Church/State Separation

How far do we go?
Calling all Crafters!

Please don't forget to bring your Craft Sale items to Conference. The Women's Society once again is sponsoring a Craft Sale for the Summer Christian Service Corps program. (Have your items already priced, please!) See you in California!!

150 Years in Albion

The Albion, Wisconsin, Seventh Day Baptist Church members cordially invite you to celebrate their Sesquicentennial on October 9-9, 1993. The celebration will be held in conjunction with the North Central Association meetings.
Everyone is welcome to commemorate 150 years of SDB witness in Southern Wisconsin.

DIRECTIONS TO PRECONCEPTIONS

FROM THE SOUTH: Hwy 18 up the mountain to Cochrane exit, Hwy 138. Cross over crest, follow 138 to Valley of Enchantment then bear left at the split into the village. Just on the other side of the village turn right on Selway Lane and bear left immediately on Hun Lane. Follow it to the top.

FROM THE NORTH: Hwy 150 past Silverwood Lake, up the mountain. Turn right at Valley of Enchantment. Just on the other side of the village turn sharp left on Selway Lane and bear left immediately on Hun Lane. Follow it to the top. You're there!
Church and State: Should they be separate?

Tough issues which are easily misunderstood. The SR asked Susan Bond and Kenneth Chroniger to address this relevant area of our society.

Susan lives in Jane Lew, W.Va. She is a school teacher and recent past-chairman of the SDB Christian Social Action committee. Ken pastors the Alfred Station, N.Y., SDB Church. He became involved in Church/State matters while living and pastoring in the Washington, D.C., area.

Church, State, and “the Wall of Separation.” There’s been much discussion lately about the separation of Church and State. I believe it has been brought on by the erosion of values in our society.

There is a need to rekindle our understanding of the concept of separation of Church and State. This is where we have a choice. We can obey God, or we can buckle under the government’s edict to keep Christ out of the public sector.

Like Daniel, who continued to pray after the king’s edict forbade it, Baptists were determined to exercise their freedom to worship as God led. Some, like Daniel, remained where they were, risking their lives to obey God. Others fled their homeland in hopes of creating a “heaven on earth” in America, free from the tyranny of the king.

Baptists have since been vigilant to keep the king (civil government) from again instituting practices that might hamper our religious freedom. Since the inception of the U.S. Constitution, we have had no President dare to establish a State religion. The State they regarded as a creation of the present evil world-order...

The biblical concept of Church and State is implied in Jesus’ words, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” Paul further infers in Romans, certain kinds of ministry are given to the State, distinct from the Church.

The historical concept is rooted in movements preceding the Bill of Rights. Henry Cook, in the 1958 book, What a Baptist Stands For, gives credit to the Anabaptists for the principle of Church/State Separation.

This problem of the relation of Christians to the State gravely exercised the minds of the Anabaptists. This was due very largely to the totalitarian conception of the State that then generally existed, and this to Anabaptists seemed incompatible with their liberty in Christ. The State they regarded as a creation of the present evil world-order...

A people committed to building the kingdom of God will naturally separate from the State.

Colonial Baptists proclaimed “Separation of the Church and State,” with the State having no authority over “the Faith.”

Non-Baptists took similar positions. Thomas Jefferson, perhaps under influences like Baptist John Leland, penned the preamble to the statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, which speaks to those hoping to “Christianize America” through “institutionalized coercion.”

Seventh Day Baptists have adhered to the “Separation concept”

1. in teaching: through materials, as the 1965 Christian Social Action Helping Hand, the Seventh Day Baptist “Distinctive” booklets, and the NST materials.

2. by collective action; the 1963 statement adopted by General Conference, with the underlying tenet being Church/State separation, and opposition to “Blue Laws.”

3. by individually struggling with school systems (whose scheduling favors one faith position over our own), and in states with Sabbath elections.

What then is “Separation of Church and State”? In reviewing John Bennett’s book, Christians and the...
Prayer in school: Should prayers be used in classrooms and events?

SB: Yes. We are to "pray without ceasing." Granted, we could pray silently and offend no one—except maybe God. While Jesus did advise that we pray in our closets, He never said that we could not pray in classrooms or events. Neither did He say that religious symbols could not be used in the classroom. What is being taught about God, the Bible, prayer, and the!==

KC: We are dealing with a government system and must allow for the equity of practice. From beads, to prayer rugs, to standing, to kneeling, all are vital parts of someone's prayer. Favoritism can't be shown. "At least half of the 50 states now have statutes that require or permit a period of silent reflection at the inception of the class period. Although some states mention only meditation as the purpose for the moment of silence, many include prayer in the list of permissible activities."

What is meant by the courts banning prayer from the school? We mean, State-sponsored, State-promoted, perhaps State-written prayer; prayer that by its very nature is conceived, coerced, and controlled by those in power. Was prayer really banned?

Should religious symbols be allowed in public places or school?

SB: (Or should we opt for a "naked public square"). Let me quote columnist Joseph Sobran:

"The prevailing notion is that the State should be neutral as to religion, and furthermore, that the best way to be neutral about it is to avoid all mention of it. By this sort of logic, nudism is the best compromise among different styles of dress.

"The secularist version of 'pluralism' amounts to 'theological nudism.'" (National Review, Dec. 31, 1985, p. 48 "Penses: notes for the reactionary of tomorrow.")

KC: "Once, in the town square, there were three crosses at Easter, a manger scene at Christmas, and a menorah at Hanukkah. Today, only the crosses are there. There is a separation of the school from religion, but not necessarily the public square."

KC: "Even the Bible may well appear there during Hanukkah. I may feel offended at the sight of another religion's symbol. But, I could do like the apostle Paul did when he saw the altar to an unknown god and use the opportunity to educate.

Should "religious education" be reinstated in public schools?

SB: I don't know. As with all things, my personal experience will color my opinions. And my only experience with this is during elementary school (in the late 1950s), when I watched my best friend leave once a week with some other students to go to catechism. While Jesus did advise that we pray in our closets, He never said that religious symbols could not be used in the classroom. Neither did He say that religious education could not be taught in the public schools.

KC: In Abington vs Schemp, Associate Justice Tom Clark wrote for the court:

"It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literature and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible, or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment."

Some say we must persuade, evangelize in the system. Will not God's truth be truth, even in these "rational constraints"? To say the teaching of religion needs to be reinstated is to deny three things: "The 1984 Equal Access Act," the courts upholding off-campus release time programs, and the act of "presence evangelism" through the consistent life and witness of Christian teachers.
Comment on the notion of the U.S. as a "Christian Nation."

Susan Bond

SB: We are unequivocally not. I believe the writers of the Constitution strove to create a government based on godly principles. But here again we've seen an eroding of such principles.

The Supreme Court began eliminating public acknowledgment of God when they removed school prayer, and they have led the country on a path to destruction ever since.

We hit rock bottom in 1973 when they legalized the murder of the innocent (abortion); it amazes me that we're still standing.

God prefers mercy to judgment, and it shows. He repents and they have led the country on a path to the murder of the innocent (abortion); it amazes me that we're still standing.

SB: We are not a Christian nation, but there are thousands of Christians residing here. It's our job to make the Christian Gospel be our number one priority.

KC: Are we a "Christian Nation" because our founding fathers were Christians? Church historian Martin E. Marty, in a speech, "The Church in Tension," provides insight: "Only one or two signers of the Declaration of Independence or Constitution could possibly get into a born-again church today—Presbyterian-style. The rest were deists and today would be called secular humanists, friendly to religious values."

Is our nation Christian because leaders, like John Quincy Adams, pointed to the principles of Christianity and civil government having an "Indissoluble Bond"? Yet "...some members of the organized church branded [Adams] as an atheist..." He, like his father, was a Unitarian.

Is it a Christian nation when, in colonial times as Baptists and Sabbatarians, our spiritual ancestors were banned, imprisoned, and exiled?

Is it a Christian Nation because the coinage reads, "In God We Trust," or the pledge "One Nation under God?" Is this the "Christian" God or a "Civil" God? Church attendance cannot be correlated directly with Christian belief—does that give tangible evidence that we are a "Christian Nation"?

To what extent should Christians be involved in politics?

SB: To what extent God leads them.

Let's define "politics": [polite citizen—more at POLICE] the art or science of government; the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy; the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government; the total complex of relations between men in society.

Just as God appointed Moses to lead Israel out of slavery and to establish a government under the Ten Commandments, He can also decide when it's time for our present slavery and to establish a government under the Ten Commandments, He can raise up leaders in today's generation and holding control over a government; the total complex of relations between men in society.

KC: To be a Seventh Day Baptist is to be a Christian. Answering from our tradition, the following arise as guidelines:

— that Seventh Day Baptists, because of differences in biblical interpretation, have differences in political outcomes, with the "liberty of thought" to do so;

— that involvement in political activity must never overshadow our commitment to the Gospel Mandate (Matthew 28:19-20);

— that a particular political party is not the New Testament method for ushering in the Kingdom of God;

— that political involvement must be grounded in biblical instruction;

— that opportunity for political involvement begins in prayer.

How should SDBs address secular events scheduled on Sabbath?

(e.g. school events; political primaries and elections; school/work exams)

SB: Since the law of God is now written in our hearts of flesh rather than on stone, it seems that our hearts act as our guide. We are called daily to die to self and to live unto Christ.

If we walk as Christ walked, there will be times when we pick corn on the Sabbath day. If we walk with Christ, the Holy Spirit will guide us and convict us in our hearts about right and wrong choices.

Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. If the specialness of my Sabbath time with God will be hampered by some secular activity, I am better off without that activity. If it somehow enhances my relationship with God, then I can include it.

My heart acts as a traffic light, flashing red or green or caution. For me, picking corn on Sabbath could be holy if I'm serving an unexpected guest or feeding a hungry family. It wouldn't be holy if I'm doing it because I was too lazy to get it picked on Friday, or if I'm doing it seven days a week in order to earn a living.

The only ones who know if I am keeping the Sabbath, helping me God, and me. That's why I will not to judge others who are picking corn on Sabbath.


KC: If Sabbath is Sabbath (realizing that we "each draw lines in the sand" concerning personal observance), we may invoke the doctrine of "Separation of Church and State" if we determine that actions of the State support one faith over another.

Pray for those in authority, that they accept Sabbath as Sabbath, or have a heart of understanding. Say "no" to those events that do not make us Sabbath, as Sabbath. Move for a consensus of a biblical Sabbath understanding within the local "Covenant Community."

Having a biblical mandate that Sabbath belongs to the structure of the Gospel for this generation, confront the State to maintain, at minimum, neutrality of word and deed under the concept of "Separation of Church and State."

A case example might be school ball practice during the Sabbath morning worship. Would practices be held during Sunday morning worship? Then, we pray. We come to an understanding that this doesn't make Sabbath, Sabbath. A consensus is reached in the "Covenant Community." Then, confront the system.

The issue becomes one of the Government System acting on the principle of "Separation of Church and State."

Let us not, like Esau, sell our birthright; like the disciples, abandon Jesus; like Galatians, quickly move from the faith. Let us hold to "Religious Liberty," "Soul Consciousness," the historical, biblical Baptist doctrine of "Separation of Church and State."

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Church/State in the Courts

Supreme Court says discrimination against religion unconstitutional

WASHINGTON (BNS)—Policies governing after-hours use of school facilities cannot discriminate against religion, a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 7.

Justices said that a school district cannot bar the use of its facilities to address a topic from a religious standpoint, when it permits that topic to be addressed from non-religious perspectives. The high court struck down a New York school district’s policy that permitted after-hours use of its facilities for a variety of purposes but prohibited religious uses.

Lamb’s Chapel, an evangelical church in the Center Moriches community in Suffolk County, N.Y., challenged the policy after it was denied the use of school facilities to show the James Dobson film series, “Turn Your Heart Toward Home.”

In siding with Lamb’s Chapel, the Supreme Court reversed lower rulings that upheld the district policy.

While school districts have broad discretion in controlling the use of facilities, including the control over subject matter, they cannot discriminate on the basis of viewpoint, the court said. The Center Moriches district policy did just that, the court said, by permitting the facilities to be used for presentation of all views about family issues except those from a religious perspective.

Animal sacrifice ban violates Constitution, high court says

WASHINGTON (BNS)—Government cannot enact laws that single out religion for adverse treatment, a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 11.

The high court said Hialeah, Fla., officials violated the First Amendment by enacting ordinances that ban animal sacrifice. Only a religious practice—the Santeria religion’s ritual of animal sacrifice—was targeted by the Hialeah ordinances, justices said.

While the court was united in its decision to reverse lower rulings that upheld Hialeah’s ban, it was sharply divided over the legal basis for that judgment.

Five justices joined Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy in applying a controversial legal standard for determining how far government may go in restricting religious practices.

The majority said the case is governed by the Smith rule, announced in the 1990 Employment Division v. Smith case. In that decision, a narrow court majority said that neutral and generally applicable laws that incidentally burden religion do not have to be justified by a compelling governmental interest.

Prior to Smith, the court had required government to demonstrate a compelling interest to justify any restriction on religious practice. After Smith, that strict standard applies if religion is targeted.

(Editors’ note: Would this kind of news be helpful in keeping you informed on this issue? The SR receives updates like these from the Baptist News Service, and can pass them along—if you want them. Let us hear from you.)

Graduation prayer dispute rejected by Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (BNS)—First Amendment specialists disagree over the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court’s June 7 decision not to review a federal appeals court’s approval of student-led student-initiated prayers at public school graduation ceremonies.

A year ago, the nation’s high court struck down a Rhode Island school district’s practice of providing clergy-led prayers at commencement programs, and then instructed the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to reconsider a Texas school district’s policy in light of its Rhode Island decision.

As it had earlier, the appeals court approved the Clear Creek Independent School District’s policy. The Texas policy differed from the rejected Rhode Island policy, the appeals court said, because students voted to have a prayer, a student led the prayer, and the prayers had to be non-sectarian and non-proselytizing.

This spring, school districts across the country were caught in a cross fire of competing legal advice. The American Center for Law and Justice told districts that in light of the Texas case, student-initiated, student-led prayers are permissible. Other groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, answered that the Supreme Court had ruled in the Rhode Island case that any school-sponsored prayer violates the Constitution.

The court’s refusal to hear the Texas case (called Jones v. Clear Creek Independent School District), no doubt will add more heat and confusion to the debate over school prayer.

God and Country

by J. Brent Walker

Who built the wall?

Americans hear a lot of talk nowadays bashing the wall of separation between church and state. One Baptist leader has even called it the “lignment of some infidel’s imagination.”

The concept is not the brainchild of modern secularism. In fact, the contrary is true. It was Jesus himself who said, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”

Colonial Baptist Roger Williams first coined the actual phrase when he talked about a “hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world.”

But some will say that the words “separation of church and state” do not appear there, but the constitutional reality that the “wall” metaphor points to certainly does. The words “separation of powers” or the “right to a fair trial” are not in the Constitution either, but who would dispute their constitutional origins?

Even the Supreme Court has adopted the metaphor as a convenient, shorthand way of expressing the deeper truth that religious liberty is promoted and preserved best when church and state are separated.

The wall of separation is as Baptist as Roger Williams, and as American as the Fourth of July.

The wall of separation was not built by Thomas Jefferson. He talked about a “hedge or wall of separation” in his letter to the Danbury, Conn., Baptist Association, defended the principle of religious freedom and then said, “I contemplate with solemn foreboding the day when the despotism of a creased, and neither tries to interfere with the work of the other. United States v. Reynolds (1872); Everson v. Board of Education (1947).

The separation of church and state is good, not bad, for religion. As a result of the distance that the separation principle places between church and state, religious people are free to utter a prophetic cri­

tique of government, and to exer­
cise their religious convictions without undue governmental inter­
ference. Separation of church and state does not require the divestment of religion from politics. It does not mean that religious people have to relegate their faith to acts of private devotion, or force their rightful place in the public forum. Religious people can speak out, become involved, and participate in politics as they see fit.

Thus, the wall of separation is as Baptist as Roger Williams, and as American as the Fourth of July. It is needed because Jesus did not commission the Church to wield the sword of civil government, and he discounted any competence on the part of Caesar to discharge religious functions.

Separation results in a free, pluralistic society and a healthy, robust church. Both the church and the state are a lot better off when neither tries to do the job of the other.

Is America a Christian nation?

“The notion of the Christian commonwealth should be exploded forever.”

The speaker? Madalyn Murray O’Hair? No. Some modern secular humanists? Not on your life. The man who spoke these words was John Leland, a self-proclaimed Colonial Baptist from Virginia.

What’s more, Leland was simply echoing the sentiments of Baptist Roger Williams who, 150 years earlier, had told us that civil authority has no “commission from Christ Jesus” to declare what is the true Church.

Both Leland and Williams understood that God has favored no nation since ancient Israel with a special covenant. The “new Israel” is the Church of Jesus Christ, not any nation. Not even the United States.

letter to the Danbury, Conn., Baptist Association, defended the principle of religious freedom and then said, “I contemplate with solemn reverence the act of the American people which declared that Congress should make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state.”

Jefferson articulated what Williams prophetically sensed: that the protection of full-blown religious liberty calls for a wall of separation—however many holes American
No one can deny that Americans are a religious people, or that Christianity had a profound influence on our civic values and public philosophy of many of our Founders. But our civil compact—the Constitution—is a decidedly secular document. It never mentions Christianity. The word “religious” is there only once, and then to disallow a religious test for public office.

Two years later, the Bill of Rights again dispelled any lingering suggestion that America is a Christian nation when it prevented the federal government from establishing or privileging any religious tradition. Further, the Treaty of Tripoli, negotiated under George Washington and ratified by the Senate under John Adams, declared: “The government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion...” This language remained in the Constitution until renegotiated in 1805.

Thus, the Constitution enshrined the democratic Virginia model embodied in Madison, Madison, and Leland; the theocratic experiment of John Cotton and the New England Puritans lost out. So, Americans do not have a Christian nation in any legal sense. Americans have a constitutional democracy in which all religious beliefs are honored and protected.

Baptists treasure religious liberty. Their forbears experienced heavy persecution at the hands of both the state and the established church. They fought and sometimes died to secure that protection and the sanctity of conscience—not just for themselves but for everyone else, too.

How strange, then, it is for some Baptists today to claim that America is a Christian nation. In making that assertion, they are not only rewriting history and forsaking Baptist heritage, but confounding all who profess a different faith or no faith to second-class citizenship.

Neither the Constitution nor even Christian charity will countenance such a view. But do not despair, good Christians. That the United States is not a “Christian nation” does not prevent Christians from trying to “Christianize” its people. Christians are perfectly free to evangelize their neighbors, to criticize their government, to allow their religious ethics to inform their public policy stances, and even to run for office. Indeed, it is precisely because government has not taken sides in matters of religion that Americans are turned loose to exercise their God-given religious freedom with near impunity.

Public schools and religion

Has God been thrown out of the public schools? Not at all. The U.S. Supreme Court has held only that the state cannot constitutionally sponsor religion in the classroom. It is not the school's job to evangelize students, or to suggest to children how, when, or what to pray. Teachers cannot and should not lead in devotional Bible reading or other religious exercises. School officials should not presleytize as if they were the outreach arm of the local Baptist church.

But God has not been banished from the classroom. Religion does have a place in the public school system. Religious expression can take many forms.

First, the schools are perfectly free to teach about religion, even though they are precluded from sponsoring the practice of religion. America's children must be told about the influence of religion on the development of American culture. To fail to teach these truths would be to skew history and exalt hostility toward religion. Courses in comparative religion and Bible-as-literature can and should be included in the curriculum.

Second, schools may participate in “released-time” programs. A school may allow students to attend classes in religious instruction at an off-campus church or other site. Although not used much anymore, this has been a helpful and constitutionally permitted way to accommodate the religious needs of students.

Third, there is equal access. If a public school allows other non-curriculum related student groups to meet on campus before or after school, it must allow religious groups to meet on an equal basis. The Equal Access Act, upheld by the Supreme Court, disallows discrimination by the schools on the basis of “religious, political, philosophical, or other content of speech.” These meetings must be student-initiated but need not be devoted to learning about religion. They may be overly sectarian, involving prayer and Bible study.

Fourth, within some limits, schools cannot interfere with the individual free exercise rights of the students. Students may pray whenever and however they like— whether in the classroom, lunchroom, or the playing field— provided they do not disrupt the educational process. Students cannot be prevented from bringing Bibles or other religious literature to school. They may read their Bibles during free time and even discuss their reading with others. They cannot be prevented from sharing their faith, as long as they respect the other students’ rights to be left alone.

Again, it's only state-sponsored religion, not student religious speech and practice, that is prohibited by the Constitution. Indeed, the free exercise and free speech clauses often require the schools to accommodate the latter.

Has God been thrown out of the public schools? Maybe the faceless God of secular ethics, but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jesus has never missed a roll call. 

J. Brent Walker is an Associate General Counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, based in Washington, D.C.

Women's Society page by Charlotte Chroniger

We may have to stand for the Lord, even when that may put us against the majority.

Women’s Society page by Charlotte Chroniger

We are appalled to read about the millions of babies killed through abortion each year. We are disturbed about situations where a criminal’s rights seem to hold more importance than a victim’s rights. We are appalled to learn about immoral behavior and practices in our government, the military, schools, and churches.

Is there anything we can do to make a difference? Often, our hands are tied—we cannot change some things. But we can pray for those situations that are contrary to God’s Word and His commandments. We can pray for those leaders who live a life of godliness, that they continue in their testimony for the Lord.

We can be a testimony of how God’s principles are a part of our family’s life. We can share our concerns with others. We may even need to speak out against an immoral principle or an anti-Christian situation.

We may have to take a stand for the Lord, even when that may put us against the majority, against a government official, or against a common practice.

As a teacher, I have had some opportunities at school to represent the Lord. Our school’s theme was, “I Love America.” The boys and girls sang a variety of patriotic songs, some of which included references to God. During our Christmas concert last December, the students sang both secular and sacred Christmas songs and carols, and some student-motivated discussions about Christmas customs followed.

When I was able to take a stand for the Lord, I knew I could make a difference.

Having a feeling that God is in control— that He sees us going on— the disregard for life, the immorality, the lack of respect for good and righteousness. Someday God will judge every act and person according to His perfect will and law.

May He find that each of us has been faithful, moral, honest, and a good representative of Jesus Christ. May He find that those of us who have served in the government have been officials and servants of good report and integrity.

Getting God back in the picture

During a study of spirituals in music class, questions came up regarding the words in some of the songs, which talked about going to heaven and the wonderful place it would be. While we were singing a spiritual, a student asked me to teach us how to pray in school.

We may have to stand for the Lord, even when that may put us against the majority.
“Father of our Country” stands up for Baptists
by Don A. Sanford, historian

The “Pearls from the Past” in the May Sabbath Recorder was entitled, “Snowhill Sabbath Blues.” It dealt with the persecution of several members of the German Seventh Day Baptist community who worked on Sunday, violating the Pennsylvania Blue Law of 1794.

In the archives of the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society, there is a yellowed paper containing the substance of a document used to defend the violators of the Sunday labor law. An embossed seal of the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Ephrata, Pa., was used to verify that Andrew Fahnestock, of the Church of Ephrata, in a letter to a Committee of a Baptist Society in Virginia, dated August 4, 1789, as follows:

“If I had the least idea of any difficulty resulting from the Constitution, adopted by the Convention of which I had the honor to be President when it was formed, so as to endanger the rights of any religious denomination, then I never would have attached my name to that instrument. If I had any idea that the General Government was so administered that the liberty of conscience was endangered, I pray you be assured that no man would be more willing than myself to revise and alter that part of it, so as to avoid all religious persecution. You can, without any doubt, remember that I have often expressed as my opinion, that every man who conducts himself as a good citizen is accountable alone to God for his religious Faith and should be protected in worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience.”

Signed, George Washington

The result was, acquittal by the Jury.

A Free People in Search of a Free Land
by Don A. Sanford

A new edition of A Free People in Search of a Free Land is now available from the Historical Society. First printed as a thesis in 1976, and republished as a paperback in 1987, it has been reprinted with a new cover design by Pat Cruzan.

This book gives an overview of the migration of Seventh Day Baptists from the Atlantic to the Pacific from 1671 to the beginning of the 20th century. A concluding chapter analyzes the geographic, sociological, and religious factors which helped shape the character and practice of Seventh Day Baptists.

A Free People is a good companion to two more recent books by the historians: Conscience Token Captive (1981) and A Choosing People: The History of Seventh Day Baptists (1992). It may be ordered from the SDB Historical Society, for $7.50 plus $1.00 postage.

One year ago—July/August 1992
Writers Maurice Smith (Southern Baptist) and James Ayars (SDB) address the growing Islamic movement. Ayars points out the references to Christ in the Koran. Christian Education page lifts up the SDB quarterly, The Helping Hand.

Forty-five years ago—July/August 1947
Missionaries to Malawi, David and Bettye Pearson, return to states following their sixth term of service. Eli Puppa, president of the SDB Philippine Convention, writes of the success of Matthew and Ellen Olson’s short-term mission there. Guidelines laid out for using copyrighted musical material.

Church news: Salem, W.Va., explains their “Parents Night Out” program; Riverside, Calif., celebrates purchase of land for new building; Westerly, R.I., participates in homeless outreach.

10 years ago—July/August 1983
Janet Thorngate relates “A Day at Sunshine Mountain.” Coverage of Ministers’ Conference hosted in Nortonville.

Ground broken for Atlantic church’s new building. Winning entries printed from the Youth Writing Contest.

Sequintennial celebration planned for Hebron, Pa., church. General Conference meetings of 100 years ago, held in Adams Center, N.Y., remembered.

25 years ago—July/August 1968
Special issue promotes General Conference meetings in Kearney, Neb.

Dr. Kenneth Smith named as president of Milton (Wis.) College.
Resolution of Appreciation to Amanda Snyder

WHEREAS Amanda Stevens Snyder faithfully served for sixteen years as chairperson of the Youth Committee of this Board, 1977-1992,

WHEREAS Amanda Snyder devoted countless hours developing programs, writing letters, counseling young people, directing and assisting with Pre-Conference camps, and supervising late-night Conference youth activities for almost two decades,

THEREFORE be it resolved this eighteenth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred ninety-three, that we the directors of the Seventh Day Baptist Board of Christian Education, express our admiration and gratitude to Amanda Snyder for her love and devotion to Seventh Day Baptist Youth.

Seventh Day Baptist Board of Christian Education, Inc.
1993-94 officer slate for SDBYF of USA and Canada

The slate of nominees for the 1993-94 officers of the Seventh Day Baptist Youth Fellowship USA and Canada has been announced by the Youth Committee of the Board of Christian Education. Come prepared to vote at General Conference, University of Redlands, Calif.

President—Callie Moore
Callie is currently president of the Denver, Colo., Seventh Day Baptist Church Youth Fellowship and a member of her church choir. She was the Denver YF treasurer from 1989-92, and has participated in Youth Sabbath activities in her church. Callie has attended local and Association camps for the past 11 years. She is a senior at Bear Creek High School, Lakewood, Colo.

Callie writes, "This past year, my walk with the Lord has taken a long road... The trials and tribulations I have been through have caused me to rely on God more than ever... God is, and has become, the focus in my life. My gratitude for being raised in a Christian home is enormous... I firmly believe in the happiness God has given me in my heart. I like to share my happiness."

Vice-President—Timothy Rood
Timothy attended Pre-Con and Conference last year in Wisconsin. He is a junior at Boulder, Colo., High School, where he participates in the school marching band, basketball pep band, computer club, and Bible club/prayer group.

Secretaries—Bridge Cicero
Bridge is a sophomore at Arvada, Colo., West High School, where she is a member of the school marching band, pep band, and symphonic band. She has been involved in both local and Association camps and retreats. Bridge has been active in the Boulder SDB Church YF, Youth Sabbath, church, and bell choir.

Treasurer—Anna Parker
Anna attends North East Junior High School, Thornton, Colo., where she is active in volleyball, drama, band, and honor society. She participates in the Denver SDB Church choir and is a YF treasurer. Anna attended Conference in Kansas and Wisconsin.

Anna writes, "I play piano and flute, am involved in gymnastics, and enjoy arranging flowers. I feel that I am responsible, willing to take on the task of being treasurer, and am fun person to be around."

The slate of nominees for the 1993-94 officers of the Seventh Day Baptist Youth Fellowship USA and Canada has been announced by the Youth Committee of the Board of Christian Education. Come prepared to vote at General Conference, University of Redlands, Calif.

President—Callie Moore
Callie is currently president of the Denver, Colo., Seventh Day Baptist Church Youth Fellowship and a member of her church choir. She was the Denver YF treasurer from 1989-92, and has participated in Youth Sabbath activities in her church. Callie has attended local and Association camps for the past 11 years. She is a senior at Bear Creek High School, Lakewood, Colo.

Callie writes, "This past year, my walk with the Lord has taken a long road... The trials and tribulations I have been through have caused me to rely on God more than ever... God is, and has become, the focus in my life. My gratitude for being raised in a Christian home is enormous... I firmly believe in the happiness God has given me in my heart. I like to share my happiness."

Vice-President—Timothy Rood
Timothy attended Pre-Con and Conference last year in Wisconsin. He is a junior at Boulder, Colo., High School, where he participates in the school marching band, basketball pep band, computer club, and Bible club/prayer group.

Secretaries—Bridge Cicero
Bridge is a sophomore at Arvada, Colo., West High School, where she is a member of the school marching band, pep band, and symphonic band. She has been involved in both local and Association camps and retreats. Bridge has been active in the Boulder SDB Church YF, Youth Sabbath, church, and bell choir.

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One of the advantages of attending General Conference from year to year is the opportunity to see and hear a variety of preachers and teachers. As a small denomination, we are remarkably blessed with people of talents, abilities, and gifts. Several gifted teachers will be leading seminars at Conference in Redlands, Calif., this August. Seminars are scheduled for Tuesday afternoon and will be re-peted on Thursday. This year, each of them deals with studying about, praying to, or worshiping God. These are all necessary parts of establishing ourselves firmly on the foundation of faith in Him.

Terry Morrison, the National Director of Faculty Ministries for InterVaristy Christian Fellowship, will lead a seminar about personal time alone with God for Bible study and prayer. He is calling it, "My Heart—Christ's Home: Listening and Speaking to Him." InterVaristy has its national offices in Madison, Wis., where I live. Consequently, I have had the opportunity to hear Terry several times. This promises to be worthwhile.

Several years ago, my Sabbath School teacher, Paul Manuel, led us in a study of various prayers in the Old Testament. Some of the most interesting were those in which the person praying was in disagreement with God's apparent intentions. I have asked Paul to lead a study based on those kinds of prayers. It will be called, "Pray-

others. Bill is pastor of the Washington, D.C., SDB Church. Shelley, his wife, is also well known in the denomination. The workshop is titled, "Intercessory Prayer and the Church: A Biblical Challenge for Today." Worship will be the subject of two seminars. At least once each week, on Sabbath morning, we meet together for a "worship service." How can we make these occasions times of genuine worship?

One of the ways to truly worship is to have clearly in mind why we are there and what it is we are doing. Russ Johnson will lead a scriptural study about the meaning of worship and why we should do it. Russ is the Director of Extension for the Missionary Society, and has been the pastor of several churches.

An important part of worship is music. As a member of a small church, I am aware of how difficult it can be to worship when we are struggling musically. "Where Two or Three are Gathered in My Name—Let's Make Music" is a workshop designed for those who have some responsibility for music in a small church with limited musical resources. Barbara Saunders, who has led choirs of various sizes, ages, and talents, has played organ and piano for churches large and small, will lead. Those attending will be invited to share approaches they have found successful. Music is one of the ways that emotion and thought come together in our worship, and this workshop promises to help that happen more effectively.

While at Conference, plan to make one or more of the seminars a part of your year. By doing so, you may enable yourself to better "worship God acceptably with reverence and awe."
Pastors' Conference 1993—
From a hostess' perspective

by Charlotte Chroniger

What a privilege to be a part of a special time of recharging and refocusing for our Seventh Day Baptist pastors and spouses! Pastors' Conference was held in Shiloh, N.J., this past April 21-25. Our Shiloh and Marlboro churches were blessed to host 60 ministers and spouses. It was wonderful to see so many old friends, and to make new ones. It was great to get to fellowship with our denominational leadership. It was refreshing to see our SDB pastors and spouses enjoy fun and laughter. It was moving to hear the personal experiences, testimonies, and life journeys of these people who shepherd our many Seventh Day Baptist churches.

Although I wasn’t able to participate in many of the sessions because of hosting responsibilities, I came away from the experience refreshed and encouraged. I saw areas in my life that need a deeper recharging and encouraged. I saw the personal experiences, the sorrows, the challenges, the blessings. It was so helpful to talk with another pastor or another spouse about ministry for the Lord. We enjoyed some stimulating discussions about the Christian faith.

As I looked at that group assembled in Shiloh, I was filled with thanksgiving for the fine men and women who provide leadership for our churches. We are so blessed to have such wonderful pastors and spouses. Our pastors care deeply for the Lord and for their congregations. Their spouses provide a variety of ministries free of charge.

Our Seventh Day Baptist leaders do benefit from attending Pastors' Conference. Your local congregations can be blessed in marvelous ways by hosting the gathering. Even though there is a lot of work involved, it is worth every effort.

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Senior Saints project at Camp Holston

by Dorothy Parrott

On May 5, 1993, the Senior Saints began their project at Camp Holston in Battle Creek, Mich. The working hours, including kitchen time, added up to 1,144 donated to the project.

Skilled workers from Washington, Kansas, Wisconsin, New York, Michigan, and Pennsylvania represented 376 years of professional experience in the building trade.

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Many of the tools belonged to the workers, but some power tools, such as the ditch witcher, were hired. It was amazing to watch that machine make the ditches for the electric wires.

Pastor Charles Graffius organizes and directs each project. The churches furnish materials and meals. The "Saints" provide the labor and pay their own transportation—over 10,000 miles is a conservative estimate of miles traveled for this particular project.

The fellowship and Bible studies are integral parts of the Senior Saints projects. Each Wednesday is a day off. Some of the volunteers enjoyed the tulip festival at Holland, Mich. Others visited relatives and friends. On the Sabbath, one couple attended a special gathering of Sabbathkeepers at a church south of Battle Creek. Others attended church and Sabbath School at the Battle Creek SDB Church.

Editor's note: The Senior Saints did not slow down for the remainder of May and into June. They continued using their "Midas touch" skills at the Albion, Wis., church (new basement lighting and extensive interior painting), and at Camp Wakonda of the Milton, Wis., church (finished the interior and added a deck to the new Dennis Lippincott Memorial craft cabin; reused the major electrical service to the camp; added new siding and gutters to the dorms; and more!)
Waterford looking outward

Our small group in Waterford, Conn., has spent a number of hours planning for outreach in the community, beginning with programs which will make SDBs more visible.

Publicity for a number of events has brought in some new people to our church, but not to regular services. Events have included: a Barbershop group, the Covenant Players, and a clown ministry.

During February, we were blessed and privileged to have Cornelth Lawrence as our Sabbath speaker while he was here for General Council meetings. Donna Bond spent the Sabbath School hour with the women, sharing the work of the Women’s Society, as well as her personal life of ministry.

Interfaith Food Locker—responding to requests for emergency food from the food bank in Waterford.

We are working on ideas for reaching and welcoming newcomers to our neighborhood.

We continue to have monthly hymn-sings at two nursing homes as we have done for several years. Some members are involved three periods a year with the Waterford Covenant Playhouse.

Our Ladies Aid Society has an annual tag sale. As a result, we donate regularly to Summer Christian Service Corps, Sunshine Mountain, the local Women’s Center for abused women and children, and the Martin house for mentally impaired. We have given toilettry articles to the nursing homes and Women’s Center.

Recently, we received a large donation of table linens and gave them to a local bed and breakfast inn. As a result of our donation, we had an invitation to “high tea” there, and to tour this very old Victorian home.

The church is used Sundays by an ecumenical group, and we have had some joint programs with them. Our Christian Education building is used by them and occasionally by others. It serves us well for smaller meetings and potluck meals.

We have recently become aware of numerous home sales in our area. We are working on ideas for reaching and welcoming newcomers to our neighborhood.

It has been a blessing to us all to have Pastor Leon and Dorothy Lawton in our fellowship. His sermons are inspirational and thoughtful, and his part-time ministry has included frequent visits to our homes, hospitals, and nursing homes.

E-Coli alert!

Seventh Day Baptists certainly enjoy fellowshipping around the tables, and eating together after church services. However, a note of concern regarding this practice seems especially timely and needed.

Due to at least one recent food-borne illness among the church family (apparently stemming from undercooked and E-Coli contaminated hamburger), the following guidelines are offered to help prevent recurrence:

1. Pre-cook all ground beef to 160 degrees or above.
   Note: That freezing does not kill the germ.

2. If any pink meat is visible, cook longer.
   (Note: too, that all opened mayonnaise and salad dressing must be kept refrigerated.)

More news on Newport building

Dr. Daniel Snyderacker, executive director of the Newport (R.I.) Historical Society, just sent our SDB Historical Society some good news.

A detailed historic and architectural analysis assessed the condition of the SDB Meeting House in Newport.

We share first from his letter:

There are several important findings to emerge from this study.

First, that the building has been well cared for during the Newport Historical Society’s stewardship. While some work is necessary on the building at the present time, it is nevertheless in good structural condition.

The second finding concerns the name of the building. You will notice that we have called it the Seventh Day Baptist/Sabbatarian Meeting House. This reflects the fact that general and accepted usage has people calling the building, “The Sabbatarian Meeting House.”

This continued usage over the years means that it must be part of the formal name of the building.

With the analysis and assessment complete, the staff at the Newport Historical Society will now complete the partial submission made to the Historic American Building Survey at the Library of Congress. We will send them the historical narrative contained in the report. This, then, will complete the documentation that the building was built and owned by the Seventh Day Baptists in a national level repository.

From the Historic and Architectural Analysis:

“Clearly the establishment of a direct line from the present meeting house to the Seventh Day Baptists in America is indisputable.”

Accessions

Brookfield, NY
Ernest Clemens, pastor
Paint Rock, AL
John Bevis, pastor

 Joined after baptism
Christopher White
Adela Brown

 Joined after testimony
Christopher Washburn
Pauline Douglas
Lynda Morgan

 Joined by letter
William Palmer

Gloria Palmer

Barbara Balcom

Riverside, CA
Gabriel Bejjani, pastor

 Joined after baptism
Robert Bacon

 Angel Peterson
Back Peterson

 Tina Thompson

Miami, FL
Andrew Samuels, pastor

 Joined after testimony
Thomas Hughes
Susan Weir

 Joined after testimony
Keith Bordeneuve

 Tina Bordeneave

 Fred Sencrart

 Tom Thompson

 Judith Lewis

 Salem, WV
Dale Thompton, pastor

 Joined after baptism
Amanda Bland

 Ruthann Cain

 Lydia Davis

 Joined after testimony
Amy Jo Meathrell

 Tanya Modispaugh

 Tracy Modispaugh

 Joshua Sias

 Julia Sias

 Dixie Spencer

 Torono, Canada
Herlitz Condison, pastor

 Joined after testimony
Barry Daley

“Clearly the establishment of a direct line from the present meeting house to the Seventh Day Baptists in America is indisputable.”
Uhl — A son, Travis-Jay Uhl, was born to Terry and Karen (Sheppard) Uhl of Shiloh, NJ, on July 3, 1992.

Muffley — A daughter, Lauren Melissa Muffley, was born to Bob and Cheryl (Davis) Muffley of Shiloh, NJ, on December 14, 1992.

Briscoe — A daughter, Brittany Briscoe, was born to Bill and Summer Briscoe of Moreno Valley, CA, on January 29, 1993.

Wilson — A son, Dustin Joseph Wilson, was born to Joe and Alimee (Lamoreaux) Wilson of Nialto, CA, on February 11, 1993.

Crouch — A daughter, Lindsay Ann C-ouch, was born to Pastor Steve and Rebecca Crouch of Finole, CA, on April 9, 1993.

Diecher — A son, Preston Mar­ cus Diecher, was born to Erica Diecher of Battle Creek, MI, on April 9, 1993.

Barber — A son, Trevor David Barber, was born to David and Diana Barber of Duarte, CA, on April 14, 1993.

Leth — A daughter, Taylor Marie Leth, was born to Brent and Twila (Carrig) Leth on April 30, 1993, in Syracuse, NE.

Swing — Esther D. Swing, 81, died on March 7, 1993, in Albuquerque, N.M., where she had lived for 40 years.

She was born near Shiloh, N.J., on May 18, 1911, the daughter of Benjamin C. and Anna (Bowden) Davis. She married Charles D. Swing at Shiloh on June 1, 1931.

Esther participated in the music program of the Shiloh Seventh Day Baptist Church, where she was baptized and began her many years of service to the Lord as a member of that church.

As an SDB pastor’s wife for nearly 40 years, Esther will be remembered in many churches for her patient, loving, and caring ways. Her deep faith in God buoyed her through times of trial, especially physical difficulties. She is survived by her husband, the Rev. Charles D. Swing; three daughters, Arline Burdick of Albuquerque; Peggy Worth, of Albuquerque; and Ann, of Albuquerque; one brother, Mervin E. Davis of Shiloh; one sister, Ethel Dickinson of Wilia; 14 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and many great-great-grandchildren. In addition, she predeceased by two daughters, Marion Mahoney and Ruby Crandall.

The funeral was held on March 30, 1993, at the Avery-Webster Funeral Home in Albuquerque. Burial was in Rockville Cemetery, Hop­ kinton, R.I.


He was born on October 16, 1917, in Gary, Ind., the son of John A. and Viola R. Melby. At age 4, his family moved to Washington, where William lived the remainder of his life. A skilled auto mechanic, he taught those skills for several years at the O.T.C. Technical School.

Bill began attending the Washington Seventh Day Baptist Church in 1977 and soon became an ardent member. He served as deacon, Sabbath school teacher, church president, and in many other capacities. Most importantly, Bill loved the Lord and His word, and diligently sought to share them with others. He demonstrated Christ-like compassion in his caring manner, especially within his family.

Survivors include his wife, Ruth, of Washington, D.C.; one son, Kim, of Los Angeles, Calif; three daugh­ ters, Laurie Hall, Gayla Melby, and Cheryl Stroman Morgan, all of that district; one sister, Catherine Marshall; one brother, Paul Miller; and 10 grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Mount Bethel Baptist Church, with Dr. Leonam White and the Rev. William Shobe officiating. Interment was in the Washington Na­ tional Cemetery.

West — Dulce E. (Hurt) West, 82, formerly of Battle Creek, Mich., died on April 11, 1993, at Carol Collage Foster Care Home in Michigan, Mich., where she had lived since January.

She was born on July 28, 1910, in Sycamore, Va., the daughter of Absalom and Cynthia N. (Bail) Hurt. She attended school to the eighth grade at Beres (Ky.) College, and was a homemaker most of her life. From 1928 to 1932, she did mangle ironing at the Battle Creek Sanitarium laundry.

On September 17, 1930, Dulce married Oliver J. West in Angola, Ind. She died in 1975.

Dulce had been a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church since 1981, when she joined the Ladies Aid Society. She was a volunteer for the Charity Union for several years, and enjoyed cro­ cheting, reading, and watching television.

Survivors include two sons, Ger­ ald of Battle Creek and Merle of Millbrook Ala.; six grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. In ad­ dition to her husband, she was pre­ ceeded in death by two brothers, Charlie and Orville; five sisters, Flossie, Carrie, Ollie, Flossie, and Laverne; and three nieces in 1993.

Services were held at the Bachman Hebble Funeral Service on April 14, 1993, with the Rev. James Galanaugh officiating. Burial was in Memorial Park Cemetery.
Loefboro.—Grace Loefboro, 86, died on April 21, 1993, at Bloomer (Wis.) Community Memorial Hospital. She was born on July 23, 1906, in North Loup, Neb., the daughter of C. Burchard and Caroline (Jones) Loefborow. When she was one month old, she moved to Milton, Wis., where her father attended Academy and College. She lived there until February of 1909, when her mother died and the children were taken back to North Loup to live with their aunt and uncle, the Raymond N. Bees. Grace remained there until her father remarried in 1915.

In October of 1915, she moved to Walworth, Wis., where her father was pastor. In 1920, she moved to New Auburn, Wis., where her father became pastor of the Seventh Day Baptist church. Grace finished high school in New Auburn in 1925, and graduated from Milton College in 1929. She worked in Madison from 1929 until marrying Eli Loofboro on June 4, 1938. She was on the Fine Grove (Wis.) School Board for several years, and cooked for the School Food Program for 15 years. At the age of 12, Grace was baptized and joined the Walworth SDB Church. She was a member of the New Auburn SDB Church and Women's Society, and New Auburn Senior Citizens.

Survivors include one daughter, Ruth Hughes of Yucca Valley, Calif.; three sons, Richard of Dayton, Ohio, Robert of Brilliant, Wash., and Terence of New Auburn; three brothers, Philip of Dallas, Texas, W. Donald of Chesapeake, Va., and Kent of Durand, Ill.; three sisters, Vivian Nelson of Glenmo, Minn., Anna Reed of El Cerrito, Calif., and Juanita Torgerson of Sau Claire, Wis.; six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Eli; one sister, Helen Nelson; and one brother, Wade.

Funeral services were held on April 15, 1993, at the New Auburn SDB Church, with the Rev. Dale Smalley officiating. Interment was in the New Auburn Cemetery.

Webster.—Wilma A. Webster, 87, of Austin, Pa., died on April 21, 1993, in Robert Ficker Hospital, Sayre, Pa.

She was born on November 14, 1905, in Couchersport, Pa., the daughter of George W. and Violet (Poet) Atkinson. On September 9, 1924, she married Merle Webster in Wellsville, N.Y. He died on May 20, 1988.

Wilma was a lifelong resident of Austin and had been employed for many years by GTE Sylvania in Emporium, Pa. She was a member of the Hebron, Pa., SDB Church.

Survivors include two sons, Harold of Cape Coral, Fla., and Merle ("Gene") of Austin; one brother, George Atkinson of Fort Wayne, Ind.; three sisters, Berna Phillips of Kelso, Wash., and Donna Grant and Elsie Dietrick, both of Couchersport; one granddaughter, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held on June 12, 1993. Burial was in Coudersport; one granddaughter, and another great-grandchild.


"Bill" worked at Milton (Wis.) College for 11 years. He also worked as a dairyman at Rock County Farm, Janesville, for 17 years, retiring in 1982.

He was a member of the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church, where he served as a trustee for many years. He also was a pastor and secretary of the church's Men's Fellowship.

Bill was a 50-year member and past president of the Milton Grange, and had served as chaplain for the State Grange. He joined the Milton Oddfellows Lodge in 1947 and transferred to Janesville Lodge No. 14 in 1962. (He served as treasurer of the Janesville lodge.) Bill was also a member of the Rock River Encampment, and the Canton Blackhawk No. 6.

Survivors include one brother, James of Gorham; one sister, Frances Edwards of Rochester, N.Y.; several nieces and nephews, and grand-nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held on April 30, 1993, at the Milton SDB Church. Burial was in Milton Cemetery.

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**Obituaries, cont.**

**K E V I N ' S K O R N E R**

Take a look at the nearest wall. How do you view that wall?

Do you see that wall as forcing you to stay where you are; preventing you from change?

Or do you see that wall as a source of comfort—holding up the ceiling above you, and perhaps protecting you from the dangers (loud music, gabby teens, junk TV) in the next room?

Perspective. One person's obstruction could be another person's protection.

Baptists—and Seventh Day Baptists in particular—should be aware of the precious freedoms we could lose if our wall of separation between Church and State is struck down.

One former missionary gave me a real-life situation of Church/State assimilation. The system in that culture had welcomed prayer and religion in the public schools. In fact, religion was so welcome that everyone—everyone—had to participate or sit through an entire Catholic mass during the graduation ceremony!

And why not? Catholicism seemed to be the majority belief, so it seemed the proper religion to include at school.

Never in the U.S., you say? Think about it. Even if the majority faith seemed to be Protestant, do you believe it would be a Sabbath-keeping Protestant religion? Where would our freedom be then?

As with most important issues, each side has its extremists. We have Separationists and Anti-Separationists. Some fight for freedom from religion in every arena. Others may resort to a faulty rewriting of history and dangerous revisionism to include religion.

May I propose a balanced approach? Written 30 years ago in response to governmental and church concerns, the 1863 SDB General Conference drafted "An Affirmation of Faith." May we, in 1993, remember our free and responsible Baptist heritage.

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**An Affirmation of Faith**

"Seventh Day Baptists grew out of that segment of the Reformation which held freedom of conscience to be one of the primary responsibilities of Christian people everywhere. From this historic tradition they draw both their reluctance to issue authoritative state­ments of position on specific public issues which might be considered by some to be binding upon individual members, and their refusal to recognize the authority of the state over the individual matters of religious principle.

Seventh Day Baptists have always made an unequivocal distinction between the administrative organization of the church and the institutions and agencies of government, declaring their absolute separation on theological principle rather than for practical advantage.

However, though principles do not change, it is recognized that forms of government and the claims of civil authority both change and differ, necessitating constant vigilance and study by Christian people so that essential principles may be universally maintained, and though the separation of church and state is reaffirmed, it is recognized that Christian people organize into churches bear spiritual responsibility for the political conscience and spiritual loyalties of individuals everywhere, including those in position of civil authority.

In their specific, contemporary problems, such as tax exemption for religious institutions, and legal enforcement of religious observances, Seventh Day Baptists both in the United States and abroad are urged to participate in a creative rediscovery and application of the principles underlying the Baptist heritage of freedom and responsibility.

—Adapted by General Conference, 1963
More of the fun and faces at Pastors' Conference 1993

Pastor Matt Olson leading a Bible study from 1 Timothy.

Pastor Bernie Wethington presenting a theology paper.

"I'm warning you guys—these things are loaded!" (Rod Henry).

A wild skit on "Talent" night.
Kneeling: Matt Olson (the dog); Harold King, Rod Henry, and Dave Thorngate (table and chair).
Back row: Dave Taylor (the villain); Kathi King (grandmother); Vivian Looper (young female); and George Calhoun (the hero).

The Bill Bowyers, Ken Davises, Ilou Sanford, and Jeanne Yurke.

Lining up for another excellent meal at the Shiloh church Fellowship Hall.