



The
Sabbath
RECORDER

February 2007

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists

A black and white photograph showing two hands, one on the left and one on the right, reaching out from the sides. They are positioned over a mound of dark soil. A small, young plant with three leaves is growing out of the soil in the center. The background is a bright, cloudy sky.

New Life
New Hope

The Revitalization
of SDB Churches



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

“Service Classifieds”

These local ministry situations are looking for willing and qualified help:

Colton, Calif.—Need Spanish-speaking volunteers to help organize, promote, and grow a Spanish SDB ministry

Hungry Horse, Mont.—People interested in doing evangelistic outreach in our community/area

Paint Rock, Ala.—Those called to serve in evangelism, children's and young people's ministries, church planting, outreach support, and music

Pine Ridge, S.D.—The REZ Connection ministry to Native Americans

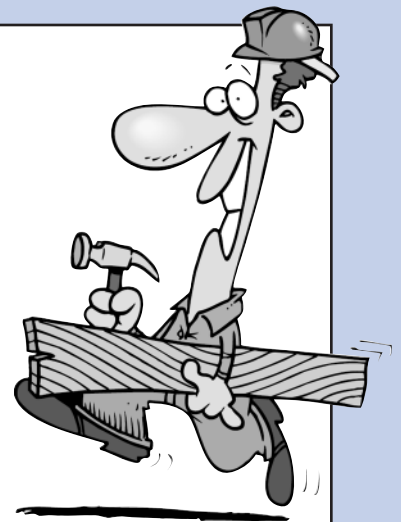
Seattle, Wash.—Looking for young adults to become active members in our growing church

Medical Mission—Short-term to Guyana, August 9-21 (rcdavis16@sbcglobal.net)

“Senior Saints”—Possible projects (calvin@seventhdaybaptist.org)

For more details, contact Dave Davis at dave@davispiano.com

**Come
and help
build God's
Kingdom
at Camp
Harley Sutton**



The Allegheny Association Camp Trustees announce that a new building is going up at Camp Harley Sutton in Alfred Station, N.Y. A single-story, 24 x 78-foot wood frame building will sit on a concrete slab where the old Crandall Dorm used to be.

Ready to bring your tools, roll up your sleeves, and enjoy the fellowship of like-minded servants? The fun begins on **April 29**, with food, lodging, and devotions all included!

To reserve your bunk, contact Lyle Sutton at (585) 973-2081, or lbsutn@infoblvd.net.

If you can't be there in person, you may send a donation to:

**SDB Allegheny
Association of Churches
2810 SR 244
Belmont, NY 14813**



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Goal: From good to great

by Ellen Olson

The Berlin, N.Y., SDB Church was a good church whose goal was to become a great church. As that happened, the church changed in size and character.

For years, its regular attendance was about 30 people. In the past five years, attendance has risen to between 70 and 90. This change happened slowly and intentionally. In the process, our congregants stepped out of their comfort zones and were stretched as believers.

With help from the MORE 2000 program (Mission of Revival and Evangelism), the church set small, manageable and measurable goals to help us grow. Kennon Calahan's book, *12 Keys to an Effective Church*, and Lyle Schaller's *Looking in the Mirror* supplemented that process.

The MORE 2000 Committee worked with Pastor Matthew Olson to develop a new vision and mission statement. A retreat time together helped to identify who we were as a church and where we wanted to go. Our new vision and mission statements were discussed, and church members brainstormed ideas for ministry.



The Berlin SDB Church was organized in 1780.

We have learned that if we are doing what God wants us to do, growth will come—but not always where we expect it.



Change can be frightening, so we informally shared this vision with individual members over time.

Since this vision was significantly beyond where the church currently was, we proceeded slowly in discussing how to achieve it. We needed to decide whether we wanted to grow, and what we needed to change in order to grow. We also addressed obstacles to growth, including lack of vision, poor community image, and previous growth attempts.

We built upon what we did well as a church, focusing on our youth programs and outreach to the poor. We had a strong high school youth group, so we started a middle school youth group, and eventually a children's group. We are in the process of hiring a part-time staff person to disciple young people who currently attend, and to evangelize those who don't.

We have almost completed a new addition to our church, built in part to accommodate our youth ministries. Our ministries to the poor have undergone similar changes and development.

Over time, we have learned that if we are doing what God wants us to do, growth will come—but not always where we expect it. None of the poor families we have helped attend our church regularly. However, a number of people began attending our church because of the ways we care for the community.

While we have had many people begin attending because we were meeting their children's needs, far more young people have gone through our program while never darkening the church door.

As a church, we learned that change is needed to be effective. Our programs today are much different from those we undertook five years ago. And they will not look the same five years from now.

We have also learned that growth doesn't come merely from programs, but from being open and ready to be used by God.

Like a lot of SDBs, you probably have a good church. With God's help, it can become a *great* church! **SR**

A mind to work

by Pastor Bob Babcock



All our committees and organizations focus on how they can contribute to reaching out into the community.

The new approach of the Marlboro SDB Church might not sound like a new approach to some. Our focus is now on becoming more of a community church. However, the biggest problem is determining what constitutes our “community.”

The Marlboro church sits on a major route in southern New Jersey near Bridgeton, but it’s still a rural church, some distance from any significant populace.

Even though Marlboro isn’t a large church, it’s made up of wonderful, gifted people who want to be part of a vibrant, growing church. To this end, all our committees and organizations meet regularly and focus on how they can contribute to reaching out into the community.

For the first time in many years, our church hosted a Vacation Bible School (VBS) in 2005, in cooperation with the Shiloh SDB and Cohansey Baptist churches. Our hope was to reach out and involve our community in this ministry.

We went door-to-door and also advertised VBS through our church newsletter, mailing it to all of the households in the surrounding area.

We had a wonderful turnout, both in 2005 and 2006. In fact, so many children attended that we had to erect several tents to accommodate everyone.

Because of its success, we experimented with several follow-up ideas.

One was a Bible Club that involved both youth and their parents. We also encouraged the young people to become involved in Association camps. Then, later in the summer, we held a “Camp for a Day” here at the church.

The Ladies Aid has held several activities the last two years, including a Quilt Show. Showing their old and newly-made quilts, they also invited other community residents to display their quilts and share in a tea time.

The Evangelism Committee has provided “The Way of the Master” evangelism training, and promoted several community-wide service projects.


One new tradition we’ve initiated is our “Community Barbecue Day.”

For this outreach activity, we put out a big sign and invited everyone to join us for a free barbecue. We set up canopies, and provided numerous activities and games for kids as well as a great meal.

Our gifted congregation has been promoting other new outreach programs, including a new young adult group; a new and improved website; enhanced landscaping and other physical improvements that make our church look more inviting; and a new computer that allows us to project worship helps and the sermon outline during worship.

Not surprisingly, we discovered that all of this activity is a lot of work.

In many ways, the Marlboro church reflects what the prophet Nehemiah said about the remnant of God’s people in Jerusalem: “So we built the wall—for the people had a mind to work” (Nehemiah 4:6).

The people of the Marlboro SDB Church not only have many good ideas; they also have a mind to work! 



The Marlboro SDB Church was organized in 1811.

Watersheds spur growth at Alfred Station

by Luan Ellis

Recently, while celebrating the 175th year of the Alfred Station (N.Y.) Seventh Day Baptist Church, denominational Historian Nick Kersten visited our church. He talked about “watersheds”—events that change the direction of a church’s flow.

“What watersheds has your church experienced over the years?” he asked. Looking at more recent times, we came up with two events.

Our first watershed was something that several of our church families participated in. “The Colors Program” was designed to help us discover our individual colors.

Four colors represented different personality types. As we determined our own color—and the colors of other participants—we realized how each of us works. This helped us understand what to expect from others and how to deal with our differences.

The program did not lead to an increase in church attendance or membership, but it did assist us in becoming more unified in our work for the church.

The second watershed was our participation in MORE 2000: Mission Of Revival and Evangelism.

This program was developed by our Conference’s Coordinating Lead-

We seem more unified in our quest to grow spiritually and in reaching out to those in the community.



ership Team (CLT) in the early 1990s to assist local churches and Associations in developing their vision for health and growth. The denomination provided resources to guide the churches, and local churches were responsible for carrying out the assignments.

MORE 2000 required that local pastors lead the program in their churches.

Not having a pastor at the time, the Alfred Station church had already decided that it needed to head in a different direction. We wanted to be a healthy, growing church, and we were looking for ways to accomplish that goal.

After receiving a special dispensation to begin the program without a pastor, a committee prepared to present MORE 2000 to our congregation. That’s when we realized that we needed to call a special person as our pastor, someone who could lead us spiritually and have the energy to get us going.

Soon after we began that study, God sent us our pastor, Ken Chroniger, and he started working with us right away.

First, we had all of our Sabbath School classes study the nature and purpose of an SDB church. Then we spent

a weekend storyboarding to evaluate our present ministries.

Through this process, we discovered our strengths and weaknesses. We found that most of our strengths fell into the program-centered area rather than ministry-centered programs. We wanted to go in a different direction.

One of our younger church members returned after being away for a few years and scolded us for being the same church as we were before. We had no new people, and we weren’t growing. *We needed to do something.*

As we completed our study, we developed a Mission Statement and a vision for the Alfred Station church. Since then, we may not have grown as much as we projected, but we are growing.

We now have four adult Sabbath School classes instead of one, and we have anywhere from 10 to 28 youngsters for the children’s message. We also have new attendees and members with “non-SDB” names like Cherry, Quick, Gulliver, etc.

When Sabbath attendance falls to what it was before we started to grow, our church feels empty.



The Alfred Station SDB Church was organized in 1831.

In our community outreach, we had a mission to a group of low-income housing residents, and we transported several children to church and Sabbath School each week. We now house and run the Alfred Area Food Pantry.

The County WIC program uses our church, and our fund-raising dinners bring in new people.

Our most powerful outreach tool is Vacation Bible School, which draws around 60 children from our church and the community. About 29 of our members help with this program.

Our pastor says that any time our church can be used by a local group or for the community, we

are letting people know where we are and that we can minister to them.

The Alfred Station SDB Church has changed within the hearts of its members. We seem more unified in our quest to grow spiritually and in reaching out to those in the community. We have begun to relax our “Western New York pride,” and are more willing to share our needs with each other. We can certainly see the work of the Holy Spirit within our church family!

Recently, Pastor Ken shared a sermon on the three “lost” parables from Luke 15—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.

In each of these instances, something was lost that belonged to a

group—the flock of sheep, the other nine coins, the son’s family. As each “wayward item” rejoined their group, a celebration took place because it was found and returned.

We have been challenged to look for those who have been “lost” from our church. And we look forward to a time of celebration and fellowship when they return.

Our Heavenly Father has truly blessed the Alfred Station SDB Church, and watersheds have certainly changed the direction of its flow.

We ask for your prayers in our continued quest for God’s will to be done—not only in Alfred Station, but in neighboring communities and the regions beyond. ✠

“Know Fear” Youth Fellowship

by Wayne and Kris North



The purpose of our group is to equip every person for the good work and mission field God is calling them to.

Hello from us up here at New Auburn, Wis. We are excited about what God is doing in our church, and around the country and world. Go Jesus! We are happy to share with everyone the vision God has given us. Here are 13 points of interest He has laid on our hearts:

1) First and foremost, **YF is church** to us. Our Youth Fellowship is where many people have come to make decisions to follow

Christ. We then attempt to get them plugged into the formal “church.”

2) We are a **family**. Many in our group have other churches where their families attend. Yet, they consider this group/church their family. We reach out to many of the hurting and lost people. Their hearts are ready to be restored by Jesus Christ. Most want forgiveness and love. So, here we are!

3) We truly try to make this ministry a **seven-day-a-week outreach**.

We meet both Wednesday and Saturday evenings; other nights vary based upon community and school activities. When these other activities happen, our group has great representation. We encourage involvement in ecumenical activities. Sometimes the youth outnumber the older folks at “adult” activities such as prayer group or Bible study.

4) We see **everybody**—every day and everywhere—**as our mission field**. While we sometimes rock the boat (especially in school), we always want to do the right thing, in the right way, in the right timing. By doing the “right” things, we know that the Christ living inside us will bring controversy in the hearts of others. We must impact the world around us. And, it’s not always preaching Jesus. It’s building relationships. It’s giving hope to a hopeless world.

5) We are committed to **praying**. It is not unusual to find our group

spending 30 minutes to over an hour each week praying. This group has many intercessors. We even have assigned pages of the phone book for us to pray over those names. We have chosen to attack the strongholds of Satan's kingdom. Our group continues to see God do miracles in both the physical and spiritual realms. If it's the Father's will that none should perish, why isn't it ours as well? Everything must be saturated in prayer.

6) We are committed to **praising and worshipping** the Lord. Music was created by God to give Him honor and glory, so let's do it. We look for people with the anointing to play and sing, yet the best form of worship is living a holy life.

7) We are committed to **studying God's Word** for His wisdom. We try to implement only His precepts into our discussions and lives. We tackle heavy issues and do not shy away from unpopular views. We believe the "Social Gospel" preached by many nowadays tells only half-truths, and half-truths are total lies! Only the Truth will set them free, and whom the Son sets free is free indeed. This generation wants the Truth!

8) We believe in **mentoring** each other. The purpose of our group is to equip every person for the good work and mission field God is calling them



The New Auburn SDB Church was organized in 1879.

to. We want to give people the spiritual weapons to overcome this world, then get out of their way for God to move the way He wants. "Controlling" people is like witchcraft. We don't do that—we try to give encouragement and shepherding. We believe in building relations and the Kingdom of God one heart at a time.

9) We help people **identify talents** and "giftings," and try to give opportunities for these qualities to be nurtured and developed. The time for youth to use their abilities is now! We lose too many people to the world because we tell them to wait until they get older to get involved in church. They need responsibilities *today*. Everyone wants to belong. Why not belong to the best and most active family in the world? Each week there are opportunities for the youth and others to preach, sing, share, invite, lead, pray, and more!

10) We **encourage older people** to get involved, especially parents. With the destruction of families, these kids need to know that other generations care for them. It has been neat to see new relationships build between the generations. A healthy church is made up of spiritually healthy people of all generations.

11) We **attend powerful concerts**, conventions, and hear dynamic speakers (like John Bevere and Acquire The Fire). We need to hear that the Word of God changes lives and has the power to resurrect lives out of the daily grave. The power of Grace needs to be implemented in our lives and churches each and every day.

12) We have **visions and goals**. While we may be more serious than many youth groups, we still have tons of fun. We want people to understand that they are *enlisting*, not joining a club. For this reason, we have a lot of fluctuation in numbers (between 20-50 each week). But each

time a new group comes through, we gain new, permanent family members. Praise God! The other ones have heard the Gospel and seen it in people's lives. The decision is now up to them. Many times our greatest opponents are the parents. They want their children to find "religion," and are intimidated when they find a relationship. Yet, we must not vary from our call.

13) Thirteen reminds us of a baker's dozen. Sweet! Literally!! This one is the most important. The main reason we were created was not to go to church, or evangelize, or to read the Bible, or be holy, or fellowship with one another, or follow the Ten Commandments. These are all wonderful, but we absolutely need to follow the main reason: to **have a relationship with God the Father**, through His Son Jesus Christ, under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Sin is symptom of an improper relationship with God. "Draw closer to God and He *will* draw closer to you." The church often fails by dealing with the *symptoms* rather than dealing with the *problem*. We teach and nurture intimacy with God.

While we fall short and have our own problems at times, and while each week is a challenge of its own, God still provides. He is so good, all the time! Amen!

The words just shared are so inadequate to show the whole picture of what God does for us each week in New Auburn. Seek His vision, seek His face, seek His will, and seek His voice for your YF. Keep an eternal perspective in all that you do. After all, Father knows best!

May God anoint and appoint your current and future ministries. **SR**

P.S. Feel free to contact us—Pastor Wayne and Kris North—for more specific information. We would welcome hearing from you. New Auburn church: (715) 237-2616; home: (715) 237-2778.

Prayer power proclaims package

The message is Jesus!

by Ed Cruzan



The single most important revitalizing factor over the past 10 years is a renewed devotion to prayer.

The “revitalization” of our church in White Cloud, Mich., has come about in three separate but integrally connected areas: The Power—Prayer, The Proclamation—Outreach, and The Package—New Wineskins.

I am indebted to the members of our fellowship for their prayers, their vision, and their willingness to step out in faith to proclaim the name of Jesus.

The Power—Prayer

The single most important revitalizing factor over the past 10 years is a renewed devotion to prayer. Prayer is our lifeline to the Father. It is communion with God. It is staying intimately connected to our first love (Rev. 2:4).

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we become unified with God, and *His* purpose becomes *our* purpose.

We now seek the Father’s will in ways previously untested, neglected, or abandoned. Prayer has taken on a dedicated portion of our daily lives and the collective life of the fellowship.

Specific prayer ministries have been organized to bathe the believers in continual prayer. Prayer now occurs in the middle of telephone conversations, as we discuss concerns, as praiseworthy news is announced, and as we drive down the highway. The once-occasional

It is essential for a church to have a vision to proclaim the full Gospel. This means we must have visionaries.

“Thank you, Jesus” has become the ever-present “Praise the Lord!”

In order for prayer to become an integral part of our lives, we each need to experience a personal revival: a commitment to seek God and His will for us as individuals. This takes hard work. We must be open to a humbling of our spirit, confession, repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and unity.

As with the Apostle Paul, leaders must set the example for the fellowship. Our pastor has been vital in this renewed emphasis on prayer. For us, prayer is not only top-down but bottom-up. The fellowship must support the leader wholeheartedly in prayer. The discipline of prayer must be made clear by specific examples of when, where, and how to do it.

At the church in White Cloud, the pastor prays daily for our prayer leaders, prayer coordinators, and all members. Prayer leaders are assigned to lift up specific individuals daily in prayer. Members are asked to lift up the pastor to God in prayer daily.

Small group ministries pray daily for concerns of individuals brought to their attention. Small group coordinators meet on Friday afternoons to lift up requests to God. Pastors from throughout the SDB Conference and local pastors from other denominations are lifted up weekly as part of the Sabbath worship experience and throughout the week.

In our personal prayer devotions, it is absolutely essential that we ask ourselves: Is there anyone I truly cannot pray with? If anyone has trouble joining together with another believer in prayer, it is a “God-sized signal” that there is disunity in the body and reconciliation is needed.

Before any mission or ministry can be effective in the name of Jesus, it must be bathed in prayer and blessed with power. God hears the prayers of the righteous and they please Him (Prov. 15:8, 29). Peter counsels us to avoid inconsideration and disrespect so that our prayers will not be hin-

dered. (See 1 Pet. 3:7; also Matt. 5:23-24, and James 5:13-19.)

Our prayers will be powerful and effective when we are reconciled to our brothers. We must personally and collectively confess our sins and be healed.

Has the church in White Cloud gotten this right yet? Absolutely not! Praise be to God our Father that through His grace “He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

The Proclamation—Outreach

Having released the power of prayer, that power must be directed to proclaiming the message. The message, pure and simple, is Jesus! Our church is in full agreement with the Conference President’s theme for this year, “Tell the truth... the whole truth.” We like to call it the “full” Gospel.

It is essential for a church to have a vision to proclaim the full Gospel. This means we must have visionaries. Spirit-filled people within the fellowship need to receive a vision for this proclamation.

The King James Version of Proverbs 29:18 says that “where there is no vision, the people perish.” In Acts 2:17, Peter quotes from the prophet Joel when he says, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit to all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”

MICHIGAN



The White Cloud SDB Church was organized in 1917.

Who among our young men sees visions? We encourage young people to seek the Lord with all their heart while He may be found, and to testify about what the Lord is revealing to them. Having discovered the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God, the visions then become empowered by the prayers of the righteous.

Diaconate offers spiritual covering for the pastor in prayer, counsel, and support. The pastor, in turn, seeks to allocate authority among the members to accomplish the targeted objective. Therein lies our duty as soldiers. We must take the spiritual gifts Christ has given us, open them and use them to the

***We must take the
spiritual gifts Christ has given us,
open them and use them to the glory
of God as members of one army,
the unified Body of Christ.***

The message of Jesus is good news to those both inside and outside the fellowship. However, Jesus commanded us to go into *all the world* to preach the Good News and make disciples. In obedience to that command, we have made a concerted effort to look outside the confines of our fellowship.

Our primary evangelistic targets are those who do not yet know Jesus. Since our objective is to reach the lost for Christ, we often experience ebbs and flows in attendance, with expanding and contracting cycles of growth and commitment. While many come and go, others become committed disciples of Christ.

Outreach requires a serious commitment of manpower. When each of us accepted Christ as our Savior and Lord, we enlisted in God’s army. As soldiers, we must always keep the message of Jesus foremost in our minds. According to Romans 7:6, we are empowered by the Spirit to “serve in a new way.”

As anointed by God, the pastor must be the leader. We are blessed to have the pastor as our leader and as one of our visionaries. The

glory of God as members of one army, the unified Body of Christ.

One way we have mobilized the army is by using small groups of two or three. When the Holy Spirit gives a vision, we allow that to be revealed, tested, and supported. When two or three have been moved by the Holy Spirit to “catch” the vision, the vision has been confirmed and prayer empowers it.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:19, we are careful not to kill visions by putting out the Spirit’s fire. In most cases, the vision will grow and eventually produce a harvest. The fellowship must maintain unity with the Spirit to accomplish God’s work in a vibrant and vital way.

The Package— New Wineskins

Can disharmony, discontent, and disunity bog down the empowered proclamation of the Gospel? Yes, and it’s usually in the package—the outward “wrapping paper.” The church in White Cloud tries to look beyond the wrapping to the gift’s message found inside.

Matthew 9:17 says, “Neither do men pour new wine into old wine-

skins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” The Holy Spirit quickens each of us anew with “new wine” at our rebirth.

I praise the Lord for my brothers and sisters in Christ in White Cloud! Hopefully, those of us who have been in the family of believers for many years have grown to a greater level of spiritual maturity. Hopefully, we are reaching “unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and are becoming mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

Hopefully, all of us who are mature are forgetting what is behind

***We have
been conscious
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and straining toward what is ahead (Phil. 3:13-14). Hopefully, by now we are eating solid food (Heb. 5:14). Hopefully, we are secure in our salvation through Christ to see the absolute importance of the Gospel message for those who are perishing.

As the church in White Cloud continues to receive newly baptized believers, we have been conscious of the new wine—the indwelling of the Holy Spirit among new believers. We have made concerted efforts to make new wineskins to put the new wine into. As longtime believers—with old wine contained in old wineskins—we must not seek to put the new wine into the same containers as ours. (*See box for some “new wine” examples.*)

So the gift does not change; only the package the gift is wrapped in has changed. Jesus, and Jesus alone, is our message. Paul said, “I become all things to all men [I put on different wrapping paper] so that by all possible means I might save some [with the message]” (1 Cor. 9:22).

“New Wineskins” at White Cloud

Two examples of “new wineskins” we made for containing the new wine:

- White Cloud’s Teen Center was founded by our church over 10 years ago. It is simply a package in which to present the message (empowered through prayer and created through vision). The Teen Center has made approximately 24,500 contacts with teens in our community. The “wine” needed to support the Center has been approximately 14,700 man-hours.

- The Mission Team of the White Cloud church averages between eight and 12 members. We have sent 23 foreign missionaries to Mexican SDB churches on three occasions; six missionaries to the SDB churches in England; three to SDBs in Guyana; three to SDBs in Jamaica; and two to potential SDBs in Nepal. That makes more than 37 foreign missionary sojourns into all the world. In addition, the Team sent five missionaries to Sunshine Mountain SDB Church in Mississippi, and 28 to Camp Holston in Battle Creek, Mich. New Michigan SDB churches have been started in Grand Rapids and Muskegon. An outreach effort to plant an SDB church in Chicago, Ill., is still ongoing. The Mission Team focuses on supporting Seventh Day Baptist missions and considers missions a function of the local church.

It is important to remember that we are all vital members of the Body of Christ. Our church is eternally indebted to the support received from the SDB Memorial Fund, the General Conference, the member churches of the North Central Association, and fellow believers throughout the denomination and local community. They have all encouraged us and built us up in the name of Christ.

We humbly pray that our church here in White Cloud will never forsake its first love. **SR**

Other “new wineskins” at White Cloud—created through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—include: Sabbath Delights, Youth and Junior Youth Fellowships, church remodeling, handicap elevator, Senior Moments, Friendship Feasts, Men’s and Women’s Bible Fellowships, Young Adult Bible Fellowship, Powerpoint presentations, Hallelujah Herald, worship band, drama ministry, chimes ministry, Basic Bible Knowledge Bible Studies, Pastor’s class, Bible classes for all ages, sound systems, electrical instruments, Monday Monthly Mission Meals, van ministry, Believers Outreach and Leadership Development (BOLD).

Small? Not in God's eyes

by Deb Kagarise

When I think about revival in a small church, two things come to mind: I realize that the *importance* of a small church is not in question, nor is the *place* of a small church in the Body of Christ.

The problem, in my view, is how to get the small church over its feeling of *smallness!* Many churches equate the size of their congregation with their ability to fulfill the call of God in their part of Christ's Body.

Revival is mentioned several times in the Psalms. In each verse, renewal of life, stimulation of spirit, and rejoicing are lifted up:

"Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name" (80:18).

"Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?" (85:6).

"I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word" (119:25).

"My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life" (119:50).

Revival of any kind begins in the heart. The heart of the person in the pew is the starting place. Until each heart is in tune with God, it cannot

Revival of any kind begins in the heart. The heart of the person in the pew is the starting place.



be in unison with the other parts of the congregation. A congregation divided—no matter what the size—is one that Christ cannot and will not use to further his Kingdom.

Many small churches are made up of biological families. That can create an atmosphere of familiarity that in turn can cause others with talents, gifts, and potential to be overlooked.

Sometimes the attitude of "We've always done it this way," or "We can't do that; we don't have enough people!" can get in the way of church and spiritual growth. This type of attitude in the small church can hinder young (or not-so-young) persons from trying new ideas or seriously considering taking on a church leadership position.

In an area made up of several small congregations of diverse denominations, the churches around Salemville, Pa., have for many years met together for various services, putting aside doctrinal differences to work together for the good of the community.

We are blessed to have *two* Seventh Day Baptist churches (one in the U.S. and Canada Conference, the other in the German Conference) so close that we

can see each other coming to worship on Sabbath morning. Although some view it as strange and impractical, we see it as a wonderful opportunity to look across the meadow and see brothers and sisters sharing in the God-given gift of the Sabbath.

Revival, revamping, revitalizing—whatever we choose to call it—*must* be desired. God does not force His Spirit, His excitement, His joy, or His power on anyone! Until we "hunger and thirst" for Him as the "deer panteth for water," there will be no spiritual or physical growth in our churches.

Let's focus on the *quality* of our church, and the *quantity* will take care of itself.

The Bible contains many examples of God using small things to teach huge lessons. David, though small in stature, defeated Goliath by the power of his faith, not by the power of his size!

I encourage you to measure your church in blessings and victories, not in the number of full pews. **SR**

P.S. If you want a better church, pray for yours.

PENNSYLVANIA



Salemville

The Salemville SDB Church was organized in 1885.



The heart of missions

For at least 30 years, I feel that I have had a heart for missions. But when I hear of young missionaries holding a huge snake between them deep in an African jungle, I begin to wonder if I have the stomach for missions. I know that I have a *heart* for it.

While I ponder and pray about whether God will ever use me “out in the trenches,” there are those who are doing mission work right here in their home churches.

Last month, I promised more mission news from around the Conference. February is the month when we see hearts of every kind—from handmade cutouts with dried-paste fingerprints, to elaborate silk and lace ones. So I thought that this was a good time to reread the annual reports of our women's societies and church aids, with an eye open for the heart of their work. Here are my findings:

Household items, bus passes, phone cards, and clothing make their way to the Daytona Beach (Fla.) Domestic Abuse Shelter, thanks to the SDB Church Aid there. This body also periodically donates food and clothing to “Friends of the Homeless,” and each Christmas fills shoeboxes for the migrant children in Pierson, Fla. Each winter, the group has enjoyed hosting meetings for our denomination's CLT and General Council.

Encouraging outreach, covering expenses, and promoting “church family” bonding are goals expressed by J. Ellenbacher on behalf of the Plainfield (N.J.) church. Members of their Women's Society help provide meals for the Wednesday Night Bible Study, which augments their street ministry and brings more people to the church.

Adding to their usual bake and yard sales, the White Cloud (Mich.) Women's Circle held a quilt sale, raffling one they had made using old pictures of their quaint town. This helped fund a local nurse's trip to take supplies to Venezuela. In addition, they helped families in their church with utility bill payments and supplied food boxes. They joined the Battle Creek (Mich.) SDB Church in supporting a mission team's work at Camp Holston.

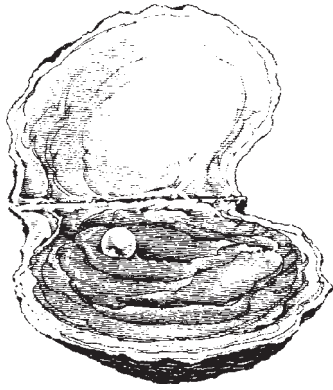
Rez Connection, the New York City Bus Ministry, and the Cornerstone Women's Resource Center received contributions from the Shiloh (N.J.) church's Benevolent Society as their coin jars filled up. The members actually used baby bottles to collect change to supplement the many baby items they also provided for the Cornerstone Center. Shiloh also helped fund the denominational budget, SCSC, and the Women's Board Love Gift by selling Tupperware, baked goods, and T-shirts.

Thanksgiving Fellowship Meals, organized annually by the Verona (N.Y.) SDB ladies, provide funds for the local Rescue Mission by way of a love-gift offering taken at each meal. Every fall, all the ladies also sell pies (with many requests for favorite varieties from repeat customers) at the Town Fire Department's Craft Show, raising funds for SCSC, VBS, and the SDB Women's Board Conference Love Gift.

The Women's Society of the First Alfred (N.Y.) SDB Church continues to run their OP Shop on Tuesday afternoons. This allows them to contribute gifts to SCSC, PROP, the denomination, the SDB Women's Society Love Gift, the Alfred Station Food Pantry, and tsunami relief.

My findings are conclusive: Each of these societies, having a heart for missions, are **H**elpful, **E**ncouraging, **A**rtistic (if not artistic, altruistic), **R**esourceful, and **T**hankful.

Please take a moment to thank God for each group—and our churches as a whole—asking Him to develop in you a “heart after His own heart.” **SR**



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

A living legacy from an extinct church

Sometimes I have to dig through pages of history to come up with topics for *Pearls*, and other times they fall unexpectedly into my lap.

The latter happened recently when I received a 116-page, letter-size copy of a book entitled, *Settling on the "Hard Bank" of the Fox River—Memories & Maps of the Seventh Day Baptists of Berlin, Wisconsin*. Written by Marjorie Lind, the town clerk of Berlin, it was sent to me by Gini Fields, the daughter of Kenneth Babcock.

Ken was prominent in the school system and SDB church of Milton, Wis. He had thoroughly researched the history of the Berlin church—a once thriving frontier ministry that nurtured several key denominational leaders.

In June of last year, a marble memorial marker was dedicated on the site of the Berlin Seventh Day Baptist Church. Built in 1850, this church is a prime example of several churches involved in the westward migration during the 19th century. Planted by Seventh Day Baptists, these churches nurtured strong Christian young people who became leaders during our denomination's most prosperous growth.

The earliest founders of the Berlin church were from the Milton church, which in turn had been made up largely of "transplants" from Alfred and adjacent churches in Western New York State.

The very name "Berlin" has its roots from two early settlers, Datus

E. Lewis and Alanson Tabor. Lewis and Tabor were natives of Petersburg, N.Y., which was adjacent to Berlin. (In its earlier days, the Berlin, N.Y., SDB Church had gone by the names Little Hoosick, Stephentown, and Petersburg.)

In turn, the Berlin church (in Wisconsin) was involved in forming other SDB churches in the center of the state—at Christiana, Dakota, and Coloma.

But perhaps the greatest contri-

name of Berlin, Wis., from the town of his youth, Berlin, N.Y.

Datus' father died while serving in the War of 1812. Placed in the care of his grandfather in Hopkinton, R.I., Datus worked on a farm and later became a machinist.

In 1833, Datus married Lucy Wells Greene of Scott, N.Y., and returned to farming. He was also licensed to preach, but as his obituary stated, "It was at a time when the subject of educated ministry was being agi-

***Perhaps the greatest contribution
of the Berlin, Wis. church—on the
"Hard Bank of the Fox River"—
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bution of the Berlin church—on the "Hard Bank of the Fox River"—was the leaders it developed.

Heading the list of the 34 constituting members were Jeremiah and Mira Davis. Their son, Pardon Davis, was listed as the 14th member. The third and fourth names were David and Angeline Platts, while the ninth through 12th were the Lewis family: Datus, Tacy, Justina, and Abram Herbert Lewis.

Interspersed were other names such as Todd, Hubbell, Burdick, Maxson, Clarke, Champlin, Brown, and Babcock. Listing their individual contributions to Seventh Day Baptist history would take pages, but three stick out most in my mind.

Abram Herbert Lewis

A.H. Lewis' father, Datus E. Lewis, was born in Petersburg in 1808. Datus is credited with choosing the

tated, and feeling that one who was to be a religious leader ought to be a man of liberal culture, such as circumstances forbade him to attain."

In the autumn of 1846, Datus moved his family to Milton. The following spring, they moved about 120 miles away to the "hard bank" of the Fox River, later named Berlin.

Datus, the acknowledged leader of the Berlin church, built a schoolhouse on his property that was also used for religious purposes until a church was built.

Perhaps his greatest accomplishment was the rearing of his son, Abram, who later was termed the "Representative Seventh Day Baptist of his Age."

Young Lewis recalled one morning when he was sent to call his father to breakfast. As Abram entered the barn, he heard his father in conversation and thought he had a visi-

tor. He soon discovered that his father was actually in the midst of a fervent prayer. The father paid no attention to his son until he had finished talking to God.

After the Lewis family moved to Milton, and then Berlin, young A.H. became an avid reader. For a time, he came under the influence of spiritualism and began questioning his faith. He even asked to have his name dropped from the church's membership list. But Berlin's pastor at the time—Elder J.M. Todd—refused to do so. Lewis later commented that if he had been left to himself, he probably would have lost his faith and gone adrift.

In 1856, Rev. William C. Whitford, the new pastor at Milton, visited Berlin and found A.H. working with the threshing crews. "Amid the din and clatter of machinery," Pastor Whitford earnestly pleaded for A.H. to attend Milton Academy. The Berlin church licensed him to preach, and he did so regularly at Johnstown Center and the Rock River churches.

On his 21st birthday in 1861, Abram Herbert Lewis was ordained at Dakota at the request of his home church in Berlin. He then left for Alfred, where he became a college

and theological student.

Later, in assessing his ministry, A.H. credited several factors: the influence of his family; the Berlin church and its pastor who refused to give up on him during periods of skepticism; a strong faith that makes one stronger when facing and refuting skepticism; the responsibility of recruitment; and resolute devotion. When A.H. finally found his place in God's work, he gave his all to fulfill God's call.

Abram H. Lewis was probably the most prominent minister, writer, and evangelist in our denomination during the time when SDBs reached their highest population in the United States.

Lewis Alexander Platts

At age 4, Lewis Platts was too young to be listed as a charter member of the Berlin church when he moved from Ohio to Wisconsin with his parents in 1844. About a year later, they settled in the Berlin area.

J.M. Todd, who had helped influence the religious convictions of A.H. Lewis, baptized Lewis at age 12. Unlike A.H., the Platts family did not have a Seventh Day Baptist ancestry. In fact, Lewis' father, David, was not baptized until 1852.

Describing the baptisms of the time, Lewis wrote, "...being submerged in the Fox River, even in winter when two feet of ice had to be cut through—with possibly six to twelve members handed down and then lifted out, one at a time. The administrator remained in the water until all had been baptized. Afterwards, they drove back home by horse and buggy, sometimes as far as two miles away, to change to dry clothes."

In 1855, the Platts family moved back to Milton, and Lewis and his brother were among the first students at the Academy on College Hill. He completed the academic course nine years later because of many hindrances.

In 1861, at the start of the Civil War, Lewis answered the call to arms, but the health officer returned him. His thoughts of the ministry grew, encouraged by his mother's prayers and Elder Whitford's recommendation.

Lewis graduated from Union Theological Seminary and served as an SDB pastor. He was instrumental in forming the Memorial and Sabbath School Boards, and also served 10 years as editor of the *Sabbath Recorder*.

Following a four-year stint as a professor at the Alfred School of Theology, he pastored the Milton SDB Church for 13 years. During his tenure, the church had a net gain of 146 members. His wife, Emma, is credited with forming the SDB Women's Society in 1884 and served as its president for 40 years.

Jeremiah and Pardon Davis

The Davis family moved from the Second Alfred SDB Church in New York and joined the Milton church. Later, they moved to Berlin. The entire family transferred their membership to the Berlin church (except the oldest son, Jeremiah Jr., who married the daughter of Milton's founder, Joseph Goodrich).

Pardon Davis moved to Louisiana, establishing a lumberyard there. When he aided three runaway slaves, he was arrested and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Somehow, his father was able to gain his freedom, but the entire episode sparked a multitude of anti-slavery letters and resolutions throughout the denomination and beyond. He was later involved in an unsuccessful movement to start a church in Kansas.

In 1870, Pardon was murdered in a claim-jumping episode in Wyoming. (*An account of his experience and the resulting denominational outcry can be found at www.wlhn.org/unf/stories/pardondavis.htm*) **SR**

See our website
for the new

SDBlog

The "SDB Exec"
web log
(known internally as 'SDBlog')
features posts—news, reflections,
prayer items—from
our agency executives.

Check it out at
seventhdaybaptist.org.



Use that talent

The parables of Jesus are chock-full of people who make good decisions and bad decisions. They show people who receive rewards, and people who are cast into utter darkness. Many of these stories reveal truths about the Kingdom of God in unexpected ways.

One that catches me by surprise is the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-31.

My first reaction to the parable is often, “How can that possibly tell us anything about the Kingdom of God?”

Yet, Jesus clearly indicates that he is teaching about the Kingdom when he says it is “like a man going on a journey, who summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey” (vv. 14-15).

In the end, the slave entrusted with just one talent returns exactly what he was given—with no apparent loss or breakage. But that wasn’t good enough. Even though he returned the owner’s property intact, that behavior was not acceptable.

I have a hard time understanding how this ending can be fair because I empathize with the slave who was entrusted with the least. I sometimes forget that everything *I* have is entrusted to me by God for good.

I often compare what is “mine” to what is “others.” I see those who have brighter minds, finer dexterity, more powerful legs, smoother voices, clearer insight, stronger leadership,



and sharper writing skills. At those times, I’m tempted to ask, “What possible good could come from the use of *my* ‘stuff’?”

We know the slave asked something similar, because he answered that question with a resounding “Nothing!” Instead of trying to do anything with the property entrusted to him, “The one who had received one talent went out and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money in it” (18).

At this point in the parable, that slave’s reaction seems a little strange but not horrible. Yet, his reaction *was* horrible.

His master was a thief, and his proclivity was probably well known.

When the day of accounting came, the third slave said, “Sir, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. See,

you have what is yours” (vv. 24-25).

The master not only accepted that charge; he even acknowledged that he was a thief. “Evil and lazy slave!” he retorted. “So you knew that I harvest where I didn’t sow and gather where I didn’t scatter? Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received my money back with interest” (vv. 26-27).

It’s clear here that the master expected his slave to know that he was a thief and to act accordingly.

This parable startles me because the master was a thief who had the authority to cast this last slave into outer darkness (v. 30)—a prerogative that I will always associate with God.

However, this parable’s primary focus is on the third slave, not the master. The slave knew what his master was like, and yet he refused to use his master’s property in a way that would please him. His action of simply preserving the owner’s property was unacceptable. He lost his master’s trust; he lost the property he was overseeing; and he lost a place in the master’s household.

What does this parable show us?

It demonstrates that it’s not enough to just know about our God and King, or to recognize the things that He has entrusted to us. It’s not acceptable to say, “Here is what you gave me. I was too afraid to use it.”

Instead, we must first see what God has placed into our hands, and then use it in the way He wants us to. **SR**



FOCUS on Missions

Positive impact in Tanzania

by Kirk Looper

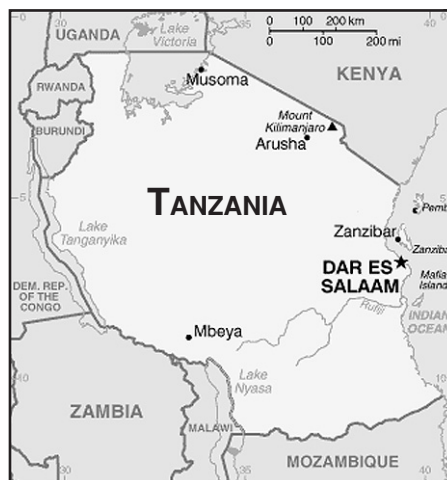
The work of establishing SDB churches in Tanzania officially began through correspondence with Henry Kamwela from 1992 to 1996, and then with Pastor Fares D. Ogillo from 2001 to 2004.

After that, we corresponded with Pastor Mlotwa Silwimba in Mbeya. And just last year, Pastors Lucus Mboya (centered in Dar es Salaam) and Robango Ryakitimbo (in Arusha) entered the picture.

We have continued e-mailing those leaders to help them organize their churches and form a Conference.

There are three centers of SDB activity in Tanzania, located in and around the cities of Arusha and Mbeya, and the capital, Dar es Salaam (Dar). Because of time constraints, we were able to visit only two of these three centers. The northern area of Tanzania doesn't have a center yet, so they have a wide-open field for their ministry.

The work in Tanzania has progressed to the point where the SDB churches there are beginning to reach out to others to form "cells" or fellowships in surrounding communities. Each of the three core



The work in Tanzania has progressed to the point where the SDB churches there are beginning to reach out to others to form "cells" or fellowships in surrounding communities.

churches have at least two additional groups that they call cells.

The stops at the two centers enabled us to visit some of the cells. It was interesting that the members of these "cell congregations" were already committed to becoming Seventh Day Baptists.

It was easy to see that our brethren in Tanzania have a plan to organize and develop the Tanzania Conference of Seventh Day Baptist churches. This plan is delineated with goals, and emphasizes caring for the needy in surrounding communities. They spoke of developing

schools, clinics, and a program to help orphans.

They also recognize that they need these types of programs to fulfill government requirements to register their Conference and churches. Registration is required if they are to meet, work, and organize within communities.

As I traveled through the country, I saw several things that I felt the SDB churches there could do if they had sufficient funds.

Large numbers of orphans were out on the streets at all times of

cont. on page 23



Pastor Mlotwa Silwimba of Mbeya.



Pastor Lucus Mboya of Dar es Salaam.



Pastor Robango Ryakitimbo of Arusha.



the BEACON

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

February 2007

Time... No time... Time out...

by Micayla Neher

Time (n.)—the system of those sequential relations that any event has to any other, as past, present, or future; indefinite and continuous duration regarded as that in which events succeed one another.

* * *

None of us view time the same way. We value our time differently than other people, and we spend it differently, too. Some of us fill our time by working, while others do homework, take care of the house, go to parties, hang out with friends, watch TV, play on the internet, and spend it in many other ways.

How do *you* spend your time?

I'd *like* to say that I spend mine by doing what God wants me to do all the time, and that I spend most of my free time in the Word or praying. But I don't.

I get caught up with the things of this world as much as anyone else. Do I feel bad about all this? Of course I do.

Many of us say, "Oh, I don't have time to read my Bible right now," or "I'll do it another time; I'm busy doing what I want to do."

But where is the joy that comes from that? It may be fun at the time, but eventually it catches up with you. Then what do you do?

My youth leader, Kim, has a pretty busy lifestyle—watching grandkids, taking care of her mother and the rest of her family, and preparing

for YF every week. Yet she still wakes up every day at 6 a.m. to read her Bible for at least an hour.

She started this by simply taking time out of her busy life to read for 10 minutes. Eventually, her reading time stretched to an hour or more. Though she may be tired, she still finds joy in having made that commitment. She finds herself having a more enjoyable day when she takes this "time out."

I have a cousin, Cathy, who has done something very similar.

She decided to make a "date" with God. She told Him that she would wake up at 6 a.m. (it used

to be 5:30!) to read her Bible and do devotions. She's done this for a while now.

Some days she feels too tired to get up. But because she made that commitment with God to have a date, He wakes her up and doesn't let her go back to sleep until she has fulfilled it.

How many of us can say that we have a commitment and devotion to our Lord? How many of us want to have that bond?

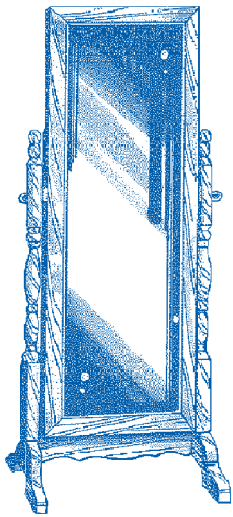
I won't let myself go to bed until I have had that special time with God. I admit that I slip up some days, but most of the time I stick to my commitment.

What are you going to commit yourself to? The world's time or God's time? If you want the same joy that Cathy, Kim, and I have, I challenge you to read your Bible every day.

I'm going to give you the two challenges that Kim and our Sabbath School teacher, Peter, gave our YF and class: First, read your Bible for 10 minutes every day. Secondly, take the time that you spend watching TV, playing video games, sitting at a computer, or doing any other leisure activity, and tithe 10 percent of it to reading your Bible.

Good luck! I hope all of you somehow find a way to make a commitment to God to spend more time with Him. **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*

Outlawing marriage?

It's estimated that one *billion* Valentine cards are bought each year, making it the second largest card-giving holiday, trailing only Christmas.

Like so many things in our society, Valentine's Day has become over-commercialized and intrusive.

While shopping for some post-Christmas bargains, I had to fight my way through stacks of red-furred teddy bears and heart-shaped boxes of expensive chocolates to latch on to some rock-hard marshmallow Santas.

I left the store vowing not to purchase anything even *remotely* related to Valentine's Day until we're into February.

Most of us aren't even aware of the origins of the revelries we participate in with passion and abandon. Valentine's Day, like Christmas, has its roots in both Christian and ancient Roman traditions.

The actual history of the February holiday is shrouded in mystery, but many theories abound.

One legend contends that Valentine was a Catholic priest who lived in the 3rd century. The reigning Roman emperor, Claudius II, was a pretty nasty dude.

One day, good old Claude decided that his army would be better if the soldiers didn't have wives and families on their minds all the time. Especially when they were trying to kill other emperors' soldiers.

So Claudius outlawed marriage, at least among young men entering the military. He decreed that no soldiers could marry, and that the ranks of his army would consist of only single, romantically-unattached males.

As you can imagine, this made people—especially young lovers—sad, bewildered, and generally ticked off. ("Extremely angry" would be a more apt description.)

Valentine—an honest and loving servant of God—was also shocked and angered. He didn't hide the fact that he considered the emperor's decree highly unjust.

Being a man of conviction, Valentine bravely continued to join young lovers in the holy bonds of matrimony, presiding over marriages in secret.

Like all good despots, Claudius was not a happy camper when he learned of the priest's activities—which also may have included trying to help Christians escape Roman prisons where they were being beaten and tortured.

Claudius became so enraged that he vowed to kill Valentine. And he did.

Some historians believe that Claudius had Valentine beheaded, while others think that this man of God became ill and died in prison. Either way, it was a death sentence.

This particular priest was later canonized as the patron saint, "Saint Valentine," but the Catholic Church actually recognized at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus—all of whom were



martyred. (This helps explain some of the confusion swirling around the holiday.)

Some people believe that Valentine's "feast day" is celebrated in mid-February to commemorate the anniversary of the priest's death or burial—which probably occurred around 270 A.D. Others think the month of February was chosen to try to "Christianize" celebrations of the pagan festival, Lupercalia.

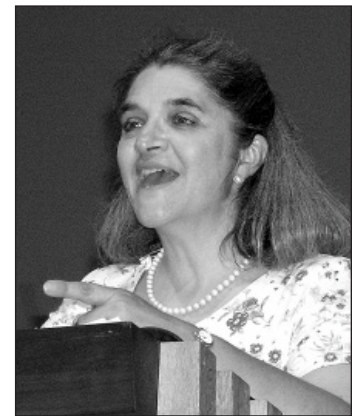
Whatever the reason, around 498 A.D., Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as St. Valentine's Day. And it has remained so since. (That's a lot of years of giving candy and cards!)

The "gifts" of Valentine's Day are great, but why not distribute them all year? A hug or kiss on Sabbath morning, for no particular reason; a bouquet of tulips gleaned from your back yard and given to a neighbor; a long overdue note mailed to a shut-in.

Why not be "saints" year round? We can scatter God's love *wherever* we go! **SR**

tell the truth ... the truth

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

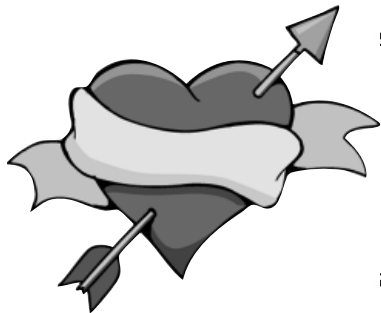


The President's Page
by Ruth Burdick

Finding the lost

February reminds me of dreary, dismal darkness and drudgery. It's one of the winter months in the North that can convey a sense of endless death.

Yet February redeems itself with the love holiday of Valentine's Day,



We need to have a burden for godless men and women who are lost to heaven and lost to life.

set right in the middle of a short month. This paradox of death versus love is thought provoking.

My theme for the fifth day of General Conference this year is, "The Lost are *Really* Lost."

Too many of us gloss over the issue of eternal spiritual separation from God, not wanting to deal with it. We may feel safe, yet we don't want to "judge" or confront our spouse, parent, sibling, neighbor, or even a stranger. The status quo is so much easier.

No, not really! That's a lie and a deception. The truth is that one's eternal destination is vitally important, and we should feel a burden for those who don't know God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and for those who seem to have rejected Him.

In Matthew 26:31-46, Jesus tells of separating the sheep to his right and the goats on his left. Note verse 41: "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Verse 46 reads, "Then they [unbelievers] will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Does this cause a tightening in your heart and give you a sense of urgency? It should.

Turn next to Jude and read the entire one-chapter book.

The author begins and ends with God's great mercy and love for those who believe. This love is given to us in abundance (verse 2). But don't stop there. Read on about the sin and doom of godless men.

Do these descriptions sound familiar? Do you know someone like this?

The Word says, "They [the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the wicked, unbelieving people in them] serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire"

(verse 7). Verse 13 says, "They [unbelievers] are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever."

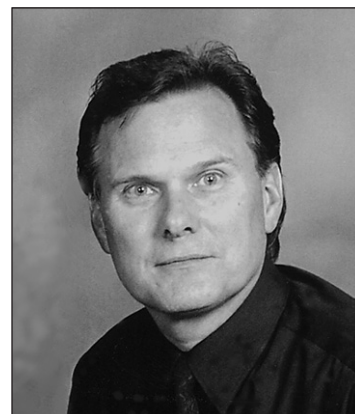
But we have a God-given directive. In verse 22 we're told, "Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh."

Folks, we have a responsibility. We need to have a burden for godless men and women who are lost to heaven and lost to life. We must share, with great joy, our belief in the only God, our Savior Jesus Christ.

This Valentine's Day, make a special effort to share the greatest love ever with someone who is really lost. The lost definitely need to be found. **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 Dir. Rob Appel

Who speaks for Baptists today?

During a “700 Club” TV broadcast following 9/11, Revs. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson spoke harshly of the terrorists and clearly blamed them for the attacks.

Discussing whether the crisis might bring revival to America, Falwell, said, “What we saw on Tuesday—as terrible as it is—could be minuscule if, in fact, God continues to lift the curtain and allow the enemies of America to give us probably what we deserve.”

Robertson replied, “Well, Jerry, that’s my feeling. I think we’ve just seen the antechamber to terror. We haven’t begun to see what they can do to the major population.”

Falwell then added, “The ACLU has got to take a lot of blame for this. And I know I’ll hear from them for this, but throwing God—successfully with the help from the federal court system—throwing God out of the public square, out of schools, the abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad... I really believe that the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way, all of them who try to secularize America—I point the thing in their face and say you helped this happen.”

“I totally concur,” Robertson said. “The problem is that we’ve adopted

that agenda at the highest levels of our government, and so we’re responsible as a free society for what the top people do—and the top people, of course, is the court system.”

On September 14, Rev. Falwell issued an apology for his comments.

In all fairness, these men are often misquoted. However, they can speak in tones that don’t reverberate with the larger Baptist community.

Do we, as Baptists, want Falwell and Robertson speaking for us?

We are starting to see many Baptist churches dropping the name “Baptist” from their identity. Why? Because Baptists are being judged by the words coming from what seems to be “the Baptist voice.”

We need to stop this trend of literal name-dropping. One way to do that is to project a unified Baptist voice.

On January 9, Mercer University joined former U.S. President Jimmy Carter in bringing together leaders of the North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF) to explore opportunities for establishing such a unified voice. The participants represented more than 20 million Baptists in the United States and Canada. (Seventh Day Baptists are a charter member of the NABF.)

One of the main reasons for possibly establishing a unified Baptist voice is the often harsh comments made by Falwell and Robertson. Because these two Baptist pastors

“hold the microphone,” they are the ones being heard around the world.

Mercer University President Bill Underwood and President Carter started this whole conversation of a unified Baptist voice. These laymen were not happy that Baptists were being viewed in such a negative light.

Concerning the January 9 meeting, Underwood stated, “Today is an historic gathering of Baptists from the North and South; black, white, and brown; theologically conservative, moderate, and progressive. All are committed to traditional Baptist values and committed to our obligations as Christians to address poverty, healthcare, and religious liberty. There is power in unity. We Baptists can accomplish more together than any one of us can accomplish alone.”

Determined to seek opportunities to work together as Christian partners, the participants agreed to tentatively plan a convocation to celebrate their commitment to Baptist values and traditions. The possible dates are January 30–February 1, 2008, at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

Seventh Day Baptists are only participating in the “discovery” process of what this all means. The need for a more diverse range of Baptists—all in a unified posture, without political or “conservative vs. liberal” viewpoints—is vital. So far, this has not been achieved. If it *does* happen, it will certainly be a celebration of a New Baptist Covenant! **SR**



To tithe or not to tithe— Is that the question?

by Morgan Shepard

Tithing is an act of worship and an expression of faith to God.

“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’” (Mal. 3:10, NIV).

* * *

Most of us would agree that the command to tithe is not in question. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, tithing is an act of worship and an expression of faith to God.

Tithing is a personal choice, one each of us should come to as we are led. Our “firstfruits” should be tithed first, as opposed to giving after all the bills are paid.

Following a harvest (of salary, time, etc.), the first thing we should do is give our tithe to God. We should tithe first to our local church, since that is the body of believers with whom we have a covenant.

A question many ask is not *whether or not* they should tithe, but *how* they can do it faithfully and consistently.

The traditional, time-tested method of tithing is to drop our tithe into the collection plate on Sabbath. But what if we miss a church service? Do we make it up *next* time? What if we go south for the winter? Do we make it up when we get home?

When this happens, we may unintentionally skip our customary Sabbath donation, or forget our giving altogether. In the meantime, our firstfruits are still coming in.

Modern technology has provided other ways to present our tithes and gifts.

Many of us pay bills on-line, either through our bank or through the company we make purchases from. No stamps, no envelopes, no lost mail! If it’s a recurring bill, we

often set up an automatic payment plan that processes our payments whether we remember to make them or not. (This is *my* favorite method.)

The SDB General Conference uses several technologies to promote consistent, faithful giving.

If you want to give a one-time gift, the “Make a Donation” button on the Board/Agency page at the SDB website [www.seventhdaybaptist.org]


Make a Donation

is probably the way to go. It is secure, quick, and easy.

If you want to give a “regular” gift, we also offer **E-Gifting**. By signing up, you can specify the amount and designate which ministry you want to support on a regular basis. You can change this at any time. Best of all, it’s secure and fast. (*More information is available at the SDB website.*)

If you want to explore on-line giving for your church, there are several internet resources that provide information and services. Your local bank may offer similar services, either through the Automated Clearing House (ACH) network, or through an on-line bill paying service. Check them out.

While all of these methods make it easier to tithe, that is not the intent. God challenges us to test Him to “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...”

Becoming—and remaining—faithful givers is the goal, and these are some tools that can help us along the way. 

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: ‘He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever’” (2 Cor. 9:7-9, NIV).

the day, left to fend for themselves because of war and diseases. (HIV/AIDS is one of the major causes of death among their parents.)

Many of these orphans sit on the sidewalks, begging for food and money for clothing. And not just older youth. Many of these homeless children are less than 5 years old. They're doomed to live on the streets unless a person or church takes them in and helps support them.

Our Seventh Day Baptist churches in Tanzania are very active in this area, with most of the congregations helping these orphans.

The congregants recognize that education is one of the most important aspects of a young person's future, and they believe that it should be offered to orphans as well as the children of the families attending SDB churches. So they have begun schools for nursery and primary-age students. They hope to develop upper elementary grades as the students need them.

Right now, they need money to purchase books, school supplies, desks, chairs, and supportive materials. Plus, each of the main church groups need a school building.

Teacher salaries are partially

covered by the tuition that some of the students' families pay. However, they allow so many orphans to attend school that it creates a real financial burden. The orphans depend upon the school to supply all their needs, resulting in a cost of about \$15 per month, per child. (This includes providing uniforms, food, housing, and educational materials.)

At the time of my visit, an average of 50 orphans attended each school. Some schools have as many as 100 orphans, while in a few, the number drops to about 25.

They also need church buildings. Most of the congregations are able to make bricks, but they need funds to buy sheets of zinc for roofs, and cement to make mortar and floors. Most can come up with the chairs and benches needed for seating. However, some churches can't even afford to purchase those.

They also need study materials and Bibles for their Sabbath Schools, and money to help feed street people.

During my visit, meetings were held to discuss the beliefs, polity, and work of the Conference in Tanzania. We looked at their organization and discussed the direction they intend to take to improve conditions.

I spoke of the importance of reviewing worship-style options and the days of celebrations—baptisms, communion, weddings, and funerals. We even discussed Christmas and Easter; anything that I could think of that could potentially cause problems and disorient the churches.

It was heart-wrenching to see so many young orphans living as street people. Yet, it was touching to see the concern that SDB congregations have for these children.

I truly appreciate the work being done in Tanzania by our SDB brethren, and I pray that they will be richly rewarded. They are working well beyond their ability, and they are sacrificing much to ensure that their churches and schools run smoothly.

Even the government recognizes the positive influence that our churches are having, encouraging SDBs to increase their work and the number of schools they open. We pray that we can reach out and help our brethren as they surge forward to increase their influence.

The Conference in Tanzania is healthy and moving along slowly but surely. They could use a computer to help translate and publish tracts and study materials. Also, a photocopier would save them a lot of money because of the high cost of printing.

I look forward to hearing of the continued growth of the SDB churches and Conference in Tanzania, and I encourage everyone to pray for them. *SR*



The church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

It was heart-wrenching to see so many young orphans living as street people. Yet, it was touching to see the concern that SDB congregations have for these children.

New members

Hebron, PA
JoAnne Kandel, pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Fay Hauber
 Elena Kenyon
 Demaris Kenyon

Milton, WI
George Calhoun, pastor
Steve Osborn, assoc. pastor
 Joined after baptism
 Dan Appel
 Joined after testimony
 Don Matthews
 Josh Snyder
 Evan Wynn
 Annette Wynn
 Michelle Wynn

Paint Rock, AL
John Bevis, pastor
 Joined after testimony
 Mark Strauser

Texarkana, AR
Mynor G. Soper, pastor
 Joined by letter
 Roy Lewis

Marriages

Kersten - Schumitsch.—
 Nicholas John Kersten and
 Brittany Bay Schumitsch were
 united in marriage on July 22,
 2006, in the Milton, WI, Sev-
 enth Day Baptist Church. Revs.
 Stephen Osborn and George
 Calhoun officiated.

Lawson - Noel.—Matthew
 Lawson and Sandra Noel were
 united in marriage on Novem-
 ber 4, 2006, in San Clemente,
 CA. The Rev. Kory A. Geske
 officiated, assisted by Pastor
 George Lawson, father of the
 groom.

Camp JOY Reunion!!

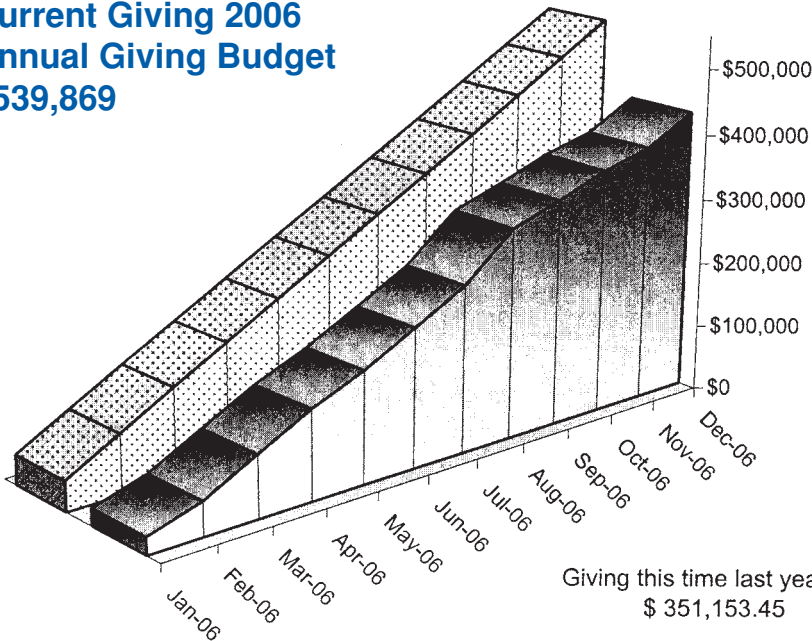
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Current Giving 2006 Annual Giving Budget \$539,869



	Month - Dec '06	Year To Date
Budgeted	\$ 44,990	\$ 539,869
Actual	\$ 39,652	\$ 429,815
Difference	\$ (5,338)	\$ (110,054)
% of Budget	88%	80%

PROP Giving	
Dec '06	\$ 1,505
Year To Date	\$ 6,405

Morgan Shepard, Treasurer



Obituary

McWilliam.—Rubie M. Ferguson Breikreutz McWilliam, 99, died on December 27, 2006, at the Milton (Wis.) Senior Living where she had resided the last four years. Prior to that, she lived in Janesville, Wis.

She was born in Trent, S.D., on May 4, 1907, the daughter of John L. and Lena (Reinholdt) Ferguson. She was a member of the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church, its Women's Circle, and the Milton College Alumni Association.

On July 1, 1939, Rubie married Aaron Breikreutz, who died in 1983. She later married Clarence McWilliam on September 20, 1991. He died in October of 1993.

Rubie graduated from Milton Union High School and worked for one year in the office of the Burdick Corporation in Milton. She later graduated from Milton College and was employed there as a part-time secretary. She also worked as a legal secretary at a Janesville law firm for over seven years.

Rubie helped care for her mother who was ill for several years, and also for her first husband as he battled back from a severe heart attack. She was a 10-year participant in the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, helped the TB and Cancer Associations, and was a member of the Milton Avenue Homemakers.

Survivors include her half-brother, William E. Ferguson of Renwick, Iowa; two stepsons, Norman McWilliam of Milton and Larry McWilliam of Gamaliel, Ark.; two stepdaughters, Lois Watson and Janice Schumacher, both of Milton; and many stepgrandchildren, step-great-grandchildren, other relatives, and friends.

In addition to her two husbands, one brother, Glenn Ferguson, and one half-brother, Vincent Ferguson, preceded her in death.

Funeral services were held on December 29, 2006, in the Milton SDB Church, with Rev. Steve Osborn officiating. Burial was in the Milton Cemetery.

Denominational Dateline

February

2-11 Vacation—Gordon Lawton

March

- 2 Tract and Communication Council (TCC) Core Committee Meeting, Seventh Day Baptist Center, Janesville, Wis.—Kevin Butler
- 3 Central Maryland SDB Church—Rob Appel
- 3 Farewell to Denton Lotz, General Secretary of Baptist World Alliance (BWA)—Appel
- 5 Baptist Joint Committee Executive Committee Meeting, Washington, D.C.—Butler
- 5-7 BWA Executive and Committee Meetings, Falls Church, Va.—Appel
- 18 SDB Missionary Society Annual Meeting, Westerly, R.I.—Kirk Looper
- 23-24 Diaconate Workshop, Salem, W.Va.—Andrew Camenga
- 29-30 Coordinating Leadership Team (CLT) Meetings, SDB Center
- 31-4/2 General Council Meetings, SDB Center

April

- 14-15 Seventh Day Baptist Memorial Fund Quarterly Meeting, Paint Rock, Ala.—Morgan Shepard, Appel
- 18-21 Pastor's Conference meets in Dodge Center, Minn.—Lawton
- 22 Seventh Day Baptist Board of Christian Education Board Meeting, Alfred Station, N.Y.—Camenga, Appel
- 22 SDB Missionary Society Quarterly Meeting, Westerly—Looper
- 28 Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church—Butler

May

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

June

- 18-29 Summer Institute on Seventh Day Baptist Polity, SDB Center—Lawton

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

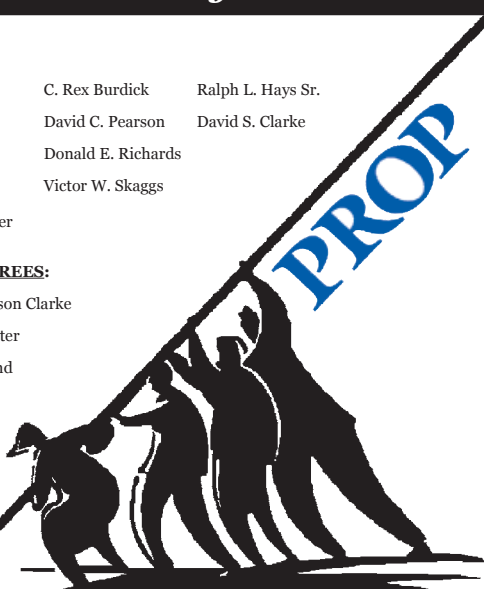
Give to those who gave so much.

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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:

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KEVIN'S

CORNER

Water and fertilize

“Again he said, ‘What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade.’”
(Mark 4:30-32).

At the very moment I had chosen the artwork for this month’s front cover, Jan Ehlers (alias, the “Chapel Czar”) paged everyone with her cheery weekly announcement: “Let’s meet for chapel!”

We all left the confines of our separate offices and gathered in the conference room. It was Gordon Lawton’s turn to lead out.

Following a hymn, Gordon read the Scripture about the mustard seed. Then he shared this story from a Christian-Cyber-Ministries devotional:

There are more than 1,200 varieties of bamboo in the world, all with varying growth spurts. For a certain Chinese bamboo tree, you take a little seed, plant it, water it, and fertilize it for a whole year. Absolutely nothing happens.

The second year: Water and fertilize the same seed. Nothing happens.

The third year: Water and fertilize. Again, nothing happens.

Year one was tough; year two, difficult; and now a third year is almost unbearable! Discouragement floods in.

The fourth year: Water and fertilize. Nothing happens. Utter frustration replaces discouragement.

The fifth year: Water and fertilize haphazardly as “no hope” describes the situation. Then the Chinese bamboo tree sprouts. It grows 90 feet in six weeks!! Talk about a gigantic return on investment!



I thought of the art book down on my desk, open to that photo of a little seedling. Our goal for this issue was to share stories of SDB churches that had experienced a revitalization of new growth.

My prayer is that these “success stories” provide much encouragement and motivation to our church fellowships. But part of me wants to add the disclaimer: “Actual results may vary.”

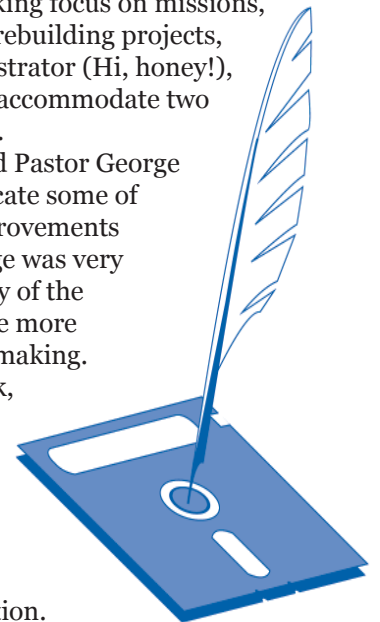
Some groups might look at the successes of other churches and try to emulate the exact same path, expecting instant results.

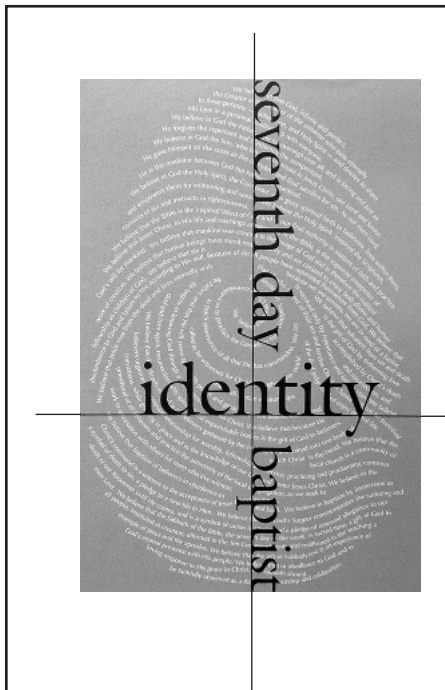
Along with the Alfred Station and Berlin churches (*see the features*), the Milton, Wis., SDB Church received some motivation from the MORE 2000 program. Milton has also benefited from having a long-term pastor throughout that process, George Calhoun.

The Milton church has revamped its ministry team concept, greatly expanded its outreach to children and youth, nurtured an outward-looking focus on missions, sent teams of workers on rebuilding projects, hired an awesome administrator (Hi, honey!), and has grown enough to accommodate two Sabbath morning services.

One young pastor asked Pastor George for advice on how to replicate some of Milton’s changes and improvements at his home church. George was very honest in saying that many of the “overnight successes” were more than a dozen years in the making. George stressed hard work, prayer, vision-seeking, consensus, and patience. The young man “went away sad,” wishing for a quicker solution.

Water and fertilize.
And wait, with expectation.





*We may have lost
our 'Distinctives'...
...but we've found
our 'Identity'!*

Seventh Day Baptist Identity

A very popular item at Conference, this colorful 32-page booklet is the perfect introductory study of what SDBs believe. Filled with Scripture references, each section follows our denominational Statement of Belief (included in the back of the booklet). The cover's distinctive fingerprint is actually formed with words from our Statement—a clever design by artist Pat Cruzan.

The new "Identity" updates and replaces our old "Distinctives" booklets.

Each copy is only 50 cents (plus postage; e.g., 87 cents for one). Please call us for larger orders so we can calculate the shipping costs. Or, go to our on-line store and the new checkout system will calculate the shipping for you.

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