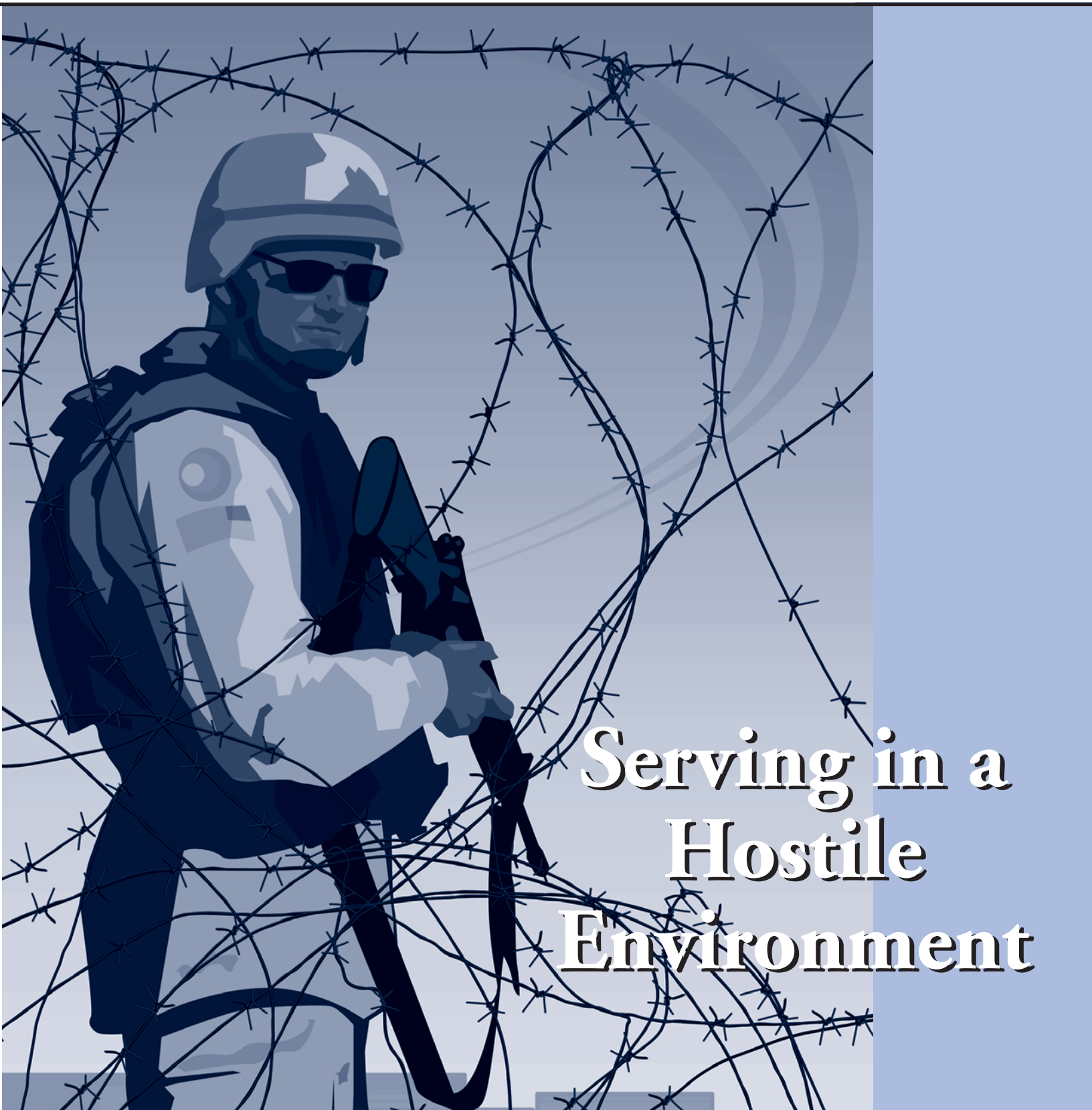


SR The Sabbath RECORDER

April 2006

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists



**Serving in a
Hostile
Environment**



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

2006 Summer Institute in SDB History

June 19–30



SDB Center
Janesville, WI

Janet Thorngate
and Nick Kersten,
instructors.

Information and registration form at

www.sdbministry.org
under "School"

Attention all women:

"Red Hat Women's Banquet" to be held at General Conference

At last year's Conference, Amanda Snyder (*in the photo*) initiated a fun way to raise funds to support Summer Christian Service Corps.

This year's annual banquet will have a "Red Hat" theme. Attendees will be "fined" \$1.00 for each red-hat item they wear, including red or pink hats, purple or lavender dresses, and all red or purple accessories. Fines will be paid at the door, or IOUs will be issued and collected before the end of Conference.

Note: All women are welcome no matter what they wear. Let's have fun and support our SCSCers!



Calling All Prayer Warriors

The 2006 SCSC teams and Project Directors will need our prayers. If you are willing to partner in prayer with someone this summer, please contact:

Faith Green
9145 Hackberry Ave.
Plymouth MI 48170

E-mail: faithgreen@hotmail.com



New Directory

The SDB Directory covering the year 2005 is now available from the Center in Janesville.

The cost for one copy is \$10.50, which includes postage. For those who pick up a Directory, the cost is \$9.00.



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A thrill ride I'd rather not repeat

by Rollie Davis,
McCool Junction, Neb.

I was at the top of the ride, but I also knew that I was abruptly on the way down. I had only a short time to spend with my wife and new daughter before leaving for Vietnam.

Have you ever been on a big roller coaster? I mean a *really* big one, like the ones named after fierce, wild creatures or major storms? Scorpion, the Viper, Tornado, the Grizzly, or the Timber Wolf?

If you have—or if you can imagine how such a ride would be—then you have a sense of how my military career went. It was filled with emotional and spiritual peaks and valleys.

It all began in the summer of 1965. I was to be married to my high school sweetheart, and our wedding date had been set: September 25.

About a month prior to our marriage, I received an “invitation” of my own. I was to take my military physical exam on September 26, just one day after the wedding. The unforgettable ride had begun, and there was no way off.

Two brief months later found me in basic training in Ft. Leonardwood, Mo. Once basic was behind, orders came down. I was to be stationed on the East Coast with an Army Air Defense Command Post. Despite many uncertainties, my wife was allowed to come along.

With the Lord’s help—and an answered prayer—the military provided us a house. It wasn’t much, but it became our home and served our purpose.

My military career did well there. I became the Battalion Commander’s aide and driver. I had no extra duty because of my position, and I was given an office job at Battalion Headquarters to fill the idle times.

I was also given a secret clearance, allowing me to sit in on some major

decision-making events while having access to classified information.

Life was good, and God blessed us again with the news that we were expecting our first child. I was at another high point on the roller coaster ride.

Then I received orders to report for a year of duty in Vietnam, and the spiraling downward ride began. Even though I knew this could happen, I was devastated. I continued to believe that somehow this would work out for the good, but I couldn’t figure out exactly “why” or “how.”

My wife and I turned to prayer. And God answered. I was given a “hardship extension” until one month after our baby’s due date.

Once again, I was at the top of the ride, but I also knew that I was abruptly on the way down. I had only a short time to spend with my wife and new daughter before leaving for Vietnam.

The day finally arrived. It was unquestionably the most difficult moment of my life. I held my wife and our 3-week-old baby in my arms, gave them one final kiss, and was off. With God’s grace, I found the strength to leave the ones I loved so deeply.

My first six months of duty in Vietnam were fairly easy, but the last six were a different story.

The North Vietnamese had rallied

their troops and planned to use Tet—the Lunar New Year—as the time to renew their war effort. So, the Tet Offensive began around the first of February, 1968. From then on, our compound received frequent rocket, mortar, and ground attacks.

It was during this time that my faith began to decline.

One night during the rainy season, I was on guard duty in a foxhole filled with six-inches of mud and water. I just couldn't understand why God had been so good to me, only to change His plan. Or, worse yet, why did He abandon me? Then it finally came to me.

God hadn't changed; my attitude and circumstances had changed. I thought of several Scripture passages that tell of God's unchanging character. One—Malachi 3:6—says, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

I began to attend weekly chapel services. They helped me focus more



Satan continues to lurk around every corner, trying to derail me and make me doubt my faith.

on God and the reason I was given this test of faith. Once I accepted the concept that *I* was the one who had changed, not God, I was able to deal with my situation.

With a renewed faith, I also realized that my family and friends back home had been supporting me with vigilant prayer. There *was* a light at the end of the tunnel! I was able to hang on for the last downhill stretch in my roller coaster ride.

As I reflect on those trying times, I can see that, in a way, I'm still in a hostile environment. Today's events are much less dramatic, but Satan continues to lurk around every corner, trying to derail me and make me doubt my faith.

So, if you should find yourself in a similar situation, I advise you to maintain a strong faith, hold close those you love, and fasten your seat belt. Above all, let God control the ride! **SR**

The fight for freedom

by Michael Graves, Effingham, Kan.

America has a rich Judeo-Christian heritage in which faithful men and women served their country both in peace time and in war. History books record tales of commitment and sacrifices that common people made under difficult circumstances.

Today, we have armed forces in many parts of the world—some providing humanitarian aid, some security, and some in combat roles, fighting against those who would take our freedoms away.

Despite what some may read about how the world views our country, whenever there is a crisis, manmade or natural, the

More than half of my basic training company received orders for Vietnam, and many of those young men were terrified.

world looks to the U.S. for leadership in providing assistance.

On June 29, 1971, a young 20-year-old Christian—after one year of college and unsure of what his future held—enlisted in the United States Army. I was that young man, scared and uncertain of what to expect as I completed

basic training and advanced instruction at Ft. Ord in California.

Upon completion of training, I received orders for duty in South Korea. That was no surprise, since I had enlisted under the "Korean Option" and was guaranteed the assignment.

cont. on next page

More than half of my basic training company received orders for Vietnam, and many of those young men were terrified. Most of the news from the war zone was very negative, so that added to their fear.

After further preparation, we were given 30 days leave before being sent to our overseas assignments.

It was in late November of 1971 that I left Tacoma, Wash., on a chartered flight for South Korea. Once I arrived, I was put in a holding company until my unit assignment was determined.

While not in a hostile fire zone, my Korean tour was a “hazardous duty assignment.” That meant if you were married and had children, your family couldn’t accompany you overseas. (Suitable housing and schooling wasn’t available.)

I was assigned to the police detail of a mechanized infantry unit, stationed at a military compound just eight miles from the demilitarized zone. My duty was to guard the front gate. Armed with nothing more than a police stick, I started my first shift.

During my stay in Korea, I also served on the camp honor guard,

raising the U.S. flag at sunrise and taking it down at sunset. That flag reminded me of Jesus, my Savior, and provided me with encouragement and hope.

The blue represented Jesus’ royalty; the red, his blood that was shed for me; and the white, his blood washing my sins away and leaving me white as snow.

My time in Korea was very difficult. If it weren’t for my Christian faith and the strength I received from God, I don’t know how I would have been able to make it through that 13-month period.

When I wrote home, I was always careful to put a positive slant on things. I didn’t want my family to worry about me.

During that time, I matured as a man and as a Christian. I made mistakes, but I learned from them. And I always remembered that my Lord and Savior was whispering encouragement and waiting to help me.

The verse I continue to rely on during times of stress is Philippians 4:13: “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

Christian men and women throughout history have committed themselves to serving this country, with many paying the ultimate price.

Today, we’re in a desperate fight with terrorism that has touched our very shores, taking many lives. It is a fight that we cannot afford to lose, and one that must be fought at every level—political, economic, military, and spiritual.

I have no doubt that the men and women defending our country will be able to accomplish their mission. The price that some have paid—and will pay—is very dear, for every drop of shed blood is precious. We need to constantly remind ourselves that freedom is not free.

I also know that God will do His part to keep this great country free. Biblical history is replete with stories of how God found ways to save His people in difficult circumstances.

May God bless you, and may God bless America. **SR**

The price that some have paid—and will pay—is very dear, for every drop of shed blood is precious. We need to constantly remind ourselves that freedom is not free.



Serving in a hostile environment—



—no matter where you are

by Morgan Shepard

Somebody asked me recently what it was like to be a Christian serving in Iraq. To be honest, I didn't think it was much different than being a Christian back in the U.S.

The first time I went to worship services, I couldn't decide whether or not to wear my sidearm. (*Take a weapon to church?!*)

In the end, I realized having a weapon did not detract from wor-

lives. When traveling, I made it a point to attend church. I was always happy to be with fellow believers.

Being in Iraq focused my attention on God's Word. I read through the New Testament, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. (Now *there* was someone having a hostile day!)

God's Word always brought me comfort and peace the entire day. Life and death *seemed* much closer

killed for them. That's the position our Iraqi brethren are in.

Whether driving by a church with- in sight of our base in Mosul, or fly- ing over one in Baghdad, I thanked God for His continued protection for those truly living in the lion's den.

No matter where we go, we are in a hostile world. But this is not our final home. God has something much better in store for us in heaven.

Serving in a combat zone has al- lowed me to focus on what is impor- tant: Faith that God will provide for His people, no matter *where* they may be. **SR**

Serving in a combat zone has allowed me to focus on what is important: Faith that God will provide for His people, no matter where they may be.

ship. (I imagine even David had a sword close by when he was wor- shipping.) My pistol did remind me—and others—that we were in a hostile environment.

Being a Christian in such an envi- ronment means being a Christian... *anywhere*. Whether you are in Ne- braska, Los Angeles, or Baghdad, you are surrounded by hostile forces that would prefer you not worship God.

I was thrilled that a number of people I worked with regularly attended services, living out their Christian values in their everyday

at hand in Iraq than back at home, even though that wasn't the case.

Prayer concerns were the same there as they were at home: prayer for families or friends; for people we worked with; prayer for wisdom, strength, and courage; blessings for safety; and praises for being with fel- low believers while away from family.

Those truly worshipping and living in a dangerous, unfriendly environ- ment are the Christian Iraqis. It takes great faith in God—that He will pro- tect and bless you—to live out your beliefs, not knowing if you will be

Morgan Shepard, a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, served in Iraq for six months. He returned to his Financial Director duties at the SDB Center in March.



Morgan Shepard worshipped at this chapel on his base in Mosul, Iraq.

His flock moves to Afghanistan

by SDB Chaplain Jerry Johnson

Greetings from halfway around the world—Afghanistan!

For the sake of operational security, I can only tell you that we are near the Pakistan border with the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division.

Look at your map and find Khowst Province. Our unit, the 4-25 Field Artillery Regiment, has its main body with the brigade headquarters here at FOB (Forward Operating Base) Salerno. Soldiers are spread out through another six fire bases up and down the eastern part of the country, supporting the infantry units who are taking the fight to the enemy.

About a third of the 3,000 or so troops stationed here have “hard” buildings, with the rest in tents.

It’s a weird feeling to leave your family behind and travel to a country that has been ravaged by war, disease, and poverty. We are nine hours ahead of Eastern time in the U.S.

So far, the climate has been warm, around 70 degrees in the daytime and in the 40s at night. The locals tell us that our altitude of 3,500 feet above sea level mitigates the harsh winters that some of the other fire bases receive. March is supposedly the “hardest” month, weather-wise.

Our base has basic facilities, a PX, a nice dining facility that stuffs our faces four times a day, a gym, and—oh, yes—a chapel with three

wooden buildings for offices. They resemble large sheds, but for the next year they will be home to my brigade supervisor and three or four of my chaplain brethren.

Lots and lots of construction is taking place, mostly by local laborers. Right now, about a third of the 3,000 or so troops stationed here have “hard” buildings, with the rest in tents. This three-week period—

when the 10th Mountain Division moves in and 82nd Airborne moves out—places particular stress on everyone. Many of us live in the large festival tents, and lines are long. But the Lord is good.

In Army terminology, I’m now doing what is called “left seat-right seat ride.” My predecessor, who is leaving soon, is giving me all of the information I need to make a smooth transition into the “driver’s seat” of religious support.

Each chaplain will be responsible for ensuring visits and services every 15 days to all of the soldiers at two or three outlying fire bases. I can’t imagine how our one priest will survive, but division headquarters is providing help. Then we will each have just our unit.

At this FOB, I will have about 250 of my soldiers living and working at any one time. It will be my job to stay integrated with my battalion staff and continue to meet the needs of the mission at the unit level.

Finally, a team of us chaplain-pastors will work together to have




Chaplain Johnson arrives in Afghanistan.

Bible studies, worship services, and counseling programs for everyone. This explains why we are co-located in our own office complex, just like the medical personnel. Balancing the unit and the larger effort is going to take a lot of work. I expect 16-18 hour days to be routine.

My new Chaplain Assistant, who is coming over soon, is a hard-working Seventh-day Adventist soldier who will bring fire to our team. Together, we hope to build a nice program on Sabbath evening. They call it “Saturday Night Live,” which we will inherit.

All in all, this is going to be a crazy and extremely busy year. Pray that we will touch lives in special ways.

I thank everyone for praying for my wife, Carrie, and our boys, who are left behind in upstate New York.

Before now, I could have never dreamed about leaving them. However, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ has called me to serve in Afghanistan for a purpose, for such a time as this. 

A Cord of Three Strands

The Lord says in Ecclesiastes 4:12, “A cord of three strands is not easily broken.”

Similarly, our Seventh Day Baptist witness is stronger because individual members, local churches, and our Boards and Agencies form an “Alliance in Ministry.”

Together, our Alliance in Ministry includes:

- New national and international contacts
- New seminary and T.I.M.E. students
- New training program for short-term missions
- Growing communication and training tools
- Support staff and ministry to all the Boards

Let's look at our “cord of three strands” in this way:

Individual SDBs
and Churches



Our Boards
and Agencies

Prayer and
Financial Support

Frankly, one of our cords is fraying. Current giving is down, and the Conference’s reserve money is gone. We need to strengthen that cord through personal and church giving.

Our Conference ministries can only continue as the giving continues. The more individuals and churches get involved in this Alliance, the stronger the cord. Please pray with us about your role in our “Alliance in Ministry,” and give generously. God bless you.

Send gifts to:
SDB Center
3120 Kennedy Rd
PO Box 1678
Janesville WI 53547

The General Council,
Rob Appel
Ruth Burdick
Kevin Butler
Andrew Camenga
Herlitz Condison

George Cruzan
David Davis
Don Graffius
Marjorie Jacob

Harold King
Gordon Lawton
G. Kirk Looper
Robert Van Horn

Random decisions?

by Mark Green, Plymouth, Mich.

“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails” (Psalm 19:21).

I’ve made some poor decisions in my life.

Nine months after completing college and marrying my wonderful wife (good decisions), I felt compelled to enlist in the Army (potentially bad decision).

Those who have been in the Army know that, like any large bureaucracy, it can be capricious and irrational. It might “chew you up and spit you out,” or it might make you a better person. And it might even kill you. Seemingly random...

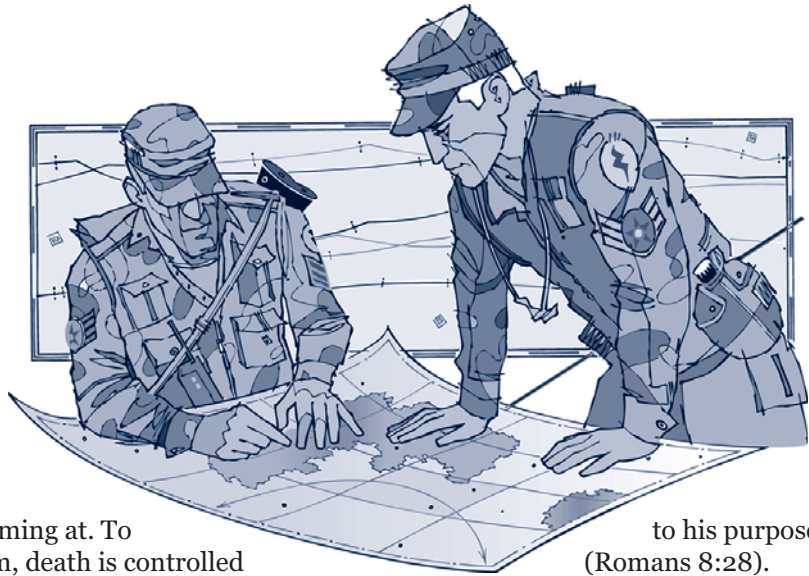
In the fall of 2004, I put my name on a list to deploy to Iraq. Another seemingly poor decision. A wife and three young boys were good reasons to avoid Iraq right then. (As you may have heard, that country wasn’t—and still isn’t—particularly stable.)

A co-worker had gone to Iraq six months earlier on a similar mission. Three months before I went, he was killed by a mortar shell that hit his trailer at 5:00 a.m. while he was showering. Seemingly random...

One should not enter a combat zone lightly. Statistics show that you are more likely to be killed in Iraq than sitting at home on your couch. If you *should* enter such a place out of compulsion, foolishness, a sense of duty, or a higher calling, you must come to terms with this possibility.

Those without faith must view life and death as a series of random happenings. Death in Iraq, as in most modern wars, is impersonal. The mortar team that fires into your camp is not aiming at you. They never have, and never will, know who you are.

The insurgent with the RPG does not know who is in the helicopter he



is aiming at. To them, death is controlled by fate, and nothing can be done to stop it. They hope that their lives will have some significance, but there are no guarantees.

How does this differ from those who do have faith?

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord; ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm

to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Here is a real promise that shouldn’t be taken lightly. God offers His divine intervention in our lives. He does not guarantee that only good things will happen to us. Experience has taught all of us that bad things *can* and *do* occur in our lives.

Improvised explosive devices and mortar shells, cancer, and car accidents—a Pandora’s box of troubles—still afflict us. Faith is not a bullet-proof vest. The difference is, we have the benefit of divine will.

In submission to God’s will, we align ourselves with His plan. Like Abraham, we do not know how it will work; how we go from a 99-year-old father of none to a 100-year-old “father” of many nations! But we do know that there is a strong hand of love guiding us toward His goal.

Iraq is really not that much more dangerous than Milton, Wisconsin, or Daytona Beach, Florida. And certainly not more than Detroit, Michigan!

We are fragile; our lives can end at any time. We must submit ourselves to God’s will, follow His calling, and trust His grace to cover our mistakes. **SR**

**Faith
is not a
bulletproof vest.
The difference is,
we have the benefit
of divine will.**

you, plans to give you hope and a future’ ” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Those words are comforting, but Christians die just as readily as non-Christians. Widows and orphans mourn their believing loved ones as well.

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according

The price of freedom

by Dr. Paul Davis, Salem, West Virginia

In 2005, Dr. Paul Davis served as Deputy Commander for Clinical Services for the 34th Medical Task Force at Camp Bucca in Iraq.

★ ★ ★

This was my first experience with prison medicine. There is an ominous sense of foreboding when you walk through a door or a gate and it is locked shut behind you.

Yes, there were lots of military police with weapons, and the “bad guys” were either separated from us by razor wire or were in handcuffs if they came to the hospital. But the thought that a compound of 700 detainees might suddenly overpower the guards and made a break for it—and that some of these folks would like nothing better than to kill an American and earn 72 virgins as his eternal reward—made many of the hospital staff more than a little nervous.

Interacting with a lot of these prisoners, I found them to be just like people everywhere else; with an understanding of right and wrong, a love of family, loyalty to friends, and a desire to leave the world a better place.

Detainees, though imprisoned, are not convicts. They have been detained for any number of reasons; some for shooting at troops, some for being in a home where weapons were found, some for trying to earn 50 cents by carrying an explosive device to its intended destination.

As long as detainees behaved themselves, they had three meals a day, showers, mattresses to sleep on, and opportunities for exercise that included volleyball and soccer. They were allowed to congregate in small groups and could hold daily prayers and other religious activities.

What amazed me is the gracious and grateful attitude of those who

received our care. The detainees I saw, to a person, responded to respect with respect. My concern for their welfare brought me more blessings than I would have thought possible.

Although I knew that some of these folks, if turned loose, might turn right around and attempt to kill me, I was sure that the vast majority would not. They were patient

railing the process at the expense of their countrymen.

There is a price to be paid for freedom. As the U.S. death toll in Iraq exceeds 2,000, many are wavering in their support of the liberation effort. I want to assure you that the millions of Iraqis who are now experiencing freedom appreciate their sacrifice.

Our people have not died in vain any more than the thousands who

The detainees I saw, to a person, responded to respect with respect. My concern for their welfare brought me more blessings than I would have thought possible.

with the whole detention system. Many actually expressed their appreciation that the U.S. was liberating their country and bringing a level of healthcare they were not used to.

Before I was deployed, the Abu Ghraib prison scandal quickly turned world opinion very negative towards our military. Make no mistake about it. What happened to those Iraqi prisoners was humiliating, inhumane, and uncalled for. But the impression was left that this was typical of how the U.S. treated its POWs.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We were ordered to provide medical care to the detainees that was equal to that received by troops, and that it meet the standard of care as set by the United States medical community.

The Iraqi people on the whole are embracing freedom with courage and expectation, and will not be deterred by a bunch of thugs interested in de-

gave their lives at Gettysburg. We are to preserve our country and the freedom it offers to all men and women—regardless of race, color, or ethnic background.

As we reach out to Iraq and other countries, we are in fact loving our neighbor as ourselves. We have every reason to be proud of the young men and women who are serving on our behalf. They are doing a great thing for what should be a grateful nation.

But there is more than just physical freedom at stake. There is a freedom from the desire to continue doing that which is displeasing to God; what the Bible calls sin.

The Bible tells us that we have no hope of pleasing God and that we will die in our sins. According to Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” No matter how hard we try, we cannot earn God’s favor because He is perfect.

cont. on page 26

The soul set free:

Recounting redemption in Romans (Part 2)

SALVATION: God is gracious in saving (justifying) believers

by Dr. Paul Manuel

After giving Roman Christians the bad news about sin—that God is just in condemning everyone, including them, because everyone has sinned—Paul gets to the good news about salvation (the second “s” in series of four he discusses). Despite man’s sinful condition, God is gracious in saving (justifying) believers.

He offers justification in propitiation

Paul explains how God does this, stating that He offers justification in propitiation (3:21-31; especially vv. 24-25). In other words, the remedy God provides for man’s sin, which enables God to declare a person righteous (justification), is also the means of appeasing and averting God’s wrath (propitiation).

cont. on page 22



The object of Abraham’s faith

Christians are aware of the central role Jesus plays in the divine plan, and they understand the importance of having faith in him—that is, of appropriating the atoning effect of his sacrifice for their sins.

Earlier, Paul mentioned that God’s righteousness is available through “faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:22) and stated that God justifies the one who has “faith in Jesus” (3:30). Abraham, however, lived 2,000 years before Jesus, and there is no evidence the patriarch knew about the savior’s atoning work. Yet Paul says that God justified him (4:3, 9).

If Abraham’s faith was not in Jesus, in what or whom did he believe? Paul states clearly and repeatedly that Abraham’s faith was in God the Father (4:3, 5, 17). He also says that is where *our* faith resides, that we “believe in Him who raised Jesus” (4:24).

Although we may know more about the details of God’s plan than Abraham (or other, early saints), the object of Abraham’s faith and ours is the same: God the Father (1 Peter 1:21; see John 5:24, 12:44).

Identifying the proper object of faith confirms the answers to questions in last month’s article: How does God save, and will God condemn those who lived after Jesus but who never heard about him?

Recognizing that all faith is properly and ultimately in God should caution us against asserting that He saves only those who *identify* Jesus as savior.

By using the illustration of Abraham, Paul affirms that the *motivation* for salvation is always grace, the *basis* for salvation is always the death of Christ, the *requirement* for salvation is always faith, the *object* of faith is always God, but the *content* of faith varies.



Temptation: A lonely place

"Devil's food cake?" my 5-year-old grandson chimed in when he heard his mommy sharing a recipe with me over the phone. "The devil has a cake?"

"Yes," Julie answered, "and you can tell this cake to shut up!"

I was proud of my daughter for making the most of the moment to teach Christopher important truths for living.

I was just coming out of the ring myself from a "boxing match" with Satan. For my final punch, I had emulated the archangel Michael (Jude 9). "The Lord rebuke you," I said.

This was not an easy battle. Actually, I don't think I've *ever* had an easy battle with Satan. But then, neither did Jesus. I'm glad that this time the Holy Spirit reminded me to "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try [me]" (1 Peter 4:12).

Although I recognized the devil's trickery as he repeated a pattern that he'd used before, I felt heavy and immobilized. Heaviness is part of the package. "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Peter 1:6).

Neither the South Beach diet nor Dr. Atkins could remove that heaviness. I felt alone.

God was the only One I could talk to about this. Oh, how I hoped this wasn't going to be one of those two-year-long lessons! Hadn't I *already* learned?

Switching gears, I thought of how God honored Job by pointing out to Satan that Job was His own. I tried to stay focused on God and His Word, even as my wild emotions continually redirected my thoughts.

As the Lord rebuked Satan for me, my emotions ebbed. I quietly reflected on what Christ himself went through.

When the Holy Spirit led him *alone* into the wilderness to be tempted, it wasn't just for one day. Nor did the battle consist of only one skirmish. Jesus drew the Sword [the Word] three times before his enemy [Satan] left him "for a season" (Luke 4:13).

Maybe the reason God allowed me to do battle just now was so that I, as a "sister warrior," could encourage you.

Just as Jesus was about to complete his earthly mission, he once again felt fearfully alone as his disciples slept while he prayed. And again, he had to pray three times before his strength was renewed for the dreadful task ahead of him.

The recorded struggles of our Savior occurred at the beginning and end of his ministry. In light of these events, should we think it strange that we, ourselves, often face similar

struggles? Maybe the reason God allowed me to do battle just now was so that I, as a "sister warrior," could encourage you.

Here are some thoughts from the *Women of Faith Prayer Journal* written by Lana Bateman:

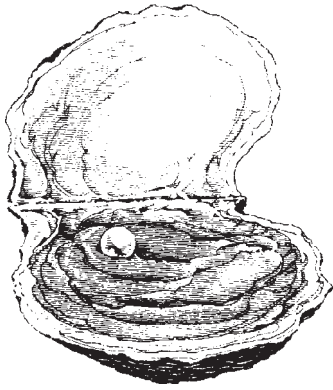
"God's sovereignty in our personal lives is like a plate that was prepared for us before birth, which holds perfectly measured amounts of joy and sorrow... and of struggle and rest. God knew what would be on our plate, and He also knew everything we would pray about. We grow as we pray, and we have confidence in these two promises: 'I will accomplish what concerns you,' and 'I will complete the work I have begun in you' (paraphrase of Psalm 138:8, Philippians 1:6)" [page 143].

Lana also writes, "In the Song of Solomon, the maiden (who represents the believer) says to her Beloved (who represents Christ), 'Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyard, while our vineyards are in blossom' (verse 2:15, NAS).

"The maiden realizes that these foxes (areas of compromise or sin) in her life can't be removed by her own efforts, so she asks the only one who can to intervene on her behalf. She opens her heart for her Beloved (Christ) to do the work" [page 147].

"It is finished." **SR**





The Sabbath in Scotland

I recently received an e-mail with several questions. One read, “Was the early 19th century William Miller a Seventh Day Baptist?”

Miller was the self-proclaimed prophet who determined that Daniel’s prophecy of the end of the current earth would occur in October of 1844, with the new Advent and return of Christ. This was never a Seventh Day Baptist doctrine.

Another question was whether there was a Sabbathkeeper on the Mayflower. We had Mayflower descendants who kept the Sabbath a half-century later, but no record of any *on* the Mayflower.

A third question dealt with our relationship to Anabaptists, a generic term applied to those who practiced believer’s baptism.

One of the questions—“Was James A. Begg of Scotland a Seventh Day Baptist?”—sent me on a “treasure hunt.”

I found Begg’s name in the index of *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, and in a biographical sketch in the section on “Prominent English Seventh Day Baptists: Preachers and Authors, etc.”

Our concentration on our English roots has often bypassed other people and places where the truth of the Sabbath has also been proclaimed.

Perhaps my inquirer, using a computer, had pulled up a listing of a James Begg Society in Scotland that is still offering membership.

The first paragraph of that resource states that James Begg was born a “son of the manse,” at New Monkshire, Scotland, on October 3,

1808. While his father joined the Established Church and was its minister for 40 years, all of his father’s family were Covenanters and would not enter the “parish” church.

It also stated that “so far as unscriptural novelties of worship were concerned, he was consistent to the end. He summed up his own position by saying that he was neither in favor of surplices, nor liturgies, nor any other innovations whatever that deviated from the simple and Scriptural customs of our forefathers.”

However, as I read further, he was strongly opposed to the running of trains on Sunday, carrying both mail and passengers on what was commonly referred to as “the

ed in Plainfield, N.J., for over a quarter of a century. His first letter to the *Recorder* was dated at 35 Argyll, Arcade, Glasgow, Scotland, April 1, 1845.

“Although he had accepted the Sabbath about 1833, he and three others were baptized at Glasgow, Scotland, by a well-known Seventh Day Baptist minister, Elder Joseph W. Morton, about 1853.

“He was the author of several valuable works on the subject of prophecy and was a staunch defender of the Sabbath. Cox’s *Literature on the Sabbath Question* mentioned his work concerning the alleged change of the Sabbath (published Glasgow, 1854), as does *Kitto’s Journal*.”¹

**Over 55 articles
by James A. Begg
were printed in
the Recorder
from 1844 to
1861.**

A further check of *Sabbath Recorder* files indicated that over 55 articles by James A. Begg were printed in the *Recorder* from Vol. I in 1844 to Vol. XVII in 1861. In addition, one index file noted “see British Correspondence (long series, Vol. 6-8) in *Sabbath Recorder*.”

A check of the bound copies revealed that James Begg’s “British Correspondence” extended through Vol. XI and contained 115 columns signed by him. Many of these columns were over 20 inches in length.

Even after his death in 1869, Begg’s name was remembered. In an 1877 *Sabbath Recorder*, the Tract Society reported that a miner who lived 10 miles from Glasgow was convicted of the Sabbath and joined the Baptists through the witness of James Begg. After keeping it alone for some time, he gave up the Sabbath in practice but never yielded the sentiment.

When Nathan Wardner, who had served as a missionary in China, searched out Begg, he returned to Sabbath observance and ministered

Lord’s Day.” But to James Begg, the Lord’s Day was the seventh day.

Since the Internet did not provide the information I sought, I resorted to our Historical Society’s 140-drawer, 3-by-5 card file “internet.”

The first entry I found for James Begg referred to the 1854 *Seventh Day Baptist Memorial* and his contact with the editor of the *Sabbath Recorder*, Thomas B. Brown. A later reference referred to a December 1924 sketch that stated:

“Mr. Begg was born in Paisley, Scotland, at the beginning of the nineteenth century and died January 1, 1869. He was a contributor to the official *Sabbath Recorder* now locat-

in all of the villages within 20 miles of his home, at his own expense. Although Wardner suspended his work two days each week, he found it was no sacrifice to keep the Sabbath.²

Professor James Moffatt, in his book, *Church of Scotland*, states: “It seems to have been customary in the

Recorder carried an extended dialogue between Rev. Wardner and a Baptist minister over the validity of the Sabbath.

Rev. Wardner’s son, Morton, accompanied him to Scotland, and pleaded for an extended tract ministry. He particularly stressed work-

on such people as the Stennetts, Peter Chamberlain, Robert Burnside, and other SDB leaders in England.

He also cited the role of James Begg who, for over a quarter of a century, contributed to the *Sabbath Recorder*. Begg greatly impacted the Glasgow church, which was the headquarters for the work in Scotland, Ireland, and Holland, sending out literature to these countries and many other parts of the world.

A Baptist pastor (Rev. Velthuysen) in Haarlem, Holland, along with 31 of 60 church members, accepted the Sabbath through some of this literature. This led to the organization of four or five SDB churches in Holland. With their mission stations in Java and the Dutch East Indies—and their magazine, *De Boodschapper*, published in Amsterdam—they maintained a lively existence.

Thus Glasgow, Scotland, stands out in bold relief in Seventh Day Baptist history. **SR**

“It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times in Ireland, as well as in Scotland, to keep the Jewish Sabbath as a day of rest from labor. They obeyed the Commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week.”

Celtic churches of early times in Ireland, as well as in Scotland, to keep the Jewish Sabbath as a day of rest from labor. They obeyed the Commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week.”³

Moffatt further stated that even during Queen Margaret’s time, “Christianity was still taught in Scotland by the church of which Columba had planted the seeds of Iona, for the Guldees had substantially maintained the succession.”⁴

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* seemed to bear this out. It stated that Queen Margaret “in trying to harmonize the Scottish church with the rest of Europe, found her point of complaint against them was that they did not reverence the Lord’s Day, but they held Saturday as the Sabbath.”⁵

Although there is evidence of communication between Scottish SDBs and English Seventh Day Baptists, some of whom studied in Glasgow, our American Sabbath Tract Society and the Missionary Board also put in considerable effort to cultivate the work in Scotland.

In 1874, after a number of people petitioned to have a minister come to Glasgow, Rev. Nathan Wardner soon arrived. The March 22, 1877, *Sabbath*

ing with young people who weren’t as set in their customs.

“There are thousands upon thousands of people,” Morton Wardner wrote, “who have never had a suspicion that in keeping Sunday, they are not doing God’s will. Every one of these people must some time have their attention called to the subject before they can either know the truth or be guided by the Bible and conscience to ‘remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’”⁶

The *Sabbath Recorder* of December 8, 1924, carried an article entitled, “Scotland, The Sabbath and Seventh Day Baptists.” It was written by Robert St. Clair of Detroit, Mich., a convert to the Sabbath who played a prominent role in the Jamaica churches becoming Seventh Day Baptist.

“Possibly no country, saving Abyssinia,” St. Clair wrote, “has so excellent a record in the matter of the observance of the seventh day Sabbath as has Scotland. This nation was enrolled as a Christian community, and reliable testimony abounds to the effect that it was true to the Sabbath of Jehovah, for over a millennium.”⁷

In his article, St. Clair pointed out the possible Scottish influence

¹*Sabbath Recorder*, Vol. 97, #23, p. 721. Joseph W. Morton (1821-1893) was a convert to the Sabbath who had served as a missionary to Haiti for the Reformed Presbyterian Church. When called in 1848 to defend the keeping of the first day of the week, he came to the conclusion that the seventh day was the Sabbath and was prominent in its promotion. The gold-headed cane he used became a symbol of service in Sabbath promotion and now hangs in the office of the Historical Society’s historian emeritus.

²*Sabbath Recorder*, Vol. 33, #3, p. 1.

³Moffatt. Quoted in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, Vol. I., p. 27f.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Our 14th edition of the *Britannica*, published in 1937, did not carry this note, but it did state that “Queen Margaret (ca 1015-1093), Queen of Scotland, rebuilt the monastery on the Isle of Iona, and it was used until 1213 on account of her.” (*Britannica*, Vol. 14, p. 875)

⁶Morton Wardner, *Sabbath Recorder*, Vol. 23, #12, p. 2, March 22, 1877.

⁷Robert St. Clair, *Sabbath Recorder*, Vol. 97, #23, December 8, 1924.



Diaconate workshop

From the time the apostle Paul greeted the overseers¹ and deacons² in Philippi, churches have recognized both of these important offices in their midst. Paul sent a list of qualifications for overseers and deacons to Timothy,³ causing later Christians to stop and take stock of themselves and those who might serve them.

This process of taking stock is not always pleasant, since it often reminds all of us of how far short of God's glory we fall. Because of this, I hear individuals express shock when their brothers and sisters in Christ approach them with a request to serve on the diaconate.

This shock frequently turns into confusion about what is being asked. It can also trigger concern about being able to serve in ways that strengthen the church body and bring honor to God.

Almost every Seventh Day Baptist church has a diaconate. Some know exactly what they want to do and how to do it, while others struggle with why they exist, and what they *should* do versus what they *can* do. Sometimes they wonder if the effort to sustain a diaconate is really worth it.

Still others have a general idea of why they exist and what they are about, but they can't quite put it into words.

The Board of Christian Education created a diaconate workshop to help the local church to think intentionally about its diaconate, developing it for use in a variety of settings. It can be presented just to the diaconate, to church leaders, or to the entire church.

More than 10 of our churches have used this resource in the last few years. Some have used it as part of a retreat, providing a framework that allows diaconate members to get to know each other better. Some have even used it to provide information to the whole church, especially those

The workshop ends with suggestions for improving and strengthening the relationship between the diaconate and other church leaders.

Since this resource consists of four to five hours of teaching time, it is best split across two days. Contact the Board of Christian Educa-

**SDB churches
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use this God-given group
in their ministry.**

congregations that are thinking about adding to their diaconate.


Some SDB churches have used the diaconate workshop to help their leadership think of the best way to effectively use this God-given group in their ministry.

This workshop is helpful and can be brought to *your* church. While the manner of presentation may change from place to place, it will look at the biblical purpose, biblical qualifications, and historical development of the diaconate.

Time will also be given to talk about the ways deacons and deaconesses can improve their skills and work together more effectively. They will also learn how to become more aware of those areas of church life where they can have a positive impact.

tion office for more information about scheduling a retreat in your church.

Address: SDB Board of
Christian Education
PO Box 115
Alfred Station NY 14803

Phone: (607) 587-8527
E-mail: sdbbce@Educating
Christians.org 

¹Overseer (*episkopos*) is also translated "bishop." Other words used in the New Testament to describe this office are "elder" (*presbyteros*) and "pastor" (*poimên*).

²Deacon (*diakonos*). Both a generic word for a person who provides service and a title used in the New Testament Church.

³1 Timothy 3:1-13.



FOCUS on Missions

Training in the Philippines

by Kirk Looper

Rev. Al Paypa recently sent us a message describing the work being done in the T.I.M.E. program in the Philippines. This pastoral training program—Training In Ministry by Extension—has been going strong

“I want to visit in the Luzon area because there are some who want to know about Seventh Day Baptists. I need your prayers for my safe travel and my physical health. Thank you for remembering us in your prayers.

na, Zamboanga del Norte. This group is pure Subanen, one of the tribes on that island. They are interested in learning and are willing to be used for God in His ministry.

“These people lead simple lives but have dedication for the ministry. I have trained them to become ministers to this area and to other tribes as well. Please pray for them.”

***We continue to
praise God for the SDB
leaders in the Philippines and
their dedicated work.***

in that country ever since Missionary Rod Henry introduced it there.

Over the years, people in the U.S. and Canada have continued to help support this program.

Our Missionary Society tries to raise \$8,000 a year to ensure the continuation of this ministry. This sum is the *minimum* needed and doesn't include all of the extra expenses that it takes to complete T.I.M.E. This year, we pray that even more money will be donated towards this vital cause.

In his message, Pastor Al stated: “Greetings in Christ's name. I thank the Lord for His goodness to us. Even though we have many calamities and political problems happening to our country, we know that God is still in control. We are safe in the hands of our Almighty God.

“Our T.I.M.E. training program is doing well but presents many challenges. I will teach in three different places with three different classes. So it causes me to feel busy at this time. Our ministry is still doing good and growing. In fact, our contact from the Benguet, Bicol area wants to know more about the Seventh Day Baptist teaching.

“I have three classes scheduled every month, and we meet in different places. I traveled to Mindanao for two classes there. Prayers for safe travel and physical health will help me be able to train them very well, by God's grace.

“There are six T.I.M.E. students from churches in Liloy, Zambo del Norte. Our classes were held at Goaw Seventh Day Baptist Church.

“There are eight T.I.M.E. students in the Sinaad Church, Sergio Osme-

We continue to praise God for the SDB leaders in the Philippines and their dedicated work. Pastor Bernard Agudera is also involved in the outreach and development of our Filipino churches.

These two leaders—Pastors Paypa and Agudera—are very close and accepting of each other, and they work well together as they develop the Conference in the Philippines. We look forward to seeing more from them. **SR**



Break time at the Sinaad church T.I.M.E. training.



T.I.M.E. students in Cebu City write down their test answers.



These six T.I.M.E. students are from the del Norte area in the Philippines.



the BEACON

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

April 2006

With every snap

by Katrina Goodrich, North Loup, Neb.

Snap. Snap. Snap.

With every snap of the fingers, someone is dead. The next snap could be your friend or a relative. How many of them have you told about Jesus and his gift of everlasting life?

How would you feel if one of your friends died unexpectedly, and you had never bothered to share the Gospel with him or her? You may have been able to help them get saved, but you didn't tell them. And now they're burning in hell forever, wondering why you never shared the story of Jesus with them.

That was the message given at the 2006 Dare2Share Conference in Lincoln, Neb., with 5,000 youth attending. During the gathering, a skit told the story of Jim Tannengen.

Jim was a mentally-handicapped teen who went to a youth group meeting, seemingly on a whim. The youth pastor read a fictional letter, supposedly from a friend who had died and gone to hell. The pastor used the analogy that every snap of a finger counted as a soul lost to death.

The story frightened Jim. He could see the snaps, and that night he accepted Christ into his life.

From that moment on, Jim couldn't stop telling everyone he met about Jesus. Three days before his mother died, Jim brought the youth pastor over to speak with her,

and she accepted Jesus as her Savior. At her funeral, the pastor shared the Gospel.

Jim's brother, Bobby, wasn't a Christian either, and he was in a gang. The night after the funeral, Bobby beat Jim unconscious because he had tried to share the Gospel with him. Jim was rushed to the hospital, and his brother was jailed.

The next week, Jim died from severe hemorrhaging behind his right eye. His last wish was that his youth pastor would keep sharing the Gospel with Bobby. Because of Jim, Bobby eventually came to Christ, even though he was in jail.

Jim's story really affected me. He was a mentally-challenged teen, and



yet he brought more people to Christ than I have even *thought* to speak to about God. If one teenager could do all of that, what about me?

At Dare2Share, they sent the youth to collect cans of food for the needy and to evangelize the people whose doors we knocked on. It was simultaneously one of the most terrifying and rewarding experiences of my life. I was pushed to the limit, going up to complete strangers and asking them about their faith and then sharing mine.

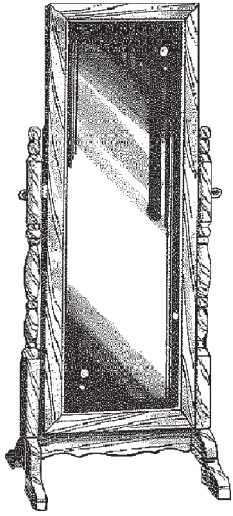
Not all of the people were receptive. In fact, some doors were slammed shut in our faces. One man never even answered the door, although we knew he was there because we saw him pick up his dog. However, some groups did lead people to Christ that day, right there on their front porches.

The outreach was amazing. More than 5,000 teens shared the Gospel with half of the population of Lincoln! We planted seeds that will hopefully grow into full, mature relationships with our Creator.

I took the challenge, and I'm now committed to sharing the Gospel with as many people as I can.

How many of *your* friends and relatives do you want to go to hell for eternity? How many have *you* shared the Gospel with? What are you waiting for?

Snap. Snap. Snap. **SR**



Reflections

by Leanne Lippincott

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

On hallowed ground

While I was growing up in Milton, Wis., I was a dyed-in-the-wool "hoyden." Among other definitions, that word refers to a "bold, boisterous girl; a tomboy."

Like most girls, I played "house" with my dolls, reigned over tea parties, and helped Mom in the kitchen. But my first love was playing Cowboys and Indians, and War. (Obviously, I wasn't a "politically correct" child.)

Playing war was especially fun since there was never any blood—unless I accidentally scraped my knee on a rock or pricked a finger while camouflaging myself in my folks' blackberry patch.

Military engagements on Plumb Street were a lot like black-and-white John Wayne war movies: entertaining, exciting, and totally devoid of stomach-turning gore.

I especially loved playing war in "The Nursery," a large, tree-filled cow pasture just beyond our orchard. It had a big gully that my friends and I used for cover as we picked off enemy soldiers with our toy rifles and cap pistols. It was also the perfect setting for getting shot by invisible bullets.

Clutching our chests or stomachs like miniature Audie Murphys, we fell to the ground and slowly rolled down the gully's slopes to an ignominious end. More than once, I could have won an Academy Award for "Best Dramatic Death Scene."

Although I was just a youngster, I knew in my heart that real war

is never fun. The game I played with childhood friends was a far cry from the "police action" in Korea.

Addressing cadets at the Ohio State Fair in 1880, Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman said it best. Summing up what generations have known since Biblical times, he stated simply, "War is hell."

When my father-in-law died earlier this year, we drove to the

***I feel
humbled,
when I think of
the men and women
who have sacrificed
so much for this
country.***

National Military Cemetery in Fort McPherson, Neb., for his interment service. As a member of the Army Air Corps during World War II, he was eligible for burial with full military honors.

With the sound of rifle shots still ringing in my ears, I watched in silence as my mother-in-law, Dorothy Lippincott, was handed a folded American flag in honor of her husband's service.

After the ceremony, I spent some time walking among the precisely placed grave markers, reading loving inscriptions and noting death dates. The seemingly endless, ramrod-straight rows of white crosses stretched out before me like foam on a sea of grass.

I thought of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and how the Nebraskan dirt beneath my feet was also hallowed ground. Countless military men and women, along with their spouses, have been laid to rest there; young lives cut short, and long lives lived to the fullest. Horrific memories of battles fought, and of friends lost, are also buried there.

I feel humbled when I think of the men and women who have sacrificed so much for this country—the wounded as well as those who gave their very lives. I also think of those who will bear the scars of war forever, emotional as well as physical.

Like most Americans, I take freedom and its blessings for granted.

I get impatient in grocery store checkout lines, but give little thought to those who don't have the money or opportunity to stock their cupboards. I get frustrated when a favorite political candidate loses, but forget that voting is still outlawed in many countries. I complain when plane fares go up, but ignore the fact that some countries impose travel restrictions.

Because of those who have fought—and are fighting—to keep us free, we are a blessed nation. **SR**





The President's Page
by Robert Van Horn

Use the weapons in your arsenal

In 1 John 3, we find an important directive: *“This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another... This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”*

Would you consider loving someone enough to lay down your life for your (spiritual) brother or sister? “Laying down your life” doesn’t necessarily mean literal death. It can be sacrificing what you normally do, loving enough to give of your time or finances.

Do we love the way Christ requires?

We’re informed in 2 Corinthians 10:4 that “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

At least three “weapons” make up the Christian arsenal: Scripture (Ephesians 6:17), prayer, and fasting (Matthew 17:21 and 6:5-18).

These weapons are to be used to demolish such “strongholds” as a sin that we can’t seem to control. How many times have you or I said that we won’t let any unwholesome words come out of our mouths, only to fail in the next breath?

Romans 8 describes the battle between the spirit and the flesh, or the sinful nature (NIV).

In verses 7-8, we find “the sinful mind [flesh] is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do

so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”

Most Christians immediately think of the “big” sins—lust, adultery, murder, and stealing. However, the “little” sins seem acceptable. Galatians 5:19 lists them right along with the big ones. All of them are still sins, and sin separates us from God.

These so-called minor sins are things like rage, dissension, envy, selfishness, and discord. They mani-

***These weapons are
to be used to demolish
such “strongholds”
as a sin that we can’t
seem to control.***

fest themselves when we’re critical of others (discord), trying to have the church service our way (selfishness), and trying to have positions of authority so we can control things (pride of life). (*See 1 John 2:15-17.*)

Far too many of these sins are tolerated and have become common practice in our churches. The Church is the Bride of Christ and is to be made into the image of Christ.

These thoughts should spur all of us to action.

Do you love your brother enough to use the spiritual weapons at your disposal? Are you, or someone you know, seeking to be a Christian and

yet still struggling against the strongholds in life? If so, begin using the spiritual weapons that we have to demolish these strongholds.

If your church is in conflict, it’s possible that strongholds exist that need to be torn down. God is all powerful and has given us the authority to be about His Kingdom’s work, the work of *reconciliation* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

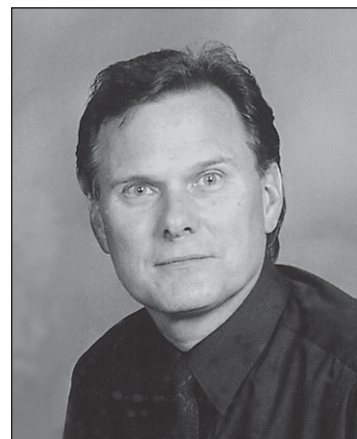
How committed are you to love your brother? How committed are you to God?

Scripture tells us that we will be known by our fruit. *Making Christ’s Mission Our Mission* is to carry on His work—preaching the Good News to the poor, proclaiming freedom for prisoners, recovering sight for the blind, releasing the oppressed.

Are you about your Father’s business? Please join me in this exciting ministry! **SR**

Footnote: There are many forms of fasting. Those of you who have certain food requirements for health reasons can still “fast” by meeting those requirements in a basic way. The goal of fasting is to commune with God in a special way, disciplining your body, mind, and soul.

There are many good resources that deal with fasting, so please do some research. Just as with any spiritual discipline, expect to grow as you learn what works for you. To fast without seeking special time with God is simply called a “diet”!



*by Executive Director
Rob Appel*

What does “Christian” mean to you?

What *should* it mean to You?

What is a “Christian” and what does that term mean to you?

From the dictionary

Webster’s Dictionary defines a Christian as “a person professing belief in Jesus as the Christ or in the religion based on the teaching of Jesus.”

This is a good start in understanding what a Christian is. However, like many secular definitions, it doesn’t really communicate what the biblical meaning of a Christian is.

From the Bible

In the Bible, we find the word “Christian” only three times in the New Testament.

In Acts 11:26, “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” The behavior of Jesus’ followers was Christ-like in their speech and activity. However, the unsaved people of Antioch actually used the name “Christian” as a contemptuous nickname to make fun of the early believers.

In Acts 26:28, Paul asked King Agrippa if he believed the things that he had told him. The king responded, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

The king obviously didn’t want to be known as a Christian because of the connotation that it meant at the time. Paul answered King Agrippa with, “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am.”

The last place we find the term “Christian” is in 1 Peter 4:16, where it says, “However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”

From your perspective

Now that you have some background, what does it mean to *you* to be a Christian?

That word has lost a great deal of significance over time. It has often been used to describe someone who is religious or has high moral values.

Many people who don’t believe in Jesus still consider themselves Christians because they go to church. They believe that if they simply go to church, serve the less fortunate, and live good lives, they’re automatically Christians.

Going to church doesn’t make one a Christian, any more than going to McDonald’s makes one a hamburger.

Some people believe that because they live in a Christian nation—or at least one founded on Christian morals—they are Christians.

Even believing in God doesn’t make you a Christian. Satan believes that there is a God. Is he a Christian? I sure hope not!

From the Lord

So, again, what makes a person a Christian?

We’re told in Ephesians 2:8 that it is “by grace that you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

Christians are individuals who have been born again, putting their faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Christians are people who have repented of their sins. They don’t put their trust in religion, moral codes, or in a list of “dos” and “don’ts.” Rather, they put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ *alone*.

Simply put, a true Christian is someone who has put his or her faith and trust in Jesus.

Genuine Christians are, indeed, Children of God; people who are part of God’s family, ready to inherit their Father’s riches. **SR**

The soul set free, *cont. from page 12*

Earlier, the apostle stated that man's sin has made God angry, so angry that He will destroy man (1:18; 2:5, 8). Here, Paul relates God's answer to man's dilemma, as if in response to a series of questions.

- What is God's only requirement for justification? It is through *faith* (v. 22).
- Who may benefit from God's offer of justification? It is for *all* who believe, the circumcised and the uncircumcised (v. 22).
- What is God's motive for justification? Why does He do this? It is by God's *grace* (v. 24).
- What part does obedience to God's law play in justification? It is *apart from* the law (v. 28).

The benefits of justification

When God declares a person righteous, that declaration comes with more benefits than the two Paul mentions in Romans 5:9-10. As you survey the previous verses in the chapter, note the other advantages of justification that Paul mentions:

- Peace with God
- Access to God
- Glory of God
- Perseverance for God
- Character by God
- Hope in God
- Love of God
- Spirit of God

What difference has having just one of these made in your life?

He illustrates justification with Abraham

Paul goes on to explain that God's means of dealing with man's sin is

justification, he seems to present a contradictory view of the law. He says that justification "apart from works of the law" (3:21) serves to "establish the

After establishing the consistency of God's remedy for man's sin, Paul focuses on the way God justifies—that He bases justification on the Messiah.

not new. He has always operated this way, and He illustrates justification with Abraham (4:1-25).

As if to answer the same series of questions, the apostle shows the consistency of God's plan.

What was God's only requirement for Abraham's justification? It was through *faith* (v. 3). Who benefited from God's offer of justification? It was for *all* who believed, the circumcised and the uncircumcised (v. 11). What was God's motive for Abraham's justification? Why did He do it? It was by God's *grace* (v. 16). What part did obedience to God's law play in Abraham's justification? When did God justify Abraham? It was *before* the law (vv. 10, 12).

He bases justification on Messiah

After establishing the consistency of God's remedy for man's sin, Paul focuses on the way God justifies—that He bases justification on the Messiah (5:1-21).

Jesus' death brings blessing to those who believe, namely salvation by God and reconciliation to God (vv. 9-10). Jesus' death also brings life—eternal life—which contrasts sharply with the condemnation that awaits Adam's descendants who do not accept what God offers (v. 21).

Earlier in Paul's discussion of sal-

vation, he seems to present a contradictory view of the law. He says that justification "apart from works of the law" (3:21) serves to "establish the

law" (NAS) or "uphold the law" (NIV; 3:31). How can this be? The answer lies in recognizing four stages in a believer's life during which the law plays different roles, from some to none.

Four Stages in a Believer's Life

Stage #1: The process of *conversion*

The process of *conversion* is a person's gradual awakening to his need for God's pardon. Whether it takes years or minutes, the person becomes increasingly aware of his sinful condition. In that process, the law plays a convicting role (3:20b)

Stage #2: The moment of *justification*

The moment of *justification* is God's declaring a person to be righteous. It is immediate, occurring the instant a person turns to God in repentance and faith. At that moment, the law plays no role; justification is entirely and exclusively by God's grace (3:24a).

Stage #3: The process of *sanctification*

The process of *sanctification* is a person's gradual aligning of his life to God's perfect standard. It is a long-term undertaking by which

the person becomes increasingly godly. In that process, the law plays a conforming role (instructing the believer about the righteous lifestyle he should adopt; 6:19).

Stage #4: The moment of *glorification*

The moment of *glorification* is God’s transforming a person to perfection. It is immediate, occurring the instant a person receives his resurrection body. At that moment, the law plays no role; glorification is entirely and exclusively by God’s power (8:30).

Paul’s concern

Paul’s concern, in this letter and elsewhere, is with the way two groups approach step #2: Jews who misuse the law (making works a basis for justification) and Gentiles who misunderstand the law (thinking works leads to justification).

The law, however, is a means of sanctification (step #3), which is the gradual making of what God declares *about* us to become a reality *in* us.

Justification is a change in our position

Justification is the decision God makes to declare us righteous because of the forgiveness He graciously provides through His son’s

death on our behalf. That declaration changes our position before God. We are no longer His enemies; we are now His friends.

God bases His decision entirely and exclusively on His grace. Here, we contribute nothing. No amount of good on our part—not even obedience to His law—can enhance the efficacy of Jesus’ atonement. Justification involves all of God and none of us.

Sanctification is a change in our *condition*

If we accept God’s declaration of our justification, He intends His

**Justification
is the decision
God makes
to declare us
righteous.**

pronouncement to begin a process that does involve us. We must follow justification, that change in our *position*, with sanctification, a change in our *condition*, by renouncing sinful behavior.

Sanctification is the course we

undertake to make us righteous. This is possible because of the guidance God provides through His law’s instruction and because of the support He provides through His Spirit. Here, we do contribute something. Sanctification involves some of God and some of us.

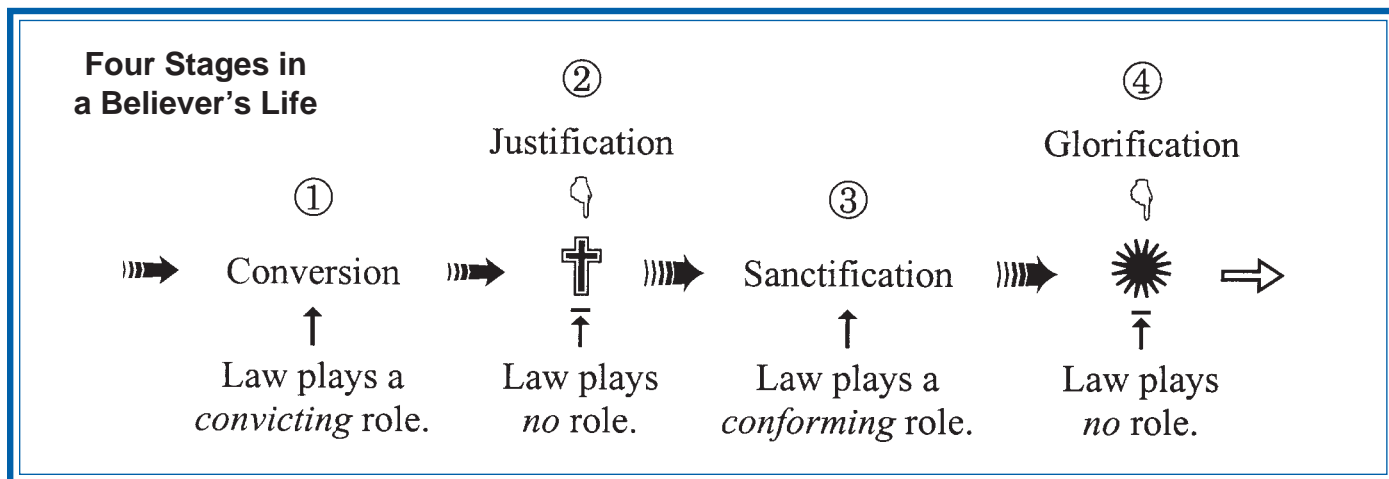
The pegboard of God’s plan

Those who would make God’s forgiveness depend on man’s obedience are applying the law where it does not belong, like trying to put a square peg in a round hole.

The round hole of God’s pardon accepts only the round peg of God’s grace. To make the square peg of God’s law fit into the round hole of God’s pardon would distort the law into something God did not intend for it.

In this way, a proper understanding of justification accords with (in Paul’s words, “establishes” or “upholds”) a proper view of law, whose benefit for the believer is only in (the square hole of) his sanctification.

“Sanctification” is the next topic Paul covers, and it will be the subject of next month’s study. There, we will also examine the role of the Holy Spirit in helping us to become holy. **SR**



2006 Youth Missions Project

*Faith Orphanage
in
Zambia, Africa*

YFs will
Unite on
May 13, 2006
Each church
has been mailed
a brochure—
ask to see it!

New members

Milton, WI
George Calhoun, pastor
Joined by letter
Candice Hurley
Tim Richards
Joann Richards

Family news updates

Thank you for keeping us in-
formed of your family news. If
you need more of the two-part
information forms, please let us
know. You may also e-mail your
updates to us at:

editor@seventhdaybaptist.org

Obituaries

Curtis.—Rosalie Curtis, 67, of
Lexington, N.C., died on January
31, 2006, at the Myeloma Institute
for Research and Therapy, Univer-
sity of Arkansas for Medical Sci-
ences in Little Rock. She suffered
a heart attack while being pre-
pared for treatment of multiple
myeloma.

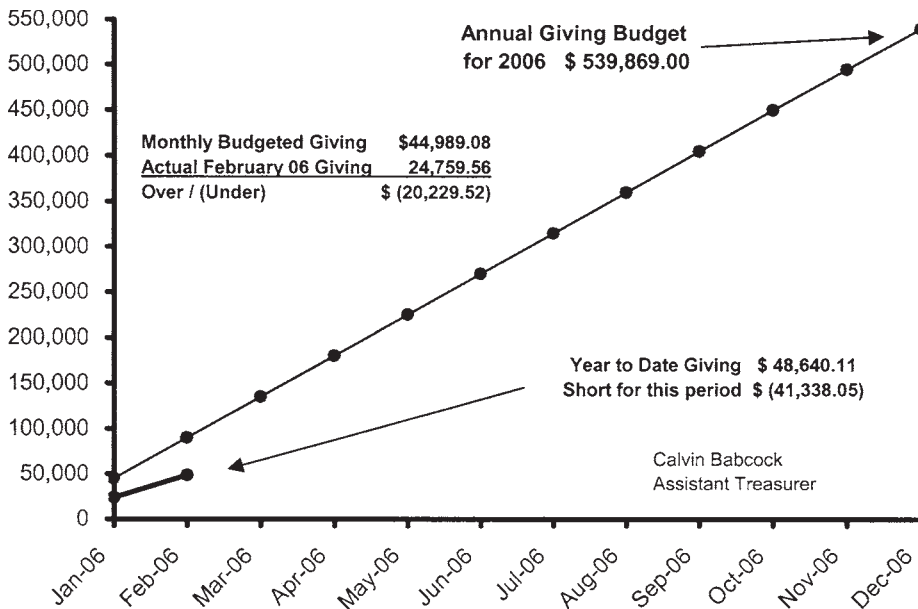
She was born on November 20,
1938, in Manville, N.J., the daughter
of Joseph and Loretta Bielanski. She
married Thomas Curtis, and together
they raised four children in Manville
and Whitehouse Station, N.J. Tom
died in 1989.

Most of Rosalie's life centered
on her family. After years of partici-
pation in the SDB Church of Christ
in Plainfield, N.J., she and Tom
helped organize the North Jersey
SDB Fellowship. That group even-
tually became the Raritan Valley
SDB Church.

Rosalie's love for music and her
beautiful singing voice made her an
important part of church and com-
munity vocal groups, including the
Sweet Adelines.

She was an energetic and outgoing
person, making friends wherever
she went. Not long before her death,
she received her real estate broker's

Current Giving 2006



THANK YOU
to those churches
and individuals who gave
generously toward
the
**Mid-Year
Conference Offering.**
Over \$17,000 was
earmarked for the
Conference ministries.

God bless you!

Obituaries, *cont.*

license, a proud accomplishment.

Survivors include two sons, Jonathan of Fort Meyers, Fla., and David of Hamilton Square, N.J.; two daughters, Nina Prol of Leawood, Kan., and Tara Curtis (Gibson) of Lexington; three sisters, Patricia Mehalick of Manville, Alice Barth of Bridgewater, N.J., and Dolores Pelesky of Hillsborough, N.J.; one brother, Richard Bielanski of Hillsborough; and eight grandchildren. In addition to her husband, one sister, Loretta Terepan, preceded her in death.

A memorial service was held on February 5, 2006, at the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center Chapel in North Carolina. Rosalie had made many friends during her final years in that state.

Her funeral was held on February 6, 2006, at the Ketuskus Funer-

al Home in Manville, with Pastor Jeanne Yurke officiating. A committal service followed at the Rosemont (N.J.) Cemetery.

Johnson.—Emma M. Burdick Johnson, 82, of Waterford, Conn., died on February 26, 2006, at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital in New London, Conn.

She was born in Rockville, R.I., on March 21, 1923, the daughter of Rev. Paul S. Burdick and Hancy (Brooks) Burdick. She married Paul A. Johnson on July 14, 1963.

Emma was an English teacher in Rhode Island, the Seaside Sanitarium, and at Waterford High School.

She was a faithful member of the Waterford Seventh Day Baptist Church and the SDB Missionary Society. She sang in her own

church choir and in the choir of the First Congregational Church of Groton, Conn.

Emma enjoyed walks to the beach and offering hospitality to everyone. She planted hundreds of daffodils in her garden, and loved to share her flowers and zucchini bread.

Survivors include her husband, Paul, of Waterford; two daughters, MaryJo Johnson of New York, N.Y., and Teresa Johnson of Waterford; four brothers, Robert, Victor, Stan, and Leroy; and one sister, Marion Maxson. Her twin sister, Esther A. Burdick, predeceased her in July of 2000.

A graveside service was held on March 1, 2006, at the West Neck Cemetery in Waterford. A memorial service will be held later at the Waterford SDB Church.

Teacher, pastor, prison minister passes

Helen Ruth Green, 74, of Milton, Wis., died on January 15, 2006, at Mercy Hospital in Janesville, Wis., following a brief illness. She lived in Daytona Beach, Fla., prior to moving back to Wisconsin.

She was born on June 12, 1931, in Albany, N.Y., the oldest of four children born to J. Paul and Elizabeth (Johnson) Green. She attended Milton College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In 1954, she received a B.S. degree in Home Economics Education from Stout State University in Menomonie, Wis. She then began a 17-year career teaching home economics in Clinton and Black River Falls, Wis., and as a home economist for UW Extension in Green County. Later, she also taught at Blackhawk Technical Institute in Janesville.

In 1969, Helen received an M.A. degree in Christian Education from



Helen Ruth Green
1931–2006

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill. In 1976, she earned a Master of Divinity from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Ill. She was ordained in 1978 and accredited that same year.

In October of 1976, she became the pastor of the DeRuyter, N.Y., Seventh Day Baptist Church. Late in 1977, she started her prison min-

istry “as a volunteer for Christ.”

Helen had a remarkable passion for the work and was good at it. She once wrote, “I spent the most useful years of my life in that special ‘niche’ of ministry to prisoners.”

She also conducted a jail and prison ministry while living in Verona and Rome, N.Y.

Helen was one of those rare individuals whose life spoke much more eloquently than her words. She gave her life to ministry—whether in the classroom, from a pulpit, or in the confines of a prison.

Survivors include two brothers, Paul and Frank Green of Milton; one sister, Georgia Colflesch of Sedalia, Mo.; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held on January 20, 2006, in the Milton SDB Church with Pastors George Calhoun and Herbert Saunders officiating. Interment was in the Milton Junction [Milton West] Cemetery. **SR**

The price of freedom, *cont. from page 11*

So what are we to do to be free of sin?
That is the good news of the Gospel.

Because Jesus is the Son of God,
he was able to live a perfect life.
Though he was tempted just as you

The essence of the Good News
is this: For God so loved the world
that He gave His only son to die
in our place (because the wages of
sin is death). He says that whoever

of Iraq is that now 25 million people
will have the opportunity to hear the
Good News. Jesus has paid the pen-
alty for my unrighteous behavior,
and my slate before a holy and just
God is clean.

As Christians, we don't need to
be about forcing religion on anyone.
We need to always be ready to give
an accounting for the faith that we
have, and reach out to those who
recognize that they are in need.

My testimony is this: "I once was
lost, but now am found; I was blind,
but now I see."

If you have not experienced this
freedom that Christ offers—and if
you see the need in your life for fun-
damental change—I encourage you
to seek out this amazing grace that
Jesus offers.

This freedom is not free, because
Jesus paid the price. But he offers
it freely to you. **SR**

**Part of the reason that
I'm so glad to be part of the liberation
of Iraq is that now 25 million people will
have the opportunity to hear
the Good News.**

and I are, he resisted and was with-
out sin. As such, he became the per-
fect sacrifice for a world of sinners
who could not save themselves.

The Bible tells us that we were
bought at a price. That price was
Christ's death on the cross which
paid the penalty for my sin.

(that's all-inclusive) believes in
Him should not perish but have
everlasting life. Not just freedom
from the desire to sin, but free-
dom even from the bondage of
death. That is good news!

Part of the reason that I'm so
glad to be part of the liberation

Denominational Dateline

April

- 1-2 Denver, Colo., SDB Church—Nick Kersten
- 1 Alfred Station, N.Y., SDB Church—Gordon Lawton
- 8 Alfred, N.Y., SDB Church—Andrew Camenga
- 13 SDB Missionary Board Office, Westerly, R.I.—Ron Elston
- 14-15 Group in Saco, Maine—Elston, Kirk Looper
- 17 Maryland branch churches—Looper
- 18-19 Churches in Maryland—Elston
- 22-23 Memorial Fund Quarterly Meeting, Colorado Springs, Colo.—Calvin Babcock, Rob Appel
- 22-23 Missionary Society Board of Managers Meeting, Westerly—Looper, Elston
- 23 Board of Christian Education Directors Meeting, Alfred Station—Camenga
- 26 New York State—Babcock (to May 24)
- 28-30 Allegheny Association, Alfred—Camenga
- 29 First Hopkinton SDB Church, Ashaway, R.I.—Looper
- 29-30 SDB Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting, SDB Center—Kersten, Appel

- 30 Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society Annual Meeting, SDB Center—Kersten

May

- 5-7 California trip—Camenga
- 6 Alfred Station SDB Church—Kevin Butler
- 13 Northwest Days, Portland, Ore.—Appel
- 13 Alfred Station SDB Church—Camenga
- 13 First Hopkinton SDB Church—Looper
- 20 Eastern Association, Pawcatuck, R.I.—Looper

June

- 1-4 Baptist History and Heritage Society Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.—Kersten
- 4 Ashaway, R.I.—Looper
- 9 TCC Core Committee, SDB Center—Butler
- 10 Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Diaconate Workshop—Camenga
- 19-30 Summer Institute on Seventh Day Baptist History, SDB Center—Kersten, Lawton
- 25 Senior Camp Staff, Camp Joy, Berea, W.Va.—Camenga (to July 2)

KEVIN'S

ORNER

So many options, so little time

Knowing that I would be in Washington, D.C. in March, I was asked to make a nearby church visit. I usually leave home for the Baptist Joint Committee meetings on Sunday afternoons, to have at least part of the weekend with my family and home church.

Well, this year's BJC meeting followed on the heels of the mid-year General Council meeting in Florida. And I had already tacked on a couple of extra days of needed sunshine.

(We had set those General Council dates months in advance. So how was the Council to know that our son would be inducted into the National Honor Society at the same time? Actually, Jackson didn't find out until just a few weeks before the ceremony.)

Back to that church invitation: Considering the ballooning activities calendar, and seeing that I would have to catch another flight the day after returning from Council, I decided to decline that visit and would try to reschedule.

Back to Florida: Since I had plugged in those extra days in the Sunshine State, I called my sister (who lives there on the Gulf Coast) before I left home to see if we could get together on that Tuesday or Wednesday. Getting no response, I figured that her school was on a winter break and I made some alternate plans.

My sister finally called back on late Tuesday afternoon, and said that we could see each other the following evening. So how was she to know that something else had come up?

While at the Council meeting, I got word that a parishioner had passed away. The funeral was scheduled for the Friday—the day I *would* have left home for Washington to make it in time for that church visit on Sabbath.

I had to tell my sister that I was cutting short my time in Florida, to return to the northern climes a day early. *Maybe next time, Sis.* The parishioner's family had many memories to share for the funeral service, so it was good to get home early and make preparations.

So, fast forward to Sunday and my scheduled trip to Washington. I rushed to catch the early afternoon bus to O'Hare.

The two-hour trip to the airport went smoothly, although I noticed some snow flurries in the air. Entering the terminal, I was greeted with the news that my 4:11 flight was pushed to 6:00 p.m. Then it was delayed until 6:38. We were waiting for our plane to fly from St. Louis through the snowstorm. The 6:38 became 7:08 (not a good feeling).

When the 7:08 morphed into 7:38, I started consulting my bus schedule in case I had to return home. It turned out to be a good plan. The flight was cancelled (among many others).

Were there any other flights available to our nation's Capital? The best the gate attendant could do was to offer me a 4:00 p.m. flight the next day. So how was she to know that that was the time of my return flight home?

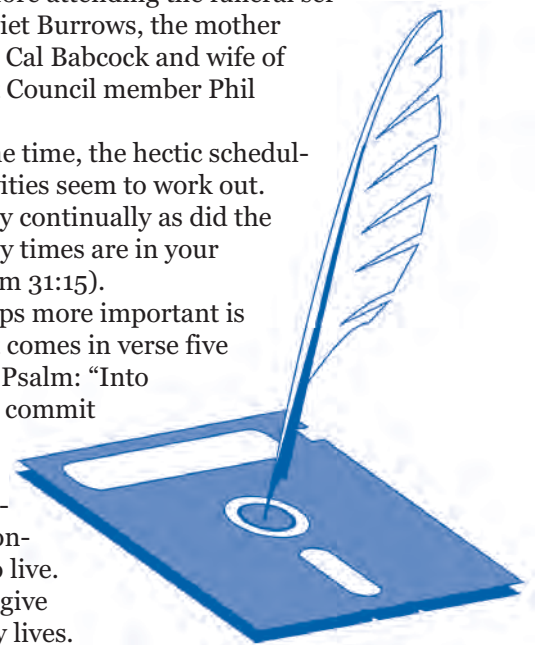
After nine hours of attempted travel, it was good to be at home in my own bed.

And the next day (when I should have been gone), I was able to get in a good number of hours at the office before attending the funeral service for Harriet Burrows, the mother of co-worker Cal Babcock and wife of former Tract Council member Phil Burrows.

Most of the time, the hectic scheduling and activities seem to work out. I need to pray continually as did the Psalmist, "My times are in your hands" (Psalm 31:15).

But perhaps more important is a prayer that comes in verse five of that same Psalm: "Into your hands I commit my spirit."

Giving God your calendar is a wonderful way to live. May we also give Him our very lives.





Important Memo:

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

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

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

GRACE AND PEACE,

Kevin

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