



The Sabbath RECORDER

Inside:

Poorly played,
or poorly tuned?

“Stepping Out
in Faith 2”

January 2013

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists

The lost Presidential Memoirs

UNCOVERED

No, not from these
guys on Mt. Rushmore—
but from the likes of Pethtel, Rood,
Thorngate, Lawton, Skaggs and more

Reflections from SDB Conference Presidents



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 a people with a difference.

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

Rez Connection outreach to Native Americans

The Lord is at work on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota! Is He calling you to join Him for a week of ministry in early April 2013?

The week will include evangelism training, outreach to Native Americans, organic gardening, team chores, and time alone with God. Families are welcome, and individuals 18 and older. We will be housed in a church building, next to the Marks family farm. There are also motels nearby in Martin, S.D.

Contact trip leader Patty Petersen at 720-320-3418 (ppetersen57@hotmail.com), or the SDB Missionary Society at 401-596-4326 (info@SDBMissions.org).



Applications for SCSC team members and church projects have been posted on the Women's Board website. Please watch "How Do I Apply for SCSC?" at sdbwomen.org/application-information, then go to sdbwomen.org/scsc-forms, read all information and send completed application forms to: SCSC Committee, c/o Milton SDB Church, 720 E. Madison Ave., Milton WI 53563.

Student applications must be postmarked by January 12, 2013. All church applications must be postmarked by January 31, 2013—NO Exceptions.

Please note: Students are limited to only two weeks of camp. Training dates are June 12-20. This will be a four-week on-site project, with General Conference as the fifth week of project with the PDs supervising if possible. See the website for further information. You may contact the SCSC Committee at the address above or at SCSC@miltonsdb.org.



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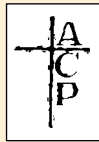


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Features: Presidential Memories

Their leadership continues4
by Kevin Butler
Four former Conference Presidents share their experiences and hopes for the future of SDBs.

The Gospel is our Foundation 7
by Jim Skaggs, President 1993

A dream come true.....8
by Norma Rudert, President 1999

Harmony goes a long way.....9
by John Camenga, President 2000

Holding on to the Truth 10
by Ruth Ellyn Burdick, President 2007

This “observer” tunes into Triumph.....11
by Owen Probasco, President 1997

A week of revelation and recommitment.....24
by Ed Cruzan, President 2009

Departments

Reflections 12 <i>Oh, for crying out loud!</i>	Young Adults 19 <i>Unlovable</i>
Women’s Society 13 <i>“Stepping Out in Faith 2”</i>	President’s Page 20 <i>Which way is forward?</i>
The Nick of Time 14 <i>Timing is everything</i>	Alliance In Ministry 21 <i>The Determination to Serve</i>
Center on Ministry 15 <i>Leroy Bass profile</i>	Financial Faith 22 <i>The Phases of Retirement (Part 2)</i>
Christian Education 16 <i>Good news in a small package</i>	Health & Fitness 23 <i>Healthcare Reform: Does Church have a role?</i>
Focus on Missions 17 <i>Showing them the ropes</i>	Family flux 25
The Beacon 18 <i>Poorly played, or poorly tuned?</i>	Kevin’s Korner 27 <i>Nothing new under the sun</i>



Their leadership continues

From the Editor: Each summer at our General Conference meetings, we nominate and vote on a Conference President-Elect.

The President is to (according to the By-laws) “serve from one session of General Conference through the next scheduled session” and “shall, with the assistance of the General Council, plan and present the program at General Conference during his term of office.”

Sounds simple, right? Only one week of work, right?

Once receiving the gavel at the end of the prior Conference, it is “Game On”! It’s time to secure the preachers, the Bible study leaders, the seminar presenters, the committee chairmen and many other people to fill the positions it takes to run a good Conference. Oh yeah, and after traveling to churches and Associations throughout the year, the President is also expected to conduct the business sessions during Conference week.

Over the years, we have had some awesome Conferences and equally-awesome Conference Presidents. I asked a number of our leaders to reflect on their term of service. Some of their replies are shared here—others will follow in future issues.

Please take some time now and pray for our current President, Dr. Ralph Mackintosh and our President-Elect, Pastor Steve James. And enjoy these memories of Conferences past.

Four past Presidents were together at the SDB Center for joint General Council and Coordinating Leadership Team meetings in December. They had answered most of these questions ahead of time and were gracious enough to pose for photos as they reminisced together.

Sabbath Recorder: Let’s talk themes. Each President is expected to come up with a unique theme for their Conference year. Althea Rood, your Conference in 1991 was based on the theme, “Called... To the Obedience that Comes through Faith.” What inspired you to choose your theme?

Althea Rood: When I talked with a friend about what theme I might use, she thought that the theme of “obedience” characterized my life. It rang a bell with me when she shared that and I knew that I had “heard from God.”

SR: Gordon Lawton, your term was 2001-2002, and your theme was

“What Do These Stones Mean?” Where did you get that one?

Gordon Lawton:

From Joshua 4:6. We were celebrating 200 years of being an SDB Conference so I wanted a theme that would speak to history. I thought about what was important to us today and how we could speak to those in the next 200 years. We could have spoken of people or places, but I chose to focus on our basic beliefs as the stones we use to build.

SR: Conference in 2004. Dale Thorngate, you presided with the theme “Seeking God with All Your Heart.” What inspired that?



Former Presidents comparing notes (from l. to r.): Gordon Lawton, Althea Rood, Dale Thorngate and John Pethtel.

Dale Thorngate: In Jeremiah 29, it says “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you.”

I had been concerned about what Jesus had in mind when he talked about God’s Kingdom. After an extensive Bible study I decided that Jesus wasn’t talking about a future kingdom, but one that he came to bring to all who would follow him, including those of us

here today. After Jesus challenged his disciples *not to worry about everyday things*, he said: “Seek first God’s kingdom, and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

SR: And our most recent Conference saw one of our youngest-ever Presidents, John Pethtel. What inspired you to choose your theme, “Are You Ready?”

John Pethtel: After a lot of prayer, God led me to see that He is at work among Seventh Day Baptists. He wants us to prepare ourselves for His coming Kingdom by being faithful servants. We need to ask ourselves, “Are You Ready?”

SR: So, John, with the freshest of memories, what were your biggest challenges during your Presidential term?

John: My bi-vocational employment was my biggest challenge. I lost my “outside the church” job near the beginning of my term. However, God still continues to provide for my family.

Althea: Mine was somewhat about work, too. My children were fairly young—11 and 13. I only did substitute teaching that year



I was pleased to serve God and SDBs in this capacity. It’s exciting to see God moving in our churches and members. – John Pethtel

so I often traveled to and from churches on Fridays and Mondays.

Dale: Probably the biggest challenge for me came when the decision was made—somewhat late in the game—to hold the Conference sessions at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon. That meant that the Host Committee would be located there in my home state. In many ways that made my plans easier. However, it also meant that I would be more involved in the local planning as well.

SR: How about challenges for you, Gordon?

Gordon: As a pastor I had to balance my presidential and pastoral responsibilities. I was limited on travel since I had responsibilities on Sabbath at home. The church did release me for up to six Sabbaths for trips as Conference President. As with others, there were last-minute changes to the program and leaders as people discovered they could not get there. Leading business was a challenge since I had to give all sides an opportunity to speak, as well as limit the floor to church delegates for at least one topic.

SR: Your biggest joys?

Gordon: It was a joy to serve, and be helped by those who were willing to lead as asked.

It was a joy to see SDBs speak openly, disagree and still worship together.

Althea: Visiting our churches and seeing what God was doing in people’s lives.

John: My biggest joy was seeing the Holy Spirit move among our people as I visited churches, during our meetings of General Council, during our week of General Conference, and even now through the theme for the year. I believe that God will continue to be faithful in revitalizing our churches and helping us to plant new churches.

SR: Any joys for you, Dale?

Dale: Where do I begin? Besides working with the best group of people in the world to make it an exciting and joyful Conference year, I was truly blessed with wonderful music! We had Barbara Saunders at the organ, with Denise Green and Becky Rogers working with the Conference choir.

My two guest presenters added a broader dimension to the meetings: Dr. William Brackney, a Baptist historian and author, and Brent Walker, Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. They both helped SDBs see themselves in relation to the larger community of Baptists.

cont. next page



General Conference sessions

SR: When we think of Conference, we often see it as a family event. How much was your family involved in your extra presidential duties?

Gordon: Linda got to travel with me a little. Two of three children were in college so we only had one left in high school. They all were helping lead in music and other ways at church.

Althea: My husband, Dale, was wonderful in “picking up the slack” at home—caring for our kids, supporting me in my extra responsibilities, and basically, making it possible for me to travel to churches and meetings.

Dale: Since my children were all grown up, the one most involved was my talented wife Janet. She has been my partner in ministry for over 41 years. Her role as confidant, advisor, administrative assistant and counselor was invaluable. She also wrote and arranged the Conference theme song: *When You Seek Me with All Your Heart*. Janet is the best possible partner that God could have provided for me.

John: I tried to limit my trips to leaving on a Friday night and returning on a Sunday morning to minimize my time away from my family. Tabatha, Xavier, and Addison all missed me while I was away but were happy to “share” me with others. They prayed for me while I was traveling, and we prayed all year for the Conference week and the people who would attend.

SR: How did your perspective of the Conference or General Council change because of your involvement?

John: I was pleased to serve God

and Seventh Day Baptists in this capacity. It’s exciting to see God moving in our churches and members. The evidences of His grace are all over our Conference.

Althea: I became aware of how many people worked so much behind the scenes to carry out our Conference ministries. Their dedication, willingness to “go the extra mile,” and desire to please God and serve SDBs was eye-opening and inspiring.

Gordon: I was reminded that we are all human and that most SDBs do honestly seek and desire to serve the Lord.

SR: I always try to get a photo of this on Sabbath night at Conference, but how did you feel as you passed the gavel to the President-Elect?

Almost in unison:
Relieved!!

Althea: Well, relieved and grateful. Relieved, that the year was over. And grateful to the many people who made our Conference sessions meaningful that year.

Dale: Relieved, but also challenged to continue to be involved in Seventh Day Baptist ministry in whatever way God would provide.

Gordon: It was a good experience and I was glad that it was only for a year.

John: I felt relieved that the busyness of the Conference week was over. I was happy to serve our Conference, and hopeful for the theme and work that God will continue through our new President.

SR: And that leads to the last question: What hopes or concerns do you have for the future of Seventh Day Baptists?

Gordon: I hope that we continue to remember that we are congregations held together by our covenant with each other. It is sometimes hard to “watch over each other for good.” But we are faith communities that are families by relationship and not necessarily



genetics. My hope is that we will be seeking and welcoming new siblings into God’s family and into our local families as well.

Althea: I hope that people will continue to be obedient to the call on their lives and that they will act on what God shows them. Our current Conference leadership is very unified in their vision for SDBs. Their willingness to work together and help each other gives me a lot of hope for what God has in store for us. I sense that the

Lord is pleased with our unity.

Dale: My hope is that Seventh Day Baptists will remain true to their call from God to “seek His Kingdom” wherever they are and in whatever ministry He chooses to use them. People need the Sabbath more than at any other time. We are challenged by how quickly we can communicate around the world. Time spent with God can best prepare us to do His will and share His love with others.

Althea: I do have a concern. Some have chosen to leave the Sabbath and have wandered from their walk with Him. I pray that we don’t just do things the “same old way” or “our way,” but that we join God



in His work! Obedience is still very important to me!

John: We should see the urgency of the Gospel in the revitalization of our churches and the planting of new Gospel-centered churches. I am hopeful that God continues to show His grace through SDBs by bringing to us—and bringing us to—people who need to hear about our Savior, Jesus Christ. **SR**

Althea Rood currently serves as President of the SDB Women’s Board. Gordon Lawton is Director of Pastoral Services for the Center on Ministry. Pastors Dale Thorngate and John Pethel are members of the General Council.

The Gospel is our Foundation

by Jim Skaggs

SDB Conference 1993 – “A Firm Foundation”
University of Redlands, Redlands, Calif.

One of my favorite hymns inspired my Conference theme: “How Firm a Foundation.” The first verse begins “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!”

All of the sermons, Bible studies, and seminars were intended to emphasize the importance of lives solidly founded on faith in God.

As a public school teacher my opportunities to travel around the country to meet with SDBs were limited. I tried to compensate by sending the churches a video presentation about the Conference and its theme.

One of my biggest joys during the Conference week was that the sermons, Bible studies, and seminars, were all solid, with good teaching—grounded in Scripture. I was also glad that my parents and extended family (uncles, aunts, cousins) were very supportive during my term.



In addition to the responsibility of serving on General Council during the year, preparation for the week of General Conference involves many decisions and a lot of time and energy. As the week itself progresses, you hope everything will go well. While most of it did, there were glitches that had to be handled. It was a relief when it was over.

My ongoing prayer for Seventh Day Baptists is that, most importantly, our part of Christ’s Church will effectively witness to the Gospel. **SR**



A dream come true

by Norma Rudert

SDB Conference 1999 – “Be ye holy; for I am holy”
Hope College, Holland, Mich.

Strangely enough, I had my Conference theme before I had the position. Always being interested in Conference themes, I was ruminating about the theme for 1998, “You are a chosen people.”

Hmmm, what could follow that? How about “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). I determined to suggest that verse to whomever became our new President.

On Tuesday morning in Lindsborg, Kansas (Conference site in 1997), I told my husband about an unusual dream I’d had. “Don, I dreamed that Marilyn Davis asked me to be Conference President. Isn’t that weird?”

Later that morning Justin Camenga sought me out, saying that someone wanted to see me. He led me down the hall to where Marilyn Davis was waiting with that very request! Obviously, some people need more than God’s gentle nudges. This felt like a “heavenly hammer.” So in spite of considerable self-doubt, I knew I couldn’t say No.



Norma Rudert

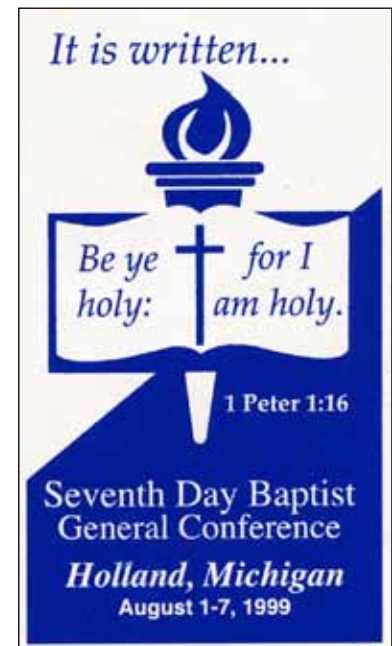
In addition to Kevin Butler’s insistence on a monthly article for the *Sabbath Recorder*, one of the biggest challenges I had was working out the details of the daily schedules. There’s a lot to fit into a busy week at Conference.

As part of those details, I experienced gratitude and joy when I began asking people to take on various responsibilities. Calvin Babcock patiently guided me through the whole process, and with Jim Skaggs by my side I knew I couldn’t *completely* mess up the business meetings.

From Bible study leaders, seminar presenters, evening speakers, committee chairpersons, choir director, organist, and a logo designer to coffee hour servers, *everyone* I approached said, “Yes, I can do that.” You know who you are, and so do I. Thank you again!

My two pastors, Bernie Wethington (White Cloud, Mich.) and John Camenga (Daytona Beach, Fla.), covered me with prayers, along with that dear soul, Clara Thompson. My husband Don was a willing and capable chauffeur as we visited several churches. The opportunity to become better acquainted with our extended SDB family was another blessing and source of joy.

Sharing ideas and concerns around the General Council meeting table helped me appreciate the many ways our denomination endeavors to further the mission of Seventh Day Baptists throughout



the world. We worked together with a wonderful spirit of cooperation.

On Sabbath afternoon at the conclusion of one of the most amazing and memorable weeks of my life, I was glad to hand the gavel to John Camenga, thinking to myself, “Whew!!! I really need this day of rest.”

Seventh Day Baptists have a long past, well over 300 years. Apparently God wants to keep us around to continue sharing our unique message in the future. My hope is that we remember to carefully observe and teach our distinctives as we look forward to Christ’s return. **SR**

Harmony goes a long way

by John H. Camenga

SDB Conference 2000 – “Live in Harmony with One Another”

West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, W.Va.

Years before I was selected as President, I had thought about “The Upward Way” as a Conference theme, using the Fannie Crosby hymn “Higher Ground” as the theme song. In my prayer times asking God to guide in the choice of a theme, I became convicted that another emphasis was required.

I was directed to “Live in Harmony with One Another” from 1 Peter 3:8. I sought to include people who held many points of view on Conference matters as speakers, committee chairs and Bible study leaders.

Harmony proved to be an important emphasis. In the period right after my term, Conference was challenged to deal with some difficult doctrinal issues with a few member churches. I believe God guided me to select the theme as I asked Him in prayer what would be needed for our Conference and our churches—not just for the one year, but moving forward.

One of my greatest challenges during that Presidential term was setting aside my personal preferences so God could work through me. It was a wonderful start to the Conference to have the choir of my home church, Daytona Beach, sing two numbers in dramatically different styles. It was also special to receive a “yes” from each person asked to participate in Conference duties.

When I was installed at the 1999 session in Holland, Mich., my mother was undergoing radiation therapy

for breast cancer. She went through the Thursday treatment, drove to the airport with Dad and flew from Florida to Michigan.

At the Sabbath night session, Dad presented me with a gavel that was his last wood-turning effort. As Conference ended, the folks flew back to Florida on Sunday and Mother drove herself to the Monday morning treatment. (I wonder if I will be that tough at 90.)

Brothers Justin and David were there not only for the Conference sessions but during the year. I cannot imagine a higher level of support than the family gave.

The “kids” were moving into independence in 2000. The girls made sure their families were there through the challenges of the year. Both sons (Andrew and JohnMark) were married in the weeks before Conference and were also active and involved in the sessions.

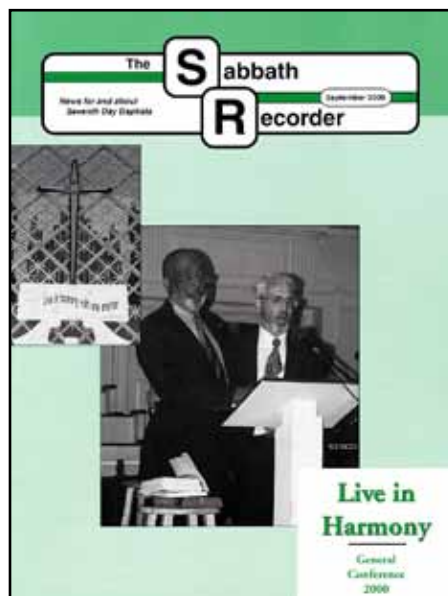
Linda served as “first lady” in spite of heart bypass surgery with significant complications. My parents and mother-in-law all traveled with us to the Conference sessions. Brothers-in-law Darwin and Robert Van Horn served behind the scenes. Darwin had the “challenging” duty of keeping the programs on schedule and holding the stopwatch on presentations.

The prayer and practical support of my family was consistent and a source of inspiration.

At the end of the week, when I passed the gavel to President-Elect Clayton Pinder, there was relief! (I kept the gavel Dad made. The new president got a new gavel.)

As far as my hopes for our future, Conference Historian Al Rogers used to say that when SDBs were restless, they “tinkered with the machinery.” I pray that we do not think that past, present or future changes to structure will “solve our problems” as a Conference.

I would suggest more time in prayer and greater efforts to “Live in Harmony with one another” as effective tools to ensure future effectiveness on all levels of our shared ministry. **SR**



Conference President John Camenga (r.) with Pastor Wray Winborne at the 2000 Conference.



Holding on to the Truth

by Ruth Ellyn Burdick

SDB Conference 2007 – “Tell the Truth... The *WHOLE* Truth”

George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon

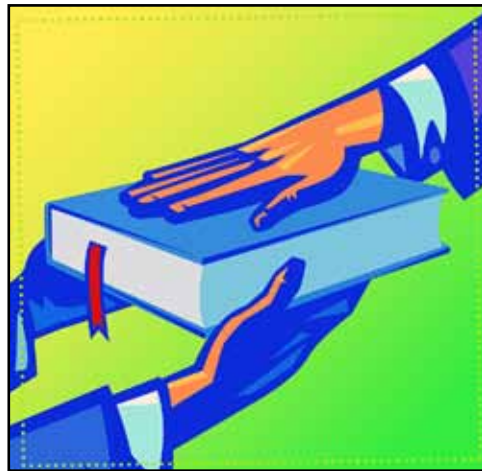
At Conference 2005 after the shock of being approached to consider the nomination for Conference President 2007, I asked for time to pray about it and consider the honor. The business responsibilities made me hesitate.

One thing I love about our God is that He is involved in the details of life. That evening during the message I was given a theme topic: God’s Word. Within the next day the daily themes jelled and that evening we were challenged to get enthusiastic and involved. Add to that the fact my whole family was supportive and positive about the possibility confirmed my acceptance to be nominated.

After the official vote took place, the theme, the Scriptures, the speakers and more detailed plans seemed to automatically come together. It was an exciting time seeing God’s intervention and guidance.

One of my first duties was to attend the final Conference meeting of General Council. With great relief I was not asked to chair the meetings that year since I was a “newbie.” Within the next three years I gained a solid respect for all the executives conducting business on behalf of the Conference behind the scenes. They work with diligence and professionalism.

The biggest challenge of the time I served was presiding over the Conference business sessions. I faced this with trepidation. It was



further complicated in 2007 with a church-by-church vote concerning involvement with the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

It was so encouraging to have a great backup team of executives and parliamentarians who guided me continually and covered any errors I made! Thankfully, the business went smoother than I expected.

I loved the planning for Conference 2007 because I was passionate about the theme, “Tell the Truth... The *WHOLE* Truth.” The location on the campus of George Fox in Newberg, Oregon was beautiful and peaceful.

Once I announced the theme, many became as excited as I was and encouraged me all along the way. I gave a challenge to our people to read the complete Bible in a year. To my knowledge, 40 set and met the goal. The testimonies of changed lives and rededication to The Word were so rewarding. There is joy in know-

ing Jesus—every step of the way.

I loved traveling to our various regional Associations to excite our people about God’s Living Word and inspire individuals to make a reading commitment. Meeting and greeting God’s people in all parts of our country encouraged them as they encouraged me. These joys are immeasurable and will be treasured always.

On that final weekend at Conference 2007, I was most surprised and thrilled to have my siblings and a sister-in-law come support me on God’s Holy Day. How God blessed me throughout my time of service as Conference President. That does not mean that I wasn’t relieved when I passed the gavel on to the next President, Pastor Andy Samuels. I was satisfied and relieved.

As long as Seventh Day Baptists remain true to the Truth of the Holy Word and faithful to the Sovereign God Almighty, we have a future temporarily here and eternally with Him. I believe this with my whole heart. **SR**



Ruth Burdick

This “observer” tunes in to Triumph

by Owen Probasco

SDB Conference 1997 – “Tuned In—Turned On—and Triumphant”

Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas

As I considered a Conference theme, I kept thinking of the three crosses on Calvary! One “thief” was tuned in. (He couldn’t help being so—he was there.) The second “victim” was turned on by Christ’s innocence. And then Christ was triumphant!

Also, the three “T’s” of Tuned In—Turned On—and Triumphant represented the three crosses.

During the year before my Conference week, I didn’t feel as though there was much direction from “headquarters” when it came to me visiting the churches. I didn’t visit too many since I wasn’t sure if I should contact them or they should invite me.

I think that the Center could be more helpful in that way. Everything went well (at least okay) but church visitation is vital and should be approached more vigorously.

Certainly a positive memory is how I was humbled and enriched by the support of my home church in Shiloh, New Jersey. I believe we had the most members in attendance at that Conference up to that time.

My own family gave great help and support in my presidential duties. Our kids seemed to enjoy having a little fun at my expense during the opening session! (Don’t know where they get their ideas.) Seriously, it did bring SDBs and their concerns closer to my heart.

Obviously my wife was supportive and a continued blessing through it all. I truly felt God’s presence throughout.

As far as how my perspective was affected, I had attended Conference for many years, served on the General Council, chaired committees, etc., but always felt more like an *observer* than a participant.

That changed! Maybe I came in as a Seventh Day Baptist, but I became a *dyed-in-the-wool* SDBer! God is my pilot, not my co-pilot.

When I passed the gavel on to the next President, I felt humbled but GREAT; sort of a sigh of relief.

Looking ahead, I think many of our new (or old) small groups struggle so much financially that sometimes their energy, worries and dedication have to go to the “building” support rather than the spiritual building support. They need assistance from our “Conference,” but I understand how, financially, that’s hard to come by.

Maybe visitation and other uplifting actions can help? I feel strongly that Seventh Day Baptists are among God’s “atta-boys.” **SR**

[Editor’s note: The Coordinating Leadership Team is revising and updating a traveling “Invitation to Conversation” program for our churches. We are drafting some specific discussion questions and then will have a listening ear (or two) from the Conference visit the church. Give us a call at 608-752-5055 to see how the program is progressing and perhaps we can get you on the schedule.]

**There’s one more
Presidential testimony
on page 24!**



Owen Probasco (2nd from rt.) and his extended family in 1997.



Reflections

by Leanne Lippincott-Wuerthele

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

Oh, for crying out loud!

I am far from being a well-studied Bible scholar, but Psalm 139:14 is a verse that I think about quite often.

The *NIV* reads, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

The *New Living Bible* states, “Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.”

Back in the 1990s, I traveled to Madison, Wis., with my cousin, Ruth Ann (Nelson) Hess to consult a heart specialist at UW-Hospitals. Ever since 4th grade, I had dealt with a relatively benign but frustrating heart condition that I learned—many years later—was paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia or “PSVT.” This condition often triggered my heart into racing 200 or more beats per minute.

The specialist I met with later performed two ablation procedures (six months apart) that finally eliminated the disorder. A catheter into my heart allowed heated radio waves to destroy the abnormal electrical pathways.

While Ruth Ann and I waited in the doctor’s office, we spotted a large, colorful poster on the wall. It was a diagram of the human heart, with all its intricate parts labeled. The drawing was mind-boggling to our untrained medical minds.

That’s when Ruth Ann recited those familiar words: “We are fearfully and wonderfully made.” We both stood there in silent awe for a few moments, looking at the complexity of the human heart while thinking of the awesome God Who formed us in His image.

Some of those same thoughts came to mind again when I viewed all the tests taken before and after my June brain surgery—an MRI, numerous CT scans, and two angiograms. The brain appears as complex as the heart, perhaps more so. How can *anyone* come to the conclusion there’s no divine, Master Creator?

In her devotional book *Jesus Calling*, Sarah Young writes as if Jesus is speaking to us:

“I created your brain with capacity to know Me as Friend and Lord simultaneously. The human mind is the pinnacle of My creation, but so few use it for its primary purpose—knowing Me. Only humans are capable of receiving Me and responding to My Presence. You are indeed *fearfully and wonderfully made!*”

The complexity of the God-created human body even extends to something as outwardly simple as tears. Actually, there are three kinds of tears:

Basal tears form continuously, but we don’t experience them as visible tears because they don’t “ball up.” Instead, every time we blink, our eyelids spread the basal solution over the surface of our eyeballs, keeping them lubricated and damage-free.

Irritant or reflex tears have



the same components as basal tears and also protect the eyes. However, since they’re designed to break down and eliminate “intruders” like dust, these tears tend to flow in greater amounts and probably contain a concentration of chemicals that target micro-organisms.

Emotional tears come in moments of intense feeling, with tears of happiness and sadness differing chemically. Emotional tears secrete many more proteins than other kinds of tears. These proteins are hormones that build up to very high levels when the body is under emotional stress.

If these chemicals weren’t discharged, they would weaken the body’s immune system. So, it’s physically *healthy* to cry since this can reduce levels of stress hormones.

Some of the proteins in emotional tears are also associated with physical pain. So crying can even help reduce pain. When people are clinically depressed and unable to shed emotional tears, it hinders their ability to get rid of pent-up stress. Thus weeping is an important stage in the healing process.

We truly are God’s wonderfully-made creations! **SR**



Women's Society page by Katrina Goodrich
www.sdbwomen.org

“Stepping Out in Faith 2”

by Nadine Lawton
Ashaway, R.I.

In early 2012 we asked you to “Step Out in Faith” for our sisters in Malawi, Africa, so they could attend their SDB Women’s Conference. We raised just over \$1,600!

This time our goal is to step out in faith for our own people here in the SDB Conference USA and Canada. These are our younger sisters and brothers who are giving up their summer for the Lord—our Summer Christian Service Corps students and Stained Glass members.

Let me step back and give you the reasons for raising funds for these young people. In May 2012 a godly woman, Dorothea Shettel, passed from this earthly life. Dorothea was a past president for the SDB Women’s Board.

After hearing of Dorothea’s passing, current Women’s Board President Althea Rood contacted Dorothea’s son Gary down in Australia, to discuss the possibility of creating a fund in Dorothea’s name for SCSC students. Gary thought this would be a great idea, since SCSC was one of his mom’s favorite Women’s Board projects.

Althea brought the proposal to the Women’s Interest Committee at Conference and they recommended that the Women’s Board set up the Dorothea Shettel Fund.

This new fund will be used to help SCSC students and Stained Glass members who cannot afford to stay after evaluation for Pre-Con and

Conference. Even when the SCSCers need to do project time at Conference there are still expenses that they have to pay for, such as Pre-Con and some of their Conference fees. This year there were two students who went home after evaluation because they could not afford to stay longer. And it’s not the first time this has happened.

Since many of the students are new to the Seventh Day Baptist denomination, attending Pre-Con and Conference helps them understand those of us who are multigenerational SDBs, as well as giving them an understanding of how the Conference works. It also helps us to get to know new members of the SDB family.

Going home early is hard on these young adults. They have just been reunited with their team members, and the rest of the students get to stay and build on the relationships that started at SCSC training, and their relationship with the Lord.

We all know that the economy has not been good for several years. SCSC families may be struggling to make ends meet, especially if they are helping their child, or children, with college expenses. The students may work during the school year, but most of those funds go for books,

an occasional meal off-campus, gas for their car or bus fare, and personal needs. They also raise funds to help with their training expenses and travel costs to training, their project and evaluation, and their transportation home.

They have a heart for the Lord and want to share it with others. They just need help in funding their summer mission project.

To help out with the SCSCers’ funding for Pre-Con and Conference, the Women’s Interest Committee recommended that the “Stepping Out in Faith” fundraiser be done again in 2013, with all the proceeds going to the Dorothea Shettel Fund. A third recommendation from the Committee was that the Women’s Board match the funds raised up to \$2,000.

So lace up your sneakers, put on your dancing shoes. Map out your route or get a pedometer. During Lent—February 13 through March 31—keep track of your steps and have family or friends pledge per step or mile, or give a straight donation.

Look for pledge forms on a Facebook event page in January. Let’s get the Dorothea Shettel fund off to a great start, and encourage the future of our Conference! **SR**





Timing is everything

In 1843, two famous works were penned and published which still have a wide readership: Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and Edgar Allen Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart*. Another publication appeared that year, nearly 170 years ago, which did not have a readership so wide.

At General Conference sessions in 1843, two adopted resolutions began a new trek for Seventh Day Baptists in the dissemination of their distinctive beliefs:

Resolved, *That in view of the imperious duty devolving on us to publish the truth of God to the world, it is advisable to make an appeal to the various orders of Christians in reference to the Sabbath of the Bible, urging them to a thorough examination of the subject, as one of great importance to the cause of God.*

Resolved, *In accordance with the object of the foregoing resolution, that a committee be appointed to prepare an address to our brethren of the Baptist denomination, to be issued under the sanction of the General Conference.* —SDB Anniversaries (yearbook), 1843, p. 8

As a result of these Conference actions, Thomas B. Brown, Paul Stillman and Nathan V. Hull were selected to write the appropriately titled, "Letter to the Baptists." After its completion, the letter was printed up as a tract, distributed, and forwarded to the 1844 sessions of the Baptist conference.*

Baptist historian H. Leon McBeth (in *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, Broadman) notes that the letter is a tremendous piece of work as it "is calmly stated, biblical in emphasis, and fraternal in tone." Though the letter was well written and argued the case for the Sabbath well, it never gained the full attention of its intended audience. In 1844, controversy over slavery ripped through the Baptist denomination. The issue was fought out in their sessions, culminating in the separation of the Southern Baptists from the Northern Baptists in 1845. The letter arrived just in time to be ignored.

The most obvious lesson we could draw from this? Timing is everything. We could posit hundreds of "what ifs" that would have led to different outcomes. How are we to interpret the leading of our Conference to produce such a letter (the vote of the delegates at Conference was unanimous in favor), now that we know it never reached its target audience?

No doubt some contemporary readers would see this as providential—that it was God's will that the Sunday Baptists contend with sin in their midst rather than debate the merits of Sabbathkeeping. Others may see this as God directing SDBs back to "the Gospel." At least one group of readers, Seventh-day Adventists, look at this letter as part of the series of events which led to the founding of their denomination.

All of these interpretations leave much to be desired, and assume too much about the wisdom of our hindsight. The significance of the letter may relate to some of the other resolutions of that 1843 Conference session, which include the action to create the first "Expose of Sentiments," as well as to form societies to send missionaries and publish tracts.

It may be that the same impulses that caused them to reach out to the lost world also caused them to be secure in their identity and unafraid to share it with other Christians. If that's the case, then the printing of the "Letter to the Baptists" is no missed opportunity—it was perfectly timed.

As Christians, we share what we are. Just as our forebears were unafraid to share who they were and how God had worked in them, we also should not only know our identity, but be unashamed to share it. It is always the right time to reach out and share what God has done in and through us, even if it does not reach the audience we intend. Is it time for you to share with the world what God has done in your life? **SR**

**The letter can be found at the General Conference webpage (under Historical Resources) and at the Historical Society's webpage (under Resources).*



Retired Pastor Profile

Retired Pastor Profile



Name: Leroy C. Bass

Birthdate, place: January 17, 1925 Springfield, MA

Leroy was raised in a Christian home, attending Baptist churches. At age 18, he was baptized (by immersion) and joined a Methodist church.

While in the Army, his Bible study showed him that Sabbath was the 7th day of the week. "I changed my practice completely within two weeks. This was while I was overseas in the Army. To love Him is to follow Him in the light of truth." (*Sabbath Recorder*, May 1961)

Family:

Married: Marjorie Darrow on August 29, 1954

Children: Gordon, Vivian, Clifford, Valerie, Marvin

Grandchildren: 18

Education:

1943 HS diploma, Northampton (MA)

Vocational School

1955 BA in Religion and Ministerial Certificate,
Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, MA

1958-59 Potomac University Theological
Seminary, Washington, DC

1966 Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary,
Philadelphia, PA

1976 *Decision* School of Writing (in June)

1977-78 Mendota (WI) Mental Health Institute,
3 units of CPE

Ministry Experience:

SDB Churches

Paint Rock, AL (1959–63)

Nortonville, KS (1963–66)

New Auburn, WI (1974–1977)

Madison, WI (Unofficial pastoral leadership
in late 70s and early 80s)

SDB Boards and Agencies

SDB Missionary to Guyana (1966–74)

Recording Secretary for the SDB World
Federation (1982–92)

Other

Church Planting, Torrington, CT (1955-56, not SDB)

Chaplain, Southern Wisconsin Center for
the Developmentally Disabled (1978–85)

Director, Bible Sabbath Association (1980–
1990, President 1984–87)

Non-Ministry Experience:

US Army 1945-46 in India and China
with CBI operations

Driving School Bus for 12 years on Washington
Island, WI

Seasonal Tour Guide for 8 years, Washington
Island, WI

Favorite Bible verse:

Matthew 4:4

Favorite books (right now):

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy by Eric
Metaxas; *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan
Knight; *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Cham-
bers; *Eusebius: Church History* by Paul L. Maier.

Retirement Locations:

Washington Island, WI

St. Petersburg, FL (4 winters)



Good news in a small package

One unexpected pleasure of taking care of a newborn is experiencing camaraderie with people you've never met. When the baby starts to cry, there are knowing smiles, nods of encouragement, and the occasional offer of help.

When the baby coos, there are sympathetic "aahs" from the impromptu audience. It seems that the common experience of helping a baby make it through the first year of life throws a lot of people onto the same team—regardless of whether membership in that team is obvious or not.

On a recent road trip, my family stopped at a Friendly's for supper. A few minutes after sitting down, a man from another table walked up to us, asked if we had coupons, and hearing we didn't, dropped three coupons on our table. As we were saying thank you, he walked away. A little while later, as he and his wife were leaving, they stopped and chatted with us for a while. When the conversation was done, they had shared their names, their ages, how long they'd been married, how many grandkids they had, and more family news.

At the same meal, I took a turn comforting our two-month-old by walking around, stepping out of the eating space, and other things you do with an infant who wants to sleep but hasn't quite dropped off. As I headed back in after achieving at least feigned sleep, Jane, a woman

I'd never met, looked from the first booth I passed and asked, "So how old is she?" I answered with the perfunctory "two months" and gave a little smile.

For the next several minutes I listened as she talked about her new grandchild, born to the eldest daughter of her husband's first marriage. She reflected about the hectic pace she once knew when she lived in Manhattan, and how glad she is to be in a season of life where things seem to move at a slower pace. We chatted a little longer about the bane and blessing of the electronic devices that seem ubiquitous in society.

On the trip home, I reflected on both of those unexpected conversations. The presence of an obvious newborn provided the other people an opportunity and desire to strike up a conversation. They decided the baby gave them permission to talk with us. And, I'm glad they did. I learned a little bit more about life as I listened, and they clearly wanted to tell someone a little about their experiences.

As these people looked at my family that day, they knew we had good news—we had a new baby and were enjoying going about our family's business. So they approached us and asked for a shot of information, some good news about a new life.

Yet, they wanted to do more than just hear. They wanted to talk about *their* good news: their babies had

grown up, were doing well, and were continuing to bring joy. It wasn't explicit, but they were offering a message of hope—that babies grow up and things turn out okay.

We know that true hope isn't based on having children, caring for them, watching them grow up, or seeing them succeed. We know that true joy doesn't come from the host of so many things that we can focus on: earning a pay raise, winning the race, getting the promotion, finishing the song at the recital, completing the model, harvesting the garden, or buying the car. Our hope and joy are based in the life, teaching, death, resurrection, and coming judgment of Jesus Christ.

For the last year, I've been praying that God will grant opportunities to speak His Good News into the lives of people who don't yet know Him. In neither of the conversations at the restaurant did I become aware of His prompting to speak at that moment the clear truth of Jesus.

I continue to watch and wait.

But, God did remind me through those conversations that He will provide opportunities to speak with people I don't know, and that He has placed in His creation a desire to speak and hear good news, even if many people have yet to hear *The Good News*.

Will you join me in praying that God will give you opportunity to speak good news to those who are ready to hear? **SR**



FOCUS on Missions

Showing them the ropes

by Clinton R. Brown
sdbmissions.org



Not long ago, I took my youngest daughter to an indoor rock climbing gym in Rhode Island. Once we were there and geared up, the attendant gave us his standard oration on climbing safety.

On the lower walls it was okay to scale the surfaces without a rope (“free-climb”), but for the higher levels it was required to use the safety ropes that would gradually lower us to the mats below if we were to let go of the wall.

Our instructor gave particular emphasis on checking and testing to be sure we had the ropes actually attached before assailing the higher walls. A climber had recently reached a certain point near the top and pushed away from the wall expecting a gradual descent as the safety rope mechanism let out the slack. At some point on his rapid way down he must have realized that he had failed to attach a rope to himself! He survived the fall, and

was taken by ambulance for medical evaluation. I was reminded of this when I read the illustration of our lives as a ladder in Henry Blackaby’s book, *Experiencing God*. Our lives are like vast climbing walls that we must strive to continue to climb because—due to the element of time—the lowest footholds fade away. If we make no effort to survive and no one helps us, we fall off the wall. Eventually, everyone will get to a place where they can no longer climb, or their hands or feet slip and there is nowhere left to grab.

It is not a perfect analogy, but it seemed to lend itself in many aspects to the challenges of life. Often there is an easy set of handholds and footholds (like steps) to make our way along. Sometimes climbers give others a hand up; other times climbers have little regard for those around them or will even use them to advance themselves.

The most important aspect of the analogy is the rope. The connection we have with our Father through Jesus’ sacrifice is our safety rope, so when we inevitably lose our grip on this life we will be lifted to safety.

Also, if we pay attention to this rope in life, it will guide us or even lift us to handholds that we couldn’t see or didn’t think we could reach.

As we look around, we see the world is full of climbers. Many do not realize the importance of being connected, or believe that they can just connect to a rope that they carry themselves and attach to the fading handholds. Others think they will risk free-climbing until it looks like the climb might get tough, though they never know when their grip will fail.

Anyone not sure their line is securely connected via the Savior, needs to promptly seek out someone to “show them the ropes.” As people firmly connected to God, we need to follow where He draws us, then take every opportunity to join Him in helping others stay on the wall and help them become connected (and connectors) as well.

It is terrible to imagine how it felt when the person in the gym let go and realized he was not connected. How much more appalling to realize how many people each day slip from this life with no mat in sight, while you and I knew or suspected they had failed to establish a life-saving relationship with God.

Joining God in making these connections is what it’s all about. Let us each pray that we watch for handholds that lead to such opportunities and keep the focus of our climb on reaching others.

Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17)



the BEACON

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

January 2013

Poorly played, or poorly tuned?

by Michaella Osborn
Boulder, Colo.

Imagine a 14-year-old being told on her birthday that her parents are going to pay for guitar lessons. She is ecstatic! This girl has wanted to learn to play the guitar for what seemed like “forever.”

When her dad *FINALLY* finds a guitar teacher later that year she is even more excited. Well, I’m not just telling you this heart-warming story to help me make a point. The girl in this story is me.

I started taking guitar lessons last spring, and to my frustration, it was a lot harder than it looked! Not only did I have to practice to get better—which was something that I had supposedly already accepted—I later found out that the guitar’s action (the part holding the height of the strings above the frets) was all out of whack, making it nearly impossible for the instrument to hold its tune for more than a few hours.

This coupled with the fact that I didn’t know how to tune a guitar made it very hard for me to practice. Although my dad knows how to tune a guitar, I was often too stubborn to let him do it for me.

You can see why I started asking myself the question, “Poorly played, or poorly tuned?” every time I heard a sour note coming out of my instrument, and when I walked down the music hallway at school.

While you might be tempted to

think that they’re the same thing, that’s not the case. A poorly *played* note is usually an honest mistake—due to not enough practice, or the musician not paying attention to what they are doing. On the other hand, if the sour note is caused by a poorly *tuned* instrument, the musician could be playing what would be, under different circumstances, a flawless song.

The same thing applies to our hearts. The Bible often refers to our heart as a musical instrument: “My heart overflows with a pleasing theme...” (Psalm 45:1, ESV); “sing-ing and making melody to the Lord with your heart” (Ephesians 5:19, ESV); and in the hymn “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” the lyricist writes, “Tune my heart to sing thy praise.”

So if our hearts are like instruments we can have “poorly played” actions, and we can have “poorly tuned” actions. The difference between these two is similar to the difference between a poorly played note and a poorly tuned one.

In the case of a “poorly played” action, we make a mistake—usually because we were not paying attention to what we are doing. “Poorly played” actions are not fun. They result in varying degrees of pain to ourselves, and the people around us, but are



something that all of us do on a seemingly regular basis. A synonym for “poorly played” action is sin. Run of the mill, everyday sin.

Where “poorly tuned” actions are still sin, they are a different sort. We might call a “poorly tuned” action a habitual sin. Habitual sins indicate a “poorly tuned” heart or a heart that has wandered from God.

If we have a poorly tuned heart, most everything we do causes pain to ourselves and to those around us. The motives of a heart that has wandered from God are almost always selfish. Although a person with a poorly tuned heart may occasionally do something good, it is similar to a musician with a poorly tuned instrument striking a semi-coherent note. It is more by luck than anything else.

But thankfully, like me and my whacked-out guitar, we have a heavenly Father who is always willing to put us back on the right track. **SR**

Unlovable

by Emily Watt
Central Maryland

Can I get something off my chest? There is someone in my life that I cannot stand. In fact, I can't ever remember disliking anyone with the same intensity.

I am a super senior majoring in Elementary and Special Education. This semester, I took 15 credits in classes along with a 20+ hour-a-week student teaching experience.

Halfway through the semester, a graduating senior began her experience in the same Special Education resource room where I was placed. And that is when I met the bane of my existence.

I have a very, very hard time dealing with her presence. I don't think I can even describe how she makes me feel. So I'll just say that I find her to be an *odious* person. I can sense her presence and it turns my entire mood sour. She's the fingernails to my chalkboard, the vinegar to my wine. The fact that I have not exploded in a flaming ball of rage is a miracle in and of itself.

I know, I know. This is not very "Christian" of me. There's a dozen verses I can think of that remind me how God is love and that I need to be loving. Pray for my enemy, turn the other cheek, love as He has loved me... I *know* all of this. I got that. But this is the first time I've struggled with loving someone that I cannot avoid.

As a Christian, there are certain ways of coping that are strictly out. I cannot yank her hair out or set her lesson plans on fire. I cannot ignore her when she talks to me or make high-pitched noises in order to drown out the sound of her voice. But in my head, that's what I want to do!

The fact that I spend all day in the same room with her and act like I *don't* want to punch her makes me feel so two-faced. I hate that feeling, but I don't have an acceptable alternative.

Actually, scratch that. I can't make her change, because I don't have that power. I can't scream at her and tell her exactly what I think, because that's not what Jesus expects from me and He's the boss.

But, I do have a choice. I can change the way I think. I can look at her every day and force myself to remember that Jesus loves her. Jesus died for her. If she were the only person who had ever existed, Jesus *still* would have come and died for her.

And I can pray for her and pray over my attitude towards her. Jesus will change my heart. He will show me that she is precious to Him, and that makes her precious to me.

I don't think Jesus expects us to like everyone we meet and that everything will be "rainbows and butterflies" all the time. We're humans. We have different experiences that shape our personalities. Some people are going to rub each other the wrong way. I do, however, think He

expects us to make the conscious decision to work on loving the people we can't stand. Not because it makes us holy, not because it wins us a bigger mansion in Heaven, but because He made the decision to love us.

I think that's where love really comes into play—remembering that we are called to love and then asking Jesus to help us love the unlovable. I can be pretty unlovable, but Jesus still loves me. How can I do less than to ask Jesus to help me extend the same mercy to the unlovable people in my life?

That's where I am right now. I haven't had any major changes yet, but I can hear that still, small voice calling me to remember what Jesus expects from me. That's enough for now.

What about you? How do you love the unlovable people in your life? **SR**

*She's the fingernails to
my chalkboard,
the vinegar to my wine.*



Forward in HIS Footsteps

Colorado Springs, CO

July 28–Aug. 3, 2013



The President's Page

by Ralph Mackintosh

Which way is Forward?

January is a time when many people look to make changes in their lives. They want to move forward, try something new or make a fresh start. A multitude of New Year's resolutions are made and often rapidly broken as individuals try to correct perceived bad habits, improve their lives and find a new path.

Some people may know they want to change but are uncertain what exactly needs to change or how to go about implementing the change. There is even a growing field of counselors calling themselves "Life Coaches" who are dedicated to helping people evaluate their lives and find the right direction to move.

We all want to move forward, however the big question is, "Which way is forward?" When I selected the theme for the Conference year, "**Forward In His Footsteps,**" I didn't know with certainty what direction Seventh Day Baptists should be moving. (And I still don't have all the answers.) But I did know that whatever direction we were to move, it needed to be God-inspired and God-directed.

A couple of individuals asked me why I chose the book *Experiencing God* to go along with the "Forward" theme. They wanted to know the connection. The answer is found by asking, "Which way is forward?"



Knowing we want to make progress and change is a healthy first step. But it's necessary to know what direction to move if we want to be effective in that changing and growing. If our progress is to be God-inspired and God-directed, then we have to spend time discovering what God's will is.

There may be times when God hits us with an instant lightning bolt of revelation on His way forward, but most of the time we need to be seriously seeking, praying and searching to discover where He wants to lead us.

One of the U.S. Presidential candidates in the 2012 elections used the word "Forward" in his campaign theme. The problem that became readily evident, however, is that the country is very divided on which way is forward. What was seen as "forward" to one group was seen as detrimental for the country to another group. Both candidates

presented very contrasting viewpoints for how our society should be structured, and the role of government. The social policies proposed were called "forward progress" by both men.

Unlike political parties, Christians shouldn't have to endlessly debate over which direction we see as progress—even though the Christian Church, in general, spends too much of its time in this activity. We should have a major advantage since we have both an example of the path we are to follow, as outlined in the Bible, and the promise of a Holy Spirit to guide us.

When we have confusion about the direction the Church should be moving, is it *God's* fault because He doesn't know which direction is forward, or is it *our* fault because we haven't spent the time to discover His will for our denomination, our churches and our individual lives? Undoubtedly God has the perfect plan for our churches and denomination, and our job is to open ourselves to His revelation and direction.

As you and your church are finishing your study through *Experiencing God*, I hope that you are spending time seeking to know His will, looking for where He is already working in your community, and praying that He will lead you **Forward In His Footsteps. SR**



by Executive Director
Rob Appel

The Determination to Serve

Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost For His Highest*: “Jesus also said, ‘Yet I am among you as the One who serves’ (Luke 22:27). Paul’s idea of service was the same as our Lord’s— ‘ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake’ (2 Corinthians 4:5). We somehow have the idea that a person called to the ministry is called to be different and above other people. But according to Jesus Christ, he is called to be a ‘doormat’ for others— called to be their spiritual leader, but never their superior. Paul’s idea of service was to pour his life out to the last drop for others. And whether he received praise or blame made no difference. As long as there was one human being who did not know Jesus, Paul felt a debt of service to that person until he did come to know Him. But the chief motivation behind Paul’s service was not love for others but love for his Lord.”

There are many important characteristics in life, and **DETERMINATION** is one of them! Determination keeps us going when we might want to give up.

Determination helps us endure life’s storms. (I am writing this right after Hurricane Sandy.) Determination helps us battle that enticing temptation we struggle with, or to persevere through life’s terrible trials. We cannot get through this life without having determination! And this is certainly true when it comes to being a believer.

The movie “Catch Me if You Can” had a short story about determination. In the story, two mice fell into a pail of milk. They swam in an effort to get out of their predicament, but it was to no avail since the sides of the pail were steep and slippery.

One of the mice gave up because it was inevitable that they could not survive their circumstances. However, the other mouse kept swimming—determined by the fact to give up is to die, so keep on swimming. Just when the little mouse was ready to quit, he felt something solid under his legs. He had churned the milk until it became butter! He leapt out of the pail to his freedom!

Like the little mouse, we too need a strong determination. We need a strong determination to serve the Lord! Rather than resigning like the other mouse, we need to keep going and be willing to *Re-sign* to serve with Jesus!

The work in each of your churches is too important to leave undone. There are the souls of men, women and children that are hanging in the balance! Let’s look to the Lord for the determination we need to serve Him and the strength and ability to not give up!

In Galatians 6:9 it says, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

And in 2 Corinthians 12:9, “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Because “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

Be Determined to Serve! If you have grown weary, be determined to Re-sign with God and get busy serving Him again!

Oswald Chambers sums it up this way:

Paul’s understanding of how Christ had dealt with him is the secret behind his determination to serve others. “I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man...” (1 Timothy 1:13). In other words, no matter how badly others may have treated Paul, they could never have treated him with the same degree of spite and hatred with which he had treated Jesus Christ. Once we realize that Jesus has served us even to the depths of our meagerness, our selfishness, and our sin, nothing we encounter from others will be able to exhaust our determination to serve others for His sake. SR

Next month: **Standing for God...
The Hardship of Service!**



The Phases of Retirement

(Part 2)

Compiled by Morgan Shepard

Updating your finances for your changing lifestyle

Although many Americans now plan for a retirement up to 20 years, your retirement may last much longer.

Rather than thinking of retirement as the final stage of life, a more realistic approach may be to view it as a progression of phases, such as early, middle and late. This involves taking a fresh look at retiree expenses and income. Last month we covered the early years.

Middle Years: Distributions and Lifestyle Realities

By April 1 of the year after you reach age 70-and-one-half, you'll generally be required to begin making annual withdrawals from traditional IRAs and employer-sponsored retirement plans. (This excludes assets in a current employer's retirement plan if you're still working and do not own more than 5% of the business you work for.)

The penalty for not taking your required minimum distribution (RMD) can be steep: like 50% of

what you should have withdrawn. Withdrawals from Roth IRAs, however, are not required during the owner's lifetime. If money is not needed for income and efficient wealth transfer is a goal, a Roth IRA may be an attractive option.

Also, consider reviewing the asset allocation of your investment portfolio. Does it have enough growth potential to keep up with inflation? Is it adequately diversified among different types of stocks and income-generating securities?

Later years: Your legacy

Review your financial documents to make sure they are true to your wishes and that beneficiaries are consistent. Usually these documents include a will and paperwork governing brokerage accounts, IRAs, annuities, pensions, and in some cases, trusts.


Many people will draft a durable power of attorney (someone who will manage your finances if you're not able) and a living will, which names a person to make medical decisions on your behalf if you are incapacitated.

You'll still need to stay on top of your investments. For example, an annual portfolio and asset allocation review are important. Keep in mind that a financial advisor may be able to set up an automatic rebalancing program for you.

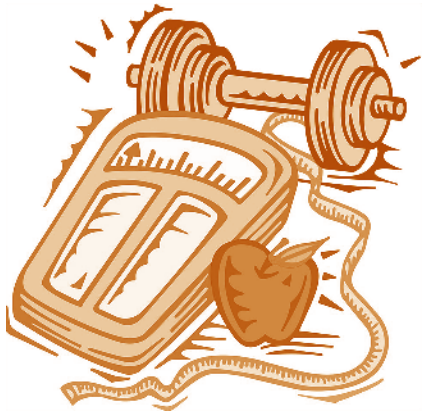
And finally, be aware that some financial companies require that you begin taking distributions from annuities once you reach age 85.

Preparing for a retirement that could encompass a third of your lifespan can be challenging. Regularly review your situation with financial and tax professionals and be prepared to make adjustments.

Points to remember—

1. By April 1 of the year after you reach age 70-and-one-half, you'll generally be required to begin making annual withdrawals from any tax-deferred accounts.
2. Match living arrangements to changing lifestyle needs and plan ahead for how you'll pay escalating health care expenses.
3. Make sure that financial documents are true to your wishes and beneficiaries are consistent.
4. Regularly consult with financial and tax professionals and be prepared to make adjustments, depending on how your life and needs change. 

(This material is for general information and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.)



Healthcare Reform: Does the Church have a role?

by Barb Green, Parish Nurse
Milton, Wis.

The answer to the above is a resounding “Yes”! The Church must be concerned about healthcare because Jesus was. He healed and commanded us to do the same. Healing is as much a part of the Gospel message today as it was in the first century. Jesus hasn’t changed.

Dr. Scott Morris suggests three ways the Church can transform health care.

Regain the body

First, regain the body. Our bodies are a gift from God. God formed Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life. We cannot separate the body from the spirit.

In America we believe that no matter what we do to our bodies, doctors can use technology to fix them when they break. Unfortunately, the technology is not always that good and the doctor is not always that smart. God gave us our bodies for a reason, and we have an obligation to care for them.

Daily life is full of choices that soon become habits. The Church has an opportunity to come alongside individuals in changing habits and decision patterns. Imagine what might happen if churches began to ask, “Is this program—this tradition, this snack, this meal—helping people live healthy

lives as God intends, or is it a stumbling block to their efforts?”

We must reclaim the health of the body as a priority of life as God intends, rather than the life our culture delivers.

Rethink prevention

The second way to transform health care is to rethink prevention. Advocate for prevention in your congregation, in the neighborhoods around you, in your denomination. Participate in prevention activities. Invest in parish nurses. Budget for ministries that keep people well in all dimensions of their lives.

Get involved in community movements that can improve the socio-economic indicators of poverty at the local level. Neither Washington nor your state capital can do this. It takes people who care about your congregation, community and city.

Reclaim death

Thirdly, the Church must reclaim death. We, as the people of God, have not spoken up about how we understand the end of life. We have allowed a relentless application of technology to prolong life at all costs. Too many people spend the last two weeks of life in intensive care with tubes stuck down their throats, separated from people who love them. This is immoral.

Death is not the enemy. Christians should be the first ones to embrace this truth. Death is part of the very human existence that God’s own Son

shared with us. Jesus experienced death and conquered death in the resurrection. Death does not have the last word. How to die well is a conversation most of us avoid having on an individual level, much less a national level.

Legislation that doesn’t ask the right questions will not take us to the right answers. We must ask hard questions even when the answers are not black and white. We must be leaders of continued dialogue in end-of-life issues and lead a public discussion about our addiction to technology and where it takes us.

Can the Church solve the healthcare crisis in America in its entirety? No. Not this year. Not by itself. But the Church can answer the call to be faithful to its own mission of caring for the bodies God has given us, and reaching out to the poor with the healing compassion of Jesus. If the Church did this, one congregation at a time, the impact on national health might surprise us all.

The cost of discipleship is never cheap. Neither is the cost of healthcare in America. But when the Church focuses on issues of health, it shines light on the path to the Kingdom of God. **SR**

(Taken from “Beyond Reform: Three Ways to Transform Health Care without Dividing the Church” by Scott Morris; *Church Health Reader*, Fall 2012)

A week of revelation and recommitment

by Ed Cruzan

SDB Conference 2009 – “Pray”

Lancaster Bible College, Lancaster, Pa.

It was July 26, 2009 when we gathered for the 197th session of General Conference at Lancaster (Pa.) Bible College for the first time. I was Conference President that year. My theme was “Pray,” supported by 1 Thessalonians 5:17 which exhorts all of us to “pray continually.” Conference week was filled with many opportunities to pray.

There were so many wonderful people involved in Conference that I cannot possibly list all of them or the events that were special to me. For those I miss, please send in your favorite recollections.

Here are a few of the things I remember from that special week:

- My revelation to focus on Jesus first, and not on praying.
- The hundreds of signed prayer cards. (Thank you to everyone who prayed for me that week, including my wife Cathy, daughter Jackie and son-in-law David.)



- The early-morning prayer times with Scott Hausrath. (Scott encouraged me to “leave the door open” as we prayed so that others might join us.)
- Pastor Nate Crandall, Jenna Weth-

ington, Lena Parrish and Ben Harris leading the morning praise.

- The morning Praying Bible Studies led by Pastors Kenneth Chroniger, Dale Thorngate, Herlitz Condison, Dave Taylor and Don Chroniger.
- The beautiful LBC campus.
- The exceptional preparation of the facilities and events by the Host Committee and its chairman, Steve Moncrief.
- The 8-foot homemade cross in the sanctuary with the “Pray” inscription on it. (It was perfect.)
- The creative spiral “Pray” banner designed by Pat Cruzan. (Thanks to Valerie Probasco for having it printed on such short notice.)
- The parade of banners.
- The inspirational men’s chorus selections and presentation led by Stephen Rogers.
- Those who gathered in the streets of Lancaster offering hope through

cont. on page 26

Council on Ministry updates

by Gordon Lawton

The Council on Ministry has had two meetings since Conference and a third is scheduled for mid-January. No, we are not spending a lot of money. These gatherings have been done via the internet. Each one- to two-hour virtual meeting allows everyone to be home in their own bed that night.

There’s still a need for meetings where people are actually present, but much can be done with video and audio over the internet. Actu-

ally, in the last couple of years, we “Skyped” in a member who could not be present in person because of work responsibilities.

Topics discussed have included fundraising by the seminary students, Pastors Conference in the spring, the 2013 Institute on SDB Polity, the Director of Pastoral Services’ activities, and an application to the Seminary Education Program.

Pastor Keith McCall has been admitted into the SDB Seminary Edu-

cation Program. He is the pastor of the Edgewater, Fla., SDB Church and began taking courses at Columbia International University’s Seminary in the fall. He is a self-employed contractor and family man. Keith will participate in the distance program where some of his classes will be on-line exclusively, and others will include an intensive component on campus in Columbia, S.C. His plan is to complete the degree in five years. **SR**

New members

Hebron, PA

Carl Greene, pastor

Joined after baptism

Nicole Graham

Joined after testimony

Seth Greene

First Houston, TX

Jim Barclift, pastor

Joined after testimony

Jack Blair

Rachel Blair

Terry Goodman

Little Rock, AR

Jeffery Monroe, pastor

Joined after testimony, baptism

Wm Kent Trice

Jamie Trice

Seattle, WA

Ken Burdick, pastor

Joined after baptism

Bobby Burdick

Joined after testimony

Jim Lindsey

Please send us your church
and family news to:

editor@seventhday

baptist.org

or to "Sabbath Recorder"
on Facebook

(or mailing address page 3)

Marriages

Uhlich – Lawton.

Benjamin Lee Uhlich and Sarah Michelle Lawton were united in marriage on December 15, 2012 at the SDB Church in Pataskala, Ohio with Rev. Gordon Lawton officiating.

Obituaries

Spencers.—Frederick A. Spencer III, 49, Dixie L. Spencer, 47, and Patience "PJ" Spencer, 9, all of West Union, W.Va., departed this life on September 3, 2012.

Fred was born on July 3, 1963, a son of Frederick A. Spencer Jr. MD, of Salem, W.Va., who survives, and the late Mary Jo (Hurtt) Spencer. On June 28, 1986 he married Dixie McCullough.

Fred graduated from Liberty High School and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and Aviation from Salem College. He was employed by United Parcel Service as an International Flight Captain with over 20 years service. He was a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Salem where he served as a trustee and was very active in all church functions. Fred enjoyed reading, construction work and all outdoor activities. He always had time for anyone who needed a hand.

Dixie was born on April 11, 1965 in Parkersburg, W.Va., to Ray and Coral (Harden) McCullough, Pennsboro, W.Va., who survive.

Dixie graduated from Pennsboro High School and obtained a Bachelor's degree in Biology Secondary Education and a Master's degree in Educational Technology from Salem

College. She was a science teacher at Ritchie County Middle School. Dixie was very active in 4-H and was an avid reader. She was a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church where she was very active. She was often called upon to organize events and activities.

Patience "PJ" Spencer was born on September 11, 2002 in Clarksburg, W.Va., to the late Frederick A. Spencer III and Dixie McCullough Spencer.

"PJ" was a student at Doddridge County Elementary School. She enjoyed reading, school, swimming, and had aspirations of becoming a doctor at St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Survivors of the Spencers include one daughter, Elisabeth Spencer, and two sons, Ian and Joseph Spencer, West Union. Also surviving Fred are two sisters, Kristi Venderlic of Friendly, and Kathy Miller, Morgantown. Surviving Dixie are two brothers, Dennis and Dean McCullough, Pennsboro.

A memorial service was held on September 8, 2012 at the T. Edward Davis gymnasium on the campus of Salem International University, with Pastors Brent Hannah and Dale Thorngate officiating. **SR**

SDB Pastors Conference

is coming
April 23-27, 2013.
Encourage your pastor
to attend this time
of learning
and fellowship.
Special guest will be
Dr. Ralph Mackintosh,
SDB General
Conference President
and illusionist.

(See
www.medmagic.org)

Cont. from page 24

- The Way of The Master.*
- Afternoons at “Sight and Sound” and the Ephrata Cloister.
 - Mike Skupin and his incredible testimony of healing as a “Survivor.” (Thanks to Steven James for the suggestion.)
 - The Youth Banquet at The Shady Maple.
 - Pastors Steve Osborn and Kory Geske eating bugs at the “Survivor Challenge,” along with a lot of other people. (I passed on that challenge.)
 - Patti Wethington filling the auditorium with SDB musical talent from around the country. (All of them delighted us with their worship and praise.)
 - The creative media interludes presented by Leanna Wethington and the media staff.
 - The wonderful LBC auditorium and its state-of-the-art technology and ambience.
 - Evening worship when the Good News was preached by Pastors Haywood Floyd, Dave Stall, Omari Rhoden and Steven James. (I love you guys.)
 - The Friday evening worship service when Pastor Shirley Morgan preached on “Praying in the Unity of the Spirit.”
 - The powerful time of healing led by Pastor Dale Rood following the Friday evening worship service. (The healing power of the Holy Spirit was so real. Praise the Lord—Wow!)
 - Communion with the SDB body of believers led by Pastors Gordon Lawton and Luis Lovelace.
 - A Sabbath morning worship service transformed into a season of remarkable collective prayer led by Pastor Bernie Wethington. (I have never experienced so many SDBs engaged in praying!)
 - Plus so many other pleasant memories too numerous to

list. (Thank you all for praying together. Keep it up.)

Recommitment to Christ

Past reflections may be good if they lead us into a closer walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. From the past we look to the future of SDBs taken from Revelation 14:6-12—

“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.’

“A second angel followed and said, ‘Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.’

“A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.’ *This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*” (Italics added.)

Do we truly believe God’s Word? “Whoever believes in the Son of God is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” (John 3:18)

Are we truly obeying God’s commandments? “He who does not love me [Jesus] will not obey my teaching.” (John 14:24a)

Are we truly remaining faithful to Jesus? “If anyone does not remain in me [Jesus], he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” (John 15:6)

Are we truly telling others about the Good News of Jesus? Here is the Good News:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.” (John 3:16-17)

Do we truly believe it? Are we truly faithful in proclaiming it?

My encouragement to us is to patiently endure as we obey all of God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. We can take comfort in the words of Jesus, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (John 20:21)

Blessings to all of you in the unity of Christ through the power of His Holy Spirit. Pray continually! **SR**



Ed Cruzan

KEVIN'S

ORNER

Nothing new under the sun

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”— Revelation 21:5.

“HOW PLEASED WE ARE with that which is new! Our children’s eyes sparkle when we talk of giving them a toy or a book which is called new; for our short-lived human nature loves that which has lately come, and is therefore like our own fleeting selves. In this respect, we are all children, for we eagerly demand the news of the day, and are all too apt to rush after the ‘many inventions’ of the hour.”

While this may sound like a modern-day parent struggling over which electronic toy or e-reader tablet to buy, the author really was talking of simple toys or books.

Charles Spurgeon delivered this New Year’s sermon on Thursday evening, January 1st, 1885, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in central London. I found it in the Spurgeon Archive at spurgeon.org. He continued, as if reminiscing about 2012:

“The newness which Jesus brings is bright, clear, heavenly, enduring. We are at this moment specially ready for a *new year*. The most of men have grown weary with the old cry of depression of trade and hard times; we are glad to escape from what has been to many a twelve-months of great trial. The last year had become wheezy, croaking, and decrepit, in its old age; and we lay it asleep with a psalm of judgment and mercy. We hope that this newborn year will not be worse than its predecessor, and we pray that it may be a great deal better.”

Still recovering from the election in the U.S. and heading toward the “fiscal cliff” (that I pray is resolved by press time), we should focus on what is truly “new.” Again, from 1885:

“We ought not, as men in Christ Jesus, to be carried away by a childish love of novelty, for we worship a God who is ever the same, and of whose years there is no end. In some matters ‘the old is better.’ There are certain things which are already so truly new, that to change them for anything else would be to lose old gold for new dross.



“The old, old Gospel is the newest thing in the world; in its very essence it is forever good news.... ‘Behold, I make all things *new*.’ What a splendor of almighty goodness shines out upon our souls! Lord, let us enter into this new

universe of Thine. Let us be new-created with the ‘all things.’ In us also may men behold the marvels of thy renewing love.”

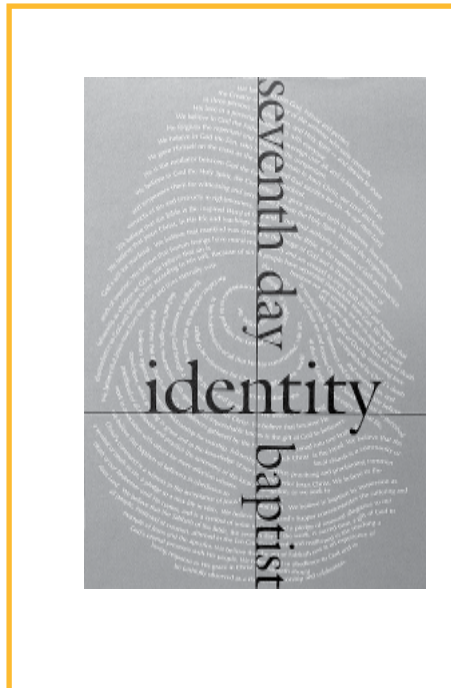
Spurgeon went on for many pages, focusing on the key verse in Revelation 21. As he neared the end of his message, the “Prince of Preachers” issued a powerful (but not always politically-correct) challenge:

“Numbers of Christians seem to live in the marshes always. If you go through the valleys of Switzerland, you will find yourself get feverish and heavy in spirit, and you will see many idiots, persons with the goitre, and people greatly afflicted. Climb the sides of the hills, ascend into the Alps, and you will not meet with that kind of thing in the pure fresh air. Many Christians are of the sickly-valley breed. Oh that they could get up to the high mountains, and be strong!

“I want to say to such, if you have been all your lifetime in bondage, you need not remain there any longer; for there is in Jesus the power to make all things new, and to lift you into new delights. It will seem to be a dead lift to you; but it is within the power of that pierced hand to lift you right out of doubt, and fear, and despondency, and spiritual lethargy, and weakness, and just to make you now, from this day forward, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

Be strong in that old Gospel hope as you enter this new year.





*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.

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