



The Sabbath RECORDER

April 2005

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists

**Holland,
Michigan—
here we come!**



**Why go
to Conference?**



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

Upcoming Events at the SDB Center

Memorial Fund
Quarterly Meeting
April 16-17



Historical Society
Annual Meeting
May 15



Tract Council
Core Committee
May 21



Summer Institute
(Sabbath Theology)
May 30-June 10

Ladies!

During last year's Conference, the name of the lady who volunteered her church to provide table favors for our 2005 Women's Banquet did not get recorded. (Whoops!)

If you recall who that woman was, please let Marjorie Jacob know. Her mailing address is P.O. Box 122, Pomona Park, FL 32181. Phone: (386) 649-4195; E-mail: jmjacob@funport.net.

Pastors!

Need some "free money"?

Remember there may be funds available for qualified pastors and retired pastors to cover up to one-half the expenses at Conference for both the pastor and spouse! Eligibility is based on pastor's income.

For more information and an application form, download from the sdbministry.org website or contact the Director of Pastoral Services at (608) 752-5055.

Pastors' Conference

April 19-23, 2005



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

Come join the CAST!

(Contact and Support Team)

The first *CAST Training Seminar* will be held May 13-15, 2005, at the SDB Church of Texarkana, Arkansas.

For an application, contact the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society, 119 Main St., Westerly, RI 02891.

Phone: (573) 857-2764; **E-mail:** relston@pbmo.net





Establ. 1844

April 2005
Volume 227, No. 4
Whole No. 6,905

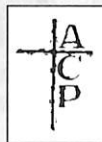


A Seventh Day Baptist publication

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

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

This is the 160th year of publication for The Sabbath Recorder. First issue published, June 13, 1844. Member of the Associated Church Press. The Sabbath Recorder does not necessarily endorse signed articles.



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WRITERS: Please type manuscripts double spaced. Only manuscripts that include a stamped, addressed envelope can be returned. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcomed; however, they will be considered on a space available basis. No remuneration is given for any article that appears in this publication. Paid advertising is not accepted.

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A Conference icon reminisces

Even after moving to Australia, we are blessed to see this grand lady each August

by Dorotha Shettel

When I was 8 years old, our family of six traveled in a new Model T Ford from South Dakota to attend Conference in Milton, Wis. This was a big event, since we were lone Sabbath-keepers at the time.

I remember staying with the Crandall family on the corner of College and Roger streets, eating in a large tent on the “College Hill,” and sitting for a group picture taken on the Milton College campus. I often had to take care of my younger sister during her nap times.

In 1926, we moved to Dodge Center, Minn., so I was able to regularly attend the church that my ancestors helped start.

My turn behind the wheel

Later, after teaching at rural schools for a few years and owning my own car, I took my mother and others to three consecutive Conferences, beginning in 1939—Milton, Battle Creek, Mich., and Boulder, Colo. I also attended the first ever Pre-Con, held in Michigan in 1940. I had to sleep with a friend in a bed that let down from the sitting room ceiling of the “girls’ house.”

It had taken us two days to drive to Pre-Con from Dodge Center. I was amazed to learn that that was almost longer and further than the trip taken by those from Alfred Station, N.Y. (Part of their trip to Michigan was through Canada!)

Head for the hills

The next year, I helped plan recreation at Camp Paul Hummel outside of Boulder. I had never been in the mountains before, so I didn’t realize

These memories make me feel like I’ll always be part of this large and loving Christian family.

that the high altitude would make such a difference to us “plains” people. (Hubert Greene had to be taken down the mountain because of constant nosebleeds.)

That same year, some of us were housed in the old Boulder church on Arapahoe. I think Conference meetings were held in another facility.

Rev. Al Rogers, who was summer pastor in New Auburn, Wis., that year, rode part way back with us. As we started home, we joined several others to tour Estes National Park, but my Plymouth didn’t like the heights. A Dr. Davis ended up adjusting my car’s carburetor so we could keep up.

A place for matchmaking

Conference was again in Milton in 1946, so I drove a carload of people there. My mother ended up meeting a former school friend (he was living in California then), and I was introduced to his son. We married the following year, and I moved to Riverside, Calif.

In 1949, I helped Evelyn Ring with Conference housing and registration.



Dorotha had to readjust to a good ol’ American picnic at Houghton in 2002.

We used the facilities of Riverside City College, but people stayed in area homes. My guests included Ploon Dijk from Amsterdam, Ethel Wilson from Pennsylvania, and Leland Davis from Colorado. Acquaintances grew!

A time of hard work

One summer when I was in Minnesota, I was able to take some teenagers to Pre-Con. I helped Ken and Doris Van Horn do the cooking until Ken’s back gave out lifting all those heavy pots. We sent the Van Horns to town for medical help and rest.

One of my “now funny” memories of Conference happened in Fayetteville, Ark., in 1955. I was left to wash the hundreds of glass Communion cups in a round hand sink in a small room, and there wasn’t any counter or level space!

Dorotha's Amazing Journey

In recent years, Dorotha Shettel could take home the "Traveled the Farthest" award. Here's the total list of her Conference participation:

1924—Milton, Wis.
 1939—Milton
 1940—Battle Creek, Mich.
 1941—Boulder, Colo.
 1946—Milton
 1949—Riverside, Calif.
 1953—Battle Creek
 1955—Fayetteville, Ark.
 1958—Covina, Calif.
 1961—Amherst, Mass.
 1962—Minneapolis, Minn.
 1963—Fort Collins, Colo.
 1964—Salem, W.Va.
 1966—Redlands, Calif.
 1969—Nyack, N.Y.
 1973—Milton
 1975—Azusa, Calif.
 1980—Denver, Colo.
 1982—Redlands
 1983—Houghton, N.Y.
 1985—Arkadelphia, Ark.
 1986—Worcester, Mass.
 (World Federation)
 1987—Lindsborg, Kan.
 1988—Salem
 1989—Portland, Ore.
 1990—Lindsborg (BWA, Korea)
 1991—Houghton
 1992—Waukesha, Wis. (World
 Fed., New Zealand)
 1993—Redlands
 1994—Lindsborg
 1995—Buckhannon, W.Va.
 1996—Lacey, Wash.
 1997—Lindsborg
 1998—Buckhannon
 1999—Holland, Mich.
 2000—Buckhannon
 2001—Lindsborg
 2002—Houghton
 2003—Newberg, Ore.
 2004—Buckhannon
 2005—Holland (*Plan to attend!*)

A short break, then back to it

In the late 1950s, I was busy with family responsibilities, including taking care of my in-laws, who lived with us. I also taught full-time and attended night and summer school.

After graduating, I joined friends in riding to Amherst, Mass., where Pre-Con and Conference were held in 1961. I took my son and others to Pre-Con the following three years:

*I enjoy being
at Conference to see my
many friends, but it also helps
me keep up with denominational
business and activities.*

Minneapolis, Minn., in 1962; Fort Collins, Colo., in 1963; and Salem, W.Va., in 1964.

Though I didn't get to many Conferences for a time after that, I did visit Seventh Day Baptist friends in Germany and Sweden, and attended church in Mill Yard, England; Amsterdam, Holland; Australia; and New Zealand.

Denominational responsibilities

After becoming president of the SDB Women's Board in 1983, I tried to visit as many of our eastern churches as possible—Shiloh and Marlboro, N.J.; Verona, Adams Center, Leonardsville, Brookfield, DeRuyter, and Berlin, N.Y.; and Salemville, Pa.

If the Lord blesses me and I make it to Michigan this August, I will have attended Conference for 21 consecutive years and, if memory serves me right, 41 Conferences in all.

Participating on General Council for seven years—and being instrumental in developing the Summer

Christian Service Corps program and seeing such positive results over the years—makes me proud of Seventh Day Baptists. Our women's support of SCSC and our young people seems to be unique to our denomination.

Worldwide travel and world-class acquaintances

As Women's Board president, I was able to represent Seventh Day

Baptists at national and world Baptist meetings, including one in Seoul, Korea. I've been privileged to know five of the six women who have served as Conference president. I feel good that we ladies have contributed a great deal over the years to furthering Christ's Kingdom. When the Women's Society presented me with their Robe of Achievement in 1993, I felt tremendously honored!

Powerful memories

I have some great memories, inside and outside of Conference: working on four Senior Saints projects; attending four World Federation gatherings; pushing Dorothy Goulding's wheelchair up the hills of Portland, Ore., during Conference 1989.

I enjoy being at Conference to see my many friends, but it also helps me keep up with denominational business and activities.

Even though I live far away from Conference sites most of the year, these memories make me feel like I'll always be part of this large and loving Christian family. **SR**

A weeklong bull ride

One pastor's view of General Conference

by Christian R. Mattison, North Loup, Neb.

When thinking about our annual SDB General Conference meetings, I have two perspectives to draw on. You might call them the “before” and “after” experiences.

“Before”

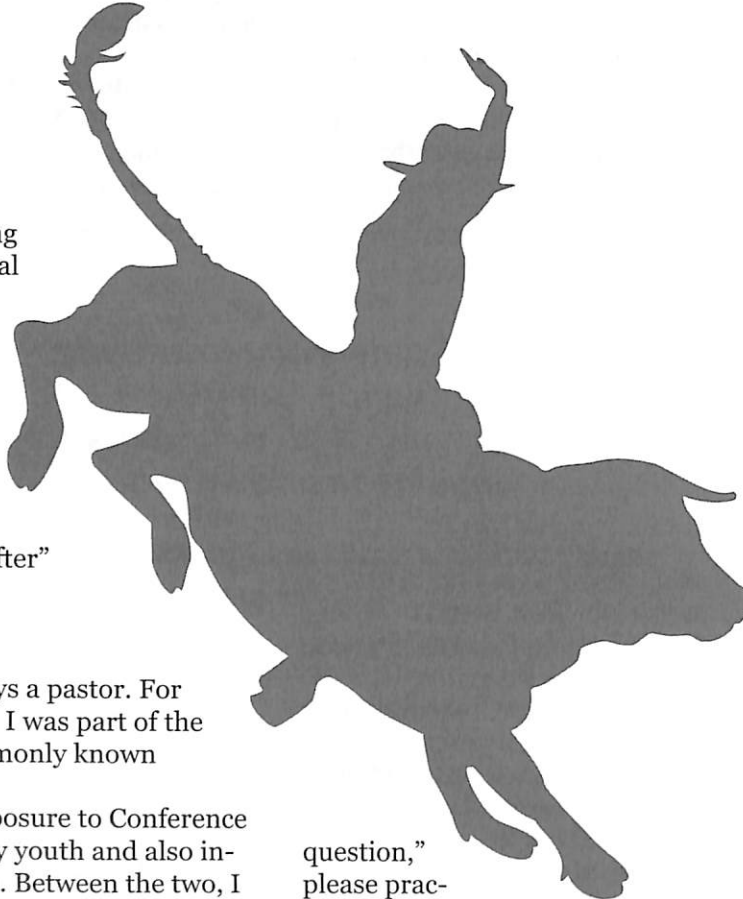
I wasn't always a pastor. For most of my life, I was part of the multitude commonly known as “the laity.”

My initial exposure to Conference came during my youth and also included Pre-Con. Between the two, I became steeped in the mini-culture of being a Seventh Day Baptist.

Getting asked “the question”

These experiences included learning the time-honored and much-maligned tradition of satisfying one's curiosity as to whether or not a newcomer might be related to someone (however distantly) by asking who they were, where they were from, etc.

(If you were not born an SDB, please do not be offended by such questions. Contrary to what you may feel, you are not being classified as to whether you hold a first, second, or third class membership in the denomination. However, if you are one of those who habitually *ask* “the



question,” please practice the courtesy of gently welcoming an unfamiliar person into our midst, and take the time to get to know them.)

A joyous time

For me, General Conference was a joyous time of seeing friends and renewing old acquaintances, punctuated by periods of business.

Those elements are still there. But since entering the pastorate, there are added factors that have markedly changed my Conference experience.

“After”

While those in the laity often take vacation time to attend General Conference, that's not the case with the clergy. I hope that you can view the

The steady regimen of committee meetings, along with floor sessions and the subsequent conversations, all make for some intense activity.

following words as a description of your own pastor's experience.

Intense time

As a pastor, I find that General Conference is one of the most intense times of the year. While I'm there to enjoy the fellowship (I'd be crazy not to take full advantage of that!), I'm also working as a representative of my congregation, my Association, and sometimes even my denomination. And often all three!

From the moment I emerge from my dorm room in the morning until my head hits the pillow at night, I'm in the business of attending to 1,001 things that I hadn't had the opportunity to deal with at any other time.

Fostering relationships

The Lord seems to place me in locations where the proximity of other SDB pastors is often remote. So I consider “rubbing elbows” with my fellow ministers at Conference a double duty. It's important to foster positive relationships with my colleagues, and Conference is the only time—aside from our biennial Pas-

tors' Conference—to really do that.

This is a time to determine whether or not we're "on the same page" regarding various issues, and if there are differences, how to navigate them with one another. This includes pastors taking the time to pastor one another. Sometimes nothing can take the place of face-to-face contact.

Sounding boards and traffic cops

We pastors also act as sounding boards for others. There have been times when my own parishioners

have sought counsel from my colleagues regarding issues that perhaps I had been too close to. I have discovered that more often than not, my fellow pastors have been invaluable in helping to resolve issues and instrumental in fostering healing.

Conference finds me returning the favor from time to time. It's an important way for us pastors to help knit together the fabric of our denomination.

There are always new faces at General Conference. Praise God! I find that it is important to extend myself

to them, helping to draw them into "the fold" a little deeper so they can connect a few more of the "dots" that comprise the SDB family. This is a wonderful opportunity to make introductions and assist others in navigating through the wild and wonderful roller coaster of Conference week.

The business of Conference

And let's not forget denominational business.


The steady regimen of committee and sub-committee meetings, along with Conference floor sessions and the subsequent conversations regarding the issues at hand, all make for some intense activity.

From time to time, I chair an Interest Committee or serve as one of the Conference speakers. Then there are responsibilities as a member of denominational-level agencies. Throw into the mix the task of juggling family schedules and obligations, and it becomes a full week!

It is a non-stop, intense, constant pastoring experience that's exhilarating, exhausting, and sometimes soul shredding. But, more often, it's wonderfully fulfilling.

When your pastor gets home

Please do me a favor. When your pastor comes home from General Conference, don't ask, "So, how was your vacation?" Yes, your pastor may have ducked out for a round of golf one day. But it takes vast amounts of energy to "drink in" all that Conference offers and requires.

General Conference can be one of the most wonderful elements of a pastor's life. It feeds the pastor and his/her family in more ways than words can express. But it is *not* a week of sipping ice tea while relaxing on a lawn chair. It's a weeklong bull ride. And I, for one, wouldn't miss it for the world! 

Thursday, August 9, 2001 "TRY GOD – Blessings"

6:30 a.m.	Morning Prayer	Dorms
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Pihlblad Union
8:30 a.m.	Children's & Junior High Conferences	Messiah Lutheran
8:30 a.m.	Music and Bible Study "How Will it Affect Me?" Pastor Chris Mattison, North Loup, NE	Presser Hall
9:30 a.m.	Christian Education Report Rev. Andrew Camenga, Director	Presser Hall
10:00 a.m.	Tract Council Report Rev. Kevin Butler, Director	Presser Hall
10:30 a.m.	Business Session	Presser Hall
11:30 a.m.	Pastors' Luncheon (AAL Room) Lunch	Pihlblad Union
12:30 p.m.	Youth and Young Adult Bible Studies	
1:00 p.m.	SCSC Presentation	Presser Hall
1:45 p.m.	Workshops (see p. 14 and workshop fliers)	
4:00 p.m.	Choir practice	Presser Hall
5:00 p.m.	Dinner	Pihlblad Union
5:00 p.m.	Youth Banquet	Messiah Lutheran Church
7:00 p.m.	Vespers – Men's Sing	Presser Hall
7:30 p.m.	Evening Worship "TRY GOD – Blessings" Worship leader: Scott Smith Speaker: David Taylor	Presser Hall

Just one example of a busy Conference day.

Possessing the Promised Land

A Conference-like experience at the local level

by Juneta West, Faith SDB Branch Church of the Bronx, N.Y.

Last summer, our church held its seventh Annual Spiritual Retreat at the Ramada Inn Hotel in the beautiful Poconos recreational resort area in Pennsylvania.

The weekend gathering, June 25-27, was a remarkable, spirit-filled experience that revealed God's infinite love and power. It was a privilege to participate in this three-day encounter with God.

Including guests, about 60 people from the Philadelphia and New York City SDB Churches—and from the Faith (Bronx), Agape (Cambria Hts., N.Y.), and Springfield (Mass.) branch churches—

met on this memorable weekend.

We held registration and orientation activities on Friday evening, and several praise sessions and workshops on Sabbath. These were designed to give God glory, honor, and praise, and to lift the burdens of those who were being oppressed.

The day began at 7 a.m. with an hour-long prayer meeting led by Sister Lucy Glenn of the Faith church. After breakfast came a presentation from Deacon Llewellyn West, leader of the Faith SDB Church. His theme, "Possessing the Promised Land," laid the groundwork for what turned out to be a life-changing Sabbath day.

We were blessed by the presence and singing of Sisters Sonya Richards from the Cambridge SDB Church in Canada and Christine Lindo of the Toronto church. Speakers and presenters included Pastor Abel Caesar from Guyana, Sis. Lois Steir from the Springfield church, Pastor Samuel Sterling from Agape, and Pastor Ball from the Yonkers Family Worship Center.


We held "break-out" groups for women, men, youth, and children, with Minister Ronald Smith leading the men's session.

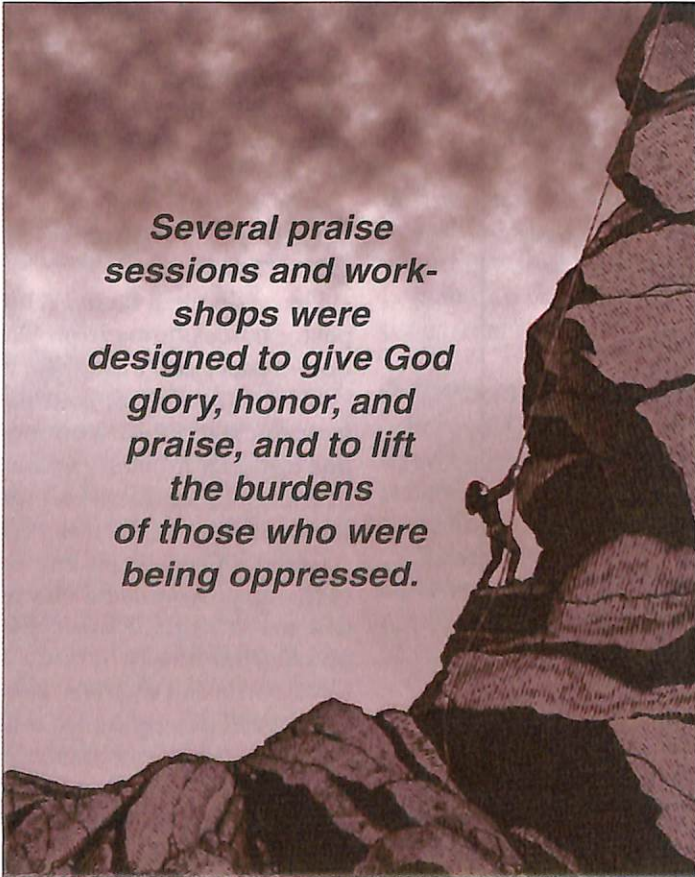
During these workshops, the special needs of each group were addressed. In the evening, we held a special deliverance session led by Sister Richards. Those present made confessions, and a prayer of deliverance was given. It was awesome to see the Spirit of God at work!

On Sunday, the final day of the retreat, we started with prayer led by Sis. V. Dunkley. Brunch followed a praise and worship time.

After brunch, two nurses led a Health Alert Workshop. Participants learned about the value of drinking water and the dangers of soft drinks. We then had another workshop session for couples, singles, youth, and children.

The retreat ended with a time for testimonies and thanksgiving. Many attendees reported deliverance, the mending of broken relationships, and physical healing.

We truly had a memorable, spiritually-rich experience. This year, everyone is eager to return on June 24 for another great weekend. To God be the Glory! 



Several praise sessions and workshops were designed to give God glory, honor, and praise, and to lift the burdens of those who were being oppressed.

Why haven't I gone to Conference?

by Jennifer Pluff

When it was first suggested that I write an article for this issue of the *Recorder*, I wasn't sure what I could contribute that would be of any use. After all, I didn't go to Conference because I couldn't afford it.

As I finally sat down to write, I went back to my school days and started with an outline.

I soon discovered that there were more reasons for missing Conference

importance of Conference—how it keeps us connected to each other and committed to common goals while encouraging each church in their individual goals. We can do more together than alone.

Location


As I got older, I found myself without a nearby Seventh Day Baptist Church. Even when my own

of responsibility to my church and denomination, and the part they each play in accomplishing God's work of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the rest of the world. This is my church, my denomination. If it isn't effective, it's because I'm not involved.

Encouragement

My church family has encouraged me to attend Conference, and I have a greater understanding of what it is, partly due to attending Association.

To date, I still haven't attended Conference. The distance to be traveled is still great, and the cost is still high. But for the last couple of years, finances, along with family and work obligations, have kept me from Conference—not apathy.

Everything in life changes. One day, I *will* make it to General Conference and see firsthand what it's all about! 

I needed to be educated on the importance of Conference—how it keeps us connected to each other and committed to common goals.

than first met the eye. Some were specific to my age, others to my situation, and, yes, some pertained to my finances. It turned out, though, that money wasn't the main reason for not attending.

Apathy

As a young adult, *apathy* was my enemy. I simply had no interest in General Conference. I didn't understand what it was all about, and since no one had encouraged me to go, I felt no desire to find out.

Attending Conference is something that the "older" people do, those who are responsible for leading the denomination. I did not belong; my role was to follow, not lead. I felt no personal responsibility to the denomination or my church.

I needed to be educated on the

spiritual growth and hunger drove my desire to return to the church and learn more about it, my lack of knowledge about General Conference kept me from attending the annual meeting.

The only denominational information available to me came through the *SR*, but I usually skimmed over the General Conference news, still believing that it didn't pertain to me. Money was "tight," I had young children, and I lived far from the usual Conference locations.

Expense

Even if granted time off from work to make the trip, the cost still would have been insurmountable. I saw no reason to go, and because of the money involved, I didn't give it serious consideration.

Recently, I have developed a sense



Jennifer Pluff is a member of the Nortonville, Kan., SDB Church and serves on the Sabbath Recorder Committee.

A stepping stone to General Conference

by Don A. Sanford

General Conference's "birth year" is generally considered to be 1802. But, like any birth, there is often a considerable gestation period.

In the years before 1802, some of our churches held an annual home-coming communion, described as "bees coming back to the hive." At other times, ministers were sent out from the home churches to encourage the settlers who had migrated to the South and West.

Some of the early letters exchanged between SDB churches provide documentation of mutual concerns which led to the proposal of a General Conference.

The earliest of these, housed in the Historical Society's archives, is a 1750 letter from the Shrewsbury church in New Jersey to the Rhode Island "mother church" of First Hopkinton, then called Westerly. The letter begins with greetings and encouragement, followed by concerns over leadership, their scattered conditions, Sabbath worship, and some doctrinal matters:

Dearly Beloved,

Although Divine Providence hath set our habitation at so far a distance one from another, and we have so long neglected this Christian duty of Christian commerce, one with another, by writing; yet we are willing to hope to revive this beneficial work, and we desire that you may join with us herein for the future, to improve all suitable opportunities to send one another some lines, that we may know each other's state, and encourage one another in our Christian race: and, in order to do it, we shall in this give you a brief account of our present state.

When Divine Providence had

sent us into this remote place, we found our disadvantage for want of Gospel ministers from among us; and we had made choice of, and sent to you, and obtained our request in the ordination of our beloved brother, John Davis, to be our Elder (for which we return God and you thanks). We speedily endeavored to maintain public worship of God on his holy Sabbath, and, according to our ability and opportunity, to practice the ordinances of the Gospel; and by the grace of God continue hitherto.

It has pleased the sovereign Lord to remove some of our dear brethren and sisters by death and to receive them to himself; may he give us all that grace to follow them in his time.

Early letters between SDB churches led to the proposal of a General Conference.

There are about four or five families whose habitations are so near that we may and do endeavor to meet constantly on the Sabbath (may the Lord grant that we worship God in truth) and for the rest, though they be scattered more remote, yet we visit one another as often as conveniently may, and join together in the duties of the Gospel.

The letter then delves into the doctrinal concerns over foot washing, which they considered a duty, and describes in detail how they




SDB Church of Shrewsbury, N.J.

practiced it and recommended it for others. They pointed out that John and Elisabeth Davis, along with Joseph Stillman, were designated as "fraternal delegates" to visit the church in Westerly.

The letter was signed "from our Sabbath meeting at Squan, the 8th of the seventh month, 1750," and included these signatures: Elisabeth Brand, Comfort Davis, Judath Babcock, Tacy Maxson, Thomas Babcock, William Brand, William Davis, Simeon Maxson, Joseph Davis, and Mosher Maxson.

Appended to this letter was the postscript, "As to the Scriptures and reasons and motives for and objections against washing of feet, we would add in brief what follows...." After presenting their rationale, they added: "Bear with us, since we pretend not to instruct you, but to submit these things to you."

The letter closed with a request for intercessory prayer for a sick brother and general health for all.

Many of these expressions from 1750, reflected in other correspondence and reports, were stepping stones to the formation of General Conference over two centuries ago. 

This first appeared as a "Pearls" column in October 2001.

How and why we began in 1802

In the book *Conscience Taken Captive* (pp. 23-24), historian Don Sanford records the beginnings—and purposes—of our Conference.

The expansion of national boundaries was just one factor which greatly influenced the developing body of the church. The revivalism of the 1790s—known as the Second Great Awakening—brought considerable change to the religious climate of America.

Elder Henry Clarke of the Seventh Day Baptist Church at Brookfield, N.Y., brought these two elements into focus. In 1801, he proposed a plan “to unite in an institution for propagating our religion in the different parts of the United States, by sending out from the various churches mis-

sionaries, on the expense of the several churches.”

The following year, steps were taken which led to the formation of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, with eight churches from Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey.

The General Conference came to perform several important functions:

- 1) It gave Seventh Day Baptists an identity;
- 2) It helped define doctrine through guidelines for membership, examination of candidates for ministry, and consensus in statements of belief and practice;
- 3) It served as a communicating agent through circular letters, annual meetings, and reports from churches and societies;

- 4) It stimulated education to foster an enlightened people;
- 5) It initiated programs and agencies or societies to carry out many of the expressed wishes of individual churches and people.

May our General Conference of the 21st century continue to perform these functions—with even greater zeal and efficiency. *SR*

General Conference
August 7-13

Hope College
Holland, Michigan

Watch next month's *SR*
for registration forms

A time of inspiration and work

Last year's Conference President, Dale Thorngate, used his "President's Page" to educate and excite people about the whole Conference experience, and to promote support for our leaders.

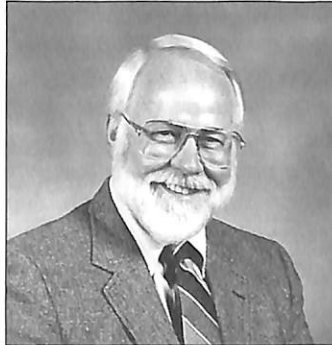
Here are some excerpts:

* * *

Most of you, like me, probably think of Conference as a time of spiritual high. However, the business of the General Conference is an important part of the week.

It is during this time that we review what has happened over the past year and do some planning for the new year. It is the time when the boards and agencies report about their work and project their programs for the future.

Review of these reports happens in the Conference interest committees, and from them the business comes to the Conference floor for vote by all official delegates. All



Dale Thorngate

people attending Conference are encouraged to select a committee and participate in its discussions.

* * *

Conference sessions give us opportunity to hear the reports of our officers and agencies and—through the committees—to have direct input into their plans for the future.

The Conference helps us do what we can't do as individual churches:

train our pastors; provide us with outreach and study materials; create many communication links, including the monthly *Sabbath Recorder*; and sustain a myriad of missionary efforts around the world.

* * *

As a pastor, I am aware every week of the financial needs of our local church and the impact it has on the work of ministry when there is a budget shortfall. It is important for us to support the work of the Conference financially.

Conference's Sabbath offering provides an opportunity for us to make up some of the budget shortfall. However, if we go home and forget to support our leaders in what we have encouraged them to do, what can we expect?

It is my desire that we show support for our leaders and the potential that we have through the work of all the boards and agencies. *SR*

Exploring the Sabbath

by Linda Greene

We now move on to the New Testament Sabbath and, more specifically, to the Sabbath in the life of Jesus.

Jesus came to model how we are to live our lives. If we can understand how he viewed and observed the Sabbath, we have a perfect example of how God wants us to do the same thing. Like you, I want to see Sabbath through Jesus' eyes.

Before looking at specific passages, I have a couple of observations to make:

It's interesting to read through all the verses in the four Gospels that have the word "Sabbath" in them and to note what Jesus was doing in those verses. In the overwhelming majority of them, he was teaching in the synagogue and healing people.

It stands to reason that he would be in the synagogue on Sabbath, and teaching would flow very naturally out of that. But I still think it's significant to note. One of our activities on Sabbath should be studying the Word and sharing our studies with each other.

Healing on the Sabbath is another matter. That's not something that developed out of Jesus' Jewish background. On the contrary, his upbringing might have caused him to *refrain* from healing on God's holy day. At least, that's what the Pharisees thought, and they were the experts on Jewish religious expectations at that time.

Jesus seemed to make it a point to heal people on Sabbath, though the Scriptures carefully document the criticism he drew because of it.

I wonder why the Gospels are so full of those types of incidents? Nothing is in the Bible without a distinct purpose. Maybe the Lord wanted to make sure we really thought things

through when it comes to Sabbath-keeping.

Obviously, tradition alone can't be our only guide in this area. Tradition is a valuable thing, but it can get off course from what God intended. So we have to test our traditions just as carefully as we test anything else that comes into our lives with regard to our faith.

Our activities on Sabbath should promote healing in our own lives and in the lives of others, whether it's physical, emotional, or spiritual. How that happens, or what it looks like, will be different for each of us, but it's an important activity to make room for on the Sabbath.

Matthew 5:17-18

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus did not come to abolish the law, not even one tiny stroke of a pen in the law. That has to include the Sabbath.

I wonder what "everything" means? Jesus also refers to heaven and earth disappearing, and that has to be at the end of the world as we know it.

In other words, nothing will be taken out of the law until all that must happen has happened or has been brought to a successful conclusion, which is the definition of "accomplish." This will not happen until the law's purpose is accomplished; or, for the purposes of our study, until the Sabbath's purpose is completed or finished—pointing to Jesus. That will be at the time of judgment. That can be the only "everything" he was talking about.


Jesus even goes so far as to say that we'll be the least in the kingdom of heaven if we teach otherwise. Note, however, that those who teach differently *will be in heaven*. Apparently, teaching and keeping Sabbath is not a requirement for admittance to heaven. But our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees, or we'll be barred from it.

The Pharisees kept the letter of the law, but they missed the spirit. Rules are not enough! In fact, I believe that being too wrapped up in keeping rules to see beyond them to the spirit of the law, is worse than being wrong about what the rules are to begin with!

Jesus came to fulfill the law. He made me holy, where the law could not. It only *pointed out my need* for Jesus.

The Greek word translated here as "fulfill" means "to cause to be" or "come into being, to become, to come to pass, to continue, to be kept, to be made, to be ordained to be."

The English word "fulfill" is defined in the dictionary as "to make full to the brim, to put into effect, to bring to an end, to satisfy, to bring reality to, to convert into reality, to measure up to, to develop the full potential of."

All of that is a beautiful picture of Jesus' relationship to the law, and his relationship to the Sabbath as well. 



Peanut butter prayers

"What's that?" my neighbor asked, pointing out our nativity flag to another neighbor. He replied, "Something religious." (They didn't realize I could hear them.) Their conversation ended with, "To [swear word] with that religious stuff. I've got my Santa Claus."

I'm quite content living in this little community of mostly retired

tossing a jar of peanut butter into their kitchen sink.

I then shared the inspiration that I had received at the beach:

Most of the waves that day were gently making music, jangling seashells along the shore. But periodically, a wave would pound out a loud note that would startle me. Just the same,

his mouth closed, but I can still "hear" it in his eyes.)



More than once, we Church Aid sisters stopped to pray for one another—crying with those who were sad and rejoicing with those who were glad. A phone call punctuated our time together with a happy exclamation mark as we learned that one of our prayers had just been answered.

What makes the Community of Believers such a comfortable place to be? Along with the Holy Spirit uniting us, probably "acceptance."

I like Charles Stanley's words in the February 3 issue of *In Touch* magazine: "Being accepted by someone who cares for us despite our flaws frees us to enjoy the friendship."

Having learned from Enid about her peanut butter experience, I'll probably think of her and smile whenever I open a jar.

Going to General Conference is like going to Church Aid for a whole week! They serve up a lot of friendship there. **SR**

A phone call punctuated our time together with a happy exclamation mark as we learned that one of our prayers had just been answered.

seniors where I can handily interact with them. Overhearing those two neighbors did sting my heart, but it also prompted me to put them on my prayer list.

Recently, I had an experience that enriched my spirit as well as filled my need for community: Church Aid.

That's what the Daytona Beach (Fla.) SDB Church calls the sum of us who meet the first Wednesday of each month. Presently, our devotional time is taking us through the alphabet, and I had to combine the "E" and "F" topics to make up for forgetting our routine last month and "diving off" into another direction.

"Emotions" and "Friendship" intertwined into a study and sharing time that seemed to be just what we needed.

When asked what emotions we have the hardest time controlling, anger and impatience topped the list. Determining to be more Christ-like in our responses, one of the women explained that she had "traded in" throwing a shoe at her husband for

I sensed God's voice and loving presence in all of it.

Reflecting on the fact that my husband is made in God's image, I told myself to picture the beautiful power of a crashing wave the next time I'm surprised by his anger and to remember that his varied emotions do not change who he is. Both gentleness and strength are attributes of God, handed down to His children.

(My "Honey" controls his anger better than I do. He wisely keeps

Calling All Prayer Warriors

The 2005 SCSC teams and Project Directors will need our prayers. If you are willing to partner in prayer with someone this summer, please contact:

Jan Graffius
1000 Walker St. #66
Holly Hill, FL 32117

Phone: (386) 258-7367
E-mail: pleg@excite.com





Pearls from the Past by Don A. Sanford, historian emeritus

Restoring the Milton House

My October 1998 *Pearls*—“Next Stop... Milton House!”—featured a picture of that building as it appeared around 1885.

Architecturally, it consisted of a three-story, hexagonal-shaped main building constructed in 1845 by Joseph Goodrich, the founder of Milton, Wis. He used a unique formula of native cement grout to erect the structure.

The Milton House may have served as an inn for frontier travelers, but its basement was part of the “Underground Railroad,” providing a relatively safe and temporary refuge for fugitive slaves. A tunnel running from the basement to a small cabin behind the inn provided a hidden exit to the next stop on the network leading to freedom in Canada.

Noted for its unique structure, the Milton House was more than a hotel. Its attached, two-story wing with five units housed various businesses and residents. (The 1885 photo showed this wing, depicting how the Milton House looked for close to a century.) It’s speculated that this part of the Milton House was eventually weakened by a number of factors.

Over the years, openings were made in the basement of the structure, leaving it without proper support. Vibrations from a printing press inside one of its units, explosions of guns producing puffed wheat and rice cereals, and the rumbling of trains at a nearby crossing all might have contributed to the deterioration.

In any event, a section of the wing collapsed in 1948, slightly injuring the lone occupant of a second-story housing unit.

I was a student at Milton College when that section collapsed during Friday evening vespers and choir practice at the local Seventh Day Baptist church, which is located diagonally across the street from the

a projection at the rear of the building—were saved, but the rest of the wing had to be demolished.

The collapse of that unit spurred the newly created Milton Historical Society (established in 1947) to restore and preserve the remaining structure.

Today, many consider the Milton House the oldest cement

***The Milton House
may have served as an inn
for frontier travelers, but its basement
was part of the “Underground
Railroad.”***

Milton House. That would have been a good time for Pastor Elmo Fitz Randolph to preach about the walls of Jericho falling down!

One unit adjacent to the main hexagon portion of the inn—and

structure of any size in the entire U.S. Its unique hexagonal design alone would make it worthy of preservation.

The Milton House’s most notable “claim to fame” remains its role as



The Milton House is undergoing both renovation and expansion.

a station on the Underground Railroad. In the Milton Historical Society's 1998 booklet, "Milton House Museum National Historic Landmark," considerable credit for these anti-slavery efforts is given

a cross-section of community residents, with Seventh Day Baptists prominent among them. Rev. John Fitz Randolph and Marjorie Burdick shared responsibilities in readying the museum displays.

A tunnel running from the basement to a small cabin behind the inn provided a hidden exit to the next stop on the network.

to the influence of Seventh Day Baptists:

"Like other devout Seventh Day Baptists in Wisconsin and throughout the Midwest, Goodrich assumed a position of leadership among the abolitionists in Milton."

Then-contemporary issues of the *SR* documented the anti-slavery sentiments of Seventh Day Baptists.

Those active in the early years of the Milton Historical Society were

Mabel Nelson and Caroline Gray were co-curators, Elston Shaw and Beulah Kaase were storekeepers, and Prof. D.N. Inglis was president for many years.

For years, supporters of the Milton House envisioned restoring it to its original size. With its recognition as one of the best documented stations on the Underground Railroad, government and private grants—along

with increased individual contributions—led the Society to finally undertake the restoration. (In replicating the old wing, the walls being added to the hexagonal structure are made with pre-cast concrete.)

As part of the drive, the Society is offering 4x8-inch engraved bricks which will be installed on the entry wall of the new building. Each brick contains three lines of 16 characters (including blank spaces) at a cost of \$50. Double bricks of six lines are available for \$100.

These bricks can remind us of those who have shared the heritage of Seventh Day Baptists. Our General Conference, the SDB Historical Society, and the Milton SDB Church will all have their names inscribed there.

We hope that others who have shared in Milton's history can also be included. Send orders to:

*Milton Historical Society
P.O. Box 245
Milton, WI 53563 SR*

Denominational Dateline

April

- 2 Stewardship Seminar, Battle Creek, Mich.—Andrew Camenga
- 9 SpringsLife Fellowship, Colorado Springs, Colo.—Camenga
- 9 Salem, W.Va., SDB Church, Ordination Council for D. Scott Smith—Gordon Lawton
- 14-15 Hope College, Holland, Mich.—Rob Appel, Don Graffius, Morgan Shepard
- 16-17 Memorial Fund Quarterly Meeting, SDB Center, Janesville, Wis.—Shepard, Appel, Lawton
- 19-23 SDB Pastors' Conference, Alfred Station, N.Y.—Appel, Kevin Butler, Camenga, Lawton, Shepard
- 20 Houghton (N.Y.) College—Appel, Shepard
- 24 Missionary Society Quarterly Meeting, Westerly, R.I.—Looper, Ron Elston, Appel
- 24 SDB Board of Christian Education Directors Meeting, Alfred Station—Camenga, Butler
- 27 Berlin, N.Y., SDB Church—Appel
- 28 Alfred Station SDB Church—Appel
- 30 Washington, D.C., SDB Church—Appel

May

- 1-2 Washington, D.C., church—Appel
- 6-8 Allegheny Association, Toronto, Canada—Appel
- 13-15 CAST, Texarkana, Ark.—Elston, Butler
- 13-15 Eastern Association, Shiloh, N.J.—Looper
- 14 Kory Geske Ordination Council, Battle Creek—Lawton
- 15 Historical Society Annual Meeting, SDB Center
- 21 Annual Homecoming, Old Stonefort, Ill.—Elston
- 21 TCC Core Committee, SDB Center—Butler
- 21 Camenga Australian Commissioning, Daytona Beach, Fla.—Appel
- 30 Summer Institute on Sabbath Theology begins at SDB Center—Lawton

June

- 3-5 Central New York Association, Adams Center, N.Y.—Appel
- 4 Southwestern Association, Houston, Tex.—Looper
- 24-26 Appalachian Assoc., Paint Rock, Ala.—Appel
- 25 Verona, N.Y., SDB Church—Butler



Recognizing great teachers

The Crystal Apple award recognizes one Sabbath School teacher whose outstanding teaching skills prepare students for Christian growth. The award helps us remember the skills, abilities, attitudes, and gifts that God places within the people who teach us.

This year's recipient will be announced during General Conference's award ceremony in August.

Please observe the Sabbath School teachers in your church. Who consistently demonstrates the kind of teaching that you would like to encourage in your church and in churches across our Conference? Then nominate one of these outstanding teachers to be this year's honoree.

Each member and branch church of the General Conference may nominate one teacher. Nominations must be submitted by June 30, 2005.

The nominee...

- must be a member of good standing in the nominating church
- must exhibit the qualities of faith and teaching found in the life and teaching of Christ
- must currently serve as a Sabbath School teacher
- may not be a member of a church who has had an award recipient in the last three years

Nomination forms have been sent to churches. For additional forms, contact the Board office at Box 115, Alfred Station, NY 14803. Phone: (607) 587-8527; Fax: (607) 587-9895; E-mail: sdbbce@educatingchristians.org. Forms may also be downloaded from our website: educatingchristians.org/Programs/CrystalAppleAward. 

The following have received the Crystal Apple award:

1986 **George E. Parrish**
Battle Creek, Mich.

1987 **Shirley S. Cargill**
North Loup, Neb.

1988 **Margaret B. Allen**
Lost Creek, W.Va.

1989 **Helen K. Bond**
Columbus, Ohio

1990 **June Johnson**
Nortonville, Kan.

1991 **Ruth B. Bennett**
Battle Creek, Mich.

1992 **Dan Richards**
Texarkana, Ark.

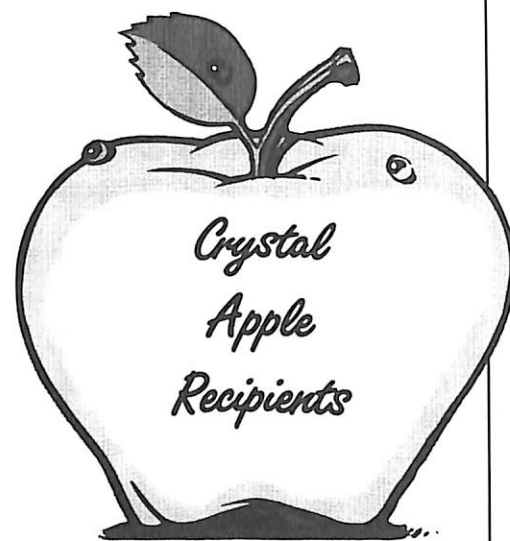
1993 **Dr. Lewis H.V. May**
Riverside, Calif.

1994 **Alan R. Crouch**
Daytona Beach, Fla.

1995 **Madeline Fitz Randolph**
Boulder, Colo.

1996 **Karen S. Payne**
Dodge Center, Minn.

1997 **Janis M. Bond**
Shiloh, N.J.



1998 **Earl W. Hibbard**
Central, Md.

1999 **Marilyn Merchant**
Riverside, Calif.

2000 **Esther A. Burdick**
Waterford, Conn.

2001 **Judy Parrish**
Battle Creek, Mich.

2002 **Larry Bird**
Washington, D.C.

2003 **John W. Griffin**
Paint Rock, Ala.

2004 **Lucinda Snyder Torkaman**
Alfred Station, N.Y.



Changes in China

by Kirk Looper

Recently, James Chang and his wife, Yan Hua Deng, came from China to visit family members in California and New Jersey. During their time out East, I had a chance to visit with them.

James' father, T.M. Chang, was once principal of Grace School, a Seventh Day Baptist school established in Shanghai, China, in the 1880s.

I appreciated the couple taking the time to visit with me, especially when they began explaining the history of the Christian Church in their country.

Christianity first entered China from England in 1807 and reached Shanghai in 1831. In 1877, Shanghai was inundated with Western missionaries, especially from the United States and the United Kingdom. They established missionary schools, hospitals, and churches.

In 1903, the Chinese themselves established the "Christianity Association." By 1920, all of the major Christian denominations in China had "Chinese" at the beginning of their name—"Chinese Baptist," "Chinese Lutheran," etc. It was stipulated that the top leader of each group had to be Chinese.

In 1950, all of these "Chinese Christian" groups were united into one Christian denomination under the "Three Self" movement. Between 1958 and 1960, a political movement called the "Great Leap Forward" closed or merged 208 Shanghai churches, leaving only 23 in the city.

During the "Culture Revolution" (1966-1979), all religious activities were stopped. This led to the rapid development of "house churches," where families met in their individual homes for prayer and worship.

Religious activities resumed in September of 1979, when China en-



James Chang and wife Yan Hua Deng visited the U.S. in March.

acted a policy of "reform and openness to the outside world." At the same time, friendly communication was reestablished between Chinese Christians and Christians outside their country.

There are still two organizations for Christians in China today: The "Christianity Association" and the "Three Self Committee."

The Committee bases its ministry on support, Gospel-sending, and church management. Chinese Christians do all the work.

About 700,000 Christians lived in China before 1949. The country's population was 450 million then, so Christians accounted for 1.55% of the total number. By 2002, Christians had increased to 16 million, with farmers making up 70% of that total. Out of a population of 1.28 billion people, 1.25% were Christian.

Today, there are 50,000 Christian gathering places in China, with 70% of them built after the new policy was set in motion. They are also 18 theological seminaries.

Recalling his growing up years in China, James said that his own family held "house church" meetings, usually on Sabbath eve (Friday night). Some close friends and neighbors would join them.

After World War II, James' father invited the "senior three class" students of Grace High School to join his house church meetings. This continued until 1950.

Family worship meetings were normal occurrences in China, even in later years. They still exist today, perhaps because there are fewer churches, or the ones that do exist are too far away to make attendance feasible.

These family meetings conform to Biblical teaching: "For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them" (Matthew 18:20).

Still, an in-house, family worship setting cannot replace the larger church. Too much is lacking. These families are flocks without shepherds. There are few evangelists to proclaim God's message, and they can't partake of the Lord's Supper.

Please pray for all of the Christian churches in China, both the "public" churches and the house churches.

Currently, there are no laws governing religion in China. However, the government has announced such laws will be established within the next three years.

In the past, some central and local governments have set their own rules. The following were adopted in 1995:

- 1) The government protects religious freedom. Laws are in place to guard proper religious activities, groups, and meeting places.
- 2) The government permits only five religious groups: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Christianity.
- 3) All religious activities have to be independent, free of foreign control.

cont. on page 23



the BEACON

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

April 2005

Esther's courage

by Jenn Layton

The book of Esther has always fascinated me. I am constantly trying to convince my YF leader to study either Esther or Ruth, even though we already have many times.

I first heard Esther's story when I was in 5th or 6th grade. I remember being really interested, mostly because the story was about a girl.

Yes, there are other Bible stories about girls, but not like this one. It was the first narrative I had ever read where a girl was the hero. Esther was one of the first books of the Bible that I read all the way through, and I've read it many times since.

The story

Out of all the girls presented to him, King Xerxes chooses Esther to be his queen. She's given everything and anything that she wants—beauty treatments, special food, the king's favor.

With the help of her cousin, Mordecai, Esther saves the king from an assassination attempt. Haman, one of the king's advisors, becomes angry with Mordecai because he won't bow down to him. As a result, Haman decides to have *all* of the Jews killed. He makes a proclamation to that effect, declaring that it was from the king, and sends it to every province.

When Mordecai finds out about the proclamation, he begs Esther to help. She is faced with one of two choices: She can either try to save herself and her people by going be-



***Esther is faced with one of two choices:
Save herself and her people
or be killed trying.***

fore the king and asking for mercy, or she could be killed trying.

What would *you* have done in that situation?

The application

If you know something is wrong but are afraid of the outcome, do you still try to make it right? That's one of those difficult decisions. Do you do what you know is right, or do you try to spare yourself?

Obviously, Esther was brave. She stood up for both herself and her people, and simply asked the king to spare the lives of the Jews. Her request took a lot of courage.

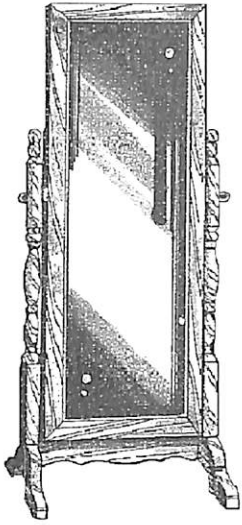
Esther knew what she was get-

ting into, but she trusted God. She knew that He would be with her, even if she was killed, because she was doing the right thing.

This story shows how God works through ordinary people and events in our everyday lives. Remember, "God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so God's generosity can flow through you" (1 Peter 4:10).

Never forget how Esther used the gifts God gave her to save her people. **SR**

*As always, you can reach me
at JLizard1687@aol.com*



Reflections

by Leanne Lippincott

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

Accounting for so much more

After staying up past midnight poking at my worn-off calculator buttons, I stuffed a bunch of papers into a folder the following morning and headed off to see my friendly tax accountant.

Cal is in his early 60s. He became our accountant shortly after my husband and I moved to Wisconsin in 1979. After Denny's death, I made the yearly trek to Cal's office by myself.

Back then, I was fairly naive about finances. My husband had always taken care of mundane matters like taxes and insurance. Cal was consistently kind, patient, and protective as he guided me through the shark-infested waters of tax returns.

When I walked into Cal's office this year, one of his assistants greeted me with her usual warmth. "Cal will be with you shortly," she smiled.

A few minutes later, a man walked towards me and said, "I can see you now, Leanne."

I followed him down the hallway and settled into the chair in front of his desk. I tried not to stare as he began going over my forms and typing numbers into his computer.

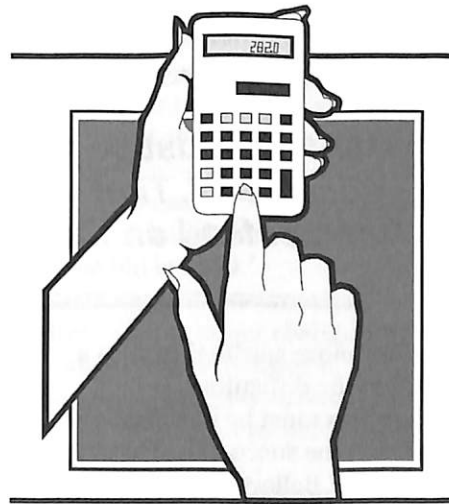
I knew without asking that something was wrong. Terribly wrong.

The man behind the desk was Cal, but he didn't look like Cal. At least, not like the politically involved, robust accountant and devoted Wisconsin sports fan I knew. He looked older, thinner, and tired. The most telltale sign was the wispy hair covering—or trying to cover—his head.

Eventually, we got around to talking about the "elephant" in the room. Once the word cancer was uttered, the floodgates opened.

I listened intently (sometimes tearfully) as Cal shared the ups and downs of his ongoing battle. A 40-lb. weight loss; trips to numerous hospitals, including the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center out East; insurance hassles, etc.

As a cancer survivor myself, many of the words flowing from Cal's lips were frighteningly familiar: "can-



cerous tumor," "chemotherapy," "nausea," "misdiagnosis." One word was especially scary: "inoperable."

Instead of our traditional handshake, I gave Cal a hug before heading to my car.

God taught me three lessons that day.

First, we should strive to live in the present. Life is too fragile to keep putting things off. David says in Psalm 78:39 that we are "but a passing breeze that does not return." The Apostle James declares, "... You are a mist that appears for a little while

and then vanishes" (James 4:14).

We should restore that broken relationship today; extend that long-overdue apology now. The future is always in the distance, but each of us has *today*.

Secondly, we can have all the money in the world, but if we don't have our health, money becomes worthless.

Because of Cal's business and investment expertise, I'm guessing that he has built up a fairly nice nest egg. But will he and his wife, Rita, be able to enjoy the fruits of his labor? Will those highly-touted "Golden Years" hovering on the horizon end up being a mirage? Those are questions for all of us.

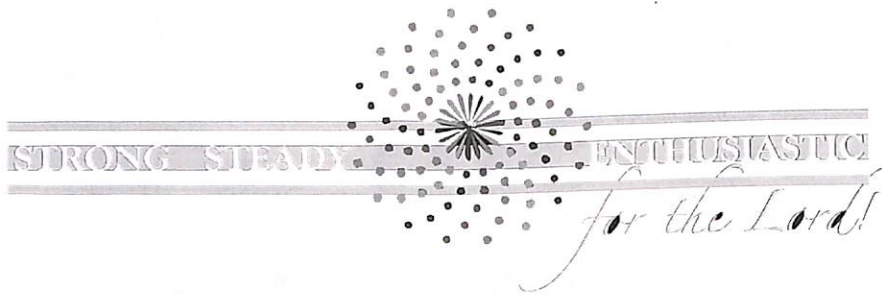
Thirdly, we can enjoy each day for what it offers, but our focus truly needs to be heavenward.

Matthew 6:11 admonishes us not to "store up for yourselves treasures on earth." That doesn't mean that we're not to enjoy the wonderful things that money can buy; we just shouldn't make them the focus of our lives.

Our "real treasures" await us in heaven: being in our Creator's presence forever, reuniting with deceased loved ones, and partaking of unfathomable joy, peace, and beauty.

For Christians, isn't that what living—and dying—is all about? We can (and should) enjoy the blessings of our earthbound lives, but we need to "press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me [us] heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Please join me in asking God to give Cal and his entire family an extra measure of comfort and strength in the days ahead. **SR**



The President's Page
by Don Graffius

Grow your roots deep and feed on the Word

As I write this in early March, I am enjoying one of my many pieces of fiction that regularly arrive in the mail shortly after Christmas. I am addicted to this literature, and I leaf through lots of them—*seed catalogs!*

The pages are filled with colorful pictures of huge flowers and vegetables. There is not an insect or disease on any of the plants, and weeds never seem to grow in these gardens.

Every year, I foolishly believe that I will produce “spectacular,” “exquisite,” and “vibrant” flowers with “striking,” “lush” foliage just as described in the pages. I send off my order after hours of careful deliberation.

Joking aside, my time in the field and garden has taught me some important spiritual lessons.

It may sound elementary, but seeds have to be properly planted to grow. They will never bear a crop in the package!

Many of us keep the Gospel to ourselves, unwilling to share it or “plant” it in others. We cannot expect to win others to Christ if we sow the Gospel sparingly.

In 2 Corinthians 9:6, we read that “...Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” This principle not only applies to giving material gifts, but also to sharing the Gospel.

The farmer I worked for in my teen years spent a lot of time and money selecting seed. He paid

more for corn seed that would withstand a frost and resist diseases. Those plants that overcome hardships often develop deeper root systems and produce sweeter fruit.

As Christians grow in the Lord, they will face adversity. Similarly, Christians in the midst of trials and tribulations become rooted and grounded in the Word of God and

Proverbs 11:18 says: “...but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.” The Bible tells us the opposite is also true: “He who sows wickedness reaps trouble...” (Prov. 22:8).

If we are mean-spirited, bitter, and harsh in our words and deeds, we will reap a similar harvest from others. On the other hand, if we sow seeds of kindness, gentleness, and

Gardens must be fertilized and weeded to be successful. That takes hard work! Believers must feed on the Word in order to thrive.

produce more spiritual fruit as a result of the difficulties.

Gardens must be fertilized and weeded to be successful. That takes hard work! Believers must feed on the Word in order to thrive.

The world is full of weeds that can surround and choke off spiritual growth. We are continually enticed to seek after material riches. TV, movies, and recreation rob us of our time with God. In the garden, weeds start small and seem innocuous. But before long, they are numerous and larger than the cultivated plants. Spiritual weeds act in a similar fashion.

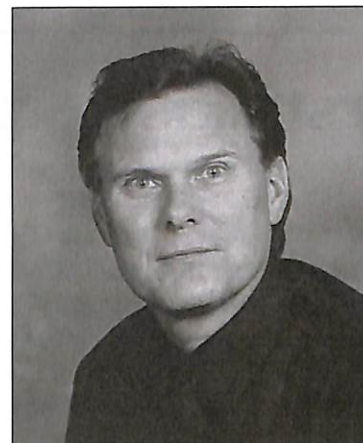
Most importantly, I have learned that you reap what you sow. You cannot sow watermelon seeds and reap beans!

love in those we associate with, we will reap far different physical and spiritual fruit.

In Galatians 6:7, Paul tells us we reap what we sow. “Therefore,” he concludes in verse 10, “as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Although we do not all grow physical gardens, we all grow spiritual gardens. We are continually sowing seeds. Are they seeds of righteousness? Are you feeding your Spiritual Garden by spending time in the Word, or are the “weeds” crowding in on you?

May God bless you with a “bumper crop” as you labor to remain strong, steady, and enthusiastic... in the Lord! **SR**



by Executive Director
Rob Appel

Worship styles: Traditional vs. new

Last month we looked at what makes us a “Next Step” people—those who specialize in calling others to belong and not just participate in church.

New people who come into our churches don’t get a feeling of “belonging” simply by showing up week after week. They receive a true sense of belonging by being included, invited, and involved in the overall ministry of their church. They need to be “baptized” into the whole church program for their own personal Christian growth.

New people, new challenges

As new attendees and members come into our SDB churches, so do new opportunities and challenges. One of the biggest challenges is traditional worship styles versus the new choruses.

So how do we worship together in harmony and one spirit? Jesus offers us this parable:

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good’ ” (Luke 5:37-39).

New styles

New worship styles are like the new wine. They cannot be contained in traditional worship and remain true to the form for which they were intended.

Likewise, the traditional styles must remain intact and not let the new styles break them apart at the seams, rendering them useless. The new worship styles must be put into a form that can be flexible. And traditional styles must remain intact, “for the old is good.”

First, we must learn to work together to bring about change, and we must learn to be flexible with each other. New and different ways of worshipping can produce conflict with our traditions.

Traditions and history are important, but should not get in the way of dynamic change. At the same time, not all change is good. Just because it is new does not make it better than the old way. However, change in life is inevitable.

If we are not somewhat flexible, we will break. Let’s make sure that we don’t compromise our values and beliefs for change that is not from God.

Showing flexibility

I have heard it said by one of our seasoned saints, “I don’t like the new songs, and I won’t sing them. How-

ever, I believe in the youth of the church, and I will support them any way I can.”

Now that is a true servant’s heart!

The “more traditional” should not compromise their style of worship. But they should be willing to experience different ways of worshipping and strive to support them, rather than tear them down.

I often see the youth and young adults offering true worship no matter what the style of music. They seem to be able to allow God’s presence to touch them, whether it’s with traditional styles or in today’s styles of music.

Where’s your focus?

So, whether we worship by Gospel, choruses, psalms, hymns, or hands in the air, we are all in awe of God, and that is the most important part of worship.

If we are bothered by another style of worship, we are *letting* it bother us and control our worship experience. We have a decision to make. Will I let this bother me? Or, will I give God true worship?

Will I let those worshipping around me affect my attitude, or am I going to focus on God?

Are you going to let God direct your worship, or are you going to direct God? It is your decision. **SR**

First class graduates from FLTI

by Mary Jane McPherson

Twenty-eight people graduated last November from the Florida Leadership Training Institute (FLTI) after completing a two-year course sponsored by the South Atlantic Association.

Pastors Andrew Samuels (of the Miami and Fort Lauderdale SDB churches) and John Camenga (Daytona Beach church) served as trainers. Inspired by similar training held in Plainfield, N.J., they designed the course to equip believers from the SDB churches, branch churches, and fellowships in Florida to serve more effectively in their local settings.

The students met monthly to study Old and New Testament Survey, Seventh Day Baptist Polity and History, Church Administration, Sabbath Theology, Hermeneutics, Church Growth, Evangelism, the Philosophy of Christian Camping, Parliamentary Procedures, and Homiletics.

Our 2005 Conference President Don Graffius, along with Executive Director Rob Appel, participated in the graduation ceremony, held in conjunction with South Atlantic Association meetings.

Training by example

In addition to the initial trainers (Pastors Camenga and Samuels), the institute had "guest presenters." These included Pastor Joe Samuels of Plainfield, N.J., Pastor Wray Winborne of Charleston, S.C., and Joanne McCall of Daytona Beach.

Students patiently endured Pastor Camenga's "hilarious" jokes while gleaning from his wealth of knowledge, especially SDB history.

Pastor Andrew's deep passion for the work of our Lord awed all of us, and his gentle spirit and wisdom were inspiring. Both men are remarkable teachers!



Happy graduates of the Florida Leadership Training Institute. Front row (l. to r.): Christine Francis, Andrew Samuels, Mary Jane McPherson, Bonnie Flint. Second row: Heather Muschett-King, Velma Taylor, Marie Ward, Grace Crouch. Third row: Margorie Jacob, Shirley Morgan, Leonie Wilson, Jennifer Dixon, Susan Walker-Knight, Louise Miller. Fourth row: Jasmine Lynch, Kay Samuels, Erica Radcliffe-Henry, J.P. Flint. Fifth row: John Camenga, Keith McCall, Angelyn Walters, Jim Jacob. Top row: Rick Crouch, Mike Spearl, Alcott Lynch, George Walters, Matt Jacob. Not pictured: Carolyn and Ted Haugstatter, and Rose Rolle.

Class valedictorian

Grace Crouch, class valedictorian, admitted that she initially didn't want to commit two years to the class and the accompanying assignments. Also, she didn't think that she was particularly *called* to leadership.

However, she testified that she learned so much about God's Word and about her own spiritual gifts. She delighted with fellow classmates as they, too, discovered their spiritual gifts.

Speaking of her fellow classmates, she remarked, "It was wonderful to see them encouraging one another along the way."

She added, "Perhaps one of the most exciting things to see was that I suddenly found myself surrounded by a 'cloud of witnesses' when life's

trials came. My peers soon became like family as they showed genuine concern for Rick and my dad after a flash fire left them with severe burns on their legs that took weeks to heal.

"My FLTI family also reached out to us and lifted us up in prayer when we lost Rick's mom in July, and they rejoiced with us when our beautiful baby boy, Luke, was born just nine days later. Through this wonderful experience called FLTI, I not only drew closer to God, but closer to His family.

"I now realize that my original feelings of inadequacy were valid, but not important to God," Grace shared. "He has called me, like all Christians, to spread the Good News regardless of my status in life or how busy I may be."

Class salutatorian

Leonie Wilson, class salutatorian, expressed her thoughts this way:

"I have gained much from attending FLTI, much that has enlightened and equipped me to function as a more mature and knowledgeable leader and follower, because I function in both roles from time to time.

"One fond memory of my experience of FLTI is waking up at 3:00 a.m. to meet classmates from Fort Lauderdale and Miami at 'our spot' (Home Depot) in order to get to class at Orlando or Daytona Beach.

"One remarkable thing about this program is the wonderful time of fellowship we enjoyed with our brothers and sisters from various churches. This gave us the opportunity to see each other more often, rather than waiting once a year for the South Atlantic Association weekend."

Words of wisdom

One of Pastor Andrew's statements was pounded into our heads and eventually into our hearts. He

continually reminded us that, "God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called."

We may not have degrees from a Bible college or seminary, but God has called us to have a relationship with Him and to make ourselves available to serve Him. We are called "to be prepared to give an account of the hope we have within us" (Phil. 1:6).

The graduates minister

Since the start of the class, three students have been called to be associate or assistant pastors, and three others to diaconate ordination.

Our group contained many Sabbath School teachers, worship leaders, Bible study teachers, youth and camp leaders, and mighty prayer warriors. Once it finally "got through" to us that all of us are called to be ministers—and all of us have God-given spiritual gifts that we are to use—our natural response was to allow God to use us without any second thoughts.

FLTI becomes SALT

Wanting to continue this effective training and thus allow others to catch the vision of this ministry, the Association voted to rename the course "SALT"—South Atlantic Leadership Training.

The new class began in January and includes members from SDB churches in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Previous graduates can take new courses and attend follow-up seminars.

Grace's message to the graduates

"Taking the Apostle Paul's words in Philippians as my own, I say to my fellow graduates, 'I thank God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus' " (Phil. 1:3-6, NASB). **SR**

Changes in China, *cont. from page 17*

- 4) Religious groups cannot intervene in national administration, justice, and educational affairs.
- 5) All religious groups have to be led by the government's Religious Affairs Department.
- 6) Religious activities have to be held in appointed places registered with the government or in homes. Licensed religious staff must preside over all group activities.
- 7) China thinks that foreigners should also have freedom of religious faith within its borders. It protects friendship, cultural, and scientific exchanges between its own people and those from other countries.

**Currently,
there are no
laws governing
religion in
China.**

- 8) Foreigners can recruit and educate Chinese students for religious staffing. They also are allowed to study in China or give lectures that follow government guidelines.
- 9) People from other countries cannot establish religious

groups, administration agencies, meetinghouses, or religious colleges in China. They also are not allowed to recruit new religious followers, share their faith, or appoint untrained staff members. Foreigners *can* give Bible study lectures if a religious group in a province invites them.

We pray that the work in China will continue to grow. We hope that the Church will eventually prove to China's leaders that it is not a violent body, but one that is committed to peace and to the success of the presiding government. **SR**

New members

Denver, CO
Rodney Henry, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Emily Lovinggood

Metro Atlanta, GA
Luis Lovelace, pastor
 Joined after baptism

Keisha Wilson
 Joined by letter
 David Samuels Jr.

Salem, WV
Dale Thorngate, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Adalia Trudgeon
 Casandra Trudgeon

Shiloh, NJ
Don Chroniger, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Alex May
 Caroline May
 Lauren Muffley
 Megan Smith
 Melissa Smith
 Adam Young
 Janet Young
 Joined after testimony
 Denise Coleman
 Julia Coleman
 Mark Young

Address or church changes?

Send your updates to us at:
Sabbath Recorder
SDB Center
PO Box 1678
Janesville WI 53547

Our e-mail is:
editor@seventhdaybaptist.org

Births & Adoptions

Sias.—A daughter, Nora Raine Sias, was born to Joshua and Jessica (Goodson) Sias of Pickerington, OH, on December 18, 2004.

Davis.—A daughter, Ziaira (age 7), and two sons—Seth (5) and Canaan (4)—were adopted by Paul and Duska Davis of Salem, WV, in January of 2005.

Holmes.—A son, Christian Perry Holmes, was born to Allen and Jaimee Holmes of Pataskala, OH, on February 15, 2005.

Thank You!

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

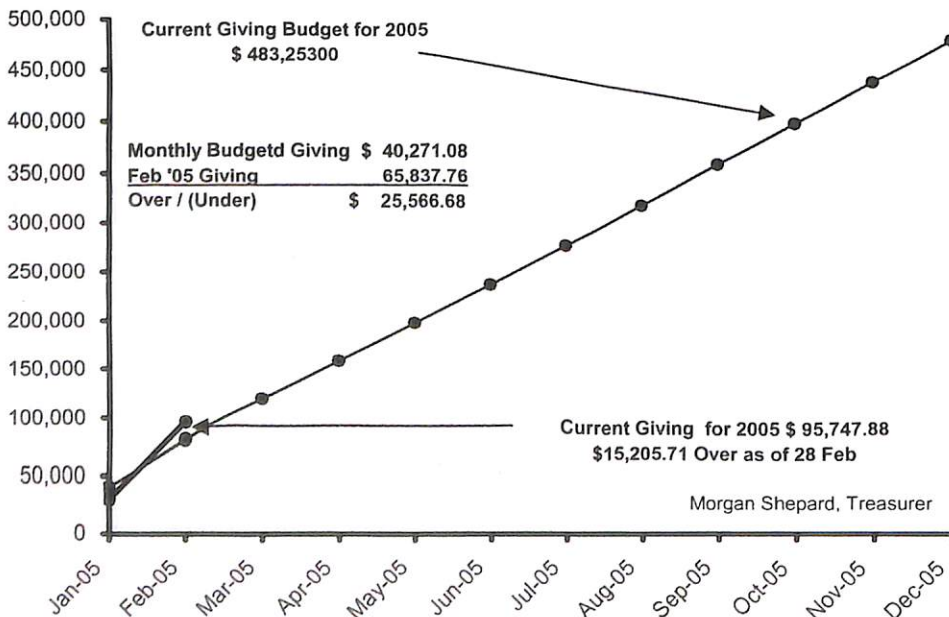
What a difference you made! In February, you gave \$65,837.76 for a three-month total of \$194,391.02 for the Denominational Budget and PROP. **Don't Stop Now!**

We still need your support to fund our ever-growing missions, scholarships, tracts, *The Helping Hand*, and the SR needs, along with our retired pastors.

Thanks for making the difference.

What can you do now?
Remain Strong, Steady, and Enthusiastic!

Current Giving 2005



Obituaries

Merritt.—Annetta (“Nettie”)

Merritt, 80, of Salem, W.Va., died on November 21, 2004.

She was born on June 8, 1924, in Doddridge County, the daughter of Wilson and Bessie Davis. She was the wife of Ralph W. Merritt, who preceded her in death.

Nettie was a nanny for the Dr. Frederick Spencer family for 23 years and active in the community of Salem. She was a member of the Salem Lioness Club and the Chamber of Commerce, served on the Salem Apple Butter Festival Committee for 15 years, and volunteered at Fort New Salem and the Salem Depot. She also served as a Foster Grandparent.

As an active member of the Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church, she served as Sabbath School secretary-treasurer. She was especially known for her role on the Fellowship Committee, often in charge of community meals the church put on as fundraisers.

Survivors include three daughters, Patricia DiMinno of Waynesburg, Ohio, Carol Beightol of Martinsburg, W.Va., and Joyce Siders of Salem; two sisters, Gladys Baker and Berneda Davis, both of Salem; seven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. In addition to her husband, three sisters, four brothers, and one grandson predeceased her.

Funeral services were held at the Harbert Funeral Home in Salem, with Rev. Dale D. Thorngate officiating. Burial was in Salem Knights of Pithius Cemetery.

Dunton.—Miriam Kathleen

Dunton, 65, of Cleveland, Ga., passed away on November 30, 2004, at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center following an extended illness.

She was born on May 15, 1939, in DeKalb County, Georgia, the daughter of Samuel Emanuel Jackson and Bernice Estelle (Ivey) Jackson.

Miriam was a homemaker and a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Hiram, Ga.

Survivors include her husband, Charles Richard Dunton; two sons, Michael A. Jacobs Sr. and Danny Jacobs; two daughters, Sharron L. Jacobs and Linda McCartney; three sisters, Martha Gillis, Viola Mabry, and Ada McGee; two brothers, Robert and Marvin Jackson; eight grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by three brothers, Berchard E. Jackson Sr., and Jim and Carl Jackson; and two sisters, Ruby Mullinax and India Mulkey.

A funeral service was held on December 3, 2004, at the chapel of the Barrett Funeral Home, with Rev. Garry English officiating. In the afternoon, a graveside service was held at the Georgia Memorial Park in Marietta, Ga., with Jeff Hargett officiating.

SDB Youth Unite for Sri Lankan Youth

Seventh Day Baptist youth from the U.S. and Canada are uniting to raise funds for their counterparts who survived the tsunami that hit Sri Lanka in December. Our four churches in that country—Colombo, Nawala/Moratuwa, Matara/Polhena, and Ampara—all sustained losses of family, friends, and property, particularly in Matara.

A letter has been sent to all the pastors and youth leaders in the SDB General Conference, USA and Canada, explaining concerns and ideas for raising funds while heightening compassion for the survivors.

The SDB church in Ampara was cut off from aid for a long time because roads and bridges were washed away. Sri Lanka counted 30,000 deaths, with Ampara having 10,000 of that total. There are still thousands of people missing, and

the town of Matara was entirely destroyed.

Kirk Looper, Executive Secretary of the SDB Missionary Society, has heard from Walter Jayewardene of the Colombo church. The losses are great, but money sent from SDBs in the U.S. and Canada has provided many basic needs. Let's add to those contributions!

Please support your local church youth by encouraging their fund-raising project which ends on May 7. Contributions should be sent to: “Youth Missions Project 2005,” SDB Missionary Society, 119 Main St., Westerly, RI 02891-2112.

Above all, pray for our churches in Sri Lanka and for the families there who want to reach out and help each other and their neighbors. If you have a computer, check the Internet for further information on Sri Lanka, and pray for the entire country. **SR**

Miami ordains two to diaconate

by Megan Malcolm

On the evening of January 15, 2005, the Miami, Fla., SDB Church held a diaconate ordination service for Sisters Leonie Wilson and Mary Jane McPherson. The evening was one of fellowship and praise as members from the Fort Lauderdale and Daytona Beach churches joined the candidates and the Miami congregation.

Attendees included Revs. John Camenga, pastor of the Daytona Beach church; Wray Winborne, of the Low Country Christian Center SDB Church in Charleston, S.C.; and Larry Moultrie, from the Garden of Prayer church in St. Stephens, S.C. Rob Appel, Executive Director of the SDB General Conference, also participated.

The service began with worship led out by the Miami Praise Team.



With their husbands at their sides, Leonie Wilson and Mary Jane McPherson kneel to receive the laying on of hands as they are ordained to the Miami church diaconate.

Other offerings to the Lord included the church's own dance ministry, Praise in Motion; special music performed by the Miami church choir; and a selection by Theo Wilson, Leonie's son.

After Leonie and Mary Jane presented their individual statements, Pastor Camenga gave the charge to the candidates, and Brother Appel gave the charge to the church. Pastor Winborne's sermon was followed by the Act of Ordination conducted by Rev. Andrew Samuels, pastor of the Miami church.

Miami church Deaconesses Wilhelmina Powell and Gladys Hamilton, and Associate Pastor Shirley Morgan, then welcomed the two women into the diaconate.

Deaconess Leonie Wilson, with husband, Kinly, and their son, has been a part of the Miami SDB Church since 1999. Growing up in Jamaica, she and her family attended the Higgin Town Seventh Day Baptist Church, where she served the Lord in a variety of positions.

At the Miami church, Leonie has served as Sabbath School Director and Praise Team member, and is

currently president of the Women's League.

Deaconess Mary Jane McPherson became part of the Miami church in 1997 after relocating to Florida from New Jersey.

While in New Jersey, Mary Jane attended the Marlboro and Raritan Valley SDB Churches, ministering in a number of ways. She has also served on the Christian Education and Evangelism Committees of Eastern Association, and has worked on the SCSC training staff, the General Council, and other positions throughout the denomination.

Since relocating to the Miami church, she has served as a Sabbath School teacher as well as church secretary. Currently, she is president of the South Atlantic Association.

Mary Jane shares her love for the Lord with her husband, Myron. They have three children and two grandchildren.

Leonie and Mary Jane have taken on an awesome responsibility in response to God's calling and purpose in their lives. Please continue to pray for them as they continue to do the work of the Lord for His glory. *SR*

PROP gets help

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The SDB Memorial Fund trustees voted to provide **PROP** (the Pastors Retirement Offering Project) a generous grant of \$50,000.

Plus, the fund will match the next \$50,000 donated to support our retired pastors and denominational workers. *Please note:* This matching program runs through the end of 2005.

PROP

*Seventh Day Baptist Center
PO Box 1678
Janesville WI 53547-1678*

KEVIN'S

KORNER

Mice with no tails (or power)

Have you ever seen one of those movies that has an alternate ending? The producers and actors lead you through the basic story line, but then you get to choose a different conclusion.

Well friends, here's a first: A "Kevin's Korner" with alternate endings. Your choice may depend on where you fit in the world of SDBs. And some of you might be able to identify with all three conclusions.

Let's start with the basic plot.

After upgrading my office computer last year, I decided that I didn't care for the "new and improved" mouse that came with it.

Have you ever shopped for a computer mouse? I never realized that there were so many choices and options!

Comparing all the features, I narrowed my choice down to two finalists. Looking to the left, then to the right, it dawned on me that these two "mice" looked exactly alike. I assumed that the person who set up the sales display "goofed" and had put out two of the same items.

But one more look proved that the only one who "goofed" was me.

Each mouse carried the same features, color, and name brand, but one of them was wireless. "Look, Ma; no tail!"

I was hooked. Imagine no mouse cable to get tangled up. Freedom!

Batteries in the mouse send an invisible beam to the mouse catcher (sorry) and the thing works like a charm.

Until one fateful day. The batteries died. I'd never dealt with a dead computer mouse before. I know what happens to dead little fishies (*flush*), but...

No battery equals no mouse. No mouse equals no moving cursor, and no moving cursor equals no computing. No computing equals a big machine and structure, but no work getting done.

I invested in some quick 15-minute rechargeable batteries, keeping one pair always plugged in. The charger powers the batteries, the batteries power the mouse, the mouse directs the computer, and the computer keeps the work flowing.

Alternate ending #1

(For church members)

The local SDB church is where real ministry takes place. You pastors and church members are on the "front lines" of outreach for our Lord. The Conference boards and agencies have no power (or reason) to work independently of our churches.

Thank you for being the "mouse"—the hands-on purpose—that directs our work.

Alternate ending #2

(For contributors during the matching campaign—and all year)

Our Conference administrative structure could be likened to a computer. What we produce depends on how the mouse is pointed. And the wireless mouse cannot point if it's out of "juice."

We thank all of you who answered the recent call to "Make Twice the Difference." Your gifts were matched by our Memorial Fund—thank you Memorial Board trustees—to power the Conference "machine." That machine produces ministry tools and assistance for the churches, making an eternal impact at the local level. Thanks for making a big difference.

Alternate ending #3

(For attendees at General Conference)

All of the busy activities of Conference week make it seem like it's over in "15 minutes." But there's plenty of "powering up" and preparation ahead of time, and our annual get-together directs much of our work schedule after we head home. The "recharging" of the week produces lingering (even eternal) effects for both attendees and Conference workers. Won't you join us this year in Holland, Michigan?



An Expanding SDB Ministry in Australia

Pastor John and Linda Camenga of Daytona Beach, Fla., have accepted a call to an exciting new ministry. In June, they will move to Brisbane, Australia.

Their main work will be with the Brisbane SDB Church, but they will serve as a resource team to strengthen our Seventh Day Baptist witness throughout the country. This is the first time Seventh Day Baptists will have a full-time ministry on the field in Australia.

The Brisbane church has asked John and Linda to help with this demanding mission. Four SDB groups are scattered along the southeast coast from Melbourne to Brisbane, a distance of over 1,200 miles.

Some goals for this service are:

- Strengthen the Brisbane congregation spiritually and numerically
- Share the salvation message with unbelievers and the unchurched
- Develop an understanding of church covenant
- Encourage closer cooperation among our churches
- Develop leadership training
- Assist in establishing a new program similar to Summer Christian Service Corps
- Develop new SDB churches

The Camengas expect this dynamic ministry to continue for five years or more.

The Brisbane church has taken on the primary responsibility for financial support. Since this is a small church with a big vision, help is needed from brothers and sisters in North America.

John and Linda are asking for several types of support:

- Prayers from everyone
- Promises of monthly or quarterly gifts

- One-time gifts from those who cannot commit to long-range giving (You could still give from time to time.)
- Special offerings from churches and groups for this special ministry

In addition to normal expenses, some extra support is required for special health-care needs.

The Daytona Beach church will commission John and Linda for this new ministry and is establishing a special account for support of their work.

Send your gifts to:

**Clayton Pinder, Treasurer
Seventh Day Baptist Church
139 First Ave.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114**

If you prefer, contributions may be made through the SDB Missionary Society, 119 Main St., Westerly, RI 02981.

All gifts should be clearly marked for "Camenga Australia Ministry" or a similar notation.

For further information, e-mail:

Pastor:JohnCam@yahoo.com

