis 18:1-22, 19:1-19; and Judges 13), some of the lessons went much deeper by declaring Christ's supremacy (Hebrews 1 and 2:5-18), exploring spiritual warfare (Isaiah 14:3-15, Mark 5:1-20, and Ephesians 6:10-20), and calling for discernment (1 John 4:1-6).

The initial question of "We're going to study *what*!?" was met with a word: angels. Nevertheless, the study's success in large measure is due to the fact that the Bible portions we read included these sections on real-life applications of our Christian faith. Even those who wondered aloud if our desire to study angels indicated some mental imbalance on our part admitted that these other "related

Recommended workbook

• *Angels* (A Lifeguide Bible Study)
by Douglas Connelly,
InterVarsity Press,
Downers Grove, IL, 1995.

Suggested supplementary reading

• *Angels* by Charles Capps and Annette Capps,
Harrison House, Tulsa,
OK, 1984; revised 1994.
• *The Nature of Angels*
by Alexander Whyte,
Baker Books, Grand Rapids,
MI, 1930; reprinted 1995.

topics" were important themes worth studying.

Focus remains on God

Throughout our study we kept coming back to a very simple truth: *God* is the one who works miracles. God may choose to work through angels, through people, through Scriptural counsel, or through any means He chooses.

Regardless of the means, it is *God* who does the work, so *God* is the one worthy of our praise and thanksgiving.

Despite the concern of some for our mental health, God is at the center of each Sabbath Eve Bible Study we have, no matter what topic is picked. SR

Pastor Jeanne Yurke ministers with the Raritan Valley Seventh Day Baptist Church in Bridgewater, N.J.

Please hug Davey for us

My dear second Dad,
We are so sorry to hear that you are in the hospital again. Our prayer is that you are not in pain and that you can be comfortable.

Once again, Dad, I want you to know how much I love you. You have always treated me as your own daughter, even from the beginning. Thank you for always making me feel welcome and loved.

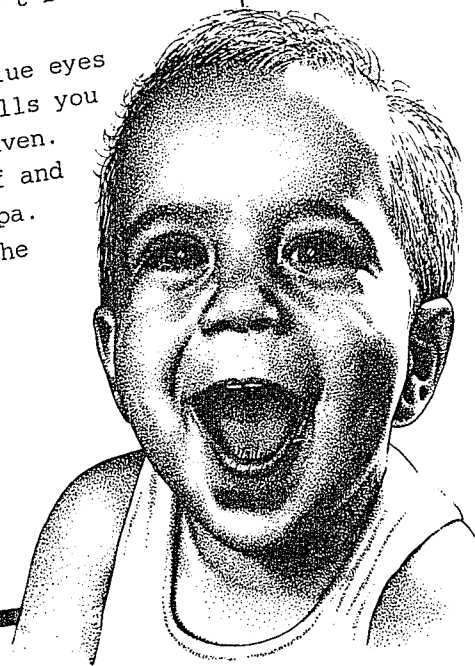
Now, I want to ask a favor of you, if I may. If the Lord takes you to heaven before He takes me, will you please do something for me? I know that our precious little Davey will be waiting to give you a big hug. So, would you please hug him for us and tell him that his Mommy and Daddy have missed him so much? But tell him that it won't be long before we'll all be together.

Dad, I can just see Davey's big, blue eyes sparkle as he takes your hand and tells you that he will show you all around heaven. Then he'll take you to Jesus Himself and he'll say, "Jesus, this is my grandpa. He just arrived today. I'm so glad he came."

And I can see Jesus smiling on you both.

Thanks, Dad.
We love you!

Jeanne



Written by Jeanne (Coon) Williams 10 days before the passing of her father-in-law John Williams. Contributed by John's daughter, Mayola Warner, of Verona, NY.



Women's Society page by Donna Bond

Sharing true hope and love

"angel (ān`jel) n. a heavenly messenger; a spirit who conveys God's will to man; a guardian spirit; (Colloq.) a lovable person; a dear" (Webster).

Angelic points to ponder

Why do we dress our little girls as (our perception of) angels for the Christmas pageant when angels mentioned in the Bible are clearly masculine with an adult mission?



A specially "enrobed" angel

She doesn't have to be an angel, or even a saint, but do you know a Seventh Day Baptist woman who has demonstrated impeccable Christian character and outstanding service for her Lord? How about nominating her for the cherished Robe of Achievement? Candidates who have gone the second mile in our denomination, their local SDB churches, and their communities are sought by the Robe of Achievement Committee. Nomination forms are available from Elizabeth Bidwell, Box 136, Shiloh, NJ 08353.

Advent angels in action

Nearly all of our local Women's Societies and Ladies' Aids have special activities related to the cel-

Nearly all of our local Women's Societies and Ladies' Aids have special activities related to the celebration of our Savior's birth.

Why are artistic portrayals of angels invariably female?

What masculine characteristics do we assign "guardian angels"?

I can use "Angel" as a term of endearment for my adult daughter, but how would my 6'3" airman son respond if instructed to "be an angel"?

Why is "don't be afraid" the standard introduction of a heavenly messenger from a loving God?

Did you know there is a national organization for collectors of angels?

Is it mere coincidence that some TV shows are focusing on angels in an era when more angelic activity is an obvious need in our society?

bration of our Savior's birth. Items gleaned from highlights distributed at Conference include the following:

Giving to others—Milton (Wis.) Women's Circle and Alfred Station (N.Y.) Union Industrial Society both gave "White Christmas" gifts. The Alfred Station group also sent notes and small gifts to church friends and provided tray favors in a nursing home. The Shiloh Ladies Benevolent Society distributes poinsettias to friends in the community each December.

Program Ideas—The Milton group had a program centered around "a special Christmas gift received" last year, while Shiloh enjoyed a Bible study on "angels"

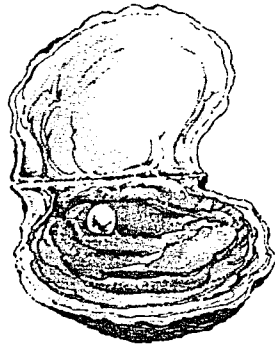
led by Charlotte Chroniger. Shiloh ladies traditionally reveal "Secret Sisters" just before Christmas and draw names for the following year. The Dr. Grace Missionary Society of North Loup, Neb., presented a community Christmas program at the Methodist church.

Our sisters in Riverside, Calif., enjoyed a Christmas tea featuring an exchange of favorite goodies.



They also hold an annual holiday bazaar with main attractions such as baked goods, needlework, porcelain night-lights, French Market soup mix, assorted nuts and sweets, candy, and fresh fruit grown in their yards.

May you be blessed by the good tidings of great joy brought by the angels so many centuries ago: "Unto us a Child is born." SR



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

Scattering seeds

Spirit which I believe was granted, and joined them in everything consistent, and was sure to appear very solemn on the introduction of anything which would not strictly conform with my profession. A change for the better was soon apparent....

The January 1993 "Pearls" introduced James Leander Scott's book entitled, *A Journal of a Missionary Tour through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan...* published in 1843.

One episode reminded me of the gravediggers scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as one of the diggers raises a skull and utters, "Alas poor Yorick," illustrating the mortality of man.

In an area not far from Columbus, Ohio, Scott and his family stopped at a small town. He described the people there as "a body religiously in a distracted condition."

One morning a company of wicked men invited him to join in a hunting expedition. Scott accepted, against the will of the few that professed religion who felt that the object of the hunt was to defeat his mission. He described this occasion in these words:

In the forest we found a man making rails, and when informed of the meeting that next day (Sabbath) he replied, "If the priest will preach this log into rails" (which by the by had baffled his power and skill), "I will then hear him preach." [This man was soon after converted to God.] He joined the hunt.

We had not proceeded far, when they began to sport and glee. I knew this day would decide for or against my usefulness in that vicinity, as the main opposers of religion in the place composed the party. I sought the aid of the Holy

We came in the course of the day to an ancient mound situated on the bank of the river, in which were human skeletons, very closely compact, and standing erect... The river inwashed had exposed many skeletons which had been buried about four feet beneath the surface... The company although very boisterous in the morning, was now softened to a lamblike mildness.

**Many seeds
were planted by the
itinerant minister,
but precious few bore
lasting fruit.**

The sly hint of the "priestly hunt" was no more, and while this vision of bones afforded a good text book, they were willing to listen to remarks upon the resurrection of the dead, in that day to which we are all hastening. No personal application was made, but solemnity fastened its unflinching grasp upon my associates, while the certainty of death, the resurrection and the general judgment, together with our weakness, compared to the Omnipotence of Jehovah, was brought before the mind.

Two skeletons in particular arrested our attention. They were evidently those of a mother with her infant within her arm. They doubtless had thus slept undisturbed for thousands of years. She, perhaps a heathen mother, had fallen asleep

with the infant on her breast, while we were blessed in living under the blaze of gospel truth: hence our condemnation is the greater if we should reject its saving power. The men of Ninevah might well rise in judgment against us.

After this day's exercise they resolved to attend the meetings, and were all, I believe, converted, and I had the inestimable privilege of baptizing them before leaving the place. After they were converted they often referred to the excursion in the forest, in which they professed to have realized the contrast between religion and irreligion.

While reflecting upon my accountability, who but a servant of the church can realize my feelings. Here I was, surrounded by a multitude, and the number of pious comparatively small, while many were opposed to the religion of a crucified Redeemer. If ever I saw the necessity of a holy devotion it was on this occasion. Their guilty, lost condition—my accountability—the judgment-day, all clustered around my vision, and well nigh overwhelmed my depressed soul.

I visited the forest, and poured out my soul to God in prayer. In deep agony I implored immediate aid of my Divine Commissioner. Immediately, did I say, for that was morally a wild uncultivated field, and I had but a few days to tarry with them, and what was done must be done quickly...

The meetings continued about three weeks, the parties of recreation were broken up, and we had the happiness to see youth join hands in singing praises to Jesus.

After services we repaired to the Scioto river, a distance of about two miles, and baptized ten happy converts. Another week was spent in the same manner, and the meetings were carried on with increas-

cont. on page 26



SR Almanac

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

One year ago—December 1996

Reprints from a 1995 Denver, Colo., church newsletter serve as features for this "Christmas Memories" issue. Writers include Victor Burdick, Bob Spreadborough, Doris Rood, Jim Galanaugh, Edward Hansen, and Gladys Randolph.

"Pearls" notes 325th anniversary of the first SDB church in America.

Pastor "Jus Start," on the Board of Christian Education page, further explains the "Great Commission vs. the Great Commandment" concept espoused at General Conference.

Focus page lists SDB medical work performed around the world.

Associate Pastor Eric Davis ordained at Riverside, Calif.

Five years ago—December 1992

Features focus on "appreciating your pastor." SDB writers include Richard Barany (former pastor) and Lannette Calhoun (pastor's wife).

Women's Society page editor, Charlotte Chroniger, offers practical ideas to support a pastor.

Missionary Society executive Kirk Looper reflects on his recent trip to Europe and Asia.

The Beacon suggests good ideas for YF Christmas projects.

New York City church ordains more diaconate members and dedicates their church building.

Mid-Continent Association meets in Nortonville, Kan.

10 years ago—December 1987

Special reprint of a 1944 Charles Bond article, "God Stepped Out."

Three-part series begins Rev. George Calhoun's ordination statement of faith.

Biography shared of Sabbath School Teacher of the Year, Shirley Cargill, of North Loup, Neb.

Annual conference in Poland lists 12 baptisms and 17 new members.

Nellie Jo Brisse, newly ordained deaconess in Salem, W.Va., shares her testimony.

Bay Area, Calif., church celebrates 25th year.

25 years ago—December 1972

Tract Emphasis issue features work of the American Sabbath Tract Society; Charles North re-elected president of the Society; Publications Study Committee holds weekend retreat; sound studio nears completion at the SDB Building in Plainfield, N.J.

Adams Center, N.Y., church celebrates 150th anniversary celebration in October.

Denver church holds sooner-than-expected mortgage burning ceremony for new sanctuary.

Pastor Russell Johnson ordained in Alfred, N.Y.

Rev. Charles Swing accepts call to Berea, W.Va. Elder Clifford Beebe honored with title of Pastor Emeritus in Paint Rock, Ala.

50 years ago—December 1947

Red-covered issue carries American Bible Society theme of "One World—One Book."

SR recommends the radio program, "The Greatest Story Ever Told," to its readers for family listening.

Another December issue features the work of the School of Theology in Alfred.

Many from the Central Association attend the 150th anniversary of the First SDB Church of Brookfield in Leonardsville, N.Y.

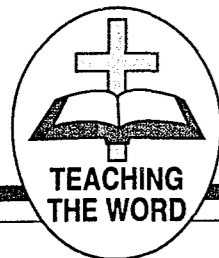
Ronald Hargis to take up pastoral duties at Waterford, Conn., in June.

William Burdick files his 100th quarterly report as corresponding secretary for the Missionary Board.

... where are we headed?

Pray for—

- comfort, strength, and hope at this time of year
- our newly-ordained pastors and deacons
- how to best support your pastor
- the work of your Association
- those involved with ministry and career moves
- members and families of General Council
- a Spirit-filled holiday season



Christian Education

by Ernest K. Bee Jr.

A Helping Hand for Jamaica

Our Jamaican brethren need your help to pay for the 500 *Helping Hands* which they use each Sabbath day in their Sabbath Schools. They currently owe almost two thousand dollars (\$1,917.96) for *Helping Hands*.

The Jamaicans pay 40% of the production cost. The General Conference USA and Canada pays 60% of the cost through your gifts to the Denominational Budget. It costs \$3.16 to write, print, and mail one copy of *The Helping Hand* to our overseas brethren.

The currency exchange rate and bank draft fees create an additional financial burden for our Jamaican brethren. Will you help us provide Sabbath School quarterlies for the people of Jamaica?

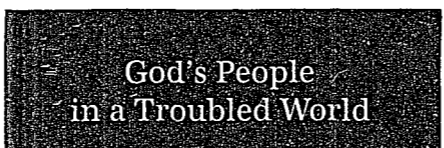
Opportunities for us to witness to the Gospel are increasing. This unprecedented opening is allowing countless persons to know God through His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Sabbath day.

Seventh Day Baptists are preparing themselves to witness

A vital approach to strengthening our relationship—covenant building—with Christ and His Church is through Bible study. *The Helping Hand in Bible Study* lessons have assisted Seventh Day Baptists in the study of Holy Scripture for the past 113 years. It is written by and for Seventh Day Baptists to reflect our Christian, Baptist, and Sabbath convictions.

The Helping Hand is important to the Gospel ministry around the world. Over 2,500 Seventh Day Baptists use *The Helping Hand* as a Bible study resource. Our people use lessons which they learn from *The Helping Hand* to become more active witnesses for God in their daily lives.

That's why your gift to support the ongoing writing, printing, and distribution of *The Help-*



Daytona Beach, Florida, Seventh Day Baptist Church



Seventh Day Baptist Adult/Youth Sabbath School Lessons

Winter 1997-1998

Your contribution will make a difference to the Jamaican people. Every dollar you give for Jamaican *Helping Hands* today will free Jamaican dollars for ministry and evangelism on the island.

If you possibly can, please send your Christmas gift checks payable to the "Board of Christian Education" and designated for "Jamaican *Helping Hands*" to P.O. Box 115, Alfred Station, NY 14803-0115. Your contribution will be reported to the Seventh Day Baptist Center and credited to your church's denominational giving. *SR*

Our people use lessons which they learn from *The Helping Hand* to become more active witnesses for God in their daily lives.

through our program, *Seeking Spiritual Maturity*, which emphasizes a spiritual discipline each year. In 1997, we are seeking to be faithful in "Covenant Building."

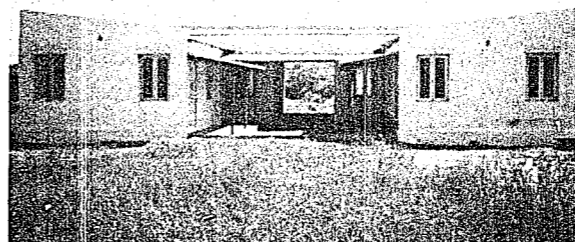
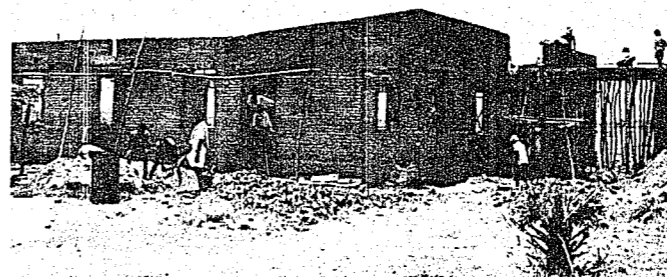
ing Hand is so vital. With the 11% Denominational Giving shortfall in 1997 (\$4,346.44 for the Board of Christian Education alone), your gift is needed now.



FOCUS on Missions

Children's Home opens in India

by Kirk Looper



(Top) Indian orphanage when under construction. (Left) The orphanage's main building which houses the orphans.

—The chapel will be large enough for community members to attend without rearranging the furniture or the personal belongings of the Home's residents.

The school-building project has received some funds to help begin the structure, but not enough to ensure that it can be easily completed or used while under construction. Some funds have been received from the Baptist World Aid (BWAid) organization. Paul Montacute of BWAid visited the site and placed the first stone in the foundation. He also unveiled the memorial stone denoting the location of the school and its contributors.

The Children's Home at Nellore is the only home that Seventh Day Baptists operate in India. Orphans in other parts of Andhra Pradesh live in crowded homes with inadequate food.

Although many of the orphans live with relatives, others do not have that option because of the storms and diseases that ravage the population on a regular basis.

The Missionary Society office recently learned that the Children's Home in Nellore, India, is now open. Ten children have taken up residence there, along with a paid staff consisting of a warden, cook, and watchman. The orphanage has established a target population of 30 children, both boys and girls.

There is one well on the premises, but funds are needed to purchase a pump to help get the water to the kitchen and toilets. The campus presently has three structures: a mess hall, toilet facilities, and a larger building which houses the dormitory, library, classroom, and offices. The dorm doubles as classroom space.

It is hoped that a medical clinic, school, and chapel will be added later.

—The proposed clinic will be

open to the community, but residents will be required to pay for the medical attention they receive.

—The school will also be open to the community, with people paying

The Children's Home at Nellore is the only home that Seventh Day Baptists operate in India. Orphans in other parts of Andhra Pradesh live in crowded homes with inadequate food.

for their children to attend. Many families have already indicated an interest in the school, and their fees will help support its work.

Many adults go without food and medicine so that the children can have an adequate supply to keep them healthy. *SR*



the BEACON

Produced by the Youth Committee of the Board of Christian Education
For and by members of the SDB Youth Fellowship December 1997

National YF ideas

Hey Youth,

It's time to start thinking about Conference next year! Here are some thoughts to ponder:

• Help out the National YF officers for this coming Conference at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon. We want your input on activities for the youth after the evening services. To make sure that this Conference is a blast, we need to know what YOU want so you will have fun and look forward to coming.

• We would also ask that your church youth group make a donation to the National YF account in order to have funds for Conference activities. Maybe you could make a pledge to raise a certain amount of money for the account. Please have your donations sent to us by January, or as soon as possible.

• As a proposed activity for next year, we are hoping to have an *all-age* Coffee House/Variety Show. So join in the fun and have a song, instrumental piece, some type of reading, or anything picked out to share with everyone.

Please send your ideas and contributions to:

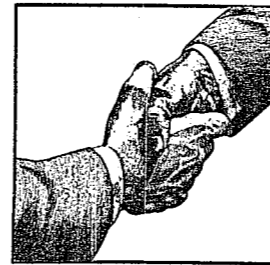
Andrea Davis
Rt. 1, Box 154-B
Bristol, WV 26332

Thank you, and God bless.

Whitney Rogers, President
SDBYF of USA & Canada



Group shot of the first Deep South campers and staff in July as they attended church in Daytona Beach, Fla.



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

Church and Society co-existing

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

An evangelist, Elder Stillman Coon, was visiting the Milton, Wis., area in the fall of 1840. It seemed that the time was ripe for the organization of a church.

On November 12, 1840, the Articles of Faith and Practice were adopted, and the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Milton was officially organized. Fifty-two names signed the Covenant.

Most, but not all, of the members of the Society became members of the Church, for the Church and Society were not synonymous. Each continued as a separate entity until 1915 when the two were formally merged.

The Society was a membership organization; the Church was a covenant. Although the exact division of responsibilities is not clear from the records, it does appear that the Society acted as trustees of the property while the Church was concerned primarily with maintaining worship and preserving the covenant relationship.

When the first church building was constructed in 1852, there was no mention of this action in the minutes of the Church beyond this note: "Voted that the Church approve the arrangements of the trustees of the S.D.B. Society in relation to the location of the Quire of Singers."

The Society prepared a budget, but it was the Church's responsibility to provide for the "lighting, warming, and cleaning of the meeting house," a task normally let out to the lowest bidder.

The Church was also responsible for the support of the pastor. This

was sometimes done by subscription, sometimes by tax, and all too often by default. When there was need to call a pastor, the Church normally invited the members of the Society who were not Church members to vote.

In 1874, the distinction between the Church and the Society became quite pronounced relative to the re-

of retention. By May of 1875, the pastor was dismissed by the Church, and a first-day minister was hired to preach. Members of the Trustees of the Society closed the church building and would not allow the Church to use the facility for its regular business meeting.

This dispute was the major cause of the separation of about

It appears that the Society acted as trustees of the property while the Church was concerned primarily with maintaining worship and preserving the covenant relationship.

tention or dismissal of Pastor L.C. Rogers. The underlying disturbance ranged from a lawsuit brought by Ezra Goodrich against President W.C. Whitford of Milton College over "misuse of donations, wasteful expenditures, and perversion of funds," to the preaching of Rogers. His preaching was described as "thunderbolts that he hurled against the false teachings of the college which was sending so many of our smartest young men and women out into the world in search of political honors and worldly emoluments causing them to disregard God's Holy Sabbath."

In the ensuing meetings in which parliamentary interpretations varied, separate actions were taken by the Church and by the Society, with the former in favor of dismissal and the latter in support

100 members in establishing the Milton Junction Seventh Day Baptist Church about one mile west of the Milton Church.

It was a common practice among many Seventh Day Baptist churches to have both a Church and a Society, each keeping its own separate record of activity. In the preservation of historical records, it has frequently been the records of the Church in its covenant relationship that have been preserved and used in subsequent historical research.

This explains why so many of the old records are dominated by reports of disciplinary action upon errant members. The Church was the body charged with the preservation of the covenant, and every effort was made to restore a member to covenant responsibility. SR



The President's Page

by John D. Bevis

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9 NASB).

The Hebrews were called to be a holy nation, and they failed. The Church today has the same calling. How are we doing?

Our attempt to be holy in our own strength is appalling. However, the good news is that we can be holy in our relationship with God because of Jesus. His grace is sufficient for my needs. His victory is mine through the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, I have a chosen place in His eternal kingdom, the true holy nation of the future, all because of Calvary.

As members of God's holy nation, we are called to evidence the love of the Lord; share the fellowship that binds us together in Christ; and reach out in loving compassion to those who hurt, to those who are alone and in need, and to those in sin.

We are chosen to be God's holy nation. We are called to be *in* the world, but not *of* the world. We are called to represent our Lord in this world.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

As chosen members of God's holy nation, we are no longer identified with the world system; we are now identified with Jesus Christ, our Lord. Old things—maybe old relationships, old desires, old values—all passed away. We are in a new relationship with the glorified Christ.

We are called to "show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." When we realize what Jesus has done for us, we can't help but praise Him.

I like the way Dr. Desmond Ford expressed it: "When Christ was crucified law was magnified, justice satisfied, sin nullified, God glorified, sinners justified, and Satan petrified." Praise God!

I understand the darkness as do you. We truly want to live in the light of the Gospel. We truly want to be God's chosen holy people.

But the darkness at times seems overpowering. We

often hurt and suffer in this life. Illness and death are all around. We have disappointments, rejections, broken relationships. We hurt.

Yet our God is able. He is able to save, able to heal, able to understand our situation because He experienced it. We become able to cope, able to walk in the light of the good news of the Gospel because of our new relationship with Jesus, our friend.

Therefore, we must show forth (shout out) His praises as we understand who we are—Chosen Heirs of all God's promises.

I am thankful that Jesus chose me for forgiveness and made my reconciliation with God possible because of His sacrifice on Calvary. I have chosen to accept this gift of grace, and I hope you have as well. *SR*

BRING A BANNER TO BUCKHANNON!

Conference 1998

A CHOSEN GENERATION — I 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 I 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.

— I Peter 2:9

You gotta have faith!

by Susie Butts

The Alfred Station, N.Y., Seventh Day Baptist Church started out the summer with an incredible week of Vacation Bible School (VBS). Twenty-seven staff gathered the morning of June 30 anticipating a week of exciting Bible stories, jammin' songs, and challenging memory verses. We were not disappointed.

Fifty-four children registered the first day, and three more were added during the week. Thirty-three of the children had perfect attendance.

The title for this year's VBS was "Sonrise Balloon Adventure," put out by Gospel Light. The children learned that, like hot air balloonists who have faith while they are flying, we can have faith in God. Six learning centers taught the children exactly what faith means and how it helps us.

Pastor Ken Chroniger's Bible Story center focused on real people from the Bible whose faith had helped them out of some "sticky" situations. The children learned about the faith of Moses, Elisha, Jonah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as well as Jesus.

Pat Palmiter led the Memory Verse center where the children were challenged to learn a verse each day that encouraged them to rely on their faith in God.

Barb Welch taught the children Bible Games to reinforce the memory verses and promote healthy, fun competition, while Betty Sutton designed (with the help of Gospel Light) beautiful Arts and Crafts that developed the verses in creative ways that the children could take home.

Luan Ellis taught the Interest Builders center, where the children learned about science and how it relates to God's creation.

Melissa Noel was in charge of possibly the most challenging of all the centers: Music. She had the exciting job of teaching the children the six songs and individual speaking parts for the closing program on Sabbath morning.

The highlight of the week occurred on Wednesday when a real hot air balloonist came to give a demonstration. Carroll Teitsworth brought a truckload of equipment and awed the children with his knowledge and experiences.



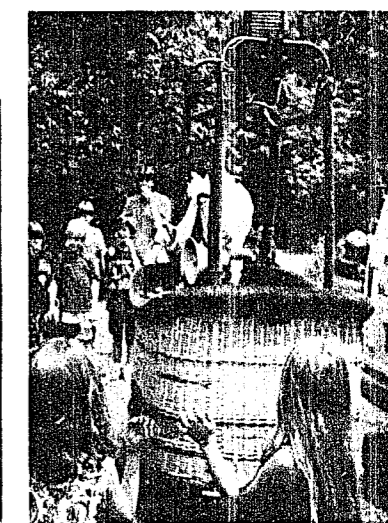
Balloonist Carroll Teitsworth (left) with the Alfred Station VBS inside the balloon.

He first gave a spectacular slide show of balloons of all shapes and sizes. Then, to everyone's amazement, he unrolled an actual balloon and began to inflate it in the sanctuary! We all took our shoes off and sat *inside* the balloon while he taught us all about it.

Carroll's presentation ended outside where he showed us the basket and fired up the burners. We were all very impressed!

The conclusion of VBS took place during morning worship on July 5. Fifty-five children participated in our mini-musical that told why we need to have faith in God, and how we can get that faith. As 187 people listened, the children's voices rang clear and sweet throughout the sanctuary as they shared about all they had learned that week.

Vacation Bible School is one of the largest outreaches of the Alfred Station SDB Church. Everyone involved felt privileged to be part of such an awesome ministry to the children and families of our community. *SR*



The group got an outside view of the balloon basket and burners.

Couple celebrates 60th anniversary

by Jasmine Lynch

Pastor William and Roselyn Vis thought they were going to a Saturday evening dinner with the Myron McPhersons at the home of the Alcott Lynches on September 27. To their surprise, they were treated to a semi-formal anniversary dinner given by the West Palm Beach (Fla.) Baptist-Seventh Day Church.

The Vises were greeted by not only the members of their church, but also by the members of the Miami SDB Church.

It couldn't have happened to a nicer couple. In addition to the sumptuous feast, William and Roselyn received flowers and greetings from their son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren; Pastor Russ Johnson, who had spent many hours working with them in the West Palm Beach church; Pastor John Camenga from the Daytona

Beach (Fla.) church; and Sister Mamby, a member of the Miami church now residing elsewhere.

The program consisted of prayer, Scripture reading, special music, a poem, and cutting of the cake. The highlight was the couple's "Reflections of 60 Years Together." Amid laughter, we saw clearly their dependence on God to provide for them in time of need, and their strong faith and Sabbath conviction.

At a time when marriages are failing before couples even get to know each other, it's refreshing to have such a role model in our presence. They have

taught us by their example that marriage is God's ideal for man, and it certainly is possible to have a lasting and happy marriage if we give our lives to Him. *SR*



Bill and Roselyn Vis read greetings at their surprise party.

Stonefort in parade, revival

by Pastor Arthur Burkhamer

We at the Old Stonefort, Ill., Seventh Day Baptist Church were pleased to participate in a recent parade celebrating the Sesqui-centennial of Saline County. The theme for our float was, "The New Covenant—God's Law in Man's Heart."

Church members handed out 600 Sabbath tracts and could have

easily handed out 1,000. We'll be better prepared next year.

I had the opportunity to preach at the Saline County Revival in October. My sermon was titled, "Repairers of the Breach," from Isaiah 58. Lisa Grammer and Martha Burkhamer provided 30 minutes of inspirational Gospel music prior to the message.

We are excited about the Lord's work in our area!

Pastor Tim Parsley requested that his church letter be moved to the Stonefort SDB Church from Mt. Zion General Baptist Church. Brother Tim is considering starting an SDB Fellowship in Mattoon, Ill. *SR*



The Old Stonefort SDB Church fancied up a truck (right) and handed out many tracts (far right) at a recent parade.



First Brookfield celebrates 200th

by William Bowyer

In 1797, what was then called "the First Sabbatarian Baptist Church of Christ in Brookfield" was organized at Leonardsville, N.Y. It was the first organized church in town, with Rev. Henry Clarke of Hopkinton, R.I., as its leader.

On October 11, 1997, the Leonardsville-Brookfield SDB Church (formed by the union of the First and Second SDB Churches of Brookfield) celebrated its 200 years of existence. Their new pastor, William Bowyer of Hopkinton, led the worship on both Sabbath Eve and Sabbath Day.

A committee composed of Pastor Bowyer, Bob and Wilma Langworthy, and Pat Welch planned the program and prepared the building and grounds with help from the congregation. The church was decorated inside and out with an abundance of mums.

Sabbath Eve included an informal worship service of historical and Scripture readings. For the "hymn sing" we shared eight hymns that were written before the church was organized. These songs were probably sung by the congregation in its early years and passed down through two centuries. Our usual Sabbath Eve prayer meeting concluded the service.

Following Sabbath School the next morning, we enjoyed the anniversary worship service. Leola Dye played the recently-repaired pipe organ, and Pat Welch gave the children's story. A newly-formed, nine-member church choir presented two selections under the direction of Bob Mickel, formerly of the DeRuyter (N.Y.) church.

Rev. Kevin Butler of Janesville, Wis., Director of Communications for the American Sabbath Tract and Communication Council, was the guest speaker. Using Acts 18: 24-28 as his text, he gave a sermon entitled, "Diamond in the Rough." He exhorted the congregation to

encourage each other to develop and use their spiritual gifts to build up the body.

At the end of the service, the Lord's Supper was led by Rev. Gene Smith of Verona, N.Y., pulpit supply during the previous year. Peo-

ple then went to the nearby Methodist church for a catered dinner. The activities of this special Sabbath continued with a music and sharing program that involved historical readings, hymns, and greetings from the denomination, Association churches, and the First (day) Baptist Church of Brookfield. Pastor Andrew Camenga presented a plaque on behalf of our sister church at Adams Center, N.Y. Members of the Planning Committee shared memorable letters

from former pastors and their families who were unable to attend. These included Erma Van Horn, Janet (Van Horn) Thorngate, Laura (Van Horn) Hambleton, Pastor John and Margy Rau, Pastor Leon Lawton, and Emma (Burdick) Johnson. Humorous excerpts from Pastor Paul Burdick's autobiography were also read. Photos of former pastors were on display, as well as artifacts and documents pertaining to the history of the church as far back as 1807. A large, beautifully decorated anniversary cake was served, along with punch. Attendee Carl Greene of Virginia traveled the greatest distance.

At the conclusion of the program, "Rev. Kev" talked about his area of communications and publishing, including *The Sabbath Recorder* and the denomination's tract ministry.

Editor Butler's presentation was part of the host pastor's program of bringing SDB leaders to Brookfield to share about their area of ministry. Rod Henry, Director of Pastoral Services for the SDB Council on Ministry, had been at the church the previous month. Ernest Bee, Executive Director of the SDB Board of Christian Education, was scheduled to speak in November. *SR*

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Members of the Planning Committee shared memorable letters



The First Brookfield SDB Church in Leonardsville, N.Y.

Executive Secretary announces resignation



Calvin Babcock, who has served the denomination as Executive Secretary and General Services Administrator since June of 1990, is resigning in order to accept the position of Office Manger for the SDB Memorial Board effective March 1, 1998. He will replace John Vergeer, who plans to retire "in the next year or so."

In announcing his resignation, Babcock talked about serving God in different ways.

"God is awesome in His control

of the universe and how His work on earth and heaven is accomplished," he said. "Each of us has experi-

"I look forward to continuing to serve Seventh Day Baptists."

enced the opening and closing of windows of opportunities in doing His work. A new window of service has opened for me after seven years of serving the General Conference."

Calvin will continue to provide support to the General Council and Conference during a transition period from March to September 1998, and will carry out "mutually agreed upon functions" of General Conference while learning his new responsibilities.

"I will work with my replacement to provide a smooth transition," he pledged.

Mr. Babcock will continue to coordinate the arrangements for General Conference sessions this coming July and the search for a Conference site for 1999.

An ordained deacon, Calvin presently serves as treasurer of the Albion, Wis., SDB Church. He was Conference President from 1984-85, served two terms on General Council, and has been moderator and treasurer of several SDB churches. He has also served as camp manager for Southwestern Association (Camp Miles), and president of North Central Association.

"I want to thank everyone for their warm support and prayers over the last seven years, and I look forward to continuing to serve Seventh Day Baptists." ✠

Births

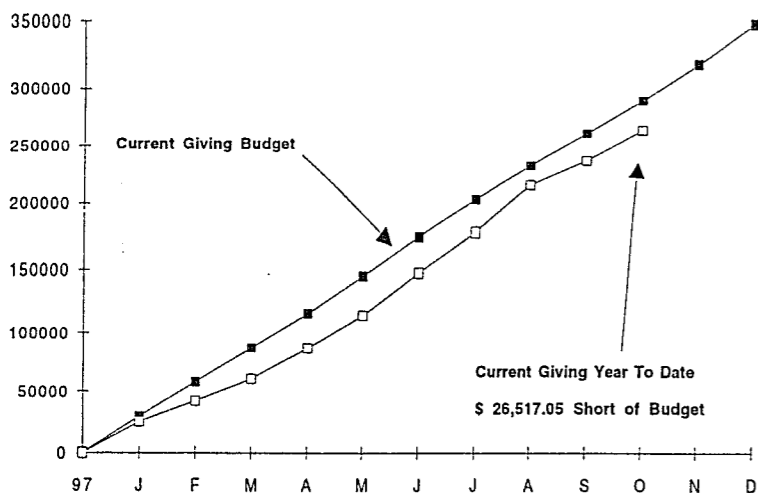
Muffley.—A son, Adam Wayne Muffley, was born to Bob and Cheryl (Davis) Muffley of Shiloh, NJ, on June 23, 1997.

McNeilus.—Twin daughters, Kortney Starr McNeilus and Kendra Michele McNeilus, were born to Brandon and Tracy (Stoeckel) McNeilus of Dodge Center, MN, on August 7, 1997.

Yasaitis.—Stan and Beatriz Yasaitis of Milwaukee, WI, are the parents of triplets. A daughter, Avecita Rosa Yasaitis; a son, Stanley Joseph Yasaitis II; and a daughter, Beatriz Castro Yasaitis, were born on September 18, 1997.

Osborn.—A son, Demetrius Alexander Osborn, was born to Tim and Jayme Osborn of Dodge Center, MN, on September 18, 1997.

Current Giving 1997



Serving 50-plus years in Westerly



The "50-year-plus" members enjoy a dinner in their honor.



The Westerly Songbirds, from the senior center, entertained.

October 18, 1997, was an exceptional day in the life of the Pawtucket Seventh Day Baptist Church in Westerly, R.I. The congregation held a special recognition Sabbath for those who have been members of the church for 50 years or more.

The celebration began during the morning worship service when 26 names were read, beginning with the following, who had joined the

church 76 years ago, on June 21, 1921: Marion (Young) Edmond, Myra (Collins) Gray, Marion (Boss) Kenyon, Margaret (Brightman) Spargo, and Robert S. Barber.

Others honored were: Albert Prentice Kenyon, 1922; Dorcas (Dixon) VanHorn, 1925; Elizabeth (Clark) Stillman and Howard E. Barker, 1927; Ruth (Kenyon) Mosena, 1929; Elwin Kenyon Jr.

and Claude Maine, 1933; Isabelle (McCull) Beattie and George H. Utter, 1937; Robert E. Owens, 1938; Harold R. Austin, Denison D. Barber, Margaret U. Durant, and Mary (Maxson) Winquist, 1943; Edith (Fitzgerald) Barker, 1945; Virginia (Loofboro) Drake, 1946; Ellen (Rathbun) Kenyon, Beryl Oberman Stephens, Georgia Young, Horace Knowles Jr., and Maurice Young, 1947.

As each name was read, those present were asked to come forward and were given a plaque and red rose by Jeffrey Lawton, chairman of the Board of Deacons, and Gary Chester, church president.

During his sermon, Pastor Dave Taylor, using Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 as his text, shared some ways of "Growing Better, Not Older." A Prayer of Thanksgiving was also offered for all those who have labored in the ministry of the church over the years.

Following the worship service, the honorees were guests at a fellowship dinner hosted by Duane and Desiree Taylor, and many of the younger members of the congregation. We were also joined by the Westerly Songbirds from the Westerly Senior Center, who entertained us with an afternoon concert.

We are grateful for the opportunity to show our appreciation to our senior members. ✠

Obituaries

Davis.—Edith (Babcock) Davis, 82, of Phoenix, Ariz., went into the presence of the Lord and into the arms of her beloved husband, the Rev. Oscar Arlie Davis, on September 29, 1997.

She was born on June 15, 1915, in New Auburn, Wis., the daughter of Jesse and Nina Babcock. On November 25, 1936, Edith married Arlie Davis in the Milton (Wis.) Seventh Day Baptist Church. The couple moved to Phoenix for health reasons. Arlie passed away on February 7, 1993.

Edith will be fondly remembered for her spontaneity, enthusiasm, and energy, and for her commitment to the Lord and His Word. She will also be remembered for her love of family, and the love she had for teaching the Bible to children.

Survivors include one son, the Rev. Milton Davis; one daughter, Ardith Dundulis; her brother, Dr. Oren Babcock; six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

A celebration of her life was held at Camelback Sunset Chapel in Phoenix on October 2, 1997. She was laid to rest on October 3, 1997, at Greenwood Memory Lawn in Phoenix.

Accessions

Dodge Center, MN

Dale Rood, pastor

Joined after baptism

Jeffrey Neher

Joined after testimony

Lisa Greene

Homecoming at Crites Mt.

by Leora Pinder

September 20, 1997, was a memorable day as several from the Lost Creek, W.Va., SDB Church met a group that filled the church at Crites Mountain.

After warm greetings—and getting acquainted and reacquainted—we gathered inside the familiar walls. Requesting and singing the favorite hymns often prompted reminiscences. We hurried to find the page numbers in three different hymnals and followed Pastor Steve Osborn who got us all started at the same time!

Many gave testimonies of what the Lord is doing in their lives. PTL! Pastor Clayton Pinder shared some thoughts on families, with emphasis on teaching children and

young people to know Jesus when they are young. The service closed with everyone singing "Blessed Assurance."

Blessings continued as we caught up on the important happenings in our lives. And what is homecoming without food? We enjoyed that also.

Everyone was glad that the others were able to come, and I think everyone left with a warm feeling in their heart. I know I did!

Those present included:

Susan Davis Bond

Basilia Brown

Ellen Sartin Brown

Roxie Hamric

Charles Kittner

Brandy McHenry

Sashia McHenry

Alma Nesselrotte

Betty Nesselrotte

Melinda Nesselrotte

Pastor Steve Osborn

Clayton Pinder

Leora Pinder

Loretta Lynn Rexroad

Baxter Sartin

Darrell Sartin

Debbie Sartin

Lonnie Sartin

Marvin Sartin

Ronil Sartin

Ruth A. Sartin

Sandy McHenry Sartin

Tressie Sartin

Edna Tonkin

Melvina Tonkin

John C. West *SR*

Scattering seeds, cont. from page 14

ing interest. Evening meetings were so crowded that many, very many, could only cluster around the doors and windows. Often after the meetings were closed, though kept to a late hour, it was with difficulty that we could get the congregation to disperse.¹

Such stories from the home mission field can, at the same time, be both stimulating and disheartening. Many seeds were planted by the itinerant minister, but precious few bore lasting fruit, for the sower moved on to other fields after the initial planting.

A few years ago, my wife, Ilou, and I toured some of that area of Ohio traversed by James Leander Scott in 1843. We found land records of Seventh Day Baptist settlements in such places as Scioto, Mud Run, and Mad River.

We explored cemeteries such as the Hill Cemetery near Butlerville and a transplanted cemetery in South Lebanon. In the area of

Northampton, we found stones bearing the names of Babcock, Maxson, Davis, and Lippincott. There was a Van Horn Cemetery in Stokes township, and other cemeteries in Montra, Pleasant Hill, and Port Jefferson.

At Jackson Center, the only SDB church in Ohio that survived into the last half of the 20th century is now the village museum. Today, the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Columbus is the only one of the faith in the Buckeye State, and that was not constituted as a church until 1976.

Some of those extinct churches succumbed to the migrations of the time. Yet in the records, I find repeated cries for pastoral leadership to tend the scattered flock.

Today we do not have itinerant missionaries traversing the country. Yet I see a modern day scattering of the seeds. Through the Internet, a considerable number of people are becoming aware of a group observing the biblical

Sabbath within the Baptist family.

Some of the requests are from people who have come to the conviction of the Sabbath through Bible study; some have been Sabbathkeepers but cannot accept many of the doctrines or polity of other Sabbathkeeping churches; and some are searching for genealogical information concerning their SDB ancestry.

They often ask for the nearest church where they can find a community of faith that practices their convictions without compromise. When the nearest church might be hundreds of miles from their home, they are in a position similar to that of converts baptized by the itinerant preacher who leaves them as sheep without a shepherd.

Is there some way that we can include these people in a covenant relationship where the seeds of faith can be nurtured? *SR*

¹James Leander Scott, *A Missionary Tour... (Providence, Rhode Island: by the author, 1843), pp. 37-41.*

KEVIN'S

ORNER

At last year's Tract and Communication Council annual meeting, we faced the daunting task of finding three (out of four) new committee chairpeople, and therefore, three new working committees.

The Lord blessed with clear answers to prayer and quick confirmations from those folks He directed us to ask.

That was the easy part. Once the committees were formed, it meant that the director (Hi!) had to help guide these new committees into outlining and performing their duties.

Yikes. That meant working with new people, new ideas, new criticism, new direction and challenges. I started to fret.

Oh, me of little faith. Why didn't I trust the One Who led these people to accept their positions?

I had plenty of time to contemplate as I drove to Columbus, Ohio, in June to meet with Dean Fox and the new Publications Committee.

We gathered on the neutral ground of my old seminary and squared off. A few heads shook disapprovingly over certain tract layouts and the wording of others. I started to feel overwhelmed.

Opinions and suggestions flew freely. Yet, the more I listened, the better I could see that these were "new eyes and ears." I needed to see these tracts from a different perspective and audience. We narrowed our focus to these pieces:

- "Christian Baptism"—revise the wording and layout
 - "What the Bible teaches about the Sabbath"—a "facelift" to the format
 - "SDBs and SDAs compared"—new thrust to help us better understand Adventist beliefs
- Several ideas are in progress and Dean was a welcome addition to our Janesville meetings.

Web Site Contest!

Help us design a new home page for the Tract Council and SR. Send us your "sdbmedia" ideas by March 1st and your design could get world-wide exposure. (Plus get you some logo goodies!!)

If you're saved and you know it...

...send us your salvation testimony and share the greatest news known to mankind. We want your brief (500 words or less) story and photo to spread God's life-changing love to others. (Address on p. 3)

Flying out to Seattle in October to meet with Sabbath Recorder Committee co-chairs Dave and Doreen Davis, I faced a different challenge. After five years of nurturing a tight relationship with the old committee in Boulder, Colo., I stepped into uncharted territory with a new group twice the size of the former "comfort zone" group.

The Lord again smiled on us as we bonded quickly and laid out these plans for the *Recorder*:

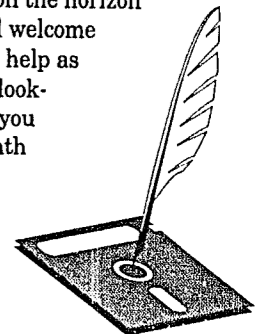
- Update computer equipment and software
- Revise some pages: contents (see page 3), departments, church news
- Solicit salvation testimonies
- Upcoming themes—Work of the Conference and how you can plug in; Godly Finances in the home; striking a Balance in Worship; Living your Faith in the workplace.

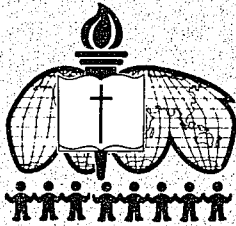
With helpful input from Calvin Babcock and Joel Osborn, our ad hoc Electronic Media Committee is pursuing:

- Constructing our own Web site
- Securing our own e-mail address
- Providing SR articles on the Internet

And what about old faithful Sabbath Promotion Committee chair Larry Graffius? He and his helpers not only continue to provide excellent material for Sabbath Emphasis Day, they have introduced new logo promotion merchandise at recent Conferences. But wait—there's more! Next year we'll be going to press with Larry's new book on practical Sabbathkeeping!

Lots of exciting changes are on the horizon for the Tract Council. We would welcome your prayers and your financial help as we try to convey a professional-looking and God-honoring image to you and to those interested in Seventh Day Baptists.





Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer

January 4-10, 1998

The "Christian Certainty" prayer booklet by Royal Mkandawire has been sent to each Conference. Let us begin the year on our knees.

World Federation Sabbath

January 10, 1998

We suggest that each church take an offering for the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation. Proceeds will help SDB Conferences around the world.

Surprise your favorite Valentine!

For a suggested contribution of \$14 (as in February 14th), you can honor your special someone for Valentine's Day.

Word limit: 25 words or less (or four lines of poetry) **Deadline:** December 30, 1997

Let's fill a page in the February SR with tender memories!

For example:



Roses are red
Daisies are yellow,
Here's to my Honey Bear—
A Valentine "Hello!"



Dear _____,
Thanks for these many years of warm togetherness.
May you have the happiest of Valentine's Days.
Love, _____



YES! Sign me up!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

My contribution _____

Here is my Valentine message:

Send your Valentine message and donation to:
The Sabbath Recorder, PO Box 1678, Janesville WI 53547-1678
(or see page 3 for our FAX and e-mail info)