

# Sabbath Recorder

We are your people,  
the sheep of your flock.  
We will thank you always;  
forever and ever  
we will praise you.

—Psalm 79:13

Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and lost one. Wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until you found it? When found, you can be sure you would put it across your shoulders, rejoicing, and when you got home call in your friends and neighbors, saying "Celebrate with me! I've found my lost sheep." Count on it — there's more joy in heaven over one sinner's rescued life than over ninety-nine good people in no need of rescue. — Luke 15:4-7 MSG



*Thanksgiving is a word of action!*

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**Pastor Michael Spearl** had a passion for science and engineering early in his life. But after earning an MS in Electrical Engineering, and working and teaching in that field, God redirected him into a new direction working for the kingdom. Pastor Michael says, "My passions have changed. Now, I teach about Jesus and disciple others." He also had the opportunity to study seminary classes at Columbia International University. He enjoys pastoring Union Station at Dunedin SDB Church in Florida.

# Sabbath Recorder

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## 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.

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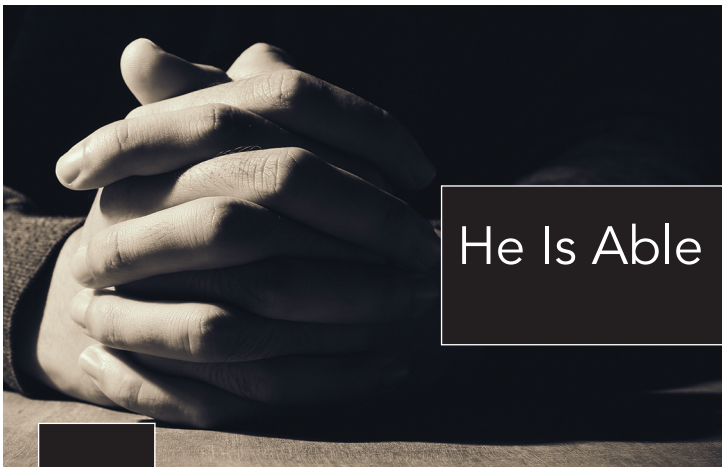
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## He Is Able

by Pastor Michael Spearl

God is pleased when we ask Him to use us to bring glory to His name.

Do you feel that God has something for you to accomplish in your life? Do you desire to do your part to help make a better world? If you follow Jesus, the correct answer to these questions is **yes** because the Holy Spirit has planted a desire, a passion within you to be about God's business.

There are many stories of godly people in the Bible with a passion to be about God's business. One short story is found in 1 Chronicles 4:9–10. This story is about a man named Jabez who cried out asking God to bless him, to keep him from harm, and to enlarge his territory. The result: God answered his prayers. We are clearly told that God granted his requests.

When I was a young Christian, I would have considered it selfish, maybe even arrogant to ask God to *"enlarge my territory."* I thought God did not approve of prayers like that. I thought prayers like that were offensive — that God would not be pleased, as if success was a worldly pursuit.

But this short story tells us that God listened seriously to Jabez and that God granted his request. So, if God answered the prayer of Jabez, are we to believe that He would also answer a similar prayer from us?

The correct answer is again, **yes**. God promotes our activities — especially those that are beyond what we can do on our own. It is God's nature, His power, and His provision that are being demonstrated. The world will take notice when it sees God's kindness and His people blessed, especially when it sees something happen that can only be done with His help. People need to see God at work.

When our passion is to serve God and to be a positive influence for His kingdom, it is right for us to ask God for success. God needs successful engineers and teachers and businessmen and tradesmen. If we are working our job or building our business God's way, then God will answer our prayers to *"enlarge my territory"* — because our work and our business represent God. Our business is His territory and He wants to bless us to enable us to touch the lives of others living in our communities. God is pleased when we ask Him to use us to bring glory to His name; He is pleased when we use our success to share the gospel message with others.

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## He is Able

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And don't think that "enlarge my territory" is a prayer reserved only for the younger generation. Recall that at the age of 85, Caleb, who 45 years earlier had stood firm with Joshua in the Desert of Paran, was not ready to retire, nor was he content with the *status quo*. He asked for more territory. He said, "Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day..." (Joshua 14:12).

Another good *territory* story is the one about Nehemiah who was the cupbearer for King Artaxerxes of Persia. The Jews, who had returned to Jerusalem decades earlier, were facing annihilation from their surrounding enemies and Nehemiah desired some time away from his job and enough supplies to rebuild Jerusalem's walls to provide safety for the people.

So, Nehemiah prayed, boldly, repeatedly, day and night culminating in his prayer that God would grant him success:

*"O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king. (Nehemiah 1:11)*

Amazingly, it pleased the king to send Nehemiah to Jerusalem. Nehemiah went with the king's favor, an army escort, and with the funds and supplies needed to make the wall-rebuilding project a success. Nehemiah knew why the king showed him such incredible favor. Nehemiah said it with his own words. It was "because the gracious hand of the Lord was upon me." (Nehemiah 2:8).

Indeed, God *is able* to change hearts and minds.

Now for a few *Thankfulness in Action* stories from the South Atlantic Association of Seventh Day Baptist churches. A few years back, I was having a conversation with Sister Marlene Campbell from the Southeast Atlanta

SDB Church. She asked for prayers concerning their church building project. She also commented that the members of the Southeast Atlanta Church were committed to make their desire for a community worship center come true; they were all-in; they were ready to sacrifice whatever was needed to make it happen. God answered their prayers "to enlarge their territory." Today, they are thankful to have a beautiful worship center that can host 250 people for an association meeting.

A few months back, I was speaking with sister Marie Ward from the Edgewater SDB Church. Their church has embarked on an ambitious building project. She mentioned how expensive the project is and that they are using a pay-as-you-go approach to build their new worship building. The project is underway, the walls are up, the roof is on, and Sister Marie marveled and praised God for the significant volume of funding that had materialized — seemingly from nowhere.

This year the Union Station SDB Church at Dunedin, FL, (formerly Bradenton SDB Church) celebrated with thanksgiving because its members were able to purchase their own worship center. But it only happened after they prayed like Jabez and Nehemiah and asked our great Father in heaven to enlarge their territory and grant them success.

The West Palm Beach SDB Church owns land outright and is in the process of having architectural and engineering plans developed for their future worship center. They too are praying that God would enlarge their territory believing that God's gracious hand is upon them.

My challenge to you: look at your own situation. Is there someone who needs to grant you favor if you are to carry out a successful ministry and follow God's plan? "Grant me favor" and "enlarge my territory" are words that we all need to pray. Start praying these words now and see what God can do through you. Our loving God is able and willing to make you what He wants you to be. SR

Our loving God is able and willing to make you what He wants you to be.

# Thankful In Not Knowing The Outcome

by Pastor JR Shick

One of the key reasons we do not “GO and DO” work for the Kingdom is the fear of it not being a success.

In the process of learning we must always ask questions, figure out the outcome, and then put what we have learned into practice. Most all of us have heard the quote from Yoda in the movie *Empire Strikes Back* — “Do. Or do not. There is no try.” Most of us tend to go with the idea, “I will just give it a try.” Time and energy are critical in the decision-making process. I heard someone once say, “They were a Christian, but not a practicing Christian.” WHAT?!! That is like saying you are allergic to water!! You are alive or dead!!! You either do or not do! To be a *follower* of Christ you believe HE is alive and follow HIS instructions. All of them! James 1:22 **“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”**

Now remember, we are all called to be *disciples* of Christ. Ask the question: what is a disciple and what does he do? Disciples are an understudy or an apprentice. They learn and then do what they have been taught. Being *followers* or *disciples* of Jesus Christ, we learn from HIM and do what HE has told or shown us to do. Some examples include John 13:34-35, “LOVE” like HE does; “SERVE” like Jesus did in Mark 10:45. Also there is Matthew 28:19-20, “GO.” This last one tells us to take all that we have learned and “DO.”

Most all of us have trust issues. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then you have trust issues. You do not trust that Jesus Christ is in control and you want to do things your way. One of the key reasons we do not “GO and DO” work for the Kingdom is the fear of it not being a success. Jesus never said everything would go your way and that your life would be easy. HE just said it would be worth it!! The Bible never said anything about the disciples retiring and living the easy life on a beach in Galilee. Fear should never be the end of doing something for the Kingdom; it should only be a motive to ask Jesus for courage. We did that as a church last year and it impacted the whole community. We did a ROCC (Real Opportunities Connecting Community) the Block event. It was amazing — that alone had an impact — but that was only a starting point. The biggest impact our little church had is found in the White Cloud Elementary School.

There are many here in White Cloud who serve in the church who are or have served in education in some way: as school board members, teachers, and a custodian. You can even throw in parents and grandparents of students who attend. The connection came from ROCC the Block and how the families reacted about the gifts the children received from the prize drawings.

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Sometimes you have to say “DO!”  
DO, or do not,  
win or lose,  
failure or success  
but never just “try.”

**Either way you will be thankful!!**

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Meetings were held after the event about how things worked or how things could be improved. In the meeting, a question was stated something like, “Wouldn’t it be great if we could bless the kids all year long?” This was followed by another question, “Do you think we could do something for the school?” The idea came to bless the teachers and then that could benefit the children.

One of the members of the church, who is a teacher, had the theme for the school year, “*We are Superheroes.*” Teachers have the power of teaching and the students have the power of learning. That theme carried over to the new idea of “*Teachers are Superheroes, but even Superheroes need help once in a while.*” A meeting was set with the Principal of the school to pitch the idea at a staff meeting. The Principal loved the idea and agreed that I could come in on behalf of the church and talk to the staff. Teachers were asked what they could use in their classrooms that would make their job easier. They just needed to fill out a wish list and we would see what the church could do. The lists would be picked up before Thanksgiving so we could deliver the requests before Christmas break. Almost all of the teachers filled out a wish list. Most of teachers filled out a list with real simple requests like: Expo markers, Clorox wipes, copy paper etc. There was one request for a whole classroom of hard cover dictionaries! The P.E. teacher asked for some baseball gloves. As it turned out, the church was able to purchase every requested item.

That is not all: the Women’s Circle of the church wrapped all the requested items with CHRISTmas wrapping paper and then delivered them all to the teachers with a card that they read to their classes stating that all the teachers, students,

and gifts had been prayed over. In addition to those gifts, a teacher put on Facebook that a child from her class was in need of shoes for winter. This set the ball rolling for the church to collect not only shoes for students, but snow gear as well. Shoes for that student along with fifty complete outfits of jackets, snow pants, hats, gloves and snow boots of various sizes were given to the school so that any student that needed them had them available to use.

The Principal was so moved by the church’s generosity she gave our church name to be used for Time Release Bible Study. That is a Bible Study done for school children during the school day. About thirty children are pulled from school and come once a month to do a Bible Study in our church!! BUT WAIT THERE IS MORE!! The Women’s Circle made up jumbo candy bars for the teachers for their birthdays or half-birthdays and prayed for them during their meeting once a month. This gave me the opportunity to visit the school monthly to deliver the goodies by putting them into the staff mailboxes. The relationships that are being made at the school are impacting the whole community. Not just individuals, but churches and businesses are looking to team with us to help spread the GOOD NEWS. Due to all of this, I was asked by a teacher to come to the school once a week to meet with a group of teachers that gathers together to pray for staff, students and their families.

It is easy to say “NO” because of the lack of trust in Christ and fear that grips us from time to time. I had no idea how this was going to turn out and I still don’t. It has gone better than I could have hoped or imagined. Sometimes you have to say “DO!” DO, or do not, win or lose, failure or success but never just “try.” Either way you will be thankful!! SR



When we recite the part of the Lord's Prayer about forgiveness, we often focus on the first half: *forgive us our sins*. We gloss over the second half about forgiving others. It's understandable. Everyone wants to be forgiven by God. Isn't that what the Bible is all about? The issue is that what Jesus actually taught us to pray was a petition to God which was contingent on our forgiveness of others. Said another way, Jesus taught us to ask God to only forgive us if we forgive others.

I want to say upfront that some people have suffered horrible things. Some of you have been physically or sexually abused. Some of you have lived in those situations for years. If that is your situation, I want you to know that I understand that forgiveness can take time. Do not hear me say that you never have to forgive.

I'm sure that most of you grew up like me thinking that the part in the Lord's Prayer about forgiveness was just teaching us that we can ask God to forgive us without a sacrifice. After all, Israel was under the sacrificial system which meant that people were to bring sacrifices to God for their sins. So then Jesus is just looking forward to the cross and the reality that no more blood will need to be shed for forgiveness...right? Well, sort of.

### **I Didn't Do It!**

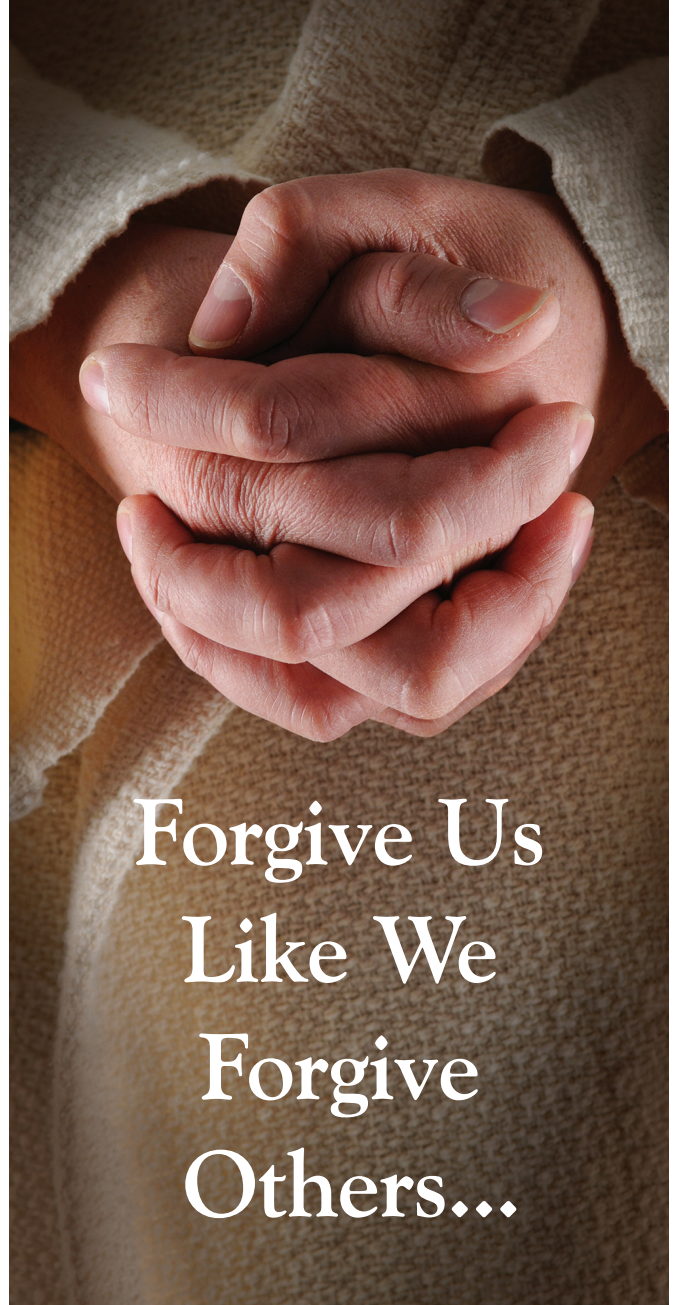
One of things that we need to remember about the Lord's Prayer is that Jesus is trying to teach us. He isn't asking God for daily bread simply because He needs it. He is teaching us that our existence is contingent on God. We can't even have the bread we need to live without the grace of God. Jesus isn't simply teaching us to ask God for forgiveness. You don't need to teach people that. We all have a desire to get away with sinning.

When I was a teenager, my immediate response when my parents called my name was, "I didn't do it!" Sometimes it was because I specifically remembered that I had done something, but most times I was just trying to get out of trouble for things that I *might* have done. At that time, I was regularly getting into mischief and I knew that, at any one moment, I should be punished for about five different things. But on the off chance that I hadn't done whatever I was getting called about, I chose to deny everything. The funny part is most times I was just getting called downstairs for dinner.

No one likes to be in trouble and we like punishment even less. But, for Jesus to simply be teaching people that they can ask God for forgiveness seems too shallow. Certainly it would be new to them to think about forgiveness without immediate sacrifice, but it would not have been completely foreign for them to ask God for forgiveness. No, there must be something more here — that something more is a tiny two letter word.

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## THE LORD'S PRAYER



Forgive Us  
Like We  
Forgive  
Others...

**We are left with the realization  
that what Jesus is really asking is that  
God would forgive us just as much as  
and in exactly the same way that  
we forgive others.**

8th in a series by Assistant Pastor Philip Lawton  
Seventh Day Baptist Church of Shiloh, NJ  
Check out Phil's blog at [contemplatingkenosis.blogspot.com](http://contemplatingkenosis.blogspot.com)

## The Lord's Prayer

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### The Power of Similes

When I was in eighth grade, I learned about similes and metaphors. Metaphors are giants of comparison. They can lift huge boulders of ideas and make them understandable. Metaphors grind the bones of new concepts and turn them into easily understandable loaves of bread. They help us understand something new. Similes are like metaphors, but as small as crumbs. They still help us understand something new, but in a tiny package.

What we have in this section of the Lord's Prayer is a simile, both in English and Greek. This comparison centers around the word  $\omega\varsigma$  translated "as." With just these two simple letters we have a huge comparison. The problem with "as" is that we often use it to mean "while." We can say "as I was walking down the street" – but what we really mean is "while I was walking down the street." That simple divergence in meaning allows our brains to think that Jesus isn't making a comparison here. If we had translated  $\omega\varsigma$  as "like" this would not happen. We would read "Forgive us our sins LIKE we forgive others." There would be no question.

**When we don't forgive others,  
we stand in the place of God,  
passing judgement on someone.**

The reality of the comparison is furthered when you realize that just two verses earlier Jesus used the same word when talking about heaven and earth. He has already told us that God's will should be enacted on earth just like it is in heaven. We are left with the realization that what Jesus is really asking is that God would forgive us just as much as and in exactly the same way that we forgive others. The irony is that Jesus understands we might miss this – so He tells us literally right after He finishes the prayer that God will not forgive us if we don't forgive others. (Matthew 6:14-15) The fact that we don't recite these verses is made all the more sad by the fact that Jesus probably didn't even say the second half of verse 13. But that is a topic for another article.

### Forgiven People, Forgive People

I think the best way to illustrate what this means practically is with a story. Since I have previously recounted Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant, I think it best to pull from the Gospel of Luke 7:36-50. This of course is the story of the woman who washes Jesus' feet with her hair. Jesus is at the home of a pharisee and we get the idea that the woman is probably a prostitute. Since the pharisees were all about living rightly, he makes a big deal about the type of woman she is. (How he knows might indicate the type of man he is.)

Jesus' response is to tell a simple parable about two guys who get forgiven debts, one more than the other. When asked who would

love the lender more – the pharisee replies the one who was forgiven more. After forgiving the woman of her sins, Jesus then turns to the pharisee and says these poignant words: **Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven — for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.**

The sad part about this story is that the pharisee focuses so much on Jesus forgiving sins that he misses the point. Jesus is not saying that the pharisee loves little because he has been forgiven little. Rather it is the realization of the sin that Jesus is talking about.

We have all been forgiven great debts to God. We are all worthless and in need of Jesus. But unless we truly understand how much we need Jesus and how much grace we have been given, we cannot hope to extend that grace to others. Jesus tells us that God's forgiveness of us is contingent on our forgiveness of others because God has forgiven us so much.

Jesus makes it pretty clear. Either you understand the grace that God gave you and thus forgive others or you don't. Revenge and bitterness are the enemy of God. When we don't forgive others we stand in the place of God, passing judgement on someone. We in essence say "Look God, I know that you have forgiven them, but I know better than you do." Unforgiveness declares that God is either a liar or a fool.

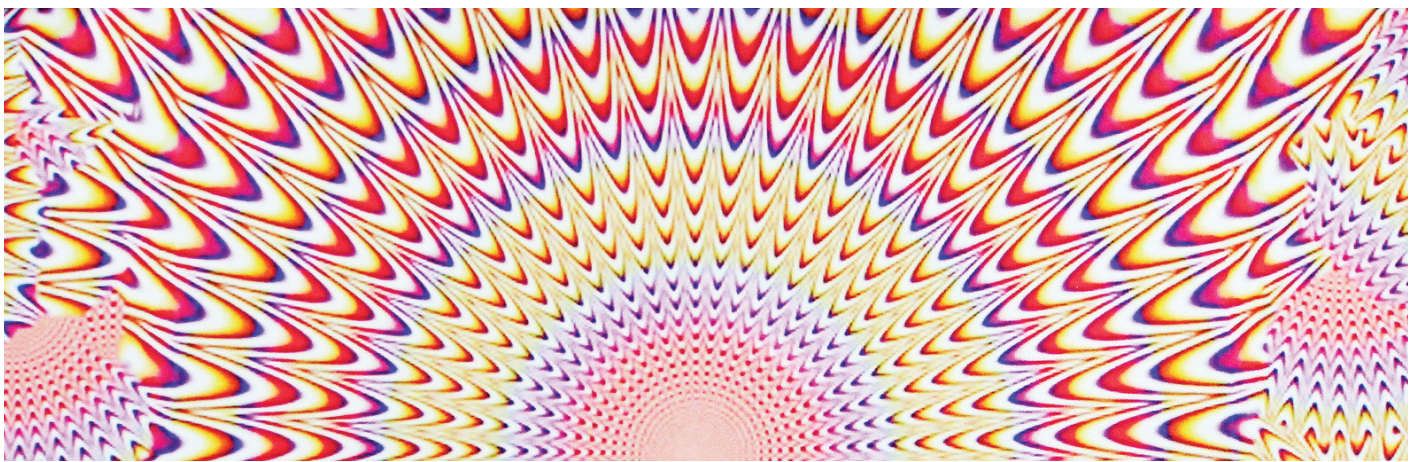
### Forgiveness Takes Time

At this point I want to highlight something. *Forgiveness doesn't always happen all at once.* I said at the beginning that sometimes people are hurt deeply. Sometimes the relationship can never go back to the way it was. Sometimes it is dangerous to continue to have those relationships. These are realities of the sinful world that we live in. But none of that changes the fact that we need to forgive.

When I went through my divorce it was hard for me to forgive. I was filled with anger and bitterness. But I knew that I needed to forgive. I knew that God had shown me grace and so I should show it to her. So I prayed that God would help me forgive. I prayed that God would give me eyes to see her the way He did.

I know that sometimes it can be hard to forgive. But what Jesus tells us is that we should understand the need to forgive. We should understand that we are no better. Yes, there are hurts. Yes, we have been wronged. But none of that changes the fact that God has forgiven them. None of that changes the fact that God forgave us. If you can't forgive right away that is okay – but you need to talk to God about it. You need to pray that God gives you the strength to forgive. SR

*May you come to realize that forgiveness is not just for yourself.  
May you be healed from the wounds that others have inflicted on you.  
May you extend to others the same grace that God gave you.  
May God open your eyes to see people the way that He does. Amen!*



# Thankfulness Should Move Us To Action

In 2015 the General Council shared with us the SDB Vision Map. In this we had our MISSION, FOCUS, CORE VALUES, and KINGDOM CULTURE laid out for us. The FOCUS, or **what we do**, states this: *"We must develop and support new and existing leaders who will work through healthy local churches. Leaders include pastors, as well as people who have served, are serving, or desire to serve in local churches."*

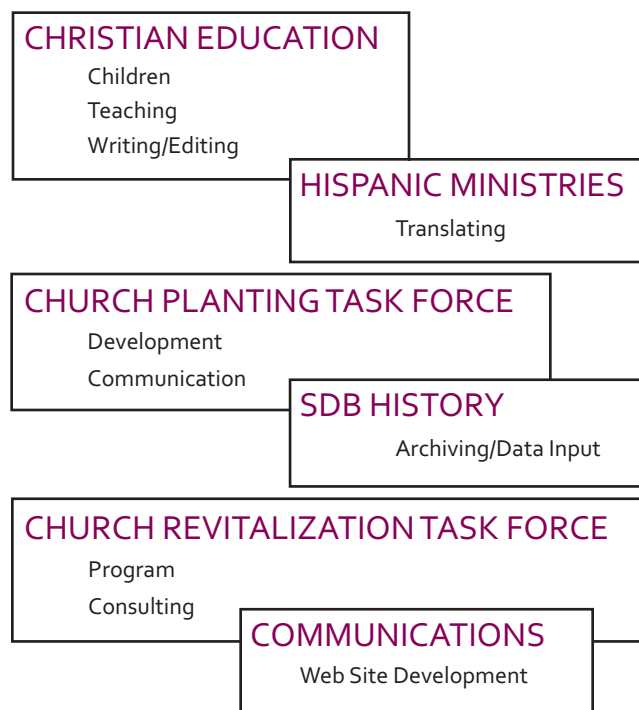
In the KINGDOM CULTURE one of the areas detailed is **Volunteer Focused**. It states, *"Volunteers are encouraged, empowered and mobilized to serve. Many ministries are successfully supported by passionate volunteers. (Through these opportunities, leaders are identified and developed.)"*


The reason I lead with these two areas of the SDB Vision Map is for this reason: **God's Purpose is for us to Be Productive!** In Ephesians chapter two, verse 10 Paul says, *"For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to DO GOOD WORKS which God prepared in advance for us to do."* Once we are in CHRIST we are compelled to do good works. Not that these good works do anything for us in the way of salvation, but rather because of what Christ has done for you personally, there will be a sense of thankfulness that moves you to action. You just want to do good works and to be a fruitful and productive Christ follower. **God has work for us to do!** And why does He have work for us to do? Well, in Ephesians 4:12 it says, *"To prepare God's people for works of service so that the **body of Christ may be built up.**"* And in Colossians 1:10 it says, *"And we pray this that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way bearing fruit in every good work **growing in the knowledge of God.**"*

There are opportunities for you to serve in a Seventh Day Baptist Ministry! We have sub-committees that work on

various areas of ministry. These sub-committees are made up of volunteers. They work and collaborate on work that is given to them by one of the Directors. Then they report back to the Director and the Council that they serve. Through this work we are able to identify and develop our future leaders of the Conference. Is that you?

Where you have opportunities to serve:



Unfortunately, all who feel called to serve don't really work out. Some people don't work well in teams, or tend to push their agenda a bit too hard, instead of listening to God's urges and voice through others. However, if you feel that you may be called to serve in one of the ministry areas above, we would love to talk to you. Please contact me at [robappel@seventhdaybaptist.org](mailto:robappel@seventhdaybaptist.org) or 608-752-5055 ext. 1005 

## The Pulse of a Healthy Church

Rev. Carl Greene

Hebron SDB Church, PA

# From Remembering to Doing

I loved the old oak tree that grew in the stone wall below my parents' house. It was a massive tree with five trunks — two of which were climbable for a novice such as I. On one particularly fine day, I had shimmied up the easiest climbing trunk and stood on my favorite branch to watch traffic. (I was a forerunner of the community watch program.) By climbing about ten feet from the tree trunk on this branch, I could get my feet into a slight dip which held my feet in place. With my feet secure, I could hold a dead limb on my right to balance my slightly unsteady body. The one downside of this community watch vantage point was that the branch was about as high up in the air as the Empire State Building (at least to a 12-year-old afraid of heights). I can still close my eyes and picture that spot in the tree very clearly even 30 years later. Probably because of what happened next.

While taking note of our neighbor's red pickup going up the road, I heard a crack of the dead limb, and felt my body lurch forward. I was suddenly in a free fall from the branch, hurtling towards the stone wall below. Rushing wind, screams of terror, and then, amazingly, I landed squarely on my feet. Nothing short of a miracle. Or, as my brother pointed out, maybe I was not quite as far above the ground as I imagined.

In the last article, we left off at the cliffhanger of Revelation 2:5 where Jesus directly told the church of Ephesus: "Remember therefore from where you have fallen: repent, and do the works you did at first." These words of Jesus seem to ring true for my tree-climbing experience. I can clearly picture where I fell from. I distinctly remember kicking myself for trusting that dead limb to steady my body. I know that my tree climbing returned to its original care and caution after I remembered and repented. But, what is it that the church in Ephesus is to remember, repent, and do in response to Christ's words in Revelation 2:5? Perhaps something recorded in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

The letter to the Ephesians was most likely a circular letter sent to a number of churches in the area surrounding Ephesus — yet it clearly included the specific church at

Ephesus. Something of a 1st century Facebook post intended for a specific audience, but the world is invited to look in on. If we place the writing of Revelation at about 95 AD, and the writing of Ephesians at about 62 AD, we can clearly see the option of Jesus saying, "Hey Ephesus, remember back to what it was like 30 years ago? Remember back to when Paul said, 'For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you...'" (Ephesians 1:15-16a).

Soak that in. In Revelation 2:5 Jesus says to remember from where you have fallen, circa 95 AD. This statement in the Ephesians Letter by Paul around 62 AD is a really high point to fall from — remember when your love for Jesus and your love for one another was so recognizable. This might very well be the first love that had been abandoned by the Ephesians by 95 AD (Revelation 2:4). If this is where they have fallen from, it begs the question, what are the "works you did at first" that they are to do once again? Ephesians chapter 1 fills us in on what a healthy church does.

As we walk through Ephesians 1, we are going to see a process emerge that has been championed by Thom Rainer in his *Church Revitalization* video consultation series. This process provides a lens for churches to look at what they are doing, and why they are doing what they do. This process also serves as a backbone to the Seventh Day Baptist Pulse process for Church Revitalization. In a single paragraph I have now used the word "process" five times — this might be a key word.

Ephesians 1:18-19 presents a clear picture of a healthy church as a process not an event. The four things that take place in these verses are not a one-time event, but ongoing actions. These actions are part of the ongoing life cycle of the church across time. These actions include: clarity, movement, alignment, and focus.

**Clarity.** Paul's prayer in Ephesians chapter one includes a request for clarity. Specifically, Paul asks that the church will have "the eyes of your hearts enlightened" (1:18a).

*These actions are part of the ongoing life cycle of the church across time.*

Try to do a literal picture of that one in your mind. That is memorable. Maybe a better mental picture of this is the difference between seeing with glasses or without if you need corrective lenses. Paul is asking that the church will see Who Jesus is — that the church will experience Jesus and not just give Him some sort of abstract acknowledgement. This request for clarity also points toward discerning what Jesus is calling the church to do.

Here is a key question for clarity: “How is God glorified by my church here in this community?” We often ask for clarity about how to keep our organization, our church, as an entity, alive or maybe even growing. What if our primary question for clarity is to have the eyes of our heart opened, to know Jesus more and to know how to glorify Him as a church. The development of our mission and vision as a church should be for God’s glory, not self-preservation.

Finally, this mission or vision statement should be precise. Precision demands the discernment of a clear direction or calling. It is tempting to come up with our goal after we do something — that way we always achieve the goal. But that hardly sounds like missional living — as an individual or as a church.

**Movement.** Paul’s next prayer phrase offers a request for movement: “. . .that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you . . .” (Ephesians 1:18b). Paul is asking that the church will know the future glory that God has prepared, and also the calling to action today. God has prepared your church to take action on the mission He has given you — but that requires less talk and more action.

Movement requires action. Say I am baking a cake. It took a long time to get all the ingredients together and get it in the oven. When the timer goes off, the kitchen smells great, but I am exhausted. I don’t take the cake out of the oven, I just let it burn to crisp where it is. Who would intentionally do that? Yet, how often do we make plans as a church, or discuss ways God has called us to bless the community — and then never take action. Movement is required to enjoy the hard work of clarity.

Movement also requires preparation. When my cake is ready, I can try to take it out of the oven really, really, really fast without hot mitts. And burn my hands. I do not just take action to take the cake out of the oven, I prepare myself for the activity. Movement as a church requires her members to be prepared. If we are not growing spiritually, if we are not actively confessing our sins, if we are not actively walking with Jesus — we are



not prepared to take action no matter how much clarity our church mission statement might have.

**Alignment.** Paul’s next prayer phrase asks for alignment, to know “. . .what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...” (1:18c). Notice what Paul is stating here: this is God’s inheritance, not the believer’s inheritance. You and I are considered God’s inheritance, we are precious to God! I do not think that this can be overstated — do not miss the fact that you are God’s treasure.

Here is a question to check my heart: do I live like I am God’s inheritance? Do I live like I am God’s treasure? This is not a question of how selfish I am, but a reminder of how much I matter to God. This is also a reminder that my sin matters to God as well.

A more difficult question might be: “Do I live like you are God’s treasure”? Do I live like you are precious in God’s sight when I talk about you, engage with you at business meetings, and disagree with you about theology? Broadening the question out, does this church live her life as if the church body is precious?

*continued on next page...*

*Does this church live her life as if the church body is precious?*

## The Pulse of a Healthy Church

*continued from previous page*

Quite often, alignment requires a hammer. We get out of shape when we are living our mission. We might remember the task at hand, but are terribly misshapen when it comes to our relationships. Alignment requires the hammer to beat us back into shape, to remember that I am, and that you are, God's inheritance.

**Focus.** Paul prays that we will know "...what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe..." (1:19a). Paul is asking that the church will experience life under the authority and power of Jesus Christ. This is in stark contrast to the power of magic and dark arts revered in Ephesus at the time. Paul goes out of his way to describe the true source of power through Jesus Christ in verses 20-23. This requires joining Jesus in what He is already doing — and to work under His authority rather than our own plans and preferences.

I think that discerning what Christ is doing in, around, and through us requires ping pong ball focus. Picture Pastor JR Schick catching ping pong balls one at a time. He is amazing at that. Now picture about 50 ping pong balls thrown at him at once — his success is far from impressive. Could this be the same for our churches? The church tries to do what everyone's preferences are, and tries to catch 50 balls at once — dropping most of them. We need to look at what is "good" and what is "best," and decide as a church to focus on God's specific call. That requires difficult decisions to sunset some good things, to embrace God's best.

I hope that we earnestly pray for **clarity** to experience God through His invitation. Ask for **movement** to live out God's plan. Request **alignment** to live like you and I are God's treasure. Pray for **focus** as a church to remove clutter from our lives. SR



*The church tries to do what everyone's preferences are, and tries to catch 50 balls at once — dropping most of them.*

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# 5 Questions You Should Ask Your Church

One of the best things any leader can do when he is in a tough spot is to stop making assumptions and start asking questions. Our assumptions got us to where we are, but they won't necessarily get us where we need to go.

Here are 5 questions leaders can ask if their church stops growing:

## 1. What is our mission?

Often a church that has stopped growing has lost the urgency behind its mission. This is doubly sad in the case of a church because our mission is actually Christ's mission...it's the spread of the Gospel into the world for which Jesus died. Leaders and congregations that are effective in accomplishing their mission are consumed by their mission.

## 2. Are we focused on unchurched people or on ourselves?

The gravitational pull of any church is toward insiders, not outsiders. Left unattended, your church will become a place where the preferences of the members trump passion for the mission. There are two primary ways to address this drift:

1. In every decision, focus on who you want to reach, not who you want to keep.
2. Commit to losing yourself for the sake of finding others.

## 3. Has our strategy or approach become dated?


While the mission of the church is eternal, strategy should shift from generation to generation. The challenge in long term leadership is that the changes that you introduced may have been novel and effective when you introduced them...but it's not 1995 anymore...or 2005 for that matter. How do you tell if your strategy is dated? When it stops being effective.

## 4. Are we on top of the constant change in our culture?

While you're studying your strategy, you might also want to study culture. It's changing, radically and quickly. We now live in a post-Christian, post-modern world. That's true in Canada. It's increasingly true in the United States. In my experience, many of us in church leadership don't really grasp the enormity of the change going on around us.

## 5. When was the last time I personally invited someone to church?

The reality is many Christians, for a variety of reasons, don't actually spend time with that many non-Christians. If almost no one at your church knows any unchurched people, it's no mystery why your church isn't growing. So why not go build some real friendships? And before you say we should be "in the world but not of it," please read the Gospels again.

If you want some help in diagnosing or evaluating the health of your church, the PULSE process is for you. Please contact the Director of Church Development for more information. 



# Your Ready-Made New Christmas Gift List!



## Emergency Relief Funds

- 1 - Life Saving Food (Suggested Gift: \$35)
- 2 - Emergency Medicine (Suggested Gift: \$25)
- 3 - Clean Water for a Family (Suggested Gift: \$15)
- 4 - Disaster Relief Supplies *Urgent Need* (Suggested Gift: \$50)



## Children's Ministries

- 5 - Shoes and Clothing (Suggested Gift: \$25)
- 6 - Help Orphans transition into Christian homes (Suggested Gift: \$30)
- 7 - Buy Seeds for sustainable food gardens in Uganda (Suggested Gift: \$25)
- 8 - Life Saving Mosquito Nets (Suggested Gift: \$10)

*Now this  
I say,  
he who sows  
sparingly  
shall also  
reap  
sparingly;  
and he  
who sows  
bountifully  
shall also  
reap  
bountifully.*

*2 Corinthians 9:6*



## Evangelism and Discipleship

- 13 - Evangelist/Pastor Training Bibles (Suggested Gift: \$20)
- 14 - Motorcycles for the Mission Field (Suggested Gift: \$1100/ Share the Cost: \$110)
- 15 - Ship SDB Helping Hand Overseas for a year (Suggested Gift: \$22)
- 16 - Share of Mission Lodging & Transport (Suggested Gift: \$100)



## Gifts Under \$15

- 9 - Hot Meals (Suggested Gift: \$7)
- 10 - Soccer Balls for Young Adult Ministry (Suggested Gift: \$8)
- 11 - Shipping Blankets *Urgent Need* (Suggested Gift: \$6)
- 12 - Missionary Society Membership for a friend (Suggested Gift: \$10)

## Construction Projects

- 17 - Freshwater Wells in Thirsty Communities (Suggested Gift: \$400/ Share the Cost: \$40)
- 18 - Metal roof on a Constructed Church (Suggested Gift \$1200/ Share the Cost: \$15/sheet)
- 19 - Build a House for a Low Income Pastor's Family (Suggested Gift: \$4,000/Share the Cost: \$50)



Please consider discussing with your family if you can add some of these to your Christmas gift list this year. We have Seventh Day Baptist families around the world who are hoping for a brother's help to better share the Gospel or minister in Christ's name to those of their community in greatest need.

It is a high priority for us that we partner with the local congregations and that they invest in the ministries that we undertake. We seek accountability of funds used in each related project and each is to be specifically for a Seventh Day Baptist ministry. If you send the gift in the name of someone else, upon your request we can contact that person with a thank you card letting him know how his gift was put to use.

*I hope that you will prayerfully consider how the blessings you have received this year may be intended to bring joy through your sharing in our ministry together.*

Contributions for gifts can be sent to:  
SDB Missions  
PO Box 156, Ashaway RI 02804

or give online at: [WWW.SDBMISSIONS.ORG](http://WWW.SDBMISSIONS.ORG)

*SDB Missionary Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the IRS codes.*

by Clinton R. Brown  
Executive Director

FOCUS on Missions



## SDB CHURCHES SEEKING A PASTOR

**The Middle Island SDB Church of New Milton, WV is seeking a pastor.**

*Middle Island SDB Church is a small gathering of believers from various communities who come together on Sabbath in rural Doddridge County in West Virginia. Our current weekly attendance averages around 11. We have a desire to serve the Lord and to serve others as well. We are praying for a minister who has a similar desire.*

**Ideal Requirements:**

- Biblically knowledgeable (formal training preferred)
- Previous pastoral ministry experience preferred, but not required
- Ability to be bi-vocational

**If you feel a calling to serve God in this church, please send a resume including your ministry experience and educational background, along with a cover letter to:**

**Middle Island SDB Church  
5915 WV Rt 18 S  
New Milton, WV 26411**



**Covenant SDB Fellowship, a Seventh Day Baptist gathering, meeting in Hungry Horse, Montana, is seeking a pastor or entrepreneurial Bible leader to help catalyze this congregation.**

*Covenant SDB Fellowship is a small gathering of active Christ-centered Bible believers who are seeking to love the people of Hungry Horse and the Flathead Valley and share with them the love of Christ by training them to become Sabbath-honoring and Gospel-sharing ambassadors of Christ.*

**Ideal requirements:**

- Biblically knowledgeable (Bible College or Seminary preferred)
- Previous pastoral ministry experience preferred
- Previous experience in starting a church or ministry preferred
- Ability to be bi-vocational or raise support to pursue this ministry
- Spiritual giftings in evangelism and/or administration helpful
- Willingness to live in a rural area required
- Ability to work with others and equip them to serve to their potential

**Please send a resume including your ministry experience and a cover letter explaining why you believe you are a fit for this position to:**

**PO Box 190278  
Hungry Horse, MT 59919**

*Hungry Horse, MT, is located near the Flathead Valley, in the gateway to Glacier National Park. Big Sky country provides the beauty that reveals the wonders of God's creation and provides the opportunity to spend time with God.*

# What is God's?

by Katrina Goodrich

*Give to Caesar what is Caesar's  
and to God what is God's.*

— Mark 12:17

Jesus has come to Jerusalem and is teaching after his palm-fronded entrance into the city. As he is walking into the temple, he is accosted by the Pharisees and then the Sadducees who are hoping to trap him into saying things that are blasphemous or seditious enough to get him arrested by the Romans and ultimately killed. So they ask him a question about paying taxes hoping he will be arrested — or at the very least turn public opinion against him. Jesus says pay your taxes — amazing everyone. But he also says give to God what is His. We can take this in the literal sense of tithing... however, I don't believe that this statement boils down to just finance. God doesn't ultimately want your money — He wants your heart.

God wants you to love and obey Him. In this passage, Jesus takes a coin, holds it up, says this has the image of Caesar on it (the coins were made by Caesar). How much more then does your soul belong to God — after all we are created in his image (Genesis 1:27). God's imprint is on our very souls, on who we are, and we have a higher calling as well. Pay taxes to Caesar but give God all that you are — your heart, soul, and mind.

Jesus doesn't say give Caesar your heart, soul, and mind. He doesn't say give the government your heart, soul, and mind. He doesn't say give your country your heart, soul, and mind. He says love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind just a few verses later in Mark 12:30 reiterating his words from earlier in the chapter to give to God what is his.

We can safely give God our hearts because, well, He is God. He's holy and good and will nurture and provide. It's safe. Blind nationalism and patriotism is not safe. Government is an earthly creation and not pure and perfect. America is a country that may have been founded on godly premise, but it is still an imperfect system run by imperfect people. Do you love your country more than you love God? Do you defend your country more than you share the eternal love of your savior? Do you proudly sing the *Star Spangled Banner*, but shy away from public prayer? Do you follow the laws of this land, but not the laws of God? Do you ridicule a man who kneels in the front of a nation to peacefully protest social injustice, but extol those who kneel to protest politics? What has your heart, soul, and mind?

Now I'm going to go there...Colin Kaepernick broke a social moré by kneeling as the national anthem was played. He knelt to protest injustice. He put his actions where his beliefs were and told us exactly why he chose to do what he did. We chose to label him anti-American and hate him for his "blatant disrespect" of a flag. At first I was in that crowd who had their mind blown — how could he be that disrespectful? But as the topic has perpetuated, I've had to examine my own heart and have come to the conclusion that, perhaps, Kap is giving to God what is His: loving God and then others above his nationalistic pride. Do I think everyone should begin kneeling at the anthem? No. However I can understand, empathize with and support the reason behind why a man chose to do so.

I am American and will continue to celebrate the birth of the country I've been blessed to live in, follow its laws, and stand and sing the *Star Spangled Banner*. But it's time for me to stop giving my country that which belongs to God. SR



Women's Society

by Katrina Goodrich  
[www.sdbwomen.org](http://www.sdbwomen.org)

It's hard for me to forgive sometimes. I guess it depends on what the other person has done — but shouldn't depend on that.

Not too long ago, someone hurt me. It doesn't matter whether it actually affected me in any way, but what I did about it matters. I chose to forgive the person. In the moment, I tried doing what was right.

Forgiving him in the moment was hard. I resisted to lash out and fight back. We were both upset.

Luke 3:34 says,  
*"And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."  
And they cast lots to divide his garments."*

Forgive those who hurt you — even if it's hard. SR



By Xander Post  
Shiloh, NJ, SDB Church

THE BEACON

## Fall into Podcasts

I listen to A LOT of podcasts. They are a great way to fill your commute to and from school or work. Podcasts can also be a creative way to add some Jesus time to your hectic day. Here are my top 5 spiritual podcasts to listen to this fall.

### The Relevant podcast.

Join this goofy ensemble cast (including Propaganda and IJMs Eddie Kaufholz) as they discuss, dissect and occasionally poke fun at culture and entertainment through a Christ-follower lens. This podcast is dear to my heart because it was one of the very first that I listened to. I love their mixture of shenanigans and interviews with cutting edge culture makers, both Christian and secular. The show has introduced me to some of my favorite writers and musicians.

### Red Rocks Young Adults

The portable straight-to-your-phone version of a large-scale young adult service, Red Rocks is a Church here in Colorado and I like to binge sermon series from their back catalogue. Their rotating cast of speakers, clear audio for a live recording, and the fact that they are the only young adult centric podcast that I listen to, make them great for listening to on long drives and while doing chores.

### This American Life

The long running radio show from NPR is also available right to your phone. While not a specifically Christian show, This American Life dives into topical issues and the lives of diverse people each week —

letting us all work out our empathy and mercy muscles for people we might not run into every day. Fair warning: there may be tears from time to time.

### Soul City Church

Soul City Church records their sermons from Chicago, IL, and we are all so grateful. The sermons are funny, insightful, challenging and practical. If you need a mid-week pick-me-up and refocus in 45 minutes or less, Soul City Church is a good place to start.

### That Sounds Fun with Annie F Downs

Author and speaker Annie F Downs introduces us to some of her very favorite people as they talk about projects they are working on, books they've written, and their personal lives. I discovered this podcast a few months ago and honestly can't get enough. Annie's infectious personality and love of all things fun has us laughing and crying right along with her. I always tell myself that I should save the episodes that drop on Thursdays for a morning before school the next week, but usually end up giving in and listening to it over the weekend. As she regularly interviews authors with books coming out, my "books to read" list has definitely not gotten smaller since I started listening. SR



by Michaella Osborn  
SDB Church, Boulder, CO

Young Adult

# The End of the Reformation?

*It* is widely held and celebrated that Martin Luther kicked off the Protestant Reformation by nailing his 95 Theses to his church door in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517, making this year the 500th anniversary of the history-altering act. Luther's frustration with the Catholic Church boiled over as his conscience and the realities of the governance of the church reached critical mass, and he wrote down his 95 complaints with the church of his day.

Following Luther's initial act of protest, the fledgling Reformers eventually settled on five core sentiments which framed their convictions. These five core convictions are commonly spoken of today as "Solus," based on the Latin word for "only." They are:

- *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone)
- *sola fide* (through faith alone)
- *sola gracia* (by grace alone)
- *solus Christus* (through Christ alone)
- *solī Deo gloria* (for the Glory of God alone)

To summarize these convictions, the Reformers were committed to taking the Bible as their only authority, and to the Gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. These convictions changed the world forever.

These convictions should sound familiar to us as Seventh Day Baptists – they are part of our theological tradition, and all appear in our Statement of Belief. Luther's convictions, and those of other Reformers like Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, became the foundation upon which Baptists, and later, Seventh Day Baptists, have built our faith. This Protestant Reformation gave birth to many Protestant denominations: Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and others – but at our root, we all claim the Reformers.

Yet in some ways, Seventh Day Baptists represent the logical end of the historical event we call the Reformation. Our conviction that individuals should participate in "unhindered study and open discussion of Scripture" has led our people for generations to honor the Scriptures,

The Reformers were committed to taking the Bible as their only authority, and to the Gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. These convictions changed the world forever.

including keeping the seventh day Sabbath, which we derive directly from careful reading of the Word of God. This conviction to do as the Bible commands rather than bowing to the traditions of men, even longstanding church traditions, was one of the defining marks of the Reformers. They did not become convicted of Sabbath observance as we understand it – though without their convicted action, our freedom to consider the Scriptures and live from them by conscience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we feel led would be impossible.

In his book *A Choosing People, the History of Seventh Day Baptists*, Don Sanford recounts part of Luther's response to a Catholic council convened to hold him accountable for his actions, held at Worms in 1521, as proof of Luther's convictions:

"...my conscience is taken captive by God's word. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other, God help me. Amen."

Luther's stand demonstrates profound willingness to sacrifice and suffer personally because of his convictions. That willingness, because of conviction, changed the world.

FUTURE

PRESENT

PAST

Council on History

by Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten  
Director of Education and History

God moved among our people, individually first and then corporately,  
to bring about the necessary reforms for us to reach a lost and broken world.

Because Protestants are committed to the Scripture as our only authority, we are prone to regular reassessments of our life and doctrine as a people. **These reassessments frequently lead to both tension and revival** – as conviction of sin naturally follows honest exploration of the Word of God, and as we submit to the Holy Spirit under the direction of the Scriptures – God frequently brings an outburst of growth and new life to His people. This growth can be painful, as those who are comfortable with “the old way” are left to decide how they will respond to changing times and a new work of the Spirit. We all know that change is never easy, personally or for a congregation. Karl Barth, referring to this long-standing Protestant tradition, repurposed and rearranged a saying of St. Augustine to suggest that Protestant churches “must always be reformed.” (*ecclesia semper reformanda est*) if they are going to live up to their convictions.

**It is time for us to reform...again.  
Our convictions have not changed,  
but our world has.**

This same need to be constantly reforming is surely ours as Seventh Day Baptists as well. As we survey our history, we have been very consistent in our main theological distinctives. At the same time, we can see places where new expressions of those beliefs were necessary. In such times, God moved among our people, individually first and then corporately, to bring about the necessary reforms for us to reach a lost and broken world. The Gospel we preach – salvation in Christ alone, by grace alone through faith alone – is unchanging and unchangeable, but the ways in which we demonstrate the Gospel must necessarily change. This change, ultimately, must reflect our most closely held convictions while also reflecting an understanding of the era in which we live.

There is little debate among us at this point that we live in tumultuous times. No matter your views on the myriad issues which plague our culture, there is no question that **the enmity and strife we see daily reflect the seismic**

**changes that signal a change in era.** What our world has been for nearly two centuries and the ways we have understood the world have been challenged and are crumbling. Whether you think that is a good thing or a bad thing, the challenge has been given, and the world as it was is giving way to something else.

Each of us, because of our individual experiences and knowledge, will have a different response to this time of upheaval. To be more specific, our response will likely be driven by what we think is most important. **Our words, our actions, and our feelings will reflect what we rely on in times like these.** For this reason, it is critical for us, as Kingdom-minded people in this tumultuous era, to sink new roots in Christ. It is time for us to reform...again. Our convictions have not changed, but our world has. We must find new ways to do and to be in this time of great change which will demonstrate our faith in Christ and our desire to see lost people come to faith. To do that, we must have a clear sense of our identity as a people. What is your identity in Christ? What is the identity of your church – our Conference?

**The world is changing. But what it will change into and what role we will play in it depends very much on what you and your church do now.** Will you close the doors against our broken culture, hunker down, and hope that it all goes away? Will you mortgage our heritage for the sake of keeping the doors open? Will you live from fear, or from faith? Will you be courageous to honor your convictions? **If you were forced to choose between your comfort and your routine or the mission of God to seek and save the lost, what would you actually choose when it came time to support it with your life, energy, and finances?** A broken world awaits your response, but choose carefully. You will be asked one day to give an account of your choice to our God. It's time for us as a Conference of churches filled with convicted believers by the Word of God to reclaim our identity and decide how we will embody it to a lost world. If you need help with this conversation in your local church, I invite you to reach out to us for help. We would love to walk with you through this crucial conversation! [SR](#)

**It's time for us as a Conference of churches filled with convicted believers by the Word of God  
to reclaim our identity and decide how we will embody it to a lost world.**

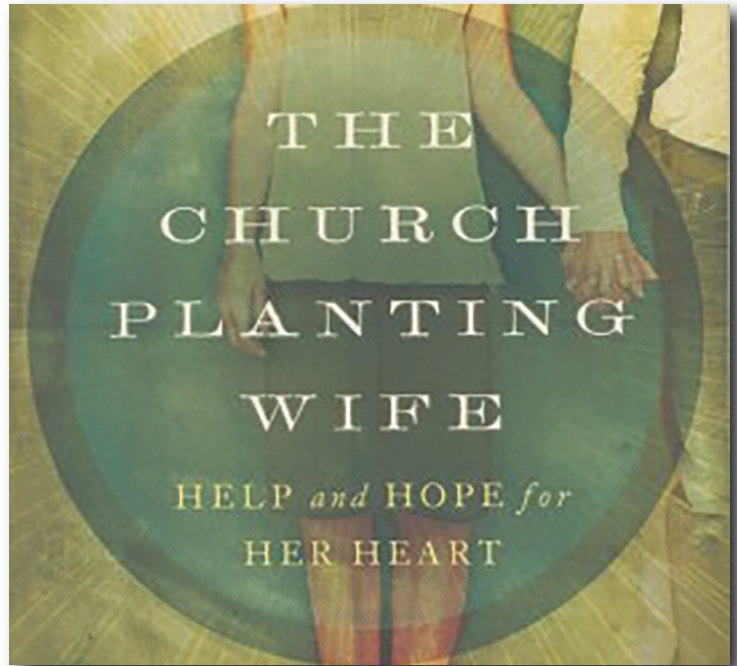
# 25 Things I've Learned from Church Planting

In 2008, God called my husband, Kyle, and me to plant a church in Charlottesville, Virginia. Though we had eight years of ministry experience under our belts at an established church, we didn't yet know all that we didn't know. We had much to learn and, more importantly, God had much sifting and pruning to do in our hearts.

God has shown me that, more than anything, He wants my heart. He wants a tender, moldable heart willing to obey more than He wants any obligatory service I can give Him. As I write in my book, *The Church Planting Wife: Help and Hope for Her Heart* (Moody, 2013), I've learned a thing or two in this crazy adventure called church planting – and I trust I'll learn more as we move forward.

Here are 25 things I've discovered so far.

1. Hospitality is essential.
2. Church planting teaches two things more than any other: that God is faithful and that we must learn how to depend on that faithful God.
3. Programs matter a lot to some people, especially families with small children. It takes special families who can grasp the vision of church planting to invest in a church plant on the ground level.
4. On the other hand, some people love the early stages of church planting but become uncomfortable when the church grows to a size where they can no longer know everyone.
5. Church planting happens one relationship at a time.
6. Sometimes church planting feels like you're pretending to be a church. And then one day (after backbreaking work and lots of prayer) you realize God has built an honest-to-goodness church right before your eyes.
7. You cannot church plant apart from the support and encouragement of others.
8. The Word is living and active. When we let God speak through His Word, He changes people. Every church plant must gather earnestly around the Word and the Christ to which it points.
9. The church plant often takes on the personality and passions of the church planter and his wife. This is why it's important to cling to Christ with biblical vision.
10. Most people, especially outsiders, don't know what it means when you say you're church planting. And they think you're a little crazy.
11. One of the church planter's greatest resources is other church planters and pastors in the same city. These relationships should be cultivated.
12. Some of the hardest relationships a church planter may have are with other church planters and pastors in the same city. Sadly.
13. The calling to church plant must be sure since you'll need to return to it again and again in the face of discouragement, defeat, and uncertainty.
14. The Gospel is everything: it sustains when discouragement comes (and it always does), it keeps a church planter and his wife in their city (because there will be times when they want to give up and leave), it compels its ministers forward (and sometimes it's the only motivation left), and it changes lives (which makes it all worth it).
15. A church planter cannot drive by an established church without appreciating what it took to make it that way. And he



will first think about the secretaries, the nursery workers, the janitors, and the seats permanently bolted to the ground.

16. As much as possible, a church plant should be structured according to how leaders want it to look a year in the future.

17. It's unhealthy for the church planter, the church, and especially the church planting wife if she's doing childcare during church each week.

18. A failed church plant is not failure. Lack of faith is failure. Service in God's name with a heart far away from Him is failure.

19. Slow and steady growth is healthy growth. Explosive growth can be fragile growth.

20. A good worship leader is important and hard to find.

21. Spiritual warfare is real.

22. Church plants should never be started by someone disgruntled or unable to sit under authority at his former church. Church plants cannot be rebuttals to another pastor's methods and ideas. They must be built on a clear call from God.

23. A church planter and his wife must pray for and develop a love for their city – and not just the city but for its people.

24. The church planting wife's main role in helping her husband is, like Aaron holding up Moses' arms in battle, praying for and encouraging him to press on.

25. There is unimaginable joy and reward in sacrifice and service. SR

*Reprinted from Christine Hoover who is a church planting wife and a mom to three boys. She also writes on her blog, Grace Covers Me ([www.gracecoversme.com](http://www.gracecoversme.com)).*

## En la teoría, ¿cómo funciona el discipulado?

El discipulado funciona esencialmente mediante la **instrucción** y la **imitación**. El discipulado funciona mejor a través del **amor**. A medida que instruimos con amor a creyentes más jóvenes en el camino de la piedad y de una vida encomiable, ellos crecerán en su semejanza a Cristo imitando nuestra vida y doctrina (cf. 1 Ti. 4:16).

**Instrucción:** La Biblia llama a los pastores y a los padres a instruir a aquellos que han sido puestos a su cargo (Pr.; Gá. 6:6; Ef. 6:4; 1 Ts. 4:8; 1 Ti. 1:18, 6:3; 2 Ti. 2:25; 4:2). También llama a todos los creyentes a instruirse los unos a los otros (Ro. 15:14).

**Imitación:** Los cristianos son imitadores, primero de Dios, después los unos de los otros. Crecemos en la gracia de Dios escuchando e imitando. Considera los siguientes pasajes:

- “Sed imitadores de mí, así como yo de Cristo” (1 Co. 11:1).
- “Acordaos de vuestros pastores, que os hablaron la palabra de Dios; considerad cuál haya sido el resultado de su conducta, e imitad su fe” (He. 13:7).
- “Lo que aprendisteis y recibisteis y oísteis y visteis en

mí, esto haced; y el Dios de paz estará con vosotros” (Fil. 4:9).

- “Pero tú has seguido mi doctrina, conducta, propósito, fe, longanimidad, amor, paciencia, persecuciones, padecimientos” (2 Ti. 3:10).
- “Amado, no imites lo malo, sino lo bueno” (3 Jn. 11).

**Amor:** Las personas imitarán tu vida incluso cuando no las ames. Pero un líder que lidera con amor presenta la mejor imagen de Cristo, y las personas te seguirán mejor cuando las ames.

**Amistad:** En un sentido, discipular es simplemente amistad, pero una amistad dirigida hacia Cristo. ¿Qué hacen los amigos? Se imitan el uno al otro. En el discipulado, nos hacemos amigos de otros para crecer en semejanza a Cristo y para ayudarles a crecer en semejanza a Cristo.

**¿Cómo ser un discípulo?** (i) Escucha y mira cómo cristianos de más edad trabajan, descansan, forman una familia, tratan los conflictos, evangelizan a sus vecinos, perseveran en las pruebas, sirven en la iglesia o luchan contra el pecado.

(ii) ¡Imítalos! SR

(De es.9marks.org)



# LESS TALK MORE ACTION

Rev. David Stall, Conference President

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After entering the beautifully renovated interior of the Toronto church, I found Omari Rhoden teaching a Sabbath School class on the Transformational Church. There were several "extra" friends in Toronto since it was the Allegheny Association weekend.

Pastor Owen Lynch was asking the right questions about how a commuter church can become a community church. He wants to see a church (or multiple churches) in Toronto reaching into the community around them. Let's pray that God continues to give direction and the church can make bold moves!



Toronto SDB



BERLIN

I was happy to visit my "home church" where I started my walk with Jesus. Pastor Matt and Ellen Olson and member Chantel Bink shared about a new youth group outreach in nearby Bennington, VT. Chantel teaches there and saw a need. The Olsons and some other church members jumped on board and the new ministry is growing fast!

One church member followed up a couple days after the service there with an artistic and carefully thought-out outline from my sermon. She made concise plans and goals for applying the words in her own life with REAL actions! Praise God!



I was welcomed in Verona by Pastor Steve James, to some wonderful and worshipful music. There were extra friends there too, for the Central NY Association meeting. Verona church has recently taken action to stream the worship service into their fellowship hall to accommodate overflow. That's a great problem to have. A church member, Paula, has been moved by the Conference theme heard via Livestream from Conference and reinforced in Verona. She is taking action with a commitment to finish writing a book that God started her on several years ago!

Niagara Falls, Canada 2017



In the excitement of our first round of church tours, my family also took in some great scenery and tourist attractions.

We are thankful for the hospitality of the Sinclairs in Toronto, and the Noels and Stalls in NY.

9/30  
All. Assoc.  
Toronto

10/6  
Berlin  
NY

10/7  
C.NY Assoc.  
Verona, NY



11/11  
S.E. Assoc.  
Atlanta, GA

12/23  
Boulder  
CO

12/30  
North Loup  
NE

3/3  
Daytona  
Beach, FL

5/19  
E. Assoc.  
Shiloh, NJ

7/29  
Conference  
Kenosha, WI



# SDB Women's Retreat Held in West Virginia



The annual Seventh Day Baptist Appalachian Association Women's Retreat was held at Camp Joy the weekend of September 22-24, 2017.

There were a total of 31 women attending the retreat from SDB churches in Alabama, Georgia, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

The program was planned by women from the Shepherd's Fold SDB church in Tennessee this year with the theme "Running the Race." Sessions were taught by Brenda Rankhorn and Cate Abraham on the topics of Focus, Training, Discipline, and Living Graciously. Women attending from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio prepared and provided the yummy meals!

In addition to the teaching sessions, there was free time to enjoy the rustic and beautiful camp setting as well as fellowship with new and old friends. The weekend was a time to eat, sing, worship, pray, hug, talk, play, laugh, and learn together. By Sunday morning, the women were refreshed as they left to return home and also looking forward to next year!

The annual women's retreat is scheduled for the last full weekend of September each year at Camp Joy in Berea, WV. Any interested women are welcome to attend. Next year's retreat will be planned by the women in Salemville, PA, and held September 28-30, 2018. [SR](#)

*by Susie Fox  
Pataskala SDB Church, OH*





## Seventh Day Baptists meet for North Central Association

The Connecting Church – Milton Seventh Day Baptist welcomed around 150 SDBs for the North Central Association meetings on October 6 and 7. Attendees came from Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The theme for the meetings was Revival: “Times of Refreshing in the LORD.”

Friday night, Pastor JR Shick of the White Cloud, MI, SDB church spoke on “Whatever happened to conviction?”

Sabbath morning sermon by Pastor Wayne North, of the Freedom Community church in New Auburn, WI, was “Conviction is more than feeling sorry.” Graveyards to Gardens, a group from Elgin, IL, with Aaron Andries, led the worship time.

Sabbath afternoon, there was a concert with the musical stylings of the Milton Quintet, five men from the Milton area singing classic harmonies. After that, Graveyards to Gardens performed, including a medley of hymns with an updated sound.

Saturday evening, Pastor Nate Crandall, Senior Pastor of the Connecting Church, spoke on “Restoration takes patience and persistence.” Special music was provided during the Sabbath morning and Saturday night services by Pastor Tim and Karen Smothers of the Battle Creek SDB church. The Association meetings ended with a time of extended prayer. [SR](#)

## OBITUARY

**POSEY** – Maude (Thomas) Snider Posey, 100, of Kennewick, WA, passed away on October 15, 2016.

Maude Marian Posey was born September 24, 1916, and had celebrated her 100th birthday before she passed away while in rehabilitation after a fall. She was a charter member of the Seattle Area Seventh Day Baptist Church. She had been accompanist for the church from its beginnings in 1968 until she retired from that ministry in 2005. She studied piano from an early age and while in high school became a concert pianist and earned a scholarship to the St. Louis Institute of Music. She received a Master’s degree in music from the University of Washington. As well as being an exceptional pianist, Maude was also a talented artist in oil and water color paintings, and ceramics, whose works had been exhibited locally.

Maud graduated from high school at the age of 17, married Arthur Snider and lived in Puyallup and Pasco, WA. In 1948 she was divorced from Art, and in 1950 she met and married Alan Posey. The couple lived in Pasco and Edmonds, WA, enjoying nearly 54 years together until his death in 2004. Maude was a public school teacher and gave private piano lessons in Edmonds, where she lived until moving to Charbonneau Retirement Community in Kennewick, WA. A tireless worker in her church, Maude was a deaconess and served as Sabbath School Superintendent.

Maude was preceded in death by her husband, Alan Posey, and her siblings: Robert Thomas, Richard Thomas, Frank Thomas, and Reva Skifteness. She is survived by her children: Ellwyn Snider and wife, Connie; Keith Snider and wife, Julia (both of Pasco); and Robert Posey and wife, Joanne, of Bothell, WA; and Susan Gibbons and husband, Don, of Oceanside, CA: plus six grandchildren; twelve great grandchildren; and nine great-great-grandchildren. A graveside ceremony was held for Maude on October 21, 2016, at Desert Lawn Memorial Park in Kennewick WA.

## BIRTHS

**LANGLEY** – A son, Tobias Dale, was born to Kory and Amanda (Brown) Langley on September 20, 2017.

**WATSON** – A son, Sawyer Eli, was born to Jason and Candace (Webb) Watson on October 7, 2017.

Both families are at the Texarkana SDB Church.



*Peace*

*Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. Psalm 55:22*

Periodicals postage paid  
at Janesville, WI  
and additional offices

Seventh Day Baptist General Conference  
July 29 — August 4, 2018  
Carthage College in Kenosha, WI

**LESS TALK  
MORE ACTION**

Thank  
You!

*Count Your Many Blessings*