Blending musical styles at church

Pleasing us or pleasing God?

- What happens in a blender
- ‘What’s wrong with Fanny Crosby?’
- Barna: ‘True worship is rare’
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Attn: Youth!

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* birthday greetings for a friend
* something God put on your heart to share
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deproperings from magazines
* an update on your church or community
* a really good Bible Study you went to

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—Aubrey Appel

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What can happen in a blender
by Mayola Warner

We wondered, would—could—this new style of music blend with the hymns we all knew and loved? Would it be "proper," would it be edifying, would it be pleasing to our Heavenly Father?

Whenever our family attended the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, we were always both blessed and challenged. But I will never forget the Conference held at Milton, Wis., in 1970.

The Pre-Con youth presented a contemporary, upbeat, Christ-honoring musical that year called "Tell Me It Like It Is." We all loved it, so much so that I was challenged in my spirit to "go back home and see if the area youth would like to do a similar upbeat musical!" I told God, "Okay, maybe just one for the coming Christmas season."

The bottom line is that "yes, they did," and a teenage singing group was born that was to minister primarily to teens. They named themselves "The Power Company" (Acts 1:8).

For 20-plus years, God kept the group alive and actively serving Him. He blessed the commitment and effort of the various musical directors and the spiritual supporters along the way—even to bringing together 10 couples in Christian marriage! Psalm 118:23 says it all... "it was the Lord’s doing, and it was marvelous in our eyes."

Blender gets turned on
Why am I sharing all of this now? Because it was at about the same time (1970) that the "blender" was turned on in the Verona, N.Y., church when we added praise and worship choruses to our traditional order of service.

We wondered, would—could—this new style of music blend with the hymns we all knew and loved? Would it be "proper," would it be edifying, would it be pleasing to our Heavenly Father? As pianist/organist, I felt that it would, as did our pastor and some enthusiastic song leaders.

And so, the blender for combining the two types of music was plugged in. Some folks liked it a lot; some disliked it a lot.

Jolts, different speeds
I recall one Sabbath when we sang the song, "Lord of the Dance." There was a real jolt in the blender, and it was turned down a bit. Some were shocked and felt that this new music was certainly not right for Sabbath morning worship.

The blending of the old with the new was bringing change, and change isn’t always easy. But we all loved each other and tried to apply God’s grace. The blender remained turned on, but at a lower level for quite a while.

It was during that time that I happened to attend a Catholic charismatic praise and prayer night. My heart was blessed as I observed all ages, even coiffured gray-haired ladies, joyfully singing the simple Scripture songs and praise choruses that our kids had learned in Sabbath School and Vacation Bible School.

With adoration for Jesus, they also used their hand motions with simple songs like, "His Banner Over Me Is Love." Just to see that all ages and types of people could be caught up in the love of Jesus, returning thanks and praise to Him via music, was keeping my personal blender open.

Balance the blender!
Of course, we all realize the importance of keeping a balance in everything in life. It seemed that almost everyone in our church tried to be sensitive to God’s leading for steadiness, stability, and blending.

Some Sabbaths we interspersed the praise and worship music throughout the entire hour. We sought to use joyful, peppy songs of praise to begin our worship, then perhaps a slower meditative one just before the morning prayers, and closing with a chorus after the benediction. By now, we were using the overhead projector.

As time went on, we realized that the delicate tension of blending change and change needed further prayer and adaptation. Two things evolved.

Add a separate service?
One was a Friday evening service consisting entirely of praise and worship music and prayer time. This evening opportunity was offered to our community as well as to our church body. It proved to be a real blessing for some time.

How did it help our church? It seemed to satisfy those of us who were hungry for "more" than the four or five choruses that we continued to use in morning worship. But when a couple of tambourines added their joyful tingle on Sabbath mornings, there was again a jolt in the blender.

A second attempt to keep the blend smooth was to provide two separate services. The first one followed the traditional, more formal order of worship, and the second was more contemporary, including praise and worship choruses.

This didn’t last more than a couple of months as I recall, because so many of our folks were feeling "somewhere in the middle." While perhaps the majority didn’t really feel all that comfortable with the changes, neither were they willing to reject them altogether.

A Biblical pattern
We took a good look in the blender and decided to unite the services again. All of this time, we were seeking and receiving God’s grace. We just added more of His love, patience, and godly tolerance to the mix.

Our pastor did some extensive studying on the Biblical basis for...
such music in worship and shared his positive finding in sermons and Bible printouts. About that time, I was asked to present a workshop at Conference on “Worship.”

God led me to use the pattern for worship from the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem to illustrate this. To me through it, if you will: the pattern given in Scripture is still valid and helpful to us. We walk with me through it, if you will:

• Personal ascent. The Jewish people began their singing long before they reached the outer courts of the tabernacle/temple.

In fact, did you know that Psalms 120 through 134 are all “songs of ascent”? Singing the joyful songs, expressing our praise to the almighty and eternal God, helps us to begin to focus on Him and is a much-needed transition. Why? We need to change gears from the work week and the “hurry, hurry everyday, we’re late already.” Singing these songs helps our personal ascent! And so we “enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise” (Psalms 100:4).

• The outer court. Moving on to the outer court where the brazen altar and laver are located, we now focus on the precious blood shed for us on the cross and see fresh cleansing. We sing about His wondrous love and move on into the holy place where our songs are slower, more meditative.

• The holy of holies. Finally we enter, as it were, the very holy of holies where we bow our hearts, some lift their hands and just quietly worship Father God.

Blending = growth, lessons

What has been happening these past years is a steadiness of order and increasing sensitivity to be obedient to God’s will. I believe that because of this whole need for blending in the Verona church, God has been able to use the experience as ongoing lessons (Romans 8:28).

At the present time, it seems that God is moving us from a plateau. A praise band is currently adding their ministry to our morning worship. While our worship time is not perfect (and never will be until we worship together in heaven), we are learning His greater lessons.

“Love is patient and kind, doesn’t demand its own way. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful and endures through every circumstance…” (1 Cor. 13)

To God be the glory. 🙏

Mayola Werner is a deaconess and organist at the Verona, N.Y., SDB Church.

“…”What’s wrong with Fanny Crosby?”

by Doreen Davis

“…”What’s wrong with Fanny Crosby?” I can still hear the words spoken by a dear saint at a special business meeting held to choose new hymnbooks for the Milton, Wis., church. Being a teenager, I wanted very much for us to choose the newly-published “Hymns for the Family of God,” because it contained many contemporary selections, including works by Bill and Gloria Gaither, Andráé Crouch, and even some praise choruses.

The ongoing discussion weighed the value of traditional and classical music, which had stood the “test of time,” against the desire to meet the needs of more than just the “musicians.”

I can remember feeling (however irrational) that if the members decided against a fresher blend of music, they were saying “We don’t care whether we keep our youth, or whether we move forward at all.” That was over 20 years ago. The Milton church is still using “Hymns for the Family of God,” and I’ve become a great admirer of Fanny Crosby. However, the struggle to find the right blend of music for any one church body still goes on, as I suspect it has for centuries.

The answer is not in which hymnbook a congregation chooses, or in how many trained musicians are in attendance. The answer is in whether we love each other enough, and care enough about the message of the music, to creatively work out our differences, thereby glorifying God in our worship.

In their search for more meaningful worship, many SDB churches are incorporating so-called “praise and worship” music into their services. Previously relegated to camps and youth meetings, this assortment of music generally consists of choruses sung in “sets” and in a more contemporary style. As this less traditional style becomes more common on Sabbath morning, it is not surprising that many members—especially those who take great pride in our “SDB heritage of musical excellence,” or those who liked things “just the way they were”—are crying “foul.”

People are often afraid that by adding something new, we will lose something of proven value in the process. Frankly, these fears have not always been dispelled by the attitudes and actions of those making the changes.

In fact, when our little church in Seattle, Wash., began making changes in our worship format, the newly-formed worship team learned some hard lessons in respecting and loving our elders, maintaining balance between old and new music, and creating a safe environment for unencumbered worship.

By putting these lessons to work, we have discovered a blend of music that meets the needs of our members and has drawn us together as a family of God.

Servants, not showpeople

Did you ever wonder why we call the Sabbath morning gathering a worship service? Why don’t we call it a worship show?

Participants in the worship service should consider themselves servants, not showpeople. The worship team may consist of simply the pastor and the organist, or many more—pianists, liturgists, song leaders, choir directors, praise bands. Yet if each person has the mindset of a servant, then right attitudes and actions follow.

Servants love the Master and so serve each other at His command. Showpeople love themselves and serve each other only when it makes themselves look good.

When we formed a praise team in our church, we had overlooked
the feelings of another worship team member who felt like she was being replaced. As a servant, she was willing to step aside for the good of the church, but as servants ourselves, we recognized the importance of her contribution. We quickly, and lovingly, restored the relationship.

Selection
Ephesians 5:19-21 says "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, all the way giving thanks to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

It seems that Paul is exhorting the early believers and giving us permission to sing a variety of music. And, indeed, music has many different functions within the worship service.

"Praise and worship" music focuses on God—who He is, what He does. Praise music sometimes has a sense of "blurtting out" of emotion or response to God's character. Psalm 100 says that we are to "enter into His courts with praise." Perhaps that is why we often open our services with praise and worship: "Shout to the Lord," "Holy, Holy, Holy, Hosanna."

"Hymns express more premeditated, carefully thought-out, expressive thinking, with meaty content. They often state an objective truth about God or our condition as human beings. Hymns are very useful for instruction or restating, and/or supporting the pastor's message. Examples: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," "In Christ There Is No East or West."

Spiritual songs are personal expressions of how one's faith is being activated in life, sometimes a story song, sometimes a personal witness. They invite intimacy, allowing someone to make statements concerning his or her personal faith. Examples: "He's Everything to Me," "Just as I Am."

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the types of music to be found in a worship setting, and many of the songs in our hymn and praise books fall into more than one of these categories. The point is, however, that we should select a variety of songs to avoid an unhealthy diet of music.

An emphasis on praise music leaves out the content and personal responsibility of hymns and spiritual songs. Likewise, an emphasis on hymns might tend to keep religion in people's heads, to the exclusion of praise and owning of a personal relationship to the Savior. Too much focus on spiritual songs may lead to a dependence on other people's testimonies.

No church can ensure perfect balance in every worship, and I am not sure that that should even be our goal, since the theme and focus of worship services may change from week to week. However, in the overall program of the church, each of these types of music should be represented.

Safe environment
One of the most important jobs of the servant worship team is to create a safe environment in which people may participate without undue fear or extreme reserve.

As I have talked to many church people about the ongoing changes in our music ministry, most of the negative comments regarding the praise and worship music were more about the mechanics of the presentation than the music itself. The great thing about these issues is that they can be remedied:

Problem: "I don't like to sing without music in front of me. I need the notes to feel comfortable about harmonizing."
Remedy: When at all possible, have the music available to those who want it, especially when introducing a new song. One of our praise team members-assembles a packet of music foe the one or two people in our congregation who want to see the music.

Problem: "I don't enjoy the endless repeats of the same song over and over again. Why is it that we have time to sing 'Praise You Father' all the way through five times, but then have to skip half the verses of the closing hymn?"
Remedy: Twice through a song is usually enough, once the music is familiar. We sometimes tap with a repeat of the chorus, but the overhead almost always reflects any repeats. Our praise team goes through the entire "set" of music during practice to ensure that it doesn't run too long. I believe that the Holy Spirit works just as much during the practice session to create a meaningful experience, as during the actual worship service. I also firmly believe that hymns were written as a complete piece; that the content should be considered as a whole. Therefore, when I lead the congregational hymns, we sing all of the verses, no matter what.

Problem: "The bottom line is, I sense an undercurrent of disappointment from others if I don't raise my hands at the right time, or if I don't feel particularly emotional by the time the song has been sung three or four times. I feel like I am being manipulated."
Remedy: We have five people on our praise team, including our pianist. Each of us has a different degree of restraint or reserve. One or two of us might raise our hands or clap, but the other two may not. By having a diversity of demonstrative behavior, we give everyone in the congregation an opportunity to express themselves within their own comfort zone. Also, those of our members who feel the need to stand, or sway, or lift their hands, are courteous enough to stand on the outside aisle or in the back, so they do not obstruct the view of those behind them.

The newly-formed worship team learned some hard lessons in respecting and loving our elders, maintaining balance between old and new music, and creating a safe environment for unencumbered worship.

Problem: "We never sing my favorite hymns anymore. Don't we ever get to have a say in the music?"
Remedy: We have "congregational choice" every six weeks or so. Before the opening hymn, I give this to the everyone's attention, so they can be ready after the children's message. We sing three or four songs in their entirety. There is never a dull, the choices come in fast and furious. And I always allow one choice to come from a child.

As previously noted, I have listened to many people complain about the music ministry, or lack of music, in their churches. In all fairness, not all of the complaints have come from the traditionalists.

At Conference, I have heard young adults call their praise and worship time following the evening service "the real worship," insinuating that the carefully planned and executed evening worship service was somehow phony.

People involved with praise teams are often discouraged by the lack of participation by some of the musicians in the church. I have heard that one particular choir director calls the praise and worship time a "hootenanny." But I have also heard those who prefer contemporary worship, or the traditional organ music and choir anthems "funeral dirges."

Needless to say, there is intolerance on both sides of the issue. How this must sadden the Father, when His gift of music causes strife among His children.

With a little work—and a lot of love—I believe we can strike a musical balance in our churches. Let's adopt a servant's heart and create that safe environment for true, God-directed worship.

To close, let us reflect on one of my favorite hymns, by none other than Fanny Crosby:

To God be the glory, great things He hath done! So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the lifegate that all may go in.

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood, To every believer, the promise of God; The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus, a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, Great things He hath done, And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son; But purer, and higher, and greater will be Our wonder, our transport, when we see Jesus we see.

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Let the earth hear his voice! Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father through Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory—great things He hath done! Sr

Doreen Davis is a member of the worship team at the Seattle Area SDBC Church.

Participants in the worship service should consider themselves servants, not showpeople. Servants love the Master and so serve each other at His command.
‘True worship is rare,’
Barna tells church leaders
by Marv Knox

DALLAS (ABP) — Although worship is vital, it is rare among American Christians, religion researcher George Barna has been telling church leaders.

"Worship is a non-negotiable obligation and privilege of every Christian," Barna said in his Inward, Outward and Upward: Ministry That Transforms Lives seminar he has conducted nationwide.

"We agree that when it comes to worship, God deserves it, the Bible commands it, and churches try to have a problem when it comes to worship, true worship is rare," Barna said in his seminar.

Religion researcher George Barna offers five ideas for what is required:

- Leaders in the church must demand that we engage in true worship.
- People in the church must refuse to accept empty worship events. They've got to hold leaders to higher standards.
- Establish worship experience—rather than worship service attendance—as a benchmark of Christian development.

Barna offers five priorities for worshipping churches

How can your church place a priority on worship?

Religion researcher George Barna offers five ideas for what is required:

- Leaders in the church must demand that we engage in true worship.
- People in the church must refuse to accept empty worship events. They’ve got to hold leaders to higher standards.
- Establish worship experience—rather than worship service attendance—as a benchmark of Christian development.

Barna defined worship as "interact(ing) with God in a very real and personal way."

Unfortunately, "all it takes is one of those (worship missteps) to paralyze your church," Barna charged.

Barna’s organization surveyed effective churches across the nation, and he developed six elements to consider for facilitating true worship:

- Be open to being uncomfortable in worship—allowing spontaneity, allowing our senses to be flooded, allowing God to interact with us. "We’re communicating with an amazing God."
- Recognize that true worship is a key to church growth and church health. Two things allow a church to grow—relationships between people on the outside and people on the inside, and a relationship with God through a regular connection with God.

Churches often evaluate worship incorrectly, measuring enthusiasm, attendance, and professionalism instead of intimacy, humility, and awe.

Noting only 25 percent of church-going adults correctly said worship is for the sake of honoring God. Other people misunderstand the content of worship, believing worship is about activities, not about developing a relationship with God, he said. Still others fail to understand the outcomes of worship, mistaking hymn-singing, giving offerings, and even seeing their friends for worship.

"The church also is guilty of putting up obstacles to worship. Sometimes, we get the wrong focus, trying to please people instead of trying to please God," Barna said. Churches also place the wrong emphasis, encouraging people to learn about God rather than interact with God.

Churches often evaluate worship incorrectly, measuring enthusiasm, attendance, and professionalism instead of intimacy, humility, and awe. "That's why they have no life transformation going on," he said.

Churches sometimes set the wrong goals for worship, striving for "human comfort rather than divine confrontation," he said. Consequently, they wind up "expecting non-Christian attenders to worship a God they don’t truly know."

Understand what worship is

"Instill an appropriate understanding of worship," he advised. "The focus needs to be on God, not us. We worship for God's benefit," he stressed. "The reason why we're doing this is that God commands it, God deserves it, it pleases Him."

"Worship is as much an attitude as an activity," he added, "and the right heart allows intimacy with God."

Commitment to Christ

"Encourage people to make a deep, personal commitment to Christ," Barna urged. "Quality worship experience depends upon us; we must bring something to the table," he said. "Worship is inside, and it comes out."

Commitment to worship

"Promote a personal commitment to true worship." "Worship is more than an under-
Standing of what worship is and why we should do it," he maintained. "The appropriate reason is because we love him."

But worship requires preparation. Barna's polling showed four items that Christians who have experienced God say are vital for worship. Eighty percent cited prayer, 60 percent pointed to the sermon, 50 percent said they must read the Bible, and 48 percent stressed quiet time.

"We also must expect God's presence" in worship, Barna said. "The 'any old event is fine' attitude will not do for worship, which requires diligence, he explained.

Connect to God

"Provide people with a worship experience that connects them to God," he insisted.

Music is the first key to this experience.

"Quantity makes a difference," he added. "It usually takes 20 minutes or more of uninterrupted music for people to be prepared for worship." Preaching also needs to be applicable to everyday life, and it needs to be presented on people's level—8th to 8th grade comprehension, for a short span of time. The third key to building a positive worship experience is a worship-friendly environment. "This includes intercessory prayer for the worship service, worshipful ambiance in the room, and an attitude of sincerity and authenticity.

Have an effective worship leader

"Worship should be led by an effective worship leader," Barna recounted. "An effective worship leader, he said, should be 'completely sold out to Jesus Christ!'; a humble, kind, loving, repentant Christian; a student of the Bible who is devoted to prayer; a true leader; a skilled musician; submissive to the church's leaders; an intense worshiper; willling to follow the Holy Spirit's leading; authentic and genuine; sensitive to the worship environment; and still growing spiritually.

Evaluate regularly, honestly

The worship experience should be 'challenged by regular and honest evaluation,' Barna said. "How many people experienced God?" he asked, citing the first criteria. Other aspects of worship that should be examined include participation vs. experience: the compulsory nature of the experience; the sensuality and awe among the people; excitement about worshiping together; and dedication to private worship.

"A commitment to implementing necessary change" to make worship meaningful is absolutely necessary, Barna said, acknowledging, "This takes courage."
A learning Experience

In September, Nancy ("Mallie") Petrie of the Verona, N.Y., Seventh Day Baptist Church sent to the Historical Society a packet of miscellaneous material that had been kept by her mother, Marjorie Mallison, a daughter of Rev. Leon Burdick.

The collection contained numerous clippings from The Sabbath Recorder, some old pictures (fortunately identified), and the record book from the Seventh Day Baptist Religious Society of Otsego, N.Y., dating from 1859 to 1916.

However, the most significant items from the historian's perspective were those relating to Pastor Burdick's first wife, Experience "Perie" Fitz Randolph. Before Perie entered the School of Theology at Alfred, N.Y., and became our first fully trained woman minister, she was a successful teacher, a fact which is often forgotten.

The collection also contained a certificate issued April 5, 1877, by Harrison County which stated that she "is of good moral character, and has passed an examination in the following branches with the annexed results: Orthography 84, Reading 90, Penmanship 88, Arithmetic 100, English Grammar 96, Geography 94, History 89, Art of Teaching 95."

She taught her first district school at 16 years of age at Spruce Creek, a few miles from her home. Corliss F. Randolph wrote, "As a school girl, she had been a pupil of Preston F. Randolph, a recent graduate of Alfred University, who, upon completion of his course at Alfred, had returned to West Virginia and in a few years trained one of the most efficient corps of district school teachers it has ever been the good fortune of the state of West Virginia to possess."

"Perie was soon fired with an ambition for an education, and speedily made a resolve to go to college. For several years she bent all her energies toward making it possible to carry that resolution into effect. Accordingly in the fall of 1874, in company with her sister, Calphurnia, she entered Alfred University, from which she graduated with the degree of A.B. in 1879. In the meantime she had engaged in school work for a short period in West Virginia again, teaching one term at Salem."

The collection of materials from Leon Burdick included Perie's Teacher's Certificate from Ritchie County, W.Va., dated November 3, 1871. There was also a certificate dated February 1875 from the Regents of the University of the State of New York stating that "experience F. Randolph was found to have attained the proficiency required by their Ordinance for admission to the Academic Class and was registered as an Academic Scholar, and that all Academies and Institutions of learning in this state are authorized to receive her as such without further examination."

Also included were the Articles of Agreement which she made to teach a term of 15 weeks of school at Auburn in Ritchie County, "providing a subscription of 30 scholars is procured, to commence M - y 1, 1882."

In this agreement, Perie agreed to teach "any or all of the common branches, Higher Arithmetic, Algebra, rhetoric, philosophy, astronomy," etc. on page 26.

One year ago—November 1997

Jan Bond, Shibol, N.J., honored as Sabbath School Teacher of the Year.

Australasian delegate to Conference, Dorothy Goulding, urges attendees to get on with the task of evangelism.

SDB World Federation meets in Jamaica, July 14-20.

Central SDB Church hosts a booth at the Prince Georges County Fair in Upper Marlboro, Md.

Five years ago—November 1993
Main features for "Getting into the Word of God" include Conference sermons by pastors Andy Samuel and John Genanga.

"Pearls" looks back at missionary Dr. George Thorngate.

"Focus" missions column asks for lightweight clothes for Africa.

Local church news: Pastor Harold and Kathi King...

10 years ago—November 1988
Historical features by Duane Davis and Don Sanford focus on SDB relations to communism and higher education.

Matthew Olson resigns as Director of Youth Ministry to begin seminary; Rev. Kevin Butler named as new Director of Communications.

Youth photo contest winners announced in The Beacon.

Auction and fun fair held at future church site in Newport, R.I.

25 years ago—November 1973
Beginning in January, the Recorder will go from a black-and-white weekly to a two-color monthly. Photos show off the new offset press.


Mid-Continent Association held at Denver, Colo. Workers from the Torren, Mexico, church take part in the program.

Due to health problems, Pastor Charles Swing resigns from the Berne, W.Va., church.

SDB Building is cited by the city of Plainfield, N.J., for "continued maintenance of its grounds and plantings." Rev. Albert Rogers, planner and caretaker of the shrubbery, accepts the award.

50 years ago—November 1948
Rev. Marion Van Horn becomes newest faculty member at the Alfred (N.Y.) School of Theology. A new wire recorder is donated for the preaching class.

Conference President Loyal Hurley begins messages on his theme, "Workers Approved of God."

German SDB Church of Irvington, N.J., organizes a relief effort for brethren in post-war Germany.

Editorial warns against dangers of commercializing the Sabbath.

Venita Vincent (now Zinn) concludes her "Children's Page" series on being among the first American tourists in Europe after World War II.
1998 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year

Earl W. "Butch" Hibbard of the Central Maryland Seventh Day Baptist Church received The Crystal Apple Award as the 1998 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year.

The recipient of this year's recognition is made. The nominees are people who demonstrate the best qualities presently teaching in our denomination.

By now, you have heard of The Crystal Apple, but perhaps you still wonder about its meaning and purpose. Each year, the SDB Board of Christian Education recognizes the ministry of an outstanding Sabbath School teacher in our denomination. Congregations send the Board nominations from which a selection is made. The nominees are people presently teaching Sabbath School who demonstrate the best qualities of a Seventh Day Baptist Sabbath School teacher.

This award allows us to annually reflect upon the task of teaching, helping us understand what a Sabbath School teacher really does. The recipient of this year's recognition, Earl W. Hibbard, aids us in focusing on the work of teachers in three areas:

1) The consistent use of the spiritual gift of teaching.

The supporting documents presented with Earl's nomination declared that there never was a time when he was not exercising his gifts as a Sabbath School teacher. Since he became a member of the Washington SDB Church in the '50s, and then the Central church, he has been a Sabbath School teacher.

2) The use of creative methods to teach the Scriptures.

Our Sabbath School Teacher of the Year is one who enhances his ability through attending conventions and seminars. He uses creative techniques in his Sabbath School class to help fellow learners gain insight into the Bible passages being discussed. Earl has taken home cards to his class that place the events of Jesus' resurrection in chronological order. He has given visual form to geographic and historic facts, impacting the study of Scripture. He has also encouraged Bible memorization through the Navigator Topical Memorization System and the denominational memorization program.

3) The development of future leadership.

What do Pastors David Thorngate of Boulder, Colo.; Robert Van Horn of Columbus, Ohio; Donald Chroniger of Shiloh, N.J.; and Kenneth Chroninger of Alfred Station, N.Y., have in common regarding their leadership training? Earl W. Hibbard was their Sabbath School teacher during their formative years, when they were developing their Christian Faith.

Once again, we congratulate Earl W. Hibbard as this year's recipient of The Crystal Apple Award, our Conference 1998 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year.

Periodically we are asked to talk about the work of Seventh Day Baptists in the world. We encourage you to pray for all the ministries abroad.

Latin America

Let us begin with our closest neighbor, Latin America. This area consists of Mexico, the Caribbean Islands, and some of the islands close to South America.

At present, we have very active conferences and churches in Mexico, Jamaica, and Haiti. A school is sponsored at each of the four churches that they list as members of their conference. Along with these conferences, we also have contacts in Belize, just south of Mexico.

South America

Below the Latin American region is South America, where we have five countries with Seventh Day Baptist churches.

Guyana and Brazil have the most active churches, with many members. These countries sponsor camps and schools. Countries with only one or two churches include Peru and Argentina.

Europe

European countries with Seventh Day Baptist churches or contacts include England, with two churches, and the Netherlands, with three. Germany, Finland, Spain, Estonia, and Poland each have one church.

We also associate with the Seventh Day Christian Church in Poland, which has affiliated Conferences in the surrounding countries.

Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Australia

Established and active Seventh Day Baptist churches in Asia are located in Australia, India, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, and New Zealand. These churches have active outreach programs and are in the process of evangelizing areas near established churches.

We look forward to the continued growth of the Seventh Day Baptist witness throughout the world. We praise God for His direction and encouragement of our developing churches.

November 1998
Have you given much thought to the way in which you worship? Is it a topic of conversation in your church? In the introduction to Twila Paris' book, In This Sanctuary, she finds the Latin saying "lex orandi; lex credendi est." Literally, this means "the rule of prayer is the rule of faith." A paraphrase might be "how we pray or worship is the way we believe." Does your worship expound on what you believe? Notice I said your worship, and not someone else's worship. Too often we look at the way another believer worships, and we forget the importance of our own worship time. I don't want to sing the praise of any particular style here, but I do want you to think about why you worship the way you do. Preparing for worship How do you prepare yourself for worship? Are you frazzled as you walk in the door, or do you actually begin preparations with some meditation time or music before you leave the house for church? Is there a particular kind of music that you can play in the car, or would silence be the best preparation for you? Think about it. What do you need to do to be prepared? With small children, or even older children, this preparation time might be hard. But put some thought into it and talk to others in your congregation to see what they do. In the sanctuary You're now in the sanctuary. What's happening? What's supposed to be happening? Are you looking at who is and isn't in church? Are you concentrating on the cracks in the wall or the dress that just pranced down the aisle? What is your focus? Did someone sit in your pew today? The nerve! How will you handle this, and will it affect your worship? Look at the bulletin Pastors and worship leaders need to ask this question: Has our bulletin become a sacred cow? Does it really need to have what it has in it? Does it need more information for worshippers? Leaders, if God prompted your heart to sing a different last hymn than the one you printed in the bulletin on Wednesday, would you listen to Him or leave it as it is? Try going without a worship folder one week and see what happens. Radial, huh? Tradition!! Why do you sing the doxology that has been sung forever? Is it truly a part of worship, or just tradition? Why do you take the offering in the part of the service that you do? Does it fit there? Is it an interruption or truly an offering? Does your order of worship flow freely or is it a combination of choppy waves and stagnant pools? Stop, look, and think Look at all aspects of your worship, from the prelude to the postlude. Do you need the prelude? Could silence be a part of the pre-worship experience? Could someone play the piano, guitar (gasp!), trumpet, or could the choir sing the prelude? Does the postlude have to be loud and fast, or could it leave the congregation with the strains of the closing hymn in their minds? Why is your children's message where it is? Could it be moved to really "fit"? Do you know what the person doing the children's message is going to say? Do they know what the general idea of the service is going to be? What happens just before the sermon? Is your service predictable? Should it be? Do you leave room for God to make some changes? My purpose here is to encourage you to think about why you do what you do when you come to church or plan the service. Does it meet the needs of your people, but would it be so foreign to visitors that they would be lost? Get your Worship Committee together, make a pot of tea, and talk, talk, talk! If you don't have a committee, create one, if only for the purpose of asking some of these questions. Our worship should rise out of our thankfulness for what God has done for us through His Son, our Savior. Read 1 Peter 2:9-10 again. That's a lot to be thankful for, isn't it? So, how are you declaring the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light? 🙏
Henry to end service in 1999
by Leanne Lippincott

Rev. Rodney Henry, a longtime denominational employee and current Interim Executive Secretary, has announced that he will be leaving the SDB Center in Janesville, Wis., at the end of 1999. On September 1, 1998, Rod celebrated his 10th anniversary of serving the Council on Ministry (COM) as Director of Pastoral Services and Dean of the School of Ministry. That date also marked his 15th year as a Center employee. In his announcement, Rod indicated that he will not be renewing his COM contract beyond the current contract of December 31, 1999. He also said he will not serve as Executive Secretary beyond his current commitment.

"The past year has been a time of evaluation and reflection regarding my future ministry in denominational service," Rod explained. "Camille and I have been seeking God's wisdom regarding my continued service," he added. In a letter to the Council on Ministry, Rod listed several reasons that led him to believe that it's time to end his service in denominational leadership:

- My 15 years of denominational service is far beyond the average stay of denominational executives.
- I perceive that there is a desire among our people for change in denominational leadership.
- My resignation will allow current denominational leadership to evaluate the overall denominational executive structure in light of three vacancies (Executive Secretary, Executive Director of the Board of Christian Education, and the Director of Pastoral Services).
- My own desire for change.

"The last 15 years have been a wonderful time of ministry for me and for my family," he wrote COM members. "I look back at the work of the Council on Ministry with a feeling of accomplishment. I believe that by leaving now, I will be leaving on a positive note.

"We don't know what the future holds for us," he wrote. "At this point, our hope is that the Lord will call me to pastor a Seventh Day Baptist church. However, we are waiting on His leading."

"I want each of you to know that this is an exciting time for Camille and me," he added. "We anticipate God leading us to new challenges in His kingdom work among Seventh Day Baptists." Ordained in 1984, Rod served as a missionary to the Philippines from 1979-1985. From 1985-1996, he developed and directed the Training In Ministry by Extension (T.I.M.E.) program and served as Director of Extension. In 1998, he undertook his present duties as Director of Pastoral Services and Dean.
Dear Kevin:

I am 85 years old, and I feel that you may be wondering why Buck as much as I did. It is just that we have been a little slow letting you know of our appreciation.

I am 85 years old, and I feel that you produce the most interesting and helpful Sabbath Recorder in memory. So do not let those who fail to enjoy your sense of humor disturb you. Just remember that Jesus Christ had a good sense of humor, also.

Vivian W. Harris Lawrence, KS

Please send your reaction to:
The Sabbath Recorder PO Box 1678 Janesville WI 53547 e-mail: sdbmedia@inwave.com

Dunn announces transition at Baptist Joint Committee

by Larry Chesser and Kenny Byrd

GREEN LAKE, Wis. (ABP) — James Dunn has announced he will step aside from his role as executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee by September 1, 1999, when he will become a visiting professor of divinity at Wake Forest University Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Dunn, who has headed the BJC since January 1981, told the agency's directors he would stay on after that date on a part-time basis. He pledged to continue to serve the religious-liberty agency "in a different role as long as my health, my successor, and our mutual understanding of the Lord's leading allow me to do so.

During their annual meeting, October 5-6 in Green Lake, Wis., the BJC directors accepted Dunn's proposal. They named an 11-member search committee and a five-person committee to determine the title, compensation and related details of Dunn's reduced role.

Kevin Butler, Seventh Day Baptist Conference, chairs the smaller transition committee.

Dunn, who will be 67 by next September, said the transition "will represent a change in pace, not a change in place.

Dunn and the BJC directors discussed his future part-time role with the agency in the areas of speaking, writing, and development. Details of Dunn's new role are expected to be presented to the BJC's executive committee in March.

BJC chairman Aidsand Wright-Riggins said Dunn "has been the most dynamic personality for religious liberty in the United States over the past 18 years. The vacuum created by his announcement is a huge space largely due to his perspective, his political savvy, his persistence.

At Wake Forest, Dunn will teach an elective course titled "Christianity and Public Policy," according to Bill Leonard, dean of the divinity school.

"James Dunn is recognized inside and outside the Baptist community as one of the foremost analysts of church-state issues in the United States," Leonard said.

Dunn's tenure at the Baptist Joint Committee coincided with more than a decade of unrest that left conservatives in power in the Southern Baptist Convention, one of the founding bodies of the BJC.

As the SBC moved away from its strong commitment to the separation of church and state, Dunn and the BJC became frequent targets of the new SBC leadership. The BJC's refusal to back new SBC positions on issues such as school prayer was among disputes that led to that denomination severing ties with the agency in 1991.

Since then, however, Southern Baptist support for the BJC has actually grown because of gifts from individuals, churches, state conventions, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Baptist World Aid supporting victims of Hurricane Georges

WASHINGTON, D.C. (BWA)—Baptists in the Caribbean are still recovering from Hurricane Georges that struck many islands in September. Lambert Mills, president of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF), reports that two of the five who lost their lives in St. Kitts were members of the Calvary Baptist Church. The church building lost its roof and suffered water damage. Communication is still difficult with some areas and CBF leaders have yet to hear from many places.
Marriages

Sweeney – Dickinson.—Jarrett Sweeney and Lora Dickinson were united in marriage on May 31, 1998, at the Marlboro Seventh Day Baptist Church, Bridgeton, N.J. Rev. Larry Graffius officiated.

Greene – Dickinson.—Carl Greene and Cindy Dickinson were united in marriage on June 20, 1998, at the Marlboro Seventh Day Baptist Church, Bridgeton, N.J. Rev. Larry Graffius officiated, assisted by Rev. Matthew Olson.


Geske – Giles.—Kory Geske and Jackie Giles were united in marriage on July 19, 1998, at the Battle Creek, MI, Seventh Day Baptist Church. Rev. S. Kenneth Davis, grandfather of the bride, performed the ceremony.

Graffius – Olinger.—Scott Graffius and Megan Olinger were united in marriage on August 9, 1998, at Herrick Chapel, Judson College, Elgin, IL. The groom’s father, Rev. Larry Graffius, officiated.

Randall – Call.—Bred Allan Randall and Lisa Ann Call were united in marriage on September 26, 1998, at the Milton, WI, Seventh Day Baptist Church. The Revs. Rodney Henry and George Calhoun officiated.

Bachman.—Ruth Mildred (Bayles) Bachman, 78, of Andover Township, N.J., died at home on Good Friday, April 10, 1998, after a long and valiant battle with cancer. She was born on February 6, 1920, in Butler, N.J., the daughter of Everett and Elsie Bayles. She was married to Charles Bachman, and they made their home in Wayne, N.J.

Ruth was employed for eight years as an assistant to her husband, who owned Ryko Textiles, Inc., in Paterson, N.J. She also was a clerical worker at the Social Security office in Paterson for three years before retiring in 1985.

Ruth’s husband, a lay minister, was the first pastor of the North Jersey Seventh Day Baptist Church, forerunner of the Raritan Valley, N.J., SDB Church. Ruth ministered alongside Charles, sharing her gifts of music, hospitality, and encouragement. Following his death in 1977, Ruth remained a vital part of the North Jersey/Raritan Valley ministry. Although she was unable to make the long drive to Bridge water to participate in Sabbath day activities, she was a fervent prayer warrior and correspondent. Her notes and greeting cards provided cheerful lifts to many over the years.

Ruth’s love of music and reading resulted in a vast collection of books, which she gladly shared. It gave her great joy to know that others were able to make good use of her library. In fact, a table of free books at the 1998 General Conference extended her giving throughout the denomination.

Survivors include one daughter, Helen Bachman of Andover Town ship; one son, Charles, of West Chester, Pa.; two brothers, Robert and Jack Bayles, both of Butler; and five grandchildren.

Services were held on April 15, 1998, at the F. John Ramsey Funeral Home in Franklin, N.J. The Rev. Robert Cassels, hospice chaplain, and Pastor Jeanne Yurke officiated. The funeral celebrated Ruth’s faithful journey with Christ and emphasized the resurrection life she has entered into through her risen Lord.

Interment was at the North Hardyston (N.J.) Cemetery.

Pierce.—Donald S. Pierce, 81, of Alfred Station, N.Y., went to be with the Lord on June 27, 1998. He was born on March 29, 1917, the son of Fredrick J. and Edna (Saunders) Pierce. He married Jean Lewis on July 16, 1950. Don operated the family farm in partnership with his father, and later worked at Alfred-Almond Central School. He became superintendent of buildings and grounds at the school, and was employed there for 26 years. He retired in 1976.

He was president of the Alfred-Alfred Station Senior Citizens, vice president of Baker’s Bridge Historical Association, director of the Allegany County Office of the Aging, and a member of the Alfred Station Fellowship.

Most important to him was his relationship to his Lord and the church. He was a 68-year member of the Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon since 1954. He cared for the church as a trustee and held various other positions of responsibility.

In addition to his wife, survivors include two daughters, Kathryn Powell of Bridgeport, W.Va., and Cynthia More of Alfred Station; one brother, Lloyd, of Alfred Station; three grandchildren, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A memorial service was held on June 30, 1998, at the Alfred Station SDB Church, with Pastor Kenneth D. Chroniger officiating. Deacon Donald Pierce will be greatly missed in his service for Christ and the Kingdom.

Accessions

Alfred Station, NY
Kenneth D. Chroniger, pastor
Joined after baptism
Angelina Barnes
Kara Burdick
Emily Kandel

Greater St. Louis, MO
Joined after testimony
Carolyn Merrill
Rachel Morrells

Raritan Valley, NJ
Jeanne Yurke, pastor
Joined after baptism
Matthew Bruno
Steven Weber

Birth

Cargill.—A daughter, Kelsey Lee Cargill, was born to Gale and Angela (Bremmeran) Cargill of Ericson, NE, on August 15, 1998.
Robe of Achievement nominations

The Women's Society is accepting nominations for the Robe of Achievement for 1999. Please be considering a woman in your church who meets these criteria for nomination:

- Was/is active as a volunteer in some phase
  of denominational effort
- Has shown evidence of special service with
  her family and / or community
- Must be a committed Christian
- Must be an active member of a local Seventh
  Day Baptist church

A complete résumé must be submitted containing a life history, including her achievements and activities. Without a résumé in hand, the committee cannot make a competent choice among many nominees. If an individual has been nominated before, and you still want that person considered, please re-submit the name as well as the résumé.

Send all nominations to:

Elizabeth Bidwell, P.O. Box 136
Shiloh, OH 43354

Deadline: March 31, 1999

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Learning Experience, cont. from page 14

omy, elocution, Latin, German or Greek if desired.” She agreed to "pay equal attention to the studies of the little scholars; also will organize a teacher's class for the special benefit of those expecting to try the county examination for obtaining certification."

The amount charged to scholars signed for the 13-week course was $4.75, or 7 cents per day for those not signed. (For the lower studies the cost was $3.75 or 6 cents.)

The above gives some historical insight into the education of the time, but the success of Perie’s teaching is seen in the lives of her students. An autograph album inscribed with “Perie Randolph from her pupils,” was given to her daughter, Genevieve Burdick, in 1898. Approximately 300 autographs are found in the 130-page book.

Most of the signatures are from the two areas where she did most of her teaching, Ritchie, Dodridge, and Harrison Counties in West Virginia, and Allegany County in New York. Many of the names are those of church and denominational leaders of the late 19th and early 20th century.

On one page it states that “these three pages contain the names of my scholars at New Milton, summer & fall of 1880.” Among those scholars were Corliss F. Randolph, in the Salem church and community.

In a previous Pearls from the Past, published in the September 1993 Recorder, Experience's ministerial role was highlighted. As a pastor, as a pastor's wife, and as an evangelist she charted new territory for the women in the churches and denomination. But perhaps her greatest and longest-lasting service is in that area which helps mold the lives of children and young people in our community schools.

Before Perie entered the School of Theology and became our first fully trained woman pastor, she was a successful teacher, a fact which is often overlooked.

I talked to another pilot later that week about my bumpy ride and queasy aftereffects. He pinpointed the problem for me. I was so intent on focusing on the lighthouses that the bumps and bouncy scenery shook my equilibrium. (Along with my fried fish and salad bar.)

The photos came out okay, and I eventually did, too.

One co-worker asked recently, “Tell me again, what makes lighthouses so special to you?” As I re-told the story, I almost had to dust off the memory myself.

And that concerned me. It seems like yesterday, and “forever ago” at the same time. While on a vision-seeking and planning retreat in the spring of 1992, I received a powerful confirmation of my place in God’s kingdom as I stood under the fog bell at Pemaquid Point lighthouse in Maine. Since then, lighthouses have become a visual reminder of a memorable spiritual experience.

I would like the lighthouses in my office to be more than just a recollection of a mountain-top time. Yet in trying to recapture my past vision, my little statues have become icons; near- Idols.

A real lighthouse is a symbol of steadiness, of being there; of vigilance and of helping people. But in my office, it is just a symbol. If I keep focusing on an icon, that will simply accentuate the bumpy ride I may be on. Looking to an idol when things get rough can only make me sick.

Fixing my eyes on God and His vision for my life will make me strong and focused. The ride will become more bearable as I take my focus off the turbulence and onto my steady Guide who rides with me.

Let’s keep our eyes on the eternal Rock, not a temporary thing standing on the rocks.

HOW impressive!!

The Houses of Worship (HOW) website selected one of the Milton, W. SDB Church web pages to be included on their “HOW Impressive Tour” of churches.

We congratulate Milton church webmaster Joel Osborn for his good work, and are thankful for this national exposure. For the tour, go to:

http://www.hows.net/how/impressivemain.htm

Click forward several times, and there is the Milton SDB Church, statement of beliefs and all! Great job!
Important Memo:

TO: FRIENDS OF THE SABBATH RECORDER
FROM: EDITOR KEVIN BUTLER

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE SABBATH RECORDER IS FUNDED BY YOUR GIFTS? YOUR DONATION TO THE SABBATH RECORDER IS PART OF THE TOTAL SDB DENOMINATIONAL BUDGET.

I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ENJOYING THE MAGAZINE DURING THIS PAST YEAR AND WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO THIS PART OF OUR SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CONNECTION AND OUTREACH. MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND THANK YOU.

GRACE AND PEACE,

Kevin

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