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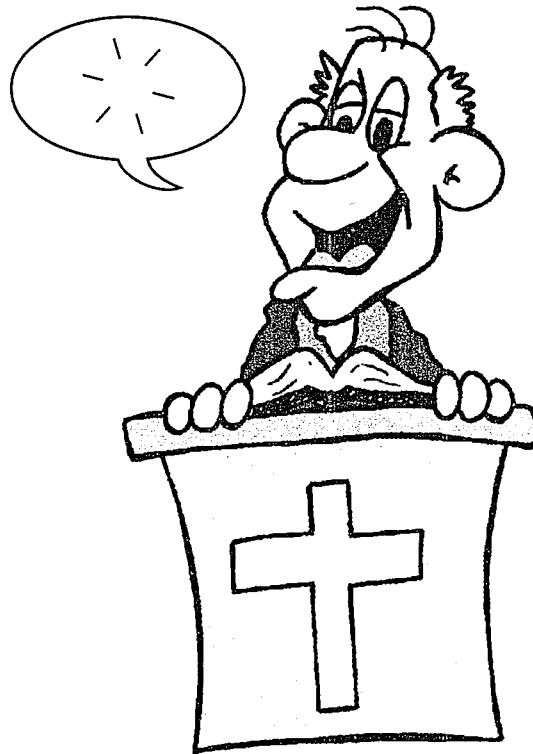
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*News for and about
Seventh Day Baptists*

July-Aug. 2001

R

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Preaching

about Nothing



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

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Kevin Butler
Editor

Leanne Lippincott
Assistant Editor

Contributing Editors

Aubrey Appel, Calvin P. Babcock, Gabriel E. Bejjani, Andrew J. Camenga, G. Kirk Looper, Clayton Pinder, Laura Price, Don A. Sanford.

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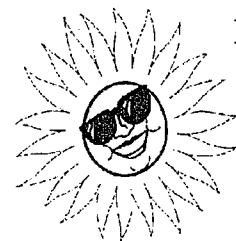
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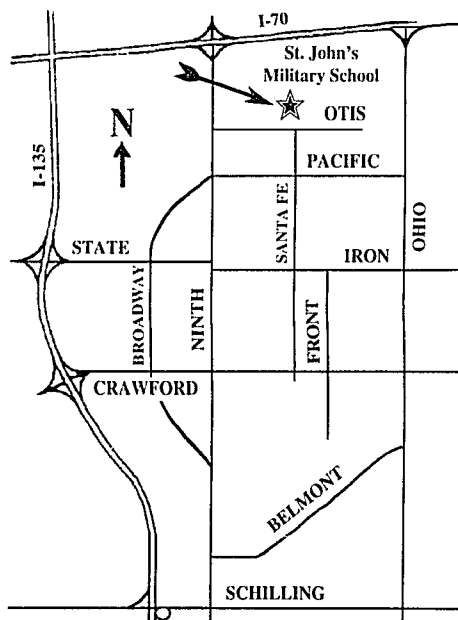
Conference phone #s
at Lindsborg, Kansas
(913) 227-3311
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RETIRED and TIRED of snow and cold?

Perhaps you could become resident manager of rental properties owned by the Daytona Beach, Fla., SDB Church. If you are interested, call Don Rudert at 1-888-778-3378.

Map to Youth Pre-Con Salina, Kansas



Help us celebrate!

Jim and Margie Jacob of Pomona Park, Fla., will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with an open house on September 29, 2001. It will be held at the Daytona Beach, Fla., Seventh Day Baptist Church.

The Jacobs were married on August 12, 1951. Their five children are planning the event, with help from church members and friends.

Cards may be sent to:
Mr. & Mrs. James Jacob
P.O. Box 122
Pomona Park, FL 32181

Or give them a call at (386) 649-4195. Their e-mail address is jmjacob@funport.net
"Please come and help us celebrate this milestone in our lives," Margie writes. They ask that gifts be omitted.



Preaching about nothing

by John Camenga

Editor's note: This message was presented last year at the Daytona Beach, Fla., SDB Church, where John serves as pastor.

I suppose some of you have noticed the sermon title for this morning. It's not that I've run out of things to say, so don't get your hopes up that way. But I've discovered that the Bible does *not* say nothing about "nothing."

In fact, the Bible says quite a bit about nothing. As we think about nothing, we may discover something that's very important.

"Nothing is impossible"

Our first passage of Scripture is a familiar one, but it's one that normally we read at another time of year.

"And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And for that reason, the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age. And she who was called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing will be impossible with God' (Luke 1:34-37).

Think of the "nothing" aspect of God's absolute power. The angel said to Mary, as the final persuader, the final item to convince her, "For with God, nothing shall be impossible."

Now we might more frequently think of the statements that Jesus made concerning salvation. He said that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. And those who heard this statement looked at each other and said,

"Well, then, who can be saved?" Jesus said, "With God, all things are possible."

But the angel did the other side of the same coin and said, "For with God, nothing shall be *impossible*. And "nothing" is what God cannot do.

Mary's challenge

Consider the challenge that was being presented to Mary. She knew what was involved in conception. And the angel told her that she was to be the exception to this universal truth.

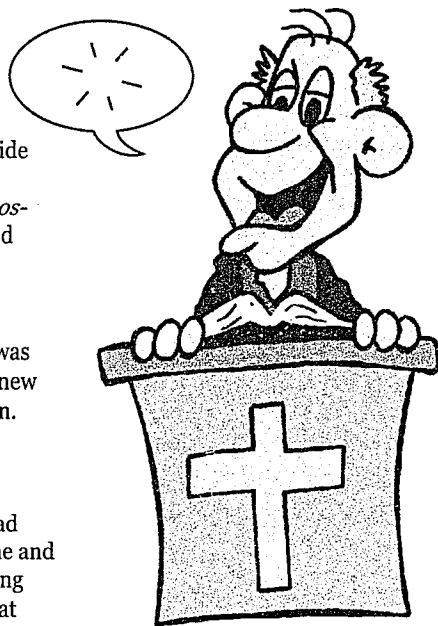
Mary knew that a Messiah had been promised, who would come and become the great conquering king for Israel. Here, she was told that she was to be the earthly mother of this promised Messiah. She raised objections, and the angel reminded her that with God, nothing is impossible. And so, she accepted the responsibility.

God could have chosen another method; God did choose *this* method. And it's significant for us to realize that even in this issue of "nothing is impossible for God," that still He sought the cooperation of the person who was most directly and most intimately connected with this particular plan.

Cooperation and freewill

God honored the gift of freewill that He had given to Mary, as He gives it to all of us. "Nothing is impossible." But He went through the process of sending the angel Gabriel to explain and persuade, that she could enter into this of her own free choice. "Nothing is impossible" with God, but God chooses to honor the gift of freewill that He's given to us.

Many times, we are required to be active in the process of God's "noth-



ing." We are a part of making those things possible that would otherwise be impossible. God chooses frequently to accomplish the impossible through us—through human beings, through His creation. And God frequently chooses people that other human beings would dismiss as unimportant or unusable. We *can* be part of making "nothing impossible" for God.

It's God's power

Remember the image that Paul used in 2 Corinthians, chapter 4, of the treasure in an earthen vessel, the jewelry held in a clay pot. He said, "We have this treasure [meaning the Gospel] in an earthen vessel, that the glory of it might shine more brightly."

As people see what God is accomplishing through us, they focus on what *God* is doing and not on us. "Wow, if that happened, I know it *has* to be *God*, because *that person* sure couldn't have done it on his own." God chooses to press into service odd, unusual, dismissed, and

unimportant people, because nothing is impossible with God.

Every problem that we face, every dilemma that we go through, every circumstance that confronts us in life, is affected by this "nothing" of God's power. Nothing is impossible with Him, and we need to accept the fact that He may choose to do things in ways that are not according to *our* plans.

Our purpose in prayer is not to advise God or give Him suggestions; it's to come to an understanding of His will and our position in His will. As we accept the fact that nothing is impossible with God, our faith grows. That means that we can narrow the list even further, of things that we think are impossible.

The "nothing" of misplaced priorities

I'd like us to think about another "nothing" that appears in Scripture. It is the nothing of misplaced priorities.

When John wrote the letters to the churches in the book of Revelation, one of those letters went to the church at Laodicea, which is now modern-day Turkey. What do we know about the church at Laodicea? What word is used to describe it? "Lukewarm."

Jesus says, "Because you are neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth." Doesn't sound real good. Jesus uses this image of taking into his mouth a sip from the cup of Laodicea and just spewing it out because it's so unpalatable; lukewarm, room temperature.

I don't like my coffee room temperature. I don't want a soda that's room temperature. In each case, I want one hot and the other cold. Jesus wanted this church to get out of the middle and be one thing or another.

Focusing on the material

The church was "nothing" because of its misplaced priority. It looked at the wrong nothing. It had a focus on material things, and in Rev. 3:17, the

people of the church are reported to have said, "I am rich, I have need of nothing." They were looking at what they had, rather than the fact that it was not enough.

You know, this church in Laodicea had undoubtedly been exposed to the teachings of Jesus, just as the other early churches were. They should have reflected back on that story of the man who had the dilemma of a bumper crop and said, "I'm going to tear down my barns and build bigger barns so I can store everything." And God said to that man, "You fool, today your soul is required of you."

Trust in what you have?

Trusting in our wealth, trusting in our possessions, is never a very good thing to do. "I have need of nothing," the church in Laodicea said. We don't know if they had a building, but they certainly seemed to have accumulated wealth at the hands of the individuals in the church.

Yet buildings sometimes become testimonies to the selfishness of a congregation; buildings sometimes get in the way of ministry. I also know of churches who have so much invested in the bank and in various accounts, that in all likelihood the money is going to outlast the people. Isn't that a sad situation? (Some days I wish *we* had that problem!)

Then I think again, and I realize that our need to encourage one another in giving—our need to recognize our dependence upon how God prompts the hearts of people to provide for the "now" needs of the congregation—is a far healthier situation than having a great amount of investment available.

One church I know of is down to about 10 people in attendance. They have a sanctuary that will seat 250 or 300 folks. And those 10 are still seated in the same places they were 25 years ago when there was a hundred in the congregation! They've been living off their endowment,

off of their investments for years, getting less and less healthy as a church.

They have "need of nothing" physically. I'm not meaning to be overly critical of it, because circumstances do change and communities change, but a church that is in that situation, where they don't need the involvement, both in terms of active participation and also in consecrated giving, is not a healthy church.

Trust in God and His people

We must not fall into the trap that the Laodicean church did, of measuring our effectiveness based on what we have in a physical way. We must measure our effectiveness on the basis of the One we have and the lives we touch.

It was Vance Havner a few years ago who said, "We have no business living ordinary lives in such extraordinary times." We do live in extraordinary times, and we need to get beyond that point of saying, "I have need of nothing," and be reliant upon God and God's people for the needs that we do have.

"Be anxious for nothing"

There's another "nothing" we need to look at: the nothing of anxiety in our daily lives. In Philippians 4:6, Paul said, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

Anxiety equals worry, equals nothing good. Anxiety or worry is a destroyer. It destroys health and relationships; it destroys hopes and dreams; and it destroys the strength to build on dreams.

Do you realize that anxiety takes an awful lot of energy? Have you ever thought about that? Worry takes energy! If you're anxious about something, if you're worried, what do you do? You're stressed out. And what does that mean? You tense up. That may strengthen your muscles if you do it long enough, but it's not going to do anything good for you in terms of health.

Does worrying resolve the prob-

lem? Does it create anything good? Nine times out of 10, the things we worry about are things beyond our control. And the other tenth, if we took all the energy we had from those worries, we'd probably be able to resolve the problem that we've got.

A positive prescription

See how Paul puts this together: "Be ye anxious for nothing." This is the "nothing" part of it. But he doesn't just say, "Don't do it." He gives us a prescription by which we can avoid it.

One of the wonderful things that I like, as I learn more and more about the Scriptures, is how frequently the "Thou shalt not"—and this is one of them—is accompanied by a "Thou shalt."

I know that sometimes even in our child-rearing style, we would say, "Don't do that!" And the kids would tense up and be anxious. Right? It's much better if we can explain why and provide an alternative. "Be anxious for nothing, but..." And here's the antidote: "By prayer and supplication [by communication with God, by sharing with Him] let your requests be made known to God."

The next verse talks about the result of being anxious for nothing. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The verse does not say, "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding *may* keep..." Or *might* keep. Or *could* keep. It says it *shall* keep your hearts and minds."

This is important, because our worries do affect our hearts. Our worries are involved also with that symbolic heart, our emotional state, and our minds. Paul understood that way back then. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." When? When you are "anxious for nothing."

"Nothing done through strife" (or politics)

There's also the "nothing" of active Christian service. In Philippians 2:3,

it says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."

There are a couple of very interesting words used here. The first word is translated "strife."

The word was used back in the days of the Greek city-states to de-



What the Bible says about "nothing" is really something pretty important for us.

scribe people running for public office. How do you run for public office? You tell how great a guy you are, and what a "good for nothing" person your opponent is. Right? Isn't that the normal pattern that almost all political candidates follow? "Let nothing be done for strife"—for striving for that position of authority and power.

In the early Church, it seems that this word was used to talk about the kind of "party spirit" Paul condemned the Corinthian church for having. "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos," and so forth. It was used to talk about the people who were trying to get some advantage to push ahead their ideas, their approach.

"... or vainglory"

The second word is translated "vainglory." What an interesting word. The Greek is "kenodoxian."

"Doxia" is a word that means glory or honor, and it's even used in expressions of praise concerning our Heavenly Father. It's where we get the word "doxology" from. It's praise.

But connected to this word,

"doxia," is the prefix, "keno." And "keno" means empty; without substance; of no value. Let nothing be done out of strife—running for positions of power, or of empty, meaningless, insubstantial glory or honor. We see this from time to time in various organizations, and sometimes it even happens in the church. We need to remember that Paul was giving these words to a church.

Don't let *these* things happen, and again there is a "but." "But... in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." The contrast is a humility of mind.

Watch for false humility

I think it's important for us to understand that Paul did not just *talk* about humility here. It's one thing to show humility on the outside; it's another thing to—as someone has put it—*think* humble.

We aren't supposed to think more highly than we ought to think, but neither are we supposed to have *false* humility, where we lower ourselves below the standard that God has equipped us to handle. No vainglory, no strife, but humility in which we understand that we are in this together and we all have a part to play.

In other words, we're talking about our motives for active Christian service when we talk about the fact that nothing should be done through strife or vainglory.

Much about nothing

One final "nothing." "Who or what should separate us from the love of Christ?" The answer? Nothing.

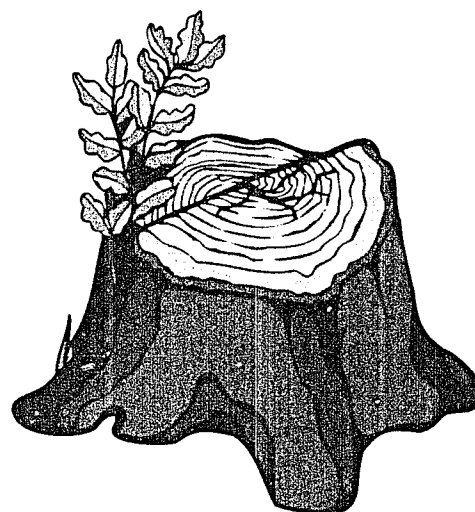
So this has been a sermon about *nothing*. With God, *nothing* is impossible. *Nothing* of importance happens if we have our priorities confused, as was true of the church in Laodicea.

Nothing good comes from anxiety. *Nothing* should be done from strife or vainglory. And *nothing* will separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus.

What the Bible says about "nothing" is really something pretty important for us. **SR**

Believing in a tree stump

by Rick Crouch



Frankie pushed dark brown curls off his forehead as he blocked the late-afternoon sun from his eyes. He stared at the middle-aged man sitting on the bench a few yards from the playground equipment.

The glare off of the slide made it seem like the man was glowing. Frankie had been playing in the sand with his dump truck and hadn't noticed the man sit down.

The man turned his head toward Frankie, and Frankie quickly looked away. Frankie had been scolded enough in his six years to know that it wasn't polite to stare.

Nobody had yelled at him for glancing, though, so he glanced up, squinting into the sun. The man was gone.

"Hello."

Frankie almost hit his head on the slide as he jerked around to see where the deep voice was coming from.

"Don't be afraid," the voice said as Frankie scrambled to catch his balance. He rolled onto his knees

and saw two gnarly scars on the man's feet exposed by brown leather sandals. Frankie slowly looked up past faded blue jeans and a flannel shirt into a kind, clean-shaven face.

"Hi," Frankie squeaked as he stood up and brushed sand off his jeans.

"That's a cool dump truck," the man said, pointing to the large metal truck behind Frankie. "It's not plastic like most of today's toys."

"What do you mean, a strange man talked to you?" she said without looking up. "We've been by ourselves the whole time."

"My grandfather made it for my dad," Frankie said. "Now it's mine." "Your grandfather is quite a craftsman."

"Not anymore, he's not," Frankie said matter-of-factly. "He's dead. So's my dad and my sister. You know who else is dead?"

The man shook his head, no. "Santa Claus."

Frankie shoved his hands into his pockets and stared at the ground. The man seemed to be at a loss for words. Finally, he said, "Didn't anybody ever tell you it's not polite to stare?"

Frankie jerked his head up.

"I wasn't staring at you, I promise!" he squealed.

"I know, you only glanced at me," the man said. "I'm talking about the poor ground. That one grain of sand at the top of your left foot was getting very uncomfortable."

The man chuckled, impressed by his own quick wit. Frankie was not amused.

Very careful not to stare, he gazed across the park, looking for his mom.

He spotted her sitting under a maple tree, reading a book. She looked up from her book, waved, and continued reading, seemingly unconcerned that a strange man was talking to her son.

"Does my mom know you?" Frankie asked.

"Well, not really," the man said,

The Old Tin Box

by H. Gene Butler

and some had been members of the Presbyterian church. My friends, Jean and Jerry Langford, suggested I check the church papers which were kept in an old tin box in their home.

To my delight, I found not only church and family history, but fascinating glimpses into Vernon Center's roots from 1797.

Before long the concept for a first-ever history of Vernon Center was forming. I made brief notes of the things I found in the tin box and started sorting papers into labeled folders.

Using the title, *The Old Tin Box*, I wrote a preface telling briefly what I thought the content would be, why it was being written, and for whom. This provided some needed focus

In 1990, I was searching for traces of my mother's family. They had roots in the Vernon Center area

while continuing to gather. I explored a half dozen town, county, and state libraries, and several Historical Society archives. I took notes and made copies of selected materials—well worth the hours and days to find what had been written about this little hamlet, and just as important, what had *not* been published. My notebook was filling, and I was loading a file cabinet.

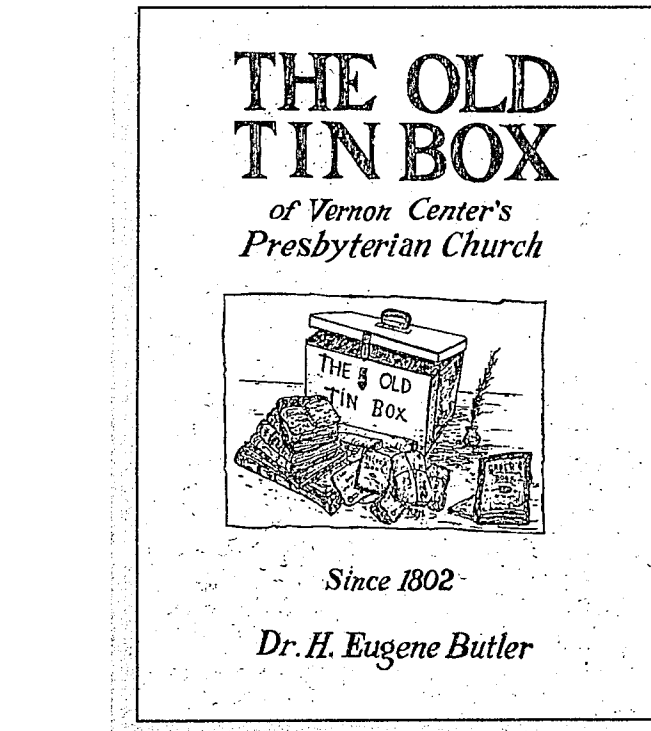
As word got around that I was working on a local history, townsfolk started digging through their own personal records. They brought me all kinds of things—scrapbooks, photo albums, letters, ledgers, and more. More scanning, more notes, and more file folders (computer and paper).

Oral histories from longtime residents and parishioners provided eye-witness supplements to the tin box records. I arranged to see people in their homes and tape-recorded some enjoyable visits as they reminisced about yesteryear. This produced over 60 hours of conversation to be transcribed selectively.

Then came the dilemma. My first objective—to write a comprehensive history of Vernon Center gleaned from all the information I was collecting—looked like several more years of work. But our church board wanted something for the 190th anniversary in 1992.

So I compromised. I couldn't do a book just on the church, because the church and early community were so closely tied. *The Old Tin Box* has a little of both.

With this shift in direction, I sent letters to all present and former members and pastors, asking for their favorite recollections, providing a list of "memory joggers" (see next page) with generous spaces for their



carefully picking his words. "I mean, she's heard of me, and I know her very well, but I wouldn't say that she knows me."

"Why not?"
Now it was the man's turn to shove his hands into his pockets and stare at the ground. He had so much to say, but maybe now wasn't the time to say it. The sun had dipped behind the trees and a stiff breeze was beginning to pick up.

"Look, it's getting late," the man said. "I'll see you again sometime."

"Frankie, stop making stuff up. You watch too much TV."

She glanced at her watch and closed her book.

"Come on," she said as she stood up. "Let's go home and eat supper. I can barely see to read anymore out here."

As they walked the three blocks to their house, Frankie didn't stare, but he took a good look at his mom. Although her auburn hair showed no signs of gray, and no wrinkles creased her 28-year-old face, his

Frankie rubbed his eyes and looked again. "Seinfeld" was still there.

"It's okay, Frankie," the man said from the chair in the corner. "I don't think she's ready to see me yet."

Frankie stifled a scream. He started to get up and run to his mom, but he didn't want to bother her again. He hated going to bed early.

"Who *are* you?" Frankie asked, clutching the remote control as if he could use it as a weapon.

"I've been called a lot of things—not all of them good—but let's just say I'm a friend. I care about you and your mommy very much."

"Why?"

The man had forgotten how hard it could be to answer the "why" questions. He could pull an infinite number of facts from memory, but answering a "why" question in a way that kids could understand was never easy.

"Well, Frankie," the man said, "you both are very special people, and I'd like to help you, and please don't ask why."

"How?"

The man looked at Frankie. Frankie, being very careful not to stare, looked back, waiting for an answer.

"How what?" the man asked.

"How are you going to help us?"

"Oh, I thought you were a Native American saying, 'Hello,' " the man said, chuckling to himself. Frankie wasn't amused.

"Why?" Frankie asked. "Oops, sorry, I won't ask that again. I promise. I meant to say, 'How come?'"

"Never mind," the man said, on the verge of being exasperated. "Look, the point is, I want to be a part of your lives. And the only way I can do that is if you ask me to."

"But I don't know you," Frankie said. "And you said my mommy doesn't really know you, either. How come you aren't talking to her? You said she's at least heard of you."

"I've stood at her door and knocked for a long time, Frankie. Either she doesn't hear me knock-

cont. on page 25

He took a good look at his mom. Although her auburn hair showed no signs of gray, and no wrinkles creased her 28-year-old face, his 6-year-old eyes saw a tired, cranky old woman.

He turned and walked away. Frankie bent over to get his dump truck, and when he looked up, the man was nowhere to be seen. Frankie ran across the field to his mom and plopped down at her feet.

"Mommy! Mommy!" he yelled, pulling the romance novel down from her face. "Guess what!"

His mom looked at him with much less excitement and quite a bit of annoyance.

"Franklin Maurice Sanders," she said through gritted teeth, "Don't you ever grab my book like that again. This better be good."

Frankie let go of the book and tried to catch his breath.

"I'm sorry, Mommy, I won't. I promise. But guess what?"

"What?" she said as she returned her attention to her book.

"A strange man talked to me."

"What do you mean, a strange man talked to you?" she said without looking up. "I've been watching you, and I didn't see anyone. We've been by ourselves the whole time."

"But, Mommy, he was there. He said he knew you, but you didn't know him."

6-year-old eyes saw a tired, cranky old woman. He couldn't see the lingering pain of losing a husband and baby daughter in a car crash. He couldn't see the stress of trying to make ends meet as a shift manager at Burger King. He couldn't see the emptiness inside.

After supper, Frankie lay on the couch, watching TV, while his mom cleaned the kitchen. He was flipping through the channels when something on the screen caught his eye. He flipped back a channel, and there was the man from the park.

"Hi, Frankie," the man said.

"How ya doing?"

"Mommy!" Frankie shouted, turning his head toward the kitchen.

"The man from the park is on TV, and he's talking to me!"

"Frankie," his mom yelled from the kitchen, "If you bother me one more time tonight, you're going straight to bed! Do you hear me?"

"But, Mommy, it's him!"

"Frankie, not another word. I'm serious!"

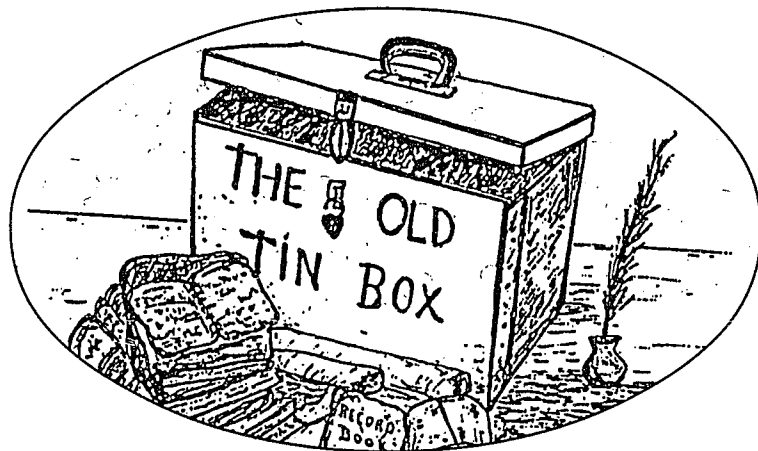
He turned back toward the television and a rerun of "Seinfeld" was on.

replies. This produced some wonderful stories and gave them ownership in the project.

After a few weeks, with stacks of material growing daily, I knew it was time to begin writing. So first I skimmed the material on hand and made a list of topical chapter titles. This helped me to gather the pieces into chapter folders. I also planned

blended changes into the text. This was an invaluable process that greatly improved the final manuscript.

A local teacher and artist, Rose Miller, drew pen and ink sketches of the several meeting houses that existed before photography was invented. We found word descriptions in letters written at the time of the



As word got around that I was working on a local history, townfolk started digging through their own personal records.

a chapter for "odds 'n ends" of good material that didn't fit anywhere else.

Revising the preface to reflect the church emphasis, I then wrote outlines for each of the chapters, summarizing their thrust and planned content. Taken together, these chapter outlines became a writing plan.

While writing the first draft, I asked several people to serve as a review team. My reviewers included our pastor, a librarian, a professor of history, an author, a teacher, a retired editor, and several residents and church members.

I evaluated their comments and

1902 centennial. Rose did other sketches, including the old tin box surrounded by its contents on a table. This was a perfect cover illustration.

I prepared camera-ready masters in my study, including paste-ups of illustrations. The finished manuscript had 180 pages, nine photographs, six sketches, five maps, and a 10-page index. A book becomes a resource when *fully* indexed!

I visited three print shops for quotes in quantities of 100, 200, and 500. I chose Boonville Graphics, Inc., not only for cost but because the owner offered to design the cover

"Memory Joggers"

Dr. Butler sent out a form, soliciting favorite recollections of the church. Some of the items included—

- Children & Grandchildren (Names/birth dates, for future genealogy searchers):
- What I like best about our church family:
- What I'd like to see in our church's future:
- Pictures I could loan for publication: (Weddings, Sunday School, Work Projects, the Church, Ministers, etc.)

• My Recollections—

A Sunday School Teacher/Class:

A Harvest Dinner:

A Children's Program:

A Sunrise Service:

A Christmas Eve Service:

A Wedding:

A Work Project:

An Anniversary:

The Men's Brotherhood:

The Women's Association:

Old Home Day:

Former pastors:

Another memory I'd like to share:

with a rustic style of hand printing—just perfect for a church and community history.

Most of the 220 copies of *The Old Tin Box* were sold on the day of our 190th anniversary celebration. During the celebration, I shared some excerpts from the book (see box below).

Had the project been delayed until our bicentennial, we would have missed capturing the delightful recollections of 13 precious seniors. Although now out of print, *The Old Tin Box* can be found in the Mormon Microfilm Library and several Central New York public libraries and Historical Society archives.

After our 190th year, I returned to my original goal and published *Pioneers of Vernon Center, New York*, in 1994. **SR**

Gene and Bev Butler are a delightfully retired couple who happen to live in the house where the editor grew up. Thanks, Dad!

Treasures from The Old Tin Box

by Dr. H. Gene Butler

During the 190th anniversary celebration I presented these excerpts from *The Old Tin Box*:

"The first settlers of Vernon Center came from Winchester, Conn., in 1798. In 1802, 17 people became charter members of the First Congregational Church of Vernon, which later became the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church. For nine years they worshipped in a log cabin located on the Green.

"The 1800s were a time of growth and turbulence. The Charles Finney revivals in the 1820s swept through Vernon Center like wildfire. Many folks made their decision for Christ through Finney's influence. By 1828 our congregation had grown to over 200 members.

"In those frontier days, the church supplied a needed system of law enforcement based on the Scriptures. Charges ranged from disrespectful remarks concerning God, to property disputes, to forgery, and even one case of homicide.

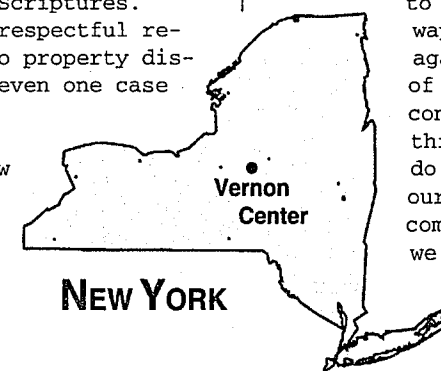
"In December of 1842, bitter feelings over how to handle the slavery issue caused the minister, John Dodd, and 44 supporters to leave and form their own church

in Vernon Center. They called themselves the Independent Congregationalists and they functioned for about five years, holding services in the little red schoolhouse.

"The Great Depression of the 1930s touched everyone here including our pastor, Rev. L.D. Jarrard. He shared in the economic hard times by staying here as our pastor at a salary of just \$12.50 a week, to provide for his family of five. The steadfast faith typified by Rev. Jarrard and carried forward by succeeding generations has made it possible for us to celebrate our 190th anniversary in 1992.

"In recalling the challenges of past years, we can be encouraged by recent happenings in the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church. We are reaching out

to help others in whatever way we can. Today we're once again a small congregation of just 45 members, but we continually look for the things we can do, and we do them. And we'll maintain our helping attitude to this community and beyond, as we continue to nurture our young people in the Christian faith."



Conference sessions in Brazil

by Janet Thorngate

(Editor's Note: Rev. Dale D. Thorngate and his wife, Janet, visited Seventh Day Baptists in Brazil in January and February of this year—he as Executive Secretary of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation, she representing the SDB Historical Society. In addition to reviewing plans for the World Federation sessions to be held there in January 2003, they taught courses in Seventh Day Baptist beliefs, polity, and history during the national convention sessions and visited churches in three different states. Second of a three-part report.)

Porto União, center of a lumbering region in Brazil's southern state of Santa Catarina, reminds us of a European city. White stucco houses with red tile roofs line terraced hill-sides. Here we are guests in the home of the local pastor and Conference President, Leonildo Lebkuchen.

The Porto União church, like Curitiba Central, is one of the three original churches in this 85-year-old Conference. (The third is Itararé in São Paulo State, which we would visit later in our trip.)

The view from the back balcony of the Lebkuchen home looks down across church steeples and domes to a wide, meandering river. Each day we walk down picturesque gray brick streets to attend the week-long sessions of the Brazil SDB Conference at the public high school.

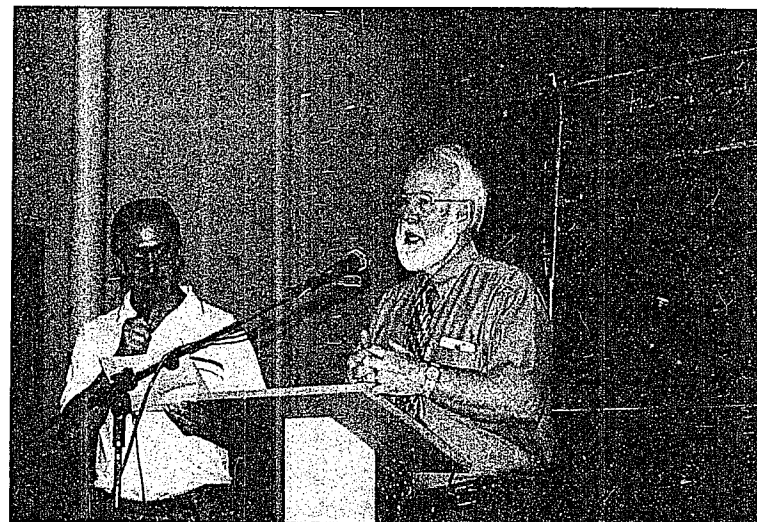
"Extending the Tent"

Pastor Lebkuchen chose "Extending the Tent" (from Isaiah 54:2) as the theme for this year's Conference sessions. One example of that expansion is the new church in Brazilia, the national capital.

Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura and his wife, Liani, were our companions and translators for much of the Conference week. Relatively new Seventh Day Baptists, they are leaders of the new church in Brazilia. Both work as financial analysts—Luciano for the national bank, and Liani for the federal government.

SDB teaching

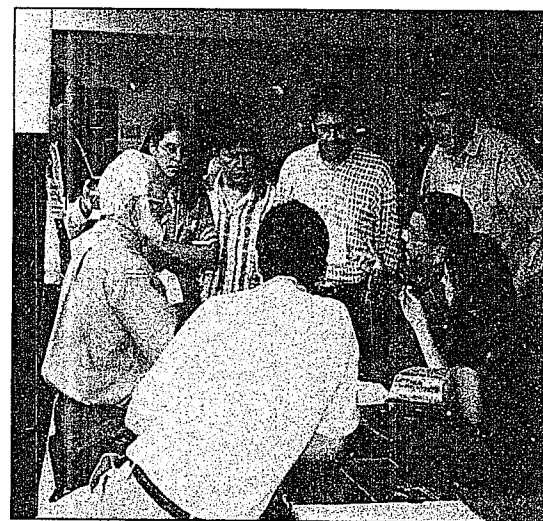
Monday and Tuesday of the Con-



Pastor John Correia (left) translated for Dale Thorngate at the Brazilian SDB Conference. The Thorngates taught SDB beliefs, polity, and history.

ference were set aside for us. We taught an intensive "summer institute" course (January is summertime in Brazil!) for about 80 pastors and Conference leaders. We alternated sessions between the two of us, Dale doing SDB beliefs and polity, while I concentrated on teaching SDB history. Our faithful translator, Pastor John Correia, worked every session,

cont. to p. 23



Discussions between the official Conference sessions were lively. Pastor Dale had translation help from Luciano and Liani de Moura (seated right).



Women's Society page by Laura Price

A friend indeed! The importance of fellowship

Over the years, my friends have been a great blessing to me, sharing worthwhile thoughts and common experiences.

My friends have shown me things about myself that I needed to deal with. Left unattended, they would have hindered my personal growth. Caring friends bring out the best in me, sort through the worst, and help to keep me humble.

Time seems to be moving swiftly, and I find that I am yet another year older. A friend sent me a card with the "Serenity Prayer" on the front. You know, the one that goes, "God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change... Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference."

She crossed out the "get-well wish" inside and replaced it with "Feliz Cumple Anos," which translates "Happy Birthday." She also wrote, "I know it doesn't say Happy Birthday, but I thought that the cover is perfect for us. Hope that your birthday is full of God's peace." I can hardly think of a better sentiment, and the cover of the card is "perfect" for many of us.

Years ago, I confided in that same friend while trying to cope with the grievances and perplexities of an ill-fated, stressed-out relationship. My dilemma actually helped prompt her to action.

"Laura," she reported back, "after hearing about your problems, I decided to rededicate my life to God! So when the pastor called for anyone who was interested, I went up there. It was something I just had to do."

I'm glad that my predicament was able to help her. By some strange irony, we have often shared strikingly similar experiences, and she herself

was once again close to the same situation. I'm glad she made it a point to refocus on God.

This entire ordeal reminded me of the beauty of perseverance, the importance of placing God first in your life, and the necessity of staying focused on Him. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." (Matt. 6:33). This is what was re-emphasized to me.

We learn from each other. I had another friend who pointed out that it's easy to be a Christian when you're in your own world without any outside disturbances. It's when you go out into the world, or even gather at church, that you get tested.

This is also where you learn how to get along with each other and love one another. Here we find opportunities to forgive and to be forgiven, to

Friends have been a great blessing to me, sharing worthwhile thoughts and common experiences.

help and to be helped, to care for others and to be cared for when we function faithfully beyond our own private domains. Our interactions provide us a way to practice our faith and grow—strengthening and tempering us as we keep and live God's Word. And we can encourage each other to continue to improve our lives.

We cannot help but touch each other's lives. Our paths are interwoven like an intricate fabric, impacting



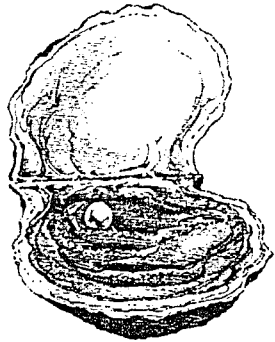
each life directly or indirectly. Even when you think no one is noticing, watching, or listening, someone is. We cannot help but give impressions and be some sort of example to one another—sometimes good, sometimes bad.

So our actions *do* count for something, no matter who we are. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14). As we all get older, hopefully we grow wiser and set a good example for those who are younger.

How old am I now? In the words from another old friend: "I'm old enough to know better, but too young to resist!" I've had to rely on God's help to get me through my own shortcomings, and I'm learning more as I go along.

So thanks be to God for His protection and eternal strength, wisdom, and love. And thanks be to God for my good friends and family who have continually supported me through prayer, encouragement, counsel, laughter, and wide shoulders to cry on when the need arose.

Finally, thank *you* for your patience, forgiveness, and compassion. This is a most gracious gift. May the God of peace bless and keep you. **SR**



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

An age-old confessional dilemma

During the English Reformation of the early 1600s, those of the Free Church tradition rejected the authoritarianism of both the Church of England and the Catholics, and faced repeated cycles of persecution.

After the execution of King Charles I in 1649, the decade of the Commonwealth gave temporary freedom for the study of the Scriptures. This proved particularly helpful for Baptists, including those who followed the scriptural basis for worship on the seventh day of the week.

Persecution returns

However, with the re-establishment of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660, a new round of religious and political persecutions set in. During this time, John James was executed, more for his suspected political connections with the Fifth Monarchist movement than for his acknowledged religious convictions as a Seventh Day Baptist pastor.

Some suffered less than others

Some historians point out that the Presbyterians and Congregationalists suffered less than the Baptists during this persecution for two reasons.

First, their stand on infant baptism was more in harmony with both the Church of England and Catholicism. These children were considered members, and thus citizens apart from any personal decision or conviction.

Secondly, each had a "Confession of Faith" which gave a certain unifor-

mity of belief and practice. The Presbyterians had their Westminster Confession of 1646, and the Congregationalists had accepted the Savoy Confession of 1658.

It is true that seven Baptist congregations in London had formulated a Confession in 1644, but its main purpose was to distinguish their Particular or Calvinistic doctrines from the General or Arminian Baptists, as well as from the Anabaptists.

Act of Toleration; Baptist confession

With the death of Charles II in 1685, the throne eventually passed to William and Mary, who issued the Act of Toleration in May of 1689. Baptists were quick to use this new freedom to express their beliefs more openly.

Representatives from about 100 Baptist congregations met in London "to consider some things that might be to the glory of God, and the good of the congregations." This document, known as "The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689," became a benchmark of Calvinistic Baptist faith in England. It was brought to America by Elias Keach, whose

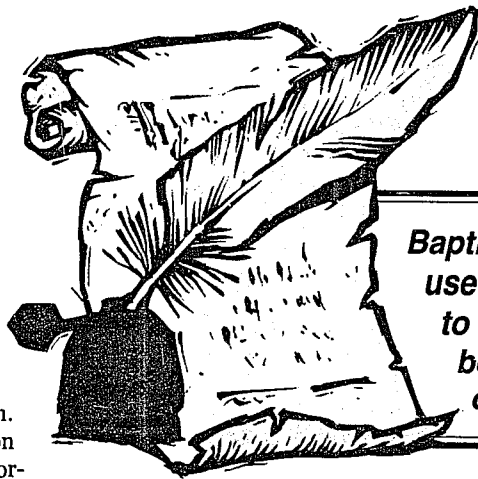
preaching in the Philadelphia area provided a Baptist environment in which Seventh Day Baptist congregations took root. This Confession was the basis for the "Philadelphia Confession of Faith" printed by Benjamin Franklin in 1743.

One drastic departure

As important as this Confession of 1689 has been in establishing and maintaining Baptist churches throughout over three centuries of history, there is one place where it drastically departs from its Biblical affirmation. In Chapter 23—entitled "Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day"—it departs from its previously *sola scriptura* or "Scripture alone" affirmations. Section one of that chapter gives a strong biblical base for the Sabbath, declaring:

"The light of nature shows that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good, and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices

cont. on page 26



Baptists were quick to use this new freedom to express their beliefs more openly.



SR Almanac

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

One year ago—July-Aug. 2000

In the feature section: Marie Ward asks, "What is a parent?"; Jerry VanHorn reminisces about his youth in Westerly, R.I., in "Pew Number 12."

"A jubilee for a camp," written by Don Sanford, notes the 50th anniversary of Camp Wakonda in Milton, Wis.

The Milton church unveils a new large-screen projection system for computerized presentations and videos.

On the Christian Education page, Andrew Camenga discusses the need for a "portable faith."

Kirk Looper recounts recent trip to the Philippines.

Five years ago—July-Aug. 1996

Features on the theme, "Working Mothers," come from Lannette Calhoun, Leanne Lippincott, Jayne Lubke, and Vivian McNeme.

"Focus" page promotes brochure on a new mission to Mexico.

Board of Christian Education honors Daryl and Barbara White for their five years of service as originators and coordinators of NET (Natural Evangelism Training) Retreats.

Old Stonefort, Ill., church celebrates 125th anniversary in May.

Members of the Plainfield, N.J., church dedicate a new parsonage.

10 years ago—July-Aug. 1991

Pastors Gene Smith, Leland Bond, Robert Harris, and Harold King bear witness to their career changes in ministry.

Ordination statement for the diaconate presented by former SR editor Scott Smith.

Royal Mkandawire reports on flood disaster in the Phalombe Plains, Malawi, Africa.

Rev. A.H. Lewis profiled in "Pearls" column.

Good meetings reported from the Eastern Association and the Wisconsin/Minnesota Semi-Annual.

25 years ago—July-Aug. 1976

A full-color cover graces July's "Bicentennial issue," celebrating America's 200th birthday. Historical articles

speak of SDBs Sam Ward, Ebenezer David, and the Ephrata (Pa.) Cloister.

Recent seminary grad, Robert Babcock, moves to Houston to begin work with the Reach Out Now project.

John Camenga writes on the last Beatitude.

Consultant John Wimber leads Conference workshop as part of "Commitment to Growth." Gary Cox presides over the Conference at Houghton, N.Y., which includes a Bicentennial celebration in period costume.

Twelve students attend Summer Institute in Plainfield, N.J.; 14 SCSCers make up team "Miracle."

Pastoral moves: Edgar Wheeler to Denver, Colo.; Fran Saunders to Farina, Ill.; Dale Thorngate to Columbus, Ohio.

50 years ago—July-Aug. 1951

One front cover shows photo of "what are believed to be the largest Ten Commandments in the world... spelled out in huge white stones on a mountain side near Murphy, N.C.... Pilots flying over the area can read them from the air."

Proposals for denominational reorganization are presented by Albyn Mackintosh, Wayne Rood, and Lloyd Seager.

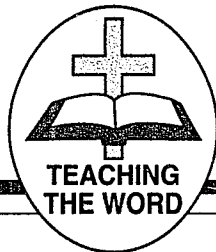
Wardner Fitz Randolph and family plan to return to the Jamaica mission after Conference.

Conference plans set for Alfred, N.Y., on August 14-19. Retired pastor, Edgar D. Van Horn, dies on July 13.

...where are we headed?

Pray for—

- our summer camping ministries
- all working moms, in or out of the home
- continued success with NET retreats
- a strengthening of our kinship system
- our SDB publication ministries
- this year's Conference in Lindsborg, Kan.
- our board and agency leaders and workers



Helping Hand follows Uniform Lesson Series

Have you ever wondered how the choices are made for the Bible passages used in *The Helping Hand*?

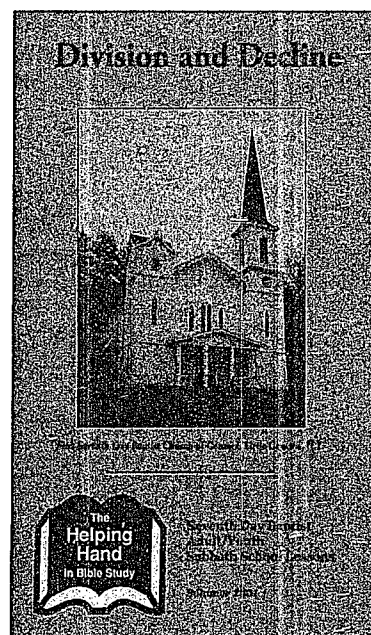
Seventh Day Baptists produce the *Helping Hand* as a lesson guide for students. However, we do not want to leave teachers without help.

Our lessons are usually based on the Uniform Lesson Series. Because we are based on this widely used system, we know that our Sabbath School teachers can use the helps produced by many Christian publishers.

The Uniform Lesson Series is also called *International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching*. This series is produced by the Committee on the Uniform Series.

As far back as 1866, uniform lessons for teaching in Sunday Schools were created. By 1872 the National Sunday School Convention officially organized the Uniform Lesson System by calling for "the formation of a committee of five clergy and five laypersons, to select a course of Bible lessons for a series of years, not exceeding seven, to embrace a general study of the whole Bible, alternating between the Old and New Testaments semi-annually or quarterly." That committee was created, did its work, and the system of lessons was rapidly adopted.

In the roughly 130 years since the Committee on the Uniform Series was created, the size of the group has expanded and the kind of work the



Our Sabbath School teachers can use the helps produced by many Christian publishers.

committee produces has changed. At the core of the series is a system of Bible study based on a 6-year cycle. This cycle is the basic outline for the scriptures that appear in the *Helping Hand*.

Around the cycle, support materials are created. These support materials help focus the lessons on particular topics and try to tie each quarter's lessons together.

Seventh Day Baptists are represented on the Committee. For many years, our practice has been to have the editor of *The Helping Hand* serve as our representative. The editor attends the annual committee meetings in March.

At these meetings, the cycle of lessons is reviewed, the previous year's work is double-checked, the current work of the committee is completed, and assignments are made for the next year's work.

The major work of the committee is producing a "Guide for Lesson Development." This guide includes "the scope of the biblical material to be studied, and information relating to age-specific learners, faith development, teaching strategies, and special interests."

While there are sessions to tie all of the material together, the bulk of the work is done in Age-Level Teams. Three age levels are used: children, youth, and adult.

For each year's material, an Age-Level Chair is chosen to help guide the work of that sub-committee from the beginning interim assignments through its completion. For the adult age-level material being prepared for the year 2005-2006, our current *Helping Hand* editor is serving as chair. **SR**



As an association of churches, we are so blessed in the work that our Lord is doing through us. We sometimes forget that denominational growth is an outcome of worshipping Him, and that His Spirit brings individuals to repentance.

It gets disappointing to hear a person say, "The Seventh Day Baptist organization is dying." That indicates to us that some people are not keeping up with the activities of the Conference.

Our pastors and leaders are doing things that must be "working" because the number of Seventh Day Baptists has increased over the past few years. We invite you to look at our reports that we make available to everyone.

Each church receives at least one copy of the "Missions" sent with the *Lead-On* (now "sdbnews.wow"); or when "sdbnews" is not published, our reports go directly to the Missions Keyworker at your church.

Along with this, the *Missionary Reporter* is made available to every church (at no cost) and to every member of the Missionary Society. Ask your pastor or clerk about these publications.

In the last three years we have welcomed six churches into the fellowship of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference. True, these were not mega-churches, but each brought at least 20 into this association of covenanted believers. Right now, four more groups are being raised up to fulfill the requirements of Conference membership.

This new growth should not be a surprise to most of those who attend General Conference each year. So, please—let's not be negative about our small membership. Use your energy to pray that God would raise up more groups and leaders to help continue the growth that He has already given us.

At the Missionary Society, we see growth in many areas of the world, not just in the United States. This comes at a great cost, and many of our sister Conferences are having a far more difficult time with growth than here in America.

These countries are short on laborers and funds to promote the churches that they have already established. They look to us for support and help.

In many cases, support is given abundantly. Many of our members pray on a regular basis for our sister churches and their needs. Some funds are donated for specific purposes. We have even had several volunteers visit other countries to help with projects.

A Seventh Day Baptist Church Planter's School has been developed to help prospective pastors and leaders in planting and developing churches (*read about the first class in this SR*). A special program for short-term

mission projects is about ready to be implemented. So many exciting activities are happening around the world.

Our USA and Canada Conference develops programs to train church leaders. These programs are shared with other Conferences and churches upon request. They range from

the Training In Ministry by Extension (T.I.M.E.) program for pastors, to the Sabbath School Nurture Series and *Helping Hand* for the members.

Almost every level of church ministry has been aided with materials developed by dedicated members of our Conference. Even the idea of the Summer Christian Service Corps has caught the eye of SDBs in several countries.

In many cases, members of the Conference in the USA and Canada have obtained the training which is applied to these programs. We praise God that He encourages those who sacrifice their time and efforts in the work of spreading this knowledge to others.

So when you hear someone saying bad things about the SDB Conference, you may want to remind them about how much you enjoy your church, Conference, and other associations that come with membership in a Seventh Day Baptist church. Also, you might ask them how much they are doing to help promote the growth and development of our denomination in His Kingdom. **SR**

Use your energy to pray that God would raise up more groups and leaders to help continue the growth that He has already given us.

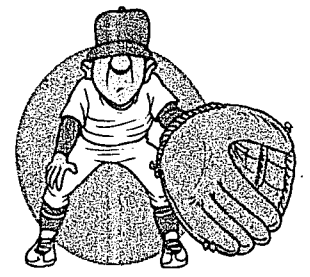


the BEACON

Produced by the Youth Committee of the Board of Christian Education
For and by members of the SDB Youth Fellowship July.-Aug. 2001

Youth activities at Conference

- Sunday**
Annual Business Meeting
Video of Conference clips
- Monday**
Bowling
- Tuesday**
Fashion show
- Wednesday**
Youth/Pastor Softball Game
- Thursday**
Youth Banquet
Evening plans pending
- Friday**
Praise time
- Sabbath**
Stained Glass concert



Bring your gloves for Wed. night!!

Pre-Con Retreats

Aug. 1, 4:00 p.m. – Aug. 5, 1:00 p.m.

Youth

Ages 15-18
(or completed grade 9)

St. John's Military School
Salina, Kansas

"The Greatest Swap Meet Ever"

Director:
Pastor Chris Mattison

Staff:
Sue Bond
Scott Hausrath
Scott Smith
Chris Thorngate

Retreat fee: \$120
(Medical form required—see May SR)

SEE MAP to St. John's inside front cover this issue

Young Adult

Ages 18-29
(or in SCSC)

Bethany College
Lindsborg, Kansas

"Lead Me Not Into Temptation, I Can Find It Myself"

Director:
Pastor George Calhoun

Staff:
Janet Butler
Ben Calhoun
Stephanie Sholtz

Retreat fee: \$120

Mail your registration form from the May SR

A class act graduates

by Shannon Colavecchio

(Editor's note: Steve McPherson attends the Miami, Fla., Seventh Day Baptist Church, with his parents, Myron and Mary Jane McPherson. Myron serves as a trustee for the denominational Memorial Fund, and Mary Jane is a recent member of the General Council. This inspiring story came from the Palm Beach Post.)

Steve McPherson finished his final six weeks of high school from home, communicating with his teachers through e-mail and juggling his assignments with weekly chemotherapy sessions.

The grueling treatment for his Hodgkin's lymphoma, which doctors diagnosed Easter weekend, left his body so weak and his immune system so vulnerable, McPherson



Steve McPherson holds his hard-earned diploma. Proud parents Mary Jane and Myron McPherson are behind Steve to the right.

Complete with "Pomp and Circumstance," the National Anthem, television camera crews, and spirited singing by two teachers accompanied

the undiagnosed Hodgkin's left his body aching—and 60 pounds lighter.

Since his chemotherapy began, the Bright Futures Scholar has gained back about 40 pounds, and is thinking about returning to his job at Power Smoothie.

He's also considering taking a few community college classes when his chemotherapy ends in October. McPherson's determination and spirit impressed more than a few people.

"We thought we would be pulling you through this, but you pulled us through," said Principal Geoffrey McKee, choking back tears. "It's tough for us to see such a young person faced with such adversity at this stage, but to face it with such grace and dignity, you've taught us all a lesson in life. You're our hero. Thank you." SR

The half-hour surprise ceremony left McPherson feeling "a little like a celebrity."

could not walk across the stage last week to get his diploma from Spanish River High School.

So he went back to the suburban Boca Raton campus Monday, June 4, expecting maybe a handshake from the principal and a quick picture to mark the belated graduation that almost didn't happen.

Instead, McPherson—finally gaining a little strength—got his own private ceremony before his parents and more than four dozen friends, teachers, and district administrators.

by acoustic guitar, the half-hour surprise ceremony left McPherson feeling "a little like a celebrity."

"A few weeks ago, I figured I'd just wasted 30 bucks on this cap and gown," said McPherson, who in the past month also missed his sister's college graduation in Pennsylvania and his brother's wedding in Denver. "This is more than I could have hoped for."

McPherson said he feels better than he has in the past year, when



The President's Page

Conference Workshops: TRY something new!

by Clayton Pinder

TRY Managing Church Finances

—A workshop for church treasurers (Norman Burdick, Steve Pierce, Clayton Pinder)

TRY Understanding SDA Actions

—An update on recent events and how to deal with SDA influence if you encounter it (Gabe Bejjani, Ron Elston)

TRY Missions

—An update on current needs, and how people from your church can become personally involved with missions (Kirk Looper)

TRY Turning Your Church Inside Out


—Practical advice and creative ways to reshape our churches into vibrant communities for others (Mayola Warner, Steven James)

TRY Defending Your Faith

—An introduction to the Christian study of Apologetics, with lots of resources to continue on your own (Marissa Van Horn)

TRY Confirming Creation

—Dr. Paul Ackerman from the Institute for Creation



Conference Workshops
will be held on
Wed. and Thurs. afternoons

Session 1	1:45 - 2:45 p.m.
Session 2	3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Research looks at the phenomenal scientific evidence for creation and resources available for further study (Paul Ackerman)

TRY Using Your Voice

—Two-part workshop on effectively using your voice for expressive reading within

the church and how to teach others (Venita Zinn)

TRY God's Time Principles

—Explore how God's principles can help you have enough time for all the things you have to do (Chuck Graffius)

TRY Expanding Your Prayer Influence

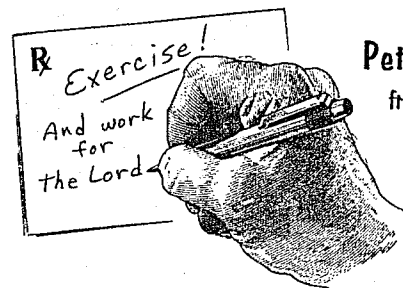
—Explore several ways to deepen your understanding and application of prayer (Tim Bancroft)

TRY Family Advent

—Ideas and resources to help turn a hectic time of year into meaningful family time (Susie Fox, Wes & Martha Greene)

TRY Caring For Parents

—A workshop dealing with the impacts of caring for elderly parents (Joyce & Rex Burdick)



Pete's Prescriptions

from Dr. Pete May,
Executive Secretary

Serving as Executive Secretary is a multifaceted experience.

Gabe Bejjani, the Council on Ministry director, invited me and my wife, Nancy, to this year's Pastors' Conference in Alfred Station, N.Y. We had wonderful fellowship, including intellectual exercises and interactions, Baptist history, and even a camp picnic. It was a joy to watch our pastors sharing, caring, helping, and learning together. They taught us a lot about SDBs as we followed along.

The four days of studies were led by Drs. Paul Manuel and William Brackney. It was enlightening and encouraging to learn about the social development of Baptists in history. Of course, everyone pondered where Baptists were going to be in the scheme of tomorrow.

We also heard that SDBs need to increase their voice of Sabbath blessings for our first-day brethren. We aren't sharing enough the blessings of God's presence in the Sabbath. In fact, Dr. Brackney said we are possibly depriving them of a blessing that they are totally unaware of. What a heavy mission for the General Conference to pursue. Can we? Will we?

Pastor Ken Chroniger, his wife, Peggy, and the entire Alfred Station

church welcomed us with heaps of courtesy, food, and love, and with unique country hospitality, farm houses, and a beautiful historical church. You have to see all of these sights to really appreciate them.

We were privileged to stay with the Lyle Suttons. They have refurbished a huge old farm house and have sweeping vistas of a stream, green woods, and a meadow. Their family and friends gave us a warm appreciation of western New York.

God's timing often provides unexpected blessings. On our way home, we had to change planes. But the flight to Ontario, Calif., was delayed at Dulles airport. So we called our son, Chip, who had just moved from California to northern Virginia. He was at the airport in 15 minutes and took us to his farm house in the woods near D.C.

We passed through two farm gates, one cow pasture, and up a dirt road

Pastors in a pastoral setting

through a Virginia "holler." This was our first visit to their new home. We didn't know he was so close to the airport!

We consider it an honor to have participated in an inspiring Pastors' Conference 2001. **SR**



Our host pastor, Ken Chroniger.



Small groups allowed for deeper discussion of the lectures.



Far left: Another in-between-meal snack time!

Left: Paul Green (plaid shirt) led the Conference in song. COM Executive Gabe Bejjani (left) and Dr. Pete May (second from left) follow along.

Basic training for church planters

A former school building, recently purchased by the SDB church in Stonefort, Ill., housed the initial "Basic Training" course for church planters in late May.

Organized by National Extension Minister Ronald Elston, six students received instruction on church doctrine and administration, along with practical helps to develop and launch a new Seventh Day Baptist church.

Students involved in this first-ever effort included John and Betsy Brewer, Louisville, Ky.; Terry Durst, Sarver, Pa.; Bob Farr, Marion, Ill.; Hubert Lewis, Stonefort; and Tim Parsley, Mattoon, Ill. As the main responder to new e-mail contacts at the SDB Center, Mike Burns also sat in on the sessions.

David Bell, church planter from Owensboro, Ky., carried the bulk of the intensive teaching schedule. Other instructors covered many areas of personal and church development. Speaking on their topics of



The first SDB Church Planter's school. Front row (l. to r.): Vivian Looper, Ron Elston, Dannette Montague, Betsy and John Brewer, Terry Durst, and David Bell. Back row: Kirk Looper, Don Sanford, Hubert Lewis, Mike Burns, Bob Farr, and Tim Parsley.

expertise were Bill and Cindy Burks, Ron Elston, Kirk and Vivian Looper, Dannette Montague, and Don Sanford.

"I was impressed with the quality of instruction," said organizer Ron Elston. "We received good feedback from both the oral and written evaluations."

Elston shared that some of the students had already started to apply the principles learned.

According to the needs of leaders and churches, one or two sessions might be held in 2002. **SR**



Instructor David Bell.



Clockwise from lower left: Terry Durst, Davey Bell, Kirk Looper (standing), Bob Farr, Tim Parsley, and Hubert Lewis.



Ron Elston at the training center in Stonefort, Ill.

Conference in Brazil, cont. from p. 12



Conference President Leonildo Lebkuchen displaying the beautiful blue-and-white SDB Conference flag.

which amounted to nine hours each day.

As always, we, the teachers, learned as much as the students. We were especially glad to expand our understanding of Brazilian church history.

The Conference has adopted the World Federation's statement of belief. But, as with any other healthy group of Baptists, discussions of beliefs and polity, both during and after class, were lively and challenging.

Efficient business

On Wednesday and Thursday, we observed the efficient way the Brazilians do their Conference business. One delegate from each church and all ordained leaders have the opportunity to vote. There are 80 churches with over 3,000 members.

From general reports and committee sessions, through action on recommendations and election of officers, all was conducted in good order. Morning devotions and evening worship sessions gave many the opportunity to lead and to preach. As the weekend approached with separate congress sessions for women, children and youth, attendance swelled to over 900.

Feliz Sábado!

Then came the joy of Conference Sabbath. Feliz Sábado! (Happy Sabbath!)

It opened with a dramatic parade of flags as church representatives carried the flags of their respective states. A formal flag-raising ceremony had civic officials raising the State and local flag. President Lebkuchen himself raised the new blue and white Brazil Conference flag.

From general reports and committee sessions, through action on recommendations and election of officers, all was conducted in good order.

Sabbath worship in the packed auditorium rang with hymns and choruses led by a variety of praise bands and choirs from different regions. What a thrill to join in worship with over 900 brothers and sisters in the faith!

As privileged guests, we were honored to have the opportunity to

address the entire Conference and to bring more personal greetings to the smaller groups. Pastor Dale brought the Sabbath morning message and gave the challenge to new officers and leaders at the closing dedication program on Sunday afternoon. On Sabbath afternoon, I addressed the Youth Congress (over 400 young people!) and presented a Seventh Day Baptist history slide program that evening.

Sad farewells

End-of-Conference farewells to new friends and old are so sad. We had to say good-bye to Salvador Catano da Silva, vice president of the Conference, who was

Brazil's representative to the WF sessions in New Zealand in 1991. We didn't have time to visit his church in the city where he serves as mayor.

Others, like Pastor Izake Nikel de Oliveria of the Curitiba Central church, we would get to know better as we visited their churches the next two weeks. Pastor Izake described visits to churches in other South American countries and gave us

a tour of the sewing factory in his home. And we learned more about the history of the Brazil Conference.

Some things cut short

Pastor Lebkuchen had planned to host us for several more days at his home so we could visit several of the rural churches he pastors

cont. on p. 26

New members

Westerly, RI

Joined after baptism
Kelly Badger
Keith Cronin
Joined after testimony
Douglas Badger
Linda Badger
Hiram W. Barber III
Hiram W. Barber IV
Kerri Barber
Katherine Thomas
Joined by letter
Morgan Shepard
Associate member
Debi Barber

Birth

Schawang.—A daughter, Halle Angelo Schawang, was born to Jeff and Audra (Williams) Schawang of Waverly, NE, on May 10, 2001.

Obituary

Bond.—Margaret Bond Allen, 74, of Jane Lew, W.Va., died unexpectedly on April 26, 2001. She was born on June 24, 1926, in Salem, W.Va., a daughter of the late Simeon and Sallie (Williams) Bond. Her husband, Stanley K. Allen, whom she married on June 12, 1945, survives.

Also surviving are one son, Thomas Bond Allen of Carlsbad, Calif.; one daughter, Linda Jane Allen Andersen of Honolulu, Hawaii; one brother, Edwin Bond of Williamsburg, Va.; and four grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by three brothers, Eugene, William, and Thomas Bond; and by two sisters, Eleanor Bond and Mary Elizabeth Tennant.

Margaret grew up and was married in the Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church. Later, she and her husband transferred their membership to the Lost Creek, W.Va., SDB Church.

She was a lifetime Sabbath School teacher in both the Salem and Lost Creek churches. In the Lost Creek church, she held almost every office and served on all committees. Margaret chaired the Christian Education Committee, was a member of the choir, and held every office in the Ladies Aid. She worked with Bible School many years, and cooked at camp many years.

She was also janitor of the church for about 10 years and did not accept any salary. She went about quietly doing all sorts of repairs and remodeling to the church and paying for the materials. She encouraged all who were in her Sabbath School classes. One church member said, "As I look at Margaret, I see an angel with a halo."

She graduated from Salem High School with the class of 1944. In 1948, she graduated from Salem College with honors.

Margaret was a homemaker and a loving, caring, generous woman, never refusing anyone of her help and friendship. She loved her Lord Jesus, her family, and her church. *Truly a mighty oak in the Christian forest has fallen.*

Funeral services were held on April 30, 2001, in the Lost Creek SDB Church, with the Rev. David L. Taylor officiating. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Lost Creek church in Margaret's memory. This money will be used to establish a scholarship for Seventh Day Baptist young folks in her memory.

The family members of Margaret Bond Allen express their thanks for all the cards, flowers, thoughtfulness, scholarship contributions and, most of all, the prayers and support of their many friends.

Tree stump, cont. from page 8

ing, or she just doesn't want me to come in."

"How come?"

The man was wishing he had told Frankie not to ask "how come" questions, too.

"Some questions don't have simple answers," the man said. "I promise you I only want the best for you and your mother. You should get some sleep. I'll talk to you later."

Either the volume on the TV had been turned down, or it suddenly got louder, because Kramer seemed to be yelling in Frankie's ear. He turned to watch just as "Seinfeld" went to a commercial. He looked back at the chair and it was empty. Frankie lay his head down on the padded arm of the couch and started flipping through the channels. Maybe he would find the man again.

Frankie woke up in the morning, still on the couch. His mom was in the kitchen fixing him a bowl of cereal and a glass of orange juice.

"Frankie!" she yelled. "Wake up! We're both going to be late if you don't get moving!"

Frankie rolled off the couch, ate his breakfast, and got ready for school. He waited until they were in the car before asking any questions.

"Mommy," Frankie said sweetly, not wanting to upset her, "How come we don't go to church?"

"Frankie, you should say 'why,' not 'how come.'"

"I know, Mommy, but 'why' questions are harder to answer."

His mom kept her eyes on the road. She didn't say what she wanted to say. He wasn't trying to make her mad.

"Look, Sweetie," she said. "We don't go to church because we don't believe in God."

"Who's God?"

"He's the person who took your father and sister away from us."

"Why did he do that?"

"I don't know, Frankie," his mom said as tears began to stream down her face. "I just don't know."

"So if my mommy believed that you existed, even though she hasn't seen you, that would be faith?"
"Exactly."

Stop asking so many questions."

Frankie didn't even know why he had brought up church. He sure hadn't planned to upset his mom like that. The question just popped into his head, so he asked it. He wanted to say something to make her feel better, but he was afraid he'd only make things worse.

Frankie was waiting at the school playground for his mom to pick him up when the man appeared on the swing next to him. None of the other kids seemed to notice.

"I didn't scare you this time, did I?" the man asked.

"No, I've been waiting for you all day," Frankie said.

"Listen," the man said, "I know your mother blames my father for a lot of things, but I want you to know that everything happens for a reason. Good will come of it."

"You mean God is your daddy?" Frankie asked.

"That's right," the man said.

"But he's your daddy, too. And your mother's."

"I don't understand," Frankie said.

"How can he be everybody's daddy?" "That's okay, Frankie, many grownups don't understand, either. Some things you just have to accept on faith."

"What's faith?"

"Some say it is the belief in things not seen," the man said.

"So if my mommy believed that you existed, even though she hasn't seen you, that would be faith?"

"Exactly."

Frankie pushed off the ground with his feet and started to swing. The man started to swing, too. Frankie saw his mom's car pull into the school parking lot. He looked over at the swing next to him. The man was still there.

"Are you going to disappear now that my mommy's here?" Frankie asked.

"No, I will never leave you," the man said. "You may not see me, but I will always be here next to you."

"Will my mommy ever see you?" "I hope so. Maybe you can open her eyes a little."

"I'll see what I can do," Frankie said as he jumped out of the swing.

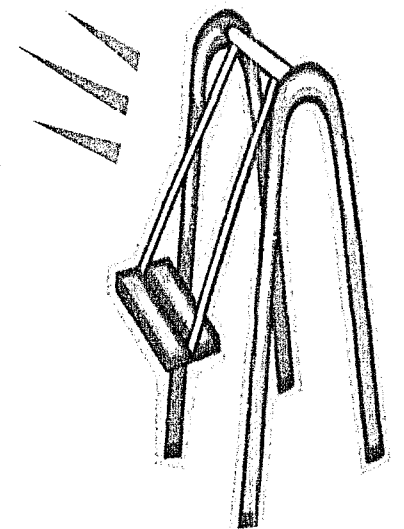
He grabbed his backpack and ran toward his mom. Just before he reached the parking lot, he tripped over a tree stump and sprawled across the grass. His mom ran to help him up.

"Didn't you see that big tree stump, Frankie?" his mom asked, a little irritated by his clumsiness.

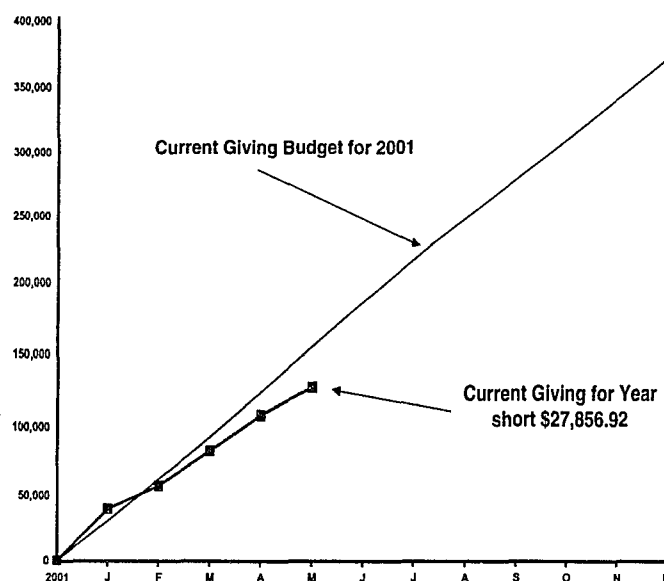
"No, but I believe it's there."

He looked back at the swings. They all looked empty, but one of them was swinging... **SR**

Rick Crouch is a member of the Daytona Beach, Fla., SDB Church.



Current Giving 2001



Brazil, cont. from p. 23

in addition to the "mother church" in Porto União. But on the Sabbath morning of Conference, just after raising the new Brazil Seventh Day Baptist Conference flag in the opening ceremonies, Leonildo was rushed to the hospital for an emergency appendectomy!

The 900-plus people attending the Conference Sabbath worship service prayed together for his healing. Pastor Leonildo had been elected to a second two-year term as Conference President, but he was not there on Sunday for the closing worship service and dedication of officers. Although he looked much better when we visited him that afternoon, the big barbecue at one of the country churches had to be postponed.

Our early return to "home base" at the Conference offices in Curitiba caused our host, Pastor José Dirceu d'Andrade Cruz, to scramble to readjust the schedule.

We shared the headquarters space that night with a busload of 14 people on their way home from Conference (in the southern state of Santa Catarina) to their home state of Paraíba in the northeast, a trip of three days and nights.



Over 900 people gathered for Sabbath morning praise in Porto União.

More Curitiba hospitality

The local people fed all of us and then took the group sightseeing in Curitiba. We enjoyed the tropical rain forest solarium at The Arboretum, and the boardwalk through the coastal rain forest at the Free University of the Environment. Tears flowed again as we bid our new friends good-bye after a spontaneous worship service in an outdoor amphitheater.

In Brazil, as in any country, at-

tending Conference sessions and visiting the national offices are two ways to find out about Seventh Day Baptists. We did that in the first 10 days of our visit. But to really get acquainted, to get to know the people, one must worship with them in their churches and spend time with them in their homes. This we did during the last two wonderful weeks. SR

[Next issue, part 3: Visits to churches in the Brazil Conference]

Pearls, cont. from p. 14

of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures." [Scriptural references for this paragraph are Jer. 10:7, Mark 12:33, Deut. 12:32, and Exodus 20:4-6.]

"One day in seven"?

The next five sections outline some of the specifics of worship with both positive affirmations and such negative limitations as praying to angels or saints, and prayer for the dead. In section seven, the Confession continues with the prescription for a weekly Sabbath, but not the Sabbath of the Bible.

"As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for

There is no scriptural reference for a change in the God-appointed time for the Sabbath because there is none.

the worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appoint-

ed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished."

The scriptural references for this paragraph are Exod. 20:8, 1 Cor. 16:1-2, Acts 20:7, and Rev. 1:10. There is no scriptural reference for a change in the God-appointed time for the Sabbath because there is none. SR

KEVIN'S

CORNER

Summertime. And the senses come alive! The sights, sounds, and smells of the season have converged on us here in Wisconsin. An early spring heat wave provided a teaser, then a cold snap shut the windows again for another month.

Now, the windows are open, the fans are blowing, and the olfactory organs leap to overdrive. An odor hits my nose and travels to my brain, connecting it to a memory.

Like the scent of a bursting yellow rose (takes me back to my grandmother's flower patch by her garage).

I'm inundated by the smell of fresh-cut lawns (shades of little league baseball), someone overusing lighter fluid on their grill (like our old backyard cookouts), truck fumes (buying candy at Stan's gas station), newly-turned sod (housing construction down the street), tar and asphalt patching pot-holes (everywhere, every year)...

Then I recall our summer vacations and the long, long rides in the station wagon to my Mom's family in West Virginia. Picking wild blackberries, picnics at the city park, hand-pumping for water, hand-cranking for ice cream, the "one-seater" at the old homestead...

It's a season of new beginnings and old memories.

Sidney Draayer, in his latest "Paraclete" newsletter, shares his recollection of family summers:

Our first venture into camping was a catastrophe, to put it mildly. As greenhorns we were totally unprepared for some things. I hadn't learned to "trench," so our tent took in water like the Titanic during a rainstorm the first night... sand maneuvered its way into our sleeping bags, our clothes, and our food... four of the children took turns being ill on a daily basis... our shadeless campsite made the hot sun seem even hotter... primitive toilets added to

our dismay. The two weeks seemed like an eternity. I was ready to give our camping gear away!

When Gladys and I announced the next spring that we would not camp again, our kids were appalled! They recited a long litany on the virtues about camping. Not to go again was unthinkable!

Reluctantly we gave in. And we found our apprenticeship paid off. We made some adjustments and developed coping mechanisms. We not only began to enjoy camping, we looked forward to it.

A few years later we bought a modest pop-up camper that became our summer home for the next dozen years. The aggravation of that first year faded in comparison to the enjoyment we had since then.

Isn't that how God often works on a bigger scale? New beginnings can often be so difficult. You have gone through some of them, or perhaps are going through one right now. You move to a new locality...

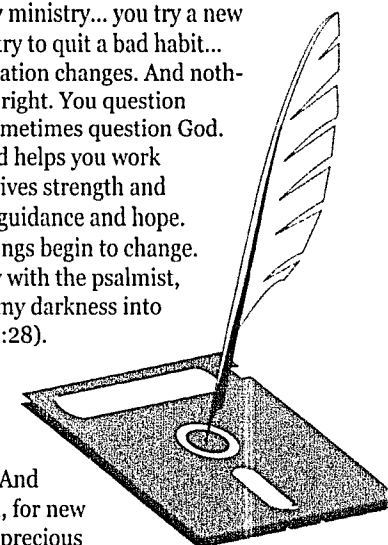
you begin a new ministry... you try a new program... you try to quit a bad habit... your family situation changes. And nothing seems to go right. You question yourself, and sometimes question God.


And then God helps you work through it. He gives strength and endurance and guidance and hope.

Gradually things begin to change. You learn to say with the psalmist, "My God turns my darkness into light" (Psalm 18:28).

Praise God for His wonderful provisions.

Thanks, Sid. And thank you, Lord, for new beginnings and precious memories.





Important Memo:

To: Friends of
The Sabbath Recorder
From: Editor Kevin Butler

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE SABBATH RECORDER IS FUNDED BY YOUR GIFTS? YOUR DONATION TO THE SABBATH RECORDER IS PART OF THE TOTAL SDB DENOMINATIONAL BUDGET.

I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ENJOYING THE MAGAZINE DURING THIS PAST YEAR AND WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO THIS PART OF OUR SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CONNECTION AND OUTREACH. MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND THANK YOU.

GRACE AND PEACE,

Kevin



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