

Sabbath Recorder



Seventh Day Baptist World Federation
Eighth Session, January 22-28, 2017
Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil

Enjoy this special Seventh Day Baptist World Federation issue!

Experience the recent sessions in Brazil from viewpoints of delegates, officers, and observers. Share their excitement as they celebrate 50 years and as they envision the future of SDBs as global citizens from many countries and cultures.

World Federation Delegates and Observers in cover photo:

Front row from left: Andrew Samuels, Andressa Taborda, Quistin Chalwe, Eli Magalhaes, Cristiane Miranda, Sidnei Grossklaus, Fred Maduka, Kharlyn Henry, Zosimo Marcelo, Jarbas Silva, Clinton Brown.

Middle rows from left: Douglas Mariano, Andrzej Bujok, Daisy Moitinho, Anna Umana, Hyatt Bejjani, Liane Pinto, Kay Samuels, Karen Umana, Avis Springer, Joao Teles, Canaan Phiri, Jacob Tyrrell, Bernardino Vargas, John Pethtel, Gavin Fox, Carlton Ferguson, Margaret Taylor, Godfrey Achor, Dale Thorngate.

Back row from left: Levi Bond, Gabriel Bejjani, Luciano Moura, Michael Spearl, Bernice Trotz, Garfield Miller, Roberto Vidal, Diego Bernardi, Jonas Sommer, David Taylor, Patty Petersen.

Delegates and observers not in photo are pictured elsewhere in the issue.



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Patricia Cruzan
Editor
sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org

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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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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: contact@seventhdaybaptist.org
SDB Website: www.seventhdaybaptist.org

Director of Communications
Jeremiah Owen

jowen@seventhdaybaptist.org
cell: (818)-468-9077

Editor of Sabbath Recorder
sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org



For access to the library of current and past issues of the *Sabbath Recorder*, go to your App Store and download the FREE SDB LINK app.

The Kingdom of God is like...



“**The Kingdom of God is like...**” a room full of brothers and sisters in Christ singing praise to God in several languages, the walls around them lined with the flags of many nations. It is bigger than that, of course. The sixty official delegates and observers sometimes swelled to more from nearby churches as they shared in worship, sermons, and Bible studies on the theme. Each represented many others as they pondered the Kingdom within us, among us, here and now as well as yet to come: this small thing, like a mustard seed, so full of potential to grow.



Such was the spirit of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation’s eighth session held in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil, January 22-28, 2017. President Dale Thorngate had planned a week full of business, education, worship, and fellowship. From the opening welcome by Brazil Conference President João Teles dos Santos to the closing communion and the celebration of the Federation’s Fiftieth Anniversary led by General Secretary Andrew Samuels, all went well.



Participants enjoyed Brazil’s welcoming hospitality coordinated by Host Committee Chairman, Douglas Machado, a man for all challenges. Whether it was adjusting the sound system and video equipment, keeping everyone in tow for sightseeing and church visits, making an emergency trip to the hospital, or assuming around-the-clock translation service, our hosts were there. Friendly, gentle horses roamed the grounds of Chácara da Esperança retreat center with us, whether on the soccer fields or on the paths and seating under ancient Araucaria trees that shaded the buildings. Guests relished endless fresh mango and papaya, ubiquitous rice & beans, and, yes, Brazilian beef.

a room full of
brothers and sisters
in Christ singing praise
to God in
several languages



Of course delegates’ main business was business: receiving reports from officers and each member conference, separating into committees to review reports and their recommendations and bring items back to the floor for action, election of officers and plans for the next five years of the Federation’s work. Five committees worked hard on that review and planning. They were chaired by Claudia Ferguson, Constitution Review; Canaan Phiri, Membership; Gavin Fox, Finance & Budget; Naval Harley, Nominations; and Devon Levy, Report Review.



Perhaps the most exciting action was acceptance of the Seventh Day Baptist Conference of Rwanda into membership in the Federation. Delegates welcomed Rwanda’s General Secretary Jean Karimutumye and also General Secretary Daniel Nsubuga of the Uganda Conference, which had been received into membership by mail ballot in 2016. They were also happy to meet President Pedro Aguilera Castillo and other Fraternal Delegates from the newest SDB Conference, organized in Chile in 2014.



Official action encouraged more cooperation between conferences within a geographic region and more direct involvement of conferences in selecting their regional vice presidents. Specific country

projects were identified for support through the Federation and/or the Missionary Society. Officers were asked to visit less active member groups. Delegates also revised the Constitution, pulling much of it out into a set of more flexible bylaws, suggested specific fundraising strategies to encourage support across all member groups, adopted a five-year budget, and accepted the USA & Canada Conference invitation to host the 9th Session in North America in 2022. They elected the ten officers who will make up the new Executive Committee with Andrew Samuels continuing as General Secretary and Jonas Sommer of Brazil the new President.

In keeping with the leadership training emphasis of recent years, General Secretary Samuels and Clinton Brown of the Missionary Society led a panel discussion on leadership training. Delegates from six conferences described their training programs and responded to questions. Other seminars dealt with Youth and Young Adult Ministries (Claudir Oliveira), Leadership and Administration (John Pethtel), Cross-Cultural Missions (Clinton Brown), and Why Do History? (Janet Thorngate).

Evening worship preachers and morning Bible study leaders kept participants focused on the Kingdom theme. Bible Study leaders: Luciano De Moura, Claudia Ferguson, Canaan Phiri, and Bernardino de Vargas Sobrinho. Preachers: Jonas Sommer, Devon Levy, Michael Spearl, Gabriel Bejjani, Andrew Samuels, and Dale Thorngate. These sessions were live-streamed onto the Internet so that many others, worldwide, could share in the feast.

Morning and evening worship embodied the Kingdom spirit through a kaleidoscope of music led by Luiz Miranda who shared instruments with his wife and daughter (saxophone, keyboard, flute, violin, recorders) in melodies and rhythms from many cultural traditions. The basic praise band, including guitars and cajon drum plus vocalist Sophia Levy from Jamaica, expanded spontaneously to include other instruments and vocal ensembles so that by the end of the week a World Federation Choir sang for the Sabbath services. Words projected in English, Portuguese, and often Spanish did not limit what native tongue was sung or when. Music was the language of the Spirit.

On Sabbath night delegates celebrated the Federation’s Semi-Centennial by honoring former leaders and dedicating the new officers. General Secretary Samuels presented appreciation awards for the three original CoWoCo members still living (of the nine who, in 1964, had drafted and signed the proposed constitution establishing the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation): Jacob Tyrrell of Guyana, Naval Harley of Jamaica, and Otrain Manani of Malawi. Gabriel Bejjani was named President Emeritus as was Joe Samuels (posthumously). Dale Thorngate was granted the title General Secretary Emeritus and Janet Thorngate, Editor Emeritus. Jan and Ruth Lek were honored for “long, dedicated, and outstanding service,” Marlo Siolo and Justin Camenga for dedicated service, and Kenneth Chroniger as Honorary Ambassador. Participants shared in The Lord’s Supper conducted by outgoing President Thorngate and incoming President Sommer. The closing fellowship circle pressed the walls on all four sides of the flag-draped chapel walls.

A paz do Senhor (May the Peace of God be with you). [SR](#)

Janet Thorngate is a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Salem, West Virginia. She was recently named Editor Emeritus for her work in publicizing the activities of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation since the early 1980s, particularly as editor of the newsletter, Seventh Day Baptist WORLD. She is author of *Baptists in Early North America: Newport, Rhode Island, Seventh Day Baptists*, published this year by Mercer University Press, and in May was granted the honorary degree, Doctor of Letters, by Salem International University. She is Chairman of the Council on History of the SDB General Conference, USA & Canada.

Editor’s Note:

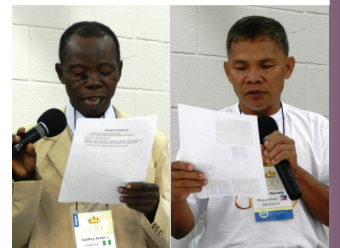
“Thank you!” to Guest Editor Janet Thorngate for this special SR about the World Federation.



Jean Karimumye of Rwanda, new member Conference, 2017 *Daniel Nsubuga of Uganda, new member Conference, 2016.*



Fraternal Delegates from Chile, newest SDB Conference, 2014: Manuel Marambio, Roberto Vidal, Pedro Aguilera





Africa delegates, five countries



Caribbean delegation, Jamaica & Guyana

Experiencing World Federation Sessions as a Delegate

by Canaan Phiri, new WF Vice President for Africa

“How good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:1)

True to the reflections of the Psalmist, I believe this should be the same feeling for each and every SDB once he or she tastes the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation (SDBWF) fellowship. I attended the SDBWF sessions for the first time in 2003 in Bocaíúva do Sul, Brazil; it left an indelible mark of experience on me and after that I wanted to keep attending the gatherings at every opportunity.

The current experience begins with my nomination by the Central Africa Conference (Malawi) Board to be one of the official delegates to the January 2017 Sessions in Curitiba, Brazil. I trusted God to take me through the hurdles of travel costs and obtaining a visa, and it happened. I was so thrilled to be part of the session which was also commemorating the 50th anniversary of the SDBWF, under the theme, “The Kingdom of God is like ...”

If ever you had a feeling that you were alone and in a minority, after attending the WF sessions you got the conviction that you belonged to a big global family. I happen to be one who globe trots attending various conferences, workshops, and symposiums, both secular and religious in nature; however, I find the SDBWF unique. It is the feeling of belonging that makes me feel at home and freer at SDBWF sessions. Despite the diversity of our respective conference practices, there is always the basic principle and conviction that I am amongst my own SDB brothers and sisters.

Such gatherings enhance cohesion between regional fellowship groupings. Just imagine — I got to know my Zambian brother from just across the border at a meeting held overseas and thousands of miles away. Though seemingly awkward, it is the WF sessions that bring us together even as neighboring

conferences and enable us to share ideas for outreach or further interaction. Indeed it was at such a gathering in 1992 that the Africa General Conference concept was born.

It is at such meetings, that we are able to learn from one another. Through the reports and informal interactions, delegates share best practices to the benefit of their conferences. WF attendees have brought back home some innovative ideas and systems. Through such formal and informal interactions, participants from different conferences have an opportunity to discuss, share, and debate controversial theological issues, thereby bringing alignment to each other, consequently enhancing our identity as SDBs. At the SDBWF, participants are able to share project concepts through which God has been able to move passion in some conferences or individuals, to support God’s work in conferences other than their own.



Canaan Phiri and Fred Maduka, Malawi, lead in praise

Above all and most important, the SDBWF offers SDBs time of fellowship with one another. The meetings are like a retreat that takes attendees away from their daily occupations and offers them time to be at the feet of Jesus and closer to God through Bible studies and prayer. Coming from diverse linguistic cultures and with various skin pigments, we praise God in our various languages and styles thereby bringing to life the Acts 2 Pentecostal experience. Certain common hymns could be sung each one in his or her language giving a blend best understood by the Almighty only. It also offers the opportunity to experience and, where possible, learn from the hosting conference through attending their conference gathering and visiting local churches to experience their style of worship. Upon returning from the SDBWF our faces radiate like that of Moses when he was coming from Sinai where he had met the Almighty. SR



Amaury Moritinho (blue shirt) speaks Portuguese into a microphone wired to earphones of the Brazil delegates while his sister Daisy and Josué Moura help with words here and there. In between them sits Clint Brown ready to repeat some African or Caribbean or Filipino English accent into something more familiar to them. The written manuscript they're checking may or may not resemble what the English speaker on the platform is actually saying. At left is musician Cristiane Miranda who assisted with Spanish translation.



A green-vested translator between two people marks a conversation in at least two languages.



A Translator's View of the SDB World Federation Experience

by Daisy Moitinho and Amaury Moitinho

To be translator at SDB World Federation Sessions was an honor and a blessing. We asked the Lord to help us to translate exactly what He wanted to speak to everybody there, and we thank the Lord for His help. It was wonderful to meet people from all parts of the world speaking the same language — we mean Seventh Day Baptist language. It was a big challenge to understand all kinds of “Englishes” there. We thank Clinton Brown for his help in translating English to English for us. We thank all participants for their patience when we did not understand them and asked them to repeat and all of them were very nice to us.

The informal conversations during the meals and outside the sessions were very helpful to understand the view of each nation. Although all conferences are different in their beliefs, cultures, and in the way they worship the Lord, we could not notice any problem among them. Participants were very interested to know how each other works as they shared experiences. Daisy translated for the Report Review Committee and it was hard work, but the group worked together in a very smooth way. Amaury worked with the Constitution Review Committee and he had the opportunity to learn more about the organization of the SDB World Federation. It was a wonderful experience to learn more about our church not only in Brazil, but around the world. We thank the Lord for this opportunity. [SR](#)

Notes from a WF Sessions Observer

by Levi Bond

Attending World Federation meetings as an observer in Brazil was a wonderful experience. It took about eighteen months for planning and preparation to be able to go. I took the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* course, which is sponsored by the Missionary Society. From there it was hard work — securing help from my association, church, and family to save up for the big trip. Last, was a trip to San Francisco to apply for a visa, and visit the Bay Area SDB Church.

For the first weekend we were honored guests at the Brazil Family Conference. While I could only communicate with a few people in English, everyone was wonderful. The Brazilians also wore me out on the soccer field Sabbath afternoon and at 6:00 AM Sunday morning.

The World Federation meetings had a similar format to USA & Canada Conference with a mix of worship, fellowship, and business. Observers were welcomed to participate in committees and business sessions, but could not vote. I was glad to have the opportunity to ask questions and share thoughts on a number of topics. The theme was “The Kingdom of God is like...” and it was a blessing to hear our brothers and sisters from around the world preach and teach on that subject. Highlights for me included sightseeing around Curitiba on Wednesday, where we only scratched the surface of many wonderful places to visit. Then on Friday we visited four SDB churches in the area. We were warmly welcomed at every one of them.

It was a great blessing to meet more members of my Christian family who are in all corners of the world, and a challenge to see that family grow to many more places. [SR](#)



Levi (barefooted) joins a 6:00 AM soccer game in the fog.



Soccer (futebol) happens any time of day.

What was most meaningful or most memorable for you in the 2017 World Federation sessions?



The most significant thing: to meet my brothers and sisters from different countries...and be received in great and perfect love.

(Karimutumye, Rwanda)

There was love and a sense of belonging in every activity, service, and conversation, especially the music.... I think of the words of a song Sandi Patty recorded which says, *"Love in any language, fluently spoken here!"*

(Margaret Taylor, USA & Canada)

Most memorable: hearing the reports from the respective delegates about the things happening within their conferences and enjoying the camaraderie and fellowship between the delegates.

(Devon Levy, Jamaica)

Most meaningful: the passion that was shared by the delegates who were representing the ministries of their conferences to reach the lost and the camaraderie that was established so quickly among the attendees.

(Pethtel, USA & Canada)

I felt so happy to meet leaders of the World Federation. We are members of a family...we ate from the same dish, slept in the same halls, dressed in the same T-shirts and sang the same hymns of victory.

(Nsubuga, Uganda)

My favorite memory: the music led by Luiz Miranda. It was lively, worshipful, and in a variety of styles. He even organized the first World Federation choir!

(Petersen, USA & Canada)

I thank the WF committee and SDBs in Brazil for making this happen: meeting the other Seventh Day Baptist leaders, our brothers and sisters in Christ, from the other parts of the world.

(Marcelo, Philippines)



What do you think is the most important role of the World Federation in the work of your Conference or in the mission of Seventh Day Baptists throughout the world?

- to keep all conferences informed (Communication) of the work and ministry of each conference, offer advice to member conferences on how they can improve ways and means of carrying out their function, and to offer support, any way possible, to these conferences or suggest mediums through which they can garner support.
(Levy, Jamaica)
- to bring us together in the decision-making of the Federation.
(Nsubuga, Uganda)
- to advise us how to spread the Gospel and better organize our conference; to bring us together with other SDB conferences: to facilitate spiritual, technical, and financial cooperation with other conferences.
(Karimutumye, Rwanda)
- to connect SDBs as a family of God; to be an avenue through which we can see how God is working around the world and know what we can do to support each other—spiritually, emotionally, physically and financially;
- to help us forge bonds with each other that will not be broken by differences in opinion or lifestyle or race.
(M.Taylor, USA & Canada)
- to recommend, implement, and monitor projects in the conferences across the world.
(Maduka/Malawi)
- to organize international meetings where the delegates get to personally experience the fellowship of the larger community of believers. Typically our people are a minority group, isolated from others by great distances. The returning delegates then are able to transmit this sense of being part of a global relationship to their local churches, providing encouragement in the face of their often great challenges.
(Brown, USA & Canada)
- to bring unity and fellowship of the Seventh Day Baptist leaders from all over the world; to provide knowledge that can be applied in individual conferences.
(Marcelo/Philippines)





Gavin Fox
USA & Canada



Patty Petersen
USA & Canada



John Pethel
USA & Canada



Andrew Samuels
USA & Canada



Karen Umaña
USA & Canada



Pedro Aguilera Castillo
Chile (Fraternal)



Roberto Vidal Leguey
Chile (Fraternal)



Manuel Marambio Torres
Chile (Fraternal)



Sidnei Grossklaus
Brazil



Eli de Magalhaes
Brazil



João Teles Santos
Brazil



Jonas Sommer
Brazil



Bernardino de Vargas
Brazil

2017 WORLD FEDERATION



Alicia Dunn-Evans
Jamaica



Claudia Ferguson
Jamaica



Devon Levy
Jamaica



Sophia Levy
Jamaica



Naval Harley
Jamaica



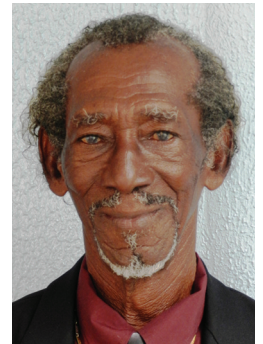
Andrzej Bujok
Poland



Zosimo Marcelo
Philippines



Kharlyn Henry
Guyana



Jacob Tyrrell
Guyana



Godfrey Achor
Nigeria



Daniel Nsubuga
Uganda



Quistin Chalwe
Zambia



Fred Maduka
Malawi



Canaan Phiri
Malawi



Jean Karimutumye
Rwanda

GENERATION DELEGATES



HERE'S TO A HEALTHY NEXT FIVE YEARS!

by WF General Secretary, Andrew Samuels

The Seventh Day Baptist World Federation is scheduled to meet next in 2022 in North America. From now until then, what will be and should be our focus? In my humble role as General Secretary, let me suggest that we all work towards the development of healthy SDB Conferences around the world, led by healthy spiritual leaders. So, as I have opportunity over the next five years, I aim to challenge our member Conferences to:

Harmony – Some of our Conferences are experiencing unhealthy conflict and tension. Let’s work hard at resolving those.

Education – In general, education is an appealing value. In a spiritual sense, it is even more valuable. Our people must be educated Biblically, so that we are reaping the benefits of what God’s Word intends for us to have. This education should include training and equipping for all areas of ministry.

Accountability – In the area of stewardship, we are called to be good managers of what has been entrusted to us. Being good stewards of all our resources – time, talents, treasure – is pleasing to God, the Supreme Owner. Proper systems of accountability enhance our usefulness.

Leadership – Everything rises and falls on leadership. When God wants to do something great, He usually first raises up a leader or leaders. That’s a good model. The development of Godly healthy leaders must be a non-negotiable priority for our Conferences, incorporating principles of management and administration.

Theology – Our belief about God and His salvation are paramount. A healthy theology of everything concerning our great God must be understood, embraced, and lived in front of the world. Thankfully, God has given to us His Word which informs our theology. A healthy understanding of absolutes and non-absolutes when it comes to our beliefs is important.

Healing – There is hurt and pain of all stripes in all of our Conferences. May we foster and cultivate communities of healing and restoration so that people can know the difference between us and the world. [SR](#)

Let us all do our part to make our Conferences healthy over the next five years.

New officers form the Executive Committee (from left):

- Karen Umaña, Recording Secretary;*
- Douglas Machado, Vice President South America;*
- Andrew Samuels, General Secretary;*
- Garfield Miller, Treasurer;*
- Claudia Ferguson, Vice President Caribbean;*
- Canaan Phiri, Vice President Africa;*
- John Pethtel, Vice President North America;*
- Jonas Sommer, President;*
- Michael Pearl, Assistant General Secretary.*
- Not pictured, Al Paypa, Vice President Asia.*





Sommer, Samuels, and Thorngate

Reflections: Past to Future

by Outgoing WF President, Dale Thorngate

As I reflect on thirty-one years of personal experience with the SDB World Federation, I want us to be reminded that God has been with us in the past and will always be with us in the future. Jeremiah notes the basis of that relationship:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.” (Jeremiah 29: 11-12)

Jeremiah’s point is that God does not plan evil for anyone. God’s plans are only to prosper and to provide hope. Our role is to be more diligent in prayer — not just talking, but also listening — because God wants to reveal His plans for us.

During the past nine years as the Federation President, I had the opportunity to work with two excellent general secretaries, two recording secretaries, two treasurers, and seven regional vice presidents. As the organization approached its fifty-year mark, my role as “elder statesman” focused on updating our organizational documents: writing a series of standard operating procedures, proposing revisions to the constitution, moving much of that in our first bylaws document, and establishing our official tax exempt status. Finally, in January, we were blessed by the week of Sessions meetings in Curitiba, Brazil. It’s the president’s job to choose a theme and select preachers, Bible study leaders, committee chairs, seminar teachers, and worship and music leaders. I felt God’s Holy Spirit leading in those plans and in the plans we made there for the next five years. I believe that God plans to give us hope and a future as Seventh Day Baptists. As we remain alert to His Spirit, already at work among us, He can work out His plan. [SR](#)



Be Joyful, With a Grateful Prayer and a Thankful Heart

by SDBWF President Jonas Sommer, elected 2017

*“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

These words from the Apostle Paul describe in every sense what the delegates and observers experienced during the World Federation Sessions held in Curitiba, Brazil, last January.

First, he commands us to rejoice always. Many have been the reasons we have to be joyful. God is working for us! During that week we got together in Curitiba, we heard the reports of what God has been doing among the Seventh Day Baptist people around the world. We could feel the joy of the lives that are being reached by the message of the Gospel, through the work of the Holy Spirit, and as a result of prayers, personal testimony, and the preaching of the gospel by members and leaders of our churches.

Paul’s second recommendation is that we always remain in prayer. During the week, we had moments of gratitude prayers and supplication for our churches, their respective pastors, the scheduled activities, and other concerns presented at each meeting. Our challenge is to continually pray for our family spread around the world.

During the Sessions we were reminded what God has done in the last fifty years of SDB World Federation. Therefore we are grateful for the Spirit who prays for us with groans too deep for words. We give thanks for the God who sticks closer than a brother. He listens when we need to vent. He understands when words are absent. He is the One who carries us and gives strength when we have none of our own.

Joyfully, prayerfully and gratefully, we will face the challenges our Lord and Savior Jesus has for the SDB World Federation in the next five years. We are sure He will be with us and we will celebrate each blessing and victory that the Lord will give us. SR



SDBs Gathered from Across the World – A Reflection on WorldFed 2017

I was privileged, in January 2017, to attend the 8th Session of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation (SDBWF) held in Curitiba, Brazil, under the theme *“The Kingdom of God is Like...”* Permit me to reflect on that global gathering of SDBs.

The Kingdom of God can be considered as a spiritual rule over the hearts and lives of those who willingly acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and surrender to God’s authority. This implies unity, kinship (therefore love), much like we experienced in Brazil. The Brazilian Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) Conference invited SDBWF delegates to attend their Family Conference, immediately preceding the World Federation Sessions, at the same venue. It was undeniably a wonderful experience, as they accepted us from different parts of the globe freely and openly. That kind of atmosphere promotes kingdom principles, and is a great ethos for the transmission of the evangelism and missions messages. What can we learn from the Brazilians?

The SDBWF started with the dream of two SDBs — Gerben Zijlstra (Netherlands) and Everett Harris (USA) — to institute an association of SDBs around the world, resulting in its establishment in 1965. At the 2017 Session, we had the treat of interacting with two of the founding delegates; Rev. Jacob Tyrrell (Guyana) and Rev. Naval Harley (Jamaica). We don’t have to look too far across the member conferences to see the invaluable contribution the SDBWF has been making to the progress of SDBs globally. For many delegates, being at the Sessions confirmed for us our part in something bigger and not just in our individual corners of the world. Meeting with other SDB nationalities brought an energy that propelled many conversations and interactions, affirming self-value, re-igniting commitment to the mission of God.

Fellowshipping with persons speaking different languages prompted me to think about the Babel Tower account in

Genesis 11 — the dividing of mankind through languages — and the coming of the unifying force of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit played the role to empower, educate and unite in righteousness, and the congregation of SDBs in Brazil was for a similar reason: to empower us for witness to all the nations, with the wholeness of the Spirit of God. The point of Pentecost is mission, and the goal of mission is that *“the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea”* (Habakkuk 2:14). Understanding this great historic event in Acts and aligning it to our experience in Brazil roused my heart with the cause of realizing the gathering from every tribe and tongue and nation bowing before the exalted Lord Jesus Christ.

Congregating with SDBs from different parts of the world urged me to do a snap review of our global presence on the backdrop of the broad goal stated by the founding SDBWF delegates: *“Seventh Day Baptist unity in Christ and a vigorous witness throughout the world.”* This should inform our individual Conferences on spreading the gospel. At the 2017 session we had about 50 attendees from 13 countries. The year 2015 marked fifty years since the establishment of the SDBWF with 11 charter member conferences then. At 52 years the SDBWF presently has 18 member conferences and SDB presence in many other countries. However, we are woefully short of reaching all 196 countries in the world. We have much to celebrate but much more to do in joining God in spreading His glory to all the world. Are we still living on the foundation of this vision?

Thank you SDBWF founding delegates, thank you past and present SDBWF executives, and thank you SDB Brazil. [SR](#)

— Garfield Miller
Missions Coordinator

SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST WORLD FEDERATION PRESIDENTS AND GENERAL SECRETARIES



Celebrating (and Documenting) 50 Years

We are preserving the stories of those faithful people who have made this history.

At the past sessions of the World Federation, Seventh Day Baptists had the opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Federation, officially reached in 2015. That celebration is merited, as for half a century many Seventh Day Baptists from around the world have participated in the cooperative work of the Federation. As part of the celebration, a graphic was produced which we have included on this page to help point to the work of some of those who have been centrally involved in the work of the Federation. But beyond these leaders whose names and photographs we see, there is also the work of individual Seventh Day Baptists in their local congregations around the world who have carried their faith with them as they made disciples of all nations.

Janet Thorngate has served for many years as an instructor in our Conference's Summer Institute class on Seventh Day Baptist History. On the first day of the class (at least since 2004, when I took the class as a student with Janet, and at each session since), Janet has taken the opportunity to remind her classes of a quote from the English historian Thomas Carlyle: "...history is the essence of enumerable biographies." In other words: where history exists, there also will you find the faithful people who went about their lives and contributed to it. Where the historian sees movements, there is really a sea of people changing their world in small, but real, ways.

A half century of ministry for the World Federation is an important time for us to ask how we are preserving the stories of those faithful people who have made this history. It is very important that each SDB Conference around the world has documented its own story so that we do not lose the stories of how God has moved among them. Many of our brother and sister conferences do not have their history written down in their own words and in their own language. We will continue to advocate for this important work to be done, and hope you will support us as we aid other Conferences in this work!^[SR]

— Nicholas J. Kersten
Director of Education and History

I imagine the Kingdom of God is a lot like the SDB World Federation sessions from January 2017 in Curitiba, Brazil.

The World Federation is a gathering of delegates from member SDB conferences around the world. It often includes representatives from conferences who are not yet members as well. These delegates gather together to discuss the business of the World Federation, which meets generally every five years, and for member conferences to communicate and cooperate with each other in their ministries. English is the official language of the World Federation, although many others are often spoken.

The Kingdom of God is like the SDB World Federation sessions because of a common belief that the Word of God as the revelation of God is meaningful and powerful.

The Bible, as God's words for us, was constantly at the forefront of the many discussions, prayers, meetings, worship times, and studies that occurred over the course of the week we had together. While some disagreements happen on the application of God's words into our everyday lives, there was no disagreement on its primacy or power for us. The Bible was constantly used as a standard of our faith in practice, whether it was in a business meeting or at a friendly soccer game. One day when the Kingdom of God is in its fullness, the audible Word of God spoken by the King Himself will be perfectly understood, obeyed, and lived out. What a great desire to share as SDBs!

The Kingdom of God is like the SDB World Federation sessions because of the concern rendered for all of God's people, not just a few.

This time was not just an assembly of a privileged few to talk about how to help those with greater need. This was a gathering in which, as a representative of the USA & Canada, I was encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and shepherded with a genuine love and desire that our conference look more and more like a movement of Jesus rather than a business or philanthropy. So many laughs and cries were shared about how the grace of God was thick with SDBs around the world. One day when the Kingdom of God is in its fullness, true equality with each other and Christ will be gained. We will truly be brothers and sisters and co-heirs of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is like the SDB World Federation sessions because of the praise and worship of God from all tongues and tribes.

While there was a lot of singing (including a Federation choir), the Holy Spirit was present in our conversations, meetings, and fellowship times which encouraged us to be praiseworthy to our Savior. I learned more Portuguese than I ever thought I would need but found that even when language fails us, the Spirit in one person can find a connection with the Spirit in another. One day when the Kingdom of God is in its fullness, language and how to worship God will no longer be an issue as we will all sing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!"

The Kingdom of God is like the SDB World Federation sessions because the ultimate focus is on King Jesus.

While there was conversation and concerns about what ministries are happening in each of our member conferences and how each conference can help one another, no conversation or request ever strayed very far from Jesus and our desire to serve Him. Whether it was helping the "least of these" or starting new churches or removing obstacles for the people in our countries to hear about the Gospel, the desire to act like and serve like Jesus was always paramount. One day when the Kingdom of God is in its fullness, our pre-existing, once and future King, Jesus Christ, will rule over NEW heavens and a NEW earth to receive the praise and glory that is due to Him.

Until the day when the Kingdom of God is in its fullness, the SDB World Federation provides a foretaste of what that fullness may look like as we strive to make King Jesus famous to the ends of the earth.

If you want to become involved with the SDB World Federation, here are a few ways:

1. Work with the SDB Missionary Society to partner with our member conferences and their work.
2. Support the travel and communication of World Federation delegates through your financial contributions.
3. Subscribe to the SDB World newsletter or visit sdbwf.org often.
4. Be an active contributor and participant in your own conference.

— John Pethtel
Vice President for North America
SDB World Federation



The Lord Guides my Way

By Yollie M. Bunag

*Ahh, as I set my eyes on the horizon
Warm breeze of air touches my soul
To wonder how this wonderful sensation
Came to be for creatures to enjoy
Love as they say is a wonderful feeling
Surrounds by the serenity of life
As I glimpse the path of my future
I know that the Lord guides the way
Yet as I leave my beloved homeland
Tears fell across my face
For I left a part of my being
To where I was created from
I know not what lies ahead
To journey to a foreign land
A land that knows no boundary
For the soul to wander around
As I face the challenge in life
Brave as I may be, but my soul needs strength*

*A strength that only my Lord could give
For He knows He's the Father of my soul
I seek not the wealth of this world
Nor what it can provide for humanity
Though I find it abounds with treasure
But the treasure in heaven that I long for
This journey of mine hasn't been so easy
With all the ups and downs that life provides
Yet I know that a strong hand holds me
Until now I still stand firmly
I may still be journeying more
To a land I know not where
Praying that the words of God
Shall be there to nourish my soul
Somehow, someday when the time has come
For only God knows what lies ahead
When this journey of mine shall come to end
Bringing with me the promised salvation*

I came across this poem recently and it stirred my soul to think of all that God offers when and if I can let go and travel from my homeland to a land that knows no boundary. We all can let God guide us into His future, His plan, and His path to glory.

For me — right now — I am looking forward to the 2017 General Conference in California. The event will be filled with opportunity, time for rekindling friendships, learning, sharing, and growing in a deeper knowledge of what God has in His plans. Please consider your travel plans for this summer and join us!!!

One thing I want to stress is that Jeremiah Owen, our General Conference Communication Director, has created easy ways to connect to the activities at Conference for those of you who cannot make the trip to Azusa Pacific Campus in California. If you are not too computer savvy, find someone in your church who is.

Connect with Jeremiah for instructions (jowen@seventh-daybaptist.org) or call me (Patti: 231 846-1756) and I will get you connected to the person who can support your need. I envision some of our churches connecting to the Conference evening programs and projecting them on the screens at your local church. In this time when technology gives us new and improved ways to connect, it's a shame to miss out on all that is planned and happening!!

Pray for me as we draw near to July. Pray for our leaders as they are completing the annual work and preparations. Pray that we will always demonstrate God's love and good will.

I pray that God's blessings will be displayed for your needs. He is a Good Father! [SR](#)

—Patti Wethington
Conference President



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I've seen rain clouds and lightning
And mud is on my shoes;
Still there's work to be done by
Whoever it behooves.

(Yes, I know that it's me, Lord,
But can it wait a while?
All the weather is gloomy...
Besides, I've other trials.)

God, I pray that you grant me
With strength to wait inside
And a zeal to support those
Who take this storm in stride.

(For you're much better off with
A soldier tried and true
Than a brand new recruit that
Would serve to hinder you.)

But you still keep declaring
You want me for the fight
So that all men may know you
And move from wrong to right.

Who am I? Quite a bad choice
To give this hefty task:
Hesitation surrounds me
And strives to hold me back.

So I sit and I watch, wipe
My foggy window clear,
When some words in a whisper
Just barely catch my ear:

"Is it I whom you seek, or
Your own ill-fated way?
Now repent of your doubt, child,
And trust what I shall say."

Now the rain makes me cold, drenched,
And—dare I say—washed clean.
So I follow the Lord through
These troubles He's foreseen.

— Seth Osborn
Boulder SDB Church, CO

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*Go and make disciples
of all the nations*



COMING SOON!

July 23 - 29, 2017

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Seventh Day Baptist General Conference
Azusa Pacific University — Azusa, California