



The Sabbath RECORDER

December 2006

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists

SDBs

and



Music

A legacy of love

- Towner's still in tune
- Discovering your (musical) sense of purpose
- Directing music—without a single lesson



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

See our website for the new SDBlog

The "SDB Exec" web log (known internally as 'SDBlog') features posts from our agency executives. Check it out at seventhdaybaptist.org.



SDB Grapevine— 200 Members and Growing!

How would you like to get "cutting edge" ministry news as it is developing? If you would like to receive the monthly E-Newsletter from the Center offices, please send your e-mail to robappel@seventhdaybaptist.org. You will become an "insider" on SDB news happening today!

—Executive Director Rob Appel



SUMMER CHRISTIAN SERVICE CORPS

Students: Are you a high school senior or in college, and willing to serve with next year's Summer Christian Service Corps?

Churches: Do you wish to host an SCSC team for service and outreach?

Applications for team members and church projects are on the SDB Conference website at seventhdaybaptist.org. Please print the applications from the website and send all completed forms (for both members and projects) to: SCSC Committee, c/o

Milton SDB Church, 720 E. Madison Ave., Milton WI 53563.

All team member applications must be postmarked by **January 10, 2007**, and all church project applications must be postmarked by **January 31, 2007**. There will be NO exceptions.

If you have any questions, please contact the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church at the above address, or e-mail the SCSC Committee at scsc@miltonsdb.org.



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Towner's still in tune

by J. Paul Green

Seventh Day Baptists have always been a singing people.

For generations, our men have expressed their faith and love of singing through male quartets and choruses. The publication of *Towner's Male Choir* in 1894 coincided with the rising student evangelistic movement. Along with the Bible, *Towner's* became its handbook.

In the summer of 1900 (one of the peak years), the SDB Missionary Society sent out five quartets. Their theme songs were "Keep Rank" and "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken."

The following year, the Missionary Society had nine quartets on the field, including seven men's quartets and two ladies' quartets. Most of the singers were students at either Alfred (N.Y.) University, Milton (Wis.) College, or Salem (W.Va.) College. Some were also seminary students.

Daniel B. Towner was associated with evangelist Dwight L. Moody, serving as music director at his crusades for over 40 years. He was also head of the School of Music at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Towner wrote the music for over 2,000 hymns and Gospel songs, including "Trust and Obey," "Anywhere with Jesus," "Saved by Grace," "At Calvary," and "Grace Greater than All Our Sin."

He also composed or edited over half of the numbers in the Towner songbook. Its full title is, *Towner's Male Choir, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 (Combined)*.

Towner's music is typical of male quartet and chorus music, with the melody usually in the second tenor part. The high tenor and low bass voices get the melody occasionally; the baritone, hardly ever. The baritone part is crucial, however, because

it fills out the harmony and is often the most difficult of all the parts.

The use of Towner's book was never limited to summer evangelist teams. Over the years, many of our SDB churches have had men's quartets and male choruses.

The late Pastor Loyal F. Hurley was not alone in knowing from memory the titles, page numbers, keys, all the words, and all four parts of the more popular numbers.

After a stroke rendered Pastor George B. Shaw unable to speak, it was obvious to a visiting quartet that he remembered all the songs. He moved his lips in perfect time with the music as the quartet sang.

By the last third of the 20th century, Towner's little book was out of print. Anyone who had a copy treated it like gold!

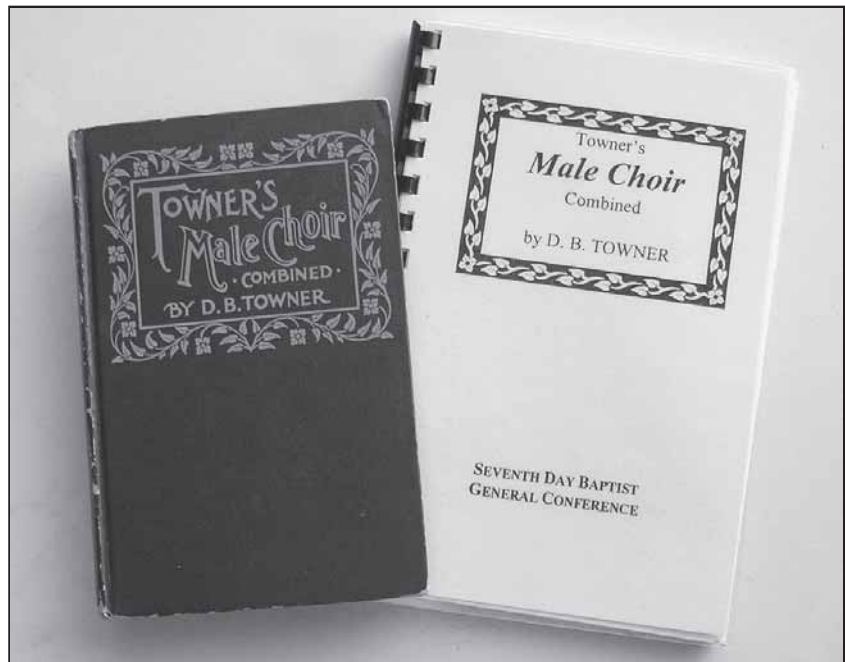
In 1996, the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society secured permission from the original pub-

lisher, Fleming H. Revell, to publish a new edition. That book can be purchased for \$5 by contacting the SDB Center at PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678. The book is spiral-bound and has slightly larger print that's helpful to old eyes.

Today, men's choruses "keep the beat going on" in Salem and Milton, and perhaps in other SDB churches.

Nowadays, quartets and choruses use music from a great variety of sources. Never before has there been such a wonderful array of music available to anyone who wants to get a group together to sing! Still, *Towner's* is a favorite, and the one most used by our men.

After more than a century since its publication, some of the songs in the book seem dated and quaint. Yet others are timeless and eternal as they deal with many aspects of Christian faith and life; songs such as "That Beautiful Land," "Secret Prayer,"



The Historical Society secured permission to reprint a new (and slightly larger) edition of the Towner's book.

and “Wonderful Peace.” They still ring in the ears and hearts of many of our people.

Every year at General Conference, between 20 and 50 men take part in the Men’s Chorus. The director is free to choose any music, but he’d better be aware that most of the men are counting on singing songs from Towner’s. How the rafters ring and the floor rumbles! Thanks be to God!! **SR**

Retired SDB pastor Paul Green continues to direct musical groups at Conference and at his home church in Milton, Wis.



This Men’s Chorus at a recent General Conference used the newly-printed Towner quartet books.



Daniel B. Towner
1850–1919

Towner (not SDB) wrote the music for over 2,000 hymns and Gospel songs.

Discovering your (musical) sense of purpose

by Lannette Calhoun, Milton, Wis.

“This Is My Story, This Is My Song”—but you may not like the way it sounds!

What would I like to see musically in church? People able to embrace the various tastes and gifts of each other.

I’ve been a church musician for over 35 years. As a result, I’ve been part of many conversations regarding the appropriateness of certain music during worship. It’s always important to know why you feel the way you do about something, so let me ask a few questions:

- Where did your musical preference come from?
- What do you listen to on a daily basis and why?
- Are you close-minded about someone else’s musical choices?

I challenge you to really think about your mindset and find someone to dialogue with about it. *Then*, be on the lookout for new ways to use music in your church.

What beginning piano students could play easy hymn duets with their teacher? What middle school trumpet player needs a chance

Encourage everyone in your church body to utilize their talents, no matter what they are.

to perform his solo/ensemble piece prior to a competition? Is your choir the only special-music provider? Do you ever sing hymns a cappella?

What dancer or visual artist needs a place to display their gifts? Who “hams it up” at the local community theater and could head up your church’s drama team?

For just a minute, think outside the “box” you’ve put yourself in concerning music, and read Ephesians 4:11-12. Replace “saint” with musician/artist/creative person, and what comes to mind? Hopefully, some really cool stuff!!

When our youngest offspring said that he wanted to play the drums, I found a good teacher and bought earplugs.

Aaron Copland’s father wanted him to become a lawyer because he thought no one could possibly make a living composing music. Play your favorite Copland CD and see what we would be missing if he had listened to his dad!

Are you still afraid to remove the top of your “box”? Maybe it’s *you* who needs to begin lessons on that instrument you’ve always wanted to play. I’ve never met anyone who wished they wouldn’t have taken piano lessons; only those who wish they had.


Encourage everyone in your church body to utilize their talents, no matter what they are. The “professionals” shouldn’t be the only ones with a baton in their hands, or seated at the piano.

What’s the worst thing that could happen if you begin to think differently? You stay where you are.

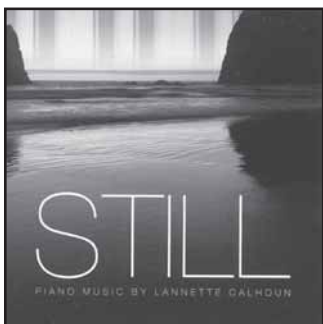
At best, you’re going to give a sense of purpose to people who might go elsewhere to find it if you don’t give it to them. You might even have to go as far as to say, “I see a gift in you. Would you be willing to share it?”

This is all about a comfort level. What’s yours?

Are you stuck in a “music rut”? Are you stubborn when it comes to accepting new things? Are you one of those people who needs to change and be willing to use the gift you’ve been given? Are you hiding it?

Don’t be discouraged. Stay focused and celebrate the little things of life—one beautiful note at a time. 

“STILL” One-hour CD



Original piano music by Lannette Calhoun.

\$15.00 each, or 2 for \$25.00 (postpaid)

Order by e-mail: glcalhoun@charter.net

Or send check to:

Lannette Calhoun
219 E. Madison Ave.
Milton, WI 53563

A portion of each sale will go to the SDB Denominational Budget.

Is time running out?

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be” (Luke 12:34).

The end of a year is a great time for giving.

When you make a year-end gift to help the Seventh Day Baptist Conference, you aren't just giving money. You are perpetuating your own values.

You're saying, "I see what you're doing for people and churches, and I want to make certain you keep on doing it. Your values are my values."

The end of the calendar year marks the time when many people think about making gifts to the work of Seventh Day Baptists here in North America.

If you itemize on your income tax returns, you're able to deduct those contributions. Then, after calculating your deductions and the resulting tax savings, you may discover that you can make an even larger gift than you thought possible.

Year-end giving...

- helps you to truly celebrate the joy of the Christmas season.
- helps you promote a fuller expression of your Christian faith.
- provides you with a year-end tax deduction if you itemize your tax return.
- allows you to deduct year-end gifts of cash, stocks, real estate, life insurance policies, cash values of paid-up policies.
- provides you with certain tax benefits related to gains or losses on your securities.
- lets you give back to God the firstfruits of the abundant bounty He has given you.

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’” (Matthew 25:21, NIV).



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

Denominational Dateline

December

- 3 Hebron, Pa.—Andrew Camenga
10 (To January 8th, 2007)
African Trip to Tanzania, Uganda, Liberia,
and Sierra Leone—Kirk Looper

January, 2007

- 5-8 Installation for Pastor Michael Spearl, Bradenton, Fla., Seventh Day Baptist Church—Gordon Lawton
7-10 North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF) Meetings, Atlanta, Ga.—Rob Appel

- 21 Seventh Day Baptist Board of Christian Education Committee Meeting, Alfred Station, N.Y.—Camenga
21 Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society Board of Managers Fourth Quarter Meeting, Westerly, R.I.—Looper
27-28 Seventh Day Baptist Memorial Fund Quarterly Meeting, Washington, D.C./Maryland—Morgan Shepard, Appel
27-28 Council on Ministry (COM) Annual Meeting, SDB Center, Janesville, Wis.—Lawton

Directing music— without a single lesson!

by Ben Calhoun

From King David on his harp to Eric Clapton on his, each generation has produced minstrels who create soundtracks to their movements, rebellion, and revival. Music influences culture, which influences artists, which influences music that influences culture, which...

However ordered, this circle of influence helps to pinpoint every generation. It's focused on the youth, but why do they hold that banner? And, more importantly, where will they wave it?

Perhaps an illustration will best, well... illustrate this. (This story is strictly fictional, and no association to any real "parties" is suggested. Well...)

At 13, a boy longed to beat his older (more handsome) brother in something—*anything*. Coaches and teachers would often compare the two, negating the younger boy's individuality.

Wise to this injustice, their parents sought a remedy. Yearning

No matter if you're a youth or a youth-maker, you have the choice to influence the next generation.

something his older (less hairy) brother never touched, the boy chose the drums.

Recognizing an opportunity to help their youngest child succeed, Mom and Dad (I mean, "the parents") promptly purchased a drum set. Their boy quickly found his niche, and they endured rock n' roll-like noise from their basement, garage, and church at all times of the day and night. The music wasn't soft and pretty; it was loud and raucous, with Mountain Dew-like energy.

With earplugs handy, the parents stoked the coals of their child's passion in a healthy and productive

way. The boy helped form a few bands and, in turn, encountered such life-changing qualities as independence, self-confidence, and individuality. He's now the favorite drummer of his older (more clean-shaven) brother.

That young boy's life was directed by a family that supported his desire, no matter how much their ears hurt.

What are *your* desires? What are *your* dreams?


Are you like a good night's rest for the dreamers, or are you more like a nightmare? Do you disregard ideas and preferences if they don't align with yours? Do you stifle creativity with your lack thereof? Are you willing to risk a little "ringing in the ears" now to hear the melodies of tomorrow?

No matter if you're a youth or a youth-maker, you have the choice to influence the next generation.

Music is often the language that young people use to communicate and to lead. It's like the "tongue" of their culture. It will move with or without you. The question is: Where will you direct it?



Ben Calhoun (second from left) in his "Stained Glass" musical outreach days. Ben's brother Josh (left), played the drums.

Ben Calhoun is Director of Church Development at Judson College in Elgin, Ill. 

Early SDB hymnwriters

by Oscar Burdick, researcher of SDB origins

Some of our early English Seventh Day Baptist pastors wrote hymns.

The first authors who come to mind are Joseph Stennett (1663-1713) and his grandson, Samuel Stennett (1727-1795). However, as Seventh Day Baptists were forming in the Commonwealth period (1649-60), two earlier SDB pastors wrote a few hymns.

In the second known version of his 1657 book, *The Seventh-Day Sabbath Sought Out*, Thomas Tillam has two hymns inserted between pages 112 and 113:

An Hymn Celebrating the Lords Sabbath

To magnifie thy Law great Lord,
Isa. 41.21
And make it honourable,
The Saints this day with one accord
Act. 2
Approach thy Holy Table. [etc.]

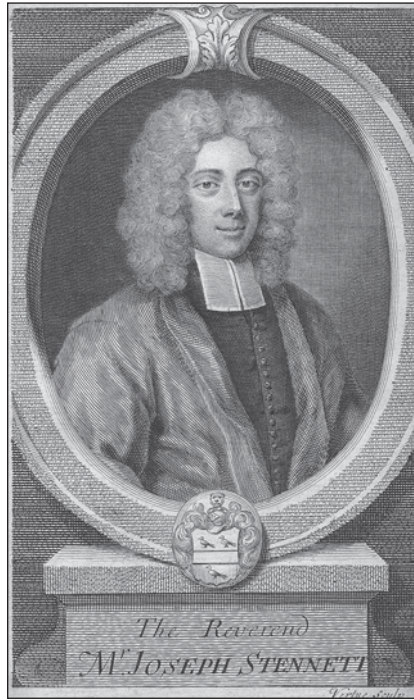
An Hymn In Honour of the Out-pouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Act. 2

Most sweet coelestial harmony,
Exo. 19
God's Law, Christ's spirit giv'n
[etc.]¹

Tillam also printed a number of hymns in his 1660 *The Temple of Lively Stones*.

Those hymns were published while he was the founding pastor of the SDB church at Colchester, Essex. Previous to this, he had been the Baptist pastor at Hexham, Northumberland, where he was in conflict with the Baptist church at Newcastle. The church report that "he did sing in publique at Hexham, David's Psalms...", to which he replied, "Twas a mercy we had that liberty."²

Tillam's friend, Christopher Pooley, an SDB pastor at Norwich,



Rev. Joseph Stennett
1663-1713

Norfolk, concluded his 1660 book, *Unwarranted Principles*, with a hymn.

(In 1667, Tillam and Pooley were disowned for taking on "circumcision and the Legal Ceremonies." Among the seven Sabbatarians who disowned them were Pastors Edward Stennet—father of Joseph Stennett—and John Belcher Sr.)³

In the 1690s, many Dissenter pastors were in a controversy about hymn singing. This included the SDB pastor Joseph Stennett (Pinner's Hall SDB Church, London, 1690-1713) and his friend John Piggott, who were for hymn singing.

Stennett published *Hymns in Commemoration... for the Holy Supper* in 1697, containing 37 hymns. This was expanded over several editions and printings to 50 hymns in 1709.

These have gradually disappeared from most hymnbooks. One was used


in the previous edition of the Christian Church Hymnal, Christian Worship. (Disciples of Christ have the Lord's Supper every Sunday.) It included "Lord, at Thy Table We Behold."⁴

Stennett published *Hymns Compos'd for the Celebration of the Holy Ordinance of Baptism* in 1712, followed by a second edition in 1722 (posthumous). Beside most every line of his hymns is a Bible reference. Three Sabbath poems are in Volume 4 of his *Works*. One of these is:

Another six-days-work is done;
Another Sabbath is begun...

In some Seventh Day Baptist circles, this is still in use as a hymn, but with only a few of the original 14 stanzas.

Samuel Stennett, D.D., was primarily pastor of the Little Wild Street Baptist Church in London. However, for over 20 years, he preached Sabbath mornings at his grandfather's church, then located at Cripplegate, London.

Stennett wrote a number of hymns,⁵ two of which are still in some hymnbooks: "Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned," and "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand." 

¹(London, 1757), copy at Regent's Park College, Oxford.

²Tillam, *A Christian Account of Some Speciall Passages or Providence... [1656 or 1657]*, 17. Only known copy is at the American Baptist Historical Society.

³*A Faithful Testimony Against the Teachers of Circumcision and the Legal Ceremonies. This was an appendix to Stennet's The Royal Law, 2d ed.*

⁴*Christian Worship*, (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1941), #464.

⁵*His Works*, 3 (London, 1824), 531-55.

Chaplain Johnson back in Afghanistan

by Jerry Johnson

“Hello” again to my SDB friends. I was able to see many of you at Conference in August during my R&R. It truly was a wonderful break! While home, I took each of our four boys on a special outing, and wife Carrie and I had a getaway to a bed and breakfast near Lowville [N.Y.].

Since returning to Afghanistan, life has not slowed down. Soon after arriving, our brigade was notified that one of our teams to the north had two soldiers killed by a massive suicide bombing near the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. I was “drafted” to go up there for six days of ministry and to conduct a memorial ceremony on September 14.

I also did a “9/11 Remembrance Service” at the very moment of the 5th anniversary of that terrorist attack. More than 150 soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and civilian workers gathered as I did a retrospective and led them in prayer for the fallen, as well as for our nation.

My regular travels have continued, with trips averaging two days a week when I am based out of Salerno. I spent 17 days in Jalalabad, Asadabad, Nanagalam, and the Korengal Valley, all to the north. All told, I have been away from my “home” about 60 percent of the time since returning to Afghanistan.

One of my biggest thrills was bap-

tizing a soldier at the Korengal Outpost. These infantrymen are the true heroes. While soldiers at the larger bases live in comparative comfort, these men have no running water,

I am thankful that I have a wife and four boys who have stayed strong during my absence.

showers, toilets, or heat for their tents. They continue to do so much with so little.

In early October, I accompanied my unit’s Civil Affairs Team to a supply drop for a girls’ school in Khowst, less than 15 minutes from Salerno. We handed out more than 1,400 lbs. of items donated by the Blue Star Mothers of Dayton, Ohio.

Prior to my last trip, I was able to present five wounded soldiers with “Quilts of Valor,” sent by women in the States. They wanted to honor those who have made major sacrifices for this mission. There are more opportunities to touch lives here than I could ever put down on paper!

At Salerno, I have been able to preach, as well as continue a weekly

Bible study and traditional services focusing on spiritual disciplines. While many soldiers are tired and claim they do not have time for church, everywhere I go there is a solid group that is hungry for God’s Word.


As we head toward the end of our deployment, we monitor soldiers who are at high risk for destructive behaviors once they get home. I will also be working on five marriage and family events scheduled for April and May. There will be unique challenges once we return to the U.S.

On a more exciting note, I am preparing a continuity file for my replacement, who should arrive by the first of February—if everything goes as planned.

I thank the Lord for giving me safety on my many travels throughout Afghanistan.

More than anything, I am thankful that I have a wife and four boys who have stayed strong and endured several major challenges during my absence. Many other soldiers share the same feelings.

We appreciate all the prayers and support from back home. In the days ahead, please pray for us as we begin preparations for another deployment—either back to Afghanistan or to Iraq.

The next time I write, I will be home! 



A number of used ammo cans formed the base for a creative bapistry in Afghanistan.



Sergeant Robby Myers testified of his growing faith. (Chaplain Johnson, right.)



A smiling Sergeant Myers came out of the water, “raised in the newness of life.”

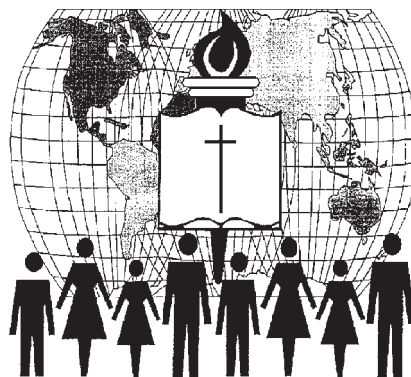
Seventh Day Baptist World Federation's Week of Prayer

As it has for the past 40 years, the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation is sponsoring the annual Week of Prayer. Booklets for the week of January 7-13, 2007, have been mailed to each World Federation Conference (and to each church in the USA and Canada).

We hope you will receive inspiration and spiritual food from the writings of Pastor Andrew Samuels. He has entitled his series of meditations, "How God Empowers His Church."

The next General Session of the World Federation will be held in August of 2008 in the United States. Now is the time to begin preparing for that meeting and for the travel of our World Federation delegates to the meetings in Wisconsin.

Would your church be willing to sponsor the expenses of one of those delegates? As the delegates plan their travel to the United States, they may be able to visit their sponsoring church while they are



here. Please consider prayerfully your contribution to this worthy cause.

If you would like to sponsor a particular delegate, please contact:

SDB World Federation

Luan Ellis, Treasurer

614 Pleasant Valley Rd.

Alfred Station, NY 14803 USA

(Contributions may be sent to the same address.)

The World Federation strives to increase communication among Seventh Day Baptist groups throughout the world, and to provide fellowship and support through periodic meetings of representatives. Prayers are requested for the 2008 meeting and for smooth procedures for the delegates to enter the United States. With world conditions as they are, we are hopeful that no one will be denied a visa to visit us.

Thank you for your contributions and prayers for this worldwide organization of Seventh Day Baptist believers. *SR*

The SDB World Federation consists of:

General Secretary Calvin Babcock
President Joe Samuels, USA/Canada

Vice Presidents:

Africa

James Siwani

Asia

Al B. Paypa

Caribbean

Ewart Caesar

Europe

Jan Lek

North America

Andy Samuels

South America

Luciano de

Moura

South Pacific

Gabe Bejjani

(interim)

2007 Week of Prayer

"How God
Empowers
His Church"

Please join SDBs worldwide
in prayer during the week
of January 7-13.

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Early SDB hymnwriters (<i>Oscar Burdick</i>)	Dec.	Serving in a hostile environment—no matter where you are (<i>Morgan Shepard</i>)	April
Elmo FitzRandolph: A son's personal chronicles (<i>John FitzRandolph</i>)	Oct.	Thanksgiving Art Contest results	Nov.
Exploring the Sabbath (<i>Linda Greene</i>)	Jan.-Feb.	Thanksgiving thoughts (<i>Nick Kersten</i>)	Nov.
"Extreme Makeover" (of the heart) (<i>Mayola Warner</i>)	July-Aug.	The fight for freedom (<i>Michael Graves</i>)	April
Evangelistic outreach in the Great Northwest (<i>Ron Elston</i>)	Jan.	The price of freedom (<i>Paul Davis</i>)	April
Faith vs. Regret (<i>Micayla Neher</i>)	June	The rests in life (<i>Diann Greene</i>)	July-Aug.
Fasting must be done 'unto God' (<i>Emily Kandel</i>)	Sept.	The soul set free (<i>Paul Manuel</i>)	March, April, June, July-Aug., Oct.
Finding hidden meanings (<i>Micayla Neher</i>)	June	Time to draw closer (<i>Robert Van Horn</i>)	May
Grandview sponsored by Seattle (<i>Ron Elston</i>)	Jan.	Towner's still in tune (<i>J. Paul Green</i>)	Dec.
His flock moves to Afghanistan (<i>Jerry Johnson</i>)	April	2006 Robe recipient	Nov.
		Update from Salerno (<i>Jerry Johnson</i>)	May
		Utilizing our gifts for the Lord (<i>Ron Elston</i>)	Jan.
		What is Poieo? (<i>Jessica Ryall</i>)	May
		'Yunz' are invited! (<i>Terry Durst</i>)	July-Aug.

Local news and events

Afghanistan	May, Oct., Dec.	Hebron, PA	March	Paint Rock, AL	Jan., Nov.
Alfred Station, NY	May, June	Iraq	Feb.	Pataskala, OH	March
Berlin, NY	Jan., July-Aug.	Miami, FL	July-Aug.	Plainfield, NJ	Oct.
Bradenton, FL	Dec.	New Auburn, WI	Nov.	Portland, OR	March
Chatawa, MS	July-Aug.	Nigeria	Feb.	Shiloh, NJ	May, June
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Feb., Nov.	North Loup, NE	July-Aug.	Stonefort, IL	Sept.
		Pacific Pines Camp	March	Yearly Meeting	Dec.



A new song

I keep learning new things about my mother. Recently, I learned that she likes surprises, and always has.

It's the same with me.

When I was a youngster, I'd get hand-me-down clothes. It didn't bother me that some of my "new" outfits were pre-used clothing, boxed up and lovingly presented to the preacher's family. The outfits were new to me, and I wore them with a smile.

It's the same with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has been around since the beginning of time, but He was "new" to me when I was a young housewife and mother in my early 20s. The difference was, He didn't come in a box. Instead, He took me *out* of a box.

In August of 1971, SDB pastor and evangelist Mynor Soper asked me if I would share my Christian testimony the following year at General Conference. Trusting that God would give me something to say, I replied, "Yes."

Soon afterwards, my husband's work moved us away from our small church family—a congregation that really needed us—to a larger church that already had Youth Group leaders. I became depressed and soon questioned my faith. *Aren't Christians supposed to be joyful?* I thought.

I was reading the Bible every day, as well as books by Christian authors. Without knowing it, my theme verse became, "If you seek me with your whole heart, you will find me" (*Jeremiah 29:13, my paraphrase*).

I felt caged by guilt.

One Sabbath morning, when our cat ruined my new stockings

by putting a run in them, I tossed him across the kitchen floor. I immediately felt guilty.

My husband was my only close friend. I wouldn't confide in others when I was having a rough day, because I wanted to be a good example of a Christian. I still thought Christians weren't supposed to have problems.

During this time, another theme verse for me could have been Romans 7:24. Utterly frustrated, Paul finally asked, "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?"

I could identify with Paul all through these verses—until I reached verse 25: "Thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." I did not know or feel that victory.

One evening, I was reading Pat Boone's book, *A New Song*. He had written about the Holy Spirit's effect on everyone in his family, except daughter Debbie. She felt estranged.

When I got to the part about Debbie asking for the Holy Spirit, I set the book down and prayed, "God, will You please give me Your Holy Spirit?" Then, remembering an elder's advice to thank God when you ask Him for something, I added, "Thank You."

There was no lightning strike, and God didn't speak to me in an audible voice; in fact, nothing emotional happened.

I got off my knees and walked into my bedroom. *What happens the next time I have a sinful thought?* I wondered.

I figured it must have been God Who gave me the proper response to that query: "Devil, leave me alone. I have God's Holy Spirit. He promised." Immediately, I recalled Luke 11:13—

"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (NIV).

The next morning, I sensed a deep knowing that God loves me just the way I am. I was free—out of my self-made box. I didn't have to try so hard to be a good example; I could simply be me.

Suddenly, it didn't matter whether anybody else loved me, because I knew God did. Something else was also noticeably new: When I read the Bible and sang hymns, the words came alive. It felt as if I was holding Jesus' hand.

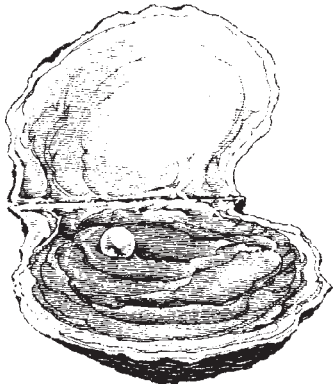
Some of the lessons I've learned since then have been hard-caught, but God has been faithful and loving through all of my struggles.

Like my mother, I like surprises—especially ones that God pulls off! When we delight ourselves in Him, He grants us our heart's desires (Psalm 37:4).

I once asked some students to name a person they'd like to meet, either from the past or present. My own answer was "Debbie Boone."

Three years ago—through an amazing, well-orchestrated series of events that had to be God's doing—I did meet Debbie. I had the opportunity to tell her my story, and I even had my picture taken with her. We shed tears of thanksgiving for the One who gave both of us a new song. **SR**

*Note: If you would like to share your testimony or song—or borrow my copy of *A New Song*—call me at: (304) 884-8897.*



Treasures from an old pulpit Bible

The old pulpit Bible from the Rock River Seventh Day Baptist Church rests in the archives of the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society. That church was founded in Wisconsin in 1856 and later joined in forming the Milton Junction (Wis.) SDB Church in 1875.

Not excessively large, the Bible measures 9 x 12 x 3 inches. It contains both the Old and New Testaments, along with the Apocrypha from the King James translation of 1611.

The title page quoting Revelation 22:18 caught my attention: “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.”

Yet I have never seen another Bible with such a mass of additional material and helps! It has indexes, concordances, and considerable miscellaneous material to aid in study and interpretation.

In addition to its 862 pages of text (572 covering the Old Testament, 116 for the Apocrypha, and 173 for the New Testament), this old pulpit Bible contains:

- 1) An opening section briefly stating the contents of each chapter in both the Old and New Testaments.
- 2) Eight pages of an “Index of the Most Remarkable Passages” in the Bible.
- 3) A page describing Judea, Palestine, and the Holy Land.
- 4) A Table of Kindred and Affinity,

“Wherein whosoever are related, are forbidden in Scripture and our laws to marry together.” This section describes 30 instances where a man may not marry a specific relative, with a like number of examples for women.

[As I read this, I realized that I had violated this edict. Following my mother’s death, I performed the ceremony uniting my dad and my mother’s sister. One of these old edicts says that a man cannot marry his wife’s sister. There’s no mention of “same-sex” marriages.]

- 5) A table of distances, surfaces, weights, and coins.
- 6) An Alphabetic Table of the Proper Names in the Old and New Testaments, with the meaning or significance of the words in their original languages (22 columns).
- 7) A Concordance of the Old and New Testaments (44 pages of 220 columns).
- 8) The Psalms of David in meter. This Bible lists each of the 150 Psalms in both rhyme and common meter (8.6.8.6.), so that they can be sung to the tunes of such familiar hymns as:
• *O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing;*
• *O God Our Help in Ages Past;*
• *Jesus the Very Thought of Thee;*
• *In Christ There Is No East or West.*

Thus the familiar 23rd Psalm could be sung in this poetic expression:

The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not

want—he makes me down to lie
In pastures green, he leadeth me—
the quiet waters by;
My soul he doth restore again—
and me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness—
ev’n for his own name sake.
Yea, though I walk in death’s dark
vale yet will I fear no ill;
For thou art with me, and thy
rod—and staff me comfort still.
My table thou hast furnished—
in presence of my foes:
My head thou dost with oil anoint—
and my cup overflows.
Goodness and mercy all my life—
shall surely follow me;
And in God’s house forevermore—
my dwelling place shall be.

Similarly, Psalm 121 might be sung in the same metric pattern:
I to the hills will lift my eyes—
from whence doth come my aid.
My safety cometh from the Lord—
who heaven and earth hath made.
Thy foot he’ll not let slide nor will—
He slumber that thee keeps;
Behold he that keepeth Israel—
He slumbers not nor sleeps;
The Lord thee keeps, the Lord
thy shade—on thy right hand
doth stay:
The moon by night thee shall not
smite—nor yet the sun by day.
The Lord shall keep thy soul; he
shall—Preserve thee from all ill.
Henceforth thy going out and in—
God keep forever will.

Even the 119th Psalm—with all of its 22 stanzas of eight verses, following the Hebrew alphabet from *Aleph* to *Taw*—is similarly set in metrical pattern. It could be sung in praise to God and His Holy Word, but probably not in a typical Sabbath morning chorus rendition, followed by a lengthy prayer and sermon. **SR**



Year-end suggestions

by Morgan Shepard

The following can help you make wise financial decisions, enabling you to end 2006 on a high note while preparing for the years to come.

“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” (Matthew 22:21, NIV). In other words, taxes and tithes.

While many of us don’t think about taxes until April 15, the decisions we make in December will affect our 2006 taxes.

Tithes, of course, are tax deductible. But that’s not why we should give to our church. God has graciously provided for us during this past year, so we should be more than willing to give back a tenth—especially since everything we have is His in the first place. (See Leviticus 27:30, NIV.)

Start your giving with your local church. Then, if you want to do more, consider the following:

529 College Savings Plans

•You can contribute up to \$12,000 (\$24,000 for married couples) annually without gift-tax consequences. Under a special election, you can invest up to \$60,000 (\$120,000 for married couples) at one time by accelerating five years’ worth of investments.

•*Anyone can contribute to a 529 Plan!* Earnings and withdraw-

als are not subject to federal taxes when used for higher education. Some states even allow state tax deductions on contributions! This is a good opportunity for grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and friends to contribute to a child’s education.

•In 2003, the SDB Memorial Fund established 529 Plans for the children of qualifying SDB pastors. Check to see if your pastor is participating in this plan, or any 529 College Savings Plan. Does your pastor have a new child? They can start a 529 Plan today! An education is a gift that keeps giving.

•Need more information on planning for college? Check out www.savingforcollege.com or talk with your financial advisor.

SDB Boards and Agencies

The chart below shows the current giving status for all of our Boards and Agencies as of October ’06 (most current info available). As you can see, everyone can use your help. All have important ministries that affect every Seventh Day Baptist’s commission to spread God’s message throughout the world.

Let’s be thankful for all God has provided in 2006. Malachi 3:10 reminds us, “ ‘Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it’ ” (NIV). **SR**

Total Agency Giving (Designated & Undesignated)			
Agency	2006 Goal	Giving to Date (Jan.-Oct.)	% of Goal
BCE	60,844.00	38,887.60	63.91%
BOF	13,200.00	11,000.00	93.33%
COM	73,744.00	47,119.04	63.90%
CSA	5,000.00	2,588.53	51.77%
EAF	5,137.00	3,144.77	61.22%
GS	215,769.00	143,358.68	66.44%
HS	–	450.00	–
MS	71,000.00	50,485.47	71.11%
TCC	60,875.00	48,162.57	79.12%
WS	34,300.00	23,907.86	69.70%
PROP	–	4,153.00	–
Sub Total	\$539,869.00	\$373,257.52	69.14%



Stewards are not owners

Stewardship is not about fundraising. Do you find that hard to believe?

I've watched churches in financial crises bring the topic of Stewardship to the fore of their education and preaching ministries. I've heard about Christian groups that run "Stewardship Campaigns" as little more than high-pressure, drenched-in-guilt pledge drives. So, my experience with the word is at odds with the idea that stewardship is not about fundraising.

Experience notwithstanding, the statement that "stewardship is not fundraising" remains true. And it *never was* supposed to be about fundraising!

Fundraising is all about getting you to give your money to my cause.

When I strive to raise money, my purpose in interacting with you is to end up with something I did not have before. In other words, I want to use you for what you can do for me.

The temptation to use others for what they have is always present in fundraising. In Christian circles, we'll sometimes notice the temptation but avoid the sin that flows from it. At other times, we won't notice the temptation, and we will baptize our language to disguise what we are doing. It is here where the words "tithe" and "stewardship" actually seduce, allowing Christians to mean, "Give your money to my cause" without the phrase ever crossing their lips, pens, or printers.

When this happens, talk of stewardship becomes little more than another technique for separating people from their money. But this is not what stewardship is all about.

People talk about stewardship in terms of time, treasure, and talent. Some people build on this idea and shape stewardship seminars around establishing and maintaining the good habits that are necessary to manage time, save money, strengthen friendships, and do good in many other ways.

These are exciting things to learn, and they provide us with information and encouragement to do a better job of controlling life and reducing waste. Yet, even here, a problem exists.

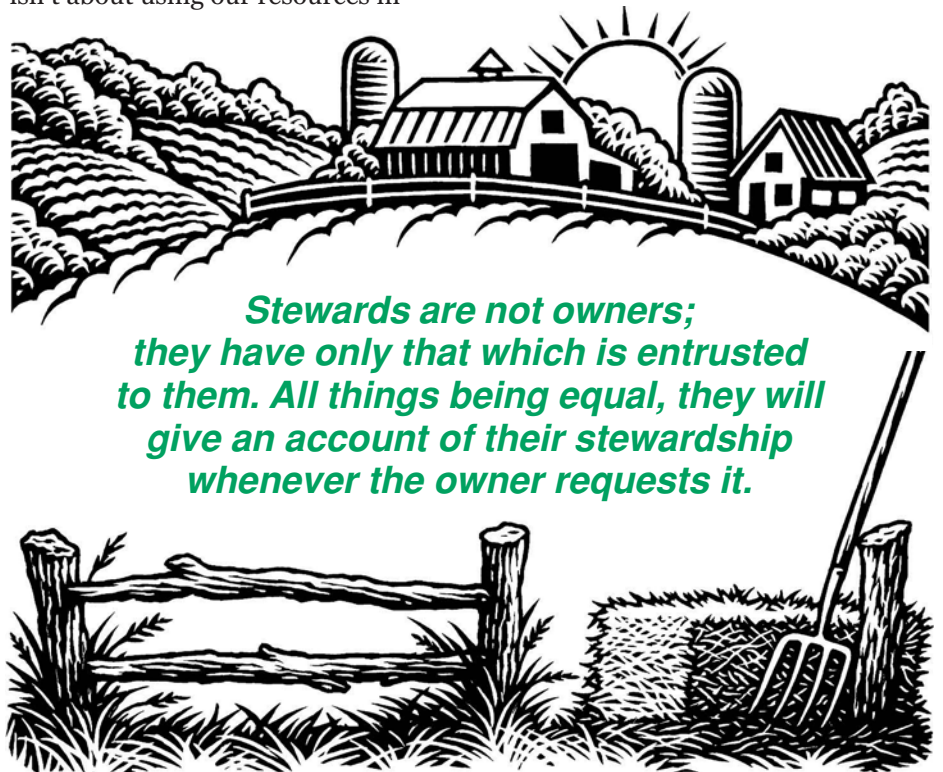
This approach to stewardship encourages us to use our resources in better ways, but stewardship isn't about using our resources in

good ways. Stewardship is actually about *being a steward*.

The first thing we need to remember about stewards is that they take care of others' "stuff." Stewards are not owners; they have only that which is entrusted to them. All things being equal, they will give an account of their stewardship whenever the owner requests it.

Stewardship is not a call to give up your money—or your time and talent. For Christians, the call to stewardship is a call to live life as a steward, relinquishing false claims of ownership and seeing all resources as belonging to another.

Have you done this? Or are you still living as an owner? *SR*



***Stewards are not owners;
they have only that which is entrusted
to them. All things being equal, they will
give an account of their stewardship
whenever the owner requests it.***



A number of years ago, we were surprised when Mr. Kwabena Opoku e-mailed us about a newly-organized SDB Conference in Sierra Leone, West Africa.

They started out with three churches and several interested groups. It was wonderful news, and we were glad to get acquainted with the leaders—as well as you can over the Internet.

It wasn't long before we received word of the increased activities of the churches, especially regarding education. Each church agreed to build a school, but the large project (and cost) quickly got out of hand. They requested help from the Seventh Day Baptist Conference of USA and Canada, which responded by sending funds to assist in construction, equipment, and supplies.

Our Sierra Leone brethren continue to have difficulties, including the inability to pay teachers' salaries. Many teachers agreed to work with-



Some of the school students and staff in Sierra Leone.

half of whom are orphans because of the rebel war. Unfortunately, competition comes from other missionary schools in the vicinity—including the S.L.C. primary school, assisted by the Anglican Diocese; and the Roman Catholic and Islamic primary schools. The failure of an SDB school would be a great disappointment.

As part of their overall effort, the SDB Mission in Sierra Leone has established churches with 50 or more members. Each needs hymnals, Bibles, study materials, and *Helping Hand* Sabbath School books.

The president of the SDB Conference in Sierra Leone—Pastor Francis E. Mattia—recently conducted a seminar, inviting many Islamic scholars. At the end of the meetings, over 15 Muslims converted to Christianity and became members of the Seventh Day Baptist Church.

These types of gatherings could take place more often if equipment and resources were more readily available. Funds are needed for food, water, and the published materials that accompany the seminars.

We pray that you will be led to help those who are working in the churches and school in Sierra Leone. Teachers are paid \$50 a month, which doesn't go far with the high cost of living and the requirement that they dress appropriately in the classroom.

We also pray that the churches will be able to pay their teachers so that the school can continue. **SR**

We need to remember that the orphans need more than just an education. They also require food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance.

out pay until adequate funds were raised, but apparently the churches were unable to raise enough money to cover the back pay.

Many of the children attend school without paying anything, and the rest come from families with very limited resources. As a result, the schools receive little income and desperately need money to pay their teachers and staff.

The school presently has a registered enrollment of 241 students,

Since many of the children in the SDB school are orphans, we need to remember that they need more than just an education. They also require food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance.

Some of the teachers live in neighboring villages five miles from the school, having to walk to their classes during the rainy season with no protective rainwear. Thus, they would be grateful for help in purchasing bicycles, as well as a raise in salary.



the BEACON

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

December 2006

Gifts

(A Christmas playlet from another generation)

by Juanita Ogden

(From the Children's Page, December 1976 SR)

Mother: "Children, how about looking at this new Christmas catalog that just came?"

Danette: "Oh, goody! I bet it has a lot of pretty things in it!"

Sharon: "Yes, and I can show mother what I want."

David: "Turn to the bicycles first, Mother."

Mother: "You know, children, that if we think only of ourselves at this season of the year, Old Man Selfishness can take over in our lives and make us very unhappy people as well as disagreeable to others. Now, do you want to be like that?"

Danette: "I don't want to be like that, Mother."

Mother: "I know that all of you want to be unselfish and follow the example of Jesus."

Sharon: "Mother, where is Jesus now?"

Danette: "He isn't a baby now, is He, Mother?"

Mother: "No, He became a grown man and went back to heaven from where He came. You remember the story in the Bible about how wicked men killed Him, don't you?"

Sharon: "I remember that story, Mother."

Danette: "So do I."

David: "Me, too. There are lots of pretty things in this catalog for a baby."

Sharon: "Don't you think it would have been nice to have taken Baby Jesus a present when He was on earth, Mother?"

Mother: "Yes, it would have been wonderful, all right. But, do you know something? We can still give a gift to Jesus here in December 1976."

All the

children: "We can?"

Mother: "Yes, we can honor Him with gifts any time we choose. In fact, there is something in the

Bible that is most interesting about that very thing. Will you bring me my Bible, Sharon?"

Sharon: "Of course, Mother. Here you are."

Mother: "Let's see. Here it is... Matt. 25:40. *Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Do you understand this Scripture? That when we do something for others we are really giving a gift to Jesus?"

David: "Do you mean that if I give some of my toys to a little boy who doesn't have any, that Jesus would like it just as much as if I handed it to Him?"

Mother: "That's right, and I'm happy to know you understand it, son."

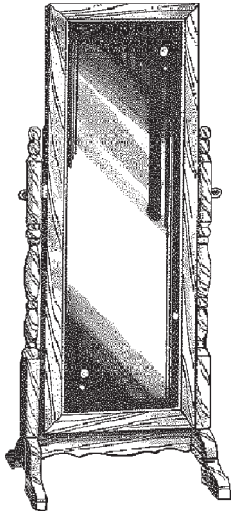
Sharon: "When we took some food over to the Brown's last night, was that the same as giving Jesus a meal?"

Mother: "Yes. I'm proud of all of you! And you know why, I'm sure."

All the

children: "Yes, yes, Mother... we know what it means."

Mother: "I'm happy—and I know Jesus must be, too! Here's something you may never have thought about before. You see, children, it's possible to honor Jesus all year long. None of us should wait until Christmas to celebrate the Christmas season. Let's remember that every day someone may need our help and friendship. What a wonderful world if we treated each other with the same love and friendly concern all through the year as we do at Christmas!" **SR**



Reflections

by Leanne Lippincott-Wuerthele

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

Oh, for a simple orange

The older I get, the span between New Year's and the following Christmas is getting shorter and shorter. Well, I've discovered that the span *is* getting shorter!

When I was a youngster (about a million years ago), December 1st marked the beginning of celebrating Christ's birth.

Today, many people have their Yuletide lights up *and lit* in early November, and most stores put out their holiday merchandise and decorations as early as September. (I have difficulty getting into the Christmas spirit when I see a pumpkin resting next to a crèche, with the infant Jesus hidden under a witch's broom.)

I enjoy everything about Christmas—the candlelight Christmas Eve service at my church; the beautiful Christmas songs on the radio; caroling on the doorsteps of shut-ins; eating no-calorie Christmas cookies and candy; watching my grandchildren almost burst with anticipation; decorating every square inch of our house with candles; trying to avoid burning down our house; trying not to incinerate Christmas dinner.

I love hearing the elderly reminisce about *their* childhood Christmases. They tell of riding in sleighs to their grandparents' homes, chopping down evergreens and decorating them with strings of popcorn, and receiving homemade rag dolls or wooden toys carved by loving hands.

Many "senior saints" get a special twinkle in their eyes when they talk

about one of their favorite Christmas gifts as children: An orange they could call their very own.

For years, the offspring of Leta Stebbins (my late husband's grandmother) thought that she loved to eat orange peel. Only years later did they realize that "Mother" chewed the peels so that she could have a hint of citrus without biting into one of her children's precious oranges.

Most days, I enjoy living in our modern society. But a part of me longs for those simpler (and often harder!) times. Times when there were no televisions, video games, computers, cell phones, and battery-operated books that read themselves.

As I age, I'm becoming more and more aware of the simple but true joys of the Christmas season.

Number one, of course, is the joy and privilege of celebrating our Savior's birth. (Yes, I know that Jesus really wasn't born on December 25th, and I realize that the Magi's camels didn't plow through snowbanks on their long journey to Bethlehem.)

I've come to realize that the real joy of Christmas doesn't lie in shopping and gift-giving—although that's fun. (At least, for women.) It also doesn't rest in stuffing ourselves with stuffing until we explode, or falling asleep

in front of the TV after dinner.

Real joy comes from spending time with loved ones during the holidays. This includes friends, immediate family members, close or distant relatives, even co-workers and fellow church members.

Christmas is all about acknowledging, accepting, and celebrating Christ's birth, and then giving, and loving, and sharing. This sharing includes the material as well as the spiritual.

When you bake those pumpkin pies this December, make a few extra to give to neighbors.

When you buy that restaurant gift card, purchase an extra one and give it to the widow down the block. Then offer to join her at the restaurant.

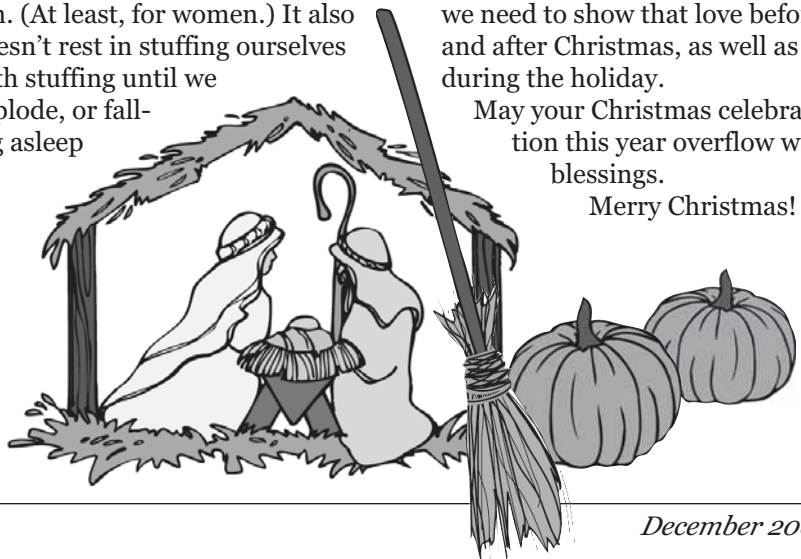
Invite that lonely widower at church to share in your sumptuous holiday dinner. And be sure to send some leftovers home with him. (Your family will be more than grateful.)

When greeting strangers, say "Merry Christmas" like you really mean it, from the heart.

The ways we can show God's mercy and love—and be His hands and feet on earth—is endless. And we need to show that love before and after Christmas, as well as during the holiday.

May your Christmas celebration this year overflow with blessings.

Merry Christmas! **SR**



tell the truth ... the truth

SDB General Conference July 29 – August 4, 2007
George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon



The President's Page
by Ruth Burdick

That baby was Divine



God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. ...The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

In certain churches in America today, Jesus is said to be a “good teacher” or “a man whose example we should follow.” But

nothing is said about his divinity.

In some churches, Mary seems more elevated than her son. This gives false testimony about Jesus and disregards his power and authority. It is to see him as something other than our Savior—the Only Savior of the world.

Because Christ is divine, he is the only one who can intervene and save us from our sins through the shedding of his blood. This is an essential truth that needs to be taught and preached. Salvation can only come from the Lord God Almighty.

As we come to the wondrous time of spiritual celebration of Jesus’ first coming, let us worship him in spirit and in truth.

How awesome it is that our Holy God became a man to enable us to identify with him, see our sinful nature, and receive his salvation through the shedding of his blood! “Jesus Christ is Divine.” This is our third daily theme for Conference 2007.

In Luke 1:30-35, the angel Gabriel said to Mary, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with

In Exodus 3:14, God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” In John 8:58, Jesus himself said, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am!”

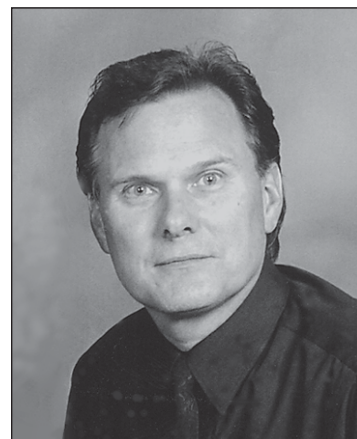
In John 1:1-2, 17-18, John testified about Jesus saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”

We must not let the influence of the world dictate our testimony about Jesus. Let us proclaim him as divine and eternal.

Let us enjoy the season that celebrates his birth. Let us claim him as Savior! **SR**

Daily Themes for Conference 2007

- God’s Word is Truth
- God is Sovereign
- Christ is Divine
- The Holy Spirit Indwells
- The Lost are Really Lost
- Worship God in Spirit and Truth



by Executive Director
Rob Appel

I have a dream

On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a speech in which he proclaimed, "I have a dream." That talk gave birth to a vision that changed a people and a nation.

Dr. King's famous speech is a dramatic example of how a compelling vision for the future can generate power. A clear vision is essential if an organization is to be effective in their united tasks.

So, what is a vision and how do Seventh Day Baptists get one?

One definition of vision is "a mental image." A vision is a statement of what we want to become. It should prompt SDBs to form an alliance and help us feel united, excited, and part of a grander cause. A vision should stretch our Conference's capabilities, giving shape and direction to our future ministries.

A vision is a guiding image of success that contributes to the total cause. The wording should conjure up a similar picture for each Conference member, describing the finished work—the ultimate goal—that we can accomplish together.

A vision should require Conference members to stretch their collective expectations, aspirations, and performance.

How a vision is used

A vision is an important guide to implementing new ministries

and a measuring stick for future collective work. Any new ministry would need to follow the guidelines of the Conference's vision.

"Why does our organization exist?" Our mission statement answers that question:

The Seventh Day Baptist General Conference unites, encourages, and equips local Seventh Day Baptist churches in their endeavors to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).

However, a vision is more encompassing than this. It also answers the question, "What will success look like five years, 10 years from now?" It is this unified image of a goal that really motivates us to pursue this work together.

Creating a vision

Our vision statement should be realistic, credible, well articulated, and easy to understand. It also must be appropriate to our Mission Statement, ambitious in its goals, and fluid—always ready to be changed if necessary.

Our vision for SDBs should unite our Conference's energies, and guide our current and future actions. In short, our vision should challenge and inspire us to achieve our mission.

Creating a vision begins with—and relies heavily on—intuition

and dreaming. This process includes brainstorming to decide what we want to accomplish in the future and then gathering information on how to achieve it together. We list and discuss the goals that we share in pursuing our common vision.

I have a dream

If I can be so bold as to alter Dr. King's speech...

Even though we face difficulties today and tomorrow, I still have a dream; one deeply rooted in Seventh Day Baptist values.

I have a dream that one day this Conference will rise up.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low; the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith of the Seventh Day Baptist people.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to work together, pray together, and struggle together—knowing that we will be doing God's work!

I have a *dream* today! **SR**

See my "Grapevine" news inside the front cover.

End of an era—Yearly Meeting disbands

by Donna S. Bond

“If we walk in the light... we have fellowship with one another” (1 John 1:7).

Yearly Meeting, often considered the forerunner to our General Conference, met in Shiloh, N.J., on October 20-21, 2006, for its 254th session.

While the youth gathered for an overnight stay at Jersey Oaks Camp, Phil Bond and Pastor Mel Stephan led the Friday evening congregation in worship and Bible study.

Dennis Coleman, a relatively new member of the Shiloh church, delivered the Sabbath morning message, “Fellowship of Believers.” Following Sabbath School and a roast beef dinner, Yvonne Stephan shared her story-telling talent as Dorcas, the woman raised from the dead.

Jan Bond spearheaded a fun and exciting Music Olympics, with hymn titles suggesting various stunts and contests.

We closed the session with a fellowship circle, singing “We Are One in the Bond of Love.” The annual business meeting followed an evening meal of pizza.

While the above-listed activities were well executed, the business meeting was what was newsworthy.

Prior to the meeting, a vote was taken in each of the eight member




While the decision to disband was made by the churches, these delegates were at the October 21 business meeting to make the decision official. (Delegates were from Shiloh unless specified otherwise.) Front row: Nancy Davis, Yvonne Stephan, Paul Greene (Berlin), Geri Greene (Berlin), Joanna Bond (Marlboro), Jan Bond, Sharon Campbell, Sandy Layton, and Valerie Probasco with Liam. Back row: Richard Bidwell, Allen Davis, Mel Stephan, Don Chroniger, Chris Bond (Marlboro), Phil Bond, Ron Campbell, Charlotte Chroniger, and Owen Probasco.

churches in New Jersey, eastern New York, eastern Pennsylvania, and Maryland. A report of their individual actions resulted in Yearly Meeting being disbanded, with remaining treasury funds to be turned over to Eastern Association.

This certainly was not the first time that the dissolution of Yearly Meeting had been discussed. In his book, *Choosing People: A History of Seventh Day Baptists*, Don Sanford refers to similar discussions among New England SDB churches as early as 1762 (see page 146).

Today, some viewed Yearly Meeting as “just one more thing to do.” Yet, we feel sad when a chance to fellowship with like-believers no longer exists.

It’s possible that the need for this gathering has run its course. Only time will tell whether we’ll truly miss it.

Perhaps we can take the energy that we usually put into hosting and traveling for Yearly Meeting, and channel it into other programs that benefit “the least of these, My brethren.” 

Bradenton welcomes new pastor

by Kim Merchant


On November 1, 2006, Michael Spearl began his pastorate at the Bradenton, Fla., Seventh Day Baptist Church. He became an SDB while attending the Bradenton church, so it is fitting that he begin his pastoral career here.

In the intervening years, Michael was an active member of the Daytona

Beach, Fla., SDB Church. Most recently, he served as a licentiate, deacon, and the church’s president. In his licentiate role, he helped fill the Bradenton pulpit after the retirement of Rev. S. Kenneth Davis.

Currently completing his first semester of seminary, Michael brings boundless energy and enthusiasm

to his new job. He is also nurturing a budding ministry in his wife’s hometown in the Philippines.

The Bradenton church will hold Michael’s installation service during the morning worship service on January 6, 2007. As on any Sabbath, but particularly on this special occasion, we invite you to join us. 

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New members

**Alle-Kiski Valley
Freepport, PA**
(Branch of Salemville)
Raymond A.P. Mialki, pastor
Joined after baptism
Gina L. Deyo

**Remembrance SDB
Fort Worth, TX**
(Branch of Houston)
Richard "Bill" Burks, pastor
Joined after testimony
Bill Burks
Cynthia Burks
Nina Creel
Jim Manly
Jenifer Osborn
Holly Pontier
Jon Walker

Births

Martin.—A son, Alexander Winston Martin, was born to Robin and Gary Martin Jr. of Salem, WV, on November 28, 2005.

Penfold.— A daughter, Trinity Nicolette Penfold, was born to Adam and Marie (Martin) Penfold of Salem, WV, on June 12, 2006.

Hibbard.— A daughter, Annalia Noelle Hibbard, was born to Justin and Karlene (Neher) Hibbard of Millersville, MD, on September 12, 2006.

Crouch.—A son, Joseph Kendel Crouch, was born to Rick and Grace (Camenga) Crouch of Palatka, FL, on November 13, 2006.

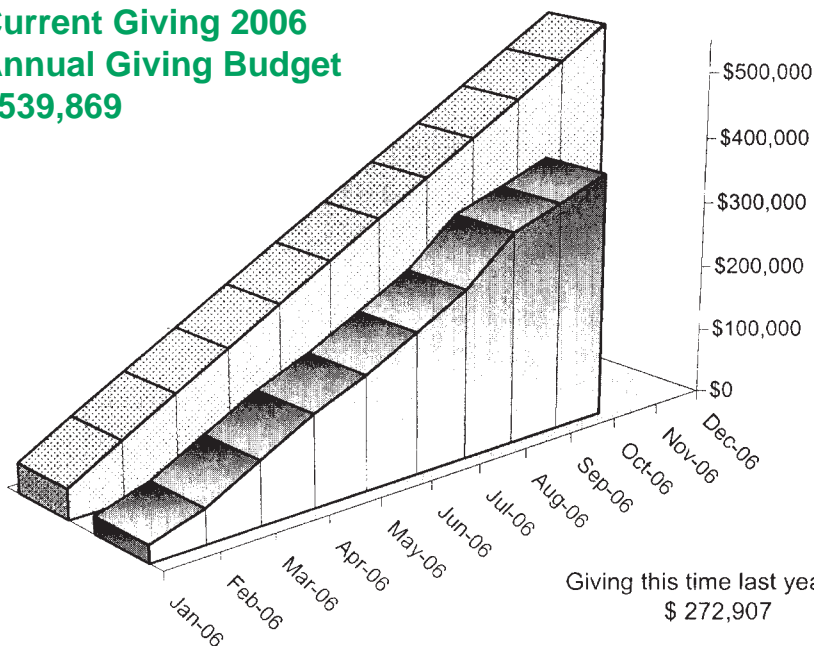
Marriages

Meathrell - Talerico.—Charles Richard Meathrell and Jessica M. Talerico were united in marriage on January 14, 2006, at the First United Methodist Church in Clarksburg, WV, with Rev. D. Scott Smith officiating.

Calise - Joly.—Matthew Francis Calise and Tiffany Monique Joly were united in marriage on August 12, 2006, at Shrine Mont in Orkney Springs, VA. Rev. Ellis Bowerfield officiated, assisted by Rev. Dr. Dale D. Thorngate.

Solomon - Davis.—Nicholas Solomon and Lydia Jean Davis were united in marriage on September 9, 2006, in the Salem (WV) Seventh Day Baptist Church, with Rev. D. Scott Smith officiating.

Current Giving 2006 Annual Giving Budget \$539,869

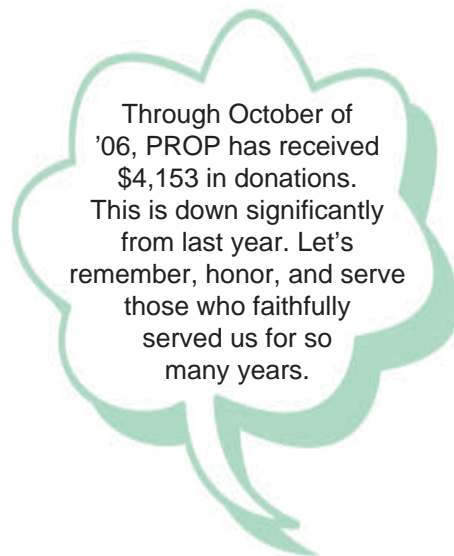


Giving this time last year . . .
\$ 272,907

	Month - Oct '06	Year To Date
Budgeted	\$ 44,990	\$ 449,891
Actual	\$ 28,031	\$ 370,929
Difference	\$ (16,959)	\$ (78,962)
% of Budget	62%	82%

PROP Giving	
Oct '06	\$ 777
Year To Date	\$ 4,153

Morgan Shepard, Treasurer



Obituaries

Millar.—Arthur B. Millar, 85, of Battle Creek, Mich., died on August 20, 2006.

He was born on June 1, 1921, in Hughenden, Alberta, Canada, the son of William D. and Eva N. (Burkinshaw) Millar. He graduated from Milton (Wis.) College and was a member of the Battle Creek Seventh Day Baptist Church.

Arthur was a musician and repaired musical instruments. He also enjoyed photography, amateur radio, and was an avid Michigan State University supporter.

From November 1942 to October 1945, he served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was discharged as a sergeant with the 20th Depot Repair Squadron.

Arthur is survived by his wife of 12 years, Maria Hering Millar, whom he married on November 5, 1994. He is also survived by other family members and friends.

Funeral services were held on August 24, 2006, at the Battle Creek SDB Church, with Revs. Harold King and Kory Geske officiating. Inter-

ment was in the Battle Creek Memorial Park.

Vergeer.—John Teunis Vergeer, 78, of Pittsboro, N.C., died on October 19, 2006. From 1986 to 1998, he served as Financial Manager of the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial Fund, headquartered in Janesville, Wis.

John was born on July 5, 1928, in Grand Rapids, Mich., the son of Teunis V. and Frauline Jansma Vergeer. He was a graduate of Hope College in Holland, Mich., and worked as vice president of Continental Bank in Chicago, Ill. He also served in the U.S. Army.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Melicent Huneycutt-Vergeer of Pittsboro; one son, Vytas V. Vergeer, of Washington, D.C.; one brother, Fred, of Thompson, Ga.; two grandchildren; and a special niece, Sara Bartelli, of California.

A memorial service for John was held at the University Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill, N.C., with Dr. Robert E. Dunham officiating.

Pastoral Changes in the past year

Accepted Calls:

- Christian King to Low Country, SC
- Justin Camenga to Ashaway, RI
- Matt Berg to Middletown, CT
- Kory Geske (interim) at Battle Creek, MI
- Haywood Floyd at Muskegon branch of Grand Rapids, MI
- Dale Smalley at Appleton branch of Portage, WI
- Kevin Palmiter (outreach) at Little Genesee, NY
- David Taylor to Mitchellville, MD
- Ron Elston at Doniphan, MO
- Mike Spearl at Brandenton branch of Daytona Beach, FL

Resignations:

- Glenn Robin from Adams Center, NY
- David Thorngate from Boulder, CO
- Harold King from Battle Creek, MI
- Don Shackelford from Lost Creek, WV

Help write a new book!

We've all been told that we should have devotions or "quiet time" every day. If we don't, we're made to feel guilty. Many of us feel God is angry or disappointed with us if we haven't "performed" in the right way.

Linda Harris is writing a book about spending time with God, getting rid of the guilt, and finding intimacy with the One Who loves us. She is looking for your experiences with spending time with God.

Please consider the following questions and e-mail your responses to lharris927@pcisys.net. Or mail

them to 2617 Montebello Dr. W., Colorado Springs, CO 80918.

All who respond will receive a free e-book in pdf format when the book is completed. Thank you for your participation.

- 1) What is the greatest challenge you've had in spending time with God?
- 2) How have you dealt with that challenge?
- 3) What difference have you seen in your life as a result of spending time with God?
- 4) What difference do you notice when you don't spend time with Him?

- 5) Are there any tools or techniques that help you in your time with God?
- 6) How do you deal with distractions?
- 7) Is there a personal experience you would like to share with readers of the book? **SR**

Robe of Achievement 2007 Nominations

The SDB Women's Society is accepting nominations for the Robe of Achievement for 2007. Please consider a woman in your church who meets the following 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*

A complete résumé must be submitted containing a life history, including her achievements and activities. Without a résumé in hand, the committee cannot make a competent choice among many nominees. If an individual has been nomi-

nated before, and you still want that person considered, please resubmit the name as well as the updated résumé.

Send nominations to:

**Laura Hambleton, Chair
SDB Robe Nominations
1568 Megan Bay Circle
Holly Hill, FL 32117**

or apply on-line at: www.sdbwboard.org

**Deadline:
March 31, 2007**

For further information, contact or call
Laura Hambleton: (386) 677-8594

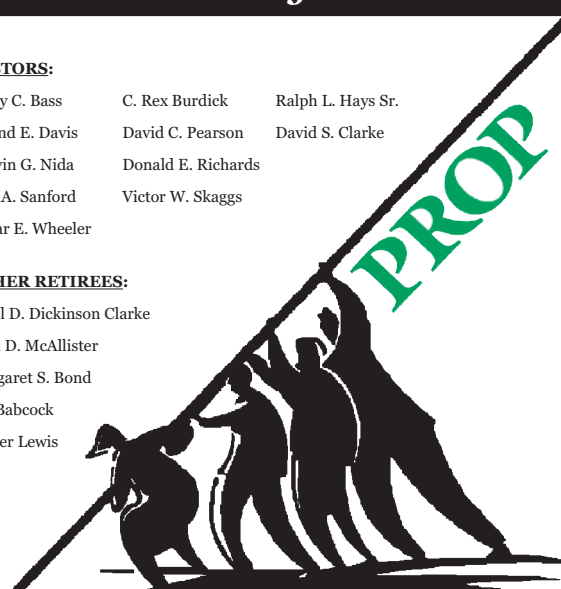
Give to those who gave so much.

PASTORS:

Leroy C. Bass	C. Rex Burdick	Ralph L. Hays Sr.
Leland E. Davis	David C. Pearson	David S. Clarke
Melvin G. Nida	Donald E. Richards	
Don A. Sanford	Victor W. Skaggs	
Edgar E. Wheeler		

OTHER RETIREES:

Ethel D. Dickinson Clarke
Jean D. McAllister
Margaret S. Bond
Ida Babcock
Esther Lewis



Pastors Retirement Offering Project

Contributions are needed for continuing support of SDB retired pastors and denominational workers, and surviving spouses of pastors.

Please donate to PROP!

PROP still going

PROP (the Pastors Retirement Offering Project) continues to support our retired pastors and denominational workers.

Won't you give to those who gave so much for Seventh Day Baptists over the years?

Send your donation to:

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

KEVIN'S

ORNER

Music to my ears

Have you ever had one of those “what if” conversations?

I remember one that went like this: “If you were forced to slowly lose your five senses, which one would you want to give up last?”

Most of the others in the group said, “Sight.”

Not me. I would hold on to my hearing.

By God’s grace, I’ve been able to marvel at many natural and manmade wonders all around North America and in other countries. The visual treats have been fantastic, and those images are fixed in my brain.

But I still get a thrill when I listen to a book on tape, or catch a stimulating radio broadcast or ballgame. Those messages ringing in my ears and the accompanying “picture” they conjure up would rival anything displayed in *National Geographic*.

Then there’s the music.

Lord know (and Janet knows) how I’ve tried to keep up with the trendy gadgets in order to have my favorite tunes on hand.

Take away my hearing? I would miss so much.

My love for music began early while taking piano lessons from my grandmother, a retired music and art teacher. As far as performing went, let’s just say I developed an appreciation, but would never headline a sell-out (or any other) concert.

I think that most of the talent went to my older sister. She still teaches music full-time to school kids, sings and performs when she’s able, and directs an area adult chorale.

In our house, we let the kids carry on the musical legacy. They have mastered several instruments and can certainly outsing their “old man” any day. (That’s our Crystal on the far right in the photo on page 8. “Stained Glass” was a dream come true for her.)

If it weren’t for SDBs, I wonder if I’d be witnessing this musical inheritance.

Good musicians bring out the talent in others. The high quality of music at the local church (and Conference) level has undoubtedly inspired our kids to work on their craft.

I can’t tell you how many times whole restaurants have come to a hush when our General Council sings the Doxology before the meal. We’re usually asked the name of our “choir.”

Speaking of choirs, what about our Conference singers? The obvious thrill of the director pours out as he or she has the opportunity to lead strong and talented singers—in all four parts—praising the Lord in song.

And let’s not forget the whole Conference congregation getting wrapped up in singing “Wonderful Grace of Jesus.” What joy divine.

May we always embrace, celebrate, and extend our musical heritage.



Thank You!!

One of my editorial privileges is the opportunity to say “THANKS” to all of our readers and supporters. My family and staff want to extend our grateful appreciation for the kind greetings and notes of encouragement that come our way this time of year. We love to hear from you!

It’s my prayer that the *SR* will continue to inspire, inform, and challenge you in the days ahead. As our presence on the Web grows, the doors are open to reach the world. Thank you for your prayer and financial support.



Important Memo:

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

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

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

GRACE AND PEACE,

Kevin

YES! *I want to help the ministry of The Sabbath Recorder!*

- Enclosed is my GIFT for *The SR* Name: _____
 \$100 \$50 \$25 _____
 Please CHANGE my address to: Address: _____
 Please REMOVE my name from the mailing list City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

*Please send form to: The Sabbath Recorder, PO Box 1678, Janesville WI 53547-1678
Or, go to www.seventhdaybaptist.org and make your donation through PayPal. Thanks!*