Six new pastors were introduced at Conference, they are: Steven Crouch, Little Genesee, NY, and Hebron, PA, churches; John Rau, First and Second Brookfield, NY, churches; Thomas Sostar, Alfred, NY; Robert Van Horn, Farina, Ill.; Rod Henry, missionary to the Philippines; and Gabriel Bejjani, Stanton, CA.

Mr. Stephen Wang, a graduate of Grace High School in Shanghai, China, and Milton College, expresses his happiness at being able to be in America and at Conference. He will be making his new home in Madison-Milton, WI.


CONFERECE SCENES
The Turkey That Wasn't

Irene B. Saunders

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

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One year the Saunders clan gathered at the Westernport parsonage for Thanksgiving. Since some members did not really relish turkey, Grandma Saunders decided we have ham, instead. But being the inculcable romantic that I am, I felt we had to have a turkey. After all, it was Thanksgiving! So with construction paper—head, tail, and wings stuck into the ham, I made a "turkey". Our turkey-pig was well received and everyone was pleased.

It wasn’t really a turkey, just a make-believe one.

How often do we strive for a noble goal of observing Thanksgiving, only to end with a "fake Thanksgiving"?

The Judeo-Christian celebrations are centered around feasting and fun. Do we miss the true fellowship of our families because so much fuss is made in the kitchen? Do pumpkin pies mean more to us than time spent with our children? Is that turkey and giblet dressing taking so much of our time and attention that we are too tired to really appreciate the family gathered around the table? Are we so worried about the cranberry sauce being "just right" that we become irritable with others? Do TV cooking games steal valuable family fellowship times?

Maybe our age-old feast-day traditions are blinding us from the true thankfulness and fellowship we should be experiencing. Is it not the turkey that needs first place on Thanksgiving Day? It is God the Giver who owns our first thought. Let’s feast on the “Bread of Life,” the word of God. Let’s drink the “Living Water,” fullness of Christ’s Spirit.

Our observance of Thanksgiving Day is quite often as fake as that "turkey." The Lord deserves our praise and our thanks every day. However, there is a special day that was set aside by truly thankful Christians many years ago for a time of gratitude-centered thoughts.

Our nation, which was founded on faith in Christ as Savior, Sustainer, and Provider, desperately needs to humbly thank Him as those Pilgrims did.

Second Chronicles 7:14 says, “If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” A prayer before Thanksgiving dinner hardly meets the requirements of this verse. That is a "fake turkey."

If our daily lives do not reflect our gratitude, our prayers will be in vain. There are four commands in that verse:

1) Humble ourselves.
2) Pray.
3) Seek His face.
4) Turn from our wicked ways.

Giving thanks is good, but it is not enough. We must learn what it means in First Samuel 15:22: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of lambs.” And in Hosea 6:6 we read, “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.” Psalm 50 verses 13-15 says, “Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

“Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth” (Hosea 6:1-3).

“Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice” (Psalm 51:8).

Let’s not let the tradition of the feast separate us from our families or from true gratitude. What kind of “vows” and “sacrifice” are acceptable before God? Let’s look at a few:

1) Obedience—1 Samuel 15:22
2) Thanksgiving—Psalm 50:14
3) Mercy—Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13; Psalm 51:16
4) Righteousness—Psalm 4:5
5) Trust in God—Psalm 4:5
6) Joy—Psalm 27:6
7) A broken spirit and a contrite heart—Psalm 51:17
8) Justice and judgment—Proverbs 24:13
9) Love of God and man—Mark 12:32
10) Atonement—Our bodies a living sacrifice—Romans 12:1
11) Praise—the fruit of our lips—Hebrews 13:15
12) Sharing with others—Hebrews 13:16
13) Do good—Hebrews 13:16

Instead of the traditional turkey banquet which requires so much fuss and time, how about a simple meal? That allows time for Bible reading, special sharing in the family, prayer times, games and skits. Our children love to make costumes and put on skits and plays. They enact Bible stories, nursery stories, and history lessons. We have shared thankfulness to God around the table. Starting with the youngest up to the oldest, we thank God for specific things. We have shared in the Lord’s Supper at home, allowing each child to partake and voice his love and thanksgiving to Jesus.

Thanksgiving should be a day of celebration, not just cooking and eating. The Lord inhabits the praise of his people (Ps. 22:3). He, not the turkey, desires and deserves first place at our table.

What a wonderful thing to have a special day to pray, share, and sing...
NATURALLY THANKFUL

Rev. Thomas J. Sostar
Alfred, N.Y.

As a group, we Christians are for the most part the strangest of people. We have formed the habit of thanking God when we are in trouble and we seem to forget to thank Him when things are going well. The Creator, God, in no way brings us into troubled waters in order to hear us give Him thanks. To be honest, He wants just the opposite. It is His purpose that we receive only the best of life—food, shelter, health, job, friends, and associates.

Are you and I really thankful to the living God? Certainly we give thanks for our blessings, but do we really know the overpowering joy and blessing that comes from a daily life of being thankful? What is living daily thankfully? Is it something we need to practice? How do we acquire a special method of being thankful? Or do we?

Paul wrote, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). In his commentary, Adam Clarke writes of this verse, "Therefore every occurrence may be a subject of gratitude and thankfulness. While ye live to God, prosperity and adversity will be equally helpful to you."

Here it would appear that we can have positive assurance, whether those things which appear to be for or against us may work out for our best interest. The living, loving Creator God would not ask us to give thanks for those things which would or could harm us. No, we must first realize and believe that those things which seem to be against us will work out for our good. God is still in charge and it is to Him that we must give thanks.

Example of Daniel

When the presidents, governors, princes, counselors and captains consulted together, they persuaded King Darius to decree a royal statute about worship. Upon hearing that the new decree was in writing and signed, Daniel, "... went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Dan. 6:10).

Something did not need to happen, good or bad. It was not necessary for Daniel to fear the loss of something or to believe that a blessing was to be taken away in order for him to thank God. Too many times we are not thankful until we lose something or for that matter, gain something. Only then do we feel it necessary in our prayer life to give thanks unto God. But not so with Daniel. Daniel prayed as he did aforetime. It was not something he had acquired, or to practice, or a special method, no, it was part of his daily life. "Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loadeth us with benefits." (Psalm 68:19). Our thanksgiving, like Daniel's, should be unceasing, spontaneous, in Christ's name, and God's will on a daily basis.

Giving thanks becomes an empty word and meaningless phrases unless related and directed to our heavenly Father. It is He who is the most generous giver to our world. He, indeed, loads us with benefits. David reminded the Levites that they were appointed "to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even" (1 Chron. 23:30). "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name" (Psalm 100:4). The Bible states that, even our conversation should center on "neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:4). We need to recognize that all of life and all that keeps it does not just happen. It comes, or is allowed, and is controlled by God.

Do you want the utmost from each day? Do you really want to thank and praise God? Do you want each new day to be more meaningful than the day before? "Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving ..." (Col. 2:7). "Give thanks in all things for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (Col. 3:15). If you really want the utmost, allow Jesus to come into your life as Lord and Savior. The choice is yours: when our minds are filled with gloom, sorrow, and disappointment or the joys of Jesus Christ who will fill us with thanksgiving.

God Gives More Than We Deserve

Be thankful in knowing that God is not giving us what we deserve, but rather something better, much better—Himself: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). This thought, this blessing alone, saved through Jesus Christ. To live eternally with Him as Lord of lords, King of kings, as Brother, Keeper, as our All in all and to be able here and now to profess it should put praise and thanks on our lips continually. Don't allow the material and physical blessings that you have cause you to forget God's greatest gift, His only Son, and the salvation that can come only through Him.

Many times as we appraise our situation and position in life, such as job, home, finances, family, bank account, we permit ourselves to become a bit self-righteous. And if we, by chance, hold some office in the church and are doing what we consider our "Christian responsibilities" we may indeed forget from whom all blessings flow. We could possibly become like the Pharisee who went into the temple to pray. He gave thanks, but for himself and what he was and what he had accomplished. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are,..." (Luke 18:11). We need to be careful in this area or we could very easily have the attitude in our prayers that God should thank us for being on His team. We have no grounds for boasting how righteous or good we are. The only goodness our life may show is the reflection or goodness of God who is operating in our lives. Our greatest and greatest efforts would be for nothing if it were not for a loving Father in heaven Who makes us righteous through His Son.

Rejoice and praise the Lord. Give Him thanks. Once you have accepted God's gift to you, let it be reflected in your daily lives. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:19,20).

An Attitude of Thankfulness

Jesus, as Lord and Savior of our life, will bring us into an attitude of thankfulness. He Himself set the example. When in prayer about who was wise among them and the great invitation Jesus prayed, "... I thank Thee, O Father" (Matt. 11:25). At the Last Supper, Jesus, in an attitude of prayer, And He took the cup and gave thanks, "... (John 11:41). In every situation, Jesus gave thanks to the Father. It was a very natural way and part of His life. No method, it was not acquired, but rather came from a heart filled with love, gratitude and obedience. It was unrehearsed, just natural. It was Jesus. And as Jesus fills our lives and dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we shall be of the same attitude. Praise and thanks to God will just naturally flow from our lips because that is what will be in our hearts.

The boat people in the news today, certainly rejoice and give thanks from their hearts for being picked up by larger boats and finding refuge in other countries. They had suffered from over-crowding, sickness, lack of food and water and even lack of care and concern from many (continued on page 23).
In verses 19-21 is a rather unpleasant-sounding list. Some of the items in this list have a very ancient sound to them, especially if we read them in the King James Version: fornication, lasciviousness,嗽ations, revet, strife, se-
ditions. These are like problems that people had in Bible times, but are hardly relevant today. We also notice that some of these things sound so gross and so monstrous that they must be talking about something else. Adultery, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft—well, obviously these don’t have anything to do with us! Perhaps we may conclude that Paul is describing the pagans who surrounded the early Christians. But in verse 21 (which we will look at later) Paul gives a warning in which he says, “I warn you, not ‘I warn them.’ Paul is speaking here of the Christians in Galatia.

I submit that Paul here describes behavior which is all too possible for the believer in Christ. None of us is immune to this kind of living. The Galatians had trouble with these things—Paul had to warn them once before, and now he warns them again—why should we think that we are any better than they?

Paul has lists like this in several of his letters; I found them in Romans, both I and II Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and II Timothy—perhaps there are others. This includes most of Paul’s letters. It would seem that all Christians might fall victim to these things at one time or another. I would ask: can anyone here read this list and find nothing which describes them? I think not.

Notice please that many of these items have to do with relationships between people: hatred, discord, jealousy, dissensions, factions, envy. He describes problems which take place between people—between Christian people. Is it possible that such things take place in our churches? I don’t think I have to answer that.

Perhaps the most basic item of all is the one called selfish ambition, or just plain selfishness. Even as members of the Body of Christ, we find ourselves quite capable of putting our own interests before those of brothers and sisters, and ignoring God’s interests as well. What great difficulty and grief this can cause within the life of the Church; it violates the very nature of the Church.

The question is: Why do we do these things?

Paul explains why in verse 17: “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the spiritual nature; and the spiritual nature is contrary to the sinful nature. But these are two things that are at war with each other.” I think it is all right to believe that there is any other way to experience the abundant life that Jesus promised. A brief passage in Colossians 3 helps us to understand what it is to live according to the Spirit. Paul says, “Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature.” Then in verse 7, he says, “You used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived, but now you must rid yourselves of all such things.”

The gospel says to us: Change the way you live! You used to walk in these ways; now walk in this way: according to the Spirit.

Perhaps it helps us if we can see ourselves at a fork in the road. When we come to a fork, we must choose one way or the other; it does no good to try and live both ways. God asks us to allow His Spirit to control our lives, rather than our sinful nature. George Ladd calls for a life of “sustained decision”: a constant denial of the sinful nature and an equally constant living after the Spirit. This is a day-by-day and even moment-to-moment decision.

If we can do this, we can truly live according to the Spirit, we will begin to experience new results in our lives and in our churches.

The new results which Paul describes are in the second list (verses 22-23): the fruit of the Spirit. As we allow God’s Spirit to control our lives, we will begin to experience the fruit of the Spirit. Now it is that we can see the proper relationship of the fruit of the Spirit to the life of the believer: the fruit is in utter contrast to the works of the flesh, and it is the new result in the life of one who is surrendered to God.

The Ultimate Consequence

Now we come to a very serious matter in verse 21, as Paul gives warning concerning the second consequence, the ultimate consequence. He says in very plain words that those who practice the works of the sinful nature will not inherit the Kingdom of God. This is the ultimate destiny for the person who lives according to the sinful nature. This is the ultimate destiny for the person who lives according to the Kingdom of God. This is the ultimate destiny for the person who lives according to the Holy Spirit. This is true, because as Paul says in Romans 8:9, “to live after the flesh is death.” Paul seems to be very sure of this point, for he repeats it elsewhere. He says in I Corinthians 15:39, “you do not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God?” And again in Ephesians 5:5, “For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is idolatrous in the life of the Kingdom of God and of God.” It does make a difference how we live!

Is there a way out of this hopeless way of living? The gospel of Jesus Christ says, Yes, there is! Paul gives the answer in verse 22. But no—in verse 21 Paul says, “The works of the flesh are self-centered rather than God-centered, and the flesh is myself seeking its own ends in opposition to the Spirit of God.” In our own strength, we strive against the Spirit, and we can only lose such a battle.

This brings us to a consideration of the consequences which result from this situation. I find here in Paul’s discussion two consequences; one is temporary and the other ultimate. This is the conflict between the two natures. It is possible for this conflict to continue throughout our whole lifetime. I have experienced such a conflict many times. The sad part is that as long as we continue to oppose God in this way, very little Christian growth is possible. Is there anyone here who does not see this conflict: the flesh against the Spirit, your own desire against God’s will?

Self-Appraisal Valuable

It is good from time to time for us to examine ourselves to see how we are doing in the Christian faith; the Lord’s Supper celebration is a good time for this. One way to do this is to look and see whether we find evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. These are the sorts of qualities which should be evident in the life of the believer. So by listing the fruit, Paul does not give a command, but a checklist. The command we have already seen in verse 16: live by the Spirit.

We saw earlier that one of the consequences of living after the flesh is the conflict between the two natures. In a very real sense, this same conflict is one of the new results of living by the Spirit. This is one of the great mysteries of the gospel: that even as we allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives, the old sinful nature is ever with us. The conflict between the two natures is possible for this conflict to continue in the Christian experience. We will never in this life be free of temptation, struggle, and tension. But if we can diligently pursue the fruit of the Spirit, we will begin to experience new results in our lives and in our churches.

Many who have studied this passage believe that there is no accident that Love is first on the list of the fruit. Many would put a colon after the word “love”—“the fruit of the Spirit is Love.” Followed by a list of how love is worked out. George Ladd says, “The fruit of the Spirit is nothing but a commentary on the first fruit, showing how love acts.” If this is so, then we see how the fruit is related to our Conference theme of love and discipleship. “All men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love—and all of its fruit—for one another.”

Now we have come full circle, for we are again dealing with personal relationships. The unbeliever will look to see how we Christians get along with each other. If they see the fruit of the Spirit, they will know that we have what they need.

I would make a plea to all Seventh Day Baptist disciples. My plea is not primarily, seek after the fruit of the Spirit; this will come. My plea, along with the command of Paul, is “live by the Spirit.” For it is the one who lives under the control of the Holy Spirit who is a disciple of Christ.
I have been wonderfully warmed this week as so many of you have come up to me and have asked about my family. So I suspect that you will forgive me if I use my family a bit this morning as I share together with you in the meaning of true discipleship. We have a rather unique family, I think. I love my wife and kids.

I have some rules in our family, and one of the rules we have is: when we sit down to the dinner table and begin to eat, nobody talks about the thing that has come to you, not on the table. It’s something we’ve practiced. We’ve talked to our kids about that. One particular thing, several years ago, my son Crouch began complaining about the food. And being the right kind of father, I said, “Brian, you know this food is a gift from God. It’s something very special for us. It’s a gift from God that we should eat with rejoicing.” And his father reiterated the fact that everything we have is a gift from God, especially the food that was on the table at that time. And Brian in his own inimitable way knocked us all over and said, “Yes I know it’s a gift from God and I thank Him for it, but it’s what you did with it that I don’t like.”

My friends, this week we have been sharing together in the meaning that beautiful phrase in the thirteenth chapter of John: “‘By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.’” The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that Jesus came to love and to die and to be our Master and Lord and to give us the privilege of being His disciple. And it may be in essence the tragedy of our lives that we are like Brian. We know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the gift of God, but the tragedy is that people look at us and it’s what we do with it they don’t like. It’s how we share the message that people will either reject or respond. There’s a gentleman here today who had a tremendous impact on my life, because he came to me a long time ago a statement that has determined my lifestyle. He came to me the other day and said, “Herb, I have two deep concerns.” I can’t remember what the second one was because I remember the first one so vividly. He said, “My concern is that there are many people here who don’t know what it means to be a child of God.” And if anything else was more prominently expressed to us it was the letter we had the privilege of reading as we walked from that tremendous sermon Thursday evening, exited out that door and picked up a Cry. And maybe we realized for the first time in this Conference week that the real essence of why we are here is because we are to learn to love one another. I would suspect that that letter caught us by surprise, because it took us from the rather neurotic in way in which we were attending our meetings and going to our programs and doing all the things that we thought were necessary and highlighted for us all at once that the real essence of the Christian gospel is in who we love and in whether or not we touch the lives of other people. We would suspect that that week was more than one who received the wonderful message of the love of God because He loves us and to what their lives mean in the world today. Praise God we have been sensitized once again. And we know again what it really means to be Christians.

**TRULY DISCIPLESHIP**

We have a wonderful privilege, my friends. We have been called to discipleship by our Conference president even before he knew that we were going to challenge ourselves to a Decade of Discipleship. And this morning as we launch this decade— as we come to this point in our lives when we say “yes” to God—as we finally come to that moment when we say “Yes Lord, we know we can do it, we believe you, you’ve given us a mission, we believe you have given us the message and we’re not going to give it in this way that people don’t like what we do with it.” We can rejoice together that this is the time, and we are the people.

Several of us will be sharing with you in the next few months the Decade of Discipleship. We will be considering, first of all, the decision that we have to make, each one of us individually, to be a disciple. And in materials we will share with you is this definition of discipleship: “Discipleship is a lifestyle of practical faith in Jesus Christ and willing obedience to His commands. It is a life of love and good works which aims in all things to glorify God and to help others to also become disciples and witnesses.” I have been reading a book the past few weeks entitled, *The Lost Art of Disciples Making*, by Leroy Emery. He says that discipleship is not an option for the Christian, it is a way of life. And as we come to this point in our lives when we decide to be with Jesus means to change the way we live.

JESUS DRAWNS US CLOSER TO EACH OTHER

But to be with Jesus also draws us closer together. Isn’t that one of the most exciting things you ever heard? To be with Jesus means that we can be with each other. The two relationships are inseparable. If we go to chapters 15-17 of the book of John, read about Jesus’ last supper with His disciples. He came to that table and He loved His disciples as He never loved them before. I don’t know if I could have sat there and looked into His eyes at that moment. I don’t think any of us said “oh, he is a disciple of mine.” He loved His disciples, and He knew that He was going to be leaving them and that they were going to be divided and not from one another. Then He stooped down and washed each one of their feet, loving them beyond anything they could ever imagine. Then in the seventeenth chapter the Lord’s Prayer is recorded. The other prayer that we often speak of as the Lord’s Prayer is really the ‘disciples’ prayer’ but the Lord’s Prayer is the one in John 17. In the twentieth and twenty-first verses are recorded these words: “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, who are all one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in so that the world may know that thou hast sent me.” Oh, how I would love that we could be one together; oh, that we could believe that we were all one. What is it that we receive when we see that we are so much a part of each other that the world will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Bejani who said “It’s how much of Christ or the Spirit I have, but how much of me that is shared with Jesus draws us closer to each other.” “We love because first God has loved us.” To the more we will want to be like Him. Dave Taylor said that people should be the mark of Christians. Have anyone seen the mark of Christ in you recently? Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said we are summoned to an exclusive attachment with His person. But if we’re with Jesus then there’s no covering up who we are. I don’t know about you, but I’ve been feeling rather vulnerable almost every night. I’m so excited. But you know something, at least on the surface I am a real cut up! I mean, I’m a great cover-ups in SDB history. I was so excited standing there in the suit and shirt and Bermuda shorts and tennis shoes. That’s what we saw! If I saw that particular television show you know that he started to step down to show us the size of a small tree and all of a sudden it dawned on him that he had on his Bermuda shorts. When we are with Jesus He knows what we are and He disciplines us as transparent. He allows the door for us to be ourselves. There’s no covering up when we are with those who we really are. Oh, that we might be with Jesus.

**PARTICIPANTS—NOT JUST SPECTATORS**

Turn with me to the eighth chapter of the book of John, and read these words from verses 31 and 32: “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. And by this you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” DISCIPLES ARE PEOPLE OF THE WORD WHO BELIEVE WHAT JESUS SAYS AND OBEY. Disciples are teachable. Dietrich von Wessel Barclay who said “A shut mind is the end of discipleship.” We need to be teachable. We need to believe it; and we need to share it. And that can only happen if we are discipled. We need to be discipled. We need to be discipled. John 10:1 says and we saw that particular evening that Christianity is a relationship with Christ. Do you know that relationship today? Do you know what it means to be with Jesus?

There are three wonderful things about being with Jesus. Steve Crouch on Monday evening talked about the fruits of the Spirit, said, “‘But I have chosen you, and ordained you that you bear much fruit.’” I gave us a reminder that the fruit of the Spirit is really the fruit of Galilee and Judea. When a privilege must have been to have looked into His face and to have felt His hand on our shoulder. But we too can be with Jesus. John Rau told us in his sermon on Thursday evening that Christianity is a relationship with Jesus Christ in the world today. Bejjani who said “We do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, who are all one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in so that the world may know that thou hast sent me.” Oh, how I would love that we could be one together; oh, that we could believe that we were all one. What is it that we receive when we see that we are so much a part of each other that the world will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Bejani who said “It’s how much of Christ or the Spirit I have, but how much of me that is shared with Jesus draws us closer to each other.” “We love because first God has loved us.” To the more we will want to be like Him. Dave Taylor said that people should be the mark of Christians. Have anyone seen the mark of Christ in you recently? Dietrich Bonhoeffer...
Jesus told us in the Great Commission to "go and make disciples." In Acts 1:8 we are told by Jesus to be His "witnesses in Jerusalem, and Judea, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." We cannot sit idly by and keep the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to ourselves. If we are disciples we will be bearing fruit. We have kept that secret for too long. The time has come for us to give the secret away; to let people know that Jesus is Lord. We are called to bear fruit. I was thrilled when our brother Joe Samuels from Jamaica brought us greetings. He told us that the fact that there were so many living that had influenced his life, he called himself a "missionary fruit salad." A missionary fruit salad; oh, that we might each of us bear fruit—have a part in changing the life of someone else. It reminds us of last year's theme, "Bearing the Fruit."

It was Dr. Tozer who told us that true discipleship is reproducing. We cannot be a Christian unless we are reproducing Christians. The essence of our calling as Christians is to bear spiritual fruit, not produce religious nuts. It was Gabe Bejjani who said that "the gifts aren't given for superstar, they are given for the work of the ministry." The gifts are given in order that we might bear fruit. The fruits of the Spirit are given to us in order that we might bear fruit. The Spirit produces fruit in our lives; He's the one that does the job, and we must be the willing vehicles through which His power can work. I have always liked what Elton Trueblood once said: "No one is a Christian unless he is an evangelist or getting ready to be one." And I would paraphrase today to say that "no one is a Christian unless he is a disciple or getting ready to be one." And because we are Jesus' disciples, we bear fruit.

Finally, we read these words from Jesus in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." And it implies a love for one another. It implies the joy that comes when we see something new in the life of Jesus. As John Rau told us love wants to share, and we are reminded of Jesus' two greatest commandments that we are to "love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves." When we came to Adrian we were welcomed royally by the Adrian College staff. And the person who gave us that warm welcome told us about the fact that there was a senior class during the Civil War that wanted to do something that no senior classes had ever done before. They decided to do something special; that it sacrifices something; that it does what it can. It reaches beyond the limitation of words. Love goes beyond any thing that is imaginable. It reaches deep down into the roots of God's love.

Steve Crouch told us on Monday evening that we shouldn't "seek after fruit, but live by the Spirit." The Spirit produces fruit in our lives; He's the one that does the job, and we must be the willing vehicles through which His power can work. I have always liked what Elton Trueblood once said: "No one is a Christian unless he is an evangelist or getting ready to be one." And I would paraphrase today to say that "no one is a Christian unless he is a disciple or getting ready to be one." And because we are Jesus' disciples, we bear fruit.

The Spirit of the New Testament is not one of privacy, nor of personal religious nuts. It is to be a public witness. The Spirit wants to bear spiritual fruit in the life of every person. In the case of the father of the little boy that Jesus fed, He told Jesus that he was to be considered uncircumcised and common. In Peter's case it was a non-Christian Cornelius. In our case, the person could be anybody, including those who can make our spirits tingle and cause us to cry out: "He was a non-Christian to me!" But to God, no man is common. For God so loved the WORLD that He made His Son to die for mankind. I am convinced that we are approaching the end of the world. In just a few days the Father will give Jesus the okay to return for His beloved children. But wait, we have a world of over four billion people and I would guess that about seventy-five percent of them have not given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. I hate to admit it, but many of them are a part of that statistic because you and I have not taken the time to show them the Father.
II Timothy 2:2—"Take the teachings...entrust them to reliable people...to teach others also" (GNB).

Seventh Day Baptists—with faith, determination, and enthusiasm—have launched a Decade of Discipleship.

The decision was made by church delegates attending General Conference in August. During September, plans were reviewed by General Conference members and "polished and perfected" by executives of the boards and agencies (Coordinating Leadership Team).

Then four (4) teams of denominational representatives "fanned out" across the country, from border to border and coast to coast, introducing the concept, explaining and discussing the details, and challenging individuals and churches to action, building on and extending Commitment to Growth.

Thanks to a special 21-day extension fare by one of the nation's airlines, the team contacted at very nominal cost essentially every Seventh Day Baptist Church and group in the country, plus some in Jamaica and Mexico.

Exceptionally good stewardship of the Lord's money (and the teams' energies and time) has been demonstrated, I believe, especially if the discipleship idea now CATCHES ON universally.

As the teams indicated in their presentations, "SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS ARE A DETERMINED PEOPLE. WE HAVE MAINTAINED OUR DISTINCTIVE WITNESS FOR MORE THAN THREE CENTURIES."

In 1976, the beginning of the Commitment to Growth plan of study and dedication to the principles of church growth was evidence of a renewed vitality—a determination to offset a declining membership and face squarely such problems as apathy toward evangelism, failure to raise budgets, a weakening of the Sabbath commitment, a shortage of men and women entering the ministry or answering the call to missions and a breakdown in communication among denominational organizations and churches.

Stepping Out in Faith

In 1979, the introduction of the Decade of Discipleship provides validation that Seventh Day Baptists intend now to capitalize on the fact that "we have witnessed growth within the body, new churches rising from surprising roots, and the desire of many to step in faith, trusting in the Almighty God."

Members of the presenting "teams" were quick to admit that they are not fully experienced yet in all phases and techniques of either church growth or discipleship. But they are all convinced by personal observation and utilization that the materials recommended for use by our church people, during the Decade of Discipleship, can be exceedingly helpful to us as individually and collectively strive to make the Great Commission really central in our lives—to make DISCIPLESHIP A LIFE-STYLE.

We have learned "the interdependence between nurture, extension, and ministry in producing mature, reproducing Christians through FullCircle Evangelism."

We have gained "a new awareness of the value goal-oriented planning."

We have discovered that "setting goals provides direction, determines priorities, and allows us to evaluate our progress."

In short, the proposed activities will help us to get from where we are now to where we want to be. Having been changed by "Commitment to Growth," it is time for us to take the next step; it is time to dedicate ourselves to a "Decade of Discipleship."

Called To Glory God

As Seventh Day Baptists, we are called to glorify God and please Him in every way (Colossians 1:10).—General Conference theme for 1980. This is done as we fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord. Our intermediate objective is to discover and fulfill our mission—a commitment to growth. This means specific growth goals—for us as individuals, for our churches, and for the ministry that we have to the world.

Therefore, the 1979 General Conference adopted as its goal for the 1980's, to "double in a decade."

This means by 1990 we will have:
- DOUBLED the number of United States
- DOUBLED the number of churches
- DOUBLED the active participation in worship and Sabbath School
- DOUBLED our pastoral and lay leadership
- DOUBLED our missionary activity
- DOUBLED our commitments to serve and give
- DOUBLED the body and its activity in all significant ways in ten years.

To accomplish this goal, General Conference approved a schedule for the 1980's in which the first year will be an introductory year, and the next nine years will emphasize in 3-year cycles—nurture, extension, and ministry.

Decision to Discipleship

Individual study of the discipleship role and acceptance of the denominational goal will be stresses in 1980. Some specific materials are recommended for study during this year—Discipleship or Discipleship materials from Light and Life Men International.

"I believe that Discipleship is the answer for our churches today," stated Eldon Babcock, Director of Discipleship for Light and Life Men International.

"Disciples in extension" will emphasize church extension and planting, both nationally and internationally, emphasizing reproduction of Christians and churches.

"Disciples in ministry" will center on the ministries of service, worship, and fellowship, centering on the reaching out to others in service and stewardship.

Individual churches, and individual Seventh Day Baptists, are urged to adopt their own goals in keeping with the overall denominational goal and with resource support from the boards and agencies.

Seventh Day Baptists can do it: we can reach our goal—even surpass it—if we truly dedicate ourselves to a decade of growth through discipleship.

This is a workbook with twelve lessons based on Scripture with probing questions, and exercises designed to help make personal applications of the lesson.

"The Meet The Master" is designed to be used for personal study or for Youth and Adult Sabbath Schools, Youth Groups or Bible Study groups.

The board has a copy to loan for examination; if it is to be studied over a period of time, copies may be purchased for about $3.95 per copy from: Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, NJ 07675.
WITNESSING DISCIPLES

Present-day Christians are concerning themselves about witnessing the Christ to others. There is a certain amount of frustration because many do not know the best way to convey their beliefs. To meet the need of knowing how, where, and to whom to witness, persons experienced in the field have written several books on the subjects.

The Board of Christian Education, Inc., has in its lending library several books which would be useful for group or individual study. We would be happy to loan books for a month or more to any who are interested.

The Master Plan of Evangelism
Robert E. Coleman

In the preface, Paul Stromburg Rees says, "It is the conviction, grounded in the Good News that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,' that makes evangelism more than a theory or a slogan, it brings to focus as a necessity.

"Under the title, The Master Plan of Evangelism, Asbury Seminary's Professor of Evangelism, Robert E. Coleman, has presented a set of principles and sketched a scheme which, if studied and shared, could turn toward the rescue of the evangelism from the realm of the 'special' and 'occasional', and encourage where it belongs in the essential, on-going life and witness of the congregation.'

How To Give Away Your Faith
Paul Little

This book gives instructions on how to witness. It is Christ-centered, practical, relevant, Biblical and authoritative; written by a man who has had year of experience as director of Evangelism for Inter-Varsity Fellowship.

You Can Witness with Confidence
Rosalind Rinker

Do you know how to bring your family or friends to Christ? Rosalind Rinker tells how it can be done. She shares her love for Christ and has written a continuous story of how she learned to witness, not only to friends and family but also to strangers. Through her experiences, others can learn to share their faith in God and Jesus.

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God
J. I. Packer

Only the faith that God has: Divine sovereignty gives Christians the strength to carry out the command to witness. The design of this book is to clarify the relationships between three realities: God’s sovereignty, man’s responsibility, and the Christian’s evangelistic duty.

Going Public with One’s Faith
R. James Ogden

This is a study of seven persons in the Bible who taught a new vision of God and demonstrated courage in their response to Him.

In conclusion, Mr. Ogden says: "At the heart of an evangelistic life style is a person who has been grasped by the power of God's love seen in that new vision which was and is Jesus Christ.

"Do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so have I sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be one in truth."

John 17:14-19 RSV

"An evangelistic life style is a journey whose destination is a hope beyond hope.

"Those who are on the journey constantly invite others to join them. They tell and retell the story of the journey—its point of origin, its destination, its vision—and what has happened to them along the way. To experience and express and evangelistic life style is to go public with one’s faith—openly speaking a word of love and Good News."

Guide to Evangelism
Paul E. Little, and others

Christianity is not a spectator sport.

"Christianity, as someone said, has never been a spectator sport. Every Christian believer is a part of the body of Christ which represents God to the world. And every believer is called to be like it or not—a witness of one sort or other concerning what God is like.

"This book is the collected wisdom of several people who have had experience front of them in association with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in sharing the gospel and training others to do so.

"The principles are easily adaptable to a church program or to a situation in which you are studying and practicing evangelism."

Linda Dolf, Editor, HIS magazine (foreword to Guide to Evangelism)

A Study Manual: They Meet the Master
Robert E. Coleman

In this book, twelve general sub-jects of initial evangelism are selected for analysis. Each lesson seeks to focus one situation for in-depth study. You are asked to read carefully the Scripture passage, then answer some probing questions about the narrative. If it seems you would review a few other incidents that have some similarity or striking contrast. The comparisons help sharper perspective.

THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN Education is very thankful for the dedicated directors and staff of its Conference and Conference activities sponsored by the board. Each of the directors report good experiences in situations in which they were able to participate a time to draw away from the secular world to a place where the emphasis is on spiritual well-being.

FAMILY CAMP, directed by Dorothy Parrott, was a time of relaxation, a time to make friends, a time to learn. Bible study concerning personal relationships with Rev. Paul Osborne, led to meaningful discussions. As usual with Seventh Day Baptist music, music was an important part of the program; Paul Green was the worship leader.

REV. KEN CHRONINGER, Young Adult Pre-Con director, had a well-balanced program. Several classes examined the Scripture references concerning Christian love.

The participants had an opportunity to study with Dr. Paul Basset from the Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City. Together they explored the Holy Spirit through history and its relevance in lives today. Dr. Basset had become informed about Baptist positions and his lectures were within that concept.

MANY OF OUR YOUTH are seeking to learn what the Lord wants for their lives. According to the director, Stephen Thornapple, this desire to learn was the factor which made Youth Pre-Con successful. Their classes centered on Gifts of the Spirit, Understanding the Work of the Holy Spirit, and Prayer.

Seven of our youth and families were visited by a Seminary student. They were asked to spend an hour in prayer and song, and were invited to return for one more visit.

Learning the message and music of 'Soulful' under the direction of Lisa Thorton was an important part of their program. This musical was presented as a vesper service at General Conference.

November 1979

ASSOCIATED CONFERENCES continue to be popular with the children and youth. The Kindergarten Preschool, Primary and Junior Classes, directed by Donetah Richards, Genny Stromburg and Yvonne Stephen respectively, worked together with 'Sing a New Song.' The music which accompanied the lessons was presented at the sharing program Sabbath afternoon. Craig Mix directed the program assisted by Rev. Paul Green who taught Primary music.

REV. LARRY GRAFFIS, di­rector of Senior High Associated Conference kept the group interested and well-occupied with a good balance of spiritual and fun activities. Of particular interest was the seminar on Mate Female Roles by Rev. Dale and Janet Thorgate. Equally popular was the day-long excursion to Detroit by the youth who had attendance at class requirements.

Because the majority of senior high age youth attending General Conference go to the classes, Senior High Associated Conference will be continued.

The Youth Ministries Committee has set the following objectives and program suggestions for Senior High Associated Conference:

The objectives of Senior High Associated Conference:

1. Experience personal spiritual growth.
2. Become interested and involved in General Conference program.
3. Become aware of Seventh Day Baptist influence on peers in society.
4. Learn something about community (surrounding area) in which General Conference is being held.
To reach one or more objectives the program might include:
1. Bible study and group worship on Youth Level.
2. Taking part in interest groups, workshops, and/or seminars of General Conference.
3. Meet other youth in a situation in which they are comfortable.
4. Discussion of social problems.
5. Formal and informal singing.
6. Excursion to point of interest near General Conference location.
7. When possible, include one or more persons from Youth Pre-Con staff on Associated Conference staff.
8. Use a variety of speakers, leaders, and methods of teaching in the program.

We are pleased to announce that Donetah Richards of the Marlboro, N.J., church has consented to take the Junior High class in 1979 and that Rev. Larry Grifis, White Cloud church, will again direct the Senior High class.

And, now, we have each returned to the secular world from the hilltop experiences of Associated conferences, of Pre-Con and General Conference. We are different persons from the ones who left home in early summer; different because each new experience promotes growth.

Renter into the "real" world is sometimes difficult. The initial steps for 1979 have already been taken—but the process continues. We meet our peers who may not understand the change which has come about. We forget to practice the truths we have learned.

Families can lessen the shock of reentry and reinforce these experiences by recalling the summer activities, listening to each other's stories, learning the songs, and discussing the problems and lessons learned. Teachers and group leaders can encourage their classes to continue studying the questions raised in the summer classes.

Let us not let the experiences of the summer become beautiful memories. These should be brought home from which we may leap into the ongoing work for God and His Kingdom.
A Modern Parable

The Sabbath Recorder

November 1979

There was a general stirring when one first caught vision of the land ahead. We knew we were on our way to expanded opportunity. There were renewed preparations for the trip ahead, but those who were familiar with the method we were traveling knew that there is considerable time between vision and arrival. So some of us went back to anacrostics of committees, ciphers of communications, and number problems of O.W.M. 

Once within the harbor our craft maneuvered around to its berth and the journey could be continued at a faster pace. Some were discouraged that our trip had been made on a craft named after our "Spartan" budget; others rejoiced that we had not been on the sister ship "Badger" with its propensity for digging holes and burying itself in the ground. Some, like the little boy, never realized that we had been on a journey. For many, the journey across the water was merely a means of getting from one side to the other and all that transpired was merely an interlude which had to be passed. A considerable number, however, recognized that while there was a goal to be reached, the journey itself was an enriching experience and that we were not the same people who boarded the vessel. We had been changed by our vision of a portion of God's creation unmarked by the familiar landmarks of man's creation.

At this Conference session, I would like to be able to say we have reached the harbor beyond the breakwaters, but as I leave the Council after having served my term, I will not abandon the ship, and the voyage itself has been an enriching experience.

Postscript:

Weeks have passed since this Conference session. Some of my expectations concerning the journey were not materialized as I had anticipated. We may have arrived at a different port, but we have not abandoned the ship nor the goal. Reorganization is not dead, for in the very process of the past few years we have been changed. We have looked at problems, we have analyzed past and present situations, and we believe we have taken a number of corrective steps with changed attitudes which can help us meet new challenges.

Some have sought surgery and at one time I felt that surgery was needed. Not long ago I was sure that a "Boardectomy" was required in order to hoist anchor and get full circle ministry and full circle administration full speed ahead. But I believe that a miracle drug has been injected into the ailing parts of the denominational body, and that miracle drug is named "The Holy Spirit." I saw things happening on the General Council and in the interest committees and in personal conversations which affected my vote.

The journey may not have changed some of the structures, but I know that it has changed some people and some attitudes. If this same experience can be shared throughout the whole body of our church through an injection of the Holy Spirit we can have full circle ministry which will carry us toward our ultimate goal of making reproducing Christians in every one of our present churches and those yet to be born.

Get Moving

A certain denomination received a call from God to get moving and carry out its mission of proclamation of the gospel to the world. Several choices lay ahead as to how to proceed: one if by tradition—two if by committee and boards—three if by full-circled government. After careful consideration of costs, personnel, and interest, it was decided to go by full circle. Arriving at the Conference port of call at the appointed hour less one as demanded by our bylaws, we discovered that there was a delay at the Conference sessions plus one, two or three and more. There was an ear-shattering blast of the mimeograph and offset press, we launched through the channels to the deeper waters outside our sheltered harbor.

Many Seventh Day Baptists aboard immediately to the lounge area, slumped into padded pews, and spent the time in a business as usual posture. After all, if too many got out on the deck to catch the vision of such an expanse of God's world, it might rock the boat! Some did gather on the afterdeck to watch the shoreline recede, conscious only of where we have been and how it has always been done before. A few circled the deck to take in all of the wonders of the journey.

In time we were out into the open waters with none of the familiar landmarks in sight. Only by looking at the SON—spelled with an "O"—could we be certain that we were headed in the right direction. So there was confidence that in the wheelhouse there was a chart and communication with a harbormaster.

A certain member of the General Council heard a call to "come over into Michigan to help us." Three choices lay ahead of him for travel: one if by land—two if by sea—and three if by air. After careful weighing of costs, frustrations of gas and traffic, the second alternative was chosen: travel by sea. Arrival at the Port of Milwaukee was made by the required hour of departure less one, only to find the boat arrived at the hour of departure plus one. After numerous delays, the vessel gave its ear-shattering blast and headed through the channel into the open waters of Lake Michigan.

Many passengers headed immediately for the lounge area so as not to lose an episode of a favorite soap opera, but as the sun overhead could one look at the sun overhead to gain the horizon. After numerous delays, the vessel gave its ear-shattering blast of the mimeograph and headed through the channel into the open waters of Lake Michigan.

Arrival at the harbor was clearly discerned.

Once within the harbor at Ludington an anchor was dropped, the stern was powered around and the C&A ferry named "Spartan" slowly backed into its berth beside its sister ship, the "Badger." A final look on its horn announced to all that destination had been reached; the unloading of cars and riders began and we sped away to offset press, we launched through the channels to the deeper waters outside our sheltered harbor.

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Given at the meeting of General Council at Battle Creek, Michigan—August 1979 by Rev. Don A. Sanford
“Be It Ever So Humble...”

Humble, then, is a place where there is new life. It is the place where one is born, though in these modern times, it is not uncommon for a child to be taken place in a hospital. It is the place where a newly married couple begin their lives, a place where a single person establishes his or her own lifestyle.

Likewise, in our church home there is new life, new birth. It is recorded in the Scriptures, that when Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.

There is baptism, covenant, commitment and redemption. Many of you were "born" spiritually in this church; others covenanted to establish a new life here; many of you have rededicated your lives at the altar here. Yes, many call this "home," because in some sense this was their birthplace.

A home is a place where there is growth. Home is the place not only where you were born, but also where you were raised. At home we are not only taught, we are guided; not only corrected, but forgiven.

The church is a place of nurture, too. If you were acquainted with Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught.

But most of all, home is shelter.

Another story about the author of "Home, Sweet Home," John Howard Payne, relates that he was walking with a friend in the great city of London, and "pointing to one of the aristocratic streets in Mayfair, where wealth and luxury had the windows closed and curtained lest the least warmth and light should go to waste, or the smallest air of cold winter come in, where isolated exclusive English comfort was guarded by a practical dragon of gold, he, this tiny man with a big heart, said: 'Under those windows I composed the song of 'Home, Sweet Home,' as I wandered about without food, or a semblance of shelter. I could call my own. Many a night since I wrote those words that issued out of my heart by absolute want of home have I passed and repassed in this locality, and heard a sweet voice coming from within these gilded, fur-lined, comfortable walls in the depth of a dim, cold London winter warbling 'Home, Sweet Home,' while I, the author of them, knew no bed to call my own.'

Nur is the shelter of home only physical. Home is "the only spot on earth where the faults and failings of fallen humanity are hidden under the mantle of charity." It is "where the great are small, and the small are great." "The one place in this world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded and suspicious coldness which the world forces us to wear in self-defense, and where we pour out the unserved communications of full and confiding hearts. It is the spot where expressions of tenderness push out without any qualification of awkwardness, and without any dread of ridicule."

And so for the church, for Jesus said, "And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you love one for another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples."

Our birthplace behooves. The place where we grew up calls us. But it is probably to the place of refuge and rest that we return.

"Going home," said Walter Cronkite, "has a meaning more poignant than perhaps any other phrase in our language. It is first spoken with true feeling by the child just turned loose for his playpen to explore the wide world of the next-door yards. His first crushing experience with disappointment or anger, or physical hurt brings a rushing torrent of emotion that ends with a tiny voice piping, 'I'm going home.'"

Oh, as Robert Frost put it: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

In the Bible we read: "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger one said to him, 'Father, give me my share of the property now.' So the man divided his property between his two sons. After a few days the younger son took his road out of the part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over the country, and he was left without a thing. So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat."

At last he came to his senses and said, "All my father's hired workers have more than I can eat, and here I am about to starve! I will get up and go to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.'" So he got up and started back to his father.

"He was still a long way from his home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' But the father called to his servants, 'Hurry! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it.' and said, 'Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' And so the feast began."

Perhaps none of us had to "come to our senses"; perhaps none of us were lost, or dead; but I venture to say that we readily echo the words of the poet: "There's no place like home!"

Welcome home!

Let the feast begin! ©

The Sabbath Recorder

November 1979
PHILIPPINES: A visa has been granted the Henrys! Praise the Lord! They continued to visit local SDB churches on the Pacific Coast during October, attended the PCA sessions in Riverside and planned to leave for service in Asia by November first or before. Remember them in prayer.

MEETING PLACES! One of the needs of any new group is an adequate meeting place. Some use member’s homes. Others use church buildings belonging to other denominations. With the need to minister in a definite community, finding the “right spot” takes time, faith, perseverance and prayer. Missionary Pastor churches in North, Jersey, Blountville, TN; Bay Area, CA; Stanton, CA; Houston, TX; and perhaps others are seeking to meet such need in these months. Pray for them and their leaders!

BRAZIL: “A whole separate church in the city of Cricara, State of Ceara, with about 200 members united with us!” During the first quarter evangelistic ministries Bro. Nivaldo Schuemann and Jose Ribeiro traveled nearly 4,000 miles in three states on three trips covering 31 days. They visited 17 churches/groups, 5 of which were new. One church was dedicated. They preached 29 times and spoke with 43 interested individuals, made 38 missionary visits, led in 15 Bible studies, and has as a goal the organization of a new church. Their missionary society and the new Field Pastor/Church Planter, John H. Camenga, will spend several weeks visiting groups and individuals. Pastor Camenga, will be on this field and in Eastern Tennessee, as well as serving as half-time Missionary Pastor of the new church at Blountville, TN.

THE CAROLINAS: During November Director of Evangelism Myron G. Soper and the new Field Pastor/Church Planter, John H. Camenga, will spend several weeks visiting groups and individuals. Pastor Camenga, will be on this field and in Eastern Tennessee, as well as serving as first half-time Missionary Pastor of the new church at Blountville, TN.

DECEMBER 1979

PRAY FOR:

1. Strength to serve Him for another month
2. David and Betty Pearson as they become acquainted with the brethren in California
3. Workers in the Denominational Building at Plantfield
4. Brazil evangelism project and the workers there
5. Those who will be involved in the Christmas programs in your church
6. TBD Memorial Fund as it seeks to administer gifts entrusted to it
7. Sabbath School teachers and workers, dedicated to training our children
8. Pastors around the world as they speak the words which God has given them
9. Executive Secretary K. D. Harden as he works with the various Boards and Agencies
10. The work of Pastor Aidae in Juarez, Mexico
11. Meno and Audrey Fuller and the ongoing medical work in Malawi
12. Your Missionary Society as it seeks to raise funds necessary for 1980
13. The youth in our churches—do you pray that each of the youth will become a part of the church?
14. The children in Guyana who were reached by the camping program
15. Churches that they share their ministry of music
16. Mary Clare and the Board of Education in their ongoing mission
17. The work bring on by Jin Jun Kim, our brother in Korea
18. The work of Darlene McCall, TBD SDB Church in India
19. TBDs in Burma and their Executive Secretary
20. Denny Barejo, the blind missionary in the Philippines
21. The Ekal Family in India and the work of the TBD Conference
22. Members of new churches in this country and around the world
23. Folks who will travel “home” this week for the holidays
24. Young people considering the ministry as a missionary-calling
25. We love you Jesus—Happy Birthday!
26. The Great Commission is to live for Jesus
27. Red and Lurlie Henry as they follow up with the folks in the Philippines
28. Pastors around the world who are hungry for spiritual food—do you want it for yourself?
29. Sabbath rest and peace for a weary world
30. Field Pastor/Church Planter John Camenga and the new work to which they have been sent and pray for them and their family as they seek to carry out His work for the coming year.

A Prayer Reminder for Each Day!!

1979 CONFERENCE THEME—

All people seem to have a common yearning for purpose in life. Today, an obsession to please one-self and be free from things and experiences that feel good drives many people. Others never find their own identity because they are caught up in trying to please everyone else around them. Both of these pursuits eventually leave a person completely empty, echoing Ecclesiastes’ comment, “All is vanity!”

The Christian message declares that all persons were created to have fellowship with God and that life is meaningful when it please God. The only answer to the yearning for purpose is, “pleasing Him in every way” (Colossians 1:11-12). This goal for life lifts one above self-seeking, and above following the crowd, to a relationship with God in Christ. By God’s Holy Spirit, a person is enabled to live a lifestyle acceptable to the God who made us—not by legalism or by permissive lawlessness, but by a lifestyle patterned after Jesus’ own life and teachings and with attitudes and actions that the Word of God declares are pleasing to Him. This captures all one’s imagination and encourages the development of a lifestyle that would live every part of life “Pleasing God in Every Way”!

I hope that every Seventh Day Baptist in North American will devote time to meditate on what “Pleasing God in Every Way” means to him or her. This may call for new and different lifestyles for all of us. It will influence our actions at home and at work, and hopefully will revitalize our churches. As we enter the “Decade of Discipleship” 1980-1990, that was voted at Conference, with a goal of “doubling in a decade” in every area of our work and witness, the theme “Pleasing God in Every Way” can be a focus for our attitudes and actions. I would like to encourage each individual and all our churches to commit self and church to areas of Bible study, prayer, ministry of service and witnessing this year, as four areas of “Pleasing God.” Let us know how this goal affects your own lifestyle and those around you during this Conference year!”

Rev. Duane L. Davis
Conference President
A Prayer Reminder for Each Day!

DECEMBER 1979

PRAY FOR:

1. America to win film for another month
2. David and Bethie Pearson as they become acquainted with the brethren in Japan
3. Workers in the Dehumanized Building at Plantfield
4. Brazil evangelist project and the workers there
5. Those who will be involved in the Christmas programs in some church
6. SMSM Memorial fund as it seeks to administer gifts entrusted to it
7. Sabbath School teachers and workers, dedicated to training our children
8. Pastors around the world as they speak the words which God has given them
9. Iwo Egon Christian D. Harris as he works with the various Board and
10. The work of Pastor Adams in Juarez, Mexico

THE CAROLINAs: During November Director of Evangelism Minor G. Seoper and the new Field Pastor Church Planter John H. Carter will spend several weeks visiting groups and individuals. Pastor Carter will be on this field and in Eastern Tennessee, as well as serving as half-time Missionary Pastor of the new church at Blountville, TN.

CUT BACK: Funds for New Fields—Burma, India, Mexico, The Philippines, may be cut back during the last quarter of 1979 depending on the level of Sabbath School Mission Offerings (SSMO) and other designated gifts for New Fields. When New Field Ministry was begun a few years ago it was decided that their support would carry on designated gifts. In 1979, for the first time, these have failed to meet the need and a limited reserve has been used. Does your church part-remember in SSMO? About half do. A special offering is needed NOW!

PHILIPPINES: A visa has been granted the Henrys! Praise the Lord! They continued to visit local SDB churches on the Pacific Coast during October, attended the PCA sessions in Riverside and planned to leave for service in Asia by November first or before. Remember them in prayer.

BRAZIL: A whole independent church in the city of Cratoes, State of Ceara, with about 200 members united. During the first quarter evangelistic ministry missions Bro. Nivaldo Schuennemann and Jose Bicierro traveled nearly 4,000 miles in three states on three trips covering 31 days. They visited 17 churches, groups, 5 of which were new. One church was dedicated. They preached 29 times and spoke with 43 interested individuals, made 38 missions visits, led in Bible studies, and recorded 35 decisions for Christ. This was in the south. Their second quarter is being spent in northern and western states of Brazil.*

* MEMPHIS, TN: Plans are being laid for organization of a new SDB church, possibly on November 17. A branch of Christ's SDB Church, Little Rock, AR, the Memphis group has grown dramatically in the last few months under the leadership of Church Extension Pastor Bill Shofer (part-time bivocational worker). This is only a beginning! But it is one in which we need to join the brethren with praise, thanksgiving and supportive prayer.

MEXICO: A new evangelistic outreach began last month in Juarez (the border city across from El Paso, TX) with Pastor Eugenio Alvarado leading. There have been interested individual and isolated members in this area for some time but this effort seeks to reach new people and has as its goal the organization of a new church. Your Missionary Board with SSSM funds is matching contributions from Mid-Continent SDB Association churches to support this ministry.

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BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

EVE RYONE IS INTERESTED in peace, we are told, but few are interested in following the Bible injunctions to “seek peace and pursue it.” Yet Jesus’ words and example would lead us in the way of the “peacemaker.” So, at our Seventh Day Baptist Conference in Adrian, Michigan, an attempt was made to put words to what we might think led into our Lord’s path to peace. After prayer and earnest discussion, a resolution was passed that seems to us to fulfill the Lord’s commands.

First of all, we are to follow His call to “preach the gospel to all the world” beginning at Jerusalem. Men’s hearts must be changed from hate and fear to trust in God and following Jesus’ command to “love one another” even our enemies. This love leads us even, “pray for those who despitefully use you.” One way we are called upon to do this is to bow our heads and pray for those who are in need. These are to be held under the same requirements as individuals. That includes the requirement to follow Jesus’ teachings on forgiveness and love will turn our enemies into becoming friends and co-workers.

Then there is something that we all are called upon to do. In our democratic country, we can influence legislation toward peace. We can write letters to our Congressmen and public officials to “promote the cause of peace throughout the world.”

Thus the resolution unites two great aims in which the Seventh Day Baptist denominations can and should be engaged: evangelization and Christ’s call to peace. They help each other and neither is complete without the other. And both are helped by obedience to the Sabbath law. If we are to have a “Decade of Discipleship,” let it be built upon these things—loyalty to the Sabbath, dedication to the cause of Christ, and willingness to devote ourselves to the cause of peace throughout the world.

Conference Peace Resolution

We call on all Christians who are war and its attendant practices of: (1) destruction, and (2) war that, as Christians, we should work to end this evil, and alleviate its effects if it should occur.

We do feel, however, that the only final answer to the age-old problem of war is to change the minds and hearts of people and nations through the world. We can be finite only by carrying out the Great Commission given to all Christians by our Lord Jesus to spread the gospel to all peoples.

All Christians, together, should support, work, and pray for adoption of public policy which can realistically reduce the likelihood of war. We affirm the belief that God does work in the affairs of nations as well as churches and individuals. All Christians and citizens should support and influence our Congressmen and Presidents to continue their efforts to avoid war and promote the cause of peace throughout the world.

Rev. Paul S. Battrick

THE LINK

"You heard it here first."
by Barb Snyder

Pardon me for not communicating the last two months. Headquarters is buzzing with hustling workers. You people sure do drive me nuts one week in a row, and we also get behind being gone for a week. I’m sure you’ve had a lot of fun filling in the brim with Conference, but I can’t help but praise the Lord for the wonderful spiritual diet available that week to those hungry for God’s word.

I feel strongly moved to promote our next speaker, Barb Snyder from Conference for both adult and youth discussion, Sabbath School, Bible study, or whatever. I will offer for loan, tapes with sermons on each of the themes for Conference week. For example, your Sabbath School could discuss Spiritual Gifts and borrow tapes with three sermons, one by Rev. Russell Johnson, at Prayer and Song, and two by Daniel Bejani and one by Dr. James Tozer. This would include all Scriptural references and questions for discussion. Personally, as Sound Studio technician, will prepare these and pray that the Holy Spirit is guiding me correctly in putting together such preparation. I hope you’ll see the potential and take advantage of this opportunity. The theme topics include: the Fruit of the Spirit, the Head of the Lord, Spiritual Gifts, Witnessing and Obedience (only two sermons) and The True Discipleship (only one sermon). These will be available anytime after Dec. 1. There will be an unlimited supply. Write to:

Barb Snyder
Sound Studio
510 Watchung Avenue, Box 868
Plainfield, NJ 07061

Religious art is needed for the Sabbath Recorder, tracts, and other publications. If you would like to submit your illustrations for our file, please send to: Mrs. Patricia Cruzan, Art Director, Seventh Day Baptist Publishing House, Box 868, Plainfield, NJ 07061. Please indicate if you want your work returned to you.

The Sabbath Recorder

November 1979

NATURALLY THANKFUL

(continued from page 51)

VINS: RELEASE

(continued from page 30)

northern Yakutia, nearly to the Arctic Circle, Vins said. “The frost reached 62 degrees Celsius,” he said. He said that he was constantly watched by authorities and surrounded by informers. “The authorities were worried I would convert the other prisoners. When I talked to a prisoner and then he prayed, he would be transferred to another prison.”

Vins’ visits from his family were infrequent during his imprisonment because he was 6000 kilometers from them. “When they did come we had one day together. The KGB recorded the meetings, including all the most intimate words we uttered,” he said.

Vins said that his living conditions “improved radically” when the U.S. Congress began to give publicity to his case in 1976. He was given hospital care and his diet was improved.

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed a concurrent resolution that year calling for Vins’ release. Introduced by Southern Baptist John H. McCuen, R-N.C., the resolution began to focus world wide attention on the Russian pastor.

Vins told the committee that he was convicted because he maintained contacts with the Christian printing press, organized Sunday school classes for children, and made public the torture and death of a Soviet soldier in 1973.

“My actions were not criminal but purely religious in nature,” Vins said. “Because we are successful and have many new believers, the authorities conduct these activities anyway against us.”

Vins expressed his dream for the future when he said, “I would like in the final analysis to return to my homeland and preach the gospel freely. That is my prayer.”

(Radio Public Affairs)

"Our commitment to God’s Sabbath continues to be a mark of His sovereignty in our country and of His sovereignty in our lives," said Dr. Edward J. Horsley.

THE TURKEY THAT WASN'T

(continued from page 35)

be as fake as “the turkey that wasn’t.” It’s not the MEAL—it’s the message—Jesus died for me.

It’s not the TURKEY—it’s the TALK—FAMILY REUNION.

It’s not the EGG NOG and CIDER—it’s the HOLY SPIRIT out-poured and the LIVING WATER.

It’s not the HOMEMADE BREAD—it’s the LIVING BREAD, the BREAD of LIFE broken for us.

It’s not the CRABBERNY SAUCE—it’s the BLOOD OF CHRIST shed for forgiveness and healing and deliverance from evil spirits and guilt.

It’s not the PUMPKIN PIE—it’s the PRaise and THANKS we can offer—a true sacrifice.
and fear to trust in God and following Jesus' command to 'love one another' even our enemies. This love leads us to even 'pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us.' Even nations are to be held under the same requirements as individuals. That includes the requirement to 'love.' Jesus' teachings on forgiveness and love will turn our enemies into becoming friends and co-workers.

Then there is something that we all are called upon to do. In our democratic country, we can influence legislation toward peace. We can write letters to our Congressmen and public officials to 'promote the cause of peace throughout the world.'

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We affirm that as Christians we are opposed to war and its attendant killing, destruction, and suffering, and that, as Christians, we should work to avert this evil, and alleviate its effects if it should occur.

We do feel, however, that the only final answer to the age-old problem of war is to change the minds and hearts of people and nations throughout the world, and this can be done only by carrying out the Great Commission left to all Christians by our Lord Jesus—to spread the gospel to all peoples.

All Christians, together, should support, work, and pray for adoption of the public policy which can realistically reduce the likelihood of war. We affirm the belief that God does work in the affairs of nations as well as churches and individuals. As Christians and citizens we should urge and influence our Congressmen and President to continue and increase their efforts to avert war and promote the causes of peace throughout the world.

-Rev. Paul S. Burdick

**VISOR RELEASE**

"The Aged" (Article 1701)" (Visit Mr. John Doe, 268 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10010, to learn about the care of the elderly and the role of the family in society.)

Avis expressed a request for a special edition of the Visor to be published in the fall which would focus on the subject of aging. The special edition would contain articles and features on the care of the elderly, as well as information on the role of the family in society.

Avis was grateful for the efforts of the Visor staff in promoting the care of the elderly and the role of the family in society. She expressed the hope that the special edition would be a valuable resource for those interested in the care of the elderly.

**NATURALLY THANKFUL**

"The Precious Pearl of Exposition"

"The precious pearl of exposition is the gift of understanding. It is a gift that enriches the mind and soul. It is a gift that helps us to see the world from a different perspective. It is a gift that can change our lives."

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MEMPHIS CHURCH TO BE ORGANIZED

At the November 17, 1979 meeting of the New Jersey and Eastern New York SOB Churches, it was decided that a new church would be organized in Blountville, Tennessee. The church was to be organized on Sabbath, October 7, 1979.

The Blountville SOB Church of Memphis, Tennessee was organized on October 7, 1979. The church was organized through the efforts of the Tennessee SOB Church, which is located in Memphis, Tennessee. The new church was organized with the assistance of the Tennessee SOB Church and the Blountville SOB Church.

The Blountville SOB Church has a pastor, Rev. Herbert E. Saunders, who is also the pastor of the Tennessee SOB Church. The Blountville SOB Church is located in Blountville, Tennessee, which is about 20 miles from Memphis.

The church is located in a small town, and the pastor is working hard to build a strong congregation. The church has a small meeting room, which is used for Sunday school and other activities. The pastor is working hard to attract new members and to strengthen the church's membership.

The church is affiliated with the Southern Bible Church of America, which is a denominational organization. The church is also affiliated with the Tennessee SOB Church, which is a regional organization of SOB Churches.

The church is already planning for its future growth. The pastor is working hard to develop a strong outreach program, and the church is planning to open a new facility in the near future. The pastor is also working hard to develop a strong Sunday school program, and the church is planning to open a new Sunday school room in the near future.

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DENVER CHOIR MEMBERS DO THEIR OWN THING.

DENVER, CO.—At the close of the 'choir year,' in early summer, a large calendar with the Sabbath dates through August was hung near the organ. Anyone wishing to furnish "special music" for any Sabbath (or Sabbaths) was asked to write in his or her name and be responsible for the particular date or dates. Amazingly, the calendar was soon filled in and no Sabbath has without a "special." Gary Cox, choir director, thought up the plan.

Several surprises were in store for the congregation as seldom were the selections printed on the worship folder. The organist was often "kept in the dark" too, and a couple of mornings was handed a piece of new music a few minutes before service time. Once during the organ prelude and accompaniment for a vocal solo landed on the organ bench to be sight-read! It was written for guitar and flute so was quickly arranged and "registered" for organ (silently) during the con­gregational responsive reading immediately preceding the rendition of the special. No rehearsal was possible.

Many musical periods and styles of singing were presented. Also age groups. One "senior citizen" mar­shaled a three quartet which rendered a favorite Horner Rodeheaver hymn.

Another time a group of young ladies sang Black Spirituals to a lively, rhythmic piano accompaniment.

A contemporary number "Come to the Water," was acted out in sign language to a recorded guitar and vocal accompaniment. One member of the group is totally deaf so the program was authentic. The entire service was relayed to him by the leader of the guest performers.

Early in the summer a mother-daughter duet of Doris Rood (visiting) and Alice Parker played a piano-flute duet. Alice also arranged the young ladies group that sang the spirituals and brought in the sign language group and finally sang in a ladies trio.

On Conference Sabbath a lovely soul-searching special arrangement of a solo from a controversial modern musical was sung through a "pipe" by Penny Thorngate, who has a rich low voice with the needed pathos. This to organ "with a beat." A re­peat has been requested since many were absent, either at Conference or on summer vacations. That same Sabbath, seventeen-year-old Todd McCrory, new in our congregation played the delightful triplet-figure accompaniment to "Jesus, the Man's Desiring" on the soprano rec­order with the organ playing the cello line for ostinato. In an earlier summer service he played a cello solo, "The Swan," as a "special." Pre­vious to summer he had played a saxophone solo at a service and another time played piano on three numbers along with the organist on her "regulars." We are wondering now what other instruments Todd will play!

Adding variety, the last Sabbath in August a trio of women sang a number by Mrs. Horsey's request, Tommy Dor­rey's "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," with Mrs. Horsey at the piano. Dr. Horsey gave the background of the writing of the piece and its particular meaning.

The previous Sunday Dr. Horsey presented his annual sermon (different each summer) in a tiny log chapel in the mountains at Buffalo Creek (an hour SW) accompanied by a carload including the Denver organist, who played the tiny organ for the service. Todd McCrory again played the cello. Todd's parents, brother, three people from Indian Hills and Hor­sey's carload made up about half of the congregation that particular morn­ing! This annual SDB "trek" to the "Little Chapel in the Hills" was started when Kenneth E. Smith was a seminary student at Lill and Denver pastors. The non-denominational con­gregational church is united in the interests of many faiths and professions.

Summer is over and the choir again assembled in the fall. The choir is now also manned together after assuming full responsibili­ties for "doing their own thing." [Gladys S. Randolph]

JAMAICA CONFERENCE MEETS.

KINGSTON, JAMAICA.—The Jam­ai­ca Seventh Day Baptist Conference held its annual session at the Luma church in July with Pastor N. B. Thompson presiding. The welcoming address was given by the Rev. R. Nelson, principal of Oberlin High School. In his address he urged the delegates to see Christ as the head of the church, and for the church to hold true to His teachings.

President Thompson gave a detailed report of visits to all the churches during the year. He recognized a for­mal for outstanding achievements. It was reported that many of the churches have experienced marked growth both spiritually and numerically as well as financially.

A real concern was focused regard­ing a full-time president. It was pointed out that when the leadership has to be involved in secular em­ployment it is very burdensome and almost impossible to carry out all of the duties associated with the office. The executive committee is to study ways to consider this position as a full-time job.

Pastor Thompson also announced that the Rev. Joe Saunders, the conference recording secretary, has been re­elected as president for another year. He announced that the theme for the next year would be "Growing by the Milk of the Word," based on 1 Peter 2:1-8. After a very inspiring sermon by Pastor Palmer at the close of the 1979 conference came to an end. Many mountain top experiences were gained.

During the business session a new congregation was voted into mem­bership. Recognition was given to Dr. E. W. Jennings of the Jealousy Seventh Day Church, of which she is the leader. The church will be a branch of the Kingston church and will be assigned its own pastor.

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TRUE DISCIPLESHIP (continued from page 28)

else’s life and draws from it the meaning of life. Love is the essence of what we are in Christ. John said to whoever claimed to “live in him must walk as he walked.” Peter said, “follow in his steps.” We love because Jesus loved us.

There’s another beautiful story that comes out of this Conference. There’s a young lady here today, a member of the Pre-Con staff, who had every intention of returning home on Tuesday because she didn’t have the funds to stay any longer. Because of the love that she had shown and the young people that she reached into their own pockets, sacrificed some of their own meals, and made it possible for them to be sitting in this Conference today. Love makes sacrifices. Love reaches out. Love makes good things possible. God loves us—it was His idea first. He’s the one that loves us, and we as His disciples can only learn to love when we have that implanted love of God that reaches out and touches people where they are.

A drumbeat is something we march to, a gorgeous child. But for those who have not been families of boys know that. Those of you who have been the first son in a family of boys you know that ye are my disciples, if you have touched people where they are. Love makes sacrifices. Love reaches out. Love makes good things possible. God loves us—it was His idea first. He’s the one that loves us, and we as His disciples can only learn to love when we have that implanted love of God that reaches out and touches people where they are.

If you read in the book of Acts you discover quickly that the disciples remained in “the apostles’ teaching, the breaking of bread, the fellowship and the prayers,” and throughout the book of Acts it says, “They met together day by day.” Oh, that we could add to our number daily, oh, that we could believe that we are His disciples, and in the power of the Holy Spirit we can. These early disciples didn’t look out at the Roman world and say, “Look at what this world is coming to.” No, they said, “Look who has come to the world.”

and that’s the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ: “Look who has come to the world.” And instead of saying, “Look at what this denomination is coming to, let us pray that we can say “Look at who has come to this denomination and to our lives.”

Love God supremely, Seek His Truth obediently, Submit to His Spirit sensitively.

The Sabbath Recorder

A THANKSGIVING STORY FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

by Linda Harris

What would it have been like to be a Pilgrim? It must have been exciting to set sail from England in a ship knowing that a new land was waiting. It must have been tiresome to be on a ship day after day, rocking back and forth on the waves, seeing nothing but water for miles and miles. It must have been frightening to be in a storm at sea, with the water coming over the sides of the boat on deck. It must have been a great relief to see land again, after so many days and trials.

Once the pilgrims reached America, their hardships were not over. Houses had to be built, crops had to be planted. And in order to do that, the land had to be cleared of trees, which would be used to build the houses. But winter came fast, and the Pilgrims were not ready to face its brutal blow. Seven times as many graves were dug as houses that were built first winter. Food was scarce, medical supplies were nonexistent, and shelter was inadequate.

At one point the daily ration of food for each man, woman and child was five grains of corn. Imagine having five grains of corn for an entire day’s meal. One grain for breakfast, two for lunch, and two for supper.

Eventually, circumstances improved, and food became more plentiful. Winter passed and new crops were planted. House building continued and preparations were made for the next winter so that it would not be so hard to survive.

But the Pilgrims never forgot the time when they had only five grains of corn each day. They were thankful that they had made it through the hard winter. They were thankful they had been able to build as many houses as they had. They were thankful that although some of their numbers were taken by disease, others had survived to continue the work. But most of all they were thankful for the five grains of corn, and thankful that God had been with them through all of their struggles, and had kept them alive.

Rather than trying to forget those hard times, the Pilgrims reminded themselves of those days each time they sat down to a “thanksgiving” meal. Five grains of corn were placed on each empty plate as the family sat down to the meal. Before the meal was served, each member of the family took the five grains on his or her plate and told what he or she was thankful for. In this way, they were reminded not only of the hard times they had, but of all that God had done for them, and how thankful they were to Him.

This Thanksgiving, as your family and friends sit down to the table, let each one think of the things he or she is thankful for, and share them with the rest of the family. If you would like, place five grains of corn on each person’s plate before the meal begins. Think of what it would be like to have only this for a full day’s food, and then think of all that God has given you. After each person has shared what he or she is thankful for, give a simple, heartfelt thanksgiving prayer for the food and fellowship. This will certainly add meaning to your Thanksgiving Day.

November 1979
VINS: PRESSURE FROM WEST RESULTED IN HIS RELEASE

By Carol Franklin and Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BPA)—Georgi Vins told the Helsinki Commission that pressure by government officials and Christians in the Western world was essential to his release from Soviet prison in April.

In response to a question from Senator Robert Dole, R-KS., about the effectiveness of the Commission, the media, and others in the West who protest the treatment of Soviet dissidents, Vins said, "I am absolutely sure that without the help of God and the support of Christians around the world, many more USSR Christians would be in prison."

Vins further stated that Soviet Christians and citizens in general support Carter's human rights emphases and "welcome the concern of the American people."

In a dramatic announcement preceding Vins' testimony before the 5-member commission, Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., one of six U.S. senators on the panel, announced on April 27 that Vins had been released the week of June 10. Later that same week, Vins is scheduled to address the closing session of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston.

According to Olin Robison, president of Middlebury (Vt.) College, with whom Vins is staying, the entire family, including Vins' mother and niece, have been given permission to leave the Soviet Union. They expect "to settle down the road from us," Robison told Baptist Press.

The Helsinki panel, whose official designation is Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, consists of six U.S. senators, six members of the House of Representatives, and three members of the Carter administration, and is charged with monitoring human rights conditions in all of the 35 nations which signed a comprehensive human rights document at Helsinki in 1975.

On the same day it heard Vins' testimony, the Commission released the names of 10,000 other Soviet "evangelical Christians" who have made public their wish to emigrate from the Soviet Union. Vins is one of five Soviet dissidents released on April 27 in exchange for two convicted Russian spies.

Vins is secretary of the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (Reform Baptists) which broke away from the officially sanctioned All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in 1965. Vins harshly criticized the official group, which has registered with the Soviet government.

All-Union Council, that is the leadership, is a body linked in the closest possible way with the state authorities, including the KGB," Vins said. "Its prescribed role is to act as a screen for religious freedom in the USSR."

Vins went on to say that representatives of registered Baptists "travel widely throughout the whole world proclaiming the imaginary religious freedom in the USSR. They perform the same role inside the country when they receive foreign religious organizations and maintain correspondence with them."

He said that his group, which in contrast to the officially-recognized All-Union Council has been forced largely underground, holds to such "fundamental principles" as the authority of Scripture "in all matters and all questions concerning faith and life"; the "absolute freedom of conscience"; the "spiritual regeneration" of church members; baptism by faith; the independence of the local congregation; the priesthood of all believers; and separation of church and state.

Vins called for continued support from the West for religious freedom in the Soviet Union. Detailing persecution of believers, he said there are about 40 Baptists now in prison for their beliefs.

Specifically, Vins called for the release of the chairman of the reform Baptists, Pastor G. K. Kryachkov, who "has been persecuted for 18 years." Vins said that Kryachkov "carries out his ministry under conditions of secrecy" and has lived at home with his wife and nine children only one of those 18 years.

Vins also called for the release of all prisoners of conscience in the USSR, "including not only Baptists, but members of the Russian Orthodox Church, Pentacostalists, Adventists, Catholics, and Jews."

He also described the extensive harassment of "The Christian" printing press which issues Bibles and other religious literature. Vins said that about 10 million pieces of religious literature had been confiscated by the Soviet Authorities in the years between 1929 and 1973. He urged the government to return all of the material to Christians.

Registering that charge of registration and churches leads to direct intervention of the state in church affairs, including the appointment of pastors, Vins said for an end to "all kinds of interference by the KGB in the internal life of the Evangelical Christian and Baptist Church."

He further described many forms of repression of religious life, which include fines, breaking up of peaceful Christian meetings, attacks on Christian weddings, and harassment of Christians. Vins urged that the Soviet government end all such activities. He noted that they are illegal under the Soviet constitution, which guarantees religious freedom for all citizens.

Vins told the Commission that his release should not be viewed as a softening of Soviet policy toward dissidents. On the contrary, he said that repression is becoming "more sophisticated." "The situation is so desperate that people are willing to give up their Soviet citizenship and live anywhere in the world where they can practice their faith," Vins said.

Vins also stated that the KGB sets up church centers to spy on believers. He also said that the latest technology is being used to "bust" the pastors' and believers' homes. In an ironic twist, he pointed out that this equipment is bought in the United States.

Vins described his two terms in prison for the commissioners. During his first term he was ordered to do "especially difficult manual labor. My health was ruined within a few months." Vins said he developed a serious hernia.

The living conditions and diet were extremely bad, and with no mail. "We had no baths for months at a time so everyone was dirty and infested with lice and insects."

His second imprisonment was in (continued on page 23)