



The Sabbath RECORDER

April 2013

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists



Can you hear me now??



How to
really
listen
to a
sermon





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

Flying to Conference?



Our 2013 General Conference will be held on the campus of the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs. The Host Committee will provide transportation to the campus from Colorado Springs Airport.

If you choose Denver International Airport instead, you may arrange a ride with the Colorado Springs Shuttle (\$50 one way/\$90 RT) to the Academy Hotel where we can pick you up. For shuttle service info please go to www.coloradoshuttle.com or call 877-587-3456.

See page 21 for more Conference info.

For those branching out beyond Facebook, here are some other ways to connect with SDBs:

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/7thDayBaptists

Twitter: www.twitter.com/7thDayBaptists

Google+: gplus.to/7thDayBaptists

Tumblr: 7thdaybaptists.tumblr.com

Vimeo: vimeo.com/7thdaybaptists

Oh yeah, and we're still on **Facebook** at

www.facebook.com/7thDayBaptists

The SDB Historical Society's 2013 Annual Meeting

will be held at the
SDB Center
3120 Kennedy Road,
Janesville, WI,
on May 26, 2013
at 2:00 p.m.

*All interested Seventh
Day Baptists are
invited to attend.*

Want to get the weekly SDB E-newsletter?

Keep up with the
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Contact [social@
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org](mailto:social@seventhdaybaptist.org)

to be on the mailing
list. Send news to
the same address
so everyone
can be informed!



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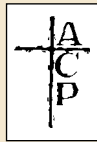


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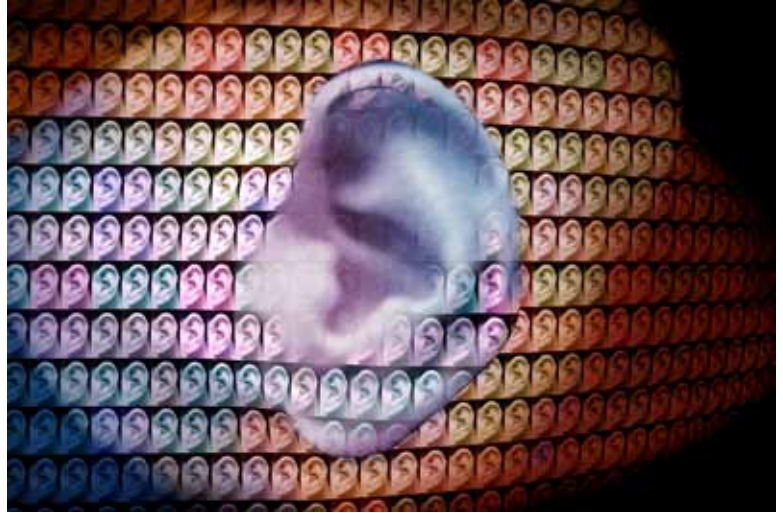
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He who has ears to hear...

by Kevin Butler

Overcoming bad habits to really listen to a sermon



To many an unbeliever, preaching has been viewed as “the fine art of talking in someone else’s sleep.”

Sadly, a number of Christians regard the sermon as a “necessary evil” for attending church services.

Whose fault is this? It’s easy to blame the pastor, or “not being that interested” in the topic. Yet communication—and that’s what preaching is—is a two-way street. The congregation needs to cooperate with the preacher if the proclamation of the Word is to be of any benefit.

Listen to these words from Proverbs: *“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart*

to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.” (Prov. 2:1-5)

While the majority of us were born hearing, we all need to learn to really listen. One study done years ago showed that during a 10-minute talk, the hearers operated at a 28% efficiency. So it follows that the longer the talk, the less we understand.

Open my ears, Lord

Bad habits can certainly get in the way of profitable listening.

These suggestions appeared in the *Sabbath Recorder* back in the '80s, taken from Denver Seminary’s quarterly magazine. Since there are many more media distractions these days, I think these suggestions are even more applicable today!

1

Don’t assume that the subject is dull

When the pastor announces his topic, avoid the temptation to decide that you’ve “heard it all before” or that this couldn’t possibly apply to your life. Even after hearing a dozen sermons on a subject, good listeners believe that they can learn something from everyone.



If you don't acquire new information, you can at least get a different point of view or fresh illustration. Something useful will come to you when you incline your ear to wisdom.

2

Don't criticize the speaker before hearing him out

So many incidental things—like the person's clothes or posture or use of English—may tempt you not to pay attention. While every speaker has their faults, good listeners know that they can waste valuable time unless they ignore the faults and concentrate on what the pastor has to say.

3

Don't let your prejudices close your mind

Suppose the preacher tackles a subject that you feel strongly about, and then takes an opposite point of view? You may react by your emotions and simply "turn off" the speaker in your brain. What if the pastor agrees with your position? You can be tempted to "take it all in"—truths, half-truths and fiction—without checking it against the Word. Effective listeners refuse to argue or agree with the speaker until they understand the position and allow him to state his case.

4

Don't "fake" attention

Experienced church-goers know how to assume the "sanctuary pose" where they gaze at the preacher with their eyes, but wander off inside their heads. (Or these days on their smart phones.)

Skilled listeners battle any boredom by asking, "What is the pastor talking about?" "What major points is he trying to get across?" "Has he proved his case?"

5

Don't waste the advantage that thought has over speech

An expert in listening concluded that we think four or five times faster than we can talk. If a preacher delivers 120 words a minute, the congregation thinks at about 500 words per minute. That difference tempts us to "wander off" onto mental side trails. We think about the football game and then come back to the speaker; we wander off to think about getting the car fixed, then come back to the speaker; think about lunch, and back to the speaker.

During one of those excursions, something important can get by. A listener can decide too quickly that a topic is too complex and will quit, because not thinking is easier than thinking.

That gap between speech-speed and thought-speed offers us an opportunity for profitable listening. Effective listeners practice three skills as they listen to a sermon:

First, they **guess at the next point**. If they are listening closely, their guess will probably be right and the speaker's point will stick in their mind. If they are wrong, they figure out why. Either way, they are more likely to remember a point when they guess than if they hadn't guessed at all.

Second, good listeners **challenge the supporting evidence**. They try to identify the proofs a speaker offers for his conclusions and evaluate whether or not the arguments are sound.

Third, effective listeners **summarize the sermon**. They take the time to ask, "What have we accomplished so far?" This takes only seconds and can be done as the pastor moves from one idea to the next or pauses between points.

If you make three or four summaries throughout the sermon, you'll remember the essential points. Writing down the outline also helps to summarize and review.

All of us can grow spiritually if we learn to listen to biblical messages. Listening enables us to learn, and learning enables us to grow. **SR**

(Test Your Sermon-Listening Skills by taking the quiz on page 7)



The process and arrogance of preaching

by Rod Henry
Thornton, Colo.

“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

So declares the Lord in Isaiah 55:11.

For me, preaching is the arrogance of taking a text or story from the inspired (“God-breathed”) Bible, and discovering God’s desire and purpose for that text.

It is arrogant to presume that a preacher knows God’s desires and purposes. But if the preacher does not set as a goal, the desire and purpose of God for the text, the preacher is aiming too low.

The Next Step Christian Church is a growing and healthy Seventh Day Baptist Church in Thornton, Colo. We have two part-time pastors: Pastor Dustin Mackintosh and me, Pastor Rod Henry.

Beginning this year, we are sharing the preaching responsibilities in a new series from the letter of James. I preach the first two or three sermons of the month from James, and Pastor Dusty preaches the last two Sabbaths of the month from James.

Monday, Monday

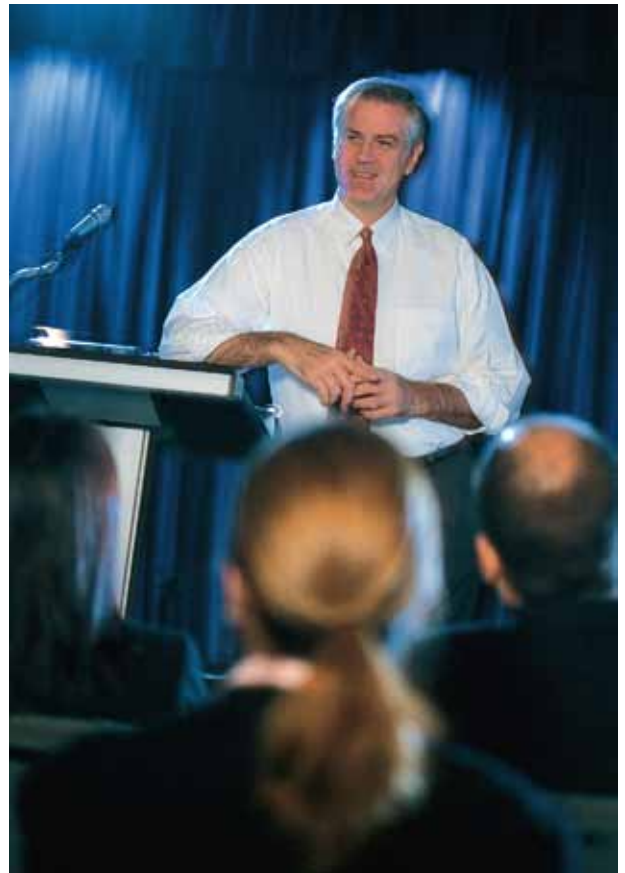
It is Monday, and I will be preaching from the next text, James 1:16-18, this coming Sabbath. I was asked by the editor to describe my

process of sermon preparation. So, I will do that on this text and sermon. Join me in this process.

It is my habit to begin preparation early in the week because a sermon takes me a minimum of 20 hours to prepare. To make this kind of time for a sermon requires a desire to preach messages that are the best I know how to preach and the ability to manage my time. Every sermon I preach is the best I know how to preach. No excuses.

Context of the book and passage

Every text has a context. James 1:1 tells us this letter was written by James (probably the James who was the brother of Jesus and a leader in the Jerusalem church). James was writing to “the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.” At the time of the writing of this letter (probably between 64-66 AD), Christians were being persecuted throughout the Roman Empire.



So, James launched into the issue of dealing with trials that produce Christian maturity in verses 2-4. In verses 5-8, we are encouraged to seek wisdom from God.

Then in the immediate context, James spoke about temptation. Temptation has its own process. But James’ main point in verses 13-15 is that God does not tempt

us. Pastor Dusty's point of the sermon on this text was, "You can trust God because He never tempts, tricks, or traps you into failure." That was his summary sentence for the text.

Meaning of the text

The meaning of our text of study will become the heart of the sermon. I want to ask, "What is this text about?" (Subject) Then I will ask, "What does this text say about what the text is about? (Predicate)

I want to work until I can state the meaning of the text in a single, short statement. I call this the summary sentence. I don't start crafting the sermon until I have my summary sentence. The passage from James 1:16-18 says,

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of all he created.

Here are some notes I made showing subordination of the ideas with indentation:

- v. 16 – Suggests that the church scattered is being deceived about what is to follow in the next two verses.
- v. 17 – All God's gifts are good and perfect

- They are from above
- They come down from the Father
 - He is the Father of heavenly lights
 - The Father does not change
- v. 18 – Example of gift from Father is (new) birth
 - Through the word of truth
 - So we are the first fruits of His creation

What is this text about? The answer is "God's gifts." That is the *subject* of this text.

What does the text say about God's gifts? It says that God's gifts are good and perfect because they come from God, Who is good and

cont. next page

HERE'S YOUR SIGN! (that you're listening to the sermon)

Circle the number that best expresses your response

Circle "1" for Seldom; "2" for Sometimes; "3" for Usually

- 1 2 3 I look forward to hearing a message from God.
- 1 2 3 I sit where I can watch the pastor as he preaches.
- 1 2 3 I pray for the pastor before and during the sermon.
- 1 2 3 I concentrate to find the main idea and main points.
- 1 2 3 I feel I could tell an absentee the sermon.
- 1 2 3 I summarize what the preacher says in the sermon.
- 1 2 3 I look for something that should take place in my life as a result of the sermon.
- 1 2 3 I make it a point to thank the minister for something particular in his message.

Scoring: A score of 20 or more indicates that you are an excellent listener; 14-19 means good listening; 13 or less means that you could improve with benefit to yourself.

perfect. An example of a good and perfect gift is the gift of our new birth.

After some changes and massaging, here is what I came up with as a summary sentence that I want the congregation to take home with them:

God gives good and perfect gifts (like the new birth) because God is good and perfect, all the time.

Manuscript

Pastor Dusty and I always prepare sermons by writing manuscripts. Preaching from the manuscripts is optional, but *writing* a manuscript

“

I want to work until I can state the meaning of the text in a single, short statement.

”

is not. Manuscripts clarify the preacher’s thinking because my experience teaches that thinking and writing are inseparably linked. Manuscripts take time, but time is necessary if you are going to pursue excellence in sermon preparation.

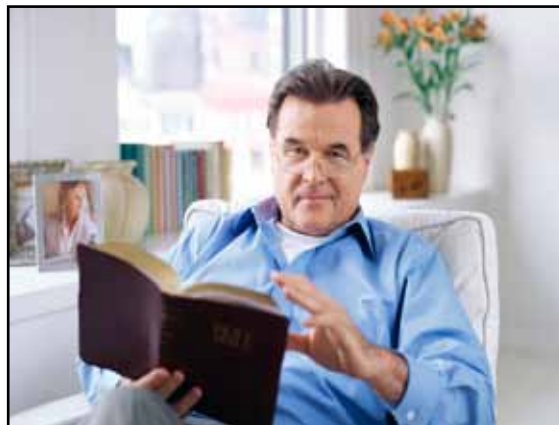
In the **Introduction**, I want to make sure that the previous texts and sermons in James give us a “running start.” In the first few paragraphs we have context (and immediate context) as well as the introduction to the meaning of this passage.

I like to introduce the subject of the sermon so people know where we are going. I also want to focus on the passage preceding this text. Again, Dusty’s summary sentence said, “*You can trust God because He never tempts, tricks, or traps you into failure.*” This will be part of my sermon introduction.

In the **Body** of the sermon, I want to go verse-by-verse explaining all the points that James makes. I want to look at the important words. I want to look at the relationship that the phrases have to each other. With examples and explanations, I want to help the congregation understand what James is trying to say, and the purpose of God in the text. It is at this point that I consult commentaries, dictionaries, and other helps.

The **Explanations** in the body of the sermon are not to share *everything* the Bible teaches about God’s good and perfect gifts. In this sermon, the goal is to teach what James is saying about good and perfect gifts in the context of trials and temptations. So this is the only text I will refer to. (Having a string of texts all saying the same thing does not make James 1:16-18 more inspired. It is already inspired.)

Now for the **Conclusion**, I want to tie together the points of the sermon. I also want to



have an application. The application is *don’t be deceived* about the nature of God and His gifts. Then, I will focus on the good and perfect gift of the new birth as the main application.

Wall staring

Camille was home for several weeks after a surgery. Since my office is just off of the living room, she would watch me work on my sermon, day after day.

About the middle of the second week, she said, “You spend a lot of time staring at the wall.” I like to think of it as “*Waiting on the Lord.*”

By waiting on the Lord, I include God in each step of my sermon preparation. I want God to reveal His *desire* and *purpose* for this and every sermon, because I don’t want His Word to return to Him “empty.”

Finally, I wait on the Lord because week after week He gives me wisdom beyond myself, to spiritually feed a congregation I love. **SR**

So, how did the sermon turn out? Read the text (beginning on the next page), or listen to the message at the church’s website: nextstepchurch.org.

Good and Perfect Gifts

A sermon from James 1:16-18

by Pastor Rodney Henry
Thornton, Colo.

Editor's note: Here is Pastor Rod Henry's sermon that he preached earlier this year on February 2. How this message was inspired and crafted is explained in his previous article on page 6. To hear the sermon, go to the church's website at nextstepchurch.org



Introduction

The Apostle James saw life, and especially our spiritual lives, as a process. He began by saying that the trials of life set off a process that goes from trials, to perseverance, to Godly maturity. We can judge the trials of life to be “pure joy” because they produce the finished product of Christian maturity.

Then James wrote of the process of temptation that begins with our evil desires, giving birth to sin, which finally gives birth to death. We are

responsible for how we deal with our evil desires so we don't yield to them, producing death.

Last Sabbath, Pastor Dusty told us that Satan, our sinful natures, and our stupidity dig holes of trials and temptations. When we fall into the holes of trials and sin, God did not dig the hole and God did not throw us in the hole. So don't blame God!

In fact, in the “holes” of life, Pastor Dusty says, “*You can trust God. He never tempts, tricks, or traps you into failure.*” Life can be full of trials and temptations but God is always there to give us *good and perfect gifts*—especially the gift of the new birth.

Our text for today gives us a helpful perspective on dealing with both the process of trials and the process of temptation. God encourages and strengthens us by giving us “*good and perfect gifts,*” because that is His unchangeable nature. Listen to James 1:16-18—

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

“Don't be deceived!”

The deception that James spoke of is a distortion of the very nature of God.

The first distortion was that God brings trials our way because He does not care for us. There's a distortion that it is *God* who is responsible for temptation.

There was another distortion of God that has existed from the first sin of Adam and Eve. It is the distortion that God is *holding back from us* what we need and desire. Therefore, God can't really be trusted. To this, James said, “Don't be deceived, my dear brothers.”

cont. next page

We are family

Before James got to the resolution of the deception, he reminded his readers of his personal love for them, calling them “My dear brothers.” James’ correction and teaching is given in the context of love.

He once again reminded the readers of this letter that as Christians, we are family. We are in trials together. We are suffering temptations together. We are being deceived together.

Our relationship with fellow Christians must be characterized by love. All people who have accepted Jesus as their Savior and Lord are part of Christ’s universal body, the Church—the family of God. And as such, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

Here’s the truth

Now, we get to the point of the deception of these brethren in Christ. No deception is worse than a deception about the nature of God. The deception that God causes trials and temptations is a lie. The truth is that *God gives good and perfect gifts because God is good and perfect, all the time.*

***Since
God is
the creator
of the universe,
He can create
good and perfect
gifts for each one of us.***

James demanded that the goodness of God shows that **God** has provided *good and perfect gifts* to face trials with joy, and to face temptations with holy living.

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Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God’s gifts are all good and perfect

God is the perfect gift giver who gives good and perfect gifts.

We just finished Christmas. Let’s be honest. The only perfect gifts we received are the ones we

bought for ourselves! I admit that it is impossible to buy me gifts. Most things I don’t even want. The few things I want, I just buy for myself.

But when it comes to God giving gifts, it is a completely different story. God’s gifts are always *good and perfect* because He knows what we need and when we need it, before we do. God is good and perfect, and He only gives good and perfect gifts.

God’s gifts have no limitations, because they are heavenly by nature

God’s gifts are *from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights*. The gifts of God are tailor-made for each of us. God creates them “on the fly” so that they specifically meet our needs.



Each gift of goodness is specially crafted for each individual.

James is saying that God is *the Father of the heavenly lights*, meaning God created the sun, moon, and stars. Since God is the creator of the universe, He can create good and perfect gifts for each one of us. This reminds us of the potential for the personalization of gifts that God creates for us.

God's gifts are perfectly delivered at just the right time

God does not use FedEx or UPS to deliver His good and perfect gifts. God delivers them directly "from above." God's timing is not our timing, but God's timing is always perfect.



Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God never changes

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. James is declaring the goodness of God. If we are in trials, we can count on the goodness of God to come to us in good and perfect gifts. If we are suffering from temptation, we can count on the goodness of God to come to us in good and perfect gifts. This means that we should never question the love and care of God, no matter what. Don't be deceived!!!

To make sure that we grasp the goodness of God, James gives us a final and convincing argument. The most important *good and perfect*



The new birth is a miracle of God in the hearts and minds of those who surrender themselves to God.



gift from God is within us, in the new birth.



He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

The new birth

James' final appeal to help us understand God's good and perfect gifts is to appeal to the gift of the "new birth." The new birth is not just saying the right prayer, believing the right doctrine, and doing the right things. It is when God uses these things to work a miracle in us.

The new birth is a miracle of God in the hearts and minds of those who surrender themselves to God. In that miracle, there begins in us a transformation of our thinking and feelings. God infuses in us a love for each other and the world around us.

This transformation is so real that God calls it a "new birth." James tells us, "*He (God) chose to give us birth.*"

From the Beginning

The new birth is God's plan from the foundation of the earth. He gave His Son, Jesus, as the *good and*

perfect gift and sacrifice, and He raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Gospel, *the Word of truth.*

God created the first human being by gathering the elements of the earth and breathing into his nostrils the breath and spirit of life. And man became a living soul. In the same way, God chose to breathe His life-giving spirit into those who were dead in sin.

That is the miracle of the new creation. A dead sinner is given life in Christ and eternal life as a gift. This is "the word of truth."

Conclusion

Salvation is the creation and work of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. The good news is that God has accomplished all of this as His gift to us. God's gift becomes our gift when we accept the gift of Jesus by faith and surrender our lives to Christ. "*Every good and perfect gift is from above*" and so it is with our new birth.

There is something about the anticipation of the *first fruit* that heightens the taste of the fruit. Believers are called the first fruits of all that God created. Every new birth in Christ is like a new plant.

As believers, we grow and mature and finally we produce fruit. The fruit we display and offer the world around us is a kind of *first fruit*. Every saved person is the anticipated *first fruit* of another generation of Christians. Every saved person is the *first fruit*, in the here and now, of what God intends for eternity.

Sooo... church— *Don't be deceived.*

All God's gifts are good and perfect all the time, because God is good and perfect, all the time. And, the best gift He has given us is the new birth. **SR**



Presenting the 2013 **Summer Christian Service Corps** and **Stained Glass** teams. Please be in prayer for these young people who will be serving at our local churches. Their training dates are June 12-20 with projects running into early August.

SCSC

*(Site and Project Director;
Team member and home church)*

•**Ashaway, RI:**

Nadine Lawton, PD

Lindsay Crouch (Bay Area, CA)

William Patrick Villalpando
(Colton, CA)

•**Battle Creek, MI:** *Jan Noel, PD*

Nathan Crowder

(Boulder, CO)

Jennifer Brown

(Texarkana, AR)

•**Boulder, CO:** *Sanja Looper, PD*

Caleb Dan Gammons

(Texarkana, AR)

Tacy Camenga (Milton, WI)

•**Colton, CA:**

Chris Galarneau, PD

Daniel Lovelace

(Metro Atlanta, GA)

Karissa St. Clair (Milton, WI)

•**North Loup, NE:**

Katrina Goodrich, PD

Stephen Lawson

(Colton, CA)

Danielle Hazelton

(New Auburn, WI)

•**Seattle Area, WA:**

Ruth Burdick, PD

Lauren Telford

(Texarkana, AR)

Austin Lotts

(New Auburn, WI)

•**Shiloh, NJ:** *Jessica Chroniger,*

Carla Burlingame, Co-PDs

Logan LaGesse

(New Auburn, WI)

Rebekah Hargett

(Metro Atlanta, GA)

Stained Glass

And this year's Stained Glass touring musical ministry: Musicians Cheyan Blevins and Allie Rudawski (from Milton, WI), Aaron Andries (Washington, DC), Gabriela Alonzo (Falls Church, VA), Lance Greene (Dodge Center, MN), and sound techie Timothy Lawton (Ashaway, RI).

This year's **Summer Christian Service Corps/Stained Glass** students will be serving a fifth week at General Conference sessions in Colorado Springs, CO. The Women's Board desires that our young adults attend General Conference to learn more about Seventh Day Baptists, to form connections with other SDBs, and to continue to serve the Conference.

Since costs are making it more difficult for our students to attend Conference, the Women's Board has committed to pay **up to \$350** of the Conference costs for each of its 20 students! This will be an expense for the Women's Board beyond the usual costs for transportation, training, and evaluation.

Therefore we have established a "**Conference Scholarship Fund**" to raise this additional amount. The amount donated will be divided among all our SCSC/Stained Glass students, up to the cost of registration, non-air-conditioned room, and lunch/supper ticket. Any additional amount will be added to the Dorothea Shettel fund, established to help with such costs in additional years.

Please pray with us for God's provision and your involvement in this ministry. Gifts can be sent to: SDB Women's Board, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678 or given on-line at the Razoo site: <http://www.razoo.com/story/Conference-Expenses-Scholarship-For-Scsc-Stained-Glass-Students>

Please indicate that you are giving to the "Conference Expenses Fund." **SR**



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

Living a life of comfort

by Katie Brown
Westerly, R.I.

*"Be kind, for everyone you meet
is fighting a hard battle."*—Philo

This has been one of those months where a certain phrase or idea keeps coming to mind as I listen to sermons, read my Bible, pray and talk with fellow believers.

God is slowly revealing to me that even the most "put together" people have a "hard battle" that they are waging war against. It's something I already knew in my head but it's a fact that I conveniently forget when I get wrapped up in my own selfish world.

Yes, I pray for others in my life who are struggling, while at the same time I pray that God brings ME strength and comfort. I think too often we stop after a prayer and think there is nothing else we can do.

I mean, I can't heal cancer. I can't get them a job. I can't bring peace. I can't restore joy. Jesus does that.

The Body of Christ needs to remember the *power* we have and the *real responsibility* we have to comfort others.

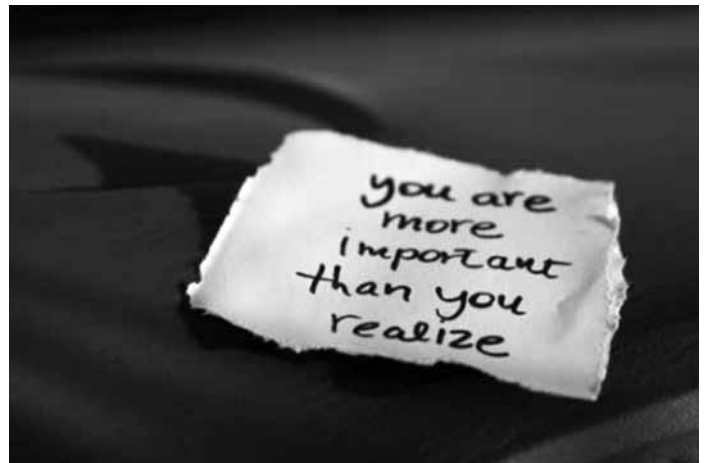
"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all of our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
(2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Do you know the power of a kind word? A smiling face? A card in the mail? A hug of solidarity and friendship? These small gestures can make your day. And while these are wonderful expressions of love, just one gesture is not what was meant by, "Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

True comfort is in *Jesus*. And a community of people pointing each other to Jesus while saying, "I am here for you the entire way" is Jesus working through us. We are here to grieve, to rejoice, to pray, to cry with each other through every season of life.

Again, this is not a new concept. We all know that it's right, but do we get too embarrassed or nervous to carry it out? We may have a handful of friends who we would not be afraid to bombard with love and support, but what about the new members of your church or a neighbor of yours?

I'm not saying we should pry into everyone's soul to find struggles, but if we lived a life that was actively encouraging the believers around us,



then our life in the Body of Christ would be greatly enhanced.

As Christians we are a new people. We are family that should be there for each other and competing to outdo each other in honor. Our churches, our lives should be a witness of what living in the Body of Christ is all about.

I pray we become the comfort we want for others. *SR*

Look for more on
the 2013 **SCSC** teams
next month!

Not quite sure what
SCSC is? Interested in
finding out more?
Go to the Women's
Board website:
<http://sdbwboard.squarespace.com>



A family grafted in

One of the great things about Seventh Day Baptists is how generously we bestow our heritage. No matter when someone becomes part of the SDB family, they are grafted into life among our people.

This is equally true if your family roots run deep in our history or if you covenanted with one of our congregations last week. When you become an SDB, the story of the movement becomes your story. Tracing one family provides an instructive example:

John Leland Shaw joined the Trenton, Minn., Seventh Day Baptist church in the early 1860s. He had married Catherine Burdick of the Berlin, Wis., SDB church, and shortly after the wedding they moved to Minnesota to start a family. John and Catherine had six children in Minnesota, but as the older children grew and needed schooling, the family moved to Southern Wisconsin. Ultimately settling in Milton they became members of the Milton church.

Three of their six children died young—Dighton passed at age 30 while preparing to go to China and work at the SDB missionary school there; Frank, died at age 19 shortly after completing his education at Milton College; and Russell died shortly after his birth in 1880.

The eldest son, Edwin Benjamin, was educated at Milton College, and then the University of Wisconsin and the University of Chicago. He became a professor of English and Philosophy at Milton College before entering the pastorate (serving Rock River, Wis., and Plainfield, N.J.) and ultimately serving the General Conference as the joint secretary of both the Tract and Missionary Societies. After leaving Conference service, Edwin returned to the faculty at Milton, where he both taught and founded the college library and served as its first librarian.

The second son, George B. Shaw, also was trained at Milton College and then at Alfred (N.Y.) School

of Theology. Entering the pastorate, he served SDB churches in Hartsville, N.Y., Friendship, N.Y., New York City, Ashaway, R.I., North Loup, Neb., and Salem, W.Va.

The last of John's children, Adeline, was born in 1885, and was trained as a teacher at Milton College before marrying Rev. Herbert Polan. She served with him at SDB churches in West Edmeston, N.Y., Hartsville, N.Y., Piscataway, N.J., Nortonville, Kan., North Loup, Neb., Brookfield, N.Y., and Verona, N.Y. John's three surviving children all served SDB churches and the General Conference for the majority of their lives, and surveying

their contributions would take more space than this column is allotted.

Edwin Benjamin Shaw married Nellie Campbell in 1895, while teaching at

Milton College. He and Nellie had four children. Leland, the oldest, followed in his father's footsteps and became an English professor at Milton College. Stephana, the second child, was trained at Milton College and taught English and Latin for more than 40 years. Elston attended Milton College and worked in commerce and publishing. He was also a long-time member and Sabbath School teacher in the Milton church. Ruth, the youngest child, married Elton Bingham and was a long-time member of the Milton Church.

Elston E. Shaw had one child, my grandfather Edwin, who passed into glory March 7, 2013. My grandfather graduated from Milton College, working in businesses in southern Wisconsin for his entire life. He loved to sing and was active in the church and community until a rare condition sapped his physical strength.

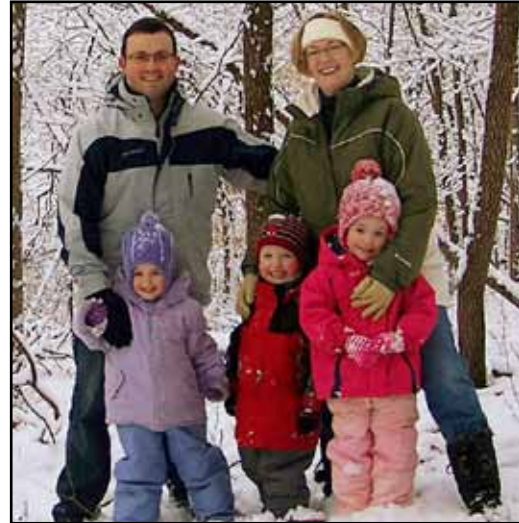
I am thankful for my grandfather and for the way that my family has been grafted into the larger Seventh Day Baptist family. From John Leland to now, the Seventh Day Baptist story has become the story of my family—a part of who I am and what I teach my daughter about what God has done for us. Even in the midst of grief, it is difficult to be anything but thankful for what God has done for just one family grafted into SDB life nearly 150 years ago. **SR**

“When you become a Seventh Day Baptist, the story of the movement becomes your story.”



Seminarian Profile

Seminarian Profile



Name: Johnmark Camenga

Birthdate and place:

September 14, 1978 Little Rock, AR

Family:

Cathy Rogers and I got married on August 5, 2000. We are blessed with 5-year-old triplets: Cate, Eve, and Jonah. We also have a 7-year-old Miniature Dachshund named Winston.

Education:

Mainland High School, Daytona Beach, FL
Salem (WV) International University (1996-99);
University of Central Florida, Orlando (2006-09);
West Virginia State University, Institute, WV
(2009-10)

Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY
(2010-present)

I hope to graduate in May of 2015.

Ministry experience:

SCSC for four years (1996-99) with projects at North Loup, Lost Creek, White Cloud, Daytona Beach
Currently blessed to serve as pastor of the Lost Creek (WV) SDB Church where I began in September of 2012. Prior to this, I was licensed to preach in the Salem, WV and Daytona Beach, FL SDB Churches.

Other employment:

My only other significant employment was at the Florida United Methodist Children's Home. I held several titles, and I most enjoyed the time spent working with the elementary school-aged boys. Those kids keep you running and love to push the limits. It helped tremendously in preparing me to be a dad.

Favorite Bible passage:

Matthew 5:43-48 helps me remember that what is demanded of me as a servant of Jesus is something that I cannot do in my own strength.

Favorite author: Greg Ogden

If given a \$10,000 check we would: Take the family out to dinner, replace Cathy's computer, and invest the rest in Cate, Eve, and Jonah's college fund.

A great answer to prayer: The peace and contentment that met us on the doorstep at the Lost Creek parsonage. When it sometimes feels like all we're doing is making our best guess from day to day, the Lord truly worked in our hearts and heads as He led us here.

A project I'm excited about: is the new West Virginia Children's Fellowship. The Salem, Lost Creek, and Middle Island churches have been blessed with an abundance of kids in the 3 to 12 age range and they have been coming out in force for our monthly get-togethers. If participation in Children's Fellowship is any indication, Camp Joy is going to be bursting at the seams in short order.

My vision for SDBs: That each congregation would dive headlong into the depths of discipleship and Christian formation, striving to reinvigorate those folks already in the pews such that the irresistible characteristics and qualities of Jesus become the same characteristics and qualities that we are known for. **SR**



Chewing on God's Word

You should meditate.

Now mind you, I'm not saying that God calls His followers to empty their minds to see what happens when a perfect vacuum is formed. Instead, you should cram your head full of God's message. I'm saying that God calls His followers to grab hold of what He has set before us and to let that thinking come to life.

The Bible is full of examples that show God's people meditating on His work and word. For instance, Mary, the mother of Jesus, "treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

God called some of His people to meditate. Joshua, the good spy, the leader who brought the Children of Israel into the promised land: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it." (Joshua 1:8).

The Lord tied Joshua's ability to follow His desire to Joshua's willingness to devote time and energy to God's word. The call and promise to Joshua was for him and the people he was leading.

That's nice, you may be thinking, *but what about us?* Here is a call that is explicitly for those who follow Christ now: Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (Philippians 4:8).

So, what is meditation? Well,



meditation is like gum chewing for the brain.

What happens when you chew gum? You grab something tough enough to be worked over without falling apart. You put it in your mouth. You spend hours squishing the blob this way and that. Occasionally, the gum just sits there in your mouth. Then, it starts again: your tongue moves it back-and-forth and side-to-side. Your mouth discovers all sorts of things about how that particular piece of gum functions. For those who pay attention, you discover irregularities and sharp places in your teeth. And, for most people, while sometimes all they do is sit on a bench and chew gum, most of the time all of this is going on as they navigate the world.

And what happens with meditation? You grab something important enough to be worked over. You put it in your brain. You spend hours pushing the blob this way and that. You cut it with truth. You squish it with questions. Occasionally, it just sits there. Then, your thoughts pick it up again. You discover all sorts

of things about how that particular idea functions. For those who pay attention, you discover irregularities and sharp places in your life and thoughts. And for most people, while sometimes all they do is sit and ponder, most of the time all of this is going on as they navigate the world.

The analogy isn't perfect. I won't claim God has called us to chew gum.

Yet, as we've seen, Scripture calls followers of God to meditate. Here are a couple of suggestions:

First, choose a passage from Scripture (like Psalm 1). Devote time each day to just one phrase or thought from what you chose (or just choose a verse). As you start the day, grab an index card or scrap of paper, and write the phrase down. Ask God to help you pay attention to Him. Then at each opportunity (lunch, supper, lines, bedtime, etc.), get out the card, read the words and think about them in a variety of ways. Use your standard Bible study approaches. Ask who, what, when, where, why, and how. Look for a sin, a promise, an example, a command, or just basic knowledge that fits with your life.

Second, read a book that shows someone else meditating. Milton Vincent's *A Gospel Primer for Christians* is one good example. The book has a section called "Reasons to Rehearse the Gospel Daily" with 31 thoughts which are meditations on the Gospel. If you read one of these a day for a month, and then think a little about what you have read, I'm sure you'll discover new ways that God's Gospel touches your life in His greatness.

I encourage you: meditate. **SR**



FOCUS on Missions

Tradition... TRADITION!

by Clinton R. Brown
sdbmissions.org

In a 1971 movie musical, Tevye, a Jewish papa, says, “Without traditions, our lives would be as shaky as... a fiddler on the roof.”

It is hard to deny the strength of some traditions that often help bind together a community. People seem comforted by the continuity of traditions; they can be a powerful tool in reinforcing values. However, if over time they become irrelevant, or their meaning does not translate, they could become more of a barrier than a facilitator in transmitting those values.

You may recall, in Acts chapter 15, the young Church was in a crisis over traditions. Jewish believers in the risen Christ had practices that they felt were integral to the proper worship of God. They felt all Christians should be circumcised (and essentially become Jewish in culture) in order to have righteous lives, and be fit to follow the Messiah.

Had the council in Jerusalem decided otherwise, we might still feel under obligation to become Jewish to follow Jesus. However, the leaders of the early Church came to a consensus that old covenant practices were not necessary for salvation, and the Gospel was as open to the Gentiles as it was to the Jews.

Though the Jerusalem Council settled the issue that people of all cultures could adapt to follow Jesus without adding extra-Biblical practices, Christians through the ages have tended to bring our own cultural preferences to how we introduce the worship of God to other people. Not surprisingly this has created tension, rejection, and confusion for those who otherwise may have more readily understood and accepted the life-changing, yet simple, relationship with Jesus.

In 2012, when I went to see new SDB congregations in South Sudan and Ethiopia, I found believers just one generation removed from a lifestyle of tribal cattle herdsman. They were now seeking assistance to construct Western-type worship facilities and obtain materials so they could better mimic Western worship styles. The idea of “Church” had been presented heavily encased in a Western cultural mindset. We are trying to explain that they can follow Jesus appropriately within the already God-glorifiable aspects of their society.

As it happened, that same year, I was also privileged to visit the SDB church in Shiloh, New Jersey as they celebrated their 275th anniversary. One aspect of the



United Artists 1971

celebration was reviewing excerpts from their considerable historical records.

A recollection that I found particularly intriguing was on the struggle the congregation faced over the all too familiar issue of the use of organ music in worship. As usual, the opposing views divided up much along the lines of age. Those more sympathetic with the younger culture were firm that change was necessary, while the traditionalists felt they would no longer be able to worship if new instruments were brought into the sanctuary. Interestingly, this was much earlier in the Shiloh congregation’s history, and the battle was over *bringing IN* an organ, and not replacing it with drums and guitars.

All the way back at the Jerusalem Council they established that in our worship and obedience to God we should always use the touchstone of his Word—by the guidance of the Holy Spirit—to evaluate what we do and how we do it.

I believe Tevye was correct that life is, indeed, shaky as a fiddler on a roof. But selfishly clinging to tradition can easily pull us off center of where God wants us to be, as unlovingly jettisoning them can throw us in the other direction. Let’s remember to remove our will and desires, as we join Him in His mission to love others as Christ has loved us—starting in our own congregations and reaching to the ends of the earth. **SR**

This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:8-9)



the BEACON

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

April 2013

Tempting, huh?

by Seth Osborn
Boulder, Colo.

Temptation is a powerful force. Everybody has experienced it. It seems simple enough to tell yourself, “No, don’t do that,” but we know that it’s not nearly that easy.

The interesting thing about temptation is that the things we’re tempted to do aren’t always bad in and of themselves. Yes, sometimes you’ll be tempted to do things that are clearly sinful—like lying or disobeying our parents—but many times there won’t be anything inherently wrong with the thing that tempts us.

For example, someone might be tempted to eat excessive amounts of food. Food isn’t evil; in fact, food is a necessary thing for our bodies to continue functioning. It becomes a bad thing when we allow the food to dominate us for the amount of time we continue to consume it.

When we allow something like food to control our life, we’re saying it’s the most important thing to us at that moment. It disrupts life and takes time away from other things we could be doing, like work or spending time with people. When we let ourselves fall into this temptation of doing something for more than a rational amount of time, we allow it to hold more importance than other things—like our family, friends, jobs, and even God. Yikes.

So how do we keep from being tempted, whether it’s something innately sinful or something that we



should do in moderation? Well, I’m happy to tell you that there’s this great big book full of answers for people who are willing to give it a look. Let’s just dig in, shall we?

Paul reassures us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” This gives us great hope against temptation. It lets us know that we’re not facing any temptation on our own. Anything we could be tempted by is “common to mankind.” It also lets us know that any temptation we face is possible to overcome. God will even give us an escape from the temptation, so we can power through it.

Caution: Many people take that

last part to mean that God won’t give us anything more than we can bear. *Do NOT* make this mistake. The verse is saying that if you’re being tempted, you can overcome it, not that we won’t ever suffer something more than we can endure. In fact, there are verses in the Bible that talk about such suffering, like Psalm 38:4 and 2 Corinthians 1:8. God may allow us to suffer more than we can bear, because He wants us to rely on Him to help us through such times.

Matthew 26:41 reminds us to “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Our spirit is perfectly willing to resist temptations, but we can still easily succumb to the desires of our sinful nature. If we pray for God to help us, though, He’ll do so.

And if you ever wonder whether it’s even worth going through the struggle of temptation, look no further than James 1:12 for your answer: “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”

So next time you’re tempted, remember that God is here. He won’t allow you to be tempted by anything that’s impossible to resist, and He will provide a way out. All you have to do is ask, and He will be more than happy to help. **SR**

Time to Recommit

by Nathan Crowder
Boulder, Colo.



I have had the craziest month. At times I'm so busy that I forget to eat, sleep and go to church.

I am in a show, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and it opened on the 28th of February. Rehearsal was every night for a month making me feel like a full-time student with two full-time jobs. As an RA in a first-year dorm I keep very busy. I take 18-22 credit hours a quarter, and I am involved in theater and a cappella groups.

Lately I have been wondering to myself: Where is God in all of this? I have been forgetting the reasons why God has put me here and given me these gifts. It is to serve Him and to give Him glory! I have been forgetting to give God the glory, even when it comes to my Summer Christian Service Corps (SCSC) assignments.

I feel like I could be doing so much better, but I have spread myself so thin that I don't have time to give everything 100 percent. I am starting to realize that it's really hard not seeing my family for so long, and it's hard

not being able to go to church because of school. Maybe I need to reevaluate things. Maybe I am in too much.

The amazing thing about all of this is that God is still blessing me and letting me thrive in my schooling and work—even though I have drifted from Him. It's made me think about how much God has blessed me.


I think He is using this situation to “talk” to me a little bit. It has shown me how much I need Him and how important going to church and reading His Word is. Church just makes me feel better. It relieves my stress and I am with the people I love the most.

I was also reminded of the bond we have in our denomination. I realized the other day that I am closer to all the people I met in SCSC (who I only spend about four weeks a year with) than life-long friends. We are a family, in Christ. It is amazing the bond people can have from something like that.

I am truly blessed by God and I am so excited to be in SCSC again this summer. I hope this can be a recommitment for me. I need to be reminded just how important God is in my life and how He can use me to affect other lives.

SCSC is a powerful thing that continues to change my life every year I have done it. I pray that as this quarter comes to an end, I can make the conscious decision to re-evaluate my schedule and recommit to my faith.

God has done pretty amazing things in my life. I know if I reconnect with Him that all of my stress will be relieved and I will be happier. I am typically a happy person, but when I constantly put God in the equation—rather than off and on—I am like a different person and am truly happy. I am so blessed and amazed by God's dedication to me and I pray that I see it all of the time, and not just when it is convenient. God is always looking out for me; it's time I am always ready to have His back, too.

I am so glad that God has been working on me this past month and I'm excited to see what will happen here at school. I can't wait to see exactly what God has in store for me. I am super excited for SCSC and trust everything will fall into place as He sees fit. 



Colorado Springs, CO

July 28–Aug. 3, 2013



The President's Page

by Ralph Mackintosh

10 Reasons to Follow HIS Footsteps to Colorado

Attending our annual SDB Conference is a simple decision for many. It's part of their yearly routine and only severe health or financial issues would keep them away.

For others, it's something they do only every few years when Conference is conveniently near their home, or they don't have another major vacation planned, or there's something about that year's program that is particularly attractive. This column is addressed to those in this last group who need a compelling reason to be at Conference.

Reasons #1-3: If you have been following the SDB Blog or the Facebook page you know we have some truly outstanding guest speakers. Announced so far have been Dr. Richard Blackaby with his insights into *Experiencing God*; noted Christian author and leader, Dr. Gordon MacDonald; and Focus on the Family President Dr. Jim Daly who will all be sharing with us during the week.

On Tuesday, July 30, we will be joined by Dr. Gordon MacDonald. He is a well-known author, speaker and teacher who has served as President of World Vision, President of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and as a pastor for over 40 years. Currently he is editor-at-large for *Leadership Journal* and Chancellor



Gordon MacDonald

for Denver Seminary. Among his many books are some of my favorites including *Ordering Your Private World* (1.5 million copies in print), *Mid-Course Correction*, *A Resilient Life* and *Who Stole My Church*. Here is your opportunity to gain insights from one of the "movers and shakers" in the world of Christian leadership. Dr. MacDonald comes to us from Concord, New Hampshire.

On Thursday, August 1, we will be joined by Dr. Richard Blackaby,



Richard Blackaby

co-author of *Experiencing God* and *Spiritual Leadership*, and author of several other books. Since SDBs have been studying *Experiencing God* this year it is especially fitting that Dr. Blackaby join us. I have heard from many of you how much this book has changed or affected your lives and this is a chance to interact with one of the authors. Dr. Blackaby is President of Blackaby Ministries and lives in South Carolina.

We will also hear from Dr. Jim Daly, President of Focus on the Family. When Dr. James Dobson



Jim Daly

stepped down as President he selected Jim Daly to take over the reins of this well-known Christian organization. Dr. Daly hosts the Focus on the Family broadcast that airs on more than 1,000 radio stations and reaches nearly 3 million listeners per week. He is the author of *Finding Home* and *ReFOCUS: Living a Life That Reflects God's*

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CONFERENCE is calling you to COLORFUL COLORADO

Your 2013 Conference Host Committee invites you to join us July 28 – August 3 at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. President Ralph Mackintosh has planned an outstanding program.

We as a committee are working together with Executive Director Rob Appel and the staff at UCCS to work out all the details of hosting you in Colorful Colorado. We are happy to serve you in this way.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at: 2013hostcommittee@seventhdaybaptist.org or call the SDB Church of Boulder @ 303-541-9097.

You will also find a wealth of information on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SdbGeneralConference2013InColoradoSprings>.

2013 Host Committee Members

Chair – Pastor Steve Osborn

Assistant Chair – Gretchen Zwiebel

Registrar – Jan Graffius

(After May 1, you may reach Jan at 304-641-7619
or registrar@seventhdaybaptist.org)

Treasurer – Cletus Severance

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Signage Coordinator – Deb Skaggs

Receptions/Banquets Coordinator –

Pat Williams

Stage Managers –

Michael and Sanja Looper

Youth Representative – Michaella Osborn


10 Reasons, *cont. from page 20*

Heart. Daly received the 2008 World Children's Center Humanitarian Award, the 2009 Children's Hunger Fund Children's Champion Award, and the 2010 HomeWord Family Ministry Award. He has appeared on numerous television programs and been featured in *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*. *Newsweek* named him one of the Top 10 next-generation evangelical leaders of influence.

These are only three reasons you should feel compelled to be at this year's Conference. More speakers and events are yet to be announced and still being confirmed. However, I'll let you in on one event that is definitely in the works:

Wednesday may be the most unusual day of programming in SDB Conference history. From the early morning event to the evening program, I guarantee you will witness things you have never seen

before and the Christian message delivered in ways you might not think possible. Wednesday is Family Day and will be a time of fun, food, fellowship and outreach like no other.

I promised you 10 reasons to come to Conference. There was only room for three and a hint at the fourth, so next time I'll give you more reasons why 2013 is a year you can't afford to miss. Follow HIS Footsteps to Colorado Springs this summer. 



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*

Leave 'em laughing

It may seem like a strange leisure time activity, but I enjoy strolling through cemeteries.

Tombstones are mentioned in the Bible as early as Genesis. "Jacob set up a stone monument over Rachel's grave, and it can be seen there to this day" (*Genesis 35:20, NLT*).

Absalom, King David's third and one of his favorite sons, had three sons and one daughter, but apparently the sons died at an early age. "During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, 'I have no son to carry on the memory of my name.' He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day" (*2 Samuel 18:18, NIV*).

However, that "pillar" wasn't Absalom's grave marker. His tomb is situated on the eastern slope of the Kidron Valley, on the east side of Jerusalem.

When I walk through the cemetery on the north edge of Milton, Wis., memories flood my mind and heart.

Because my feet shuffle down its gravel roads in the spring, leave flattened grassy footsteps in the summer, and crunch brittle leaves in the fall, I know where the final resting places of many Miltonians are located—including those of such faithful SDBs as Dr. Forrest Branch, and Prof. Herbert Crouch and his wife, Virginia.

I realize that these burial sites are empty, housing only tattered earthly tents. Whenever I walk past my first husband's grave, I'm acutely aware Denny isn't there, and I find that comforting.

Wandering through cemeteries can conjure up heartwarming memories while providing interesting insights into the lives of complete strangers. Surprisingly, cemeteries can also be sources of humor. Here are a few of the funny—and sometimes profound—epitaphs actually on headstones:

A Mr. Aikle is buried in East Dalhousie Cemetery in Nova Scotia. His tombstone reads, "Here lies Ezekial Aikle. Age 102. The Good Die Young."

Lester Moore, a Wells Fargo station agent in the 1880s, is buried at Boot Hill Cemetery in Tombstone, Ariz. His marker reads, "Here lies Lester Moore. Four slugs from a .44. No Les. No More."

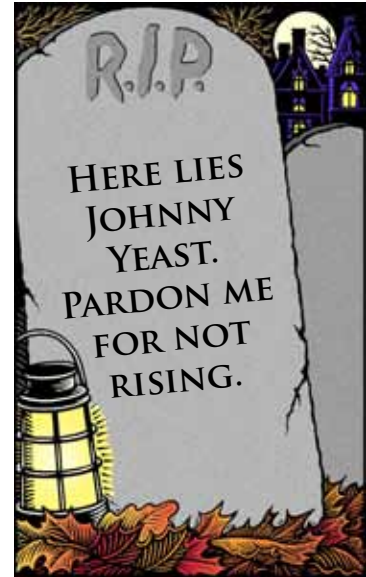
A grave marker in a Ruidoso, N.M., cemetery reads, "Here lies Johnny Yeast. Pardon me for not rising."

An epitaph in Thurmont, Md., says, "Here lies an Atheist. All dressed up and no place to go."

An accident led to this in a Uniontown, Pa., cemetery: "Here lies the body of Jonathan Blake. Stepped on the gas instead of the brake."

Silver City, Nev.: "Here lays Butch, we planted him raw. He was quick on the trigger, but slow on the draw."

Anna Wallace's marker in Ribbesford, England, reads, "The children of Israel wanted bread,



and the Lord sent them manna. Clark Wallace wanted a wife, and the Devil sent him Anna."

One English lawyer's epitaph declares, "Sir John Strange. Here lies an honest lawyer, and that is Strange."

Anna Hopewell's gravestone in Enosburg Falls, Vt., reads, "Here lies the body of our Anna, done to death by a banana. It wasn't the fruit that laid her low, but the skin of the thing that made her go."

Found in a cemetery in Hartscombe, England: "On the 22nd of June, Jonathan Fiddle went out of tune."

One of my favorite epitaphs—with a "footnote"—is also located in England:

"Remember man, as you walk by, as you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so shall you be. Remember this and follow me."

Underneath those lines, someone added: "To follow you, I'll not consent, until I know which way you went." **SR**



by Executive Director
Rob Appel

A Surprise Visit

A school superintendent was concerned about the disorder he found in so many classrooms. He decided to take action and chose one class as an experiment.

He made a proposal to the students, “I would like each of you to clean out your desk today and resolve to keep it clean. I will return one day and inspect your desks, and the person with the neatest desk will be given \$100. I won’t tell you which day it will be. It will be a surprise.” The children were excited and began to tidy up.

During the first week every student checked their desk to make sure it was in perfect order. The following week a few grew tired of the waiting, and returned to their old habits. After a month all but one student was sure he wasn’t coming back. One little girl believed the promise, and every day she made sure here things were neat.

The other students teased her, “Why do you keep your desk clean? You can’t possibly believe he is coming back!” Even with that taunting, she remained diligent and kept her desk in perfect order.

Near the end of the school year the superintendent returned. Students started trying to clean their desks but the superintendent told them to stop. He then started the inspection. One-by-one he rejected the cleanliness of each desk. Some of the children tried giving excuses, and one boy even blamed the superintendent for making them wait so long!

Finally, the superintendent arrived at the desk of the little girl. She beamed with confidence as she stood by her desk. The superintendent then led her to the front of the classroom. He took out a crisp \$100 dollar bill and gave it to her and said, “Boys and girls, this student never stopped believing that I would return. She kept her desk in perfect order and she did not have to worry one little bit about what month, what day, or even what time of the day I would arrive, because she was always ready. Always!”

Ready is the key word from this illustration and the word from Luke 12:40. He writes it very plainly, “You

also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Oswald Chambers writes in his book *My Utmost For His Highest* about **Our Lord’s Surprise Visits**:

“A Christian worker’s greatest need is a readiness to face Jesus Christ at any and every turn. This is not easy, no matter what our experience has been... Jesus rarely comes where we expect Him; He appears where we least expect Him, and always in the most illogical situations. The only way a servant can remain true to God is to be ready for the Lord’s surprise visits. This readiness will not be brought about by service, but through intense spiritual reality, expecting Jesus Christ at every turn. This sense of expectation will give our life the attitude of childlike wonder He wants it to have. If we are going to be ready for Jesus Christ, we have to stop being religious. In other words, we must stop using religion as if it were some kind of a lofty lifestyle—we must be spiritually real.”

So how do we get ready for Jesus? Like the little girl in our illustration, it takes **daily preparation**. We are to keep our lives clean and repent daily so we are ready for His return. We must acknowledge that we are in need of God’s grace through Christ. Repentance is the act of turning away from our sin lives and into a new life in Christ.

We also must be ready for those times where we are confronted by someone that we might be uncomfortable with. You know, the homeless, the street people, someone from another ethnic group, the ones we stereotype. We never know what Jesus might look like, or one of His angels.

Jesus says, “Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Like the little girl who kept her desk clean, we must clean out ourselves so we are ready for our Lord’s surprise visits. **SR**

Next Month:

Faith – Not Emotion

Continuing the series of “Presidential Testimonies”

In the January *Sabbath Recorder*, we heard from a number of our past Conference Presidents. At our prompting, they reminisced over some questions and shared their memories. We present another in that series.

Name: Stephen Thorngate, MD
Conference Year: 1971
Conference Theme:
 “The Responsibility of Maturity”
 (Ephesians 4:13)



SR: What inspired you to choose your theme?

Dr. Steve: Seventh Day Baptists in America celebrated our tercentennial that year. Our small denomination had achieved a level of maturity comparable to any persuasion and worthy of pride! I felt honored to be involved in the celebration. I felt strongly that along with the denominational maturity—depending on the level—there comes a gradual increasing responsibility.

What were your biggest challenges during your Presidential term?

Steve: I lived on the west coast. Conference was to be in the denominational birth state of Rhode Island or somewhere in New England. I wanted to visit as many churches and meet with as many people as possible, as well as produce a memorable Conference worthy of a 300-year-old denomination whose maturity is unsurpassed.

Your biggest joys?

Steve: Getting to know and work with SDBs that either I had known or came to know better. I owe much to people behind the scenes like Wayne Rood, Lois Wells, Glen Warner, Gordon Sanford, Alton Wheeler, and the Barbers in Rhode Island.

How much was your family affected by (or involved in) your extra Presidential duties?

Steve: I was just getting going in my medical-surgical practice, but both my partners and my wife, Beverly, were very supportive.

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

Steve: Since I was so “green” at such work, it was good planning to have me on Commission for the year before so I could improve my understanding of how polity works for our people.


How did you feel as you passed the gavel to the President-Elect?

Steve: Relieved! The next president was Paul Osborn, whom I had gotten to know better serving on Commission. I knew that his Conference year would be well done. Even at this stage of the game, I was thinking that if I had it to do over again, there were things I would have done differently.



What hopes or concerns do you have for the future of Seventh Day Baptists?

Steve: It is good to be proud of our past and conscious of our maturity. But with maturity comes responsibility, which includes advancing to the next stage of maturity.

As a denomination, we should practice and teach Bible-based mature Christianity, and as individuals accept the responsibility St. Paul gives us in Ephesians 4:13. 

Obituaries

Burrows.—Philip F. Burrows, 85, formerly of Milton, Wis., died on May 15, 2012 at the East Moline (Ill.) Nursing Home.

Philip was born February 1, 1927 in the Town of Genesee, Allegany County, N.Y., to Myron A. Burrows and Gertrude (Irish) Burrows. He had six brothers and two sisters. Philip married Harriet V. (Depew) Babcock on February 6, 1946.

He attended Friendship (N.Y.) Central School. After serving in the United States Air Force as an aircraft engine mechanic, he returned home and finished high school at Richburg (N.Y.) Central School. Most of his gainful work was for Butler Manufacturing Company, holding various jobs in Galesburg, Ill., Kansas City, Mo., Sioux Falls, S.D., and Milton, Wis.

Phil was a faithful member at Seventh Day Baptist churches in Nile, N.Y., Kansas City, Sioux Falls, and Milton. He was ordained as Deacon in Kansas City.

At the SDB Conference level he served as a member of the Memorial Fund Board and the Tract and Communication Council. Phil also served the Milton Kiwanis Club as secretary for many years. His hobbies were bowling and golf.

Surviving him are two step-children, Calvin P. Babcock and Carolyn M. Babcock Gould; three brothers, Harold, Duane, and Victor Burrows; five step-grandchildren,

and several great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Burial was at Mount Hope Cemetery in Friendship, N.Y. Final services were graveside with Rev. Dr. Kenneth Chroniger officiating.

Fuller.—Audrey B. Fuller, 89, passed away on January 17, 2013 at The Villages Regional Hospital in Lady Lake, Fla.

Audrey was born in North Loup, Neb., on December 29, 1923, the daughter of Earl and Edna (Davis) Babcock. She attended the West Nebraska School of Nursing in Scottsbluff and received her RN in 1944.

On November 22, 1945 she was married to Menzo Fuller. They celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary on Thanksgiving Day 2012. They lived in North Loup for 28 years. From 1973 to 1979 they spent time as Seventh Day Baptist missionaries at Makapwa Mission near Blantyre, Malawi, Africa. From 1988 until 2011 they lived in Daytona Beach, Fla., and spent 25 years as active members of the Daytona Beach SDB Church.

Audrey was an active member in churches in North Loup, Shiloh, N.J., and Daytona Beach. In 1988 she was a recipient of the denomination's Robe of Achievement. In North Loup, she was also an active member of the American Legion Women's Auxiliary.

She is survived by her husband, Menzo; sisters Donna Brown and Gloria Sharp; daughters Kerry Rahn and Phyllis Williams, and sons Richard and Robert Fuller; three grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her older brothers, Wayne and Allen Babcock.

A celebration of Audrey's life will be held at the Daytona Beach SDB Church. **SR**

New members

Miami, FL

Andrew Samuels, pastor

Joined after baptism

Karlene Chambers

Sackeh Sinclair

Milton, WI

George Calhoun, pastor

Joined after baptism

Anissa Welch

Caleb Sanford

Philadelphia, PA

Kenroy Cruickshank, pastor

Joined after baptism

Simeon Barrett

Makeba Ashmeade

Births

Sconyers.—A son, Jacob Edward Sconyers, was born to Lee Sconyers and Jeannie Cruzan of Fayetteville, NC on February 6, 2013.

Green.—A daughter, Tskylar Kai, was born to Earl and Tshahi (Samuels) Greed of Pembroke Pines, FL on February 18, 2013.

Yost.—A daughter, Vienna Victoria, was born to Jason and Mary (Kavanaugh) Yost of Janesville, WI on March 15, 2013.

Marriages

Schmude – Caseltine. David Schmude and Debby Caseltine were united in marriage on February 7, 2013 at the SDB Church in White Cloud, MI. Rev. Bernie Wethington officiated.

Death Notices

Edwin E. Shaw, 83, formerly of Milton, WI died on March 7, 2013.

Rev. Bernie E. Wethington, 64, of White Cloud, MI died on March 19, 2013.

“I pray Thee Lord my soul to take”

by Jim Skaggs
Madison, Wis.

Editor: As I was wrapping up my Korner (opposite), I read this blog entry from my friend Jim Skaggs, member at the Madison, Wis., SDB Church. It seemed to go along the “final journey” theme of my thoughts, so here it is.

You can find many more engaging entries at Jim’s blog, www.one-eternal-day.com.



***Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
And if I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee Lord my soul to take.***

That was the prayer I learned to say when I was a child. This version of the prayer dates back at least to the 18th century. Wikipedia quotes two more modern versions as replacing the last two lines with:

***When in the morning light
I wake,
Teach me the path of love
to take.***

and,

***Guard me Jesus through
the night,
And wake me with the
morning light.***

John Mark Reynolds comments that “Contemporary Christians worry that the story of the crucifixion may be too intense for children. Death is uncomfortable to our consumer-driven and decadent popular culture. There is nothing we can buy on late night television to cure it. It is the end of our choices

and our pleasures. It cannot be defeated....”

Talking about death is considered morbid. We are insulated from death in ways unknown to people in any other time in history and in most of the rest of the world today. And yet it is as unavoidable for us as it has always been for everyone else.

Reynolds goes on to write:

The end is coming. This makes me sad of course. I am quite happy and have no desire to die, but die I must. It is more certain than taxes. After that?

After that best reason, divine revelation, and experience says that after that comes the judgment. The universe has not been nice to humankind, but just. The universe is not fair, but fiercely good. The other side is not going to be Disneyland with fully effective safety devices, but full of goodness, truth, and beauty.

That means full of awe and terrible with splendor.

And I have mucked up and muddled through far too often to trust in my own good works or have confidence that my soul is, in itself, ready for such unadulterated joy. My wiring for pleasure is too little and the current of goodness too great for any such easy hopes.

My hope is in God. I really might die before I wake. These few paragraphs may post after I am no longer around to edit it. I hope not, but I do not know. This much I know:

The small and safe little world of secularism which pretends that ‘this life is all there is’ cannot be for me.



Would that I could believe that this were true!

Would that death were sleep... but perchance we dream... and what dreams may come! Instead what evidence we have suggests that this life is not the end, but the beginning of a bigger reality. There is no reason to think our experience of this reality is not (as Plato would say) more intense than that one in which we find ourselves now. Our little fences and moral compromises would be blown away like prim fences in a cyclone of goodness.

Best to have learned to be one with that powerful coming wind.

Hope?

There is none in our certain death or in the mere fact of an afterlife. (No exit! What a dreadful thought!) There is hope only in the greater fact of a good God.

This I do know. If I should die before I wake, I pray Thee Lord my soul to take. **SR**

KEVIN'S

ORNER

The road to paradise contains many curves (like, around 620)

As this past Wisconsin winter seemed to drag on and on, the anticipation for our late-February trip to Hawaii heightened. Janet had accumulated enough frequent flyer miles that we only had to pay a small processing fee and our seats were booked.

The three islands we visited this time seemed to represent the three levels of Hawaii that we needed. Not yet “unwound” from our busy schedules and still in deadline-and-meeting mode, our first hotel near Waikiki placed us within a bustling city, yet close to awesome natural wonders

on Oahu. Maui, the next stop, was still quite touristy but without the big urban sprawl. And by the time we reached Kauai—the least developed and “most Hawaiian” of the three—we were able to relax and enjoy the culture and natural beauty.

But the second island, Maui, did have one of the biggest adventures: **The Road to Hana**.

How does one describe this road? For those familiar with northern Vermont, picture the curves of Smuggler’s Notch repeated over and over for a few hours. Here’s a good summary from TripAdvisor.com:

The Road to Hana is not so much a destination as it is an experience. The roughly 52 miles will take you along a narrow winding road through the rain forests of Maui. The road itself can be very narrow [Kevin: Oh, really??] with several one-lane bridges along the route [Me again: Since when does *four dozen* constitute “several”?], and has many sharp turns, some of which can be very difficult to see oncoming traffic, so go slow. [Very difficult = Impossible.]

The Road to Hana offers many breathtaking views of the rainforest, several waterfalls, and a picture-perfect coastline. Remember, Hana—beautiful in its own right—is not really the destination so much as the trip itself is an unforgettable experience.

The challenge of that road mirrors the path of life: short times of open highway and relaxing; times of close calls and quick decisions; dealing with other people (aggressive drivers and big vehicles); knowing when to push and when to yield; following local

courtesy customs vs. rigid rules; and stopping once in a while to savor some of the sights. Taking our time, the memorable excursion took nearly 5 hours.

Once we reached Hana, the little duplex we had rented for the night was nice but certainly no Shangri-La. Walking behind the house, my slight disappoint-



The crazy Road to Hana

ment turned into wonder. The wind and the waves, the palm trees and the mountains around the bay felt like the setting for a deserted island movie. So picturesque. And the whooshing sounds outside the bedroom window were way better than my portable sound machine at home... I slept well that night!

For the return trip, we knew more of what to expect, and had a different kind of anticipation—heading back to the “known” instead of venturing into new territory.


The perspective of the route also changed. Driving along the coastal side meant not having to hug the tight curves with fears of scraping against the mountains. (I just had to make sure to not drive off the cliff.)

Each way, Janet wished the drive wouldn’t end. Then again, she wasn’t behind the wheel.

It took some concentrated work but the payoff was worth it. Does that sound like our path to heaven? Here’s where I can identify with my wife. I’m not in the driver’s seat. Jesus has done all the work necessary for us to safely traverse the road to heaven.

Yes, we had been to “paradise” in Hawaii. But the beauty and perfection of our *real* Paradise will make even the best earthly “must-see” a distant memory.





Important Memo:

168 Years and counting!!

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

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

GRACE AND PEACE,

Kevin



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