

# LIFE ON MISSION



Touching lives for Jesus

Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

Azusa Pacific University — Azusa, California

July 23 - 29, 2017

ENCOUNTER EQUIP  
EMPOWER ENCOUNTER  
ENCOUNTER EQUIP  
ENCOUNTER EQUIP  
EMPOWER  
ENCOUNTER EMPOWER  
EQUIP  
ENCOUNTER  
EMPOWER EQUIP  
ENCOUNTER EMPOWER  
EQUIP  
EMPOWER

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

September 2017







## 16 Church Development

New Churches and Accreditations  
by John Pethtel

## 17 Focus on Missions

Gospel Feet 2017  
by Clinton R. Brown

## 18 Youth-Con

by Amanda Langley

## 19 Children's Conference

by Emily Watt

## 20 Young Adult

Blindfolded Guidance  
by Sarina Villalpando

## 22 Women's Society

Robe of Achievement  
by Karen Payne

## 23 Awards

## 24 President's Page

Life on Mission: Reflections  
by Patti Wethington

## 27 New President's Page

Less Talk, More Action  
by David Stall

*Thank you!* to Madge Chroniger,  
Official Conference Photographer, and to the  
other photographers whose photos we used!!

## Coming Next Month...

First in a series by Rev. Carl Greene:  
*Holy Discontentment (Ephesians 1)*

Testimonies from SCSC 2017 TEAM FIRE  
and more photos from Conference!

Welcome to Conference 5

Embracing Your Mission 6  
by Nate Crandall

Evening Worship and  
Seminar Speakers 9

Encounter, Equip, Empower 12  
by Nate Crandall

Church Blast With Butler 15  
by Kevin Butler



*Beginning...*



# Sabbath Recorder

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

September 2017

Volume 239, No. 9

Whole No. 7,039



Patricia Cruzan  
Editor

[sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org](mailto:sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org)

## Contributing Editors:

Rob Appel, Clinton R. Brown, Katrina Goodrich,  
Barb Green, Nicholas J. Kersten, John J. Pethtel,  
Xander Post, David Stall, Sarina Villalpando

*The Sabbath Recorder* (ISSN 0036-214X) (USPS 474460) is published monthly (combined July and August) by the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference's Tract and Communication Council, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678. This publication is distributed at no cost to members and friends of Seventh Day Baptist churches and is made possible by donations from its readers. Periodicals postage paid at Janesville, WI, and additional offices.

## POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to *The Sabbath Recorder*, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678

This is the 172nd year of publication for *The Sabbath Recorder*. First issue published June 13, 1844.



Member of the Associated Church Press.

*The Sabbath Recorder* does not necessarily endorse signed articles.

## WRITERS:

Please email your manuscript as a Word document to the Editor at [sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org](mailto:sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org).

Unsolicited manuscripts are welcomed; however, they will be considered on a space available basis.

No remuneration is given for any article that appears in this publication.

Paid advertising is not accepted.

## 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](mailto:contact@seventhdaybaptist.org)

SDB Website: [www.seventhdaybaptist.org](http://www.seventhdaybaptist.org)

Director of Communications

Jeremiah Owen

[jowen@seventhdaybaptist.org](mailto:jowen@seventhdaybaptist.org)

cell: (818)-468-9077

Editor of Sabbath Recorder:

[sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org](mailto:sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org)

## SDBs ONLINE

<http://www.seventhdaybaptist.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/7thDayBaptists>

<http://www.twitter.com/7thDayBaptists>

<http://gplus.to/7thDayBaptists>

<http://7thdaybaptists.tumblr.com/>

<http://www.pinterest.com/7thdaybaptists/>

<http://www.sabbathrecorder.com>





July 23 – 29

Azusa, California



President Patti Wethington  
SDB Church, White Cloud, MI





# EMBRACING YOUR MISSION



## Sunday Evening Worship

Pastor Nate Crandall  
The Connecting Church  
Milton, WI

This spring at Pastors Conference I was asked to share my devotional method with the other pastors. The reason I developed this particular method was not for use by church members or other pastors. I did it for me. It seems like I'm always getting distracted from the most important relationship in my life, and I wanted a way that would help me to stay on track with the Lord.

In fact, you could say that my life has been a series of getting distracted from God and coming back. I remember when I first studied the life of Abraham in depth. It seemed like Abraham was always wandering away from the land God gave to him and doing dumb stuff. Then he would always return, and pitch his tent in the land of God's promise and call on God — between the house of God and the heap of ruins.

It seemed almost like the setting of a horror movie. I felt like yelling to Abraham, "Don't do it!" And I remember thinking, "How could Abraham be so foolish?" Yet, this has been the story of my life. I have been way too easily distracted from my Lord. I have been as the song says, "Prone to wander" and "Prone to leave the God I love."

Even Abraham, the great father of our faith, was prone to wander, and he didn't even live in the internet age! Abraham was blessed by God so that he could be a blessing to others. However, because he was distracted from his call, he failed on being a blessing several times.

The king of Egypt didn't feel blessed when all the women in his household couldn't have children. Hagar and Ishmael didn't feel blessed when they were kicked out of Abraham's house and were in fear of starvation. Jesus rightly compared us people to sheep. Without a shepherd we wander away from all the things that are good for us.

I wonder if you feel the same about yourself. Along the way of life, distractions come along and throw you off. They might be good things — but when Jesus, who is our life, is not the source of our daily living, isn't the well that sustains us, then those distractions will turn into detours and the detours will end up in dead ends and destruction.

Does it feel like, instead of humbly coming to the Lord, you fight with a spiritual deafness to His calling? Do you feel the pressure of living in a world that wants to have it all but you don't? Do you want to live for God but just don't want to go to Africa?

You face it. I face it. Distractions in this life pull us away from the kind of life that God has planned. Instead of life on mission we just have life. If we are going to live a life on mission for Jesus, we must not get distracted from what's most important. Here are three things we must do to maintain our focus.

### Embrace all of God's word

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)*

Rightly divide the truth. These words of Paul to Timothy, a young pastor, apply to us all. Certainly if a pastor is to rightly divide the truth, the outcome of his ministry would be that the church family will rightly divide the truth also.

Why would we be ashamed? Because we haven't been diligent to honor God's word and to teach all of it as the Lord commanded us to. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the*

*Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19-20) If we aren't embracing all of God's word then we are disobeying the command of the Lord.

Now this takes courage in the face of those who oppose the truth. Peter and John were threatened by the Jewish ruling council and ordered not to speak in the name of Jesus. They refused and continued to tell others the message of Christ even when persecution and jail and death began to reign down on them. Instead they responded by calling out to the Lord, *"And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."* (Acts 4:29).

It takes diligence in the face of popular false teachings that run rampant in the larger body of Christ. These teachings, like internet fodder, get replayed and reproduced and find their way into our thinking. This is what Paul warned Timothy about. *"But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer."* (2 Timothy 2:16-17)

These profane and idle babblings are not neutral. They hit home and lead to more ungodliness. Like a cancer they spread, and so like cancer they must be cut out. Paul says to shun them. Move away from them. Do not give them a foothold in our heart because the end of these false teachings is to destroy people's faith.

We are messengers of the gospel. We are those who proclaim truth. But what if our message loses its truth quotient? Like Jesus said, *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world."* (Matthew 5:13-14) The one weapon that we have to bring precious people whom Jesus died for out of the darkness is the truth. We cannot be



Distractions in this life pull us away from the kind of life that God has planned.

Instead of life on mission we just have life.

used for God's business if we don't carefully, diligently carry His word. No ambassador lasts long if he speaks his own thoughts instead of what his president has directed him to say.

The great issue of our time centers on the truth of marriage. We have taken up this issue in the last few years, and this year it comes to a fine point as we decide about a possible change to our statement of belief. There are many truths in the scripture that are not in our statement of belief which we follow, and I would say that there are some truths in our statement of belief that we don't follow well. I share no opinion tonight as to whether or not this statement on marriage should be added to our statement of belief. This is outside of my purpose. However, what is smack dab in the center of my purpose this evening is the truth that marriage, according to the revelation which we all say we hold in the highest esteem, is between one man and one woman. *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* (Genesis 2:24) If we rightly divide the word of truth on this issue of marriage we will see that the truth and loving people in the name of Christ go hand in hand.

I'm passionate about telling my kids the truth of Christ because I want them to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. I tell them the truth because I want them to know what the fullness of life which God has designed is all about. I'm also passionate about sharing my love for them. I'm not going to love my kids and then later on down the road bring them to the truth. These things cannot be separated because if you love you will share the truth. If you don't share the truth in love, then you don't have the truth in you either.

The scripture says that *"grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."* (John 1:17) This means both grace, which is the manifestation of his love, and truth at the same time. When the Bible says that they will know we are Christians by our love it is not saying that truth is absent in that love. It simply means that as those who have been born again by the Spirit of Truth we are drawn toward our Heavenly Father whose very nature is Truth and Love.

This is rightly dividing the word of truth. Yet, in our world we hear profane and idle babblings about marriage. From those who believe marriage should include those of the same sex we hear things like, "God wouldn't want us to be apart because we love each other." Or that those who believe marriage is between one man and one woman are bigots and evil.

Instead of shunning the profane babblings of same sex marriage, many of the people of God have embraced it — and this is to our shame. If we are going to be used by God to advance His mission on this earth then we must cleanse ourselves from this shame by turning in repentance to Him. Then we may become as Paul says to Timothy, *"a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work."* (2 Timothy 2:21) If we are to be used in the work of the Lord in His mission on the earth then we must embrace all of His Word.

## Embrace the leadership of the Holy Spirit

*"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth."* (John 16:13)

The Spirit leads us into all the truth. Properly understood this does not mean only the knowledge of the truth but the practice of the truth. To be led into the truth is to let go of the deceptions that drives our lives away from God's purposes. Many people quote the words of the Lord that knowing the truth will set you free. However, that's not what Jesus said. *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:31-32) The freedom that we all desire is dependent on our remaining in His word. It's not just knowing the truth but abiding in the truth.

Jonathan Edwards was the famous preacher during the Great Awakening in the early part of the 18th century in America. He wrote extensively about the work of God during this time. One area he specifically focused on was how to determine if what was happening in a person's life was due to the work of the Holy Spirit or another spirit. In his book, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, Edwards highlights on "mark" which is especially applicable in our study today. *"And therefore, if by observing the manner of the operation of a spirit that is at work among a people, we see that it operates as a spirit of truth, leading persons to truth, convincing them of those things that are true, we may safely determine that it is a right and true spirit."* I call it simply a devotion to the truth. This devotion to the truth is what God was doing in David in his Psalm of repentance after his adultery with Bathsheba.

*"Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart."* (Psalm 51:6) We see that when confronted with his sin, David was more concerned about the truth than he was about covering it up. Rather than continue to hide it, David openly repented, even giving us one of the most powerful psalms of truth and grace.

When the Holy Spirit nudges us to deal with the lies we are holding onto in our inner being, it is the devotion to truth that will set us free. This battle over the truth is what determines our reality. If we don't embrace the leadership of the Holy Spirit in this manner, we will not be purified from the sin that so easily entangles us.

There is a difference between forgiveness of sin and being purified from sin. Forgiveness is done by God's command. Being purified is to be separated from the impurities of sin, evil and deception that have crept into our lives or have never been purged from us in the first place. Being purified only comes with our willingness, diligence and courage to bring the light into the dark places of our lives.

When we are unwilling to look into the darkness of our hearts and bring the light, that sin keeps us from being used in the way that God has designed us. Sin robs us of our most

*Continued on next page...*



## If we loved people like God loves them, nothing would keep us from our mission to bring them good news.

*Continued from previous page*

precious commodity — time. Time is not a “thing” in heaven. Time is a thing now. Now is the time that we have to be on mission with Jesus.

One of the things that the Lord said about our heavenly Father was that He prunes us so that we will be even more fruitful. To paraphrase Paul’s words to Timothy, if we are cleansed or purified from the things that bring God dishonor, we will be set apart to be used in the work of the Master. This requires that we embrace the leadership of the Spirit as He leads us into all the truth.

### Embrace the heart of God for the unsaved world

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

Our world is confused about love. When the world says, “I’ll love you forever,” it means maybe for a few years until something better comes along. But God is clear about love. He defines it for us as unconditional, not dependent on our behavior but only on His decision. He also demonstrates it for us in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

The extent of God’s love is something we should think deeply on. It required that God respond to the dire situation that we humans faced. So the perfect love of God looked at the condition of humanity which is described in Genesis 6:5, *“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* The perfect love of God looked closely at the condition of the human heart and saw that *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick.”* (Jeremiah 17:9) The perfect love of God looked at the status of his creation and recognized that we were dead in our *“trespasses and sins.”* (Ephesians 2:1)

So the perfect love of God willingly, happily gave himself, humbled himself to the lowest of all humanity by taking on his body the sins, all the sins of his creation. Although he deserved none of the consequences of sin, he received all of them in his body on the cross. The weight of our guilt, shame, grief, regret, fear, pain, sorrows — all of these were not a barrier too high for

the Lord to cross over. The power of love as God defines and demonstrates it is greater than any obstacle that would seek to stop it from reaching its objective.

Such an obstacle that we face is fear. Fear has so bound up the saints of God that we have allowed it to keep us from loving the people that God has strategically placed in our lives. But the Bible speaks of a different kind of love for us. It speaks of a stronger love, one that does not allow any barrier to dissuade it from carrying out the mission of Christ.

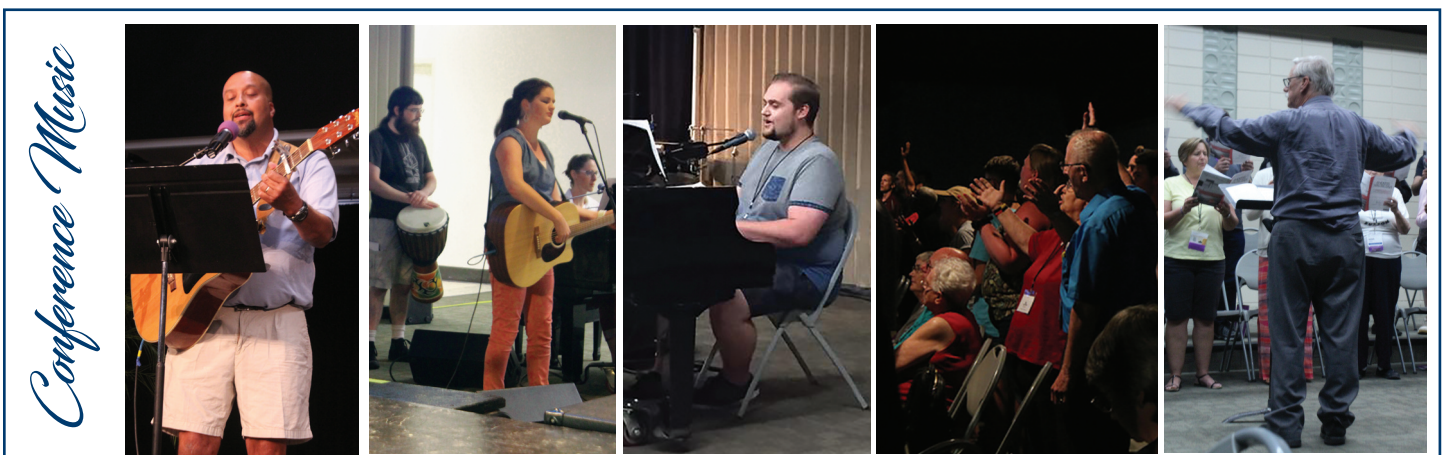
1 John 4:18 tells us, *“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.”* To be perfected in love is to be made complete. It is to love in the way that God loves. If we loved people like God loves them, nothing would keep us from our mission to bring them good news. The fears that keep us from speaking out and acting in the name of Jesus and on behalf of his mission would not be large enough because the love of Jesus would compel us to break through those barriers.

Because God’s love was so great, He broke through the barrier of sin through the cross. If our love is to be like God’s love in its expression, we must follow that same path. The path is called “death to self,” and only those who have been riveted by the love of Christ for them will be able to stay on that path until it comes to its completion.

Perfect love follows Jesus in his willingness to sacrifice, to be pressed to the limit and beyond, for the sake of others — others who may have no wish to be so loved. Perfect love casts out fear. Fear is unable to stand in the presence of perfect love. It doesn’t mean that perfect love does not confront fear. It is in fact surrounded by fear, but under pressure it doesn’t break. It stands firm. If we are to follow Jesus on His mission to seek and to save the lost then it will be because we have embraced God’s heart for the unsaved world.

What would it look like if we were to embrace all of God’s Word, the leading of the Spirit and the love of God for a sinful world? We would be characterized by the mission of Jesus. We would be known as those whose life is on purpose instead of by accident. We would be laser-focused on the purposes of Christ. SR

*Message is archived online at <http://bit.ly/SDB2017>*





## Salvation Desperation

"Salvation drives mission. Fresh salvation drives passionate mission. Mission leads to desperation. Desperation cries out for salvation. Jesus saves...and sends us into mission. Mission to Desperation to Salvation to Mission..."

Salvation happens when you reach the end of yourself. And now you need God to do the rest. And then He does...and you are saved. It happens when you takes risks in His name for His glory."

...

"If you are in the midst of passionate mission, praise Jesus, you're in the right place. If you are in the midst of mission...and desperate for God to show up, praise God and await His salvation — for He saves forever, and He saves again and again. Reach the end of yourself and watch God do the miraculous — bringing light and life and healing and RESURRECTION to you and those to whom you are sent.

If you are comfortable and secure, maybe even bored — the memory of 'salvation' is a distant and vague thing, you aren't 'feeling' it, you're attempting to force it, but there is no passion — get out and live on mission. You won't be bored. Consider that God is calling you into something crazy. Something risky. Something beyond you and beyond your ability."

## Monday Evening Worship

Rev. Dustin Mackintosh  
Senior Pastor at the  
Next Step Christian Church  
Thornton, CO



## Living With Purpose

"Soon after a person becomes a Christian he discovers that being a Christian is not a bed of roses. Just because he is saved, does not mean he has left his struggles behind. The fact is, the Christian life is a struggle against the pressures of this world. Worldliness is a problem for us, to varying degrees....What's truth is truth. There's no in-between. There's a right way to see things and a wrong way to see things."

"One of our key verses this evening is: Romans 12:2 (ESV) *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* If we are going to live life on mission with purpose, we must heed both the warning and the admonition in this verse. The warning is 'do not be conformed to this world.' The admonition is 'be transformed by the renewal of your mind.'"

"Let a desire to learn from God develop your attitude! The proper response to spiritual temptation — FIGHT! (Ephesians 6) *Put on the whole armor of God.* Let a desire to love God supremely direct your affections! *Flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith.* (1 Timothy 6:11-12) A man of God said, 'Christians are not ruined by living in the world, but by the world living in them!' Are you living in the world, or is the world living in you?"

## Tuesday Evening Worship

Rev. Andrew Samuels  
Senior Pastor  
Miami SDB Church  
Miami, FL





## *Wednesday Evening Worship*

Rev. John Pethtel  
Director of Church Development &  
Pastoral Services for the SDB Conference  
Colorado Springs, CO



## *Don't Diss Courage*

Exodus 31:1-8

"Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is the confidence that God is working before us and is present with us and that He is faithful to keep His promises."

"Courage causes us to take risks for the sake of others. Fear causes us to put ourselves before others."

"Here is what I am starting to finally grasp about Biblical leadership: *People don't follow titles. They follow courage.* Courage to say the right things. Courage to do the right things. Courage is risky but not reckless. Courage is bold but not stupid."

*"Encouragement is not telling someone  
how great he is,  
but telling him how great God is."*

## *Thursday Evening Worship*

Alan Briggs  
Director of Frontline Church Planting  
Colorado Springs, CO



## *Our Lives, His Platform*

"What is our platform? It's not the Church, not a stage. It's our lives...and for the Gospel."

"When people are close enough to the lives we live in Jesus, they have a deep curiosity. Are we ready to share about the hope that we have, or have we missed opportunities?"

"People today are looking for leaders who have been transformed. Only the Divine can astonish people. Stories of God's transformation evoke worship of God and they multiply more stories of how God is moving in our lives. Are you inviting the people in your church to look for God stories? Can people see that we've been with Jesus?"

"God's invited us into His story. He uses transformed people. Pray for God to shape us and transform us. We are invited everyday into His Great Co-Mission!"



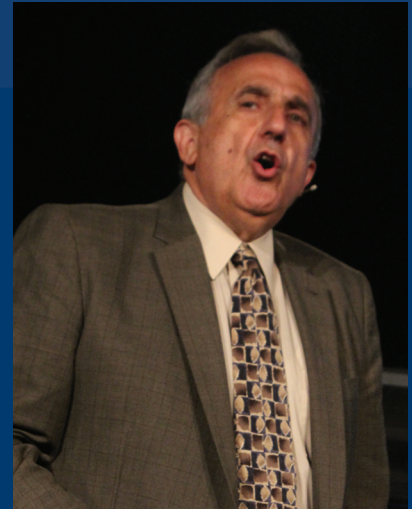
## Life on Mission

"You know the story on the road to Emmaus. These disciples were walking; they were discouraged; they were talking about what happened to their master. How sad their life was. In verse 32 of Luke 24, they asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us when while He talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?' There was fire in their hearts after they were discouraged, walking away — and that fire came when Jesus talked to them and opened the scriptures for them. That fire will come back to your hearts if you walk with Him and if you open the scriptures and listen to it."

"'Don't be ashamed to testify.' Paul says, 'that is why I'm suffering as I am, yet I am not ashamed. Why is it the same, because I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.' Fan the fire. Don't be ashamed. Believe that God is with you and He is going to give you the word. He is going to give you the courage. He is going to give you the direction — that fire will never go out. May that fire burn in your heart now and always until He comes."

## Friday Evening Worship

Rev. Gabriel Bejjani  
Senior Pastor  
Riverside SDB Church  
Riverside, CA



The sermons are available online so you can hear the entire message from these speakers. Follow HS link for the list of video messages: <http://bit.ly/SDB2017>

## Seminars



**Emily Klotz** is Director of Women's Ministries at Resurrection Life Church in Cadillac, MI.

"Emily Klotz shared from her heart and gave an experience for our women to reach and see a living God

who cares about our personal concerns, and then reminded us that we are precious in every way to God. We can be healed and have overflowing hearts to reach out and touch others for Jesus. I'm grateful for all that Emily and her family contributed to our General Conference event. They gifted us with talents, time and loving presence!"

— Patti Wethington



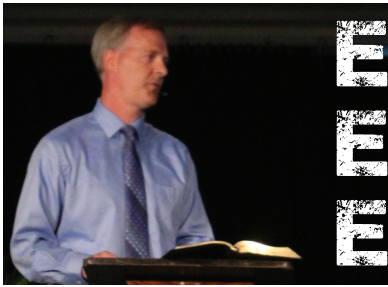
**Alan Briggs** is the Director of Frontline Church Planting, a network and equipping hub in Colorado. He is the Multiplying Pastor at Vanguard Church in Colorado Springs.

"Alan Briggs' presence was vital and alive with personal engagement and inspiration for a calling that is true and

simple. He faithfully worked with pastors and leaders, and spoke with the youth as well. He filled every minute of his time Wednesday and Thursday and closed the evening service with a message inspired by God that calls each of us to live in relationships and personal sacrifice to win souls for God's purpose. I personally enjoyed every moment of Alan's presence and inviting spirit!"

— Patti Wethington





# ENCOUNTER EQUIP EMPOWER

## Sabbath Morning Worship

Pastor Nate Crandall  
The Connecting Church  
Milton, WI

Let me tell you a tale of three churches. The first church is the church of my youth, the Milton Seventh Day Baptist church. This is where I began to encounter Jesus. Sometimes Jesus was hard to find. Oh there were good people who did good things, but the characteristic of that church was cultural Christianity. Our parents did the church thing, so we did the church thing. There was youth fellowship and junior choir and turkey supper and traditions. Most of the people in the church really didn't understand what a relationship with Christ was all about. During the last of my years as a teenager, the gospel began to slowly invade, and some who had been cultural Christians their whole lives trusted Jesus alone to save them. I myself trusted Christ at a Vacation Bible School at another church.

The second church is the church of my adult life, the Milton Seventh Day Baptist church. The characteristic of this church is that people are being equipped for ministry. The gospel message has been consistently preached in church, in our youth and children's ministries, in our ministry at Camp Wakonda and other places. The Word was being preached and the church was being built up. When I came to this church about ten years ago, there were adjustments that I had to make. I had to learn what my role in this equipping process was. There was a steep learning curve, but I so enjoyed the emphasis on equipping since the words of Paul in Ephesians 4 about equipping the saints for ministry was a special emphasis of my seminary. Yet as I began to move in sync with this second church I began to notice some things that were missing. Instead of working together in unity, so often the work of the ministry was random, subject to the personal desires and agendas of individuals. I began to spend much of my time refocusing ministry and putting out fires rather than building the ministry. Something was missing.

Let me tell you about the third church, the church of my future, the Milton Seventh Day Baptist church. This church does not yet exist fully, but it will in the future. The Lord has called us, and we will follow. The picture of this church is one where its people live for God's glory, where they are becoming more like Jesus, they are serving each other in the love of Christ, they are sharing life together in the power of the Spirit, where its people connect others to Jesus and help God change their lives. We don't yet really know what this looks like, but I do know that if we are to get there, the people of God will need to be empowered to live their lives on mission for Christ. Indeed if we are to walk into the future which our Sovereign Lord has designed for us we will encounter Jesus, be equipped to serve Jesus and be empowered in the mission of Jesus.

About two years ago I was turned on to "Strengths Finder," which is the result of many years of research conducted by the Gallup Organization. It is first of all a philosophy of human abilities, the core of which understands that the greatest potential for growth that we have as humans is in the area of our strengths. "Strengths Finder" has identified 34 core areas of strengths

based on interviews of over 10,000 people using a highly specific methodology. A test that takes under 20 minutes online results in a ranked order of your own personal strengths. You can ask for your top five or have all 34 if you so desire.

What made such an impression on me was how accurate the descriptions were of my areas of strength, the kinds of work I prefer to do, what energizes me, etc. From these strengths I developed three strength statements. These strength statements are meant to be a guide to focus a person's time and energy so that the main emphasis of the work life, and for me ministry life, is in these areas of strength. Not only, according to the philosophy, will this have the greatest potential for growth, but it will also have the greatest potential for fulfillment.

Here are my strength statements:

I feel strong when...

- I speak God's truth so that people **encounter** Him and are changed.
- I envision and lead for change where God's people are **equipped** to be who He has called them to be.
- I **empower** leaders to do what God has called them to do.

It's no mistake that Patti asked the speakers for this week to focus on **encounter, equip, empower**. So these are not only my areas of strength, this is my goal for the message this morning – for you to **encounter** Jesus, to be **equipped** for ministry and to be **empowered** in mission for Jesus.

**Do you know what your spiritual strengths are?** We most often refer to our spiritual strengths as spiritual gifts. The scripture calls them "graces" or Charismata in the Greek. A grace is a gift of God. These gifts He has implanted in each one of us at our conception. However, they become spiritual gifts or spiritual strengths when those who have been given them are born of the Spirit. So when our spirit comes alive by the grace of God when we first trust in Christ, the Lord gives us gifts of spiritual strength. The sad reality is that the majority of Christ-followers either do not know their spiritual strengths or they are not using them.

**Do you know what your natural strengths are?** Consider the parable of the talents. The master in the parable gave talents and expected a return on his investment. He expected results, and when the servant with the one talent gave no return on the master's investment, he was thrown out into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. We each have talents or natural strengths that the Lord has given us to use for His glory. Yet rather than investing them in the work of the Kingdom of God, the temptation is to keep them for ourselves. If we are going to be properly equipped for ministry we must use our graces (spiritual gifts) and talents (natural gifts) for His purposes instead of our own.

This requires that we recognize the difference between our purposes and God's purposes. How do I know when I am being driven and motivated by my own self-centered desire rather

# The message is for you is to *encounter* Jesus, to be *equipped* for ministry and to be *empowered* in mission for Jesus.

than Christ-centered purpose? James gives us a clue in 3:13-18. *"For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason..."*

Paul gives us more clues, *"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other...the works of the flesh are evident."* (Galatians 5:17-24)

These are a litmus test to reveal to us where our purposes are self-centered or Christ-centered. Once the Lord reveals to us our own heart, then we are ready to follow Him out of that area of darkness and into His light. The light is where Jesus is glorified in us — all we are, all we do, all we say, all our patterns of thought, all our hopes, all our plans — as we are laid open and what comes out is that Jesus is honored and praised, then we know that our purposes line up with His.

You are most fulfilled and encouraged when you are living according to the design of your master. That is being equipped. But to be empowered is to recognize the purpose and the plans of Jesus in and through His church. It's not about your gifts. It's about His mission. You can live your life on your mission, for your gifts and your desires and your hopes and dreams, but in the end you will come out with the same result as Solomon — that this has all been meaningless. On the other hand, you can live your life on His mission and for His purposes. This mission begins and ends with us being transformed into the very image and nature of Christ. We live on mission for Jesus when we **encounter** Jesus, when we are **equipped** to serve Jesus and when we are **empowered** to partner with Jesus in His ongoing mission on earth.

## Encounter

Ephesians 4:4-6

***"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."***

Knowing Him as Savior, Lord and Friend, filled with His Spirit on an ongoing basis, submerged in His Grace until every nook and cranny of our life, heart and soul is bathed in it.

As we heard earlier this week, there is only one name given under Heaven by which we must be saved. There is one Lord and Savior. There is only one faith that saves. There is only one baptism that brings us from death to life, only one hope that belongs to our call.

Yet, we so often, daily, hourly, moment by moment, turn our hopes to the things that fade, rust, break, get lost, stolen, destroyed. Our encounter with the Lord must be in the moment. At any moment the Lord will reveal Himself to us, but we must look to encounter Him. We must build into our lives structures that do that. We must allow the Lord to move us into ways of

thinking and ways of living that create the attitudes conducive to ongoing encounters with the Lord.

"Love not the things in the world" must be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis. We must build into our lives times for self-evaluation and for Spirit-evaluation. Conference is such a time. Now is the time to open our hearts to what the Spirit is saying to His church. Let me have you ask yourself a few questions:

*Is my character submitted to Christ?* — meaning I'm not making excuses for behavior.

*Is my pride subdued?* — meaning I am ready to admit where I am weakest.

*Are my fears at bay?* — meaning I don't live by fear but rather am moved by faith.

*Are interior issues undermining my life and ministry?* — meaning I am being healed of wounds, losses, disappointments, junk, etc.

*Are my ears open to the Spirit's whisper?* — meaning I can hear His voice.

*Is my pace sustainable?* — meaning I have space in the margins of my life.

*Are my gifts developing?* — meaning I know what they are and am using them.

*Is my heart for God increasing?* — meaning I love the things He loves.

## Equip

Ephesians 4:7, 11-12

***"But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift...And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ"***

The Lord gave Himself to the church. These gifts are His strengths which He has loaned out in order to accomplish His mission. But we must overemphasize that these gifts or strengths are Jesus Himself. It is His working through people that is the key. It is Jesus who builds His church so that the gates of Hell do not prevail against it. Until we realize that, we will be in a holding pattern as we try to build the church and fail miserably as the gates of Hell continue to pummel us.

Jesus' mission is accomplished through His people. He has divided up the achieving of that mission with five (or four depending) areas of equipping. They are not just equipping to do tasks, but to reveal the nature of Christ. The building up of the body of Christ is all about attaining the understanding of who Jesus is, being transformed to be like Him. This happens on the basis of unity. We've each been given a measure of His grace. As we respond to this grace each believer responds to the grace given to him. We see the progress of growth toward the goal of maturity which is Christ-likeness.

Notice that the Lord has given certain people (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) a leadership role in

*Continued on next page...*



The Lord is the one who saves people. We are the ones who bring the message. We cannot ever get an A grade on being His messengers if we are busy with our own mission and then we pick up Jesus' mission on the weekends.

*Continued from previous page*

this equipping process. This is important for us to understand. We must, as Christ has done in giving His gifts, allow these leaders to do their role of equipping. This must happen in two ways.

First, recognize the call of these leaders and let them lead. They must be given the authority, within accountability, to do what Jesus has equipped them to do. Burnout is the end of every road where a pastor, for example, is not given the freedom and authority to care for and to lead the flock. Because of past fears of abuse that have never been fully healed, many pastors do not have the freedom to lead into the green pastures which the church desperately needs for increasing in health and life.

This also includes not doing those things which a leader is not called to do. The management of the church infrastructure is not something that I have been called to do. This past year our church made a conscious decision to pilot a new structure where those called to lead in ministry were not asked to make decisions about the buildings and the finances and the computers. Previously they were structurally part of this decision tree, and it was sucking the life out of them. When we made this move to try this different structure for a year, the response I got from these leaders was, "Thank you!" I myself cannot tell you how freeing it has been. Those who have been called and equipped to do this sort of thing are happy. The ministry leaders are happy. I'm happy. Jesus is happy. We are all clapping along.

Second, God's family, the church, cannot be equipped properly unless all these gifts are in operation. Traditionally, the ministry of the prophet has worked against the ministry of the teacher and vice versa. Yet, Biblically it was when the prophets and the teachers were in unity in the church at Antioch that the ministry of the apostle Paul was given a platform to operate on a powerful level. We must begin to recognize more than just the pastor in this role of equipping God's people for ministry.

An apostle, Paul says, lays a foundation upon which the church is able to grow in a healthy way. We must recognize the difference between the role of the apostle and the pastor and not send pastors into those kinds of roles. The apostle either plants new churches or replants existing churches as a general rule. A pastor has not been given the grace by Jesus to do this kind of thing. Let us be careful to recognize a difference.

I use these examples because of the emphasis on church planting which the Lord has been leading our churches to focus on these past few years. Much more needs to be taught and modeled in all of these areas of equipping gifts. But my point remains, these are the gifts that Jesus gave to build up His body and get them ready for areas of service in ministry. Who are we to say we know better than Jesus? Instead, we need to figure these things out and make conscious steps toward a future where we are equipping the church according to the design of Jesus.

As we are equipped to use our spiritual strengths we become fulfilled, satisfied, and content because we are becoming who God has designed us to be. Ultimately that means that we become like Jesus.

## **Empower**

Ephesians 4:13

***"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."***

The power that we have comes from Jesus. When He is working through us and we are not fighting against Him by trying to work in our own abilities, strength, and understanding, then the power of Heaven comes to earth. We are not equipped so that we ourselves can be fulfilled but so that the Kingdom of God may advance on the earth.

The critique of the people of God in this season of world history is they lack power. Lots of talk, no power. The power that we have in us, which the Lord is waiting to unleash, is to sum all things up in Christ. When the people of God stop trying to work their own agendas, then the power of God working through the equipped people of God will cause encounters with Christ which will radically change our understanding of what it means to follow Christ.

The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ means among other things that His mission is our mission. He came to seek and to save the lost, but among the other desires that we have, many of them good desires, we have left that out of who we are and what we do. It does no good if you have a doctrine of evangelism in your statement of belief if you are not putting that into action.

To be empowered means that we are accountable for results. The Lord is the one who saves people. We are the ones who bring the message. We cannot ever get an A grade on being His messengers if we are busy with our own mission and then we pick up Jesus' mission on the weekends. The Great Commission was never meant to be a side job for the church. The Great Commission is our bread and butter because it is why Jesus came to earth. The unity of the faith of a mature church is one that has been empowered to take the gospel and to set people free and is actually doing it. If we are not on mission with Jesus then we are a long way away from the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

How shall we respond?

### **1. Decide to live your life on mission for Jesus**

Stand to repent of your desires and your plans running your life, and your desire is to live on mission for Jesus. Just because you are a believer doesn't mean that your world view and your thinking have been adjusted to the thoughts of God as revealed in His Word. Just because you are a pastor doesn't mean that your life is on mission for Jesus instead of on mission for yourself.

### **2. Understand your spiritual and natural strengths**

Make a commitment to the Lord to find and begin to exercise your spiritual and natural strengths. Spiritual strengths are most often discovered by listening to our pastors or spiritual mentors. They can see gifts in us that we are not yet able to see. This was what Paul did for Timothy as he encouraged him to pursue the spiritual strengths that became evident as Paul placed his hands on Timothy and prayed for him. (2 Timothy 1:6)

### 3. Mobilize people to be empowered for ministry.

It is a challenge for pastors to lead their people into and out of areas of ministry. Some are in areas of ministry that they are not gifted in. Others are gifted for areas of ministry that they are not currently serving in. Although it can be a difficult pastoral challenge, the results of helping people to truly be empowered in ministry are huge.

What would happen if we were to take these steps? I believe that Paul's words to the Ephesian church are spot on. This is the result when we live our life on mission for Jesus, as we encounter him, are equipped for ministry, and are empowered for His mission. [SR]

***"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."***

— Ephesians 3:20-21

Message is archived online at <http://bit.ly/SDB2017>

When the people of God  
stop trying to work their own agendas,  
then the power of God working  
through the equipped people of God  
will cause encounters with Christ  
which will radically change our  
understanding of what it means  
to follow Christ.

## Church Blast with Butler!

by Kevin Butler



Kevin interviewing J.R. Shick (White Cloud, MI)



Johnmark Camenga (Lost Creek, WV) and  
Nathan Crandall (Milton, WI) with Kevin



Carl Greene (Hebron, PA) and Matt Olson (Berlin, NY)

"Church Blast with Butler!" Believe me, I did not come up with that name.

Our beloved Conference President Patti Wethington conned me (*kidding*) into putting on an entertaining program-of-sorts, right after lunch on Monday through Wednesday, to draw people back into the afternoon schedule. My opening monologue revealed that security agents at the airport rushed me to a private room (*kidding*) after hearing that I was in California to participate in several "church blasts."

Using a talk show format, I had 15 minutes each day to grill some of our pastors who are leading their churches in practical steps of revitalization. I contacted these men ahead of time to get some of the basic info, but the dialogue on stage was far from scripted. (*NOT kidding.*)

My thanks go out to pastors J.R. Shick (White Cloud, MI), Johnmark Camenga (Lost Creek, WV), Nathan Crandall (Milton, WI), Carl Greene (Hebron, PA) and Matt Olson (Berlin, NY) for participating and being good sports. They needed to be on their toes for whatever came their way. They did not disappoint. I encourage you to contact them to see how their congregations are moving toward a brighter future. [SR]





**Redemption Evangelical Fellowship Church**  
Riverside, CA



**Agape Ministry Iglesia Bautista del Septimo Dia**  
San Sebastian, Puerto Rico

# New Churches

## Accredited Pastors

### New Accreditation:

Carl Greene  
(Hebron SDB Church)

### Accreditation Renewals:

D. Scott Smith ..... 5 years  
David Thorngate ..... 15 years  
Andrew Samuels ..... 25 years  
Kevin Butler ..... 30 years  
Verne Wright ..... 30 years  
Perry Cain ..... 35 years  
Robert Harris ..... 40 years  
Melvin Stephan ..... 40 years  
Dale Rood ..... 45 years  
Leroy Bass ..... 55 years  
Kenneth Smith ..... 60 years



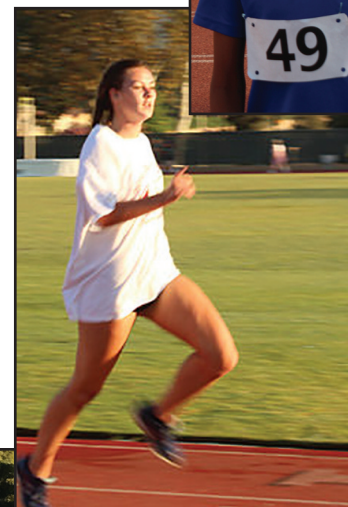
**Seventh Day Baptist Church of Edgewater**  
Oak Hill, FL



Church Development & Pastoral Services

by John J. Pethtel  
Director





This year's fifth annual Gospel Feet 5K Run was organized to raise funds to better enable SDB ministries across the globe to bring hope to people in their communities in desperate situations. The funds bring hope to the lost, food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, aid to the sick, and homes for children who have no one.

This year's 5K/1K Walk/Run had 58 participants. By the end of the General Conference meetings, \$1,940 had been raised which the Missionary Society could use to partner in responding to needs near and far.

Everyone who participated was a winner, but the first gentleman to cross the finish line this year was Seth Green. Not far behind him, our first place lady to complete the 5-kilometer run was Gabi Osborn. And our first to finish representing the Children's Conference this year was Aaron Barbee.

A big THANKS to all who participated, donated, and organized the event. It is an effort to which many contributed starting before the run began, and continues forward to bring the light of Hope in places of despair for God's glory around the world. SR



by Clinton R. Brown  
Executive Director

FOCUS on Missions





# Youth-Con

by Amanda Langley

Youth conference/Youth-Con is very new and we, along with the Christian Education Council, are still figuring out the best way to facilitate the program. Despite this, the amazing staff helped to make every moment profitable. Benny Uhlich, Daniel Lovelace, Jennifer Hughes, Haywood Floyd, and Bill Shobe, accompanied Kory Langley and me (Amanda Langley) in this adventure.

We led the youth through a more relaxed but still somehow packed schedule this summer. There were Bible studies lead by all of the staff on our theme of *Devotion*. The theme came from Acts 2:42. Haywood led us in worship music that drew some of the college staff to worship with us occasionally. Alan Briggs came to talk with the youth about being dedicated in their life on mission. We played a lot of games inside and outside in the lovely California air.

Some of the most powerful moments we had this year were in our small groups. A staff member or two would lead a group of about five youth in discussion and collaboration. For evening activities we were able to have a movie night, game night, youth vs pastors basketball game (which the pastors won), coffee house, and a spirited game of capture the flag. Pictures were graciously taken by Madge Chroniger and Peter Osborn of the youth banquet, afternoon of games, capture the flag, and Sabbath worship.

This year would not have been a success if it weren't for the wonderful group of youth that was up for anything and brought laughter to every situation. Here are some things that they would like to say about Youth-Con. SR



*"My first year of Youth-Con was definitely a life changing experience. I learned a lot about how I need to live my life as a follower of Christ."*

— Niesy Scott, Texarkana SDB Church

*"During youth-con I learned to be devoted to God. I learned that to be devoted I need to pray and read my Bible, and learn to listen to God. To be devoted I need to trust God and lean on Him. I am glad that I got the chance to go to Youth-Con and learn more about being devoted and listening to God and His calling for me."*

— Rachael Osborn, Boulder SDB Church

*"I guess Justin Bieber isn't the greatest thing to be devoted to. God and I are still working on that one."*

— Jayda Green

*"It was a great environment to hang out with old friends, make new ones, and learn how to be devoted to God!"*

— Melissa Brown

*"Going into conference, I wanted to learn what it meant to be on fire for God, and how to keep that fire going so I could live my life for Him. During the week, I learned that I need to fuel my fire, or I'll lose it. My fire will transform me, and transformed people transform the world. In order to transform the world, I need to be aware of my spiritual gifts and use them for God. Through me, God will shock people using His power, because nothing from the world will surprise people these days. The only thing standing in my way is fear. Fear of things that Satan will throw at me. But why fear Satan? He's been defeated. So I need to be devoted to the Word, and connect myself to strong believers, because I can't face life by myself. I stand here in front of you a different person, a changed person, because of Conference 2017."*

— Holly Probasco, Shiloh SDB Church



# Children's Conference

by Emily Watt

Children's Conference 2017 was a week filled with growth, fun, and relationship building. Forty-nine students were registered for Children's Conference, from Pre-K to Jr. High. The program was put on using Group Publishing's *Maker Fun Factory* Vacation Bible School kit. This kit tied into the theme of the General Conference because it helped students to understand that each person is made uniquely for the specific life that he is meant to live and to reach the people around him for the Lord.

The morning started with a Welcome message from Director Emily Watt and a short video that introduced the message for the day. A volunteer student would then pray for concerns that other students brought forward, and for the day itself. Afterwards, Joe and Karissa Bornemann would lead students in a half hour of music and worship. Students rotated through several different centers that focused on a global daily theme and a daily verse. These centers included Bible Discovery (led by Keli Watt and Elianna Chroniger), Imagination Station (led by Lauren Telford and Joe Bornemann), Snack Factory (led by Dusty Davis, Logan Curran, and Cane Davis), KidVid Cinema (led by Michaela Osborn and Dustin Tio), and Soundwave Sing and Play (led by Nathan Crowder and Abigail Noel). At the end of the morning session, students would come back together in the main auditorium for a closing talk and prayer.

Throughout the week, students were asked to present ideas for the Program Presentation, allotted for Sabbath morning. They brought forth some amazing ideas, including confetti cannons and beach balls. The director was highly entertained by their ideas and encouraged the students to create a program that would be as much fun as humanly possible for everyone involved. She is

proud of the program that they created and thrilled by the pride that the students took in their creation.

In the afternoon, students participated in recreation that also featured lessons that tied into the daily theme. Elementary Recreation was coordinated by Victoria Richards, Caleb Gammons, and Randi Gammons. Gabi Osborn and Jevy Martin coordinated Jr. High Recreation.

Each day was wrapped up with Kid's Campfire, which was put on by a group of highly able and excited high school volunteers, including Annie Lloyd (who worked extremely hard as the coordinator), Isaac Floyd, Becca Uhlich, and Brock Hannah. While supervised by the director and other adults, these students in particular created schedules, organized students, and worked hard to create a loving and fun environment for students while their parents were in Evening Worship. They deserve a very special round of applause for their willingness and their enthusiasm towards this program.

Children's Conference seeks to educate and train the future leaders of our Conference using community and solid teaching. This applies to the students who are enrolled in the program, as well as the volunteers. As the director, I would like to extend my gratitude to the parents who enrolled their children into the program, the children who made this week as special as it was, and to the volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to the future of the Conference. I loved watching the students become engaged in the curriculum and form relationships with other SDBs from around the nation. I simply cannot wait to see what Children's Conference 2018 will hold. [SR](#)





# Blindfolded Guidance

You are now blindfolded and trying to find an object in the room. You are in complete darkness, you don't know where anything is and you don't know what the object you are trying to find is. The thing you do know is that there is an object hidden for you to find. Could you find the object? Is there something you could use to help you find this object?

A voice has appeared to guide you. It is telling you what directions to go in. It's told you what you are searching for is a small, round, and gray pebble. You still are in darkness, you wonder if the voice is telling you the correct directions, and you wonder if you really need to find this pebble because the journey so far has been hard.

Sometimes we are faced with complicated decisions and feel that we are in complete darkness – but we never are. We have the guidance of God. God has a plan for us. He is the voice behind the blindfold that is encouraging us which direction to choose – but the choice of following the voice is our decision in the end. We are blind in the world without Christ. We must accept His guidance in order to find our pebble. In James 1:5-6 (NIV) it is written, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."*

It is important to remember that we are not alone, no matter how hard the decision is. God has a plan for us to follow. When we have accepted Christ as our savior, we have the Bible and other Christians to help lead us. We still may not be able to see everything, but we will have direction. Now the question is, how should we go along with following God's plan? How do we know what He is trying to tell us? What do we do in order to figure out that big choice in our life that God wants us to make?

Pray, read, and pray some more. When we are faced with that decision it is important to continually pray. God may know what is going on in our life but He will not know we are accepting His guidance unless we pray about it. By reading the Bible, God will show us His guidance through words and may reveal something we weren't seeing. God's word is a powerful thing that we tend to underestimate. Finally, never stop praying. God is not going to always provide an answer right when we want it. He is going to reveal it when the time is right. Don't stop praying and don't give up. SR



*Young  
Adult  
Conference  
Fun!*



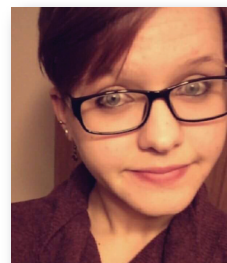
Young Adult

by Sarina Villalpando  
Maranatha Community Church, Colton, CA



# A different way to see the Evening Worship Messages

by Melinda Floyd



"I will be 19 years of age September 8th. I will be attending GRCC as a first year to major in business in order to help with the process of going into business for myself and selling my art. My goal is to inspire people with my art and also present them with a different way to see an image and how that perspective can change person to person. I hope that my art will not only be appreciated but also will give glory back to God showing thanks for the gift He has given me."

Favorite scripture: Joshua 24: 15  
*But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.*



World Fed says "Thank you, Dale and Janet"!



General Council says "Thank you, Susie"!



# Robe of Achievement

Janet Van Horn Thorngate

We are pleased to honor one of our very deserving women with the Robe of Achievement. Like many previous Robe recipients, our honoree is a deacon, wife, mother, (including foster mother), grandmother and great-grandmother. She is not only a wife, but a pastor's wife and also a "preacher's kid." This being the case, her childhood and youth were spent in WV, NY, and AR. This year she was bestowed with the degree Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* by the Salem International University.

The following is taken from the citation given her with her doctorate:

*Mrs. Janet Van Horn Thorngate graduated from Salem College with a Bachelor of Arts cum laude in English and History, and then earned a Master of Arts in English Literature from West Virginia University. She obtained West Virginia's secondary school teacher certification.*

*She has spent much of her life as a teacher. She was an instructor in English at West Virginia University and Salem International University, as well as with Upward Bound at then Salem College. She worked as a technical librarian at several Educational Resources Information Center clearinghouses, and was a member of the ERIC National Steering Committee, 1976-1981.*

*She has devoted much of her life to the Seventh Day Baptist Church, whose members were founders of Salem College in 1888 and whose continuing support over the past 129 years has been valuable to the university. She was librarian and archivist for the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Library. She continues to be an instructor in Church History for the Seventh Day Baptist School of Ministry. She is the editor of Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society publications. She has been President of the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society since 2002.*

*Her other literary endeavors include editorship of Seventh Day Baptist World, the newsletter of the SDB World Federation, of which her husband, Rev. Dr. Dale Thorngate, is President. She has been editor of Lead-Line, the leadership newsletter of the SDB General Conference, and editor and writer of a variety of church and organization newsletters, booklets, etc. Her extensive work in church history and her meticulous attention to detail in her research led to her most recent publication: a volume published by Mercer University Press for their series*



*Baptists in Early North America. Her volume, entitled Newport, Rhode Island, Seventh Day Baptists, was published early in 2017. Another recent work, Seventh Day Baptist World Federation: The First Fifty Years, 1965-2015, was published for the SDB World Federation conference held in Brazil in 2017.*

In addition to the activities mentioned in the citation, some of Janet's church volunteer work includes: serving as Youth Advisor, pianist, Sabbath School teacher, Vacation Bible School teacher, Camp JOY board member, various roles at church camps, and church secretary.

Janet's denominational service includes being Youth Field Worker in Colorado before there was an SCSC program, and most of you are familiar with her work

on the Historical Society/Council on History not only as a member, but as President. She served on the Faith and Order Committee for many years and as chairperson for over 10 years. Along with husband Dale, she co-directed Young Adult Pre-Con in 2006 and served as Conference Choir pianist that year. She even wrote the theme song for conference in 1978 *Bearing the Fruit*. How many of you remember that song? She has been part of the US Delegation to World Federation meetings since 1986.

Church and denomination activities aren't the only places Janet has served. Her community activities include being a board member for a United Way agency; being member of the Salem International University Auxiliary; organizing and helping cook Thanksgiving dinners for students who couldn't get home for the holiday; being pianist for community worship services; being a choir member at WV Black Heritage Festival; and donating devotional booklets to young people who attend the Salem church.

Time does not permit us to tell of all the ways Janet has served her community, church, and denomination. She is an exemplary Christian, a life-long Seventh Day Baptist, and truly a woman deserving of this Robe of Achievement. [SR]

— Karen Payne



Women's Society

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

## Winner of the Scripture Memory Awards

The **Mary G. Clare Scripture Memory Bowl** has for many years been given to the member church of our Conference with the most participants to successfully complete our Scripture Memory Program. In recent years, one church has dominated the competition—the First Toronto Seventh Day Baptist Church. After a year off from the pinnacle, once again, **Toronto won the Clare Bowl this year.**

Last year, the Christian Education Council introduced a new award for participant churches in the Scripture Memory Program to honor churches with the highest percentage of participation in the program. The new award, **the Andrew J. Camenga Scripture Memory Award** was given last year to the First Hebron, PA SDB Church. This year, **Hebron repeated their victory!**



*Toronto wins Clare Bowl*



*Hebron wins Camenga Award*

# Awards, etc.

## Scholarships Awarded by the Council on Ministry to those preparing for ministry

The Council on Ministry administers two scholarships for those training for ministry: **the Charles H. and Margaret S. Bond Scholarship**, and **the Alcott Lynch Pastoral Training Scholarship**. Both of these scholarships were made by the respective families following the passing of beloved family members who devoted their lives to service in ministry to the body of Christ. In 2017, **both of these scholarships were given to Conlief Lyons**, of the First Toronto Seventh Day Baptist Church, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Conlief is a student at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. We are grateful to both families for their continued commitment to the training of Seventh Day Baptist pastors. For more information about either scholarship, or to find out more about the School of Ministry's training programs, please contact Dean Nick Kersten at the SDB School of Ministry.



## The Gold-Headed Cane Award

Formerly a lifetime achievement award given the SDB Historical Society, the SDB Historical Council has taken over in honoring outstanding contributors to the preservation and communication of SDB history by giving the Gold-Headed Cane Award. The award consists of two parts: one of two traveling canes which the recipient of the award keeps for a year, and a plaque, which the honoree keeps. **This year, the Council on History elected to honor the outstanding contributions of Norma Rudert (White Cloud, MI, and Daytona Beach, FL) with the Joseph W. Morton Cane** for her contributions as a Trustee and Officer of the Historical Society, as well as her service in the work of editing works of SDB history and her ongoing service heading up the recent Centennial Fund campaign.

## The Crystal Apple Award Winner

Each year, the Christian Education Council recognizes a great Sabbath School teacher. This year, we are proud to honor **Shari Severance, of the Boulder, CO, church as our Crystal Apple Award recipient.** Her church nominated her on the back of the testimony of several members about the impact of her dedicated and loving teaching in their own spiritual growth. We are proud to join the Boulder church in honoring Shari.



*Shari's pastor accepts award for her*

## The roll call vote regarding the proposed change to the Statement of Belief

At General Conference 2016, local churches of the General Conference were asked to prepare for a roll call vote at the 2017 sessions regarding a possible addition to the Conference's Statement of Belief regarding marriage and family. All churches were given the opportunity to cast their votes on the question, either by sending their vote in advance by mail or email, or by casting it on the floor. In addition, churches were given the opportunity to give a justification in writing and/or verbally from the floor (providing it could be given in less than one minute)

along with their vote. After the votes were tabulated, **the motion to amend failed, 56% to 44%** (a 2/3rds majority was required for adoption). Among those churches voting "no" who wished to explain their vote, the sentiments were largely that either (1) the proposed addition did not belong in the Statement of Belief or (2) the proposed addition would present an obstacle to Gospel outreach. **No church who voted "no" and who chose to give an explanation of their vote indicated they thought the Bible was unclear about the nature of marriage.** No additional action surrounding the broader belief was brought to the floor of Conference at this year's sessions.



# Life on Mission:

---

## Relections

There are so many reflections that have passed through my thoughts as I returned home from California. I am so blessed by all of you who could make the trip West and join us at Azusa Pacific University. All things considered, the weather was balanced and not too overbearing. The Tuesday night traditional basketball game blessed us with a gentle breeze and a break in the temperature. By the way, the Pastors won! I also think about the 1,000 to 1,500 universal attendees that joined each day via the internet. That astounded me and was far beyond what I prayed for when thinking of those who just could not attend. Imagine all those people at Azusa!!!! I'm thankful for the work that Jeremiah Owen does to share the experience, move our information out in reachable forms, and provide the opportunity for so many to receive.

Conference was amazing and everything I prayed and dreamed it would be. I'm so thankful for a very present, positive Host Committee who served until there were no more service needs. I watched them tirelessly meet the needs of every request. Thank you to all who served this year with the host team. We were blessed by your gift of time and sacrifice during a very busy event. I can't forget to mention that every year Doug Macintosh, Allen Hauber and Joel Osborn, quietly behind the scenes, make everything sound and look so good. You guys are the best!! My heart thanks you for all you tirelessly do! I don't want to forget all those who worked on special assignments, taught in break-out sessions, worked with the Youth, Young Adult, and Children's Associated Conferences. We have a unique experience to offer at our General Conference event and not one contribution of time, talent, and gifts should go unnoticed! Thank you...

I have prayed that everyone was inspired by the speakers slated at special times for personal growth, blessing, and learning. Dustin Willis' presentation exemplified the meaning of *Life on Mission* and the inspiration for our year-long journey. I'm grateful for his message...for those of you who did not hear it live, it's archived with the conference presentations at <http://bit.ly/SDB2017> ...listen and be influenced by his passion and mission. Alan Briggs' presence was vital and alive with personal engagement and inspiration for a calling that is true and simple. I personally enjoyed every moment of Alan's presence and inviting spirit! Emily Klotz shared from her heart. I'm grateful for all that Emily and her family contributed to our GC event. They gifted us with talents, time and loving presence!

So grateful for Carl Greene and his "multimedia box" filled with surprises and daily messages from Ephesians Chapters 1-4. He opened our eyes to new and engaging ways for our churches to examine the "Pulse" and health of existence. It is only with courage and determination that we take the journey through evaluating "An Autopsy of a Dying Church" and pray diligently for God to open our eyes to the needs and opportunities awaiting us to strengthen the health of our local churches. Thank you for your work throughout the year with the Church Revitalization Task

## LIFE ON MISSION

Touching lives for Jesus

### President's Page

by Patti Wethington

SDB Church, White Cloud, MI

Force and sharing with conviction each day of Conference.

Kevin Butler — What **JoY**! Thank you for how you do what you do! Your "Blasts" were well articulated and I'm sure part of the reason my lungs will never be the same! Thank you for answering the call, creating the moments, and making information fun in "Butler Blast" style. Forever changed by the likes of you!!!

The morning testimonies were timely, heartfelt and personal. Thank you, Dan Richards, Gabe Graffius, Keith Ashley, Dan Klotz and David Fox.

The music was intentional. I asked Jenna Killingbeck to embrace the music and engage our GC participants in worship that was filled with the Spirit of God and prepared our hearts to receive God's spoken word. She took the calling seriously and with the sermon outline and the *Life on Mission* theme, she prayed for months over each song and word spoken. Thank you, Jenna, for hearing and responding to God's calling. Oh by the way....when we got home we found out that she is expecting #3 baby (which she secretly hopes are twins).

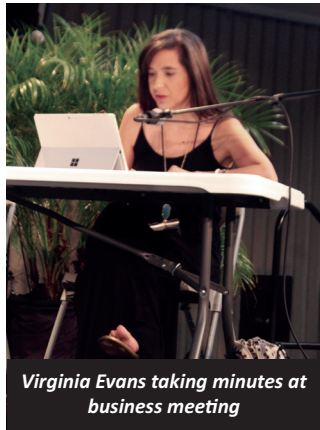
It was truly a blessing to have Charlotte and Don Chroniger sitting in sessions and together. The Choir presentations were such a blessing. Thank you both for willing spirits and serving hearts.

The sermon line-up was everything I prayed it would be. Each night our speakers grabbed the essence of our *Life on Mission* theme, moved us through what it means to have a heartfelt **Encounter** with God, **Equip** us for the work that is waiting to be done, and **Empower** us with a choice to make a difference or move out of the way!!! God will do immeasurably more that we ask or think according to the power that works with in us!!! We must choose to embrace a *Mission* lifestyle and engage with those who are right within our reach!

Thank you Dusty Mackintosh, Andy ("Andymon") Samuels, John Pethtel, Alan Briggs, Gabe Bejjani and my "sandwich" preacher Nathan Crandall who set the stage Sunday night and wrapped it all together Sabbath morning. Forever I will be grateful for your presence and contribution to the message and theme of *Life on Mission: Touching lives for Jesus!* It's what matters most in God's calling.

I know that my life has been changed by this calling and the experience of serving our church in leadership. I have been blessed beyond measure and will forever remember the love and support of all who contributed to General Conference 2016-17 *Life on Mission: Touching lives for Jesus!* SR

## More photos...



Virginia Evans taking minutes at business meeting



Executive Director Rob Appel



Global Missions Supporter Award goes to First Hopkinton

### Fundraising Coordinator Position

**Missionary Society** is currently seeking to hire for a new and exciting position. The position will be responsible for raising funds for a wide range of missions work around the world.

The position will be virtual, full-time with some travel, flexible hours, salary and bonuses. Accountable to meeting expected goals.

Experience preferred in the areas of fund-raising, sales experience, and good writing skills. College degree preferred. Will require someone with a passion for world missions and spreading the gospel.

If you know of someone who has the experience and passion for a position like this, send inquiries and/or resume to Danny Lee at:

[president@sdbmissions.org](mailto:president@sdbmissions.org)

## 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.*



# *Odds and the End!*



Pastors Win!! Pastors Win!! Pastors Win!!



Come on, Patti...it's mine now!



Finishing the Race or just FINISHED??



No one  
will ever  
recognize us!!



Is the week over?

Yes, I think so...



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.



God bless you,  
President Dave Stall



# LESS TALK MORE ACTION

Rev. David Stall, Senior Pastor  
First Hopkinton Seventh Day Baptist

[pastordavestall@gmail.com](mailto:pastordavestall@gmail.com)  
[www.hopkintonsdb.org](http://www.hopkintonsdb.org)

I am thankful and humbled to be your  
Conference President! I understand that  
some of you are concerned.

I wouldn't have chosen me either.



In 2015, as I started my doctorate degree, things came to a screeching halt. During a period of intense spiritual formation, God made it painfully and plainly obvious to me that my ministry calling and activities had already exceeded the limits of my Christian character. I had sin issues, character issues, personal issues, and relational issues that needed fixing. This required a sabbatical, repentance, work, and ongoing accountability. God has been so good to me in this. The last couple of years have been absolutely amazing.



Before I get caught up  
in other things, let me  
mention that I have an  
amazing wife, family, and  
church who are all  
supporting and working  
on this with me. I would  
be lost without them!

I hope you will visit the Seventh Day Baptist "Facebook Livestream" page and check out the installation message. There you will hear all of my acknowledgements and testimonies about how God has worked to bring me to this role. I'm a product of Seventh Day Baptists. I grew up here. SDBs invested a lot in me, at the risk of that not being a good investment. I owe a lot to SDBs. As Christians, (and as SDBs), God isn't calling us to talk about evangelism, church planting, church revitalization, church discipline, missions, education, spiritual disciplines, spiritual gifts... God is calling us to DO them! Less talk. More action.

It seems like God is saying...I need you to stop talking about what it means to be a Christian, and actually do it.



As I crawled out of  
that tough season late  
in 2015, God gave me,  
very specifically, this  
Conference theme. A  
few days later, I was  
asked to be President  
of this Conference.

It seems right that God gave this theme of "Less Talk. More Action" as that is what He has continually asked of me. With moves across the country, and into different ministries, God has spoken and God has called me. My job is always to listen and then follow. God generally doesn't call me into discussions. He calls me to action!

The greatest experiences in my life and ministry were a result of stepping out and acting on faith. So, let's stop talking like Christians, and start living like Christians!



Periodicals postage paid  
at Janesville, WI  
and additional offices

# LESS TALK MORE ACTION

**COMING NEXT SUMMER!!**

Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

July 29 – August 4, 2018

Carthage College  
Kenosha, WI

