

The **S**abbath **R**ecorder
News for and about
Seventh Day Baptists
December 2001



*Celebrating
The
Incarnation*



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

The Sabbath Recorder

Establ. 1844

December 2001
Volume 223, No. 12
Whole No. 6,868

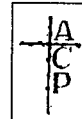


A Seventh Day Baptist publication

The Sabbath Recorder (ISSN 0036-214X) (USPS 474460) is published monthly (combined July & August) by the SDB General Conference's Tract and Communication Council, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678. This publication is distributed at no cost to members and friends of Seventh Day Baptist churches and is made possible by donations from its readers. Printed in Canada. Periodicals postage paid at Janesville, WI, and additional offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Sabbath Recorder*, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678

This is the 157th year of publication for *The Sabbath Recorder*. First issue published, June 13, 1844. Member of the Associated Church Press. The Sabbath Recorder does not necessarily endorse signed articles.



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Stained
Glass
auditions

The SDB summer touring group is accepting audition tapes for a lead guitarist (no singing necessary). For an application, please contact Dede Mackintosh at (949) 721-5762 or Dedemack@netscape.net

Scripture Memorization corrections for 2001

Two names from the Daytona Beach, Fla., church were omitted from the list printed in October: June Kenyon and Clara Thompson. Alan Crouch's name should not have been included.



Are you wondering what to do next summer?
Are you wanting to serve God?

In the **Summer Christian Service Corps** you can serve God and get acquainted with some of our fantastic youth. See what it's like to commit yourself to a challenging experience.

For applications, contact:
Linda Camenga, 209 First Ave.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: (386) 255-4743
SCSC@sdbwboard.org

Application Deadlines:
Team members—Jan. 15
Churches—Feb. 1

Corps member training: June 21-28
Director training: June 19-24
Project dates: June 28-July 29

Celebrating the Incarnation

by Doreen Sanford Davis

Foreword:

Every Christmas since 1959, Carlton E. Mouse, the Sanford family historian, pens an epistle to the masses. While the exact identity of the "mouth behind the mouse" remains a mystery, it is no secret that the letters (first called "The Parsonage Mouse" and later "The College Street Mouse") have always been popular with kith and kin. Over the years, Carlton has detailed the life and times of the Sanford clan, as told by a discreet mouse in the house. I am very grateful to Carlton, who so lovingly chronicled my life. Thanks Mom! (Oops; the secret is out.)

A personal and profound season

God teaches us to know and love Him through His Incarnation, Jesus. The season in which the Christian Church traditionally celebrates the Incarnation has become a deeply personal and profoundly spiritual time for me.

Each December, "Let every heart prepare Him room" becomes my daily theme. I proactively choose activities or studies which help me understand this most incredible act of love and sacrifice our Savior made when He left heavenly glory to become a man.

It's about Jesus

For as long as I can remember, Christmas was about Jesus. I always knew in my heart of hearts Who was the "Star of Bethlehem" amidst presents and parties and pageants. In the 1960 edition of *The Parsonage Mouse*, I found the following account:

Little Doreen Michele... our almost three-year-old, is the delight of our lives.... This year's Christmas holds much more meaning for her. She loves to look at the manger scene crèche which the family put out again. She kept putting her own little dolly in the stable along with Mary, Joseph, the baby, the



"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

(Philippians 2:5-8)

words like you mean them! This is the *Messiah* you are singing about, not the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker."

The words "Bernie" was so impassioned about were from the movement, For Unto Us a Child Is Born: "And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This time I knew what it had to do with the Baby Jesus.

A turning point

The turning point in my relationship with the Incarnate Christ occurred during my junior year at the

shepherds, and the wise men. Each time her mommy took it out, Doreen would become indignant and put it back. Finally she said, "No, Mommy; that's for Baby Jesus to play with. I want it for Him!" She's to be an angel in the Sabbath School Christmas program this year. All have their fingers crossed in the hopes that she will be angelic, as well as look angelic.

A growing faith

Eventually, my love for the "little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay" grew into a personal saving faith in the wounded, dying, and risen Christ who not only took away the sins of the world, but took away my sins as well. Naturally, the traditional music,

He threw his baton in the air and exclaimed, "Sing the words like you mean them! This is the *Messiah* you are singing about, not the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker."

The facts of Christ's birth

That year marked the beginning of my Christmas pageant theatrical career. Whether it was typesetting or because I was such an enthusiastic singer, my parts seemed to gravitate to angels or one of the heavenly hosts—although I did play the part of Mary once.

I soaked in the facts surrounding Christ's miraculous birth as the drama unfolded around me each year. I understood as much as my little heart could, although I do remember reciting Isaiah 9:6b: "...and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" and thinking, What does that have to do with the Baby Jesus?

pageantry, and festivities became more meaningful to me as I grew in my faith.

Each fall while I was in high school, my dad and I would climb the hill to Milton (Wis.) College and walk over to the Deland Performing Arts building to practice with the Milton Choral Union for a Christmas performance. Once, during a rehearsal of Handel's *Messiah*, Dr. Bernhardt Westlund threw his baton in the air and exclaimed, "Sing the

University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire.

The week before Christmas break, the faculty advisor of our Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship led a Bible Study on Philippians 2:1-17. As he announced the study text, I remember thinking, *This is odd. Shouldn't he be reading something from Luke, or Isaiah or something? After all, it is Christmas...*

But I obediently turned to the familiar text and, suddenly, the Incar-

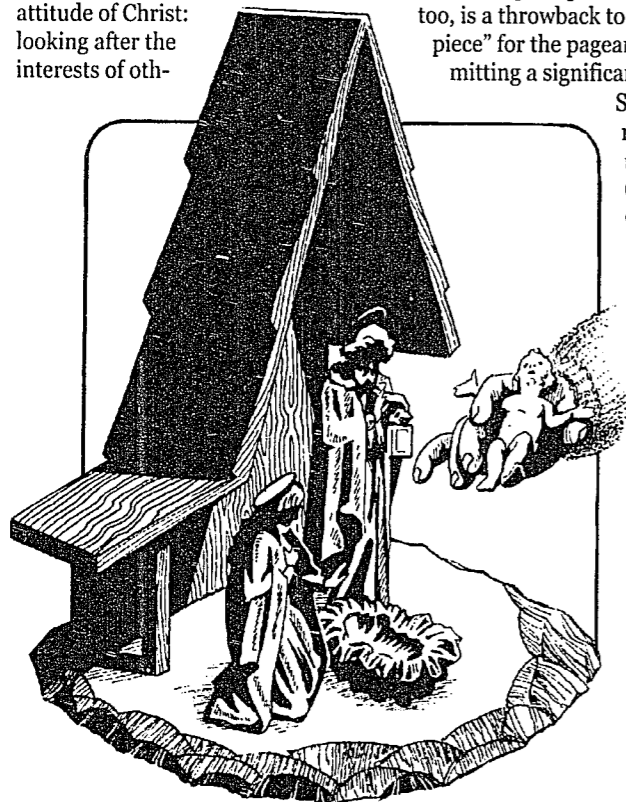
nate God was staring me in the face as He never had before.

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:5-8).

...but now I see

I was overwhelmed at the enormity of Jesus' sacrifice, which began not in Gethsemane leading to Calvary, but in Nazareth leading to Bethlehem.

After I removed the proverbial "two-by-four" from my cranium, I was able to hear the rest of that quiet professor's study. That passage from Philippians talks about what happens when we take on the attitude of Christ: looking after the interests of oth-



ers, not complaining or arguing but being shining stars in a depraved world, etc.—practical advice for all families during the holidays.

Traditions old and new

In the 20 years since this personal "epiphany," I have continued to celebrate the Incarnation in the many traditions of our culture, using vari-

ous springboards into a deeper relationship with Jesus, God with me. Sometimes it's a good children's book, like Max Lucado's *The Crippled Lamb*, or a historical novel like Marjorie Holmes' *Two From Galilee*; pleasurable reading that refreshes my outlook.

it to a close friend as a gift. Another year, the kids in my youth Sabbath School divided the first three chapters of Luke into manageable passages and recited the whole story to the congregation. Some years, I simply add another "life verse" to my "catalogue."

I also collect good fiction, stories, or poetry to read during the season.

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In addition to the usual music and festivities, I have established a few traditions of my own. My favorite is memorizing Scripture. Perhaps this, too, is a throwback to "learning my piece" for the pageant. But committing a significant portion of

Scripture to memory is often part of my Christmas celebration.

One year, I memorized an entire chapter of Romans and recited

This is the time to share

While I find the Incarnation a deeply spiritual and personal subject, I also find that it is most easily shared during the holiday season. The door is already open, so we can witness to others with wild abandon about Who that baby "away in the manger" really was, and what He can do right now to bring them peace, and joy, and everlasting life.

So how will Jesus become more real in the Davis household this year? Since our son is almost three years old, I will leave my collectable white porcelain nativity scene in the box, put out our resin-cast (nonbreakable) set, and leave plenty of room around the Baby Jesus for toy trucks and dinosaurs. Relationships begin early. **SR**

Doreen and David Davis are members of the Seattle (Wash.) Area Seventh Day Baptist Church, and serve as co-chairs of the Tract Council's Sabbath Recorder Committee.

Building family Advent memories

by Susie Fox



Why a family advent?

Our Family Advent got started about ten years ago just after our fourth child was born. I had reached

oling, entertaining, and more—and the reality of life with a family of four boys ages 8, 6, 3, and new baby! And so, I began to think about what I re-

I had reached a pinnacle of frustration realizing the huge gap between "the perfect Christmas"—decorations, baking, exchanging gifts and cards, special crafts, caroling, entertaining, and more—and the reality of life with a family of four young boys.

a pinnacle of frustration realizing the huge gap between "the perfect Christmas"—decorations, baking, exchanging gifts and cards, special crafts, car-

olly wanted the Christmas season to be like.

At the same time, I ran across a magazine article titled "A Little Bit

of Christmas Every Day" by Linda Blackerby (*Moody Monthly*, November 1987) which I had saved a few years before. The author shared how using a family Advent calendar helped them pace their December

We made a big banner with a collage of different size pockets, and numbered the pockets with glue and glitter.

activities and build family traditions while helping them focus on the Incarnation as well.

"Before" and "after"

What caught my attention was her "before" description of a compulsive, guilt-ridden, frantic pace



to get everything done (and done right) until she collapsed in exhaustion once Christmas was over.

I felt like that!

Then she shared the "after" description of daily Christ-centered activities throughout the month of December—involving the whole family—that seemed to energize and result in happy memories. *I wanted to feel like that!*

A new tradition begins

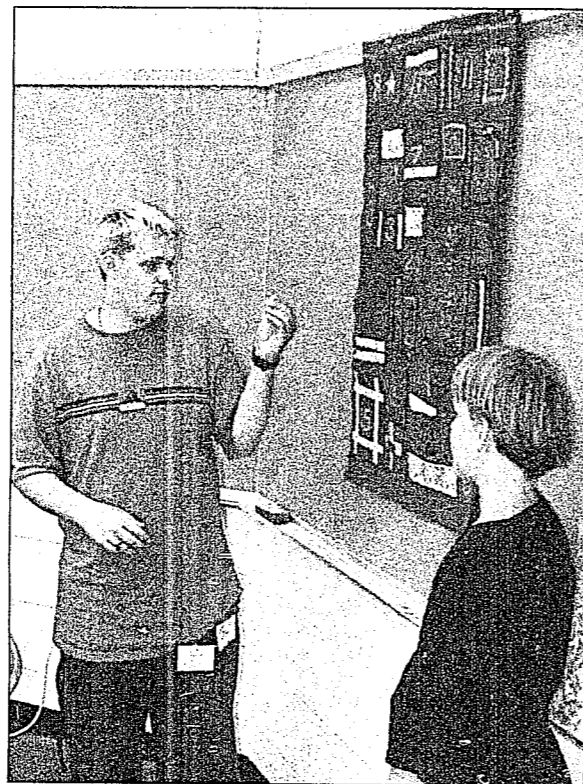
And the rest, as they say, is history. That year, over Thanksgiving, we made a big banner with a collage

of different size pockets, and numbered the pockets with glue and glitter. Then we decorated the banner with extra glitter and trimmings and hung it in a prominent place.

Each evening starting December 1, our whole family got together and did whatever activity was in the pocket for that day. Part of the excitement was taking turns and being the one to get what was in the pocket for that night.

What's in today's pocket?

I had planned activities that we would probably do anyway if we had enough time, but might not take the time to do if we got too busy. Some nights we just had candy or a treat; most nights included a prayer by one or more members of the family.



David and Jamie Fox displayed their collage of "Advent pockets" at the Conference workshop.

Variations on Advent

Instead of an Advent Banner, try one of these:

- Envelopes with numbers written on outside
- Small packages for each day
- Paper chain with message written on the paper link—add or take away one link each day
- Repeat a poem or scripture divided into 24 parts—add a new phrase each day
- Family scrapbook to look at and add to
- Large candle that you burn a little each night
- Nativity with 24 objects, adding one each night
- Advent Calendar with windows to open daily

Instead of just writing the daily message on a piece of paper, try one of these:

- Write a short poem—corny is OK!
- Write the clues on wrapping paper
- Hide bigger object behind a picture, under couches, infrequently used drawers with a clue where to find it
- Write on the back of old Christmas cards
- Putting the clue in a sealed envelope adds to the "suspense"
- Send a clue to your family in the mail

It worked! Teaching and memory building were taking place. It gave us a forum for explaining the Incarnation and how it fits in with all the other traditions and cultural activities that are included in the Christmas season.

Go with what works

We learned that some things work better than others. Twenty minutes is too long to keep the whole family together; ten minutes is about right. Not every night was a success, but more of them were successful than not.

Each year we repeated some favorites and added some new ones. When we missed a night, we either skipped it or did two pockets the next night. If someone was away, we still did it

with those who were home. As the older children were less interested, we enlisted their help to "do it for

The important thing is to have a regular mechanism for daily activities. The Greenes have a tradition

The important thing is to have a regular mechanism for daily activities.

the younger ones" in helping prepare as well as cooperate.

Other ideas?

Using a banner with pockets is just one idea. You can get the same results using a variety of ways to structure your family activities (*see box above of "Variations"*).

based on a story they read several years ago. Each person puts a piece of straw in the manger which represents anonymous good deeds they do for someone else throughout the month of December.

Weekly vs. daily

Someone asked during the Confer-

He turned the world upside down



Celebrating Family Advent has developed several family traditions, and has been a wonderful teaching opportunity, giving us many fun family times.



ence workshop if the same benefits could be realized from having a weekly service using the traditional Advent wreath of five candles.

Both families agreed that although a weekly service can be meaningful, having a more frequent reminder and a way to pace our activities *daily* makes it especially helpful for us.

Where to find information

So what are some examples of activities and where can you get information and ideas? That was the rest of the workshop.

Be sure to use the Bible itself with the story of Jesus' birth and all the events surrounding it. I've used stories and worksheets from old Sab-

Handouts from the Family Advent Workshop, including additional ideas for Family Advent, are available on request. Contact:
Susie Fox
 1722 Taylor Station Rd.
 Blacklick, OH 43004
 or
 i-m-dfox@prodigy.net

bath School materials which are often available as samples from the bookstores after Christmas.

The library is an excellent source of information, although many of the best Christmas books are hard to find during December so you have to think ahead. After-Christmas sales are a great source for picking up new items to pack away for the next year.

From ornaments to internet

In the early years, I would try to pick up a new book and box of ornaments for the next year. Ornaments can be used by having each person share a favorite memory, thought, or prayer request as the ornament is hung on the tree.

The internet opens a wide variety of new sources of information. A search on "Advent" will give you addresses of several on-line Advent calendars filled with activities and information on Christmas traditions around the world. I recently ordered some frankincense and myrrh over the in-

ternet (www.frank-incense.com).

Some of the best sources, however, are your own memories and things you were going to do anyway.

Focusing on God's great plan

Looking back over the past decade, celebrating Family Advent has developed several family traditions, and has been a wonderful teaching opportunity, giving us many fun family times. For our family, spreading the Christmas celebration across the month of December helps us to focus on the story of Jesus' birth as part of God's great plan.

And remember the Greene family story. It ends the same way: *"...Everyone who saw the baby proclaimed his holy name..." "... they rejoiced in the news that Christ the Savior is born!"* **SR**

Susie and Dean Fox are members of the First SDB Church of Columbus, Ohio.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six-year-old.

For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's "Winter Pageant." I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production.

Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation and that all parents who couldn't come that evening were welcome to sit in on the rehearsal. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

The morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor, and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly scampering to find seats. Then each class, accompanied by their teacher, entered the room and sat cross-legged on the floor. And one by one, each group rose to perform their songs.

Because the public school system had long since stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn't

expect anything other than light commercial entertainment—songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes, and good cheer. So, when my son's class rose to sing "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads. Those

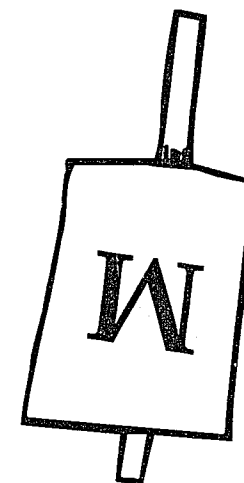
in the front row held up large letters, raising them at the appropriate point in the song to spell out the title.

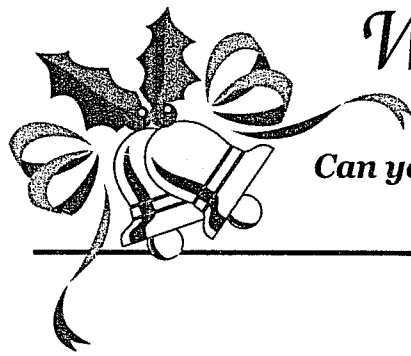
The performance was going smoothly until we noticed that a small, quiet girl in the front row was holding the letter M upside down—totally unaware it appeared as a W. The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her W. The teachers tried to shush the children, but the laughter continued—until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together.

A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood—the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos there was a purpose for our festivities. For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear: CHRIST WAS LOVE.

I believe He still is. **SR**

An unattributed story of the season from the internet.





White Christmas 2001

Can you help our Missionary Society's outreach?

•Bicycles for both the women in leadership and the pastors in most of our countries. These bicycles will cost from \$200 to \$400 depending upon the country. Countries included are: The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda.

•Medical supplies and medicines are needed for Rwanda, Malawi, The Gambia, the Philippines, and Cameroon.

•School supplies, books and equipment for The Gambia, India, Malawi, and the Philippines.

•Funds to purchase uniforms for the ladies in Malawi and South Africa.

•Funds to purchase uniforms for children attending school in Rwanda, The Gambia, Haiti, and Malawi.

•Sewing supplies and material for Malawi, The Gambia, Ghana, Rwanda, and Nigeria.

•Money to purchase blankets for the refugees and camps in Rwanda and the hospitals in Malawi.

•Bibles and study materials, including *The Helping Hand*, for our sister Conferences and churches.

•Children's Bibles in The Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

•Church roofs in Rwanda, Malawi, and the Philippines.

•Funds to help ship boxes of clothing and supplies to different countries. This is expensive and is often done by the Missionary Society, but lately some churches have gathered children's and baby clothing and shipped directly from their local church. The church group usually pays for shipping but sometimes requests for help are sent to the Missionary Society office.

•Leadership materials and supplies for most of the sister Conferences and churches.

•Keyboards for many churches in our sister Conferences. These will cost between \$400 and \$800.

•Hymnals for the churches in Guyana and Rwanda.

•Funds to support the literature used in outreach in all of our sister Conferences and churches.

•Computers and printers. These will need to be purchased in the country where they are to be used. The amount of duty taxes are so great that you end up paying almost as much

as it costs there anyway. Also, repairs and upgrades are available locally when you purchase in the country. Need five.

•Photocopiers for our churches. Advice, same as the computer. Need over eight.

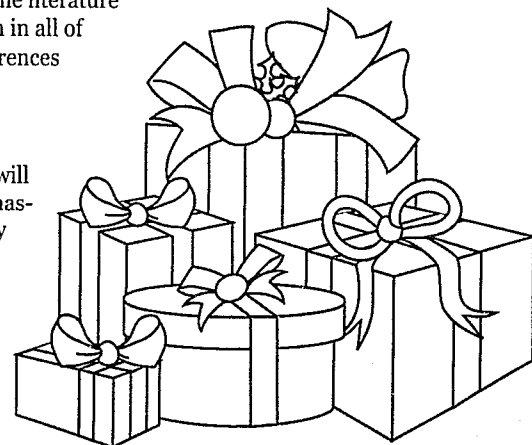
•Scholarships for Makapwa Bible School (Malawi). \$500 per semester.

•Funds for building plots and roofs in Rwanda. \$200 to \$500. Still need five.

Please send your gifts or questions to the:

SDB Missionary Society
119 Main Street
Westerly RI 02891

(401) 596-4326
sdbmissoc@edgenet.net



Women's Society page by Laura Price

Getting back on the saddle

I asked someone where they wanted to be spiritually and where they thought they were now. They in turn asked me the same question. So here is my response...

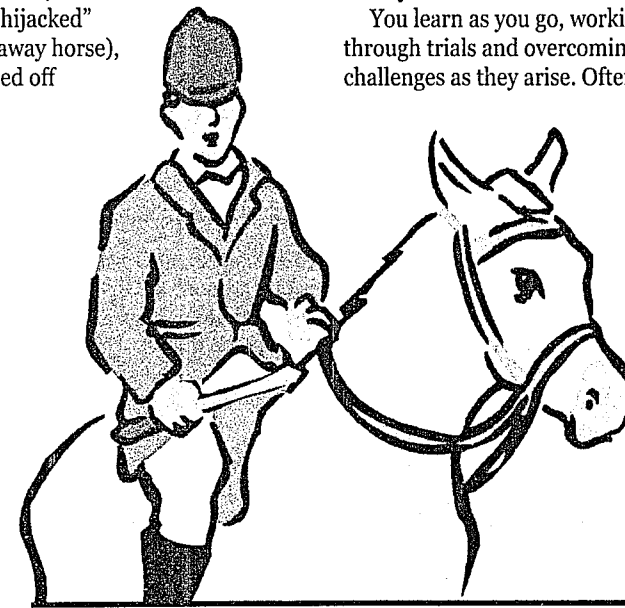
Hey, I'm working on it! Actually, I think I'm doing pretty good right now. I suffer occasional setbacks, but that's part of the greater scheme, right? Aiming for the "higher plane," or whatever you want to call it.

To become a master equestrian you're bound to be kicked, stepped on, knocked down, run over, bitten, dragged, pawed, squashed, thrown off, "hijacked" (runaway horse), rubbed off

(by a tree or some other handy object), or refused (to be obeyed) at some point. Maybe you've already had the privilege of experiencing all of the above!

But the important thing is to "get right back on" and correct the problem. And the sooner the better, both for the horse and handler. The horse has to learn manners, and the handler has to learn how to handle the horse correctly. Otherwise, problems will persist or even worsen, resulting in a fearful, incompetent horseman, and a spoiled horse that could be dangerous to both the rider and bystanders.

You learn as you go, working through trials and overcoming new challenges as they arise. Often, you



The important thing is to "get right back on" and correct the problem.

can figure things out for yourself, but sometimes it's necessary to ask for help from those who are more experienced.

Read. Research. Compare advice and ideas to see if they make sense. Once you find sound ideas, test them and try them for yourself. Then you'll know if you've found a solution that works for the right purpose.

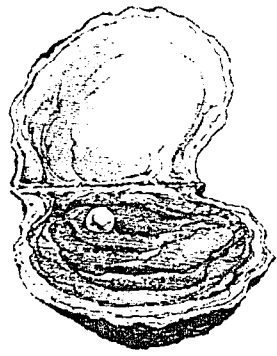
If you do some studying before running into problems, you'll be better equipped for dealing with them. Timing is an important part of correcting an unfavorable action, particularly if you don't want that action to become a bad habit. Once it does, it's all the more difficult to correct. It is much more expedient to deal with problems as soon as they appear.

If you try to ignore trouble or take the wrong action (delaying, for instance), your problems will only get worse. But if you take the time to think things out, and move as quickly as possible once you have a plan, the situation will quickly improve. The relationship between horse and rider becomes a joy.

Thanks to various horses and ponies, I have experienced it all, from being kicked to dealing with simple disobedience. The blows were none too comfortable at the time, but they pale in comparison to the overall good I've experienced.

I am not a master equestrian; but I'm a good one. I've developed good balance, and I'm comfortable around horses. I respect them and I know about their behavior, care, and training. Yes, I'm no expert, but I'm not a novice. I have grown over the years,

cont. on page 26



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

Event more important than the date

"What you worship as something unknown, I proclaim unto you" (Acts 17:23).

When Paul visited the Athenians, he observed that the people were very religious, but they did not know the object of their worship.

This indictment of the Athenians could be made of many today. Beginning in October, I have received countless catalogs of Christmas cards and stationery. Not one of them conveys any mention of the "Reason for the Season."

An editorial entitled "Christmas - Festivals" appeared in the December 23, 1852, *Sabbath Recorder*. Its author, Rev. Thomas B. Brown, pointed out the dilemma that Christians have faced for many years: the pagan adaptation of a Christian event. Brown wrote:

Many thousands of people are under the impression that the twenty-fifth day of December is the veritable anniversary of the birth of Christ. We shall not go into any discussion of this question, as we consider it to be of no importance. The fact itself, that "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," is very important to be believed; for "every spirit that confesses not that Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God."

The Scriptures, accordingly, set forth this fact with much circumstantiality. All those particulars of his miraculous conception and birth, which, taken in connection with his subsequent history, go to prove that the fullness of the Godhead had become embodied in human form, are

presented with a minuteness of detail sufficient to satisfy the faith of every humble inquirer.

But of the *time* when this wonder of wonders—the manifestation of God in the flesh—began first to be displayed, the Scriptures say nothing, save that it was some time during the reign of Caesar Augustus, and while Herod was king of Judea. This is, to our mind, sufficient proof that an annual recognition of the time by his people does not devolve upon them with any obligation.

Not an annual recognition of the time, but an habitual recognition of the fact, of Christ's incarnation, is the

It was contrary to the genius of Christianity to institute festivals. History establishes no fact more striking than that of the continued proneness of men to make their religion consist of devout observance of times and seasons.... Give men, whether Jew or Gentiles, a system of religion which embraces a great number of such observances and they very soon show their disposition to rest on them, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. It was no unnecessary alarm, therefore, that the Apostle to the Gentiles felt, when he saw the Galatians turning

All those particulars of his miraculous conception and birth are presented with a minuteness of detail sufficient to satisfy the faith of every humble inquirer.

great duty which devolves upon believers; for the Christian life is sustained, not by the devout contemplation of these facts in which our redemption stands.

Accordingly, Christianity presents us with no festivals. It recognizes the existence of the weekly Sabbath, it is true—a festival which celebrates the creation of the world—but it does not originate the observance of it, nor of any thing having a resemblance to it.

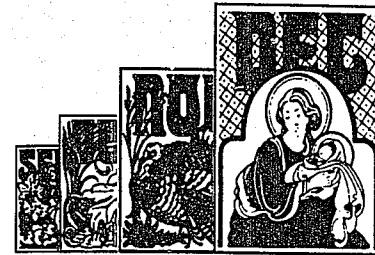
Should it be said that the Eucharist is a festival, because it commemorates the Lord's death, we reply it is not strictly a festival, because no specified time is set for the celebration of it. It may be attended to at any time. Whereas festivals always imply set times for their observance.

to such observances; and no unnecessary admonition to the Colossians, that they should beware of incurring censure on this score (Gal. 4:10-11; Col. 2:16).

What then is Christmas, what is Easter, what is Good Friday, and a host of other festivals which have long been more or less honored in the Christian Church, but so many encumbrances by which the power of the Christian System to promote the life of God in the soul is hindered, not to say destroyed? Such we sincerely regard them.

Christianity is simply a scheme for rendering sinners just before God. And as this justification is accomplished—not by the works of the sinner, but solely and wholly by the

cont. on page 26



SR Almanac

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

One year ago—December 2000

This month's issue is a 24-page, full-color glossy called, "Journey of a Lifetime." Author Jeanne Yurke presents our Seventh Day Baptist beliefs in an allegorical form, accompanied by a beautiful layout designed by Pat Cruzan.

Special thanks go to the Raritan Valley, N.J., SDB Church, for their donations and for taking on the project. Thanks also to Kevin Butler, Ben Cruzan, Leanne Lippincott, and SR Committee Chairs Dave and Doreen Davis for their valuable input toward the "Journey." We appreciate the Tract Council's vision to offer this publication at no charge to our churches.

Five years ago—December 1996

Reprints from a 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" page notes the 325th anniversary of the first SDB church in America.

Pastor "Jus Start," on the 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.

10 years ago—December 1991

Authors share about mixed-race or foreign adoptions. Writers include Glen and Nancy Warner, Eddie Henry, Shelley Warner, and Jane Mackintosh.

Rod Henry's Sabbath study looks at "Sunday" in the New Testament.

President Mynor Soper reflects on his first major church visitation trip of the Conference year.

Sabbath School Teacher of the Year profiled: Ruth Bennett from Battle Creek, Mich.

Another SDB health camp held in Andhra Pradesh, India.

Central Maryland SDB Church celebrates a "Religious Liberty" Sabbath.

25 years ago—December 1976

Fair booth ministries are hosted by the Battle Creek, Mich.; Little Rock, Ark.; and North Jersey churches.

Ernest K. Bee Jr., moderator of the Washington, D.C., church, is elected chairman of the North American Baptist Fellowship for 1977.

Ohio SDB Fellowship becomes the First SDB Church of Columbus.

U.S. Supreme Court rules that "employers may not fire or refuse to hire persons whose religious beliefs require them to refrain from working on Saturdays." The case stemmed from the firing of a sabbatarian in Kentucky.

"10 in 10" announces ten churches that reached their annual Our World Mission giving goal in ten months.

50 years ago—December 1951

Salem (W.Va.) College receives private library of 1,800 volumes from the estate of Dr. Joseph Rosier, former U.S. Senator and former president of Fairmont (W.Va.) State College.

North Central Association met in Milton, Wis., in October with Leland Shaw presiding.

Rev. Paul Maxson announces that the Schenectady, N.Y., mission has organized a Friday night prayer meeting and Bible study.

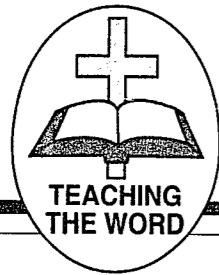
General Conference's Commission and Planning Committee to meet in Plainfield, N.J., at the end of the month.

Salem College President K. Duane Hurley is injured in a car accident in Charleston, W.Va. "Friends throughout the denomination will want to shower him with greetings and messages."

...where are we headed?

Pray for—

- the positive impact of SDB literature
- your pastor and family
- preparations for Conference's bicentennial
- religious liberty worldwide
- the support of our boards and agencies
- a strong Sabbath School program
- a blessed celebration of Jesus' incarnation



2001 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year

We can see the pain in the faces of adults and children, "I don't want to sit through another boring Sabbath School class!"

For better or worse, Sabbath School can be a boring, unenlightening time.

Yet, Sabbath School can also be a time that encourages Christians, providing a deeper understanding of Scripture and a better relationship with classmates.

Sabbath School should be an important part of the life of the church.

The local church has a lot to do with the success or failure of the Sabbath School program. The church can indicate that the Sabbath School is important, or the church can show that Sabbath School is just something to promote boredom and suffering.

A congregation can indicate the relative lack of importance of teachers by taking the first volunteer available—or always waiting until the last minute before looking for new teachers—or it can try to continually recruit and train teachers and make sure that good transitions take place.

The Board of Christian Education considers the Sabbath School an important part of the life of the local congregation. We want to encourage you to carefully consider the role of the Sabbath School in your church's overall ministry—which means that you look at curricula, teachers, training, students, and the time given to the Sabbath School program.

One way that we promote the importance of Sabbath School is with our Crystal Apple Award. This award recognizes an individual that we choose as the Sabbath School Teacher of the Year. This person exhibits the qualities of faith and teaching demonstrated by our Lord.

The Sabbath School Teacher of the Year for 2001 is Judy Parrish. Her students report that she demonstrates an understanding of the Bible as the final authority for matters of faith and practice; she works to bring out God-given abilities in others; and helps the students recognize Christ and His teachings.

Judy's example extends beyond the Sabbath School class. Serving Christ through the Battle Creek, Mich., Seventh Day Baptist Church, she has functioned as moderator, mentor, pianist, children's division superintendent, and church librarian.

Information from the nomination we received makes it clear that Judy's students enjoy attending Sabbath



Judy Parrish (right) receives the 2001 Crystal Apple Award from Pastor Harold King.

School. They view it as part of their walk with God and an opportunity to learn more about His will for their lives.

We have no proof that any of her students have ever said, "I can't wait to get to Sabbath School." However, it is easy to imagine that many in her Helping Hand class look forward to the weekly lessons.

Has your church made Sabbath School a priority? Have you? If you think that Sabbath School can shape the life of the church in a positive way and think that your program is not doing that, reconsider your approach. Consider what God is asking you and be ready to make changes.

If your church has a great Sabbath School program or a spectacular teacher, consider nominating someone for the Crystal Apple award. We want to hear the cry and see the face that says, "I'm glad I'm headed for Sabbath School! I'll leave knowing more about God and His people. I'll leave more able to show His light in the world around me." SR



On Sabbath Day, October 6, 2001, the Outreach Bible Church Baptists of the Seventh Day in Portage, Wis., held a double dedication.

The day began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the unveiling of a new street sign. The sign designates the driveway to the church as "Keith Way," in memory of founding pastor Keith Julson. He died in December of 1998. His widow, Darcy, and their three children and two grandchildren were among those attending the event.

With 80 people present, Pastor Daron Smalley led the worship service full of music and praise. The building dedication followed, with dismissal by Pastor Leroy Bass. Attendees then gathered in the new Fellowship Hall to enjoy a special meal prepared by the church's women.

The Portage group formed in the early 1990s with the help of a Missionary Society-sponsored outreach project. In 1993, the church was organized as a branch of the Albion,

Wis., SDB Church. Four years later, the Outreach Bible Church (OBC) was officially recognized as a member of the SDB General Conference.

The church became quite visible in the Portage area, sponsoring a booth at the Columbia County fair with the help of Christian clown Jim Fetrow, a.k.a. "Harry the Hobo."

For several years, the group met in the Zona Gale Center

for the Arts in Portage. From those rented quarters, the OBC sponsored outreach activities into the community. These included youth programs, Christian concerts (some featuring the SDB musical

Pastor Smalley reports that several people who live near the church have begun attending.

group, Stained Glass), and several evangelistic meetings.

This new church has had its share of difficult times, including the sudden death of Pastor Keith. However, the group remained faithful, and Brother Daron Smalley was called as pastor. Under his leadership, the church has continued to grow and reach out into the community with the Gospel message.

One of the group's goals was to have their own facility. In the fall of 1999, ground was broken for their own building in a prime location behind the "golden arches" of a certain restaurant in Portage.

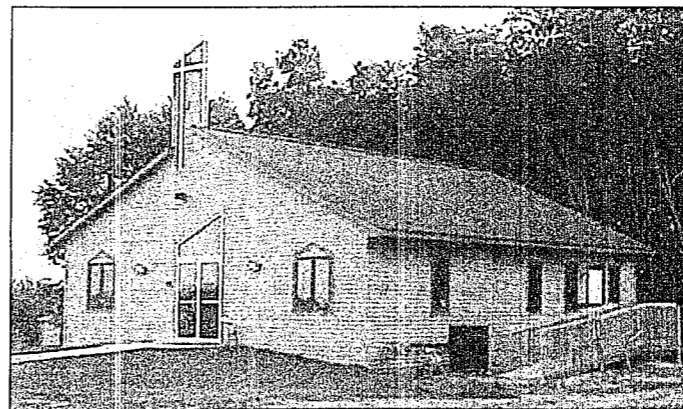
That vision has now become a reality with the dedication of their new sanctuary and fellowship hall. Pastor Smalley reports that several people who live near the church have begun attending.

Outreach Bible Church is a member of the North Central Association of SDBs and is scheduled to host that group in 2003.

We are so blessed to see God opening windows of opportunity so new churches such as the OBC can continue to grow. SR



Family members of Keith Julson stand next to the drive dedicated in memory of the founding pastor.



The new church and fellowship hall in Portage, Wis.



the BEACON

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

December 2001

The gift of yourself

by Eowyn Driscoll

Ahh, Christmas time. It's the only time of year when you can see multiple Santa Clauses (on the same block), you have the perfect excuse to bring a very large coniferous tree into your home and, of course, it's the time of giving.

Everywhere you go, people are giving each other "stuff." Generally, people are more charitable during the holidays and, for most people, Christmas day means presents!

Amidst the glare of Christmas tree lights, carolers, and shiny wrapping paper, we tend to forget why we do all of this. We forget the reason why this holiday exists.

It all exists because God decided to give us the greatest gift ever, His Son. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, for whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Jesus is the greatest of all the gifts and blessings that God has ever given us—or will ever give us. And it's a gift that never ends. It doesn't just appear right after Thanksgiving and go away after New Year's.

No, it's a permanent gift. So maybe we should all be a little more giving of ourselves, not only during the holiday season but throughout the entire year as well. **SR**



Come to the Third Annual Year-End Youth Retreat in Pacific Pines California!

Featuring Director Eric Davis

When? 4:00 p.m., December 28, 2001 – 10:00 a.m.
January 1, 2002

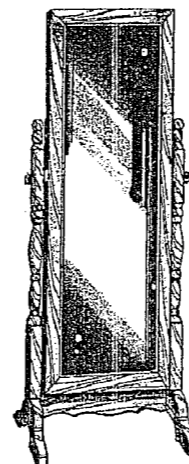
Ages? 15-18 (or eligible for Youth Pre-Con in 2002)

Cost? \$15.00 per camper

Send registration to:

Year-End Youth Retreat
c/o Riverside SDB Church
5901 Chicago Ave.
Riverside, CA 92506

(909) 686-0545, ericdavis@juno.com



Reflections

by Leanne Lippincott

*"Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror;
then we shall see face to face."—1 Cor. 13:12*

More than a topcoat

cluded a large doll with hair I could braid, a Gene Autry plastic guitar, a bicycle, a microscope, a multi-layered petticoat, a chemistry set, and a cow-girl dress. (Obviously, Mom had requested the petticoat.)

Ever so slowly, I learned to give back. In material ways, at least. At school, we made Christmas presents for our parents—things like holiday candles and Christmas corsages. I made gifts at home, too. One year I embroidered my Dad's initials on some large white handkerchiefs. And since he worked as a meat cutter, I once built a miniature chopping block, complete with a tiny meat cleaver and rolls of sausage made out of painted wooden dowels.

As I grew older, my gifts came from stores. I had become a "woman of means," earning 50 cents an hour baby-sitting and mowing lawns. In the summer I sold blackberries, and in the winter I hawked painted, sparkle-encrusted pine-cones. I was a teenage tycoon, stuffing dollar bills into my pink plastic piggy bank and charging my brother interest when he ran short of cash.

One Christmas, my brother and sister and I pooled our funds and bought Dad a new topcoat. I don't remember the exact year, but I do remember that it was the first time I truly understood Acts 20:35.

We handed Dad the large box and waited impatiently as he carefully unwrapped it. When he lifted the lid, there was a moment of silence. Then my father did something I had seen him do only once before: he cried.

My father was born in 1912 and was raised during an era when fathers showed their love by feeding and clothing their children rather

than hugging them. For a brief moment that Christmas morning almost 40 years ago, I saw my father in a new light.

I caught a fleeting glimpse of a man who indeed loved his children and was in turn touched by their love. And all of this came about through the simple act of buying a coat, wrapping it in paper, and placing it at his feet. Giving and receiving. Our father's feet; our Father's feet.

*"...and she [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger..." (Luke 2:7, NIV). **SR***



Robert Martinsen modeling his new winter topcoat in the early 1960s.

The Bible talks a lot about giving. Jesus gave the ultimate gift, His life, so we could live abundantly, both here on earth and for all eternity.

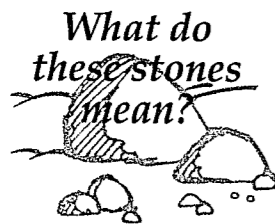
As children of God, we also are to give—regularly, liberally, cheerfully and, whenever possible, secretly. And we shouldn't give only material things. Sometimes our best gift is the gift of ourselves. We should strive to spend more time with our children, and use our varied talents to promote worthy causes.

When I was growing up, I knew little about true giving. But even as a child, I was aware that *somewhere* in the Bible it said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Now that I'm old enough to know what a concordance is, I know that verse is in the book of Acts, chapter 20, verse 35.)

For all of us, children *and* adults, it's one thing to know about giving, but it's an entirely different matter to actually do it.

My memories of Christmases past include reciting memory verses at Christmas Eve church services. The anticipation of those "solo performances" elicited both a churning stomach and a giddy excitement. At the conclusion of the service, each child was handed a sack filled with candy, nuts, and oranges. So I was on the receiving end of giving at an early age, and I quickly learned to love it.

I was surprised when St. Nick brought me exactly what I wanted each year. My "Christmas loot" in-



Aug. 4-10, 2002

The President's Page

The first stone: Christ

by Gordon Lawton

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
In the old meetinghouse here in Little Genesee, N.Y., near the back and to the right, there was a stained glass window that showed a rock sticking out of the ocean with waves and whitecaps all around. On the rock was a cross. It always brought to my mind the hymn line, "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand."

If it were not for Christ there would be no "Christ-ians." He is the reason for our hope and should be believed on by all who call themselves by His name. In Acts 11:26 we are told that it was in Antioch that the believers were first called Christians. Some think that this was a taunt or slur against those early believers which they took as their own, taking the insult and wearing it as a badge of pride.

Christ is the first of five stones of belief which we will investigate at Conference 2002. Taking the metaphor of the stone from our Conference theme, we discover that Scripture has for us three additional analogies between Jesus Christ and stones.

1) *Jesus is the cornerstone* (1 Peter 2:6; Eph. 2:20) upon which the church is built. In biblical times, the cornerstone was the first stone set in a foundation. It was set squarely as the reference point to which all the other stones would line up. Lining up with Jesus Christ means that we will do what He approves. Anything else is sin. He is, to change the metaphor, the benchmark and measuring stick, as well as the source of truth.

2) *Jesus also is the capstone* (1 Peter 2:7). This is the stone that went on top of a wall and completed the structure. We see here the connection to the name given in Revelation 21:6: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." The capstone covers and protects the wall just as His righteousness covers us and just as He, by His Spirit, protects and directs us.

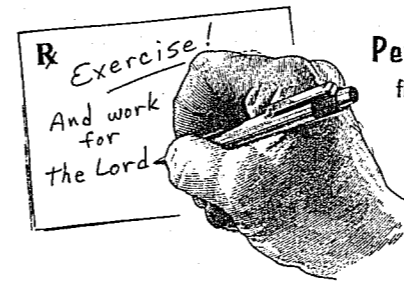
3) *Jesus is the stone that makes some stumble* (1 Peter 2:8). This last stone is one that I wish we did not have to talk of, but it is true and necessary. It is sad that there are those who would want to make following Jesus into a system of moral conduct rather than a relationship of faith with the Savior. Does this mean that we should be immoral? Of course not! But the belief and trust in Jesus as the Savior and the obedient following of Him as LORD is more than many will accept as it flies in the face of their reasoning or their sense of total self-determination, which in either case is an unilluminated position (2 Cor. 4:1-7).

Many this month will be remembering the Incarnation. A baby can be loved and adored without demanding much in return. Let's not forget that He was born for the Cross, as well as to rule, reign, and judge. Let's focus on our Cornerstone (model and authority) and Capstone (savior and completer), and submit to Him so that we do not stumble.

Have a joyous holiday season. Hope to see you in Houghton, N.Y., next August.

Pastor Gordon Lawton

President Gordon Lawton and his "stone" prop at Conference.



Pete's Prescriptions

from Dr. Pete May,
Executive Secretary

How do you cope?

A lot of people need help coping with conscious and subconscious feelings, fears, and frustrations because of America's new war-time status.

Those of us who know the Lord should help our friends cope by telling them that we are praying for them. This brings peace of mind to many people.

Our future is in Jesus. We can live at peace in Him, and He expects us to share that peace. He told His disciples that if they share as much as a "cup of water" with a thirsty person (Mark 9:41), they are doing what is expected of them. We must not keep to ourselves the security of knowing Jesus.

Non-Christians often accuse us of hypocrisy—and sometimes rightly so—when they see that we know and believe in Jesus and yet don't share that peace with others. This is the time for SDBs to reach out, share, and in plain words, *evangelize*. We should tell even casual acquaintances and strangers that Christ is in charge.

During these difficult times, some Americans try to cope by fostering a "kill them all" attitude. This mindset simply leads to more frustration. The Lord is in charge. He can eliminate fear, frustration, and hate in all of us. We need to pray for our enemies as well as for our leaders, our soldiers, and ourselves.

We need to let go and allow the power of God and prayer to lead to a general peace as well as our own personal peace. We should share our prayers, our smiles, our encouraging words, and our belief in Jesus—the One who taught us to offer a "cup of water" to those distressed about the world in

which we live today.

As tragic as the events of the past few months have been, good will grow out of them. Now, more than ever, individual SDBs and their churches have an opportunity to reach out to hurting people. We can help by talking with others and asking questions that show genuine concern: "What do you think about America's terrorist problems?" "Is anyone in your family in immediate danger?" We can serve our fellow citizens by helping them cope with their fears of war and death.

We certainly didn't cause this conflict, but we are in it. The world is God's. If He decides not to create a "tomorrow," then the present War on Terrorism will become a moot subject. However, God may want to see how well we can care for each other, and for each stranger and enemy. May the Holy Spirit guide us to share God's love and peace in our corner of the world.

Isaiah speaks about our Comforter in chapter 40, verses 28-31. Look it up! Give the world and your neighbors a Sabbath rest and God's peace. And let it start with Seventh Day Baptists. **SR**



Now, more than ever, individual SDBs and their churches have an opportunity to reach out to hurting people. We can serve our fellow citizens by helping them cope with their fears of war and death.

North Central Association meets in Michigan

by Dale Rood

The North Central Association of Seventh Day Baptist Churches was held at the Battle Creek, Mich., SDB Church on October 12-13, 2001.

Special guest for the weekend was National Field Minister Ron Elston, who works with new SDB churches and contacts in the United States and Canada. Pastor Ron brought the message Sabbath morning and told of the many new contacts and outreaches that are taking place right now.

There is even a church planting school to equip people interested in beginning new Seventh Day Baptist churches. The Stonefort, Ill., church has made available special facilities for the use of this school.

We were surprised at the large number of groups and individuals throughout the middle of the country who are interested in establishing churches. The map seemed to be literally peppered with dots

indicating such people and places. The youth praise band, "Mabel," came from Milton, Wis. (site of next year's meetings). The band is named in honor of Mabel Cruzan, wife of the

Pastor Ron Elston told of the many new contacts and outreaches that are taking place right now.

late Earl Cruzan, one of our former pastors.

One business item was arranging for an Association-wide mission trip. The Milton church has sent its youth to Evansville, Ind., the last

two years, and wanted to expand this opportunity for young people across the Association. We requested that plans be developed to make this possible for 2002, and voted funds to assist in this.

Of particular interest is the possibility of expanding to other areas in the future. A couple doing mission work in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in western South Dakota is desiring to connect themselves and their work with Seventh Day Baptists. Joining with them could be an exciting possibility for short-term missions.

Meetings in 2003 will take place at our newest Association church, Outreach Bible Church in Portage, Wis. **SR**

From the Dodge Center (Minn.) church's Joyful Newsletter.

SR Reaction

Opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the SR or all SDBs. Letters may be edited according to space and editorial style.

Dear SR,

I arrived at a friend's house in time to watch two special episodes of "Touched by an Angel." At one point, Della Reese began to sing: "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform..."

The first feature told of a rescue worker who died trying to save others. This was touching because almost all of us witnessed the 9/11 tragedy on television.

The second feature highlighted a family facing turmoil from one parent's mid-life crisis. (I'm 46 now; need I say more?) When we realized the theme, both of us felt I could benefit by watching it.

A week or so passed, and late last

night I was sitting home alone. (Bill was working out of town.) I picked up an old *Sabbath Recorder* from '95 which for some reason was on our bedroom chest. Its feature article, "The blossoming flower along the wooded path," by P.L. Watson read:

"It is said the Lord works in mysterious ways, and I have to believe that this is what is happening to me. I feel an awakening to what is going on around me, and especially a heightened appreciation for my spouse."

These thoughts described my mood precisely at this stage of life with all its struggles.

Then in Kevin's Korner, I read: "Dear Lord, You know how much I want to honor and acknowledge you

in all things—yet your ways are so mysterious! ...But I still wonder why we have to go through some things."

Wow. All of these mysterious "co-incidences."

Kevin then related feelings of rejection when a clean-up of the SR mailing list was done in order to wisely use funds. Folks who would rather not get the magazine were asked to be removed, and did. (I am one who did, but that's another story with a happy ending of one who came to know God's grace.)

He continued, "Lord, thank you for reminding me of your provisions and presence and guidance."

To this I would only add: Amen.

Cindy Burks
Little Rock, AR

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(Feature Index & Kevin's Korner on back cover)

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Births

Carmichael.—A daughter, Aliya Nicole Carmichael, was born to Robert and Ronda Carmichael of Grand Rapids, MI, on October 31, 2000.

Geske.—A daughter, Tiffany Faith Geske, was born to Kory and Jacqueline Geske of Battle Creek, MI, on December 6, 2000.

Osborn.—A daughter, Rachael Grace Osborn, was born to Pastor Stephen and Angie Osborn of Milton, Wis., on June 7, 2001.

Severance.—A son, Azariah Gabriel Severance, was born to Shane and Jennifer Severance of Brighton, CO, on September 29, 2001.

Yoneda.—A son, Ezra Takashi Kenneth Yoneda, was born to Cheryl Van Horn and Theodore Yoneda of Fairmont, WV, on October 10, 2001.

Rood.—A daughter, Michaela Jo Elizabeth Rood, was born to Chris and Janelle Rood of Boulder, CO, on October 19, 2001.

New Members

Boulder, CO
David Thorngate, pastor
Joined after testimony
Dan Crowder
Sheri Crowder
Chris Severance
Stacy Severance

Doniphan, MO
Ron Elston, pastor
Joined after baptism
Jack Lewis
Vernon (Butch) Lewis
Gary Roberts

Salem, WV
Dale D. Thorngate, pastor
Joined after testimony
Lawrence O. Watt
Raakeli Ann Watt
F. Scott Rogers
Rebecca L. Rogers

Marriages

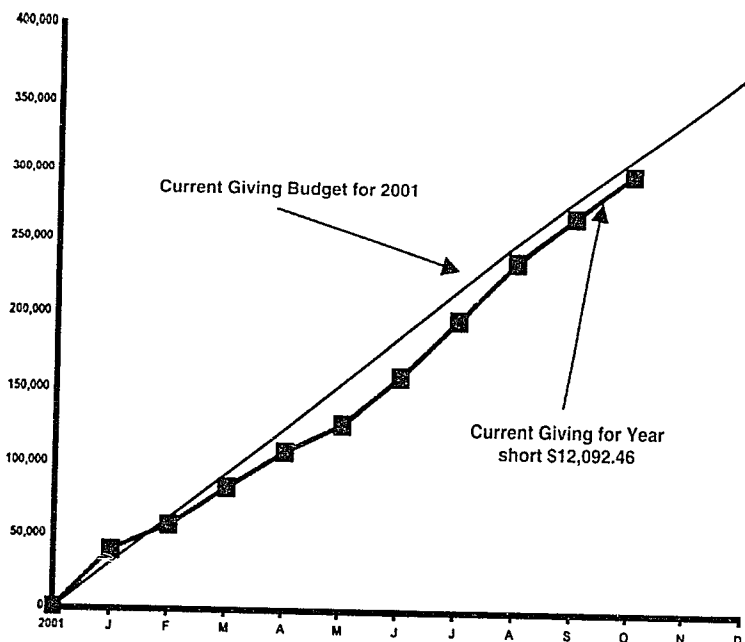
Artis - Deters.—Craig Artis and Roxanne Deters were united in marriage on September 9, 2000, in Marshall, MI.

Humphrey - Badger.—James Humphrey and Melanie Badger were united in marriage on October 21, 2000, in Battle Creek, MI.

Rootes - Wells.—Sidney Rootes and Liesl A. Wells were united in marriage on November 16, 2000, in Battle Creek, MI.

Law - Martin.—Thomas Lee Law and Melissa Marlene Martin were united in marriage on October 14, 2001, in Williamstown, WV, with Rev. Dale D. Thorngate officiating.

Current Giving 2001



Obituaries

Cornish.—John E. Cornish, 76, of St. Clair, Mich., formerly of Battle Creek, Mich., died on June 26, 2001.

He was born on December 14, 1924, in Battle Creek, the son of John and Audrey Cornish. On March 24, 1951, he married Doris Wonnacott.

John was a World War II veteran and taught in the East China School District for more than 30 years. He was a member of the Battle Creek Seventh Day Baptist Church.

In addition to his wife, survivors include two sons, Jeff and Eric; three daughters, Janet, Cindy, and Mary; and five grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on June 29, 2001, in the First Congregational United Church of Christ in St. Clair.

Baumel.—Clayton George Baumel, 68, of Centralia, Wash., died on August 21, 2001, in Centralia.

He was born on February 1, 1933, in Bensenville, Ill., the son of George Washington and Elizabeth Cecelia (Peterson) Baumel. He served in the U.S. Army and was a member of Operating Engineers, Local 612. He retired after working 40 years as a heavy equipment operator and construction superintendent.

Clayton was a volunteer with the Salvation Army for more than 20 years, and was a charter member of the Centralia Seventh Day Baptist Church.

Fellow church member Marie Chuinard remembers him as "a big man who hid his shyness with a bit of bluster. He was down-to-earth, enjoying newly-mown hay, fresh-cut lumber, and the feeling of accomplishment at the end of a day's work.

"Seeing a job needing done, he didn't call a meeting, appoint a committee, or hold five meetings to decide 'can we, should we, who should,

who can.' He just did the job, saving us many, many dollars and much frustration.

"Clayton was always ready with a word of support but honest with his thoughts. I accepted them as words of wisdom from the 'big brother' he came to be over the years. Not having an older brother of my own, I 'adopted' Clay without realizing it until the day I was told, 'He is gone.' The overwhelming sense of loss that I felt told me just how much I was going to miss my 'big brother.'"

Survivors include his wife, Sandra, of Centralia; two daughters, Susan Halvorsen of Chehalis, Wash., and Connie Nutt of Vancouver, Wash.; four sons—Scott, Larry, Clint, and Jack, all of Centralia; and 16 grandchildren.

A private service was held.

Durham.—Madge Irene (Harris) Durham, 89, of Coldwater, Mich., died on September 6, 2001, in the

Community Health Center of Branch County, Coldwater.

She was born on June 19, 1912, in Tiskilwa, Ill., the daughter of Floyd and Alice (Main) Harris. On February 12, 1946, she married Willard Durham.

Madge worked for the Battle Creek Food Company and Security National Bank in Battle Creek. During World War II, she was a telephone operator. She was a member of the Eastern Star in Bedford, Mich.; a member of the Battle Creek SDB Church and the First Baptist Church in Coldwater; and a volunteer at the Community Health Center.

Survivors include one daughter, D. Jean Swart of Coldwater; one sister, Sue Moss of Arizona; four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband in 1985; three brothers—Louis, Robert, and Donald; and one sister, Lois. SR

Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer January 6-12, 2002

This prayer booklet will be sent to each Conference. It is written by Pastor José Dirceu de Andrade Cruz, General Supervisor of the SDB Church of Brazil.

World Federation Sabbath January 12, 2002

We ask that each church take a special offering for the SDB World Federation.



Getting back on, cont. from page 13

from when I first wanted a horse as a child, to when I got my first pony at age 13. It's been an accumulation of personal experience, fellowship, and studying.

This all parallels to where I am spiritually with an applied Biblical foundation. From all this personal experience, social interaction and studying, I am further along than when I was a child. I'm not an expert, but I'm familiar with a good deal of the Old and New Testaments—their content and physical, societal, and spiritual practicalities.

I can generally recognize when something is quoted out of context, and can separate manmade doctrine and traditions from Scripture. I understand what some of the symbolism represents and am also familiar

with the Biblical holy days and their purposes. I know that God's law was given to us not as a burden or to keep

If you try to ignore trouble or take the wrong action (delaying, for instance), your problems will only get worse.

us from having fun, but to save us from trouble, turmoil, and heartache. Best of all, I know that God loves us.

You may think all of this sounds rather bookish, but it's beyond that. It's tied in with my understanding,

and again, with my life experiences. I'm not perfect, spiritually or otherwise, but I've found perfection in God's Word. If I err in part or completely, I'm sure I'll know soon enough. Meanwhile, I'm enjoying the benefits.

Life is good, and I'm learning as I go. SR

Epilogue: We all need to check on where we're heading from time to time, to make sure we're on the right path. It's important to remember where we are so we can keep from getting lost. All of us will have to continually dust ourselves off and get back in the saddle again until we finally reach our destination. May God bless and keep you.

Event more important, cont. from page 14

work of the Lord Jesus—nothing is introduced into the scheme in the way of festivals and ordinances which would for a moment draw away attention from “the Lord our Righteousness.”

Ordinances there are, indeed two very simple ones: one of them complied with at the beginning of the new life, and never afterwards repeated; the other repeated often, but so simple in its character, and so directly exhibiting the great fact upon which our redemption depends, that it can have no tendency to divert our mind in any contemporary direction.

But apart from these ordinances, or even in connection with them, Christianity is a system of such severe simplicity, that it cannot long interest the hearts of those who have never discovered the necessity of some other righteousness besides that which lives in external observances.¹

What Thomas B. Brown wrote is true to the extent that many within and outside the Church have, in effect, treated Christmas only as a festival without thought of its true significance. It is a sacrilege when we share gifts with one another without a thought of the greater

Yet how impoverished we would be if we did not step out of the routine of our daily existence once a year and proclaim the wonders of God's grace and His Incarnation to meet us here on earth.

Thomas Fuller, an English cleric of the 17th century, recognized the

Many within and outside the Church have, in effect, treated Christmas only as a festival without thought of its true significance.

gift that God has given to mankind. It is sacrilege when we try to outdo our neighbor with bright lights and fail to see the light which shone on the shepherds in Bethlehem and guided the Wise Men. And it is sacrilege when “Jingle Bells” is more popular than “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” or “Joy to the World.”

importance of a special celebration when he penned the oft-quoted reminder: “Things said to be ever done will prove to be never done unless sometimes solemnly done.” SR

¹Thomas B. Brown, “Christmas – Festivals.” Sabbath Recorder, Vol. 9, #28, Dec. 23, 1852, p. 110.

KEVIN'S

ORNER

What's on the inside?

I felt it was only fair that I tell the Tract Council members right at the start of our annual meeting last week: “Janet and I are considering a move out of Janesville.” They stopped breathing for a second.

“To Milton. All of eight miles away.” Okay, exhale...

With Janet working at the church every weekday, plus carting the boys to church activities several times a week (sometimes several times a day), plus worship, plus weekend meetings, she's a bit tired of the commute.

So, we've been watching the market for an available and affordable house. A new real estate listing arrived in the mail just the other day. The description of this older Victorian sounded promising, especially the price. But there was no photo attached.

Checking the address in the letter, I decided to drive by the place. To my surprise, it looked beautiful! It had nice siding, some fancy trim under the peak of the upper roof, and a decent fenced-in yard.

Before I could finish my report at home, Janet had an appointment locked in with the realtor.

When we arrived in Milton for the showing, we looked again at the outside and were still excited. The realtor unlocked the door and we stepped inside. Let's just say that our excitement was not merely dampened (think tidal wave); we almost drowned in our disappointment.

It was one big letdown. We saw a nice exterior, then uncovered a questionable interior. Peeling plaster, uneven floors, and a cracked foundation should have mandated a “great fixer-upper” tag in the listing.

As I shared this story with the Tract Council, I was led to take it a step further:

“We can put some fancy, beautiful covers on our printed materials, but how do people react when they ‘open the door’ and look inside our tracts or magazines?”

We need to have good quality on the *inside*. Now, it's okay and beneficial to get a reader's attention, but we need to earn and keep their trust by what's behind the cover.

Then I had to go-to-meddlin'. “What are people's reactions when they see *you*; as a person, a Christian, a Seventh Day Baptist?”

They may see how you look, and how you behave in public. But what if they scheduled an appointment to look *inside* your heart, and mind, and thoughts?

What's going on inside? Jesus was concerned about this, especially when he dealt with the Pharisees.

As part of the “seven woes,” Jesus said, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

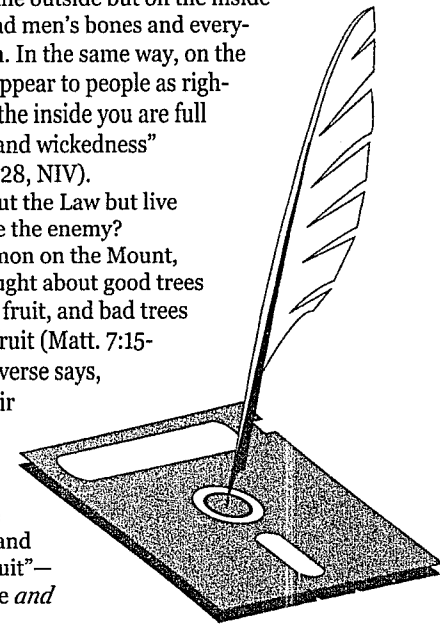
You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (Matt. 23:27-28, NIV).

Do we spout the Law but live (or think) like the enemy?

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also taught about good trees bearing good fruit, and bad trees bearing bad fruit (Matt. 7:15-20). The last verse says,

“Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

Let's all be “good trees” and bear “good fruit”—on the outside *and* the inside.



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Kevin's Korner

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