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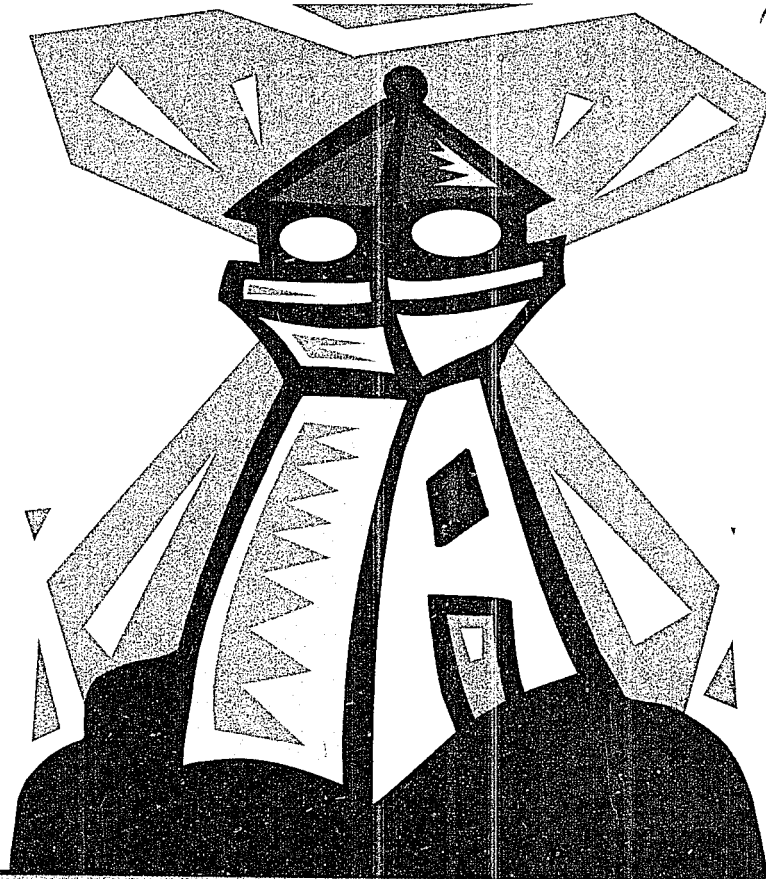
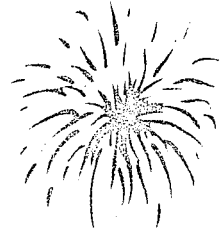
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News for and about
Seventh Day Baptists

February 2000



CELEBRATE JESUS!

*and turn your home into a
Lighthouse of Prayer
this year*



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 for our faith and daily conduct.
- baptism of believers, by immersion, witnessing to our acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord.
- freedom of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- the congregational form of church government. Every church member 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

Full-time Associate Pastor Position

available at the
Milton SDB Church

Please send resumé to:
Milton SDB Church
720 E. Madison Ave.
Milton, WI 53563

E-mail: miltonsdbchu@jvlnet.com
Fax: 608-868-9776



"Celebrate Jesus" through the 50-Day Spiritual Adventure

Intrigued by this month's feature articles? Be a part of the "Lighthouses of Prayer" movement, or just improve your relationship with Jesus through this year's 50-Day Spiritual Adventure. Items to help you include a journal, "Celebrate Jesus," and an Adventure guidebook, *Jesus: the People's Choice*.

To order your resources, call 1-800-224-2735 (U.S.) or 1-800-461-4114 (Canada). Or write, Mainstay Church Resources, Box 30, Wheaton IL 60189-0030.

Robe of Achievement

The Women's Society is accepting nominations for the Robe of Achievement for 2000.

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, 2000

Summer Institute on SDB History and Polity

May 30 – June 16, 2000

Seventh Day Baptist Center
Janesville, Wis.

Taught by Janet Thorngate
and Gabriel Bejjani

This year's session
will be open for laity to audit.
Please contact Rev. Gabriel
Bejjani for more informa-
tion: (909) 682-2022

The Sabbath Recorder

Establ. 1844



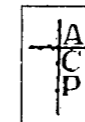
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Features

A tale of three cities 4
by Greg Asimakoupoulos

Thanks to happenings in Bethlehem, Capernaum, and Jerusalem, you have reason to celebrate Jesus and expose others to what he can accomplish in their lives.

Remember to leave the lights on! 8
by Bob Hett

Turn your home into a "lighthouse of prayer" to attract those lost in the darkness of sin.

A royal priesthood and church polity 10
by John Conrod

God calls us to be "a royal priesthood." So, how should the Church of Christ be governed?

Departments

Women's Society 13 <i>When we are hurt</i>	President's Page 20 <i>Recipe for Conference</i>
Pearls from the Past 14 <i>Blind Lewis had vision for future</i>	Seek spiritual maturity 21 <i>Day of worship and celebration</i>
SR Almanac 15 <i>Looking back 5, 10, 25... years</i>	Local news 22-23 <i>Salem, WV 22</i> <i>Alfred Station, NY 22-23</i> <i>Leonardsville/Brookfield, NY 23</i> <i>Baptist World Congress 26</i>
Christian Education 16 <i>Seeking nominations for Teacher of the Year</i>	SR Reaction 24
Focus 17 <i>World Fed to meet in Brazil</i>	Family flux 24-25 <i>Accessions,</i> <i>marriage, births 24</i> <i>Obituaries 25</i>
The Beacon 18 <i>National Youth Retreat held in Wisconsin</i>	Kevin's Korner 27 <i>Passionate people</i> <i>Down Under</i>
Young Adult Connection 19 <i>Team Eternal's summer in Daytona</i>	

A tale of three cities

by Greg Asimakoupoulos

When Abraham Lincoln was nominated by his party to run for president of the United States, he didn't even attend the Republican National Convention held in Chicago. He remained in his hometown of Springfield, Ill.

While the delegates nailed the planks to their platform, Lincoln went about his daily routine as a conscientious lawyer.

How politics and politicians have changed in 140 years! Nominating conventions, banners, and flags. Fund-raising gimmicks and political gags. TV commercials and radio spots, campaigning rhetoric, handshaking stops. Candidates mudslinging, pundits predict, while pollsters take surveys and average percents. Debates, empty promises, payoffs, and more.

It's another election year. The signs are everywhere. On billboards and bumpers, in yards and in windows. The race is more like a marathon than a sprint. And as exhausted as the candidates obviously are, so are we who sit in the grandstands and watch them run.

They are running with one goal in mind. That goal is an election-night victory celebration. And whoever wins, the celebration will last until dawn.

The approach to illuminate others with the love of Jesus is a bright idea of friendship evangelism based on and bathed in prayer. Your neighborhood and your place of work become your spheres of influence.

But even while the population at large endures election fever, there is something just as contagious sweeping the country. It's a celebration that is more than a night in duration. In fact, it's a celebration that has been going on for several months already. It's called "Celebrate Jesus!"

Banners are hanging. Hands are lifted and are waving in symbolic praise. Joyful singing can be heard in Gothic cathedrals, storefront churches, school gymnasiums, and homes. It's almost like campaign momentum.

But lest I confuse you, "Celebrate Jesus!" is not a political movement (not by any stretch of the imagination). It is a pledge of spiritual allegiance being articulated by Democrats as well as Republicans and independents. It is a declaration of *dependence* on the only begotten Son of God.

In this nationwide celebration, Jesus Christ is being endorsed by Christians all over as their unanimous choice to provide them with

a personal relationship with their Creator and to address the demands of daily life and the fears of their future.

More than 70 denominations and over 300 parachurch ministries have identified themselves as a coalition called "Mission America." They have joined together in this unprecedented celebration and demonstration of unity in an attempt to reach every household in North America with the claims of Jesus Christ.

Did you know that the United States and Canada form the fourth largest unreached people group in the world?

In light of that staggering statistic, the spiritual darkness of North America will be the target of a unique evangelism strategy. It's called Lighthouses of Prayer. Suffice it to say the approach to illuminate others with the love of Jesus is a bright idea of friendship evangelism based on and bathed in prayer. Your neighborhood and your place of work become your spheres of influence.



As you begin to pray for those you will come to know, care for those you begin to spend time with, and share what it means to follow Jesus, your life will become a lighthouse to those spiritually adrift.

One of the parachurch ministries that is part of Mission America's "Celebrate Jesus!" initiative is Mainstay Church Resources. You know them as the people who produce innovative worship and discipleship resources called the 50-Day Spiritual Adventure each year.

This year's Adventure is called, "Celebrate Jesus! Discover What Makes Him Attractive to So Many People." It is a fresh look at evangelism without having to use the dreaded "E" word. Each week's theme is based on the natural way Jesus approached his task of announcing God's kingdom.

The 50-Day Adventure is a seven-week celebration. I promise you that your church will never be the same. And that's a promise I can keep because of what I know of Jesus. Whenever Jesus is allowed unlimited access, Christians are challenged. Churches change. Those seeking meaning to life are introduced to a Savior. The bottom line is this: when you sincerely worship Christ, you can't help but celebrate Jesus!

In actuality, it's a celebration that has been going on for more than several months. How about two millennia? It's a celebration that is epitomized in three cities.

It began in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-14)

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. That's how Charles Dickens begins his classic story, *A Tale of Two Cities*. He was referring to 18th century London. Curiously, the same sentences could be said of

the world when Jesus was born.

Israel was a vassal state of Rome, dominated by a ruthless Caesar named Augustus and ruled by a pup-



This unprecedented "light show" indicated the coming of a Godlike ruler. They knew they must attend his birth.

pet king called Herod. The Jewish people scrambled to make a living. Many lived in poverty. Sickness was common. Justice wasn't. To top it off, Israel's God has not spoken for over 400 years.

The spiritual stock market of the chosen people had hit bottom. Why were the prophets silent? The people wondered. Where was the long-awaited "Anointed One"? The Old Testament was replete with references to the servant of the Lord who would appear on earth and defeat the political and spiritual enemies of those who put their trust in the Lord. Where was Messiah?

So much for the worst of times.

According to a group of religious stargazers from the East, this same epoch in Israel's history was the best of times. Having spied the sky on many a moonless night, they'd identified a curious planetary alignment. What they saw appeared to be the brightest star they had ever seen. For them, it was an omen. A good omen.

This star was a cosmic sign signaling the birth of a world leader. And not any ordinary world leader.

This unprecedented "light show" indicated the coming of a Godlike ruler. They knew they must attend his birth. Immediately, they began their pilgrimage with appropriate plumage in their headdress and worthy gifts in their leather bags. And for months they traveled, until their

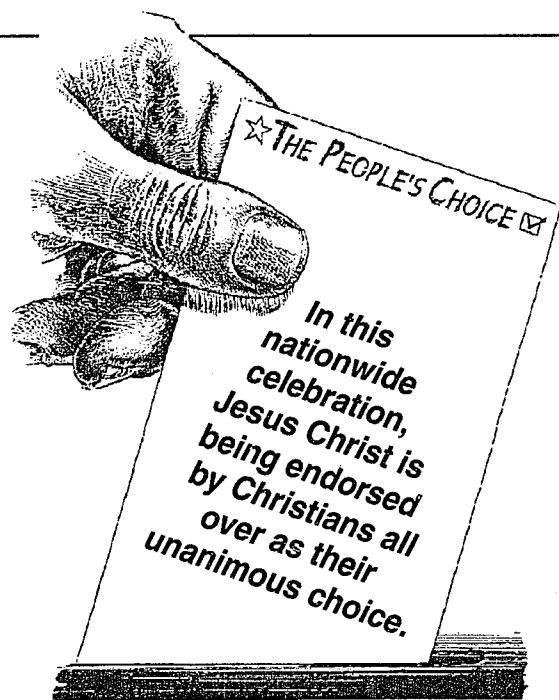
search met with success.

In the little town of Bethlehem, we see a strange collection of celebrants celebrating Jesus. Yes, the magi were there with their gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They fell on their knees and worshiped the infant Jesus. But they were not alone.

Months before, on a midnight clear, angels celebrated Jesus' birth. They sang loudly and joyously. Their melody echoed across the otherwise silent night.

And don't forget the shepherds. The shepherds, taking their cues from the angels, walked down from the sheep-dotted hills surrounding Bethlehem onto the stage of history and knelt around the perimeter of the spotlight that focused its beam on the baby born King of the Jews.

But lest I forget, there were others. A God-fearing man named Joseph and his Messiah-carrying wife called Mary are among those who celebrated Jesus from the beginning. Individually, they had swallowed



their pride, and with some difficulty they had digested the unthinkable plans God already had announced for them. Now they humbled their hearts and lauded their Lord with quiet praise.

The magi, the angels, the shepherds, the parents. This was a tapestry of celebrative worship you can't fully appreciate by reading words on paper. Worship of Jesus has to be experienced firsthand to fully appreciate.

For the seven weeks of the Adventure, you can experience Christ-centered worship in fresh, interactive ways. Messages have to do with ways Jesus endeared himself to people. For example, week 1 is "Jesus stayed spiritually connected and directed." Week 2 is "Jesus shattered the stereotypes of 'us' and 'them.'" Week 3 deals with how Jesus liked people and drew out the best in them. One of my favorites is this one: "Jesus spoke God's truth in everyday language."

Each message will be thematically tied to hymns and worship songs.

Worship will all center around Jesus. What a celebration this can be!

It continued in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-39)

Yes, beginning in Bethlehem, Jesus was celebrated. But the adoration and applause was not limited to his first days of life. Another city is proof of that.

Fast forward 30 years to the picturesque village on the north shore of the sea of Galilee. It's called Capernaum. Jesus had adopted this fishing town as his campaign headquarters while he lobbied for support and introduced the platform of what he calls the kingdom of God.

Capernaum is the place. The atmosphere is electric. There is emotional static everywhere. Jesus is the cause.

A power surge emanating from his healing hands has touched people whose sick and disabled lives had become a premature death dirge. But not any longer. Jesus has given them new reason to wake up in the morning. He has put a spring in their step. He has put a glint in their eye. Jesus is obviously the people's choice.

What we observe in Capernaum early on in the Gospel of Mark is not unique. It is, in fact, the paradigm of a pattern. Wherever Jesus went, people followed. Not just a few. But the phrase I am struck by throughout the Gospels is this: "Large crowds gathered."

Do you remember the television commercial for E.F. Hutton stock-brokers several years ago? "When E.F. Hutton talks, people listen!"

Well, that's what we see in the life of Jesus, the people's choice. As he taught them, they were dumb-founded. And as he healed the dumb and the blind, they were physically transformed and teachable. In John 6 we read that the crowds were so impressed with Jesus' ability and teaching, they attempted to take him by force and make him their king. Wow!

During the 50-Day Adventure, the themes of the messages will have a life beyond worship. Through the Adventure journals you will be able to sit at the feet of Jesus each day and take in his teaching (not unlike those who first followed him and wanted to make him their king). The journals will transform your daily Bible study and prayer time from a predictable routine into an Adventure in accelerated spiritual growth.

It culminated in Jerusalem (John 12:12-19)

Well, we've considered the way Jesus was celebrated at his birth and at the beginning of his ministry. The bugles blew in Bethlehem. The cornets in Capernaum sounded his praise. So I guess it shouldn't amaze us that near the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus was still being celebrated as the people's choice.

Notice the exaggeration spoken here. The Pharisees and their hyperbole. "The whole world has gone after him!" Hardly! They hadn't. Neither would those who in five days' time

would stand on Pontius Pilate's patio and persuade the governor to have Jesus crucified.

But most of the common folk who had been impacted by Jesus had indeed gone after him. This Palm Parade is a most appropriate conclusion to a life that began with a serpentine of shepherds and sages 33 years before. In Jerusalem, we see the party continue. It's been interrupted for a weekend, but the party goes on. And will. In the New Jerusalem.

Those who point to Jerusalem and say that Jesus wasn't really the popular hero we've painted him to be, point to his betrayal at the hand of one of his trusted Twelve. They point to his rejection at the hand of the crowd, which cried out for his execution and the release of a renowned criminal. But those who tally the score at the ninth hour on Good Friday forget it was the "top of the ninth." The "bottom of the ninth" had yet to be played two days later.

For Jesus and for us, celebrations are not continual. They are contrasted against the backdrop of suffering and hardship. That's the na-

ture of celebrations on an imperfect, sin-infested planet.

If you have ever watched a Billy Graham Crusade on TV, you've heard the announcer at the end of the broadcast make mention of how easy it is to send correspondence to Dr. Graham: Billy Graham, Minneapolis, Minn. That's all the address you need!

In the Billy Graham Museum, on the campus of Wheaton (Ill.) College, there's an exhibit of humorously addressed letters that have been sent to the world's most celebrated evangelist. One letter in particular stands out from the rest. Sent from a viewer in Nigeria, it simply reads, "Billy Graham, Many Applause, Many Sorrows."

That is the way of the world this side of heaven; even for Jesus. But because of Easter, the applause that attended Jesus at his birth, throughout his public ministry, and at the beginning of Holy Week, is not dwarfed by the many sorrows that snuffed out his life on the Cross.

When he strode out of the borrowed grave, we have every reason to believe the hosts of heaven gave him a standing ovation. It is an ovation

that continues to be joined by all who have entered into his presence. It is a standing ovation that will attend his reign in the Eternal City to come.

Scripture refers to that city as the New Jerusalem. It is a city where every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Talk about the people's choice!

Jesus: The People's Choice is the name of the Adventure guidebook. It is a candid look at how the characteristics that made Jesus so attractive are being lived out in the lives of ordinary people like you and me. It's a story of the many applause and many sorrows of life, and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who modeled how to take a bow and carry a cross.

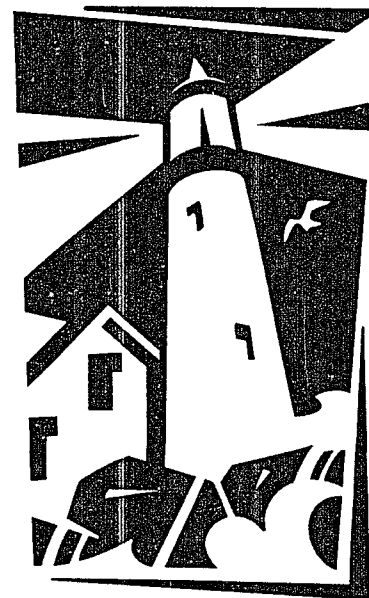
The guidebook is one of two textbooks for this seven-week course on becoming like the most attractive person ever. The other one is your Bible. Between the guidebook and your Bible, you will develop a healthy habit of spending more time focused on applying God's Word.

A tale of three cities: Bethlehem, Capernaum, and Jerusalem. Maybe we should add another city. Yours!

In the best of times and in the worst of times, you have reason to celebrate Jesus and expose as many people as you can to what he can accomplish in their lives. In the many applause and many sorrows of life, there is only one who is worthy of our praise. Let's celebrate his glory right now. **SR**

Rev. Greg Asimakoupoulos is Director of Creative Communications at The Chapel Ministries in Wheaton, Ill.

For Adventure material information, see inside front cover.



**As you
begin to pray
for those
you will come
to know,
your life will
become
a lighthouse
to those
spiritually adrift.**



Remember to leave the lights on!

by Bob Hett

I had arranged to borrow some baptismal robes from another church. As I was leaving through the main door, I noticed a sign posted right next to it: "Would the last person to leave the building please turn the lights off."

As we prepare to "Celebrate Jesus" in the year 2000, perhaps we ought to be more concerned to "Remember

Light is essential to life

Recall with me that the very first act of God in creation was to turn the light on in His world (Gen. 1:3-4a). Without light, there would be no plant life, no reproduction of the oxygen essential for human and animal life.

If God hadn't turned the light on that very first day of creation,

dispelled the darkness of sin and death, and offered spiritual light and life to all who would receive it (John 1).

We should reflect the Lord's glory

As in the succeeding days of creation, God eventually created the "lesser light" of the moon "to govern the night" (Gen. 1:16), so today He has chosen lesser lights to "shine like stars in the universe" as they "hold out the word of life" (Phil. 2:15-16) to a dark and dying world. And, as the moon has no true illumination of its own but reflects the light of the sun, so our lesser lights "reflect the Lord's glory" (2 Cor. 3:18).

The same Savior who said, "I am the light of the world," also declared, "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

When the church reflects Christ's light, we will experience what Jesus experienced. We will attract those lost in the darkness. To that end, we are invited to embark on a seven-week Adventure called "Celebrate Jesus!"

The Adventure covers eight themes:

- 1) Jesus stayed spiritually connected and directed.
- 2) Jesus shattered the stereotypes of "us" and "them."
- 3) Jesus liked people and drew out the best in them.
- 4) Jesus knew his identity yet served with humility.
- 5) Jesus spoke God's truth in everyday language.
- 6) Jesus cast a vision of a better kingdom, now and future.
- 7) Jesus courageously completed his assigned mission.
- 8) Jesus broke the power of darkness so all can live in the light.

It also includes five action steps:

- Pray with a pencil.
- Light your street.
- Celebrate people.
- Dare to care.
- Screen your message.

My wife and I had the joy of moving into a new home built specifically for us this past year. It is located beyond the boundaries of our public water supply. Therefore, we had a well drilled some 325 feet down through the ledge in our front yard and covered with a well cap about 75 feet from our front door.

We recently drove by a country shop that makes "wishing wells," complete with shingled roofs and a hanging basket that can be used as a planter. We were about ready to purchase one and put it over that well cap protruding in our front yard when we noticed that this shop also sells lighthouses with a glassed-in top and bulb, ready to be illuminated when connected to a power source.

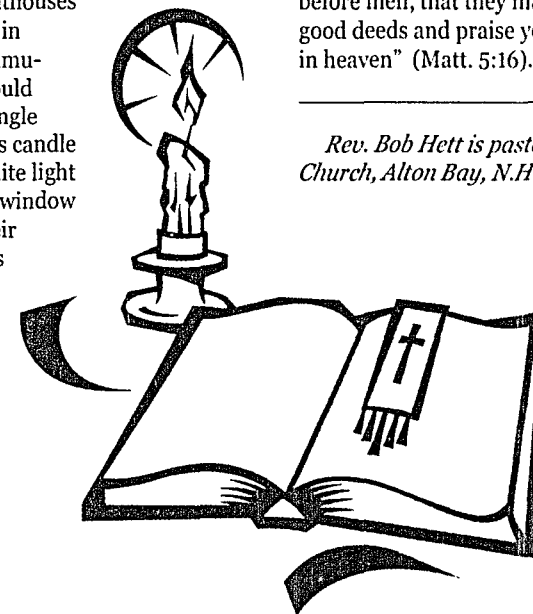
There was no longer any question about what was going to cover our well cap. It would *not* be a wishing well; it had to be a lighthouse that would shed light throughout our neighborhood.

When the "Celebrate Jesus!" idea began to take shape several years ago with Mission America, someone sug-



Those who want their houses to become lighthouses of prayer should place a single candle in a window for all their neighbors to see.

gested that those who wanted their houses to become lighthouses of prayer in their communities should place a single Christmas candle with a white light in it, in a window for all their neighbors to see.



If asked what the light shining in the window was all about, they could tell their neighbors that they wanted their home to be a lighthouse of prayer in their community. Then they could solicit prayer requests from their neighbors, pray for them, and keep track of how God is answering those prayers.

May I suggest that you keep out one of those simple Christmas candles (or go out and see if you can still buy one in a department store). Put it in a prominent window of your house and "Remember to Leave the Lights On" for your neighbors to see as we "Celebrate Jesus" this year.

Recently, I was reading in the book of Numbers the instructions God gave Moses concerning the lampstand in the tabernacle. He said, "Tell Aaron that when he sets up the seven lamps in the lampstand, he is to place them so their light shines forward" (Num. 8:2, NLT).

This year, instead of reminding people to turn the lights off when we leave the house of worship, let's encourage one another to "Remember to Leave the Lights On" throughout the land and to "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). **SR**

Rev. Bob Hett is pastor of The Bay Church, Alton Bay, N.H.

We want to help every neighborhood in America turn their lights on for Jesus by establishing at least 3 million "lighthouses" of prayer this year.

to Leave the Lights On" rather than to turn them off.

We want to help every neighborhood in America turn their lights on for Jesus by establishing at least 3 million "lighthouses" of prayer this year. And, it can begin this week in your home if you'll just "remember to leave the lights on" for Jesus!

there would be no life. All would be darkness and death.

Truths pertaining to the physical world also pertain to the spiritual

To redeem the world spiritually, God sent light into this world in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, who declared, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5). His light ultimately

A royal priesthood and church polity

by John Conrod



Over our nearly four centuries of existence, Seventh Day Baptists have spoken out boldly to a lost world about the need for repentance of sin, and that the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord should always be first and foremost in importance.

Did God intend for the Church to have a single autocratic ruler or even a government of apostles and elders? Or did He want His Church governed by all its members equally?

Our unique position in Christian ecclesiastical settings has often called us to defend a second Biblical truth. We have found it necessary to alert Christians to the need to observe the seventh day of the week as God's ordained and commanded day for our worship; all this as part of our love for, and recognition of, Jesus

as our Lord and the Lord of the Sabbath.

We sometimes overlook a third unique cause that also calls out for support—to remind Christians that God has called them to be “a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9), which includes how Christians should relate

to each other and to God in their church polity.

The question that begs to be answered is, “How should the Church of Christ be governed?”

Church government always an issue

Church government has been an issue within the Church since it be-

gan. When Jesus said that He would build His Church and give it the “keys to the Kingdom,” did He intend for it to have a single autocratic ruler or even a government of apostles and elders? Or did He want His Church governed by all its members equally?

Some churches are convinced that the Bible teaches the Church should be governed in a hierarchical structure from the top down. This has clearly been the structure of the Roman Catholic Church with the Pope as the Vicar of Christ.

Other churches which still believe in a hierarchical structure for church government do not have just one man at the top wielding all the power. They have a governing Board of Elders that make the decisions for the church.

The third type of church government is followed by congregational churches and is a democracy of all members.

What does the Bible say?

We must not allow humanly de-

vised theories of church government to replace the clear teachings of the Word of God. The question to be answered is, “Does the Bible set out a clear directive for the governing of the Church?” Let us look first at Acts 15.

Acts 15:1-2

“And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, [and said], Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.”

“When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.”

It is clear that the matter in dispute should be brought to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

Acts 15:4

“And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and [of] the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.”

Note now that not just the apostles and elders were present, but that it says the whole Jerusalem church “received them.”

Acts 15:12

“Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.”

What multitude? Why the whole church body of verse 4, of course.

Acts:15:22-23

“Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; [namely], Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

“And they wrote [letters] by them

after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren [send] greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.”

Note that the suggestion of James was not only acceptable to the “apostles and elders,” but also had the approval of “the whole church,” and the letter was sent in the name of “the apostles and elders and brethren.” Even churches that are gov-

Jesus Christ is the “Head” of the Church and the rest of us are “members of His body.” At no time did Jesus ever appoint any man to be the head of His body.

erned by elders admit that “correct church government should always be based on multitude of counsel.” The real question is, “How many church members does it take to be called a ‘multitude?’”

Christ is the Head, all of us are members

Clearly, Jesus Christ is the “Head” of the Church and the rest of us are “members of His body.” At no time did Jesus ever appoint any man to be the head of His body. It is also true that He chose groups of apostles to serve His people.

But notice what Jesus said was expected of them. They were not to be like the world in their leadership; they were to be humble servants.

Christ warned His disciples that they should not act like a lord making “final decisions” in deciding doctrinal or even administrative matters. He said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so

among you” (Matt. 20:25-28).

An honest study of the New Testament Church in the book of Acts will show that there is no mention of apostles and elders making important doctrinal or administrative decisions without the agreement of the whole church.

Earlier, when seven deacons were chosen, they may have been “ordained” by the apostles, but they were chosen by “the multitude of the disciples” (Acts 6:2). Again, we ask the question—what constitutes a “multitude?”

God’s government in Israel

God’s form of government for the nation of Israel was a theocracy. Under this theocracy, God was King (Judges 8:22-23; 1 Sam. 12:12). Moses was only a prophet. At Mount Sinai, God sought a direct relationship with the people.

Exodus 19:10-11

“And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes,

“And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.”

Exodus 20:18-19

“And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw [it], they removed, and stood afar off.

“And they said unto Moses, ‘Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’”

Note that it was the people who refused that relationship out of fear. They wanted Moses to continue to be a “go-between” for them. Moses became a “mediator” and occupied a position unparalleled by anyone until Jesus Himself (cf. Deut. 34:10; 18:15-19).

Even with that unique position, there is nothing in God's Word that gave Moses authority to function in a priestly ministry over Israel. And now, under the New Covenant, all believers are called "a holy priesthood."

And Joshua's successor is...

When it came time for Joshua to relinquish his role as the leader of Israel, did he appoint a successor? He did not.

Joshua 24:14-16

"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

"And the people answered and said, 'God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods.'"

Joshua 24:24-28

"And the people said unto Joshua, 'The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.'

"So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

"And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that [was] by the sanctuary of the LORD.

"And Joshua said unto all the people, 'Behold, this stone shall be

a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.'

"So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance."

Joshua gathered the people together and asked them to make a choice. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." If that doesn't sound like a plenary decision, what does?

Of judges and kings

When Judges were ruling Israel, there were at times multiple judges and sometimes no judges at all. Was there a board of elders that appointed these judges? No. Many times the people just "did what was right in their own eyes," which would have worked if they actually were doing what was right. At this time God dealt directly with His people.

When Israel later had a human king, this is not what God wanted. It was a rejection of God's direct rulership (1 Sam. 8:6-7). God did not want the people looking to human leadership; it was the people who chose that. Even then, the kings of Israel were not allowed to function as priestly intermediators.

What does God want?

In the New Covenant it is clear



By using a congregational form of government, rather than a government by intermediators, we can allow each member to have a direct relationship with God.

that God wants to have a direct relationship with all His people. By using a congregational form of government, rather than a government by intermediators, we can allow each member to have a direct relationship with God.

God has often used human servants as His representatives when the people didn't listen and didn't want to listen to Him. He used kings and prophets, priests and apostles, elders and, yes, even Babylonians. But these aren't His preferences.

He wants a "priesthood of the believers." He longs for a direct connection with each of us. It is *contrary* to the clear Old and New Testament patterns of God's relationships with His people to adopt anything but a *democratic* form of church government! Only congregational polity puts each person in a direct relationship with God.

Is this different from the Old Testament? Not at all. God did not want human rule then, and He doesn't want it now. To want human intermediators is to deny that Christ is actively filling these roles in our personal and ecclesiastical lives.

Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant, the supreme Judge, the High Priest, and the King. We are all appointed to be a "royal priesthood," having a relationship with the Father that is only mediated through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:9, 1 Timothy 2:5). **SR**

Rev. John Conrod is Director of New Covenant Ministries, based in Lakewood, Colo. John is a member of the Denver SDB Church. This article also appears in the Fishermen's Net newsletter at www.geocities.com/midcontinentsdb.



Women's Society page by Donna Bond

When we are hurt

In our November *Sabbath Recorder* page, we discussed our responsibility for not hurting other Christians as Paul instructed in Romans 12:18, "if it is possible, so far as it depends on YOU, live at peace with everyone" (NIV, emphasis mine).

During this month when we celebrate love, let us consider our responsibility for how we react when we are the injured party in a church setting.

How do we respond when we have been hurt by a fellow church member? Some quit going to church altogether; ultimately, they deprive themselves of fellowship with the ninety and nine who did not hurt them.

To change churches might be a solution, but what happens when someone from the new church commits a perceived offense? One young person faced rejection by stating, "I don't deserve to be run out of my church."

Sometimes a confrontation is necessary or beneficial. Sometimes you aren't going to get your way!

If you receive "constructive criticism," consider whether there is any merit in what was said, whether the issue is important, whether the critic had all of the facts, and whether there is something you need to change. Beyond that, realize that some people are lacking in effective communication skills. In the long run, they hurt themselves more than they hurt you.

Perhaps the church could do a better job in teaching us to constructively express our anger. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

These passages have been misinterpreted to mean, "Deny your angry

feelings and swallow them with a donut (or something)." Christ displayed righteous indignation toward the money-changers in the temple but did not allow the incident to ruin His life.

Most Christians do not deliberately intend to hurt others. Context clues or tone of voice can help determine the intent of a comment. For example, "You don't need to sit on my purse," could mean "Get your fat derriere off my purse, Idiot" or, "Let me move my purse so you will be more comfortable when you sit down."

A motto that was given to me by a Christian sister is this: "What is that to you? Follow thou Me." As tempting as it is, it is not our job to get revenge against an emotional bruiser; it is our job to forgive (ref. January 1999 *Sabbath Recorder* Women's page).

We may or may not be able to re-establish the relationship as it was. Once our fingers are burned, we continue to cook but keep our hands off the burner until it cools down.



**As tempting as it is,
it is not our job to get revenge
against an emotional bruiser;
is our job to forgive.**

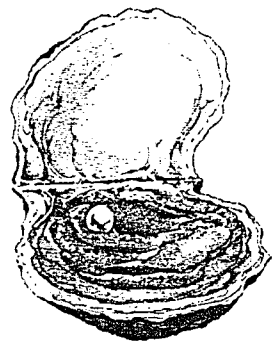
Worthy of an extra warning are those situations when your precious child is hurt. A co-worker recently said, "You can say what you want about me; you can even make me cry. But I am not responsible for what I do to you if you hurt my child."

God has given us a "tigris instinct" to protect our young, but my co-worker was wrong. We *are* responsible for how we react. Consider carefully the possible ramifications of your involvement in your child's problems.

In all of these matters, pray for guidance. Be open to an unbiased opinion from a trusted Christian friend or counselor. Realize that you are probably not going to change the other person's outlook nor is it your job to "make her happy."

Remember that (eventually) "all things work together for good for those who love the Lord, who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Follow *God's* agenda in relating to other Christians. **SR**



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

Blind Lewis had vision for future

Stephen Pierce, a trustee of the SDB Memorial Fund, recently asked for background information on the Nathan E. Lewis Fund for the Blind. There had been no requests made on the fund for several years.

When I checked the *Sabbath Recorder* index, the first reference I discovered was from August 5, 1972. Sister Ruby Cummings, of the Dartmouth SDB Church in Guyana, was pictured listening to a tape recorder purchased from the Nathan Lewis Fund. Young people in the Georgetown congregation taped selections from the *Recorder*, *Readers Digest*, and *National Geographic*.

Nathan Lewis himself was blind in later life. He understood what it was like to be deprived of the ability to keep informed of what was happening through the printed word.

Lewis was a mechanical engineer with the Babcock and Wilcox firm in New York City and a member of the Plainfield, N.J., SDB Church. In addition to his service as trustee and president of his home church, he was a trustee of the Memorial Fund from 1926-1958 and its president from 1937-54.

He was also a trustee of the American Sabbath Tract Society from 1928-49 and trustee of the SDB Historical Society from 1944-57. Although his professional education was from Stevens Institute, he served as trustee of Alfred (N.Y.) University, which granted him an honorary doctorate in science.¹

Though his denominational service was outstanding, he probably was best known for his interest in

young people and the first denominationally-owned youth camp which carried his name—Lewis Camp.

In an *SR* article entitled, "The Church Camp Movement—Its Beginning Among Seventh Day Baptists," Rev. A.J.C. Bond wrote of some of the early camping which Marjorie Burdick spearheaded (beginning about 1926) at a camp facility in Bethel, Conn.

"I was the chore boy," Bond recalled. "I carried water down the hill, across the glen, and up the hill, all of which I enjoyed in the consciousness we were laboring in a good cause."

Sometime after that first taste of youth camping, Bond collapsed from his work load, and it was decided that he should take some time off. Bond wrote:

"They secured a room on the seashore at Weekapung, R.I. One day, near the close of this restful experience, Mr. Nathan Lewis, a loyal parishioner in Plainfield who had a summer home on his farm near Ashaway, proposed that as soon as I was able, he and I choose a site on his farm owned for many years by Seventh Day Baptists of the Lewis line, for a young people's camp. That was the beginning of the Lewis Camp. The day arrived, and the experience was a pleasant one. We visited many spots and finally decided upon the one that had spreading oak trees and a rock big enough to accommodate a class.

"Here Lewis built a camp, with a fireplace provided by Mrs. Lewis. In the summer of 1927, three camps were held there—two girl camps in succession and a boys' camp. I could only participate in the first camp since I was a del-

egate representing Seventh Day Baptists at the Lausanne Conference in Switzerland. Pastor Harold Crandall had charge after that. I may say here that Pastor Crandall was a helpful associate in all my camp experiences in Rhode Island. Mr. Lewis built the camp and still owns it, but for the use of Seventh Day Baptist young people's camp.

"From the vantage point of hindsight, one can see how the camps came into being in response to a vital need in our denomination. And those of us who were active in its beginnings were in a position to pick up the existing trends."

Not only did Lewis Camp owe its existence to Nathan Lewis, but his interest continued for the rest of his life and beyond. A letter of appreciation from the American Sabbath Tract Society (*SR*, March 12, 1951) notes his membership on the Committee on Teen-age Conferences and Camps from 1927-1941 and chairman for five of those years.

Upon his death, Lewis' will provided for an endowment with the income to be shared equally between the Fund for the Blind and Lewis Camp.

The 1998 Annual Report of the Memorial Fund listed receipts from the Fund for the Blind at \$1,893, with no requests for expenditures for the visually impaired. Income reserve was listed at \$13,775. Nathan Lewis did not leave this endowment to go unused. **SR**

¹Lewis, Nathan Earle, 1876-1959, *biographical sketches from Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America, Vol. III, pp. 205-6.*



SR Almanac

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

One year ago—February 1999

Features focus on the 50-Day Spiritual Adventure theme, "Promises Worth Keeping: Resolving to live what we say we believe."

Special SDB Youth Camp held in Cebu, the Philippines.

SDB churches in Rwanda, Africa, lend their support in resettlement camps for displaced Rwandans, chased out of their villages by renegade bandits.

The denominational "Chicago Council" of 1890 remembered on the Pearls page.

Former publishing house of the *SR* in Alfred, N.Y., is torn down.

Five years ago—February 1995

"Seeking Spiritual Maturity" theme of prayer is promoted. Pastor William Shobe focuses on prayer evangelism; other articles look at the school prayer issue and prayer ministry resources.

Pearls page gives prayer advice from turn-of-century leader A.H. Lewis.

Conference President Myrna Cox shares testimony from a meaningful prayer experience at the 1994 Conference.

Need for wells and medicine continues in Africa.

Kevin Chroniger reflects on positive influence of his "other Dad," Pastor Delmer Van Horn.

10 years ago—February 1990

A closer look at our polity—how SDBs govern themselves—with articles by Ernest Bee, John Peil, and Paul Osborn.

Don Sanford outlines our 20th century denominational structure.

Centerfold displays denomination's organizational chart.

Medical clinic in Malawi, Africa, is expanded to meet refugees' needs.

Pastor Gene Smith graduates from the T.I.M.E. program.

25 years ago—February 1975

Rev. Herb Saunders named new Dean of the Council on Ministry.

Several SDB women attend Church Women United meetings in Memphis, Tenn.

An entire Sunday-keeping denomination, The Church of God, based in Cleveland, Tenn., accepts the scriptural truths of Sabbath observance.

Rev. Wayne Babcock writes about the Second Commandment. News item shares that Babcock accepts call to pastor in Dodge Center, Minn.

Mildred Jeffrey of Denver, Colo., featured on the "Personality Profile" page.

Group in Toronto, Canada, meets in November as first step to organize as an SDB Fellowship. Herlitz Condison leads the group.

50 years ago—February 1950

Deacon Joseph and Martha Tyrrell report on their missionary work in British Guiana, South America.

Articles and flyer promote SDB participation in "One Great Hour of Sharing."

Rev. Ronald Hargis, executive of the SDB Board of Christian Education, to move into the Hebron, Pa., parsonage in May.

Rev. Kenneth Stickney accepts call to the Rockville and Second Hopkinton, R.I., churches.

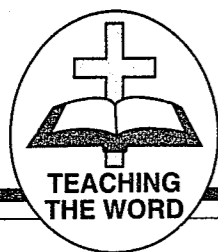
Ordination statement of Rev. Carl Maxson presented. Maxson was ordained in Andover, N.Y., in July.

"The Gothic"—home of the SDB School of Theology in Alfred, N.Y.—featured in the Alfred University newsletter.

...where are we headed?

Pray—

- that we are people of our word
- for more prayer warriors and outreach
- for your pastor and family
- with thanks for our Baptist polity and heritage
- for proper stewardship of time and resources
- for those suffering losses in the family
- for our new executives and workers



Seeking nominations for Sabbath School Teacher of the Year

"But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it" (Deuteronomy 30:14 NASB).

With those words, Moses sought to reassure Israel that the command of God was something they could do. He promised them that it was not out of reach.

God did not set the children of Israel up for failure. He gave them His presence and His command, knowing that they could obey. The word of God was near the Children of Israel—they still wanted to hear it from Moses.

In Romans 10:8, Paul let his readers know that the word was near them as well. He identified the word as the message that he had been preaching. This word proclaims salvation and God's faithfulness. The primary emphasis of this part of Romans seems to be establishing the nature of righteousness based on faith. There is, as well, an emphasis on speaking this word of God.

Although we know that God has promised a time when we will not have to teach or be taught (Hebrews 8:10-11), we know that He has called some to be teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

While there are many opportunities to teach and learn in our daily

Teacher of the Year. Each member church of the General Conference may nominate one teacher. The following criteria will be used for the 15th annual *Crystal Apple* award:

•Is a member in good standing of the nominating church

Help us highlight the important role of teaching by nominating a Sabbath School teacher who helps you know that God's word is near you.

life, one important way is through Sabbath School. Help us highlight the important role of teaching by nominating a Sabbath School teacher who helps you know that God's word is near you—in your mouth and in your heart.

The Sabbath School Committee of the Seventh Day Baptist Board of Christian Education is seeking nominations for the Sabbath School

•Exhibits the qualities of faith and teaching found in the life and teachings of Christ

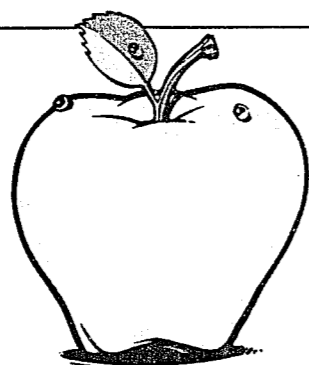
•Currently serves as a Sabbath School teacher

The local church pastor and superintendent are asked to complete, sign, and return the form certifying the nominee's church membership, present teaching position, previous teaching experience, unique teaching skills or practices, and other Christian Education service. The post-marked deadline is June 30, 2000.

The Board is seeking nominees whose teaching skills have contributed to the Christian conversion and nurture of our people. The Board understands that it is not possible to recognize and honor every worthy teacher. Nevertheless, we wish to honor one such teacher on behalf of all our Sabbath School teachers. We urge the local church to annually recognize all of their teachers. **SR**

**1999
Crystal Apple
Recipient**

**Marilyn Merchant
Riverside, CA**



Seventh Day Baptist Conferences and churches around the world are looking forward to and preparing for the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation (SDBWF) meeting in Brazil in January of 2003.

This is an exciting time, and Brazilian SDB churches are working hard to ensure the success of the gathering. To prepare, many young people are taking beginning or advanced English language classes. The churches have initiated a nationwide campaign to build a Convention Center, which will be dedicated during the Federation meetings.

Plans for the SDBWF meetings include promoting non-delegate attendance, which would boost fellowship and affect future planning. After all, the primary purpose of the organization is to promote fellowship and cooperation among SDB Conferences and churches worldwide.

Opening the registration to visitors would give attendees the opportunity to meet other leaders. In many cases, this will be the chance of a lifetime.

Recorders for additional information.

Other areas of ministry of the Brazilian Conference include sending pamphlets, Bible lessons, and other literature to Peru, Mozambique, Igreja Agua Viva, and Argentina. The Santo Antonio do Sudoeste SDB Church sponsors a radio program in San Antonio, Argentina, and a missionary team from Brazil traveled to Paraguay near the end of 1998.

Brazil's religious education ministries are preparing new evangelists and workers using the Training In Ministry and Extension (T.I.M.E.) program. This includes T.I.M.E. studies which have been adapted to their culture and beliefs, as well as other booklets published by their Conference.

A workers' meeting is held yearly for training, reteaching, and the exchange of experiences. Their last meeting was held September 19-26,



Brazilian SDB churches are working hard to ensure the success of the gathering. To prepare, many young people are taking beginning or advanced English language classes.

If you are interested in attending, you can obtain information from World Federation President, Rev. Gabriel Bejjani; or from Rev. Dale Thorngate, World Federation Executive. However, specific information will not be available until later. Meanwhile, watch future *Sabbath*

1999, and they will meet this year from June 19-25. It is so exciting to hear of their plans and techniques for keeping their leaders up to date and encouraged!

Their communications reveal that they need Sabbath School materials for children as well as adults. These

will have to be purchased, and we are looking for contributions to help defray the cost. Funds are also needed to maintain the quality of their T.I.M.E. program.

"We would appreciate it if you could send us help for our religious education department," they wrote.

If you are interested in assisting, send your donation to the SDB Missionary Society, 119 Main St., Westerly, RI 02891. We will be happy to pass it on to the Brazilian Conference.

We look forward to the meetings in Brazil in 2003, and pray that many of our SDB members around the world will attend. A highly spiritual program is being planned, and "the more, the merrier."

So, save your money and make plans to participate in these meetings. Only three more years to wait! **SR**



the BEACON

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

February 2000

National Youth Retreat held in Wisconsin

by Aubrey Appel

"I think Matt Olson should pay for everyone to go to Hawaii next year."—Anonymous

The first-ever National Youth Retreat, held in Milton, Wis., from December 29-January 2, was a total success. There were youth from all over the nation, including Florida, New York, Colorado, and Oregon; and everyone meshed extremely well.

There were 27 campers in all, four counselors (Ben Calhoun, Cathy Payne, Alanna Powell, and Jeff Rood), and our exceptional cooks (Rich and Madelyn Neher).

"There is nowhere I would have rather spent the last few days of the millennium," Miriam Lawton remarked excitedly.

The theme for the retreat was TEOTWAWKI, presented by our fearless leader from California—Eric "you can tune a guitar, but you can't tuna fish" Davis.

No, the theme wasn't an ancient Chinese phrase of wisdom, but an acronym for "The End Of The World As We Know It."

"I came, I camped, I survived," declared Gabe Vaught with emotion.

Eric used the phrase TEOTWAWKI to talk about dying to ourselves and getting rid of our old sins and temptations, and then asking the Lord to help us start over. Eric posted three truths related to dying to ourselves:

- 1) We cannot know what is going to happen.
- 2) We can trust God with our future.
- 3) Heaven awaits all who believe.

We acted out hilarious Bible story skits to illustrate trusting God with our futures. We also summarized passages from the Bible that spoke about the real TEOTWAWKI described by all-consuming fire and pestilence.

On New Year's Eve, we had a slightly crazy bonfire, and we welcomed the year 2000 with communion and singing praise songs. After staying up most, or the entire night, playing various card games and digesting extensive amounts of caffeine, we drove to church in the morning to hear a rousing sermon by Pastor George Calhoun.

Josh Calhoun could be heard mumbling, "Eric Davis is totally cool!"

I overheard that the cooks were very impressed by the youth's conversation, manners, and maturity, especially towards biblical issues.

"Haircuts are fun!" screamed Jeff Neher after receiving one from the celebrated Jeff Rood, who also chopped a little off the top of Eric's melon.

We managed to have a snow fight one afternoon with select melting patches, but because of the warm temperatures, Justin Knudson questioned, "What happened to the snow?" (Well, Justin, because snow is made of frozen water and dust particles, when the temperature rises above freezing, it can no longer maintain its frozen state and turns to the liquid form of water, which soaks into the soil causing large amounts of mud...)

To close, a quote from the beautiful Karlene Neher, who said with wisdom, "Friendship is not so much the time spent together, but the togetherness felt in the time spent."

Special thanks to Matt Olson, Eric Davis, Kevin Butler, and anyone else who made our first retreat possible. God bless you guys! **SR**



Happy "retreaters," Tiffany Vigneault and Bill Fick.



Young
Adult
Connection

Team Eternal's summer in Daytona

by John Mark Camenga

with the opportunity to give a children's message. The children were asked to obey their parents (and I promised to do the same).

Week two brought us to Kiwanis Camp, where we were on staff for Deep South Camp. The summer heat made us each thankful for the air-conditioned sleeping quarters.

Our lessons focused on Joseph, and the story of the origin of the universe. It was concluded that God did,

sented special music. We sang the two-part choral piece called, "The Gift of Love." The message of the song was basically that works without love are dead. Following church, we took the afternoon off, and got ready for Sunday and the rest of the fourth week of our project.

We saw two BYBCs on tap but, as the week materialized, the children did not. Both BYBCs were canceled following two days of zero in atten-

We were blessed to have one of the girls ask Jesus to be her Savior.

in fact, create the universe, and Joseph was a good guy who had a few rough breaks.

As it turned out, the week had a few rough breaks of its own, but these things brought the campers closer, and the week continued the strengthening process of a relatively new camping program. A focused staff, a few rainbows, several gorgeous sunsets, and a loving Heavenly Father carried and encouraged us throughout the week.

We entered week three very tired but ready for our second BYBC, this time in Edgewater, Fla. We had fewer kids in attendance this week, but that did not limit the fun we had.

The crafts were a big hit. The glitter supply was abundant, as was the eagerness to use it. Despite the enthusiasm, the mess was contained, and the kids actually learned a few things (or so they told us). Cathy was amazing with all of the children, who responded well to all of her direction and teaching.

This Sabbath, we once again pre-

dance, so we were put to work at the church. In addition to that, we had the chance to play with nephews and visit family and church members.

Despite the cancellation of the Daytona and Deltona BYBCs, we had a productive week. Sabbath morning came once again by the grace of God and, once again, I had the children's message. I discovered that ceiling fans do not lend themselves well to matches as my attempt to exemplify my point went down the drain. Regardless, Joshua Crouch enjoyed my attempt and smiled the whole time. (Thanks Joshy!)

Cathy and I would like to thank everyone who had lunch with us, made cookies for the BYBCs, and supported the whole idea of having an SCSC team. We would especially like to thank Marie Ward for all of her planning and preparation, prayers and sacrifice, and encouragement and dedication to and for us, and for the project.

All in all, it was a wonderful summer for Team Eternal (1 Peter 5:10). **SR**

The last day of Summer Christian Service Corps training at Camp Jersey Oaks, Shiloh, N.J., led into the first day of our project and left us both very ready for the Sabbath.

Cathy Rogers and I flew into the Orlando, Fla., International Airport on June 25, 1999, and didn't look back. Mark and Faith Green, along with their son, Conner, escorted us to Daytona Beach, Fla., and left us in the capable hands of Dad and Mom (a.k.a. Pastor John and Linda Camenga).

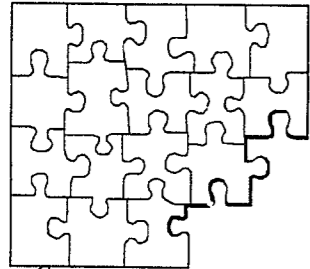
That Sabbath morning, we were "introduced" to the congregation through special music. Cathy and I sang the song, "Shifting Sand," by Caedmon's Call. In the afternoon, the Youth Fellowship accompanied us to Oak Hill, where we were to have our first Back Yard Bible Club (BYBC). We passed out fliers and then returned to Daytona to complete our Sabbath rest.

Sunday came, followed ever so closely by Monday morning. We spent a good portion of that time preparing for the challenges of the upcoming BYBC. The focus of our material was the "Wordless Book," a simplified telling of the process of salvation based on five colors: Black represents sin; red represents the blood of Jesus; white represents forgiveness from our sin; green represents spiritual growth; and gold represents our reward.

Sixteen children heard at least part of the message during the first week, and we were blessed to have one of the girls ask Jesus to be her Savior. All of that, and it only rained one of the five days!

The second Sabbath presented me

Live in Harmony with One Another



The President's Page

Recipe for Conference

by John Camenga



People ask, "What is it really like at Conference?" My stock answer has been to describe it as a combination of revival services, church business meeting, educational seminar, spiritual retreat, and family reunion. All of this is part of Conference.

However, like many other recipes, the result is something greater than can be described by the list of ingredients. Let's look at this recipe for Conference. In an appropriate mixing container:

• Take one-part revival services

We hear challenging messages. This year our theme is "Live in Harmony with One Another" (1 Peter 3:8-9, NIV). The selection of the theme makes a difference in the "flavor" of the product.

Regardless of the theme, I go home with new insights into God's Word and its application in my life. Messages and Bible studies make a difference. I am revived and ready to face the challenges at home.

• Add one part church business meeting

Many of us dislike business meetings, but they can be a time for believers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to review past effectiveness and plan for future ministry. We share ideas and dreams. We can move beyond the "ho-hum" to the exciting task of "being about our Father's business." (Some people

say they skip this ingredient and still like the flavor of Conference.)

• Add a dash of educational seminar

Workshops are a regular part of Conference. These sessions expose us to facets of ministry that may help us personally, or may help our home churches.

The subjects change from year to year, but there is something that should appeal to everyone. It may be a workshop on meeting the needs of the handicapped. There may be a session for church treasurers. Improving facilities, or evangelistic skills may be highlighted.

A little later this year we will share some of the specific topics for Conference 2000.

• Include a generous handful of spiritual retreat

Prayer times, quiet moments, worship, a time away from routine all add to a sense of being in a place separated from the "real world."

Jesus took some of the disciples up to the Mount of Transfiguration. They wanted to stay up there, but the work they had to do took them back to the valley. Frequently people describe Conference as a "Mountain-top Experience." It can be a time of renewal that prepares us to pick up our normal life and normal load with renewed vigor.

• Family reunion

We may be a "family church," but we have very liberal adoption policies! First-time Conference at-

tendees discover a ready-made, nationwide circle of family and friends ready to include and absorb them. Conference becomes a portable hometown that relocates every year.

Going to Conference is going home! The old home place has been sold and my high school friends are scattered to the four winds. It has been 10 years since I have even passed through my city of birth.

When I go to Conference, I see many of the people who mean the most to me. I renew my most valued relationships. I have the exciting opportunity to meet my new family members. I can reflect with other loved ones on the losses the family has experienced in the past year and rejoice together in the promise of a coming, permanent reunion.

• The secret ingredient—you

If *you* don't come to Conference, you are missing something that can enrich and strengthen your Christian walk. Of equal importance is the fact that *you* are needed to make this recipe complete. Without *you* the flavor will not be as full and complete.

Make effort to be there. This year the hometown moves to the lovely campus of West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, W.Va. The dates are August 6-12. We need *you* to make the recipe complete!

A word of warning: Attending Conference can be habit-forming. Missing the annual opportunity can cause withdrawal symptoms. However, it is a healthful and beneficial addiction! **SR**

Seeking Spiritual Maturity:
through Sabbathkeeping



An annual emphasis of
the SDB General Council

Excerpted from Larry's book *True to the Sabbath, True to Our God*, chapter 9, pages 89-91, 94.

Jesus' Sabbath celebration

No better model can be found than Jesus, in fulfilling God's intent that the Sabbath be our day of worship. He regularly joined in Sabbath services at the synagogues throughout Galilee.

It was his weekly habit to join with a local congregation, in fact, he was one of their favorite Sabbath School teachers (Luke 4:15-16)! Certainly Jesus' activity in the synagogue on the Sabbath comprised a very significant part of his earthly ministry.

In sharing this weekly worship, Jesus was giving his endorsement of the Sabbath as a day of celebration. He was also demonstrating various forms of worship activity. Teaching, preaching, sharing the good news about the Kingdom of God, prophesying, and especially healing, were the things that we commonly find Jesus engaged in on the Sabbath. All of these can and should be practiced in our Sabbath worship today.

Covenant renewal

One of the key features of our weekly assembly for worship is the renewal of our covenant relationship with God. Here, as God's people, we join in a corporate promise, we pledge our lives to each other and to the Lord.

There is more involved here than personal commitment. In the covenant there is the dimension of accountability which we invite and

Day of worship and celebration

by Larry Graffius

promote when we make our promise in public, in the midst of the congregation. Here we bear witness to one another of what we believe in, and of what we will do as we practice our faith.

The renewing of our covenant with God and with each other is one of the most significant acts of worship, both in the Old and the New Testament.

This covenant promise is made by the people of God as they are assembled for worship. It takes place most often in Sabbath services as we pray, sing hymns of our faith and commitment, share in the service of the Lord's Supper, baptism, marriage, ordination and dedication.

Furthermore, it is very significant that in the development of the covenant relationship with His people in the Old Testament, God gave the Sabbath as a sign of that abiding relationship:

"Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy. Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you.... For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD.... The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested'" (Exodus 31:13-17).

In other words, God is telling His people, "By consistently, faithfully

joining together in Sabbath worship, you will be reaffirming our covenantal relationship. The Sabbath is the perfect opportunity for you to renew your commitment. The act of coming together, in 'holy convocation' will be itself a demonstration of your faithfulness, your obedience. It will serve as a sign, a mark of fidelity in our relationship."

What are we celebrating?

God's people are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for generations to come as a lasting covenant. On this day His people celebrate God's grace, God's provision, and God's sovereign lordship.

First, recognize that it is God who has called you and *makes you holy*. The wonderful covenant relationship that is yours to enjoy is nothing of your doing. It is all of God's grace, it is all His doing.

Second, it is a *Sabbath of rest* because God will provide for you; you need not work, but instead you are to celebrate on this day.

And third, in Sabbath worship you acknowledge that *the LORD made the heavens and the earth*, that He is the Lord of all creation. He is the source, the giver of all that we have and the ruler over everything. Come before Him in worship! Let your Sabbath Days be set apart for renewing your covenant relationship with Him.

Worship means to focus our attention on God. It means to turn away from worldly cares and "turn your eyes upon Jesus." **SR**

Light streams in—and out— of Salem church windows

Reprinted from the Salem Sentinel, newsletter of the Salem, W.Va., SDB Church. Janet Thorngate, editor.

Sabbath mornings—and many other days—light streams in through our church windows. Our prayer? That light may also flow out from those windows.

In September, we began a new Sabbath School year with 16 teachers (two per class) prepared every week to lead a group in Bible study and reflection.

Classes fill the new addition, top to bottom. Most weeks the college/young adult class is the largest (one week, 24), keeping teachers Cynthia Calise and Pastor Dale Thorngate busy with their cross-cultural study of the Gospel of Mark.

We all enjoy getting better acquainted with the Salem-Teikyo University international students who welcome the opportunity to practice their English. It's also great that so many of our own college young

people are close enough to come home at least some weekends, often bringing friends or roommates with them.

In long-time Salem church tradition, we try to provide lunch for the college students with a different family each week—sometimes at home, sometimes at the church, sometimes at the restaurant where many gather to extend Sabbath fellowship.

In October, we hosted the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial Board for their fall meeting. They came to check out their investment in our new addition and provide a useful estate planning seminar.

The building fund received a big boost later in the month when everyone helped with the Harvest Steak Dinner, which netted over \$1,000. We served Sunday dinner to over 250 people.

Also in October, our youth attended the Appalachian Association retreat in Columbus, Ohio, and the church hosted one of the community

Columbine Forums on school safety and character development.

The church continues to provide space for several community groups, including Senior Citizens, Alcoholics Anonymous, Foster Grandparents, Ministerial Association, and the Salem-Teikyo Auxiliary, which requested guided tours during their fall reception.

The Appalachian Association Executive Committee, Camp Joy Board, and our denomination's Christian Social Action Committee also met here, as well as the Memorial Fund Trustees and Salem-Greenbrier Cemetery Association.

We had so much to be thankful for as we joined with others in the Salem Community Thanksgiving Service, happy that our chime choir could contribute to that time of grateful praise. Even the Christmas music rehearsals provided a spiritual experience, working towards harmony in a world so full of discord; so in need of song and light from church windows. *SR*

Special events in upstate NY

by William Bowyer

The Leonardsville/Brookfield, N.Y., Seventh Day Baptist Church hosted the fall meeting of the Central New York Association on October 16, 1999, at the Meeting House in Leonardsville. The Association also includes SDB churches in Adams Center and Verona, N.Y.

Eighty people accepted the invitation to be in His House, on His Day, with His people, to hear His Word and to learn what He's doing in missions. Pastor Steve James led a car caravan from Verona on this beautiful October day, and half of our participants were from there.

The day's activities began with Sabbath School and the worship service. Pastor Bill Bowyer, of the Leonardsville/Brookfield church, led the worship service, while Kirk Looper, Executive Director of the SDB Missionary Society, was the featured speaker. Dinner was served at the nearby Methodist church.

Following the meal, Pastor Bill led a "roast" for Pastor Andrew Camenga, which was enjoyed by all, with the possible exception of Pastor Andrew! (This was Andrew's last Association meeting before moving on

to his new ministry with the SDB Board of Christian Education.)

The concern for leadership at the Adams Center church has been alleviated by Pastor Gene Smith's return as interim.

After the roast, Kirk and his wife, Vivian, presented a program about SDB missions, with assistance from youthful "models" wearing native clothing.

The activities concluded with a youth program of volleyball, viewing and discussing a Dr. James Dobson video about God's will, and, of course, supper.

Another event that prompted thankfulness was held at our Meeting House on the Sabbath after Thanksgiving Day. The worship service focused on salvation and baptism, with Pastor Bill including passages on the baptism of Jesus, and stories about Philip and the Ethiopian, Paul and the jailer, and Paul and Lydia. He wanted to explain the biblical meaning of baptism to about two dozen visitors who had been invited by those being baptized. He also wanted to show church members some of the things

that are used to prepare the candidates for baptism.

At the end of the service, two of our church's most active young people—Duane Dye and James Gaff—were baptized by a privileged and thankful pastor. Afterwards, they were honored at a meal and reception at the Parish House.

In other news, two important meetings were held in October and November. Many of our church members reacted positively to those meetings, which resulted in three new Bible studies, regular meetings of the diaconate, and Pastor Bill and his wife, Gwen, deciding to accept the call to continue at the church for at least another year.

As usual, a special service of praise and thanksgiving was held on the Tuesday evening before Thanksgiving Day. It was made up of mostly music and readings by those in attendance.

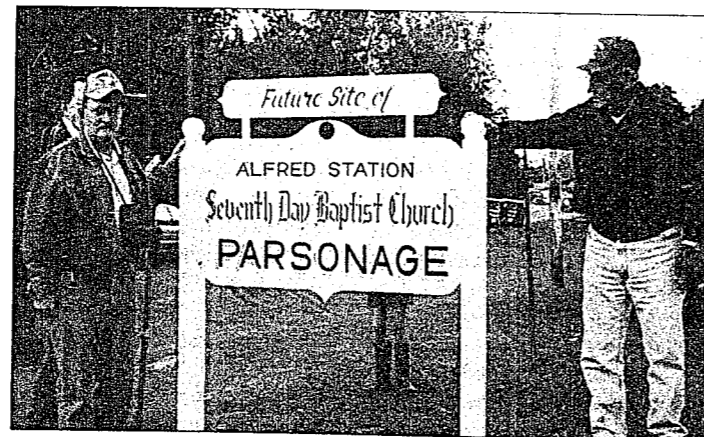
The Leonardsville/Brookfield SDB Church praises God, from Whom all blessings flow, for His answers to a variety of recent prayer requests. PTL! *SR*

New parsonage opens new CE building

A new parsonage in Alfred Station, N.Y., will open up the present parsonage to become the Christian Education Building for the SDB church next door.

The groundbreaking ceremony in the fall brought many church members and workers, ready to start the project. The Alfred Station church asks that you pray for God's blessing to be upon the work of building the body there, both physically and spiritually.

When traveling the area, you are invited to Sabbath School at 9:45 a.m. and the 11:00 worship hour. You are also invited to share with your financial support of this building endeavor to help these facilities meet the goal of spreading the Gospel. *SR*



Sign painter John Brundage (left) and Willis "Burr" Woodruff help announce the project.

New parsonage, cont.



Alfred Station church members and friends gather for the ceremonial groundbreaking.



Trustee chairperson Mary Jane Reid steadies the "Golden Shovel" at the groundbreaking.

Accessions

Battle Creek, MI
Harold King, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Laurie Luchowski

Sue Hall
 Joined after testimony
 Olive Mesick
 Stacy Saunders

Berlin, NY
Matthew Olson, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Meagan Hall

Leonardsville/Brookfield, NY
William Bowyer, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 James Gaff

Marriage

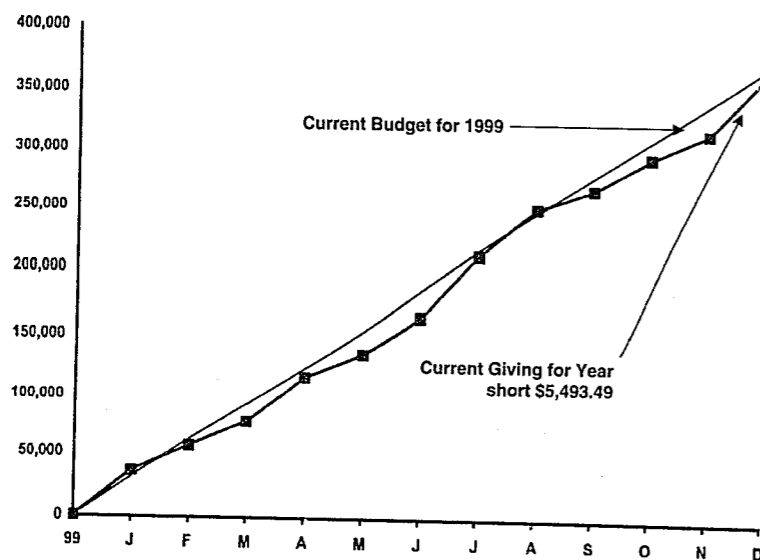
Westerberg - Green.—David Paul Westerberg and Ilean DeOrion Green were united in marriage on September 4, 1999, at Bethany Lutheran Church in Escanaba, MI, with Rev. Richard R. Hutton officiating.

Births

Williams.—A son, Jordan Troy Williams, was born to Troy and Kathy Williams of Roundrock, TX, on June 8, 1999.

Cunningham.—A son, Ean James Cunningham, was born to Don and Cathy Cunningham of Montclair, VA, on July 8, 1999.

Current Giving 1999



SR Reaction

Dearest fellow workers,
 Your December issue ("Helping Others") came at a significant time.

I am in a church position where I am asked to preach occasionally. My next sermon will be about the same subject. I have named the sermon, "God's Word on Poverty."

John Camenga and I came up with similar ideas from the same texts. It really impressed me that someone as uneducated as I am would come up with "competitive" material.

May I add one thing to the topic? Often Christians feel awkward and ashamed when accepting or soliciting charitable assistance. Here is a little encouragement for these situations:

Elijah asked for and received assistance from an impoverished widow. Christ asked a social outcast for a drink of water.

I cannot think of better examples than these.

Thank you, and please keep the great material coming.

John Bouknight
 Columbia, SC

Dear Kevin,

Excellent! Outstanding! That is the rating I give to your December SR.

Topping the articles, I thought, was "Ready or Not, Here I Come!" I also was aided by "Some Basic Guidelines" and the "Circles of My Responsibility." When I read your "Kevin's Korner," I wondered what I would have done with the hammer.

I'm sharing this issue with our SDA pastor, for during another pastorate I was in the "Ready or Not" minister's predicament, when even the then-pastor advised me not to bring an ex-prison inmate to church. Our congregation—and minister—were "not ready" for him.

Lord, help us to deal with these situations as You would have dealt with them!

Eugene Lincoln
 Hagerstown, MD

Obituaries

Van Horn.—Ruby Estella (Babcock) Van Horn, 88, died on November 20, 1999, at Meriter Park Hospital in Madison, Wis. She was born on May 10, 1911, in North Loup, Neb., the daughter of Rolla O. and Estella (Greene) Babcock. She attended schools in North Loup and Scotia, Neb., graduating from Scotia High School in 1929. Following graduation, she taught in a one-room rural school for one year. In 1930, she entered Milton (Wis.) College. After her mother's death two years later, she returned home to "keep house" for her father on the family farm, and taught at the elementary school in Scotia.

On September 11, 1934, she married Paul E. Van Horn in the family home in North Loup. They moved to Milton but spent most of their married life in Beloit, Wis. When their children were older, Ruby returned to Milton College, graduating Cum Laude in 1959 with a B.A. degree. She taught in the Clinton, Wis., school system until retiring in 1974.

While in Beloit, Ruby was active in her church and community, serving two terms on the Beloit School Board. They spent several of their retirement years in a cottage on the Wisconsin river. During this time, Ruby was active in church and community affairs in Mauston.

In 1983, they moved to the Methodist Retirement Center. Ruby and her husband served as co-editors of *The Center Post*, a publication of the Resident Association, which she headed as president for two terms. Music was always Ruby's major interest, and she played the piano for the Center's Sunday evening vespers.

In addition to her husband, Paul, survivors include two sons, Charles of Rohnert, Calif., and Richard of Aloha, Ore.; one brother, Orville Babcock of White Cloud, Mich.; nine grandchildren, seven great-grand-

children, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held on November 28, 1999, in the Meriter Health Center Auditorium, Madison.

Davis.—Edgar Keith Davis, 90, died on December 21, 1999, at Surrey Place Convalescent Center in Bradenton, Fla. He was born on November 18, 1909, in North Loup, Neb., the son of Orsen and Maude Davis. He was a graduate of Fussyville (Neb.) High School, Denver (Colo.) University, and the University of Colorado Medical School.

Dr. Davis was a charter and lifelong member of the Denver Seventh Day Baptist Church, serving on the Planning Committee, where he helped design and build their first church facility. He was also a deacon and held a number of other positions in the church.

He married Margaret Jean McCartney on May 27, 1934, in Pueblo, Colo. She served as his nurse during most of the years of his medical practice.

"Dr. Keith" worked as a carpenter and painter with his father in the construction business until he decided to return to school and become a doctor. He began practicing medicine in the small mining town of Silverton, Colo., where he was the only doctor, surgeon, obstetrician, and administrator of a 25-bed hospital.

During World War II, he served his country in the Army, and then was transferred to the Navy where he became Lieutenant Commander. He was called up again during the Korean conflict.

He eventually returned to school, specializing in anesthesiology, which he practiced until his retirement. He was a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists.

Dr. Keith served on the Commis-

sion of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference from 1947-1953, and authored the monthly stewardship "Mini Messages" shared with SDB churches across the country.

Although he moved to Florida, he never moved his membership from the Denver SDB Church. He and Margaret faithfully attended the Bradenton branch of the Daytona Beach SDB Church up until the last five months, when their deteriorating health made the trip impossible.

In addition to his wife, Margaret, a resident of Surrey Place, survivors include one son, Philip, of Bradenton; one daughter, Sheila Noon, of Half Moon Bay, Calif.; three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held in Bradenton on December 24, 1999, with Pastors Kenneth Davis and Leland Bond officiating.

Church Clerks and Pastors

Please let us know if you need more "SR Information Forms" for births, marriages, accessions, and obituaries. Our address and phone/fax numbers may be found inside the front cover. If sending obituaries from your local newspaper, please include the specific death date and date of memorial service.

You may also e-mail your church family info to us at sdbmedia@inwave.com

Baptist World Congress emphasizes justice, evangelism

by Robert O'Brien

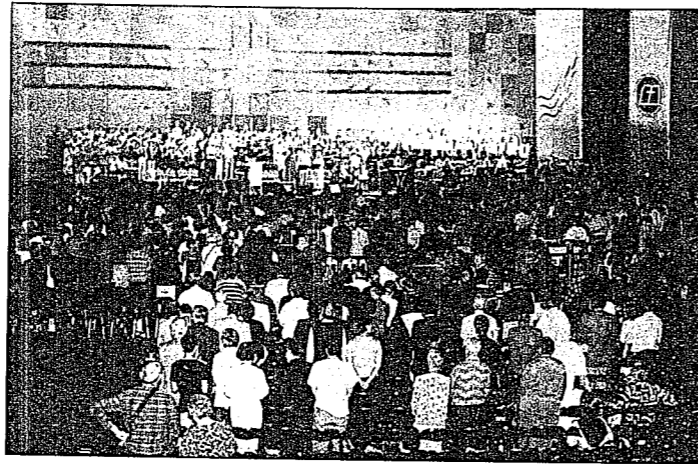
MELBOURNE, Australia (ABP)—Baptists worldwide declared a "Decade of Racial Justice" and a new emphasis on evangelism amid color and pageantry at the 18th Baptist World Congress, Jan. 5-9.

A resolution on racial justice at the gathering in Melbourne called on Baptists everywhere to seek "inter-racial and inter-ethnic harmony to achieve authentic justice for all persons without regard to race."

Congress delegates elected South Korean pastor and broadcaster Billy Kim to a five-year term as 19th president of the Baptist World Alliance. Kim, 64, is pastor of the 13,000-member Central Baptist Church in Suwon, South Korea.

Some 6,100 delegates from six continents—representing about 80 percent of the world's Baptists—examined the congress theme: "Jesus Christ Forever. Yes!" They also launched initiatives to minister to the poor and hungry, emphasize prayer and evangelism, encourage strife-torn people, and promote social justice.

Formed in 1905, the Baptist World Alliance consists of 196 member bodies, representing 43 million Baptists



Part of the over 6,000 delegates and "mass choir" assembled for worship at the Baptist World Congress in Melbourne.

in 160,000 churches. The organization holds a congress every five years.

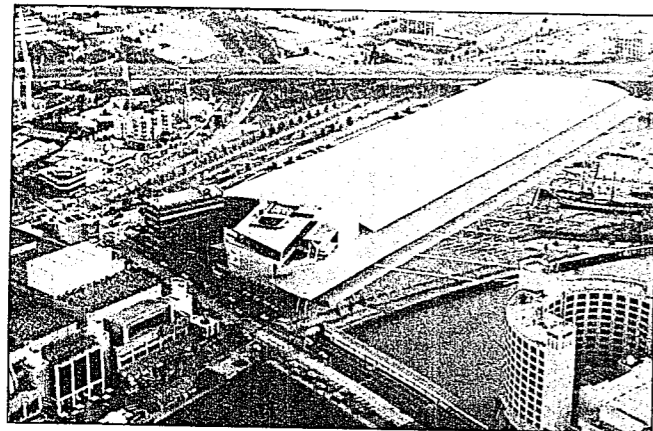
Looking toward the 100th anniversary of the BWA, General Secretary Denton Lotz urged a 21st Century Committee to "examine achievements of the past, the present success and future possibilities" of the BWA.

That committee will bring recommendations for changes and emphases to the Centennial Baptist World Congress in England in 2005.

The congress marked the first ma-

in 160,000 churches. The organization holds a congress every five years. Looking toward the 100th anniversary of the BWA, General Secretary Denton Lotz urged a 21st Century Committee to "examine achievements of the past, the present success and future possibilities" of the BWA.

That committee will bring recommendations for changes and emphases to the Centennial Baptist World Congress in England in 2005. The congress marked the first major international church assembly in the year 2000. The gathering is usually held in July but this time met in January to take advantage of the Australian summer. Baptists of all stripes found unity in worship, fellowship, and colorful pageantry throughout the congress. The pageantry ranged from an opening parade of flags and dramatization by Australian aborigines to an International Festival of music, movement, food, and testimony outside the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. SR



Site of the Congress: Melbourne's huge Exhibition Centre. Photo taken by Editor Butler from the observation deck of the Rialto Towers, the highest office building in the Southern Hemisphere.



SDBs at their Congress booth. Seated: Kevin Butler and Dorothy d'Alpuget. Standing (l. to r.): Janet Butler, Susanne and Andrew Goulding, Sandy and Glenn Wagner.

KEVIN'S

CORNER

Ah, Australia...

Janet and I could "talk your ears off" about places and plane rides, show you pictures and postcards (and a suitcase full of souvenirs and mementos), compare prices and phrases—but what impressed us the most had to be the people.

At the Baptist World Congress in Melbourne, we saw fellow Baptists opening their homes and lives to all kinds of "foreigners."

Like a young Melbourne couple we met, originally from Malaysia, inviting us out to a late Chinese dinner following an evening service. I asked jokingly as we walked to their car, "Do you usually pick up strangers like this?" They smiled and came right back with, "Do you usually go out with strangers like this?"

We had an instant bond being Baptist. But it went beyond that. They knew what it was like being newcomers in a strange land. And as Christians, they knew the Golden Rule of doing unto others. We look forward to future correspondence with T.K. and Angie.

Arriving in Sydney for week number two, we found the same openness and love. And passion. SDBs in the Sydney area, along with those visiting from Brisbane,

have a powerful passion to learn more of our heritage, to grow in their faith and witness, and to pass on our legacy to the next generations.

I could sense their feeling of isolation from our Conference in North America and the frustration of having to pay so much for items to be shipped from here.

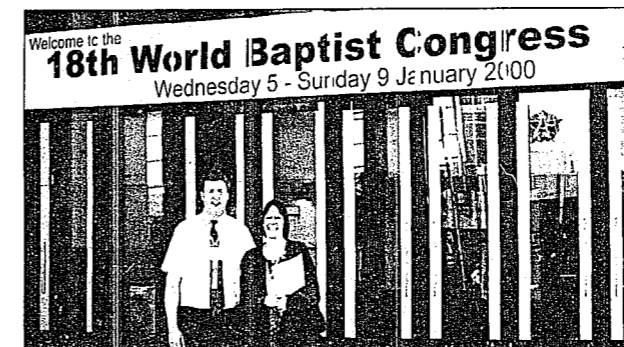
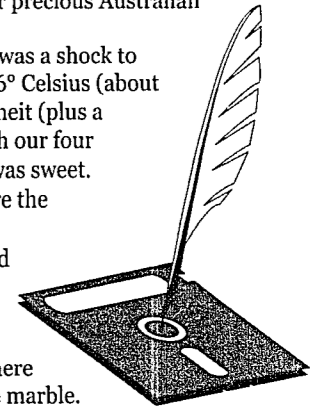
One thing they suggested: to get more of our materials (even the larger books) scanned and placed on CDs for their dissemination overseas. Anybody out there able to help with that request?

We dearly thank all those who made our trip possible. We will carry our precious Australian memories always.

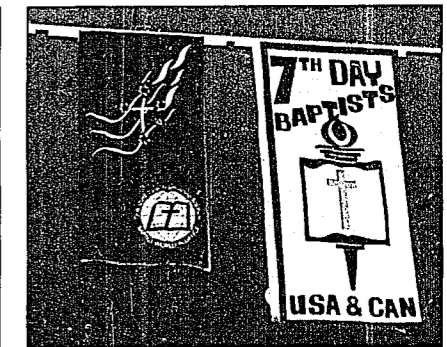
As we headed home, it was a shock to our systems going from 26° Celsius (about 79° F) back to 26° Fahrenheit (plus a wind chill). Reuniting with our four "blondies" at the airport was sweet.

And keeping us warm were the friendships and bonds of brotherly love we nurtured Down Under.

God's people are God's people—brothers and sisters—no matter where you travel on this big blue marble.



Kevin and Janet Butler, delegates from "the States."



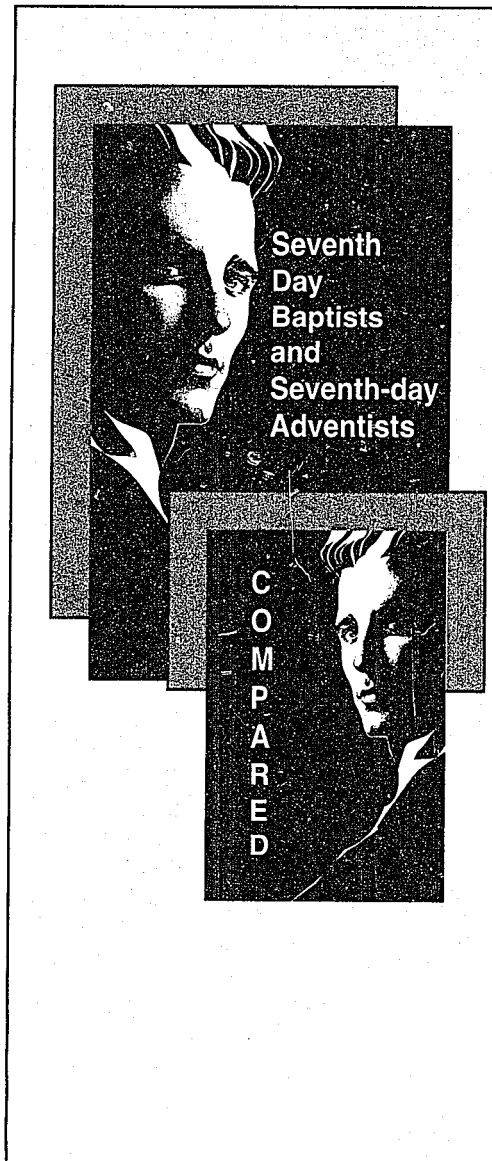
Our Conference banner at the Congress.



Sabbath eve get-together in Sydney (l. to r.): Susanne and Andrew Goulding (with daughters Rebecca and Jessica in front), hosts Terry and Suzanne Rudd, Dorothea Shettel, Marianne Kube with daughter Renaissance, and Gabriel Alegre with fiancée Elisabeth.

SDBs gathered for Sabbath morning worship outside the Centre in Melbourne.

Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices



Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists Compared

Many people confuse Seventh Day Baptists with the much larger, but also much younger, Seventh-day Adventists. While there is agreement in some areas, there are considerable historical and theological differences.

This newly-revised tract lists both agreements and areas of difference between the two denominations. Differences included: Biblical interpretations of prophecy, ceremonial laws, tithing, the state of the dead, and blessing of the Sabbath; church government; the "Investigative Judgment" and end-time theology; ecumenical relations; and an individual's Spirit-led freedom of thought.

2 color, 8 1/2 x 11 tri-fold.

Price is 10¢ each; contact us for shipping costs of larger quantities.

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