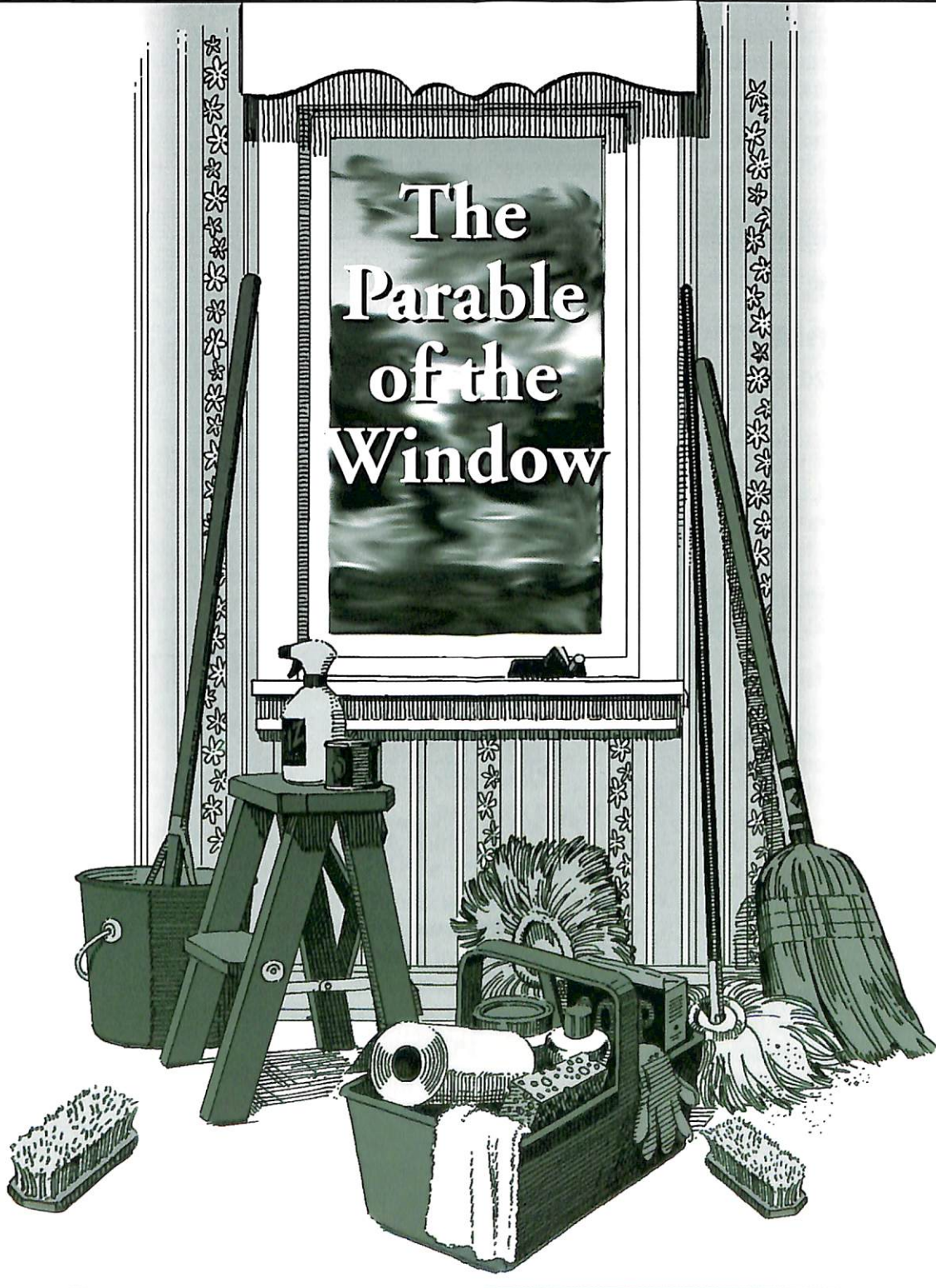




The Sabbath RECORDER

December 2004

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists





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 Christ Jesus.
- 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 our Lord. It is the joy of the Sabbath that makes SDBs just a little bit different.

For 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@seventhdaybaptist.org and the SDB Web site: www.seventhdaybaptist.org

Pastors' Conference

April 19-23, 2005



"Living in the Light"
(studies from Ephesians)
Alfred Station, N.Y.

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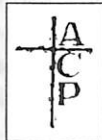


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The parable of the window

by Irene B. Saunders

There once was an old man who lived at the end of an overgrown lane. Not many people went down that road because no one else lived on it. It was impossible for a car to go through because of the trees that had grown up over the years.

The children in the village were afraid of the old man and ran away whenever he came into town to shop. They thought he was evil.

One day, a new family moved into town. Jeff was only 9 years old, but he wanted to be friends with everyone. He asked his new friends in the village about the dark lane and the strange man who lived all by himself. They told Jeff to never go down that road if he wanted to live. But the boy just couldn't resist seeing for himself who this person was.

Jeff rode his bicycle as far down the lane as he could. When the passage became too overgrown, he leaned his bike up against a tree and made his way through the weeds and underbrush on foot.

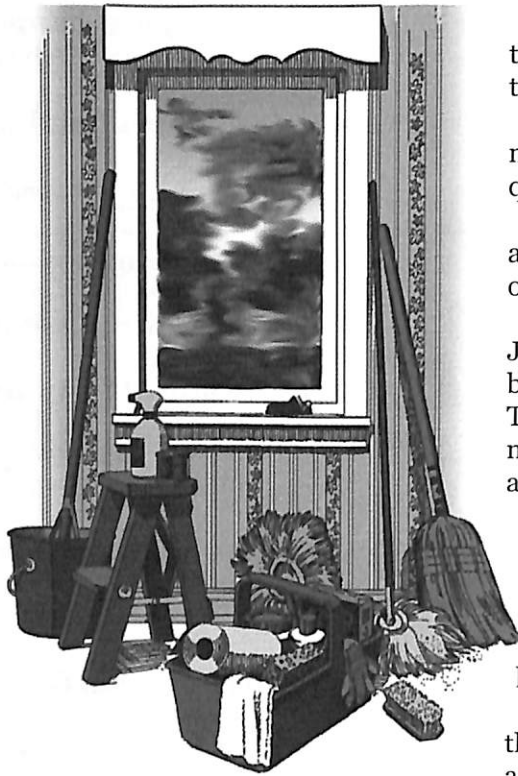
Soon, he spotted a rundown cottage that used to be neat and pleasant. He could tell that from the pretty shutters now hanging by only one hinge. The remains of window boxes held weeds that were growing against what used to be windows. From where Jeff stood, he couldn't see a single window that was not boarded up.

He cautiously moved closer to the cottage. All of a sudden, he heard a husky voice call out, "What are you doing here? Did you come to spy on me?"

Jeff was frightened, but he managed to respond that he just wanted to be friends.

An old man appeared from behind a huge oak tree. *He doesn't look scary*, Jeff thought. *He looks lonely*.

"My name is Jeff. What's yours?" Jeff asked.



With each clean window, Ben's solemn face became brighter.

The old man replied that his name was Ebenezer Scoggins, but he preferred to be called "Ben."

Jeff moved a little closer, but his knees were pretty wobbly. "You must be lonely all the way out here," Jeff offered.

Ben looked Jeff over from head to foot before answering. "Well, not many people come out here nowadays. Used to be, this was a busy, happy place."

"When was that?" Jeff asked.

"Oh, the children were little and Anna, my wife, was here. She kept the place homey. It was filled with fun and love and light..."

Ben's voice trailed off and crackled a little. He turned around and

told Jeff harshly, "You should be getting back to town."

Jeff had just begun to make a new friend, so he wasn't going to quit now.

"Uh, I noticed that the windows are all boarded up. Did they break or something?"

Ben slowly turned back toward Jeff, speaking softly. "No, they didn't break, but I was afraid they would. That's why they are covered. Anna made ruffled curtains for them and always planted pink petunias in the window boxes—every year. Now that she is gone and the kids have all moved away to the city... well, I don't need the windows."

"Doesn't it get dark in the house?" Jeff asked.

"There isn't any reason to see anything," Ben answered stoically. "I get around just fine the way things are. I know where everything is." Then he added in a gruff voice, "You best be heading for home now."

Reluctantly, Jeff went back to the village, but he knew he had to return very soon.

As time passed, Jeff visited old Ben more and more often, and they became good friends. One day, Jeff decided to ask Ben about the windows again.

"Ben, would you like me to help you take the boards off the windows? I could do that, and then the house would be full of light again."

Ben immediately said "No," but then he thought about it. *Maybe it was time for the house to be sunny again. Maybe it wouldn't hurt too much.*

That day, Ben and Jeff tore the boards off the windows and gave the glass a good washing. "Let me wash the insides, too," Jeff said. "Then the light will really come in!"

No other person had been inside the cottage since Anna died. Ben did

not know whether he wanted Jeff there, but he finally allowed him to go in.

As Jeff entered, he tried not to be obvious as he viewed the cottage. All the furniture was covered with sheets, except for a table and one bentwood rocker in the corner near the potbelly wood stove. The table held only an old Bible and an oil lamp, and the room was neat and clean. The white, ruffly curtains that Ben had mentioned were still hanging.

Jeff went right to work, washing and wiping. The vinegar water made the glass sparkle, and wonderful sunshine streamed into the room.

Ben and Jeff went from room to room, washing every window in the house. With each clean window, Ben's solemn face became brighter. Soon, he was smiling broadly, and the two workers began laughing and whistling.

Jeff entered the parlor with its cozy cobblestone fireplace and a wedding picture and baby photos lined up on the mantel. The parlor was the very last room to receive glistening wipes. A colored, cut glass window was next to the fireplace.

Just as they finished cleaning the special window, the sun peeked from behind a cloud and poured into the room. Wonderful rainbows caressed the pictures, casting a pattern across the floor and up the far wall.

"This was Anna's favorite room," Ben said. "She loved that window and the rainbows. The children used to try to catch them in their hands. How we would laugh!" Ben pointed to a sheet-covered settee, adding, "Anna and I would sit here and watch our family as she knitted sweaters and coverlets."

As Ben spoke, he walked over to the settee and slowly pulled away the dusty sheet covering a maroon-colored Victorian love seat. He gently stroked the velvet upholstery. "We brought this parlor set all the way down the Mississippi River on a barge."

He paused for a moment, then continued reminiscing. "Anna loved her home. So much of her is still here, and I have been afraid to see it all these years. Now I see that I have been missing so much by covering things up. That can't remove the sorrow; it just buries it.

"I have been so miserable in my world of darkness," he confessed. "Thank you, Jeff, for coming and

**Let's open
the curtains, wash
the windows, and
let the Light
of God shine in
and out!**

helping me to let the sunshine in again. I have wonderful memories that have been pushed into the darkness.

"Just as the sunshine was kept out because the windows were covered, so the lovely remembrances were kept covered," Ben observed. "I thought I could get rid of the pain and loneliness that way, but it has only made it worse.

"Jeff, you have given me back many wonderful thoughts—of my Anna, the sunshine, and her rainbows."

What would a house be like without windows? We receive light and can see what is outside—and inside—through them. Without windows, we have only walls. How empty and plain life would be in such a house!

Jesus is our "window" through the clouds of sin that separate us from God. Only he can bring true Light to this world.

At NASA, they speak of a "window" for a possible rocket launch. Conditions have to be perfect. If a launch is not done then, it is postponed until the next "window."

Jesus died once. We may have many opportunities to see him and reach God. But, then again, there may be only one chance, only one window. Have you missed the Window of the World? The Light of the World? Are you living in darkness? Are you afraid to let the sunshine in?

Someone once said, "We are all fools." How right that is!

We are either fools *for* Christ, or we are fools *against* Christ. There is no other position.

Windows have two sides: inside looking out, and outside looking in. "[Jesus] was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Others can see Jesus, the Light in us, if we allow his Spirit to shine through us—unless we have boarded up our lives so that they cannot see.

Life without Christ is dark, very dark, but we can share his light. In fact, that is our mission. How can we stand idly by while the ones around us are groping in the dark? Let's open the curtains, wash the windows, and let the Light of God shine in *and* out!

Light that is shared is not cut in half; there is enough for all.

"Let your light so shine that men may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:35).

Let the Son shine in the windows of our souls, and let his Light shine out through us. **SR**

Irene Saunders is a deaconess at the Nortonville, Kan., SDB Church.

I held Grandma's hand

by Renée Bledsoe

I held Grandma's hand... and I thought of Jesus.

I know it sounds strange, but I was not expecting my grandmother to die. We pictured seeing her name on the "Smucker's 100th Birthday Board" and hearing Willard Scott announce her name on the Today Show.

Grandma was one month from her 91st birthday.

When she told us she had cancer, all I could do was hold her hand and comfort her. No great poem, verse, or story came to mind to make the inevitable news seem any better.

I held her hand and remembered all of the wonderful years we shared as a family. Grandma was the picture of independence and longevity. Then came the diagnosis.

I held her hand when I heard the news, because she had held my hand so many times when I was a little girl.

I held Grandma's hand and thought of Jesus, and how he knew he was going to die. Was he scared like my grandmother was?

I held Grandma's hand as my way of showing her how much she meant to me for all the years of my life. And I wondered—*Did God want to reach down and hold His Son's hand when he knew he had only four months to live?*

Four months, from beginning to end. Did Jesus count the days as our



***I held her hand
when I heard the news,
because she had held my hand
so many times when I was a little girl.***

family did? Did he appreciate all the days he had left with his disciples, or were they wasted on frivolous activities?

Did Jesus give loads of advice to the disciples, knowing that he wouldn't see them until they joined him in heaven?

I held Grandma's hand every Sunday when it was my turn to watch her. She was on morphine, so while she slept, I held her hand.

Did Jesus' sleep become interrupted when he was thinking of the end? I no longer wondered why he wanted someone to sit with him the night before he was crucified; he just longed for the touch of a loved one.

I held Grandma's hand and

thought, *Does God want to hold our hands when we are sad or scared? Does He yearn to spend every last moment with us as His children?*

Near the end, my grandmother could no longer drink from a glass, so a little sponge became her "straw." Again, I thought of Jesus; how he hung on a cross and was thirsty. A sponge was given him, too.

Will Grandma and Jesus talk about that when she sees him?

I wanted to thank whoever made those sponges on the little plastic stick. Grandma thought they were "just grand." Did Jesus like the sponge that was put to his lips when he was on the cross? Did he think it was "grand"?

Hospice. Morphine. No more doctors. No more hope.

A son and his wife, a daughter-in-law, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and a brand new great-great-grandchild. All so much, to end too soon.

Did Jesus feel this way when he began his three years of ministry, knowing how it was going to end?

When my grandmother could no longer walk and needed someone to just sit with her, I held her hand. When she didn't notice her soiled hand after using the bathroom, I did not shy away. I held her hand.

I knew it was my love for her that was winning out. I thought of how Mary must have felt, seeing the blood stains on Jesus and him writhing in pain. Did she want to hold his hand just one last time, to let him know how she loved her son?

I wanted Grandma to know that she was not alone. I was so glad when my father took her to his house right after we received the doctor's report. None of us wanted her to be alone.

On the morning that I heard my 64-year-old father call her "Mommy,"

***Don't be afraid
to hold a hand that
might be dirty or
old or strange.
Just remember that
it is the small touch
than can mean
so much.***

I realized that she had held his hand when he was a little boy. Did Mary think of the days when Jesus was a little boy?

It is so hard to say good-bye to someone when you cannot imagine life without them. I would love just one more day to hold Grandma's hand. I want to tell her one more time that I love her.

Then I think, *Does God want us to hear the same thing that I whispered? I love you Grandma... I love you... I love you...*

Was that enough? And, does God wonder if He is enough for us?

It hurts to think that someone, right now, might feel like, "I'm all alone."

You are not alone. Jesus is right there, holding your hand.

He wants to whisper in your ear, as I did to my grandmother: *"I love you... I love you..."*

Now, Grandma is holding her mother's hand, her father's hand, her husband's, her son's. She will also be the first to hold my baby's hand—her great-grandchild I miscarried eight years ago. She can hold their hands until I get to heaven.

Don't stop holding hands. Don't be afraid to hold a hand that might be dirty or old or strange.

Just remember that it is the small touch than can mean so much.

Jesus wants to hold your hand. Let him.

Hold someone's hand today, and think of Jesus. **SR**

*A tribute to Harriet Peloubet,
by Renée Peloubet-Bledsoe of the
Verona, N.Y., SDB Church.*

Give to those who gave so much.

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A tale of two churches

by Donna Tanney, West Edmeston, N.Y.

I suppose all churches have tales. Ours does; in fact, the Leonardsville-Brookfield, N.Y., SDB Church has had several over the years.

In 1791-1792, the first settlers began coming into this central part of upstate New York. We were part of a newly-surveyed wilderness of well-over 40,000 acres. Lying directly west of the boundary line (the Unadilla River), the land was largely level and fertile.

The settlers, including many Seventh Day Baptists, were predominately veterans of the Revolutionary War. They had been waiting for their land grants—territory that had been promised in exchange for their war-time service.

Brookfield's proximity to the river apparently led that town to be surveyed first. Because of the settlers' eagerness, the available land was taken up almost before the surveyor's ink had dried.

Well aware of these facts, and realizing that droves of people were leaving the shores of New England, Seventh Day Baptists sent Elder Henry Clarke into these wilds in 1795. As an evangelist, he would both lead and guide these adventurous pioneers.

By 1797, Elder Henry had a good group going. They organized under the title of "The First Sabbatarian Church of Brookfield." In doing so, it became the second organized church within the County of Madison, which would not be "set off" from Chenango County until 1806.

The settlers were advancing westward. By 1809, a group of Clarks came in (First-Day Baptists), and with them a young Seventh Day Baptist, Eli Bailey, who had married Mercy Clark.

Bailey, the second evangelist sent here by Seventh Day Baptists, settled near the Brookfield-Sangerfield

Town Border (now Beaver Creek Rd.) where he soon had a congregation established. They organized under the name of "The Second Sabbatarian Church of Brookfield."

In 1823, the congregation erected a small church building. Nothing of that church physically survives today, but evidence of its existence can be found in a fair-sized graveyard and a commemorative marker placed in 1975.

In the 1830s, two equally powerful groups—The First Day Baptist Church of Brookfield and The Second Seventh Day Baptist Church of Brookfield—put minds (and funds) together, and erected a large and beautiful domed edifice in the Village of Brookfield. One congregation met there on the Sabbath, the other on Sunday. The building was jointly owned but operated under the name of the Brookfield-Clarkville Baptist Society, and it opened in 1837.

Once this last organizational name was attached, citizens seldom attempted to identify Brookfield houses of worship by name. Pointing produced the greater degree of certainty.

Both Elders Clarke and Bailey left their mark, not only on the Brookfield area but on Seventh Day Baptists as well—in denominational matters, hymns, records, etc.

In 1847, the First Sabbatarian Church of Brookfield (located in Leonardsville) burned down. Undaunted, the congregation built another lovely church, which still exists today.

During the 1970s, their enrollment decreased rapidly. This decline led the Brookfield and Leonardsville churches to begin worshipping together, alternating attendance at their two church buildings.

The gradual loss of the remaining

members precipitated the decision to combine the two churches. Thus, in 1985, they joined forces, forming the Leonardsville-Brookfield SDB Church.

Since it's cheaper to share heat, we continue to meet in the Brookfield church during the cold winter months. This building is also more accessible, so we are "getting along."

But complacency is an insidious disorder that can be easily entered—perhaps because it is so comfortable and requires no extra effort.

I looked about our church this spring, taking note of faces and relative ages. When an opportunity surfaced, I uttered a frightening phrase, "We are a dying church."


At our quarterly meeting, Dr. Warren Brannon echoed that phrase and continue to expound upon it as only he can. And the congregation listened. In "retaliation," our church moderator appointed Dr. Brannon to chair a new program to interest newcomers.

He began working right away and got Pastor Gene Smith to agree to conduct a special service on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, beginning in May and running until fall.

We have a good speaker in Rev. Jim Ketchum, whose informative and illustrated sermons manage to keep most of our "sleep-deprived" folks awake. He also has his turn at these special midweek events.

We made posters and handouts, invited people to come, prayed about it, prepared post-meeting refreshments, and really socialized.

The Lord has honored us. Our group has grown, and we now have at least a half-dozen new people in church—talented ones, at that.

May God be praised for opening our eyes as well as our minds! 

Looper ordained to ministry

by Thelma Tarbox

On October 23, 2004, the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hopkinton in Ashaway, R.I., ordained Kirk Looper into Christian ministry. Kirk is the Executive Director of the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society.

Church President Sandra Neugent welcomed guests who had come from nine states, including California and Florida. She provided special music, singing "Amazing Grace."

Gordon C. Kilts, President of the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society headquartered in Westerly, R.I., offered prayer. Rev. Joe Samuels of Plainfield, N.J., gave the Affirmation of the Ordination Council, noting that it had been "unanimously resolved to recommend that G. Kirk Looper be ordained."

Bill Bowyer, presenting a meditation based on Paul's letter to the Philippians, said that Kirk measures up to the qualifications listed in that prayer. "He has entered into ministry for the love of God," Pastor Bowyer commented. He pointed out that Kirk also has a capable helpmate—his wife, Vivian—who assists him in the missionary office. "They are a team."

Vivian fully supports her husband. "When Kirk and I married," she explained, "I pledged before God to be supportive of Kirk and his endeavors. God's call of Kirk to ministry has been my call. We are one in Christ."

Recalling that Kirk had taught school in Leavenworth, Kan., Pastor Bowyer quipped, "For a man who has served in Leavenworth, Kirk has come a long way!"

Rev. Ron Elston, SDB National Extension Minister, gave the Charge to the Candidate. He commented that Kirk is his supervisor and best friend, and that they have traveled around the world together for several years.

Rev. Elston noted that following Christ is a solemn responsibility, but

one filled with joy. He admonished Kirk to guard against becoming physically and spiritually exhausted. It is important to preach God's Word clearly so that it can be understood in love. A minister must be a servant, not the master. Pastor Elston commended Kirk for teaching by example.

Rev. David Taylor charged the congregation to remember what an awesome privilege it is to be called to the ministry, to be approved and found suitable to be ordained.

In Kirk's case, Rev. Taylor pointed out, ordination is unique. Unlike most candidates, he is not the pastor of one church. As the Missionary Society's

***As the Society's
Executive Director, he is
called to perform pastoral
duties abroad as well
as in North America.***

Executive Director, he is called to perform pastoral duties abroad as well as in North American churches. Many overseas areas are scary and dangerous.

It is almost impossible to grasp the problems that Kirk faces. He needs wisdom. Often entire Conferences, not just one church, contact him for assistance. Pastor Taylor's final charge to the church was to remember that Kirk needs our support so that, through him, we may share with people in need.

While Kirk and Vivian knelt, min-



Rev. Kirk and Vivian Looper were cited as a true ministry team.


isters and deacons came forward to administer the "Laying on of Hands."

Rev. Leon Lawton offered a Consecrating Prayer, asking that Kirk might have a zeal for truth, an unflagging energy, and a hate for sin but a love for sinners.

"May God grace his ministry with success so that at the end," Rev. Lawton shared, "Kirk will hear, 'Well done good and faithful servant, welcome to the Father's right hand.'"

Rev. Gordon Lawton, the Director of Pastoral Services from the SDB Center in Janesville, Wis., welcomed Rev. Looper to the ministry. He noted that it was unique for him to be welcoming Kirk because years ago, when they were all living in Kansas, the Looper family encouraged Gordon while he was in seminary.

Gordon presented Kirk with a Certificate of Ordination. Then the newly ordained Rev. G. Kirk Looper closed the service with the Benediction.

A reception followed at the parish house, where delicious refreshments, fellowship, congratulations, and well-wishes flowed for Kirk and Vivian. 

Center welcomes another Shepard

by Leanne Lippincott

Morgan Shepard has been hired as the Conference's new Financial Director, working out of the Seventh Day Baptist Center in Janesville, Wis. He will also serve as treasurer of General Conference.

Morgan is taking over the duties of Calvin Babcock, retiring General Services Administrator and Finance Manager of the Memorial Fund. Calvin will continue to train Morgan to facilitate the transition. (Once Cal moves to New York sometime next year, he will focus on endowment funding for the Memorial Board.)

Morgan was born in Wheatridge, Colo., and grew up in the Columbus, Ohio, SDB Church. The son of Dick and Mary Shepard, he has also attended or been a member of SDB churches in Texas, Washington State, New Jersey, Rhode Island,

As Financial Director, Morgan will oversee the day-to-day accounting and operations of the Memorial Fund.

and Washington D.C. He is currently a member of the Shiloh, N.J., congregation but will be joining the Milton (Wis.) SDB Church.

After attending high school in Ohio and Texas, Morgan earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Texas Tech University in Lubbock in 1988. In 1996, he received a Masters in Business Administration from Washington State University in Pullman, Wash.

In 1988, Morgan was commissioned in the U.S. Naval Reserves as a

Civil Engineer Corps officer, serving in California, Guam, Washington, D.C., and Germany. He currently is a Commander in the Naval Reserves Volunteer Training Unit in Madison, Wis.

His work experience includes five years in architecture and 10 years in construction project management.

He worked for a couple of firms in Yakima, Wash. Prior to moving to Wisconsin, he worked in construction management in Royersford, Pa.

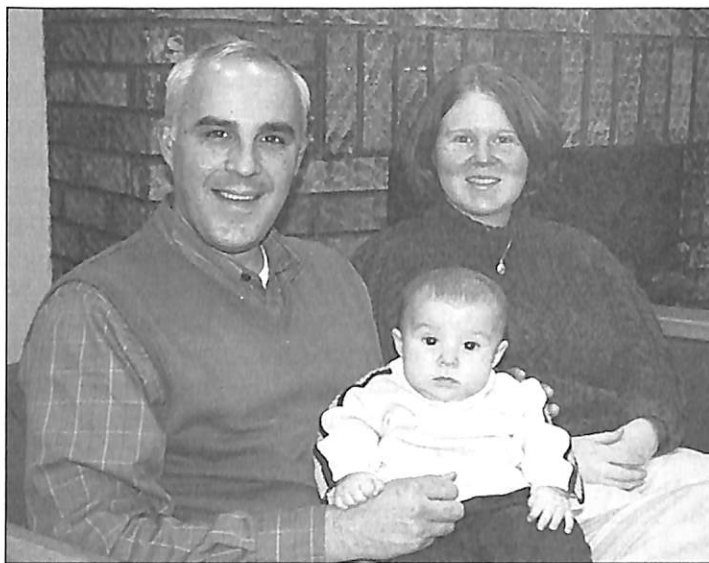
How did Morgan end up getting the Financial Director's job?

"I had lunch with Pastor Don and Charlotte Chroniger [of the Shiloh church]. She told me about the job opening at the Center. It sounded interesting, so I talked to a few more people."

Morgan traveled to Pittsburgh, Pa., to be interviewed by the Leadership Transition Committee, composed of Don Graffius, George Cruzan, and Dale Thorngate. General Council approved their recommendation to hire Morgan.

"I didn't learn until later that the job also included being General Conference Treasurer. I asked George, 'Is there anything else you haven't told me?'"

As Financial Director, the Center's newest employee will oversee the day-to-day accounting and operations of the Memorial Fund, and will support the trustees at their quarterly meetings.



Morgan, Kate, and Ben Shepard are settling in to a new life and ministry in Janesville.

"If it's got something to do with money, it will probably come across my desk."

His most immediate challenge is "to learn the job, trying to replace Calvin and learn all he knows, which will only come with time."

He hopes to build up Memorial Fund endowments to "a level that we never have to say 'No.' I want the Board to be able to continue to do God's will and serve our churches through grants, loans, and scholarships. I would like to see the Conference increase people's awareness of our denomination and everything it does."

Morgan and his wife, Kate, are first-time parents of a son born in August—Benjamin Denver Shepard. "I enjoy watching him smile, develop, and grow," the proud father remarked.

Morgan's main "hobby" is fixing up the 125-year-old house he and Kate recently purchased in Janesville.

What's the *most* challenging part of his job change? "So far," he grinned, "being an Ohio State fan in the state of Wisconsin." **SR**

BJC Board changes name

by Robert Marus, Associated Baptist Press

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs will become the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty after the agency's directors approved a name change on September 27, 2004.

Holding their annual meeting in Washington, D.C., representatives of the national and regional Baptist bodies that support the group voted unanimously to alter their certificate of incorporation. The alterations include the name change, designed to better reflect the BJC's mission of advocating for religious freedom and church-state separation.

"The 'Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs' is a relic from the old days when there was possibly more of a public-affairs mission [for the organization]," David Massengill, chair of the BJC's Bylaw Revision

Committee, told Board members in recommending the change.

The Washington-based group deals strictly with legal and legislative issues regarding the First Amendment's two religion clauses. Those clauses ban both government establishment of religion and government infringement on religious exercise. The BJC does not deal with other public-affairs issues in which Baptists might be interested. Therefore, Massengill said, the name change was in order.

The change came about with a revision of the group's incorporation documents, as well as its bylaws, to bring the documents better into line with District of Columbia law for non-profit corporations.

Opening the Board's meeting with a devotional message, Falls Church,

Va., pastor Jim Baucom told BJC leaders that many Baptists don't understand or appreciate the concept of church-state separation anymore. Therefore, Baucom added, the organization needs to focus its public message more on advocacy for religious freedom, and then note that such freedom is underpinned by the separation of church and state.

"It is religious freedom that we need to begin preaching, not church-state separation.... It is the job of our forebears that we need to begin doing again," Baucom said. "This is what Baptist life is all about—that we believe that we have a God that we love because we choose to love Him, not because we are coerced to love Him. And any union between church and state leads to coercion." **SR**

Ideas for White Christmas gifts—2005

- Bicycles for both the women in leadership and the pastors in most of our countries. These will cost from \$200 to \$400.
- Medical supplies and medicines are needed for Rwanda, Liberia, Malawi, The Gambia, Ghana, and The Cameroon.
- Many of our Conferences have schools linked to their churches, and they need funds to continue this service.
- Sewing supplies and material for Rwanda.
- Scholarships for Makapwa Bible School. \$500 per semester, per student.
- Funds for church building roofs in Rwanda. \$200 to \$300.
- Funds to help the poor and children in Indonesia.
- Funds to help organize and develop the Women's Board in

- our sister Conferences and churches. This will include sending a woman as the instructor.
- And for many of our sister Conferences and churches:
 - School supplies, books, and equipment.
 - Bibles and study materials, including *The Helping Hand*.
 - Children's Bibles.
 - Leadership materials and supplies. This includes the CALLED and T.I.M.E. programs.
 - Keyboards and other musical instruments. These will cost between \$400 and \$800.
 - Hymnals.
 - Funds to support the translation and printing of literature.
 - Computers and printers. These will need to be purchased in the country in which they are to be

used. The amount of duty taxes is great enough that you end up paying almost as much as it costs there anyway.

- Photocopiers. Advice same as the computer. Cost is at least \$2,500.
- Funds for building plots.
- Funds for the leaders' wives to travel to the churches to teach the women.
- Funds to help support church projects in the USA. This would include outreach, educating the pastor in our denomination polity and beliefs, and help in rent or salaries.

*SDB Missionary Society
119 Main St.
Westerly, RI 02891*

Exploring the Sabbath

by Linda Greene

Our journey through all the Old Testament references to the Sabbath continues.

Leviticus 23-25

The Sabbath is a day of “sacred assembly.” This stresses the necessity of preserving Sabbath as a time for gathering together to worship God and learn from Him.

We have no room here to “fudge” regarding church attendance. Some claim that church attendance and its accompanying obligations ruin the restful quality of Sabbath, and that we are therefore justified in staying home to “really get some rest.” Well, that argument is pretty much shot out of the water with this Scripture.

Leviticus 23:8 says do no “regular” work. What does *regular* mean here? Don’t do your ordinary work? Don’t do your routine work that is part of your regular life? Sabbath is *not* a regular day, so recognize that and treat it differently!

Actually, the Hebrew word used here (*abodah*) has its root in the word *abad*, which is translated elsewhere as work without the “regular.” So we shouldn’t make too much of that specific word. Still, it’s interesting to consider.

The rest of these three chapters make for fascinating reading. After talking about the seventh day and its purposes, God discusses making every seventh Sabbath a special day (one Sabbath every seven weeks). He goes on from there to talk about the seventh month and gives all kinds of special instructions for what happens in that month (vv. 23-44).

In chapter 25, He talks about the seventh year and the Sabbath rest for the land. The instructions make it sound as if the farmer, his helpers, and all the animals take the whole year off from working that land. They just eat what it produces of its own

accord. Wow! That’s amazing! What a concept! That’s the origin of taking a sabbatical.

Finally, to cap the whole thing off, God talks about seven Sabbaths of years, or the Sabbath year of Sabbath years. “Jubilee”—one year out of every 50—results in ultimate freedom and redemption. “Proclaim liberty throughout the land.”

Everyone and everything returns to its original condition and purpose during Jubilee. Debts are wiped out completely, slaves are set free, property and homes are returned to their original owners. God gets totally car-

ried away with this whole Sabbath thing; really over the edge here!

***The Sabbath is a celebration
of our freedom from sin!
We gather every Sabbath to rejoice
in our salvation and in the
absolutely amazing God
who engineered it all
from the very
beginning.***

focus of every part of our lives. The Sabbath is a weekly reminder (because we *need* it that often) that we are completely dependent on God for every detail of our existence. God loves us unreservedly and extravagantly, and sets us completely free from the bondage to sin in our lives. He restores us to our original condition and the purpose for which He created us. No wonder Satan has worked *so hard* to obscure this truth of the Sabbath! It represents his total defeat and inability to interfere with God’s completed work in Jesus Christ on the cross.

ried away with this whole Sabbath thing; really over the edge here!

What a wonderful picture of Jesus’ redemptive work in our lives! And why does He do this? Because it all ultimately belongs to God anyhow, so our ownership is only a temporary gift of His grace. He *never* wants us to forget that (v. 23).

The whole concept of the Sabbath is so much bigger than a day of rest. If it weren’t, God would not have taken it this far; He would not have gone to the extreme that He did.

The Sabbath represents freedom from bondage—freedom to be with, do for, and have God as the primary

The Sabbath is a celebration of our freedom from sin! We gather every Sabbath to rejoice in our salvation and in the absolutely amazing God who engineered it all from the very beginning. When He rested on the seventh day during Creation, *this* is why—*this* is what was on His mind!

God knew from day one the mess we were going to make and what we were going to need. He loves us so much that He was prepared from the very beginning to take care of our sin so that we could spend eternity with Him. What an absolutely amazing God we have! **SR**



Single Minded

by Paula Davis

"...that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:35).

Be still before Him

"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.... The Lord delights in the way of the man whose steps he has made firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand" (Psalm 37:7, 23-24).

I have always had trouble being still.

When I was little, I had an uncle who would trap me as I ran around my grandparents' home during holiday gatherings and make me sit still on his lap for a full minute. I thought I would die! Of course, if I wiggled or fought, he would start the time over again until I sat completely still for the entire time.

I really haven't changed much as an adult. I don't run through the

house at family gatherings anymore, but I am rarely still. I always have to be doing something. If there's action, I'm usually in the midst of it.

God is revealing to me how dangerous that can be in my life. If I keep myself busy, there is no time to be lonely, and I don't have to think about being single for the rest of my life. However, keeping busy shuts out the One Who has the solution to the loneliness.

If we never take the time to be alone, we will never see that there is a solution to the loneliness in the midst of our aloneness. God is waiting for us to be still long enough to hear Him tell us how much He loves us, or to whisper His promises to us.

But God is a gentleman. He rarely shouts above the noise and busyness of life to be heard, and unlike my uncle, He won't trap us and hold us on His lap until we stop struggling

and listen to Him. He waits for us to come to Him—and to be still.

It's more than reading His Word or talking to Him in prayer. It's becoming motionless and peaceful before our Lord, allowing Him to speak without expectations. It is only then that we can know the steps on the path He has laid out before us. And it is then that He can delight in His child and uphold us along that path.

Lord, too often I get so caught up in the busyness of my life that I don't allow myself to be still before You and allow You to pour Yourself into my life. I know in my head that You alone are enough for me. But I want to know it in my heart, also.

Teach me to be motionless and peaceful in Your presence. Teach me to be still before You, and to rest in Your arms. *(For additional readings, see Psalm 46.)* **SR**

Join SCSC!

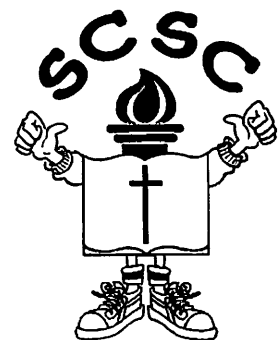
Are you willing to serve with next year's Summer Christian Service Corps?
Is your church ready to host a team for service and outreach?

Team Member applications are due by **January 15**

Church Project applications are due by **February 1**

For more information and your application, contact Grace Crouch at
rgcrouch@netzero.com

Every church will also get an application by mail, and the Women's Society web site should have a form posted soon. Check **www.sdbwboard.org**



SCSC Committee
c/o Grace Crouch
543 St. Rt. 100

Send your completed form to: **Palatka FL 32177**



Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian

A word from the pews

On October 16, 2004, I was privileged to participate in the dedication of the new Meeting House of the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Genesee in Little Genesee, N.Y.

The old church, built in 1837 and remodeled in 1879, burned down in June of 2001. Although few items had been saved from the old building, two pews were moved to the church's Community Center several decades ago and remain the church's oldest relics. These pews are especially meaningful to me because my great-grandfather, Benjamin Franklin Burdick, made them. He and his wife, Julia (Crandall) Burdick, had joined the Genesee church in 1844.

For years, I have been fascinated with church pews. I have viewed them from both the pulpit and the congregation. I have seen the stately, ornate pews of cathedrals in England and America, as well as the historic box pews of New England. But why are they called "pews"?

Webster's International Dictionary gives three distinct definitions:

—The first is from the French term for "a long-handled hooked prong for pitching fish." Jesus did tell his disciples to fish for men, but this can hardly be related.

—The second meaning of "pew" stems from the English definition for "podium" or "raised place" for a speaker in a church. The sense of being *raised* applied to the old pews that Webster defined as "one of the compartments in a church which are separated by low partitions, usually raised on a platform and have long seats upon which several persons

may sit—sometimes called 'slips.' Formerly, pews were made square and contained several seats facing each other, but they are now usually long and narrow."

—The third definition is more applicable—"one of the long, fixed benches which now usually constitute the seats of a church."¹

Alice Morse Earle, in *The Sabbath in Puritan New England*, describes some of the various old-fashioned pews as being "long, narrow, uncomfortable benches made of simple, rough, hand-riven planks placed on legs like milking stools. They were without any support or rest for the back; and perhaps the stiff-backed Pilgrims and Puritans required or wished no support."²

At first, individual families provided their own pews, often conforming to no pattern. Those with more wealth had wainscoted and padded seats, with footrests and shelving. Facing seats within the box pews were used by children. In time, the box pews were standardized.

One advantage of the enclosed pews, particularly in cold weather, was for heat conservation. With no centralized heating, each family brought its own portable coal box with the hope that it would outlast the hours-long sermons of the day. One report records, "The communion bread was frozen pretty hard and rattled sadly in the plates."³

The early plans of the Newport, R.I., Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House, first occupied in 1730, show four box seats in the center of the church, 10 along the outside wall (one of which was reserved for strangers), and 10 encircling the three sides of the balcony.

In 1928, Maude Howe Elliott recalled how as a teenager she visited the Meeting House with her mother, Julie Ward Howe, the author of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Mrs.

Elliott recalled that the pews were as they had been when the church was in use, and each pew had a name on it.⁴

Some of the servants or families of lesser means had similar boxes in the balcony, but with lower sides, facing the sanctuary. With the upraised pulpit, mounted by ornate steps, the congregation had a good view of the pastor, and the pastor had a bird's-eye view of the congregation.

The concept of family ownership of pews has been carried over into more modern times, with many 19th-century churches collecting rent for family pews. Sometimes an annual bidding was held, with the best pews going to the highest bidder. Even today, many members tend to sit in the same pew each week and feel put out if someone else takes "their" pew.

During the current extensive refurbishing of the Newport Meeting House, partially supported by our Historical Society, the question was asked whether the box pews would be part of the restoration. The Newport Historical Society's answer was, "No." They need space for exhibits and want to retain flexibility for gatherings.

Occasionally, the New England Yearly Meeting of Seventh Day Baptists holds Sabbath services in this Old Meeting House, substituting folding chairs for the more limited pew seating. **SR**

¹*Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, pub. 1930.

²Alice Morse Earle, *The Sabbath in Puritan New England*, (Corner House Publishers, Williamstown, MA, 1974), p. 31.

³*Ibid*, p. 85.

⁴Undated article from the *West-erly Sun in Corliss Randolph material*.

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Local news and events

Alfred Station, NY	Jan.	Ghana, Africa	June	Nortonville, KS	July-Aug.
Ashaway, RI	May	Kennewick, WA	Jan.	Portland, OR	Sept.
Battle Creek, MI	Nov.	Lost Creek, WV	Sept.	SDB Center	July-Aug., Dec.
Boulder, CO	March	Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, FL	May	South Atlantic retreat	April
Columbus, OH	March	New Auburn, WI	June	White Cloud, MI	March
Denver, CO	Jan.	New England Yearly Meeting	Sept., Nov.		
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	April				



Changes to the *Sabbath Visitor*

The Sabbath Visitor is changing. After decades as a mailed subscription service, this weekly children's bulletin is becoming an online publication available to everyone.

Beginning with the edition for Sabbath, January 1, 2005, you will be able to visit the Board of Christian

children attending their services changes dramatically from week to week. (Churches do not want to waste paper when they know children might not be showing up.)

While *The Sabbath Visitor* was a subscription service, we could not grant permission for local copying

time has come to change or eliminate the *Visitor*.

In our evaluation, we discovered that almost all churches in our Conference have access to both Internet connections and inexpensive ways of creating multiple copies. Since we can easily create files in the Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format, we can use our web site to distribute files and your printers can create local copies of *The Sabbath Visitor*.

While the *Visitor* will no longer be a subscription service, we encourage individuals and churches that use the publication to designate gifts toward it. To help make this easier for some of you, the Board has established a PayPal account for receiving donations online.

We want your church to have access to *The Sabbath Visitor*. If your church would like to use *The Sabbath Visitor* and does not have the equipment to reproduce it, please contact the Board of Christian Education office, and we will try to work something out. **SR**

**Now that you don't
have to subscribe and wait
for the Visitor to arrive, why
don't you give it a try?**

Education web site (at Educating Christians.org), download the *Visitor*, and print as many copies as you need for the children of your church.

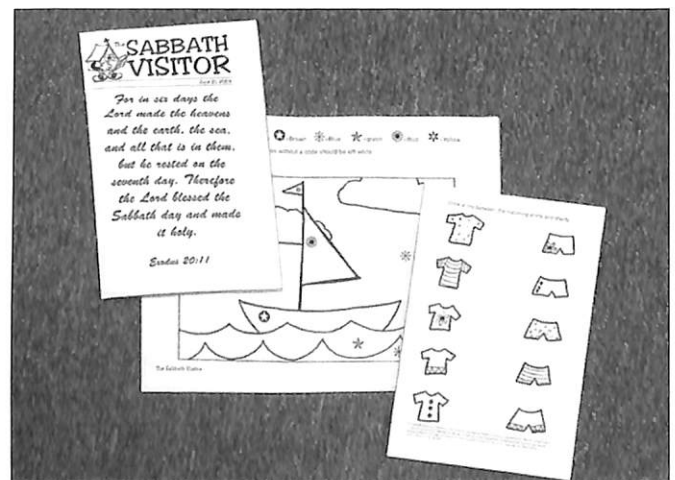
As a weekly children's Bible bulletin, *The Sabbath Visitor* includes a variety of activities. Over the course of several weeks, you are likely to see things like word searches, mazes, dot-to-dot pictures, puzzles, hidden pictures, coloring pages, and reminders of Bible stories. The activities are designed principally for Primary and younger Junior children.

Now that you don't have to subscribe and wait for the *Visitor* to arrive, why don't you give it a try?

Why are we changing *The Sabbath Visitor*? Primarily for two reasons: The first is that over the last few years, an increasing number of churches have been asking for permission to order one master copy of *The Sabbath Visitor* to make copies locally because the number of

because every dollar of subscription revenue was needed.

At the same time, the subscription model has not been working. Which brings us to the second reason: Subscriptions have not even come close to covering the cost of creating content for the *Visitor*. When the cost of printing and mailing is added to the total, the Board of Christian Education is providing a subsidy of nearly \$5,000 a year. When those costs are added to the services provided by TCC and the Conference Center staff—taking orders, collecting funds, and making sure *The Sabbath Visitor* is printed, packaged, and mailed—it becomes clear that the

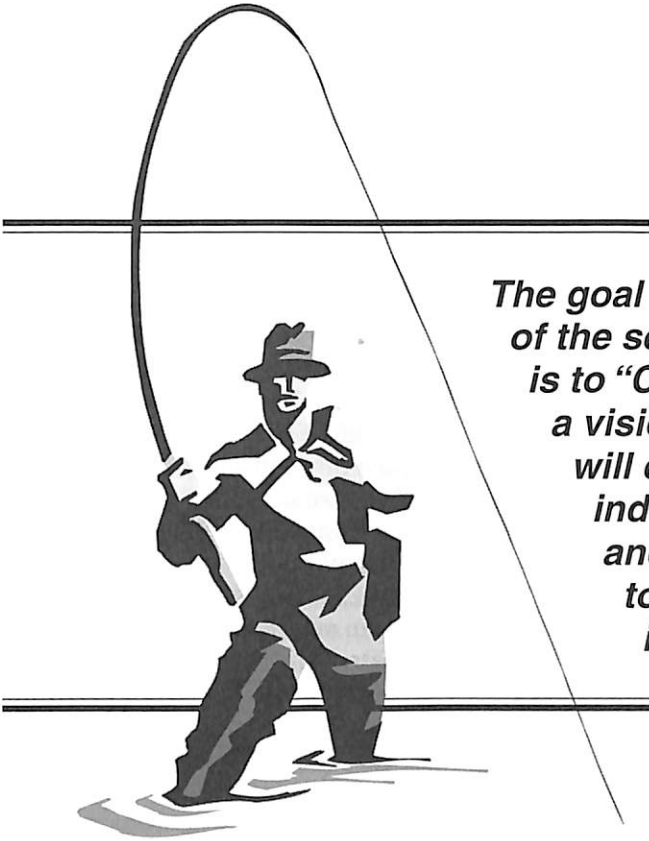




FOCUS
on Missions

CAST— Contact and Support Training


by Kirk Looper



***The goal
of the seminar
is to “CAST”
a vision that
will encourage
individuals
and churches
to participate
in outreach.***

the skills necessary to fulfill national field needs. Trained individuals will follow up on contacts received by the Missionary Society and work as support personnel for projects in the field.

Veteran NFDT members Gordon and Beverly Kilts will be among the team of seminar instructors. We are praying that many Seventh Day Baptists will be among the instructors. We are praying that many SDBs will join the CAST at the first seminar.

If you feel God nudging you to be part of CAST, contact the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society for further information. Write 119 Main St., Westerly, RI 02891; call (401) 596-4326; Fax (401) 348-9494; or E-mail sdbmissoc@verizon.net today. Check out our new web site for updates: sdbmissions.org 

the seminar, and attendance at it, will provide foundational training and include opportunities to develop

The Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society is developing a new seminar for 2005.

We encourage you to be part of a CAST (Contact and Support Team) of Seventh Day Baptists in North America who will help provide continued outreach on the national field as part of the National Field Development Team (NFDT). Individuals will be given training and an opportunity to fulfill their roles in the body of Christ.

The goal of the seminar is to “CAST” a vision that will encourage individuals and churches to participate in outreach. Studies before



Gordon and Beverly Kilts will help instruct a new CAST of national field workers.



the BEACON

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

December 2004

College crunch time

by Jenn Layton

Now is the time when most high school seniors I know, including myself, become completely stressed out. We're not even halfway through the school year, and college application deadlines are coming up quickly.

Along with each school's application, we have to write an essay telling why we would be a great asset to their institution. It's hard enough trying to pick a college to attend. The stress of the application makes it even worse. These documents are a deciding factor in whether or not we'll have a future with a certain school.

I'm a procrastinator. Right now, I don't even know which colleges I will be applying to. This makes things even more stressful. There are just so many colleges that offer my major—elementary education. This makes narrowing down the choices even more difficult. Do I want a big school or a small school? Do I want to play sports in college or not? Do I want to go somewhere close to home or far away?

These are all questions that I've been asking myself the past couple of months. I do have answers for *some* of those questions, yet others are still "up in the air."

I've realized lately why I can't make a decision: I'm trying to turn my decision over to God, praying that He will guide me in my choices. Still, I constantly worry

about what my final decision will be.

I haven't fully turned my decision over to Him, partially because I'm scared. Scared of what my decision will be; scared of how it will affect my future; scared, in general, of trusting God with my whole heart.

I do realize what I need to do—turn my problems over to God in hopes that He will guide me in the direction He wants me to go. I need to trust Him with my life.

Being a senior is one of the most awesome feelings! Over the past three years, I've gotten to do so much. I've played the sports I love. I've made friends and memories that will last a lifetime. I've done my work and studied hard, and I know it will all pay off in the end.

The best feeling of all is knowing that I've completed three years and only have one more left before I step

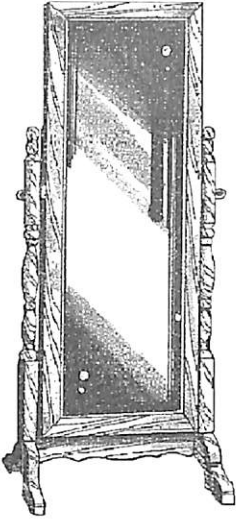
out into the world as an adult. Scary, isn't it?! But I know that, with God by my side, I'll be okay. Anything is possible through Jesus Christ.

Always remember Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." **SR**

Thanks for reading! And, as always, if you need anything, you can reach me at Jlizard1687@aol.com.



Now is the time when most high school seniors become completely stressed out. We're not even halfway through the school year and college application deadlines are coming up quickly.



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

Random acts of kindness

As long as I can remember, Christmas has been my favorite holiday.

I love going caroling on crisp winter nights when puffs of breath hang in the air like angel wings. I love sitting in church on Christmas Eve, holding a small candle while singing "Silent Night." Most of all, I love Christmas because it celebrates the birth of my Savior. Without Christmas, there would be no Easter.

I also love many of the "secular" aspects of Christmas. Like getting together with friends and family, enjoying the delectable fragrance of peppermint-scented candles and the aroma of pine needles, stirring was-sail with a cinnamon stick, watching grandchildren open presents, and viewing the ribbons of twinkling lights that envelop my neighborhood.

Last, but certainly not least, I love eating palate-pleasing Christmas "goodies" that make my stomach shake like a bowlful of jelly.

The thing I *don't* like about Christmas is the blatant commercialism, which gets worse every year. I have a hard time maintaining my composure when I spot Christmas decorations for sale in stores in September. I want to leap up onto the checkout counters and yell at the top of my lungs, "Hey, people! It's not even autumn yet!"

One of the wonderful "intangibles" of Christmas is the sense of goodwill that permeates the air. For a few weeks around the holiday, people seem a little kinder, a little less self-

absorbed. They're more courteous, more generous, and even more patient. It's frustrating that these attributes aren't as apparent the rest of the year.

In December, I can reach for a toy in a crowded store, and a total stranger will offer, "Here, let me get that for you." In July, that same busy shopper is likely to knock me to the floor and step over my body.

Why do we sing at nursing homes just at Christmas time? Why do we mail holiday greetings to shut-ins but fail to send letters or cards the rest of the year? "Goodwill to all men" shouldn't be tied to a calendar or to our whims or moods.

Several months ago, a relative introduced me to an idea that can help spread the kindness and generosity of Christmas year round.

Like many couples, this family isn't swimming in money. Still, they practice what they call "Random Acts of Kindness." These acts can be rather insignificant and inexpensive, yet they are tremendously rewarding—for the "giver" as well as the "receiver."

These nearly-endless kind acts give birth to surprise and joy. One of this couple's ideas was so creative that I've embraced it myself:

When I pull up to the drive-through window of a fast-food

restaurant, I sometimes tell the clerk that I also want to pay the bill of the people right behind me. Before driving off, I ask the employee to relate a message: "Please tell the people in the other car that they have just received a random act of kindness."

I especially like choosing cars loaded with kids, or ones with elderly drivers.

Do I worry about fast-food employees simply pocketing the extra money? Not really. Once the looks of astonishment leave their faces, they seem to enjoy these acts of kindness as much as I do. **SR**

God, we're thankful for Your Son's birth, and for the freedom to celebrate it anywhere and in any way we want. I pray that the love we experience at Christmas will manifest itself throughout the year. Bless us with giving hearts and a sense of discernment, so that we may sow kindness where it is needed most.



I love going caroling on crisp winter nights when puffs of breath hang in the air like angel wings.

Are you in a “holding pattern”?

As a frequent flyer, I have become all too familiar with the term “holding pattern.” Pilots often put their planes in holding patterns as they approach busy airports because they have not yet been cleared to land.

The plane tips its wings, slows down, and begins circling the airport. The aircraft is in constant motion, using up time and burning fuel, but it isn’t going anywhere. You are making no progress toward reaching your ultimate goal or destination.

The Apostle Paul urges *us* to avoid holding patterns. In Philippians 3:12-14, he says, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind, and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

If anyone had the right to be satisfied with what he had achieved spiritually, it was the Apostle Paul. He was preaching the Gospel throughout the world, changing lives and starting churches. But Paul was not ready to go into a “holding pattern” or spiritual retirement. No, Paul said he was “pressing on” for more

of Jesus and his transforming power.

Are you in a spiritual holding pattern? Perhaps you accepted Christ and began your Christian journey, but after making some progress you slowed down and started circling ground you’ve covered before. You are in motion—singing, giving, going to meetings, but not covering any new ground for Jesus.

Churches get stuck in holding patterns, too. Social events, and committee and board meetings are scheduled, but does this break new ground for the Lord? “Activity” is not necessarily obedience to the Great Commission!

My wife and I were once in a holding pattern because the pilot was afraid to land. The copilot emerged from the cockpit, removed some of the aisle flooring, and used a periscope-type device to visually determine if the landing gear was down. The wheels were down, but he didn’t know if they were locked in place—until we landed!

Similarly, we sometimes stay in a “spiritual holding pattern” because we fear the unknown. We are more comfortable circling familiar ground than moving on in a new direction. Just as the pilot was unsure of his equipment, we lack confidence in our spiritual resources.



The President's Page
by Don Graffius

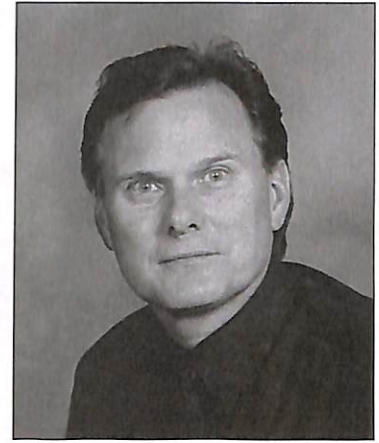
Spiritually healthy Christians should be anxious to break out of spiritual holding patterns to gain more of God’s power in their lives. The first step is having the desire and confidence to do so.

Before leaving a holding pattern, a pilot must seek permission from the control tower and receive landing instructions.

Once, as we approached a landing strip in Puerto Rico, the tower gave our pilot permission to land. As he made his final approach, he suddenly jerked the plane straight up, veering away from the runway. He later informed us that he had determined that the wake from the jet landing in front of us could have jeopardized a safe landing. The ultimate decision to land was his.

Each of us must ultimately decide to leave our own spiritual holding patterns, to touch down, and cover new ground. The second step is making a decision and taking action.

As we approach the “landing strip” in our daily lives, it is important to take inventory to determine if we are in a spiritual holding pattern. If we are to be strong, steady, and enthusiastic for the work of the Lord, Seventh Day Baptists must join the Apostle Paul in “pressing on” to break out of our spiritual holding patterns. *SR*



by Executive Director
Rob Appel

Are you a frontiersman?

Back in the early 1800s, many of our forefathers packed up everything they had and headed into the unknown to build a new life, a new community, and a new church. They left the comfort of their home, family, and way of life to start over.

When they arrived at their destination in the West, they built houses and barns, and also helped new neighbors as they arrived. Soon, they were a community and united to erect a church building, with the town growing up around them—a Seventh Day Baptist community.

Our forefathers and mothers were true pioneers. They left the comfort of their homes and ventured into an unknown world that was a bit frightening. But, they did it!

So, where are *we* going to find such a place today to pioneer? Where is the new frontier in the 21st century? *In your local church!*

Rural America and the Church

Many of our churches are in rural settings, and have been struggling because rural America is struggling. It is difficult to keep young adults close to our communities because most jobs are in larger, more populated areas.

Local congregations need to continue to support their rural churches.

They need to find ways to let go of the young adults who are moving away for work-related reasons, and support them in starting SDB churches in other communities. The local church still needs to provide an ongoing dynamic ministry to area residents, continuing their outreach to the unsaved.

The post-denominational era and the SDB Church

We need to recognize that we are in a post-denominational era. Most, if not all, mainline denominations are in numerical decline.

Based simply on participation, non-denominational megachurches are growing rapidly in America. There is little call to *belong* to a church, but rather to *participate* in one. Nowadays, it is much easier to recruit new congregants simply because their “participating” requires little or no sacrifice.

God bless those groups that specialize in bringing people from unbelief and sin to participation in the Church. But there is more to Christian living than accepting the Lord and spending one hour a week taking part in a worship service.

Seventh Day Baptists call individuals from unbelief to belief, too. But SDBs specialize in calling people to take further steps in their Chris-

tian faith—embracing maturity and ministry, and joining a covenant community.

Seventh Day Baptists go beyond the “participation” aspect of church. Our mission is to encourage and equip people to take the next bold step towards Christian maturity. We call people to *belong*.

While membership in other denominations is declining, we need to recognize that SDBs are in the enviable position of holding our own. Let’s start feeling good about ourselves so that we will feel good about inviting new people into our churches.

The new frontier

The “new frontier” is in your own church and surrounding community. Within each of our local communities, we need to find ways to create and initiate opportunities to *invite*, *include*, and *involve* new people in our churches.

We can *dream* of the untamed, wild frontiers out there—and even about being pioneers like our forefathers—or we can *act*. We can trail-blaze right in our own back yards, without leaving our homes and other comforts of modern society. The only things we need to pack are our courage, humility, God’s love, our Bible, and a smile. **SR**



Center hosts reception

The SDB Center in Janesville, Wis., held an open house on November 6, 2004, to welcome some new employees.

The Center's reception area (above) filled quickly as a steady stream of visitors greeted the new Executive Director, Rob Appel; Director of Pastoral Services, Gordon Lawton; and Financial Director, Morgan Shepard.

Lorna Austin Graffius (upper right) introduced another new "member" to the building: the Confidence Quilt, which raised funds for the Women's Society.

Introducing the new executives (photo right) were General Council Chairman Dale Thorngate and Memorial Fund President George Cruzan, along with Paul Green who organized the day's program.

Special thanks go to Center employees Leanne Lippincott, Rosie Geske, and Jan Ehlers for their help with the gathering. *SR*



Denominational Dateline

December

- 4 Remembrance Seventh Day Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas—Rob Appel
- 4 Plainfield, N.J.—Kirk Looper
- 11 Kennewick, Wash.—Gordon Lawton
- 11 & 25 Rockville, R.I.—Looper

January 2005

- 9-11 North American Baptist Fellowship, Orlando, Fla.—Appel
- 22-23 SDB Memorial Board, Houston, Texas—Morgan Shepard, Calvin Babcock, Appel

- 23 Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society Board of Managers, Westerly, R.I.—Looper
- 29-30 SDB Council on Ministry Mid-Year Meeting, Seventh Day Baptist Center, Janesville, Wis.—Lawton

February

- 25 Coordinating Leadership Team, Daytona Beach, Fla.
- 26-28 General Council, Daytona Beach

Department Index for 2004

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New members

Little Rock, AR

Floyd Van Horn, asst. pastor

Joined after testimony

Camille Tucker

Angela Lamont

Paint Rock, AL

John D. Bevis, pastor

Joined after testimony

Shay Rankhorn

Brenda Rankhorn

Melody Rankhorn

Carolyn Rankhorn

Joshua Rankhorn

Marriages

Myers – Colvin.—Mark Myers and Katie Colvin were united in marriage on December 28, 2003, at the Nortonville, KS, Seventh Day Baptist Church. Rev. Steve Saunders officiated.

Madden – Dorminey.—Dexter Madden and Norma Dorminey were united in marriage on February 14, 2004, at the Burbank (CA) Foursquare Church, with Pastor Scott Hausrath officiating.

Owen – Keating.—Jeremiah Owen and Sarah Keating were united in marriage on July 10, 2004, in Arcadia, CA. Pastor Scott Hausrath conducted the ceremony.

Changes at church?

Please send your updates to us at:

Sabbath Recorder

SDB Center

PO Box 1678

Janesville WI 53547

Our e-mail is:

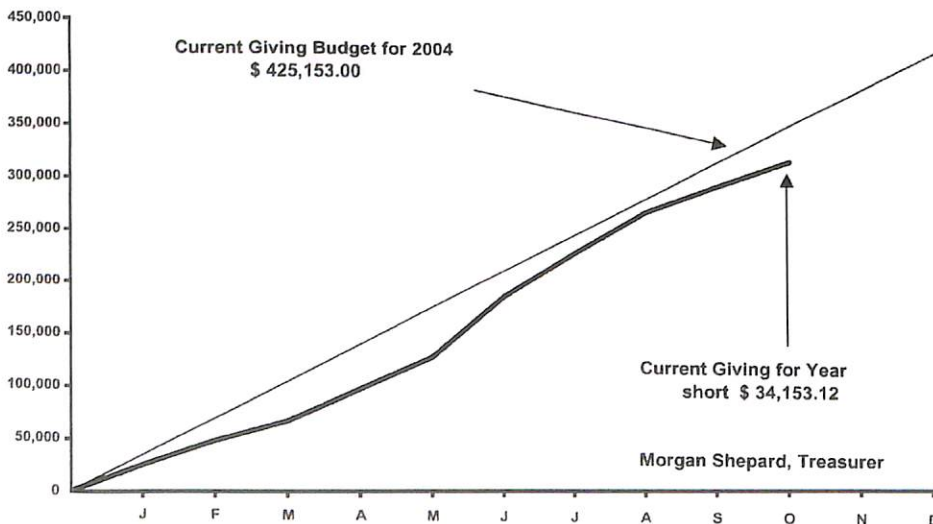
editor@

seventhdaybaptist.org

Birth

Shepard.—A son, Benjamin Denver Shepard, was born to Morgan and Kate (Thomas) Shepard in Paoli, PA, on August 2, 2004.

Current Giving 2004



Make TWICE the Difference

Now is your chance to help the Conference serve you better.

From now through February, every gift to the Denominational Budget (designated and undesignated) will be matched by the SDB Memorial fund. The chart (left) will reflect actual giving; the amount doubled by the fund will be reported separately.

Let's end 2004 on a positive note and begin 2005 strongly.

Please send your support today!

"Twice the Difference"
Seventh Day Baptist Center
PO Box 1678
Janesville WI 53547

Obituaries

White.—Barbara (Davis) White, 80, died on December 14, 2003, in Denver, Colo.

She was born in Boulder, Colo., on July 18, 1923, the daughter of Roy and Minnie Davis. On February 26, 1944, she married Daryl D. White in Boulder, Colo. He died in 1999.

Barbara and Daryl teamed with the denominational Natural Evangelism Training program and taught in many SDB churches nationwide and in Jamaica. They were strong supporters and trainers of the SDB Church in Mexico, traveling there often to encourage growth in Christ.

The Whites were always delighted to offer a helping hand with the Colorado SDB churches (Boulder, Denver, and Colorado Springs). Many can remember their rock collection and the lessons they taught at Camp Paul Hummel. Barbara and Daryl were instrumental in the development of the Colorado Springs SDB Church, becoming charter members.

Barbara served as a deacon (over the years in each of the three Colorado churches), singing in the choirs and working at Camp Paul Hummel. She served on the SDB Women's Board during the years it was conducted from the Denver/Boulder churches.

The Seventh Day Baptist family—locally, nationally, and internationally—became the center of Barbara's life. Many people came to know Christ, and others grew in their relationship with Christ, because of the sacrificial joy she planted with her smile and message.

Survivors include one son, Robert White of Black Earth, Wis.; one daughter, Patricia Davis of Conifer, Colo.; three sisters, Juanita and Dorothy Lusic, both of Ventura, Calif., and Ruth Cruzan of White Cloud, Mich.; one brother, LeRoy Davis of LaJunta, Colo.; six grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held in the Denver SDB Church, with Pastor Rod Henry officiating. Interment was at the Fort Logan Cemetery in Denver.

Davis.—Dorothy Belle Davis, 90, of Salem, W.Va., died on May 30, 2004.

She was born in Clarksburg, W.Va., on February 1, 1914, the daughter of Abram V. and Bertha (Holden) Upton, and married J. Bond Davis on June 17, 1936.

Dorothy was an English teacher, dramatist, and historian. She earned Bachelor and Masters degrees from West Virginia University and an honorary doctorate from Salem-Teikyo University.

Dorothy taught English in Harrison County Schools for 37 years, mostly at Salem High School. She coached more than 50 class plays during her teaching career and wrote historical pageants for the Salem Bicentennial and the Harrison County Centennial. She also wrote two books—one on the history of Harrison County and the other on John George Jackson.

Between 1968 and 1997, Dorothy wrote more than 50 historical sketches for the newsletters of the Harrison County Historical Society. She also wrote many articles for the Clarksburg Publishing Company.

She enjoyed sewing and gardening, and was a member of many educational and professional groups, including the Salem Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Harrison County and West Virginia Historical Societies.

Dorothy attended the Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church and wrote its bicentennial history, published in 1992.

Survivors include one son, Edward, of Salem, and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held at the Salem SDB Church on June 10, 2004,

with Rev. Dr. Dale D. Thorngate and Dr. Dallas Bailey officiating.

Pethtel.—Nancy Louise Pethtel, 60, of Salem, W.Va., died on June 10, 2004, at Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown, W.Va., following an extended illness.

She was born in Cassity, Randolph County, W.Va., on April 11, 1944, the daughter of Cletus and Alice V. (Heatherly) McCauley.

Nancy was a member of the Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church and had been employed as a food server.

Survivors include her husband, Kenneth; two sons, John of Denver, Colo., and Kenneth of Salem; two daughters, Debra Sue Brooks of Morgantown and Sheila Cottrill of Clarksburg, W.Va.; three sisters, Virginia Hamrick and Mary Barnhart, both of Stonewood, W.Va., and L. Loretta Canter of Buckhannon, W.Va.; five grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. An infant daughter, Sherry McGary, preceded her in death.

A memorial service, conducted by Rev. Dale D. Thorngate, was held on June 18, 2004, at the Salem SDB Church. Burial was in the Salem SDB Cemetery.

Nisio.—Ruben Nisio, 84, died on September 20, 2004, in Curitiba, State of Paraná, Brazil.

He was born on March 8, 1920, in Porto Alegre, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, the youngest son of Ignez and Pastor Julio Nisio, a pioneer of the Seventh Day Baptist church in Brazil.

Ruben had four brothers and two sisters. From his birth on, he was educated and guided in the ways of the Lord, and he never departed from them.

Brother Ruben studied Civil Engineering. Following graduation, he worked at Aeronautics, building and

cont. on next page

maintaining airports. He was one of the engineers responsible for constructing the Afonso Penna International Airport in Curitiba.

He served the Lord in the Curitiba First Seventh Day Baptist Church, holding the offices of deacon and secretary. For many years, he helped manage the SDB Brazilian Conference as its Executive Secretary, together with his brother, Pastor Silas Nisio, and his brother-in-law, Pastor José Gugelmin.

In 1986, Ruben was one of the Brazilian delegates to the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation sessions in the United States.

Brother Ruben was a man of God who left Brazilian SDBs with an example of a pure, simple, and firm faith.

Pierce.—Frederick Milo Pierce, 61, of Corning, N.Y., died unexpectedly on September 20, 2004.

He was born on August 9, 1943, in North Hornell, N.Y., the son of Lloyd and Minona (Moland) Pierce. He attended Alfred-Almond (N.Y.) Central School and graduated from Alfred State. In 1963, he moved to Corning to work at Corning Glass Works. He was employed by its MT&E division for 38 years, retiring in 2003.

Fred served in the Vietnam War and was active in the Jaycees. He coached Little League and Cinderella softball, serving on the latter's National Board for several years. He also enjoyed hunting and fishing. He was a member of the Alfred Station, N.Y., Seventh Day Baptist Church.

Fred was a loving father who enjoyed his family, avidly watching his children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews play sports. He also enjoyed traveling to NASCAR races.

Survivors include his loving wife of 34 years, Anne Valerio Pierce; three daughters, Karen Pierce, Kimberly McNaney, and Amy Pierce; his mother, Minona, of Alfred Station, N.Y.; one sister, Betty Sutton of Friendship, N.Y.; two grandchild-

dren, and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Funeral services were held on September 25, 2004, at the Phillips Funeral Home, Inc. in Corning. A memorial service was held at the Alfred Station SDB Church on October 2, 2004, with Rev. Kenneth Chroniger officiating. Burial was in St. Mary's Cemetery in Corning.

Woodruff.—Willis "Burr"

Woodruff, 82, of Canisteo, N.Y., passed away on October 1, 2004, at his home.

He was born in Alfred Station, N.Y., on October 14, 1921, the son of Charles E. and Agnes (Muszynski) Woodruff. He was a graduate of the former Alfred High School as well as Alfred State College. In 1946, he married Louise Austin.

Burr spent his early life in Alfred Station and had lived in Canisteo since 1990. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Army from 1942-45 as a member of the 88th Infantry Division, 313th Engineer Combat Battalion, in North Africa and Italy. Following his discharge, he worked for the Agway Corporation until his retirement in 1979.

In 1980, Burr joined the Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist, where he was a trustee and served on several church committees.

He was also a member of University Lodge No. 944, F&AM of Alfred, the Alfred American Legion Post #370, the Alfred Rod and Gun Club, the Bakers Bridge Historical Society in Alfred Station, and the Almond Senior Citizens. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and especially playing cards.

In addition to his wife, survivors include one daughter, Kathryn, of Oakfield, N.Y.; three sons, Paul of Medina, N.Y., David of Hemlock, N.Y., and Roger of Alfred Station; one sister, Helen Mullen of Almond; eight grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and several nieces and nephews.

A private funeral service was held

at the Brown & Powers Funeral Home in Canisteo, with Rev. Kenneth Chroniger officiating. Burial followed in Alfred Rural Cemetery. A memorial service will be held at the Alfred Station SDB Church.

DeGross.—Leta C. DeGross, 93, formerly of Little Genesee, N.Y., died on October 12, 2004, in the Highland Healthcare Center in Wellsville, N.Y., following a lengthy illness.

She was born on January 8, 1911, in Little Genesee, the daughter of Albert and Amy (Sanford) Crandall. On October 28, 1939, she married Jerald DeGross.

Leta graduated from Bolivar (N.Y.) Central School in 1930, and from Milton (Wis.) College in 1934. She was a self-employed music teacher, giving organ and piano lessons in her home.

She was a member and deaconess of the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Genesee in Little Genesee. She was church organist for many years, and served on the SDB Board of Christian Education.

Leta was also a member of the Woodard Homemakers Club in Kenmore, N.Y.; the Roena Ames Music Club in Richburg, N.Y.; the Little Genesee Garden Club; and the Western New York Genealogical Society. She was a former member of the Erie County Cooperative Extension Service.

Survivors include her husband, Jerald, and one daughter, Faith Palmer, both of Alfred Station; one son, Stanley, of Hamburg, N.Y.; six grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her twin sister, Letha Polen, earlier this year.

A memorial service was held on October 17, 2004, at the First SDB Church of Little Genesee, with Revs. Gordon Lawton and Don Sanford officiating. Burial was in Wells Cemetery, Little Genesee.

KEVIN'S

ORNER

Give, and it will be given again

A quarter-century ago and fresh out of college, I started working for a major corporation. Just a couple of years later, I switched to another big company. These were employers that would match my charitable contributions.

Then, Janet and I answered a call to ministry and headed off to seminary. That means it's been 20-plus years since we've even bothered checking that big list of employers that match charitable gifts.

Sure, General Electric matches. So does Radio Shack. The name "Seventh Day Baptists" does not appear on the list.

Until now. Sort of.

For a limited time (December through February), the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial Fund trustees have earmarked funds that they will use to match—dollar for dollar—gifts and donations made to any of our boards and agencies. That means:

- gifts sent directly to a specific SDB ministry
- donations to boards and agencies given through your local church
- tithes to the Conference from your local church
- even undesignated gifts sent toward the "whole pie" of ministry work.

(Please check inside the front cover to see the various ministries which will benefit from this matching campaign. The PROP fund has a separate campaign; see page 7.)

Ultimately, you and your local church will benefit by receiving the products and services that support your ministry of the Gospel. That's how you can "make twice the difference."

A Tract Council Wish List

Adobe InDesign layout software	\$339
Logo promotion items (Polo shirts, trinkets)	\$750
Spanish language tracts	\$4,000
<i>The Sabbath Recorder</i>	Priceless

Speaking of fundraisers—and this may sound silly—but I actually *enjoy* listening to those "annoying" fund drives on the radio. These people are passionate in their pleas to find the money to continue their broadcasts. They boldly state their case and ask listeners to pledge funds for the station.

I guess I enjoy listening to the campaigns because I was involved in several while working part-time at a Christian radio station.

WNWC in Madison, Wis., is part of a large network of stations in the upper Midwest. At one of the annual Sharathons, my wife wanted to volunteer by answering phone calls from listeners.

Activity at "Pledge Central" was at a fevered pitch, thanks to one of those ever-popular "matching challenges." If a certain amount could be raised within the certain time frame, a supporter would double the pledges that came in.

Phone calls were streaming in with lots of people talking at once. One off-air announcer was being a bit boisterous in inspiring the troop of volunteers. Janet could not hear the caller and had had enough.

"SHHH!!" she hissed at the self-appointed studio cheerleader.

Slightly flustered, he quieted right down and she went on with her work.

During a lull in the phone calls, I asked Janet, "Do you realize who it was you just shushed?"

"No..."

"It was the Chairman of the Board of the entire radio network!!"

Thankfully, I was able to keep my job.

And Janet's focus was on doing *her* job, getting the right information and serving the listener. Good for her!

The combined boards and agencies are here to serve you and your local church.

May we never lose sight of that. As you give to us (at a fevered pitch?), and as the Memorial Fund matches that gift until the end of February, you will make twice the difference: helping us to help serve you better.



Robe of Achievement

The SDB Women's Society is accepting nominations for the Robe of Achievement for 2005. Please consider a woman in your church who meets these criteria for nomination:



- Was/is active as a volunteer in some phase of denominational effort
- Has shown evidence of special service with her family and/or community
- Must be a committed Christian
- Must be an active member of a local Seventh Day Baptist church

Send all nominations to:

**Robe Nominations
Audrey Fuller
908 N. Colonial Cir.
Daytona Beach, FL 32117**

Or apply on-line at
www.sdbwboard.org

**Deadline:
March 31, 2005**

Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer



**January 2-8
2005**

Prayer booklets, sponsored by the SDB World Federation, will be sent to each church and Conference. This year's author is Pastor Gabriel Bejjani, Riverside, California, USA. Gabe is the past president of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

We invite all of our brothers and sisters to join in prayer that first week of January. And on Sabbath, January 8, we encourage you to take a special offering for the World Federation. Details will be sent to your church.