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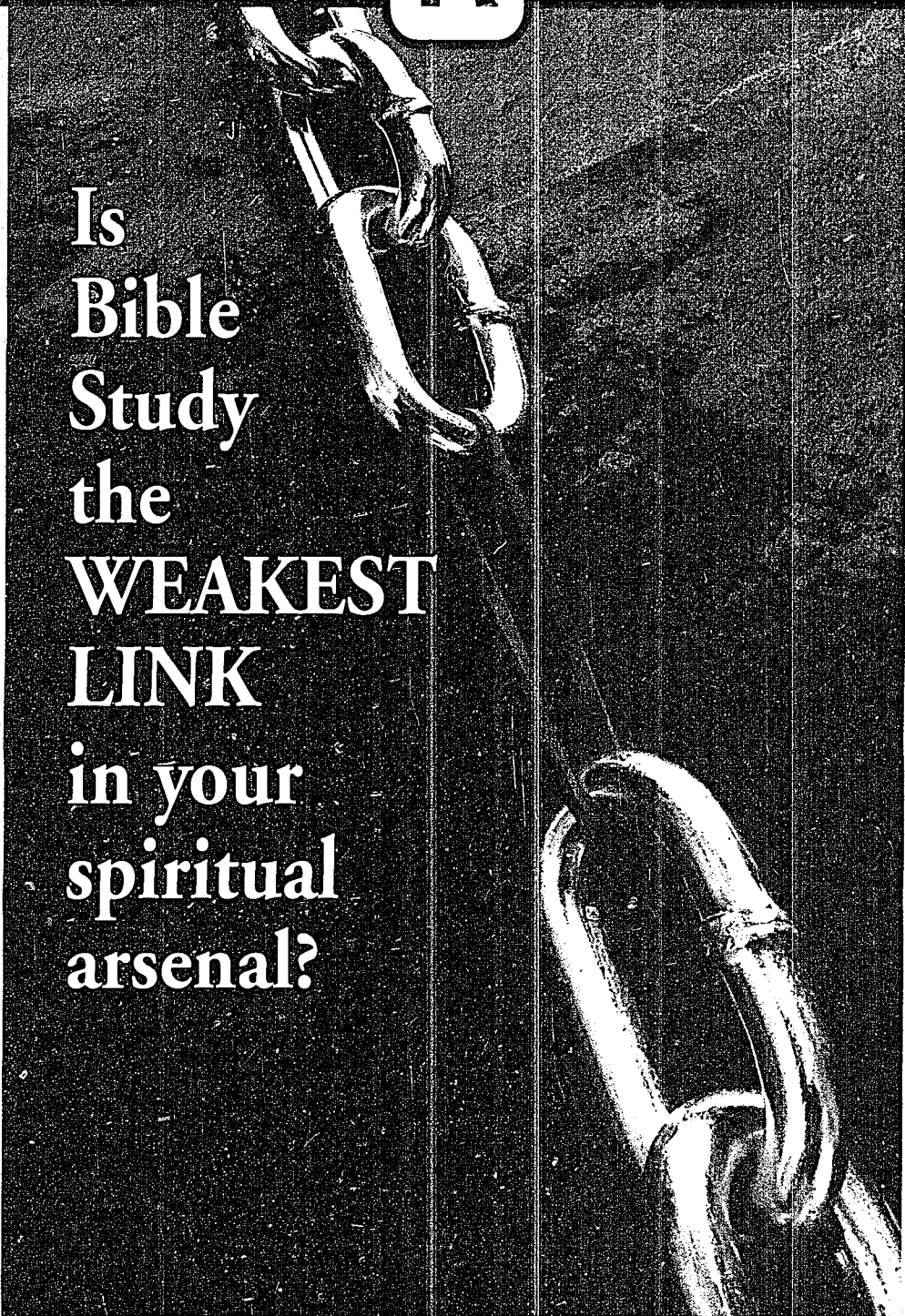
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*News for and about
Seventh Day Baptists*

March 2002

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Is
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Study
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WEAKEST
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spiritual
arsenal?



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 SDB Women's Society sponsors the Summer Christian Service Corps (SCSC) program.

Our teachers hold a one-week camp which helps teach the young adults leadership and service to our churches and missions. Then they send the SCSCers to various places for six weeks of service.

We need your support to keep this program alive.

Enid Nobles, Treasurer
9 Little Pond Trail
Ormond Beach, FL 32174



New Directory

The Seventh Day Baptist Directory covering the year 2001 is now available at the SDB Center in Janesville, Wis.

The cost is \$8.75 per Directory, which includes postage. For those who pick up a Directory, the cost is \$7.50 each.

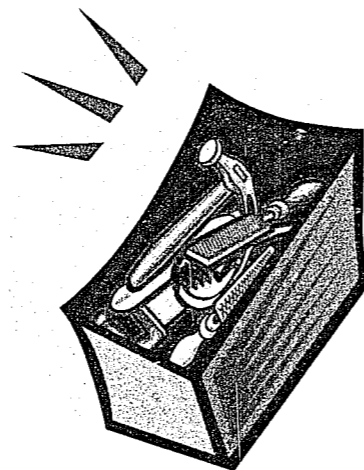


Time to spruce up Camp Harley

Our spring Work Camp at Camp Harley Sutton, Alfred Station, N.Y., will be from May 12 through May 22.

Our goal is to spruce up the place and add facilities as we prepare to host Youth Pre-Con. We'll need carpenters, plumbers, painters, and other odd-jobbers. Meals and lodging or camping facilities will be provided.

Please contact Lyle Sutton at (585) 973-2081 if you'd like to lend a hand!



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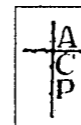


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The first thing to go

I vowed that I would apply myself to studying what the Bible said so that I would not be caught short in the future.

Check your attitude

Second, we must have the right attitude for Bible study. We need to be humble and teachable, willing to ask for wisdom and apply it when God provides, as it says He will in James 1:5—"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

God's ways are not our own (Isaiah 55:8). We need to see that we don't have wisdom of our own, but must instead rely on the Lord to reveal wisdom to us.

Our society teaches us to depend on what we know and have already learned. Yet God's Word shows us that we cannot rely on our own ways, but instead acknowledge His ways (Proverbs 3:5-6). Then he will make our paths straight.

The only reliable way that He will reveal wisdom to us is through His Word with prayer. If we are not willing to open the book, read it, and prayerfully look for His answers—and then do what it says (James 1:22)—we will not access His wisdom.

Be diligent

Third, we must be diligent. 1 Timothy 2:15 says "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

Be *diligent*. This word carries the flavor of making haste, being eager, and doing one's best. How contrary to what society embraces!

We make resolutions that we quickly break and forget, and look for the shortcuts in "Cliffs Notes" or on the Internet. If a project is too hard, we give up rather than see it through. But study requires hard work, and Bible study is not an exception to this rule.

We need to focus and set aside other concerns in order to set our mind on the subject to be studied. We must press through in spite of the difficulties, distractions, and sometimes even boredom, looking instead to the payoff in the end.

In the case of the Bible, that will mean reading, re-reading, meditating, looking at parallel translations, using a reliable Study Bible, checking noted cross-references, doing word

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conduct ourselves
in His creation.**

studies, outlining, studying literary styles, using a Bible Dictionary, using a reliable commentary, and asking questions. The payoff? God's promises that He "gives to all generously and without reproach" so that we may be "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4-5).

Bathe in prayer

Fourth, we must bathe our Bible Study and meditation in prayer. Without the Holy Spirit to quicken His Word in our spirits, we are without hope of real understanding.

Nor can our study be cold or clinical. We are studying a "living and active" entity, as is described in Hebrews 4:12. We aren't doing an autopsy on a dead body when we study the Bible. Instead, we are interacting with something living and active from our loving Heavenly Father.

In order to enter into this active realm, we need to communicate spirit-to-Spirit with our God through

prayer as we study. We must let Him know of our love for Him and our need for Him.

We should tell Him that we are available and want to talk with Him. We must tell him that we recognize that we have nothing without Him, which is why we are seeking His answers. And we must listen.

Not only is God's Word alive, but it is life-giving, just as Jesus tells us in Matthew 4:4—"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." So eat up and enjoy the life that He gives!

A proper respect

Fifth, we must revere God and honor His Word. Plainly speaking, we need to have a high regard and holy respect for God and His Word.

The Bible is not like a bestseller we pick up at the grocery store checkout and discard once we've read it, forgetting most of what it says. It is not a book we just put on the bookshelf to impress others, or store away as an eternal fire insurance policy.

Psalm 119:82 says, "My eyes fail with longing for Your Word." Let us value and seek after God's Word with that kind of intensity, giving priority to our study time, recognizing that in this act of obedient study we are gaining something of eternal value.

The "why" of Bible study is well summarized in this quote from Jack W. Hayford: "God's Word is the only source of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding concerning ultimate realities, waiting to liberate and enrich those who will pursue its wealth."

May you be so liberated and enriched! **SR**

Liz Green is Administrator of the Economic Assistance and Work Services Division of the Dane County Department of Human Services, and a deaconess at the Milton, Wis., SDB Church.

A habit that promises results

by Dan Cruzan

My first exposure to real Bible study was when I was a Boy Scout. Joe Campbell and I decided that we would try to get the God and Country Award.

J. Paul Green was our pastor at the time, and he was to serve as our mentor for the course. A primary part of the assignments he gave us was to study a portion of Scripture each week and then meet with him to discuss it.

It's more than children's stories

Through these Bible studies, I learned that there was much more to Scripture than the stories I heard as a child—Noah's Ark, the Burning Bush, and the Good Samaritan. I began to understand that the Bible isn't an anthology of interesting stories but a record of God's attempts to reconcile sinful man to Himself. It also gives us a glimpse at what He has planned for the future.

I soon understood that this information was useful to me because I,

too, needed reconciliation with God. And after being reconciled through Christ's atonement, I needed to know how to live a life that was pleasing to Him. I needed the information on those pages in order to live a satisfying life. So it was primarily for selfish reasons that I began to study the Bible.

Lifelong search begins

Joe and I didn't get the God and Country Award because our Scout troop disbanded before we completed the course. However, we did finish the assignments, and that Bible study began my 40-plus years of searching Scriptures; a search that has strengthened my faith and made me a better person.

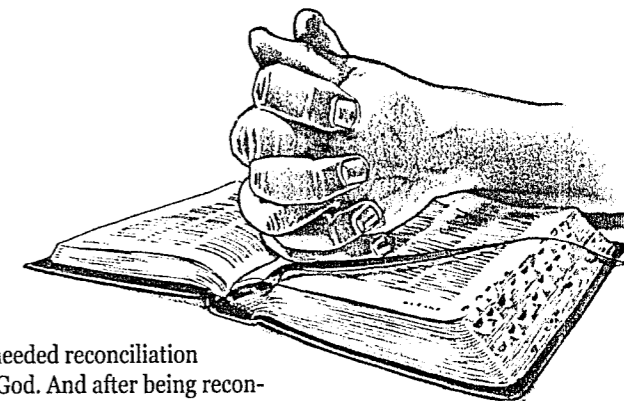
I've had no formal training in studying the Bible, but I've always

considered myself a Bible student. And now I'm a Bible study teacher who has the humble privilege of sharing what I've learned.

A successful Bible study can only be achieved if done for the same motives I had as a boy. The student must recognize that there is something in the Bible that he either needs or desires.

Be a Bible reader

By reading three or four chapters a day, the Bible can be read through in one year. I like to read in chronological order because it gives me a better sense of time. Most of the events recorded in the Bible are not isolated



Resource ideas

The primary Bible I use for my studies is the *Zondervan New International Version Study Bible*. I like it because it's a reasonably accurate translation and written in easily understood "American English." (The King James version may be the best English translation, but we no longer speak like people from the 17th century.)

Most modern Bible translations are good. I also like the *Life Application Study Bible*.

A study Bible is the single most valuable resource for a Bible student. One of its best aspects is that the study aids are right there, usually on the same page. Any good one contains footnotes that explain the unfamiliar to the reader. It will also contain charts, illustrations, and

timelines that help personalize the events and make them more easily understood.

The center column of my Bible contains a cross-reference system that can lead to similar topics, ideas, or words in other parts of the Bible. It also contains a concordance that is extensive enough to usually locate a verse that I'm looking for.

The resource that I use second most is *Baker's Topical Bible*, formerly titled, *Hitchcock's Topical Bible*. I have the paperback edition, published in 1984. It uses the King James version, giving me a different language aspect than my study Bible.

cont. next page

incidents but are built upon, or are a continuation of, previous events.

Since the Bible is a continuous story, it's helpful to know the order of events. It has become my daily habit to read early in the morning before the day's distractions begin. Although this habit of reading is informative and valuable, it's not the same as studying.

Where the lesson starts

These daily readings are where my lesson ideas germinate. For instance, today's reading was from Genesis, chapters 20-22.

From chapter 20, I picked up the idea that Abraham sometimes was not a man of integrity. From chapter 22, I found that God chose Abraham not because he was virtuous, but because he obeyed Him. That seems like a potential, worthwhile lesson.

To develop that idea into a lesson, I would ask myself several questions: When did this happen? Are there surrounding historical events that affect this story? Who are the characters involved? What were the characters' motives? Can this lesson be applied to my life and to the lives of my students?

Many other questions are valid and would come to mind as the study progressed. The answers to these questions require Bible study.

Add color and sound

When I read the Bible, the events that play out in my mind are accompanied by Technicolor and Surround-sound. It helps me to imagine how the people looked and what the scenery might have been like. The things I see in my mind are probably not even close to reality, yet they still help me to understand what's going on.

One of my favorite scenes in the Bible is when Elijah turns from the altar where God has consumed everything with a roaring, blazing flash of fire. The sight makes a hydrogen bomb explosion look like a Fourth of July sparkler.

I can see Elijah's crooked smile as he staggers away, his beard and eyebrows singed, and wisps of smoke rising from his hair. His eyes are as big as hen's eggs that sarcastically scream, "Didn't I tell you?!"

What's your point?

When putting together a Bible lesson, it's important to narrow the scope of the study so that the focal point can be summarized in a sentence or two. As a teacher, I find it helpful to never reveal the lesson's goal unless necessary.

It's best if the students can, through the study, discover and verbalize the point of the lesson themselves. This takes careful crafting by

the teacher, asking the right questions and paying attention to detail. But it's well worth the effort because then the students "own" the lesson learned.

It's always a delight when a student comes up with "the thing" before I reveal it. Then I know I've done my job.

Make it a habit

To summarize, I believe that for Bible study to be worthwhile, it needs to be habitual. If it becomes a habit, a person will do it regardless of surrounding circumstances. For the study to be meaningful, the student must recognize a need or desire to discover information that will make his life better.

Last, but most important, is the spiritual understanding that God gives us. Matthew 7:7 states, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

Earnestly studying the Bible is asking, seeking, and knocking. God promises us *SR* for those endeavors.

Dan Cruzan owns and operates Dan Cruzan's Nursery in Bridgeton, N.J., and is a deacon at the Marlboro SDB Church.

The book is arranged according to topics, so it's an easy way to look at other Scripture references dealing with similar themes. I believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and does not contradict itself. So by looking at the same topic in different circumstances, it gives me insight into what God had in mind.

Another resource that I refer to from time to time is a high school **world history book**. Mine is a rather dated copy, printed before "the revisionists" were hired. It gives me a quick view of civilizations and world leaders that were intertwined with Biblical events.

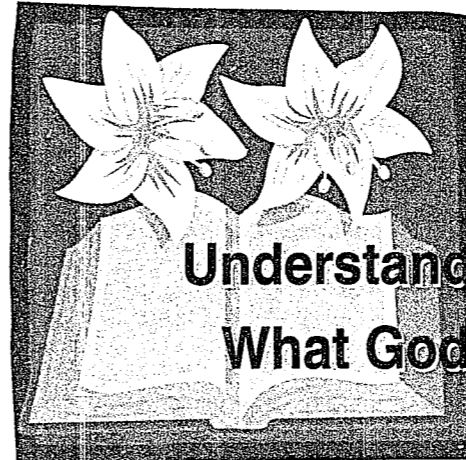
World history was so boring to me during my internment in high school that I only did what was necessary to complete the class and didn't commit much to memory. Now I know that God was there, too.

Didn't God send Jonah to the Assyrians? He used the Babylonians to bring about His promise for punishment to rebellious Judah. The mighty Roman Empire was part of His plan and came into being at His discretion. He was the motivating force of world history, and He is the force that will bring about the world's future.

I have two commentaries on the Bible, neither of which would classify as outstanding. But I do use them from time to time, and they sometimes help me get at the heart of the matter.

The list of other possible references is nearly endless. I own a few of them, but they would be just as beneficial if available from the library, since I don't use them very often.

—Dan Cruzan



Understanding What God has said

by Paul Manuel

The main principle to keep in mind is that "context controls meaning."

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15 NAS).

In this admonition from Paul, the apostle indicates that there is a right way and a wrong way to deal with what God has revealed, and that the right way is not necessarily easy. In fact, it may require considerable effort—"Be diligent"—to grasp the meaning of a passage.

At first, the task of interpreting Scripture may seem daunting. We live hundreds of years after the people who originally received these documents. We come from a different culture and speak a different language. Perhaps we have had little or no religious training and find the

Bible a maze of confusing stories that talk about people with unpronounceable names.

How can we even begin to make sense of what we read in these ancient documents?

Despite the obstacles, understanding Scripture may not be as difficult as it sometimes seems. While there are, indeed, challenges that arise with the passage of time as well as with changes in culture and language, it is possible to overcome many of those hindrances.

The most important skill to develop is simply the ability to read carefully—to pay attention to detail and to be alert for potential problems or for areas that need further study.

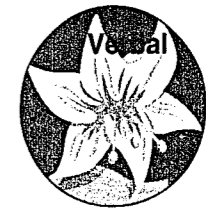
The main principle to keep in mind is that "context controls meaning."

Picture the text as a flower with several petals, each of which connects to the center and contributes to the flower as a whole. These petals represent various aspects of the context that influence meaning.

Unlike a flower, though, in which all the petals are equally important to its beauty, some aspects of context may be more important for under-

standing the meaning of a passage than other aspects. To make that determination, we must ask a question for each petal.

What follows is a sampling of those questions as well as suggestions for additional tools that can help in understanding the context and in exposing the meaning of a passage.



•The verbal context: What words did the author choose to make his point?

This is a difficult aspect for most people, since they depend upon a translation of God's Word, and no transition from one language to another is word-for-word. Moreover, some English versions attempt to simplify what the original author

wrote for the modern reader to understand. They are more concerned with readability than with accuracy. Consequently, they may gloss over

Rather than a weekly collection, Paul is recommending private savings ("each one... is to put aside"). Even without the ability to read

No transition from one language to another is word-for-word. Moreover, some English versions attempt to simplify what the original author wrote for the modern reader to understand.

difficulties or interpret a passage in a way that is not correct.

The *New Living Translation* (1996) introduces a potentially misleading change in 1 Cor. 16:2.

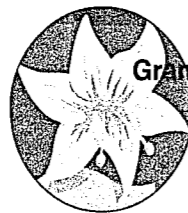
On every **Lord's Day** [Greek: every first day of the week], each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.

By translating "the first day" as "the Lord's Day," the NLT implies that the Corinthians were meeting for worship, but there is no evidence the early Church met regularly on that day. Quite the contrary, the evidence we have indicates that the first believers met on the Sabbath (e.g., Acts 15:21).

To avoid such problems, it is best to use a translation that does not take such liberties. The *New American Standard* (updated edition, 1995) offers a good balance between the literal and the literate. Its rendering of this passage—and the rest in this article—is far more accurate.

On the **first day of every week** each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

Greek or Hebrew, a good translation can help the modern reader understand the verbal context of a passage.



•**The grammatical context:**
How do the words relate to each other?

Sometimes even those who have studied the original languages have difficulty understanding precisely what the biblical author was trying to convey. In such cases, the best solution may simply be to recognize the different possibilities that are present.

As with the previous aspect of context, a good English translation can alert the reader to potential ambiguity. Paul writes in Rom. 8:9, ...you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed **the Spirit of God** dwells in you. But if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Him.

Even if "the Spirit of God" is the same as "the Spirit of Christ," it is

possible to interpret the English phrase "Spirit of" in different ways: as the Spirit who *belongs* to them, who *acts* with them, who *comes* from them, or who *is* them (i.e., God or Christ). Paul probably had one of these in mind but which one?

This passage may not have been ambiguous to the Roman Christians, but the uncertainty for us means that we must not be dogmatic and insist upon a particular meaning, at least not without also considering other aspects of context.



•**The cultural context:**
How do the traditions or practices of the day illuminate the passage?

In obedience to Jesus' command (Matt. 28:19), most Baptists—including SDBs—mark the beginning of a person's commitment to God by immersion in water.

...make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

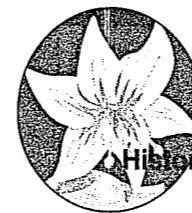
Some Christian denominations practice other modes of baptism, such as effusion (pouring) or aspersion (sprinkling). Does the Bible enjoy a particular form, or is it up to the individual?

Baptists, to support their position, typically appeal to the verbal context, stating that the Greek verb (*baptizo*) means "to dip," not to pour or sprinkle. What many do not consider, yet which offers even stronger support, is the place of this custom in Judaism.

A good Bible dictionary or en-

cyclopaedia will often treat cultural issues. On this matter, the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992) notes, "[r]ites of immersion [were used for] proselyte baptism."

Jesus did not invent baptism. Rather, he advocated this common means of ceremonial cleansing for his followers, the first of which were all Jews. (Other modes were probably introduced later by Gentile Christians.) Understanding the cultural context of Jesus' command clarifies that what he intended and what we should practice is immersion, not pouring or sprinkling.



•**The historical context:**
What events were on people's minds at the time?

When Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian Empire, the new ruler, King Cyrus, permitted the Jewish exiles to return to Canaan. Ezra records

the decree in the opening verses of his book (1:2-3).

"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of

The uncertainty for us means that we must not be dogmatic and insist upon a particular meaning, at least not without also considering other aspects of context.

heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel...."

From this account, it seems that Cyrus believed in Israel's God, and

that is why he allowed Jews to resettle their ancestral home. The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah (45:4), presents a different picture of the Gentile monarch.

"For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen [one], I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me."

If Cyrus did not believe in the true God, why did he let God's people go back to their land?

In an article on Cyrus, the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* states that this generous act was part of a larger "policy of remarkable tolerance based on a respect for individual people, ethnic groups, [and] religions," which generated broad public support for the king. In other words, Jews were only some of many that he freed.

This incident illustrates God's sovereignty, that He controls the course of history whether those who make history acknowledge Him or not. Cyrus acted politically for his own interest, which God used providentially for His own interest.

cont. on page 26

New Hymn Index available

Hymn Index to People and Places in the Bible is now available through Church Music Resources. It provides a convenient list of hundreds of hymns which mention a specific person or place.

There are 103 hymnals, supplements, and single-author collections from 21 denominations, as well as nondenominational material. It indexes 141 people and 84 places.

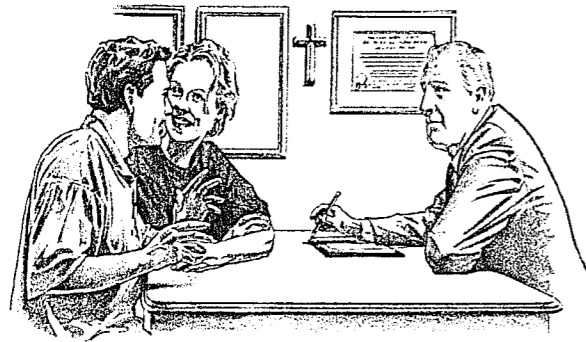
The *Index* is perhaps most valuable in providing a way to access hymns in 48 single-author collections. This resource makes it possible to look up a specific person or place and know where to find a hymn on that subject. Information on how to

obtain copyright permission and how to build a collection of hymn materials is included, along with a list of publishers and addresses.

The *Index* will be useful to anyone who plans worship services or teaches in a church-related school.

Church Music Resources is a new company which will provide help for busy worship planners. The *Index* is the first of many such resources to be published.

For information on the *Index*, comments from well-known church leaders, and an order sheet, write Church Music Resources, 1951 N. 64th St. #41, Mesa, AZ 85205.



World's best counseling service—and it's free

by Stefan Kube

Just a few weeks ago, I stayed overnight in a Queensland motel and was delighted to discover a new, red Gideon Bible on my bedside table. Although I had my own Bible with me, I made a point to use the new one. And what a lot of "counseling" I found on the first few pages!

How did this shiny red Bible come to be in this motel room?

In the autumn of 1898, two traveling men, strangers to each other, met in a Wisconsin (USA) hotel. Discovering each other to be a Christian, they held their evening devotions together.

The Lord impressed on them the idea of forming an association of traveling men with the object to win others for the Lord Jesus Christ by distributing the Word of God.

Gideons International was formed from these humble beginnings. With the help of dedicated Christians, it has distributed millions of Bibles and New Testaments, placing them in schools, hospitals, hotels, motels, and with members of the armed forces and those in penal institutions.

Why can the Bible be such an effective counselor?

Page 3 of "my" red Gideon Bible contained this remarkable introduction:

"The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of Man, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories

are true, and its decisions are immutable.

"Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

"Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed."

Now, let us come "down to earth," to practical counseling.

During that particular night in the Queensland motel, I opened the page "Where to Find Help." Twenty-four categories were listed: Afraid, Anxious, Bitter or Critical, Depressed, Friends Fail, Needing God's Protection, Sick, In Trouble, Worried, etc.

I personally needed assurance of God's protection. Psalm 27:1-6, Psalm 91, and Philippians 4:19 were given as references. I was very encouraged by reading these Scriptures. We all long to have a personal Counselor, someone we can fully trust and who is available any time of the day or night.

The prophet Isaiah introduces us (in Isa. 9:6) to such a person, the coming Messiah, whose name among others would be Wonderful Counselor. Isaiah 11:2 prophesied, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and un-

derstanding, the spirit of counsel and might..."

The Gospels are the record of Jesus' conversations with the people of His day. These New Testament letters represent the practical application of His teaching for godly living. We find His counsel in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus knew what was going on in the seven churches of Revelation and counseled them for their spiritual benefit.

Our Savior was not just telling us what we want to hear; He also wants to advise us, telling us what to do about it. He reassuringly said, "Do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

Because of Who our wonderful Counselor is, and knowing and understanding our needs, He can help us in ways that go far beyond our ability to understand, and far beyond the limited help that a human counselor can offer.

Fortunately, Gideon Bibles, with their "Where to Find Help" pages, still provide the world's best counseling service. **SR**

From the December 2001 "Link," SDB newsletter in Australasia, edited by Stefan Kube.



Women's Society page by Laura Price

Study the Bible and have faith

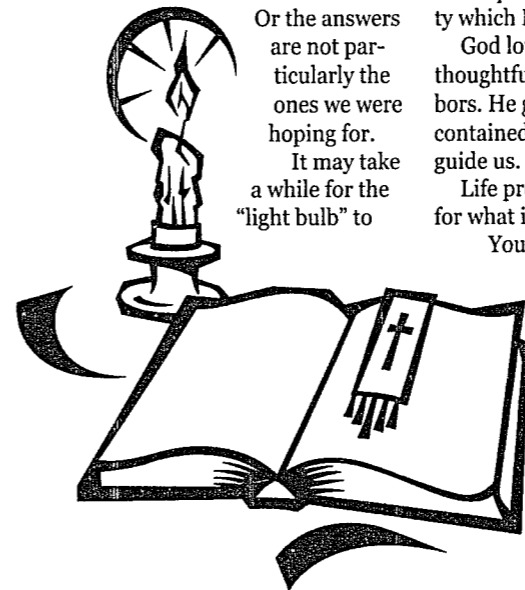
In order to promote growth and maintain a decent physical well-being, a good diet and exercise regime are essential. Optimum health depends upon a well-balanced, nutritious diet and enough regular exercise to give the cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems a good workout.

In the same way, spiritual growth and maintenance depends upon partaking of God's Word ("soul food") and following it. Regular study of the Word is beneficial to developing one's faith and walking in control of His Spirit. Being obedient to what you know God wants you to do is to exercise your faith in Him.

If you are unsure of what God might want you to do in a particular situation, that's where Bible study and prayer can give you solutions. Just remember, sometimes the answers or development of faith can take longer than we would like. At times, the answers are right in front of us, but we "can't see the forest for the trees."

Or the answers are not particularly the ones we were hoping for.

It may take a while for the "light bulb" to



come on, or it may be more immediate. So be patient, and have faith that through the study of the Word, something good will come of it; that it will be edifying and practical for your daily life here and now, and for your ongoing spiritual development.

If you are even slightly perceptive, you may notice God's Spirit all around you. It is evidenced in the perfectness of this planet that we all co-habitate, with everything so perfectly and delicately balanced to support the complexities of the miracle of life. If it's something good, it's something from God.

The more you are open to listening, the more you will learn. The whole purpose of studying is to learn more and gain a better understanding.

From the resources at hand, we can learn about the "blessings" that come from following God's will (intentionally or inadvertently doing good deeds of a selfless nature), to the "curses" or hardships that accompany selfishness and cruelty which He also warns us about.

God loves us and wants us to be thoughtful of Him and our neighbors. He gave us His living Word, contained in the Bible, to help guide us.

Life presents a testing ground for what is contained in God's Word.

You can learn things from hearing, doing, and seeing.

You can "test" or confirm God's Word to the things currently in your life. The more you study, the more you may see the correlations. All of your "life examples" can serve to support what is contained within the Scriptures regarding

perseverance, and human nature and frailties.

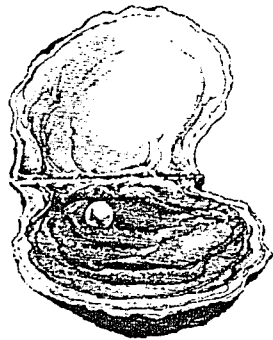
Of course, you'll never know what it says if you don't hear or read the Bible for yourself. Whether it's with someone else or on your own, studying must be done in order for you to derive your own convictions and conclusions.

Personal salvation and maintaining a relationship with the Lord is something between yourself and God. Just remember, there is always more to learn. Our brain grasps only so much at a time, which is why it requires exercise in the form of study. Better yet, you should test what you learn by doing. You will remember the lessons better that way.

Even if you have read through the Bible on more than one occasion, you still need to be reminded about and refreshed with what it says. The more we study, the more we learn of the Bible's contents, and the less dependent we are on someone else (who may or may not be accurate) to tell us what the content is. Since we are already familiar with the Bible, we can more accurately check it out for ourselves.

Be patient. The more you study, the more you will know. And the more you will be able to consciously put it to use. Set some regular time aside (before breakfast, before bed, or every Sabbath) to read your personal letter from God.

Regardless of whether you're in a good mood or bad mood, be consistent and continue to study and learn from its pages. God's Word is good for your spirit, just as nutritious food and physical exercise are good for your body. **SR**



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

Improved transportation to Conference—1835

By definition, the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference is a conference of churches. In Baptist polity, the essential authority of a church rests within the people who make up the congregation.

Since the number of SDBs and their diverse locations makes it impossible to gather all of them into one place at one time, local churches select and empower representatives to act on their behalf.

February's "Pearls" traced Maxson Green's 1829 horse-and-wagon journey to General Conference in Hopkinton, R.I. He charted his trip so that he could visit family, friends, and churches along the way. He was gone from home from September 2 to November 13, a total of 72 days, and calculated his mileage at about 1,000 miles.

Green didn't mention his co-representative from the Alfred (N.Y.) church, Daniel Babcock, as a traveling companion, but his use of the plural pronoun indicates that probability. Six years later, Green was delegated as the sole messenger to Conference at the same location.

During those intervening years, a steady flow of migration into the territory provided other options of transportation. As the lone representative, Green chose to travel commercially. Thus, in his second journal, his diary listed costs rather than miles. He still managed to meet with friends and visit some churches en route to Hopkinton.

•Aug. 31, 1835—Started on a jour-

ney to Rhode Island; arrived at Hammondsport at 8 o'clock p.m. Expense 50 cents.

•Sept. 1-5—Took passage in a steam boat to Penn Yan, fare 75 cents. From there took passage in stage to Syracuse, fare \$3.75; then took a line boat¹ to Schenectady, fare \$2.31; then took the railroad to Albany, fare 50 cents; took passage in a steam boat to New York;

Matt. 6:10. Went home with Eld. A.T. Wells and stayed the night. Felt much recruited.

September 11-14 contained references to Conference meetings, with various ministers preaching, and to the concluding business of the missionary, tract, and education societies. Green wrote, "Paid five dollars to the several societies."

"Sept. 10—Went to Conference quite sick and fainted and was taken out of the house and doctored. Went home with Eld. A.T. Wells and stayed the night. Felt much recruited."

took lodging at Patten's Hotel.

•Sunday, Sept. 6—Went to Roman Catholic church and heard a mass and a discourse delivered by one of their priests. In the afternoon went to Presbyterian church and heard a good discourse; then returned to my lodging. Expense 81 cents.

•Sept. 7—Went aboard the sloop "Eliza." Capt. Rathborn, bound for Mystic; arrived there on the 8th at 9 p.m. Fare \$1.50.

•Sept. 9—Took a boat to Pawcatuck Bridge. Fare 25 cents. Stopped at Dea. Wm. Stillman's and took refreshments and then to Hopkinton to meeting. Went home with Dea. Daniel Lewis and stayed the night.

•Sept. 10—Went to Conference quite sick and fainted and was taken out of the house and doctored. Took little comfort at the meeting. Eld. Wm. B. Maxson preached from

The rest of the week was spent traveling to the seashore and visiting friends. On Sabbath, Sept. 19, Green attended his final worship service at Hopkinton. On Sunday, he made a few more visits before beginning his journey back to Alfred.

•Sept 21—Went to Dea. J. Langworthy's and took breakfast. Started for Berlin, N.Y. in company with B.C. Church² and others; had fine weather and agreeable company; Arrived at Stephentown³ Sept. 24. Fare \$3. Stopped at Joshua Maxson's and visited in the neighborhood until Sabbath, Sept 26. Went to Berlin to meeting. Elder Wm. Satterlee preached the first discourse, followed by Eld. Sibeus M. Burdick. Went home with Dea. Asa Coon, and took tea; went with him to evening meeting, then back and stayed the night.

During the following week, Green recorded accompanying the pastor on visits to five different families. He also noted numerous other calls.

Green didn't start for home until October 5. His first recorded stop was at Troy, N.Y.

•...took tea with a cousin, then boarded a line boat to Montezuma; stopped at Schenectady and visited Dea. John Maxson's family; paid \$1.25 for books; went aboard a boat and arrived at Montezuma on the 9th at 10 p.m. Stayed the night; fare and expenses \$4.

•Oct. 10—Took passage on a packet to Geneva, fare 75 cents; stayed the night, expenses 56 cents; went to meeting and heard a Presbyterian preach; took passage in a steamboat to Hammondsport, fare 75 cents; then walked to Bath; stayed the night, 38 cents.

•Oct 12—Took the stage to Howard, fare 63 cents; then walked to Hornellsville; then took stage to Almond, fare 25 cents; then walked home and found family well; felt a degree of thankfulness to Him who had preserved me

through the dangers of the long journey.

The experiences of such delegates as Maxson Green on the expanding frontiers ultimately led to an 1834 proposition to form Associations. These groups were to provide fellowship for the scattered families who had migrated from their home churches, while promoting continued participation in the denomination.

The original intent was to have these Associations meet prior to General Conference. Just as duly-elected representatives are chosen to form governmental bodies, the Associations would elect delegates to carry out Conference business.

But Conference's sense of "homecoming" and personal involvement were too well established for such a radical change. Thus two years after Maxson Green attended the 1835 meetings, it was voted that "those churches who were members of an association would be represented by the delegates from an association, and those churches that were not members of an association

would have direct representation." Though there have been drastic changes in transportation and the work of General Conferences since Maxson Green's time, some of those same experiences are being enjoyed, and tolerated, even today. **SR**

¹Line boat refers to canal boat pulled by horses on tow paths along the banks of the Erie Canal.

²B.C. Church was the first teacher at Alfred Academy when it started the following year, and later was the first teacher in 1844 at Milton Select School, which later became Milton College. Maxson Green was one of the first trustees of Alfred Academy, and one wonders if this trip together had some bearing on the recruitment of Church as teacher.

³Historically, the Berlin church went by four different names, depending upon the location of their meetings: Little Hoosick, Stephentown, Petersburg, and Berlin.

⁴Conference Minutes, SDB Yearbook (1837), p. 5.

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.

Mr. Kevin Butler,

After reading your editorial, "Finding an open channel" (Jan. '02), I felt led to respond.

You wrote, referring to yourself, "Solution: Hum your own tunes, dummy..."

I live with an inherited progressive nerve damage hearing loss. It brings with it each day the stress of tinnitus, affecting about 10 million sufferers in the United States.

I have not had the opportunity to experience the cassette tape mysteries or mastery of them. They are of no use to me. As far as music is concerned, my hearing aid cannot be used in the church that I belong

to. My nervous system won't take it.

This has not dampened my faith or my love for Christian music. I don't hum my own tunes; I sing them from memory. I still remember the tunes of the songs that I heard when I was able to hear. And for the new hymns I have taken to memory, I might be off tune a bit, but I am sure that my Lord understands.

I was really moved by your experiences that you wrote about in the editorial. I agree about not buying all the frills that mere "religion" wants to offer.

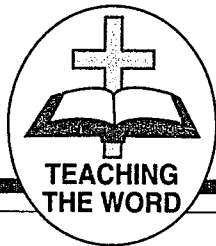
Recently, I watched the movie, "The Perfect Storm." The song at the

end of the movie—*Eternal Father, Strong to Save*—brought me out from under. I located that song in an older hymnbook and began to memorize it. I just about ran and told each of my family members that that was a prayer. A prayer to take very seriously.

When I am on the road, I don't hum my own tunes, but I sing them as loud and clear as I can.

Thank you for sharing your experiences through your editorial. May God continue to bless you with newer experiences in 2002.

Barbara LaFrance
Westerly, RI



Christian Education

by Andrew J. Camenga

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Item	Qty.	Price each	Total
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FOCUS
on Missions

Struggles to register in Burundi

by Kirk Looper

Over the past couple of years, Pastor Nduwayo Gilbert has had his work cut out for him in Burundi, a country in East Central Africa.

The work began in January of 2000, when he contacted the Missionary Society of the SDB General Conference of the United States and Canada, Ltd. Like so many of the letters we receive, he requested information about Seventh Day Baptist beliefs.

We wrote back, explaining our beliefs. We also included a pamphlet detailing the differences between the tenets of Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists.

By March, Pastor Gilbert had decided to organize a Conference and register it with the government. We sent a letter to the Burundi government, indicating that Pastor Gilbert represented Seventh Day Baptists in that country. This placed the responsibilities of organizing and developing churches squarely on the shoulders of the Burundi Conference. At no time would we take those responsibilities away.

As a sister Conference, we pledged to help by providing advice and information. We further explained that we have literature and books indicating that we have a 350-year history. This material was sent to Pastor Gilbert as proof to back up our claims.

The materials were slow in arriving at the pastor's home. Meanwhile, a government agency refused to accept his application to register our denomination. Apparently, another Sabbathkeeping organization approached the government with the story that Seventh Day Baptists were a cult and no longer a real denomination. The government took the word of the other Sabbath group and withheld registration from the Burundi SDB churches.

This anti-SDB activity continued throughout the year. Later, opposition forces even bribed officers to refuse the registration application.

Meanwhile, we wrote a letter to the Burundi government, explaining that we *are* a denomination and that the materials we had sent to Pastor Gilbert would prove it. The government was understanding and patiently waited for the material.

All of this finally resulted in the registration of Seventh Day Baptists in Burundi. Our churches were pleased, of course, and immediately began their work.

By the end of the registration process, more than 300 people had been praying in secrecy in different corners of the country. Now they can meet in public, and they are overjoyed.

**A good portion
of the Burundi SDB
Conference's revenue is used
to cover the costs of lawsuits
brought against our people
for practicing their religion.
Even though they
win a case, the lawyer
still has to be paid.**

The problems stirred up by the other Sabbathkeeping denomination still exist. A good portion of the Burundi SDB Conference's revenue is used to cover the costs of lawsuits brought against our people for practicing their religion. Even though they win a case, the lawyer still has to be paid.

They currently are involved in spreading the Gospel and the work of SDBs in Burundi. Since most travel is by public transportation and walking, the Conference

could really use an automobile. They can carry only a limited amount of materials when they use public transportation.

In addition to a car, the Conference would also like funds to duplicate pre-translated materials. This would amount to several thousand copies of each piece of literature monthly.

The Conference's work is widespread in Burundi. When the expense of translating and publishing material is taken into account, it might be more economical to furnish them a computer, printer, and photocopier. The cost of this equipment would be \$8,000. **SR**



the BEACON

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

March 2002

“Today is.”

by Eowyn Driscoll, with help from her mother

“Time present and time past; are both perhaps present in time future.”—T.S. Elliot

By now, most of us have seen the *Lord of the Rings* movie. Whether we loved or hated it is not the point, because that’s not what this article is about.

This actually revolves around the book a little bit. So if you are one of the few people who have spent their entire lives avoiding LOTR books, just skip ahead a little, since this *Beacon* is not entirely full of Tolkienisms.

At one point in the *Fellowship of the Ring*, Sam and Frodo are with Galadriel, and she is offering them a chance to look into her very special magical mirror. Sam looks first and immediately wishes to run home to The Shire.

Galadriel reminds him that he did not wish to go home *before* he looked into the mirror, and adds, “Remember that the mirror shows many things, and not all have yet come to pass. Some never come to be, unless those that behold them turn aside from their path to prevent them. The mirror is a dangerous guide of deeds.”

Now that I’ve thoroughly confused you, let me show you the important piece of that quote: “Some never come to be, unless those that behold

them turn aside from their path to prevent them.”

It is only our present action, or inaction, which will affect us tomorrow.

The novel I am working on tomorrow might not actually be written; the novel I am working on today,

**Only by acting in love,
by going down
the path that God has
created for us, can
our future be
assured.**

will. I am in the class of 2003, but only if I remain in school. My web site will be up and running tonight, but only if I finish building it today. And so on.

In *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis said, “...For the present is the point at which time touches eternity. Of the present moment, and of it only, do the humans have an experience analogous to the experience which our Enemy has of reality as a whole; in it alone, freedom and actuality are offered them...”

In a word, the future is the least like eternity. It is the most completely temporal part of time.”

This writing hits the mark exactly to what our lives are. We think of the future as an obstinate concrete block—our schedules, our entertainment, our plans. It seems to give the future a solidification that tomorrow may not actually hold.

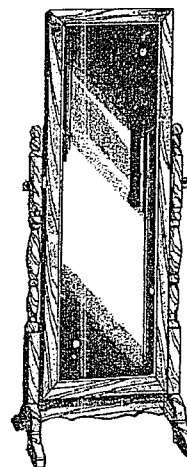
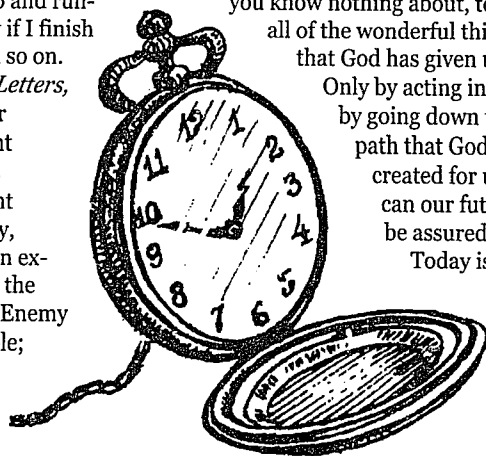
The future has always, and will always, have this quality of unquavering surety. But it is illusion and can be a trap if we lay aside present concerns to chase dreams of what might be. (“The mirror is a dangerous guide to deeds.”)

Today is. “This is the day that the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Today is the day to speak softer, be nicer, study for the math exam you know nothing about, to find all of the wonderful things that God has given us.

Only by acting in love, by going down the path that God has created for us, can our future be assured.

Today is. SR



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

A Book to be used

turned about upon the cummin...” (Isaiah 28:27).

I didn’t fare much better when I skipped ahead to the New Testament.

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word...” (James 1:21).

My knowledge of Scripture was so deficient that, for years, I misidentified Philipians. A framed prayer on my Mom’s bedroom wall ended with “For to me, to live is Christ...” (Phil. 1:21). For some reason, I thought that “Phil.” stood for “Philatians.”

When I was 14, my favorite aunt gave me a large, black leather-bound Bible of my very own, with my name imprinted in gold on the front. I was proud of it and treated it like a priceless heirloom.

That’s why I was horrified the first time I saw my husband’s Bible. It looked like a dozen chariots had run over it. The cover was creased and torn; words were underlined in blue, black, and red ink; and notes were scribbled in the margins. (The only handwriting in my Bible was

on the page recording births and deaths.)

My husband was equally shocked when

he saw *my* copy of God’s Holy Word. “It looks like it’s been sitting on a coffee table, collecting dust,” Denny remarked. He was right.

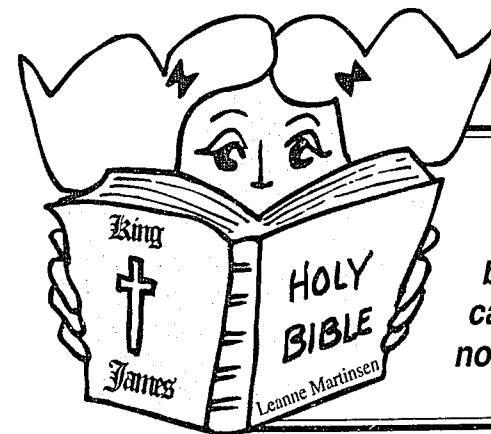
A few years later, I found myself struggling with depression. When I opened my Bible to find comfort and encouragement, I was stunned to realize that I had no idea where to begin. I had always considered myself a staunch Christian, but my Bible and I were casual acquaintances, not steadfast friends.

Thankfully, God, in His infinite mercy, directed me to the passages that I needed to read. And what a blessing those words were—and are!

The Bible should be treated with care and respect, but it shouldn’t be pampered or idolized or viewed as a mystical, magical book, similar to those used by ancient sorcerers.

Like Jesus Himself, His Word needs to be out in the open, ministering to us and others, not set apart or hidden away in a drawer. Our Bibles need to see the crumbs on our rugs as well as the shine on our coffee tables.

May all of us renew our efforts to read our Bibles on a *daily* basis, and then put those wonderful lessons to work. SR



I had always considered myself a staunch Christian, but my Bible and I were casual acquaintances, not steadfast friends.



The President's Page

The fourth stone: Sabbath

by Gordon Lawton

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Part of the value of special events and days is the opportunity for remembering, learning, and teaching. Independence Day in the U.S. is a day to remember the beginnings of the United States of America. Each July 4th we who live here have a day to rejoice in our freedom and to remember that freedom is not cheap.

At some point, each child asks, "Why are there fireworks?" This opens the door to talk of battles, Francis Scott Key, Paul Revere, George Washington, and other persons and events from the late 18th century to the present.

God placed events in the lives of the Children of Israel so that they could remember, learn, and teach, especially when their children asked, "What does this mean?"

In Exodus 12:26, a question is anticipated about the Passover Ceremony. In Exodus 13:15 a question is anticipated about the redemption of the firstborn. In Joshua 4, verses 6 and 21, a question is anticipated about the stones from the Jordan which were set up at Gilgal.

Even today our children ask questions about what we do: "Why do some people wear suits and dresses to church and others do not?" "Why do we pray before we eat?" "What is this pool in the church for?"

The question, "What does the Sabbath mean?" is asked in varied ways by our children and others. Sometimes it is asked gently and politely, while other times it is asked with antagonism or disbelief, or through rebellion and disobedience.

What *does* the Sabbath mean? The Sabbath—like the stones at Gilgal and the portable Passover celebration—demands the question be asked.

This weekly celebration declares "God is our Creator" (Exod. 20:8-11). It shouts, "You are free!" (Deut. 5:12-15). In the light of our Savior we see this freedom to include freedom from sin for the believer.

Yes, the Sabbath was prepared by God to be a weekly reminder of our risen Lord, who brought us out of slavery to sin into freedom in Him. Yes, the elements of Rest (Exod. 20:8-11), Worship (Lev. 23:3, Luke 4:16), Doing Good (Mark 3:4), and Giving Life (Mark 3:4) enhance the Sabbath as well.

The Sabbath means depending on God rather than ourselves, another person, or any social or political system. (Those planning and leading extracurricular activities at school are, at best, generally apathetic and often are outright antagonistic toward Sabbath issues.)

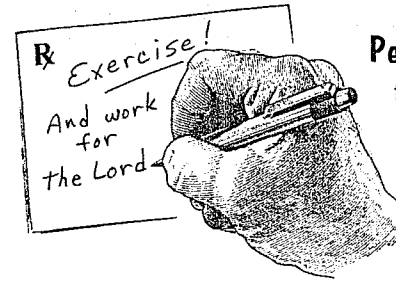
When I know I have something to do, I have to schedule appropriately. Which means I may have to go to bed earlier than I would like to meet the obligations of the new day.

The Sabbath is a gift from God that we are commanded to observe. It takes discipline to truly experience the freedom that God has for us each seventh day.

Preparing for the Sabbath in advance is a habit that must be cultivated. Activities like shopping, cleaning, studying, and paying bills can keep us from focusing on God. We need to avoid anything that would distract us from rest, worship, healing, and doing good on the Sabbath. Trusting and resting must be learned also. It takes discipline to set things and thoughts aside until another day so we can give God our full attention.

Please take full advantage of God's wondrous gift of the Sabbath.

Pastor Gordon Lawton
(Hope to see you at Houghton College, August 4-10.)



Pete's Prescriptions

from Dr. Pete May,
Executive Secretary

Fellowship in the Bible

like Norbert, who has cancer, and David, a patient of mine who was an alcoholic. We pray for the Owens' health and many others in our churches.

God; He's *our* God. He makes sure that all of us realize that and have an opportunity to respond.

Our Bible study group gives us a place to bring our acquaintances—

From "Fellowship of the Rings," where Frodo and friends fight for good over evil; to a 500-member "Bible Study Fellowship" in Pasadena, Calif. (wife Nancy tried to participate but found some of their ideas unacceptable); to a "Fellowship of Friends" in Altadena and Arcadia, Calif.

Nancy and I are privileged to be members of this last group, which is led by Pastor Scott Hausrath of the Foothill Community Church (SDB) in Montrose. He is currently guiding us through the book of John every Wednesday evening.

Fellowship ("koinonia" in Greek) means the spiritual union of believers with Christ. 1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." We must have fellowship and study, and love each other.

The first thing we do at our Bible fellowship is compile a prayer list for the week. Some weeks, it's fairly long.

We pray for John and Audry and her health problems; for Rocky's ministry at the camp he runs; for Dannette, our engineer and evangelist; for Willard and his Christian growth. We also pray for Coty and LaVerne, for my back problem, and for travel safety.

There's a long list of other friends who might join us soon—



**What does a prayer
and Bible study group provide
for God? It allows Him to
speak to and influence
people so that they are
aware of Him.**

Our fellowship follows the commandment in John 15:17: "Love each other." In the Bible, this is what fellowship means.

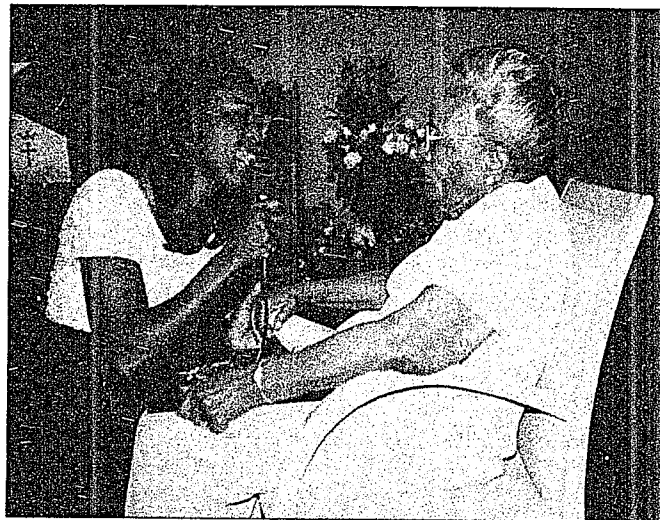
Scott needs prayer, too, as he faithfully leads our study. This group has been together for two years, with some joining recently and others planning to join after they complete their medical treatments.

What does a prayer and Bible study group provide for God? It gives Him a place to work on the people who touch our lives. It allows God to speak to and influence people so that they are aware of Him. He's not only

those who have been shaken and awakened by God Himself—so that they can learn more about Him. God's will can direct their lives as they get to know Him as their ever-present Holy Spirit, a Trusted Friend who's guiding them every moment of their existence.

By attending a Bible study, one can see the drama of others experiencing God's Presence in their lives, both in modern times and in ancient days. **SR**

Miami church honors long-time member



Miami church member Eurickah Cooté sings "God Will Take Care of You" to Deaconess Gladys Hamilton.

Deaconess Gladys Hamilton of the Miami, Fla., SDB Church, turned 89 on December 27, 2001. Four days prior to her birthday, the Miami church honored her with an appreciation service.

Gladys is a charter member of the church and has served it faithfully since its founding in 1981. Although she didn't start the church, she played a significant role in its formation.

Gladys had relocated from New York City to Miami, and the founders of the church lived in West Palm Beach, an hour away. Because Gladys didn't drive, they decided to start a church in Miami instead of closer to their home. Because of their sacrifice, Gladys could participate in the life of a Seventh Day Baptist church.

Ordained as a deaconess in 1992, Gladys has remained active in the church although failing health has limited her participation.

She was born in Jamaica but moved to Cuba with her parents

when she was 10 months old. She eventually returned to Jamaica as an adult. While there, she gave her life to the Lord and was introduced to the Seventh Day Baptist church. Upon migrating to New York City, she continued her relationship with SDBs, then sought to maintain those church roots when she moved to Miami.

Gladys is quiet, humble, and unpretentious. Never one to seek the

limelight, she is the model of cooperation and meekness, and unquestionably deserves the attention heaped upon her by her church family. In addition to the gift she received, relatives, church members, Jasmine Lynch of the West Palm Beach church, and Pastor Andrew Samuels all presented tributes to her.

The elegantly decorated church facilities provided the perfect atmosphere for the delicious dinner which followed the service. The Hospitality and Organizing Committees did a fine job preparing for the 100-plus people who attended.

A verse from "God's Hall of Fame," read in one of the tributes to Gladys, says it all:

*"This crowd on earth they soon forget
The heroes of the past.
They cheer like mad until you fall,
And that's how long you last.
But God, He never does forget,
And in His Hall of Fame,
By just believing in His Son,
Inscribed you'll find your name."*

Deaconess Gladys Hamilton, we salute you! **SR**

Note from Pastor Ed

The Lord is presently showering the Bell SDB Church of Salemville, Pa., with many blessings.

Since the new year, the church has seen an increase in attendance. Along with the new families have come a significant number of small children, enough to fill two and a half pews for the Children's Message.

Because of limited space, the church is being challenged to figure out where to put these additional children. We also need to figure out where to get teachers for them.

These are wonderful "problems," and we celebrate having them!

—Pastor Ed Sutton

Young Adult Winter Retreat focuses on our "calling"

by Marissa Van Horn, Columbus, Ohio

Imagine with me for a moment...

Thirty-five young adults gathered together in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. Envision these young adults from all across the United States and Canada. And suppose these young adults were joined in fellowship with each other and God. Just think what an amazing and wonderful experience this would be!

Now, believe me when I tell you that this happened and was such a blessing to all those involved.

This year's Young Adult Retreat (held Dec. 28 to Jan. 2) focused on our "calling" from God. Matt Berg did a wonderful job planning our lessons, and Nathanael Lawton prepared our devotional sessions. Both focused on examples of Biblical callings applied to our lives. We learned that we all have a primary and secondary calling.

Our primary calling is our job as a Christian: to love others and spread the Gospel. Our secondary calling might change from person to person, but everyone is called to serve God in the way that He chooses—whether that be as a pastor, teacher, or janitor.

These ideas were discussed in small groups as we got to know each other and prayed for those in our group.

Our worship times were led by Ben Calhoun and his many helpers. We sang praises to our Maker as we learned new songs and enjoyed our old favorites. New songs included those taught to us by our Canadian and New York (Jamaican) friends, Paula, Jody, and Tee.

Free time was spent visiting with one another, playing a variety of games, and enjoying scenic hikes



Young adults gathered at Camp Paul Hummel outside of Boulder, Colo.

on Camp Paul Hummel property. Sledding occurred one afternoon as well as visiting with the local red fox and deer. (They came so close that we could almost touch them!)

We learned that we all have a primary and secondary calling.

This year, the meals were supervised by Sanja Looper but prepared with the help of the young adults. We had great food and enjoyed the bonding time in the kitchen with our small groups as we cooked.

(Or in my group's case, made up a team song and teased on Jon-O.)

The New Year was brought in with much exuberance. We celebrated several different time zones, since we all had different times on our watches. But at midnight, Colorado time, we *really* celebrated! This was followed by a wonderful period of praise and worship.

I speak for every one of us when I say "thanks" to all who helped to plan and carry out this retreat, especially those not mentioned above.

God was good, and I encourage anyone who might be able to attend next year, to do so. That way you will not just have to imagine with me; you can experience it for yourself. **SR**

General Council meets in Florida

The SDB General Council met in Daytona Beach, Fla., on February 2-4, 2002.

Reports came from all the boards and agencies, along with updates on the 2002 and 2003 General Conference sessions. Plans are proceeding to hold the 2003 Conference at George Fox

University near Portland, Ore.

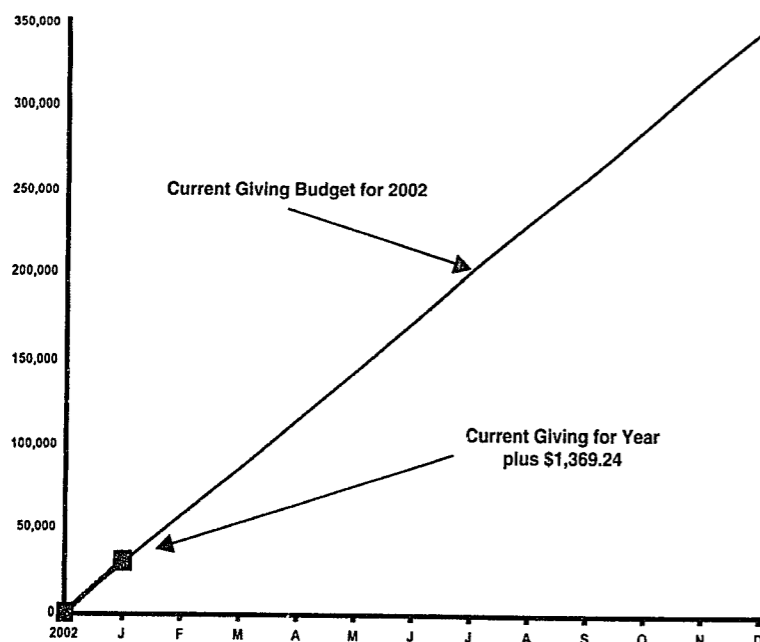
We rejoiced that Pastor Herlitz Condison expects to graduate from seminary in May.

Upcoming events at the SDB Center in Janesville include a Church Planting School in May and Summer Institute in June. **SR**



The 2002 Council. Seated (l. to r.): John Camenga, Kirk Looper, Norma Rudert, Clayton Pinder, and Calvin Babcock (guest). Standing: George Cruzan, Gordon Lawton, Marjorie Jacob, Gabriel Bejjani, Jeanne Yurke, Pete May, Nancy May, Andrew Camenga, and Kevin Butler.

Current Giving 2002



Births

Gage.—A daughter, Peyton Marie Gage, was born to Dr. John and Andrea (Burdick) Gage of Gainesville, TX, on April 29, 2001.

Landrum.—A son, Isaac Theodore Landrum, was born to James and Paula Landrum of Kansas City, MO, on August 2, 2001.

New members

Lost Creek, WV
Don Shackelford, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Ila Ryan
 Joined by letter
 Don Shackelford
 Patricia Shackelford
 Lisa Shackelford

Milton, WI
George Calhoun, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Aubrey Appel
 Robin Brewer
 Nola Mae Gray
 Joshua Harris
 Brandon Marteny
 Gary Rosenmeier
 Sarah Sager
 Larry Schultz
 Dave Zimmerman
 Joined after baptism
 Gary Groelle
 Sharon Rosenmeier
 Joined by letter
 Stephanie Sholtz

Salemville (Bell), PA
Edward Sutton, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Jeff Kagarise
 Bobbi Rager

Obituaries

Bethel.—Kirk Bethel, 57, of the Rudement Community, Ill., died on October 17, 2001, at Memorial Hospital in Carbondale, Ill.

He was born on December 25, 1943, the son of Lee and Viva (Morris) Bethel in the Rudement Community of Saline County. On June 19, 1969, he married the former Carolyn McSparin, who survives.

Kirk was a U.S. Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, active in the local Republican party, former Special Deputy of the Saline County Sheriff's Department, and a mechanic for the Highway Maintenance Department of the Illinois Department of Transportation. He attended the Old Stonefort, Ill., Seventh Day Baptist Church.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his mother, Viva; two sons, Rick and Bart; and one daughter, Marla Agin, all of Harrisburg, Ill. He is also survived by four brothers, Bill and Frank, both of Harrisburg, Mark of Florida, and Jack of Equality, Ill.; 10 sisters, Margaret Williams, Linda Barefoot, Marla Vonlienen, and Cindy Blackman, all of Harrisburg; Christine Bowers of Stonefort, Fern McIntosh of Evansville, Ind., Geraldine Martin of Tuscola, Ill., Judy Blankenship of Karbers Ridge, Ill., Janice Bierman of Elsberry, Mo., and Pat Ferrell of Scott City, Mo.; four grandchildren, several nieces and nephews, great nieces and great nephews, and a host of friends.

Kirk was preceded in death by two brothers, Cecil Jr. and James Edward Bethel, and by infant twin sisters.

Services were held on October 20, 2001, at the Reed Funeral Chapel with Pastors Doug Burkhamer and Bob Farr assisting. Burial was in Joyner Cemetery, Stonefort, with full military honors by the American Legion George Hart Post.

Blomgren.—Marjorie E.

Blomgren, 94, passed away on November 28, 2001, at her home in Milton, Wis.

She was born on December 11, 1906, in Otter Creek, Wis., the daughter of Harry and Florence (Burdick) Robinson. She lived her entire life in the Otter Creek-Milton area.

Marjorie graduated from Milton Union High School in 1925 and was then employed by the Burdick Corporation, Milton. On June 12, 1929, she married Albert F. Blomgren. He died in May of 1972.

She was a member of the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church, the Milton Woman's Club, a charter member of the Milton Historical Society, and past member of the Milton Prairie du Lac Questers. Marjorie was previously active in volunteer services and was an avid bridge player. Her greatest joy was being home with family and friends.

Survivors include one daughter, Carol Blomgren, of Milton and Santa Fe, N.M.; one son, Gary of Milwaukee; and six grandchildren, two stepgrandchildren, four great-grandchildren, three stepgreat-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by one son, Ronald.

Funeral services were held on December 1, 2001, at the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church, with Pastor George Calhoun officiating. Burial was in Milton Cemetery.

Van Horn.—Nellie Van Horn, 97, died on January 16, 2002, at Cray Manor in Atchison, Kan., following a long illness.

She was born on February 18, 1904, in Cherokee, Okla., the youngest child of George and Mettie (Pierce) Van Horn. Her parents were in the process of moving to a farm on Seventh Day Lane in Nortonville,

Kan., when she was born. She stayed in Cherokee with her mother and two sisters until she was three weeks old, then they headed to Kansas to join the rest of the family.

Nellie attended Lane Country School. After moving to a farm west of Nortonville, she attended the Sugar Bowl Country School. She also attended Nortonville High School, graduating in 1923.

On June 30, 1916, Nellie was baptized and joined the Nortonville Seventh Day Baptist Church.

When Nellie's mother died in 1921, she became the family homemaker, cooking and keeping house for her father. She was a high school sophomore at the time.

In 1923, she traveled to Denver to live with her sister, Lura Benner, and enroll in Beautician School. After receiving her license, she returned to Nortonville and set up a beauty shop. After her father's death in 1931, Nellie worked in a private home in Lancaster, Kan., but came home every weekend to see her sisters and attend church.

In 1932, Nellie returned to Denver to work in private homes. In 1937, she started working for the local telephone company and stayed there for 32 years. Upon retiring, she returned to Nortonville and lived in an apartment at Community Homes.

When Nellie became ill in 1992, she entered the Atchison Hospital. She was eventually transferred to Cray Manor, which became her home.

She is survived by many nephews and nieces, including Kathryn Niemann and Reba Wheeler, both of Nortonville.

Funeral services were held on January 19, 2002, at the Nortonville Funeral Home, with Rev. Stephan Saunders of the Nortonville SDB Church officiating. Nellie was laid to rest beside her mother and father in the Nortonville Cemetery.



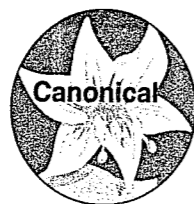
**•The theological context:
How did existing beliefs
shape people's thinking?**

In Peter's speech at Pentecost, he notes that many Jews in Jesus' day did not recognize him as their messiah, even having witnessed the miracles he performed. Acts 2:22-23—

Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst... you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put [him] to death.

Mic. 5:2), but only one describes him as a suffering servant (Isa 53:3-6).

These are the passages that excited people in the first century, yet as the majority of them predict a monarch and not a martyr, it is understandable why many rejected Jesus' messianic claims. He did not meet their expectations.



**•The canonical context:
What does related material
elsewhere in Scripture say?**

Because some passages contain only a partial transcript of an event, or because an author may not repeat material his audience already knows,

Because some passages contain only a partial transcript of an event, the modern reader will often need to consult other passages in the canon of Scripture to get a complete picture.

How could so many people have missed what was so obvious? The answer lies, in part, in what they expected the Messiah to be, the way earlier portions of Scripture described him.

A topical Bible organizes verses thematically and is a good source for such information. The standard is *Nave's Topical Bible*, which lists many OT prophecies in the entry for Jesus. Of the seven passages most clearly and directly referring to the person of the Messiah, six describe him as a conquering king (Psa. 2; 110; Isa. 9:3-7; 11:1-4; Dan. 7:13-14;

the modern reader will often need to consult other passages in the canon of Scripture to get a complete picture.

This means that it is inadvisable to base our understanding, especially of doctrinal matters, on a single verse. Rather, we should formulate an opinion after considering what God has said in other places.

In John's gospel, Jesus seems to give his disciples a "blank check" for their petitions (16:23).

Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.

Some Christians take this to mean that whether there is a *need* for a particular thing or simply a *desire* to possess it, they have only to "name-it-and-claim-it," and God will grant their request. Is this assumption consistent with what God has revealed elsewhere?

As with the earlier section on cultural context, *Nave's Topical Bible* is a good tool to locate other passages on the same subject. In the section on prayer, two verses in John's first epistle indicate that God is quite particular about the petitions He answers. According to the apostle, who was present for Jesus' instruction and would certainly have understood Jesus' intention, the *source* of the request must be a person who respects God's will (3:22), and the *substance* of the request must itself reflect God's will (5:14).

...whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

The purpose of prayer is not to gratify us but to glorify God.

These six aspects of context—verbal, grammatical, cultural, historical, theological, and canonical—are not the only ones that can help explain the meaning of a passage, but they are among the most important.

Along with diligent effort, a few good tools, and dependence on the leading of God's Spirit, a Christian (even with little or no formal training) can be one who is "accurately handling the word of truth" and who, thereby, meets with God's approval. SR

Dr. Paul Manuel is pastor of the German Seventh Day Baptist Church in Salemville, Pa.

KEVIN'S

ORNER

The first thing to go

Chicago's O'Hare Airport, once again. Even with frigid, snowy weather finally heading our way, I was not overly excited about heading to warm—even unseasonably hot—Florida for General Council meetings. Maybe it had something to do with our own "un-season" of a mild Wisconsin winter.

Waiting at the gate to board my flight, I stared up at the "Departures" monitor. The names of several cities caught my attention; places where I'd love to return, others that I'd like to explore for the first time.

Did I *really* have to go to Orlando? What if I walked up to the counter, bought another ticket for who-knows-where, and just flew away?

Well, of course I didn't do that. And I haven't given in to scores of other temptations that seep into my mind.

Why don't I follow those wayward inclinations?

Conference President Gordon Lawton explained it clearly during a devotional time at the Council meeting (which I *did* attend).

It's called "self-control."

Gordon shared from Acts 24:24-26—"Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, 'That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.' At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him."

But it doesn't look like Felix wanted to hear more about self-control.

Perhaps some of our youth at Conference didn't either following some costly vandalism at Lindsborg. (The Conference's pocketbook and reputation took a hit thanks to some poor choices and no supervision.) Gordon mentioned how self-control could have prevented that.

Parents and sponsors can provide guidance, too. He said that self-control motivates us to go to work, to pay our bills, to say "no," and actually get to bed early in order to meet the obligations of the next day.

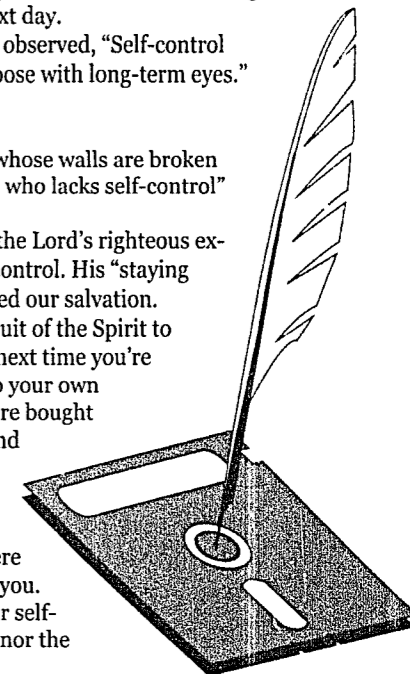
Gordon also observed, "Self-control helps us to choose with long-term eyes." I like that.

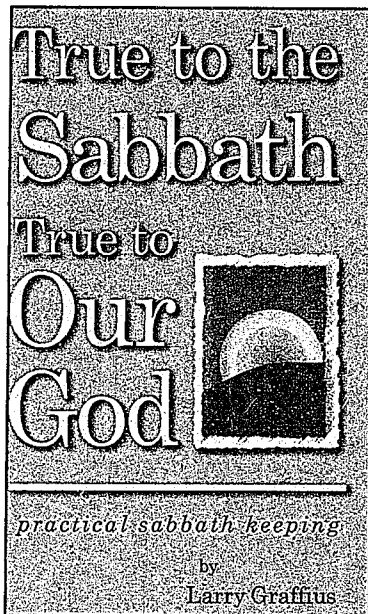
"Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control" (Prov. 25:28).

Let's follow the Lord's righteous example of self-control. His "staying power" provided our salvation.

Allow that fruit of the Spirit to guide you the next time you're tempted to "do your own thing." You were bought with a price, and called to be His child, to minister in obedience where He has placed you.

Exercise your self-control and honor the Lord.





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for believers?

What does it mean to
keep the Sabbath
Holy?

How do we practice
Sabbath keeping
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