Is Bible Study the WEAKEST LINK in your spiritual arsenal?
The SABBATH RECORDER

Who are Seventh Day Baptists?
If you've never read The Sabbath Recorder before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are. Like other Baptists, we believe in:

- • salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- • the Bible as the inspired word of God. The Bible is our authority for our faith and daily conduct.
- • baptism of believers, by immersion, witnessing to our acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord.
- • freedom of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- • the congregational form of church government. Every church member has the right to participate in the decision-making process of the church.

The seventh day
God commanded that the seventh day (Saturday) be kept holy. Jesus agreed by keeping it as a day of worship. We observe the seventh day of the week (Saturday) as God's holy day as an act of loving obedience—not as a means of salvation. Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ. It is the joy of the Sabbath that makes SDBS just a little bit different.

The cost is $8.75 per Directory covering the year 2001 is now available at the SDB Center in Janesville, Wis. The cost is $8.75 per Directory, which includes postage. For those who pick up a Directory, the cost is $7.50 each.

New Directory
The Seventh Day Baptist Directory covering the year 2001 is now available at the SDB Center in Janesville, Wis. The cost is $8.75 per Directory, which includes postage. For those who pick up a Directory, the cost is $7.50 each.

Time to spruce up
Camp Harley

Our spring Work Camp at Camp Harley Sutton, Alfred Station, N.Y., will be from May 12 through May 22.

Our goal is to spruce up the place and add facilities as we prepare to host Youth Pre-Con. We'll need carpenters, plumbers, painters, and other odd-jobbers. Meals and lodging or camping facilities will be provided.

Please contact Lyle Sutton at (608) 973-2081 if you'd like to lend a hand!

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What's in your Bible?
by John Conrod

There are some Christians who claim that in order to have an inerrant Bible, every word must be free from all errors of translation. They would make the claim that Scripture ceases to be trustworthy if we have anything less than what was in the original manuscripts (which are no longer available to us).

Some have even asserted that only one translation in each language is inerrant and that all other translations are flawed. This kind of reasoning is very misleading. The Bible itself states that the Scriptures combined their voices to give us the whole counsel of God in a complementary fashion. It is because of the multiple prophets and apostles, as well as the many translations and interpretations, that we can confidently claim the Bible we now have is the absolutely reliable and inerrant Word of God.

Because the Bible has been spread throughout the world for many thousands of years and in many thousands of copies, we can be assured that a very small percentage of it is in question, none of which jeopardizes a major doctrine.

Our problem today is not in the accuracy of the many translations. Our biggest problem is that too many Christians are not reading and studying, meditating and memorizing, believing and obeying, or quoting and sharing the Word of God.

May God give us the wisdom and love to honor His Word in our everyday lives.

John Conrod is Director of New Covenant Ministries and edits the Fishermen's Net Newsletter.

The many different writers of the Scriptures combined their voices to give us the whole counsel of God in a complementary fashion.

Why study the Bible?
Musings of an average churchgoer
by Liz Green

Why do we study the Bible, and how should we go about it? For those of us who are average churchgoers without any special training, how do we move to higher levels, and is it even worthwhile that we do so?

My observation has been that most of us, given the option, do not aspire to be scholarly about Bible study! We view it as a dry, esoteric use of our time, which would require far too much effort. It would mean actually applying ourselves rather than relying on the wisdom of our pastor or favorite Christian author.

Shame on us! I believe that our culture has made us too casual in our estimation of the Word.

The Bible's eternal value
There are many number of places in the Bible that speak of the eternal value of God's Word. Pick any part of Psalm 119 and you will see why we should love, honor, and study the Word. To name a few:

- Psalm 19:9—"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your Word."
- Psalm 119:11—"Your Word I have treasured in my heart that I might not sin against You."
- Psalm 119:130—"The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."
- Psalm 19:165—"Those who love Your law have great peace and nothing causes them to stumble."

Why study the Bible, as well as the attitudes that students toward the Word of God.

What's the purpose?
First, we must have purpose for our study of the Bible.

Why do we do it? Is it to be able to say that we've read it all the way through, or be able to quote verses at any convenient moment?

Well, perhaps. But we should be so in love with the Lord that we simply want to learn all that we can about Him and how He wants us to conduct ourselves in His creation. That's it—plain and simple.

One of my landmark moments in life was when I realized deep in my spirit that I did not know enough of what the Bible said. I was facing certain choices, trying to make a decision that would honor God. While I wanted to do the right thing, I didn't know what the Bible really said, even after spending a lifetime in churches. I had to have some help, and do some "cramping."

The Lord was merciful and answered my questions. However, to that end, we started a Sabbath School class based on Kay Arthur's Inductive Study Method, so that we might develop and sharpen our Bible study skills.

If you might be thinking this is a good idea, be forewarned that it was not a smashing success. While this excellent book provides a wealth of information and tools for study, I did not find it particularly teachable, or accessible for the students. Or perhaps we just weren't ready for it.

At any rate, we ended the quarter not feeling much farther ahead of where we started. That was when I began to think more about the attitude which we must bring to Bible study, as well as the attitudes that we as teachers must instill in our students toward the Word of God.

To that end, I read a wonderful book with unchanging Truths, which-free of charge—can actually keep us pure, transform us, and give us great peace and purpose. It's called Living by the Book.

Why do you study the Bible, and how should we go about it? For those of us who are average churchgoers without any special training, how do we move to higher levels, and is it even worthwhile that we do so?

My observation has been that most of us, given the option, do not aspire to be scholarly about Bible study! We view it as a dry, esoteric use of our time, which would require far too much effort. It would mean actually applying ourselves rather than relying on the wisdom of our pastor or favorite Christian author.

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The Lord was merciful and answered my questions. However,
I vowed that I would apply myself to learning what the Bible said so that I would not be caught short in the future.

Check your attitude

Second, we must have the right attitude for Bible study. We need to be humble and teachable, willing to ask for wisdom and apply it when God provides, as it says He will in James 1:5—"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." God's ways are not our own (Isaiah 55:8). We need to see that we don't have wisdom of our own, but must instead rely on the Lord to reveal wisdom to us. Our society teaches us to depend on what we know and have already learned. Yet God's Word shows us that we cannot rely on our own ways, but instead acknowledge His ways (Proverbs 3:5-6). Then he will make our paths straight.

The only reliable way that He will reveal wisdom to us is through His Word with prayer. If we are not willing to open the book, read it, and prayerfully look for His answers—and then do what it says (James 1:22)—we will not access His wisdom.

Be diligent

Third, we must be diligent. 1 Timothy 2:15 says "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." Be diligent. This word carries the flavor of making haste, being eager, and doing one's best. How contrary to what society embraces!

We make resolutions that we quickly break and forget, and look for the shortcuts in "Cliffs Notes" or on the Internet. If a project is too hard, we give up rather than see it through. But study requires hard work, and Bible study is not an exception to this rule.

We need to focus and set aside other concerns in order to set our mind on the subject to be studied. We must press through in spite of the difficulties, distractions, and sometimes even boredom, looking instead to the payoff in the end.

In the case of the Bible, that will mean reading, re-reading, meditating, looking at parallel translations, using a reliable Study Bible, checking noted cross-references, doing word studies, outlining, studying literary styles, using a Bible Dictionary, using a reliable commentary, and asking questions. The payoff? God's promises that He gives "all that we need for our Walking and without reproach" so that we may be "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4-5).

Bathe in prayer

Fourth, we must bathe our Bible Study and meditation in prayer. Without the Holy Spirit to quicken His Word in our spirits, we are without hope of understanding anything. Nor can our study be cold or clinical. We are studying a "living and active" entity, as is described in Hebrews 4:12. We aren't doing an autopsy on a dead body when we study the Bible. Instead, we are interacting with something living and active from our Loving Heavenly Father.

In order to enter into this active realm, we need to communicate spirit-to-Spirit with our God through prayer as we study. We must let Him know of our love for Him and our need for Him.

We should tell Him that we are available and want to talk with Him. We must tell him that we recognize that we have nothing without Him, which is why we are seeking His answers. And we must listen.

Not only is God's Word alive, but it is a living being, just as Jesus tells us in Matthew 4:4—"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." So eat up and enjoy the life that He gives!

A proper respect

Fifth, we must revere God and honor His Word. Plainly speaking, we need to have a high regard and holy respect for God and His Word. The Bible is not like a bestseller book that we pick up at the grocery store checkout and discard once we've read it, forgetting most of what it says. It is not a book we just put on the bookshelf to impress others, or store away as an emergency fire insurance policy.

Psalm 119:82 says, "My eyes fail with longing for Your Word." Let us value and seek after God's Word with that kind of intensity, giving priority to our study time, recognizing that in this act of obedient study we are gaining something of eternal value.

The "why" of Bible study is well summarized in this quote from Jack W. Hayford: "God's Word is the only source of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding concerning ultimate realities, capable of liberate and enrich those who will pursue its wealth." May you be so liberated and enriched!

Liz Green is Administrator of the Economic Assistance and Work Services Division of the Dane County Department of Human Services, and a deaconess at the Milton, Wis., SDB Church.

We should be so in love with the Lord that we simply want to learn all that we can about Him and how He wants us to conduct ourselves in His creation.

A habit that promises results

by Dan Cruzan

My first exposure to real Bible study was when I was a Boy Scout. Joe Campbell and I decided that we would try to get the God and Country Award. J. Paul Green was our pastor at the time, and he was to serve as our mentor for the course. A primary part of the assignments he gave us was to study a portion of Scripture each week and then meet with him to discuss it.

It's more than children's stories

Through these Bible studies, I learned that there was much more to Scripture than the stories I heard as a child—Noah's Ark, the Burning Bush, and the Good Samaritan. I began to understand that the Bible isn't an anthology of interesting stories but a record of God's attempts to reconcile sinful man to Himself. It also gives us a glimpse at what He has planned for the future.

I soon understood that this information was useful to me because I, too, needed reconciliation with God. And after being reconciled through Christ's atonement, I needed to know how to live a life that was pleasing to Him. I needed the information on those pages in order to live a satisfying life. So it was primarily for selfish reasons that I began to study the Bible.

Lifelong search begins

Joe and I didn't get the God and Country Award because our Scout troop disbanded before we completed the course. However, we did finish the assignments, and that Bible study began my 46-plus years of searching Scriptures; a search that has strengthened my faith and made me a better person.

I've had no formal training in studying the Bible, but I've always considered myself a Bible student. And now I'm a Bible study teacher who has the humble privilege of sharing what I've learned. A successful Bible study can only be achieved if done for the same motives I had as a boy. The student must recognize that there is something in the Bible that he either needs or desires.

Be a Bible reader

By reading three or four chapters a day, the Bible can be read through in one year. I like to read in chronological order because it gives me a better sense of time. Most of the events recorded in the Bible are not isolated timelines that help personalize the events and make them more easily understood.

The center column of my Bible contains a cross-reference system that can lead to similar topics, ideas, or words in other parts of the Bible. It also contains a concordance that is extensive enough to usually locate a verse that I'm looking for.

The resource that I use second most is Baker's Topical Bible, formerly titled, Hitchcock's Topical Bible. I have the paperback edition, published in 1984. It uses the King James version, giving me a different language aspect than my study Bible.

Resource ideas

The primary Bible I use for my studies is the Zondervan New International Version Study Bible. I like it because it's a reasonably accurate translation and written in easily understood "American English." (The King James version may be the best English translation, but we no longer speak like people from the 17th century.) Most modern Bible translations are good. I also like the Life Application Study Bible.

A study Bible is the single most valuable resource for a Bible student. One of its best aspects is that the study aids are right there, usually on the same page. Any good one contains footnotes that explain the unfamiliar to the reader. It will also contain charts, illustrations, and

cont. next page
incidents but are built upon, or are a continuation of, previous events.

Since the Bible is a continuous story, it's helpful to know the order of events. It has become my daily habit to read early in the morning before the day's distractions begin. Although the habit of reading is informative and valuable, it's not the same as studying.

Where the lesson starts

These daily readings are where my lesson ideas germinate. For instance, today's reading was from Genesis, chapters 20-22.

From chapter 20, I picked up the idea that Abraham sometimes was not a man of integrity. From chapter 22, I found that God chose Abraham not because he was virtuous, but because he obeyed Him. That seems like a potential, worthwhile lesson.

To develop that idea into a lesson, I would ask myself several questions: When did this happen? Are there surrounding historical events that affect this story? Who are the characters involved? What were the characters' motives? Can this lesson be applied to my life and to the lives of my students?

Many other questions are valid and would come to mind as the study progressed. The answers to these questions require Bible study.

Add color and sound

When I read the Bible, the events that play out in my mind are accompanied by Technicolor and Surround sound. It helps me to imagine how the people looked and what the scenery might have been like. The things I see in my mind are probably not even close to reality, yet they still help me to understand what's going on.

One of my favorite scenes in the Bible is when Elijah turns from the altar where God has consumed everything with a roaring, blazing flash of fire. The sight makes a hydrogen bomb explosion look like a Fourth of July sparkler.

I can see Elijah's crooked smile as he staggering away, his beard and eyebrows singed, and wisps of smoke rising from his hair. His eyes are as big as hen's eggs that sarcastically scream, "Didn't I tell you?"

What's your point?

When putting together a Bible lesson, it's important to narrow the scope of the study so that the focal point can be summarized in a sentence or two. As a teacher, I find it helpful to never reveal the lesson's goal unless necessary. It's best if the students can, through the study, discover and verbalize the point of the lesson themselves. This takes careful crafting by the teacher, asking the right questions and paying attention to detail. But it's well worth the effort because then the students "own" the lesson learned.

It's always a delight when a student comes up with "the thing" before I reveal it. Then I know I've done my job.

Make it a habit

To summarize, I believe that for Bible study to be worthwhile, it needs to be habitual. If it becomes a habit, a person will do it regardless of surrounding circumstances. For the study to be meaningful, the student must recognize a need or desire to discover information that will make his life better.

Last, but most important, is the spiritual understanding that God gives us. Matthew 7:7 states, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

Earnestly studying the Bible is asking, seeking, and knocking. God promises us results for those endeavors.

The book is arranged according to topics, so it's an easy way to look at other Scripture references dealing with similar themes. I believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and does not contradict itself. So by looking at the same topic in different circumstances, it gives me insight into what God had in mind.

Another resource that I refer to is the history book of the world. It's a rather dated copy, printed before "the revisionists" were hired. It gives me a quick view of civilizations and world leaders that were intertwined with Biblical events.

World history was so boring to me during my intensely busy period in high school that I only did what was necessary to complete the class and didn't commit much to memory. Now I know that God was there, too.

Didn't God send Jonah to the Assyrians? He used the Babylonians to bring about His promise for punishment to rebellious Judah. The mighty Roman Empire was part of His plan and came into being at His discretion. He was the motivating force of world history, and He is the force that will bring about the world's future.

I have two commentaries on the Bible, neither of which would classify as outstanding. But I do use them from time to time, and they sometimes help me get at the heart of the matter.

The list of other possible references is nearly endless. I own a few of them, but they would be just as beneficial if available from the library, since I don't use them very often.

Dan Cruzan owns and operates Dan Cruzan's Nursery in Bridgeton, N.J., and is a deacon at the Marlboro SDB Church.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

(2 Tim. 2:15 NAB).

In this admonition from Paul, the apostle indicates that there is a right way and a wrong way to deal with what God has revealed, and that the right way is not necessarily easy. In fact, it may require considerable effort—"Be diligent"—to grasp the meaning of a passage.

At first, the task of interpreting Scripture may seem daunting. We live hundreds of years after the people who originally received these documents. We come from a different culture and speak a different language. Perhaps we have had little or no religious training and find the Bible a maze of confusing stories that talk about people with unpronounceable names.

How can we even begin to make sense of what we read in these ancient documents?

Despite the obstacles, understanding Scripture may not be as difficult as it sometimes seems. While there are, indeed, challenges that arise with the passage of time as well as with changes in culture and language, it is possible to overcome many of those hindrances.

The most important skill to develop is simply the ability to read carefully—to pay attention to detail and to be alert for potential problems or for areas that need further study.

The main principle to keep in mind is that "context controls meaning."

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15 NAB).

The verbal context: What words did the author choose to make his point?

This is a difficult aspect for most people, since they depend upon a translation of God's Word, and no translation from one language to another is word-for-word. Moreover, some English versions attempt to simplify what the original author

March 2002

by Paul Manuel

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Feature

Understanding What God has said

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wrote for the modern reader to understand. They are more concerned with readability than with accuracy. Consequently, they may gloss over

rather than a weekly collection, Paul is recommending private savings ("each one...is to put aside"). Even without the ability to read

greek or hebrew, a good translation can help the modern reader understand the verbal context of a passage.

No transition from one language to another is word-for-word. Moreover, some English versions attempt to simplify what the original author wrote for the modern reader to understand.

difficulties or interpret a passage in a way that is not correct. The New Living Translation (1996) introduces a potentially misleading change in 1 Cor. 16:2. On every Lord's Day [Greek: every first day of the week], each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.

By translating the "first day" as "the Lord's Day," the NLT implies that the Corinthians were meeting for worship, but there is no evidence the early church met regularly on that day. Quite the contrary, the evidence we have indicates that the first believers met on the Sabbath (e.g., Acts 15:21).

To avoid such problems, it is best to use a translation that does not take such liberties. The New American Standard (updated edition, 1995) offers a good balance between the literal and the literate. Its rendering of this passage—and the rest in this article—is far more accurate.

On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. Rather than a weekly collection, Paul is recommending private savings ("each one...is to put aside"). Even without the ability to read

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On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.
World's best counseling service—and it's free

by Stefan Kube

Just a few weeks ago, I stayed overnight in a Queensland motel, and was delighted to discover a new, red Gideon Bible on my bedside table. Although I had my own Bible with me, I made a point to use the new one. And what a lot of "counseling" I found on the first few pages!

How did this shiny red Bible come to be in this motel room? In the autumn of 1898, two traveling men, strangers to each other, met in a Wisconsin (USA) hotel. Discovering each other to be Christians, it has distributed millions with its "Hear and be comforted" campaign.

Discovering the idea of forming an association of dedicated Christians, it has distributed millions with its "Hear and be comforted" campaign.

The Gideons International was formed from these humble beginnings. In the autumn of 1898, two traveling men, strangers to each other, met in a Wisconsin (USA) hotel. Discovering each other to be Christians, it has distributed millions with its "Hear and be comforted" campaign.

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Now, let us come "down to earth," to practical counseling. During that particular night in the Queensland motel, I opened the page "Where to Find Help." Twenty-four categories were listed: Afraid, Anxious, Bitter or Critical, Depressed, Friends Fail, Needing God's Protection, Sick, In Trouble, Worried, etc.

I personally needed assurance of God's protection. Psalm 27:1-6, Psalm 91, and Philippians 4:19 were given as references. I was very encouraged by reading these Scriptures. We all long to have a personal counselor, someone we can fully trust and who is available any time of the day or night.

The prophet Isaiah introduces us (Isa. 9:6) to such a person, the coming Messiah, whose name among others would be Wonderful Counselor. Isaiah 11:2 prophesied, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might..."

The Gospels are the record of Jesus' conversations with the people of His day. These New Testament letters represent the practical application of His teaching for godly living. We find His counsel in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus knew what was going on in the seven churches of Revelation and counseled them for their spiritual benefit.

Our Savior was not just telling us what we want to hear; He also wants to advise us, telling us what to do about it. He reassuringly said, "Do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

Because of Who our wonderful Counselor is, and knowing and understanding our needs, He can help us in ways that far go beyond our ability to understand, and far beyond the limited help that a human counselor can offer.

Fortunately, Gideon Bibles, with their "Where to Find Help" pages, still provide the world's best counseling service.

From the December 2001 "Link," SDB newsletter in Australasia, edited by Stefan Kube.

In order to promote growth and maintain a decent physical well-being, a good diet and exercise regimen are essential. Optimum health depends upon a well-balanced, nutritious diet and enough regular exercise to give the cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems a good workout.

In the same way, spiritual growth and maintenance depend upon participating of God's Word ("soul food") and following it. Regular study of the Word is beneficial to developing one's faith and walking in control of His Spirit. Being obedient to what you know God wants you to do is to exercise your faith in Him.

If you are unsure of what God might want you to do in a particular situation, that's where Bible study and prayer can give you solutions.

Just remember, sometimes the answers or development of faith can take longer than we would like. At times, the answers are right in front of us, but we "can't see the forest for the tree.

Or the answers are not particularly the ones we were hoping for. It may take a while for the "light bulb" to come on, or it may be more immediate. So be patient, and have faith that through the study of the Word, something good will come of it; that it will be edifying and practical for your daily life here and now, and for your ongoing spiritual development.

If you are even slightly perceptively, you may notice God's Spirit all around you. It is evidenced in the perfectioness of this planet that we all co-habitate, with everything so perfectly and delicately balanced to support the complexities of the miracle of life. If it's something good, it's something from God.

The more you are open to listening, the more you will learn. The whole purpose of studying is to learn more and gain a better understanding.

From the resources at hand, we can learn about the "blessings" that come from following God's will (intentionally or inadvertently doing good deeds of a selfless nature), to the "curses" or hardships that accompany selfishness and cruelty which He also warns us about.

If you wish and want us to be thoughtful of Him and our neighbors. He gave us His living Word, contained in the Bible, to help guide us.

Life presents a testing ground for what is contained in God's Word. You can learn things from hearing, doing, and seeing.

You can "test" or confirm God's Word to the things currently in your life. The more you study, the more you may see the correlations. All of your "life examples" can serve to support what is contained within the Scriptures regarding perseverance, and human nature and frailties.

Of course, you'll never know what it says if you don't hear or read the Bible for yourself. Whether it's with someone else or on your own, studying must be done in order for you to derive your own convictions and conclusions.

Personal salvation and maintaining a relationship with the Lord is something between yourself and God. Just remember, there is always more to learn. Our brain grasps only so much at a time, which is why it requires exercise in the form of study. Better yet, you should test what you learn by doing. You will remember the lessons better that way.

Even if you have read through the Bible more than once occasion, you still need to be reminded about and refreshed with what it says. The more we study, the more we learn of the Bible's counsel and the less dependent we are on someone else (who may or may not be accurate) to tell us what the content is.

Since we are already familiar with the Bible, we can more accurately check it out for ourselves.

Be patient. The more you study, the more you will know. And the more you will be able to consciously put it to use. Set some regular time aside (before breakfast, before bed, or early Sabbath) to read your personal letter from God.

Regardless of whether you're in a good mood or bad mood, be consistent and continue to study and learn from its pages. God's Word is good for your spirit, just as nutritious food and physical exercise are good for your body.
By definition, the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference is a conference of churches. In Baptist polity, the essential authority of a church rests within the people who make up the congregation. Since the number of SDBs and their diverse locations makes it impossible to gather all of them into one place at one time, local churches select and empower representatives to act on their behalf.

February’s “Pearls” traced Maxson Green’s 1829 horse-and-wagon journey to General Conference in Hopkinton, R.I. He charted his trip so that he could visit family, friends, and churches along the way. He was gone from home from September 2 to November 13, a total of 72 days, and calculated his mileage at about 1,000 miles.

Green didn’t mention his trip in his papers from the Alfred (N.Y.) church. Daniel Babcock, as a traveling companion, but his use of the plural pronoun indicates that probability. Six years later, Green was elected as the delegate to General Conference at the same location.

During those intervening years, a steady flow of migration into the territory provided other options of transportation. As the lone representative, Green chose to travel commercially. Thus, in his second journal, his diary listed costs rather than miles. He still managed to meet with friends and visit some churches en route to Hopkinton.

Aug. 31, 1835—Started on a journey to Rhode Island; arrived at Hammondport at 8 o’clock p.m. Expense 50 cents.

Sept. 1—Took passage in a steam boat to Penn Yan, fare 75 cents. From there took passage in stage to Syracuse, fare $3.75; then took a line boat to Schenectady, fare $2.31; then took the railroad to Albany, fare 50 cents; took passage in a steam boat to New York; Matt. 6:10. Went home with Eld. A.T. Wells and stayed the night. Felt much recruited.

September 11-14 contained references to Conference meetings, with various ministers preaching, and to the concluding business of the missionary, tract, and education societies. Green wrote, “Paid five dollars to the several societies.”

"Sept. 10—Felt much recruited."

During the following week, Green recorded accompanying the pastor on visits to five different families. He also noted numerous other calls.

Green didn’t start for home until October 5. His first recorded stop was at Troy, N.Y.

...took tea with a cousin, then boarded a line boat to Montezuma; stopped at Schenectady and visited Dea. John Maxson’s family; paid $1.25 for books; went aboard a boat and arrived at Montezuma on the 9th at 10 a.m. Stayed the night; fare and expenses $4.

Oct. 10—Took passage on a packet to Geneva, fare 75 cents; stayed the night, expenses 56 cents; went to meeting and heard a Presbyterian preach; took passage in a steamboat to Hammondport, fare 75 cents; then went to Bath; stayed the night, 38 cents.

Oct. 12—Took the stage to Howard, fare 63 cents; then went to Hornellsville; then took stage to Almond, fare 25 cents; then walked home and found family well; felt a degree of thankfulness to Him who had preserved me through the dangers of the long journey.

The experiences of such delegates as Maxson Green on the expanding frontiers ultimately led to an 1834 proposition to form Associations. These groups were to provide fellowship for the scattered families who had migrated from their home churches, while promoting continued participation in the denomination.

The original intent was to have these Associations meet prior to General Conference. Just as duly-elected representatives are chosen to form governmental bodies, the Associations would elect delegates to carry out Conference business. But Conference’s sense of “homecoming” and personal involvement were too well established for such a radical change. Thus two years after Maxson Green attended the 1835 meetings, it was voted that “those churches who were members of an association would be represented by the delegates from that association, and those churches that were not members of an association would have direct representation.”

Though there have been drastic changes in transportation and the work of General Conferences since Maxson Green’s time, some of those same experiences are being enjoyed, and tolerated, even today.
### Christian Education

**by Andrew J. Camenga**

#### Publications for sale

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**FOCUS**

**Struggles to register in Burundi**

*by Kirk Looper*

Over the past couple of years, Pastor Ndewayo Gilbert has had his work cut out for him in Burundi, a country in East Central Africa.

The work began in January of 2000, when he contacted the Missionary Society of the SDB General Conference of the United States and Canada, Ltd. Like so many of the letters we receive, he requested information about Seventh Day Baptist beliefs.

We wrote back, explaining our beliefs. We also included a pamphlet detailing the differences between the tenets of Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists.

By March, Pastor Gilbert had decided to organize a Conference and register it with the government. We sent a letter to the Burundi government, indicating that Pastor Gilbert represented Seventh Day Baptists in that country. This placed the responsibilities of organizing and developing churches squarely on the shoulders of the Burundi Conference.

At no time would we take those responsibilities away.

As a sister Conference, we pledged to help by providing advice and information. We further explained that we have literature and books indicating that we have a 350-year history. We wrote back, explaining our beliefs. We also included a pamphlet detailing the differences between the tenets of Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists.

Meanwhile, we wrote a letter to the Burundi government, explaining that we are a denomination and that the materials we had sent to Pastor Gilbert would prove it. The government was understanding and patiently waited for the material.

All of this finally resulted in the registration of Seventh Day Baptists in Burundi. Our churches were pleased, of course, and immediately began their work.

By the end of the registration process, more than 300 people had been praying in secrecy in different corners of the country. Now they can meet in public, and they are overjoyed.

The problems stirred up by the other Sabbathkeeping denomination still exist. A good portion of the Burundi SDB Conference's revenue is used to cover the costs of lawsuits brought against our people for practicing their religion. Even though they win a case, the lawyer still has to be paid.

They currently are involved in spreading the Gospel and the work of SDBs in Burundi. Since most travel is by public transportation and walking, the Conference could really use an automobile. They can carry only a limited amount of materials when they use public transportation.

In addition to a car, the Conference would also like funds to duplicate pre-translated materials. This would amount to several thousand copies of each piece of literature monthly.

The Conference's work is widespread in Burundi. When the expense of translating and publishing material is taken into account, it might be more economical to furnish them a computer, printer, and photocopier. The cost of this equipment would be $8,000.
“Today is.”
by Eowyn Driscoll, with help from her mother

In a word, the future is the least like eternity. It is the most completely temporal part of time.

This writing hits the mark exactly to what our lives are. We think of the future as an obstinate concrete block—our schedules, our entertainment, our plans. It seems to give the future a solidification that tomorrow may not actually hold.

The future always, and will always, have this quality of unanswerable. But it is illusion and can be a trap if we lay aside present concerns to chase dreams of what might be. (“The mirror is a dangerous guide to deeds.”)

Today is. “This is the day that the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Today is the day to speak softer, be nicer, study for the math exam you know nothing about, to find all of the wonderful things that God has given us. Only by acting in love, by going down the path that God has created for us, can our future be assured.

A Book to be used

I grew up in a Christian home, so there was always a Bible (King James Version) in our house. But I seldom read it.

It’s not that I didn’t try. Periodically, I’d pick it up, determined to read it cover to cover. But I seldom made it past Genesis and all of those “begats.”

“And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: And Peleg lived after he begat Reu...” (Genesis 11:17).

I also had trouble understanding other Old Testament passages.

“For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings...” (Leviticus 7:34). “For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin...” (Isaiah 28:27).

I didn’t fare much better when I skipped ahead to the New Testament.

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engraven...” (James 1:21).

My knowledge of Scripture was so deficient that, for years, I misidentified Philipians. A framed prayer on my Mom’s bedroom wall ended with “For to me, to live is Christ...” (Phil. 1:21). For some reason, I thought that “Phil.” stood for “Philatians.”

When I was 14, my favorite aunt gave me a large, black leather-bound Bible of my very own, with my name imprinted in gold on the front. I was proud of it and treated it like a priceless heirloom.

That’s why I was horrified the first time I saw my husband’s Bible. It looked like a dozen chariots had run over it. The cover was creased and torn; words were underlined in blue, black, and red ink; and notes were scribbled in the margins. (The only handwriting in my Bible was on the page recording births and deaths.)

My husband was equally shocked when he saw my copy of God’s Holy Word. “It looks like it’s been sitting on a coffee table, collecting dust,” Denny remarked. He was right.

A few years later, I found myself struggling with depression. When I opened my Bible to find comfort and encouragement, I was stunned to realize that I had no idea where to begin. I had always considered myself a staunch Christian, but my Bible and I were casual acquaintances, not steadfast friends.

Thankfully, God, in His infinite mercy, directed me to the passages that I needed to read. And what a blessing those words were—

are!

The Bible should be treated with care and respect, but it shouldn’t be pampered or idolized or viewed as a mystical, magical book, similar to those used by ancient sorcerers.

Like Jesus Himself, His Word needs to be out in the open, ministering to us and others, not set apart or hidden away in a drawer. Our Bibles need to see the crumbs on our rugs as well as the shine on our coffee tables.

May all of us renew our efforts to read our Bibles on a daily basis, and then put those wonderful lessons to work.
The fourth stone: Sabbath

by Gordon Lawton

The President's Page

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Part of the value of special events and days is the opportunity for remembering, learning, and teaching. Independence Day in the U.S. is a day to remember the beginnings of the United States of America. Each July 4th we who live here have a day to rejoice in our freedom and to remember that freedom is not cheap.

At some point, each child asks, "Why are there fireworks?" This opens the door to talk of remembering. God placed events in the lives of the Children of Israel so that they could remember, learn, and teach, especially when their children asked, "What does this mean?"

The question, "What does the Sabbath mean?" is asked in varied ways by our children and others. Sometimes it is asked gently and politely, while other times it is asked with antagonism or disbelief, or through rebellion and disobedience.

What does the Sabbath mean? The Sabbath—like the stones at Gilgal and the portable Passover celebration—demands the question be asked. This weekly celebration declares "God is our Creator" (Exod. 20:8-11). It shouts, "You are set apart for God!" (Deut. 5:12-15). In the light of our Savior we see this freedom to include freedom from sin for the believer.

Yes, the Sabbath was prepared by God to be a weekly reminder of our risen Lord, who brought us out of slavery to sin into freedom in Him. Yes, the elements of Rest (Exod. 20:8-11), Worship (Lev. 23:3, Luke 4:10), Doing Good (Mark 3:4), and Giving Life (Mark 3:4) enhance the Sabbath as well.

The Sabbath means depending on God rather than ourselves, another person, or any social or political system. (Those planning and leading extracurricular activities at school are at best, generally atheistic and often are outright antagonistic toward Sabbath issues.) Knowing I have a savior who does not ask me to schedule appropriately. Which means I may have to go to bed earlier than I would like to make the obligations of the new week.

Preparing for the Sabbath in advance is a habit that must be cultivated. Activities like shopping, cleaning, studying, and paying bills can keep us from focusing on God. We need to avoid doing anything that would distract us from rest, worship, healing, and doing good on the Sabbath.

Trusting and resting must be learned also. It takes discipline to set things and thoughts aside until another day so we can give God our full attention. Please take full advantage of God's wondrous gift of the Sabbath.

Pastor Gordon Lawton
(Hope to see you at Houghton College, August 4-10.)

Fellowship in the Bible

From "Fellowship of the Rings," where Frodo and friends fight for good over evil; to a 500-member "Bible Study Fellowship" in Pasadena, Calif. (wife Nancy tried to participate but found some of their ideas unacceptable); to a "Fellowship of Friends" in Altadena and Arcadia, Calif.

Nancy and I are privileged to be members of this last group, which is led by Pastor Scott Haurath of the Foothill Community Church (SDB) in Montrose. He is currently guiding us through the book of John every Wednesday evening.

Fellowship ("Koinonia" in Greek) means the spiritual union of believers with Christ. 1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." We must have fellowship and study, and love each other.

The first thing we do at our Bible fellowship is compile a prayer list for the week. Some weeks, it's fairly long. We pray for John and Audrey and her health problems; for Rocky's ministry at the camp he runs; for Dannette, our engineer and evangelist; for Willard and his Christian growth. We also pray for Nadya and LaVerne, for my back problem, and for travel safety.

There's a long list of other friends who might join us soon—like Norbert, who has cancer, and David, a patient of mine who was an alcoholic. We pray for the Owens' health and many others in our churches.

God; He's our God. He makes sure that all of us realize that and have an opportunity to respond.

Our Bible study group gives us a place to bring our acquaintances—some joining the group.

Pete's Prescriptions
from Dr. Pete May,
Executive Secretary

What does a prayer and Bible study group provide for God? It allows Him to speak to us and influence people so that they are aware of Him.

Our fellowship follows the commandment in John 15:17: "Love each other." In the Bible, this is what fellowship means. Scott needs prayer, too, as he faithfully leads our study. This group has been together for two years, with some joining recently and others planning to join after they complete their medical treatments.

What does a prayer and Bible study group provide for God? It gives Him a place to work on the people who touch our lives. It allows God to speak to us and influence people that so that they are aware of Him.

March 2002
Miami church honors long-time member

Deaconess Gladys Hamilton of the Miami, Fla., SDB Church turned 89 on December 27, 2000. Four days prior to her birthday, the Miami church honored her with an appreciation service.

Gladys is a charter member of the church and has served it faithfully since its founding in 1981. Although she didn’t start the church, she played a significant role in its formation.

Gladys had relocated from New York City to Miami, and the founders of the church lived in West Palm Beach, an hour away. Because Gladys didn’t drive, they decided to start a church in Miami instead of closer to her home. Because of their sacrifice, Gladys could participate in the life of a Seventh Day Baptist church.

Ordained as a deaconess in 1992, Gladys has remained active in the church although failing health has limited her participation.

She was born in Jamaica but moved to Cuba with her parents when she was 10 months old. She eventually returned to Jamaica as an adult. While there, she gave her life to the Lord and was introduced to the Seventh Day Baptist church. Upon migrating to New York City, she continued her relationship with SDBs, then sought to maintain those church roots when she moved to Miami.

Gladys is quiet, humble, and unpretentious. Never one to seek the limelight, she is the model of cooperation and meekness, and unquestionably deserves the attention heaped upon her by her church family. In addition to the gift she received, relatives, church members, and Pastor Andrew Samuels all presented tributes to her.

The elegantly decorated church facilities provided the perfect atmosphere for the delicious dinner which followed the service. The Hospitality and Organizing Committee did a fine job preparing for the 100-plus people who attended.

A verse from “God’s Hall of Fame,” read in one of the tributes to Gladys, says it all:

“This crowd on earth they seem forgot,
The heroes of the past.
They cheer like mad until you fall,
And that’s how long you last.
But God, He never does forget,
And in His Hall of Fame.
By just believing in His Son,
Inscribed you’ll find your name.”

Deaconess Gladys Hamilton, we salute you! SR

Note from Pastor Ed

The Lord is presently showering the Bell SDB Church of Salemville, Pa., with many blessings.

Since the new year, the church has seen an increase in attendance. Along with the new families have come a significant number of small children, enough to fill two and a half pews for the Children’s Message.

Because of limited space, the church is being challenged to figure out where to put these additional children. We also need to figure out where to get teachers for them.

These are wonderful “problems,” and we celebrate having them! —Pastor Ed Sutton

Young Adult Winter Retreat focuses on our “calling”

by Marissa Van Horn, Columbus, Ohio

Imagine with me for a moment...

Thirty-five young adults gathered together in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. Envision these young adults from all across the United States and Canada. And suppose these young adults were joined in fellowship with each other and God. Just think what an amazing and wonderful experience this would be!

Now, believe me when I tell you that this happened and was such a blessing to all those involved.

This year’s Young Adult Retreat (held Dec. 28 to Jan. 2) focused on our “calling” from God. Matt Berg did a wonderful job planning our lessons, and Nathanael Lawton prepared our devotional sessions. Both focused on examples of Biblical callings applied to our lives. We learned that we all have a primary and secondary calling.

Our primary calling is our job as a Christian: to love others and spread the Gospel. Our secondary calling might change from person to person, but everyone is called to serve God in the way that He chooses—whether that be as a pastor, teacher, or janitor.

These ideas were discussed in small groups as we got to know each other and prayed for those in our group.

Our worship times were led by Ben Calhoun and his many helpers. We sang praises to our Maker as we learned new songs and enjoyed our old favorites. New songs included those taught to us by our Canadian and New York (Jamaican) friends, Paula, Jody, and Tee.

Free time was spent visiting with one another, playing a variety of games, and enjoying scenic hikes on Camp Paul Hummel property. Sledding occurred one afternoon as well as visiting with the local red fox and deer. (They came so close that we could almost touch them!)

We learned that we all have a primary and secondary calling.

This year, the meals were supervised by Sanja Looper but prepared with the help of the young adults. We had great food and enjoyed the bonding time in the kitchen with our small groups as we cooked.

(Or in my group’s case, made up a team song and teased on Jon-O.) The New Year was brought in with much exuberance. We celebrated several different time zones, since we all had different times on our watches. But at midnight, Colorado time, we really celebrated! This was followed by a wonderful period of praise and worship.

I speak for every one of us when I say “thanks” to all who helped to plan and carry out this retreat, especially those not mentioned above.

God was good, and I encourage anyone who might be able to attend next year, to do so. That way you will not just have to imagine with me; you can experience it for yourself. SR
General Council meets in Florida

The SDB General Council met in Daytona Beach, Fla., on February 2-4, 2002. Reports came from all the boards and agencies, along with updates on the 2002 and 2003 General Conference sessions. Plans are proceeding to hold the 2003 Conference at General Fox University near Portland, Ore. We rejoiced that Pastor Her-litz Condition expects to gradu-ate from seminary in May.

Upcoming events at the SDB Center in Janesville inclu-de a Church Planting School in May and Summer Institute in June. 

Births

Gage.—A daughter, Peyton Marie Gage, was born to Dr. John and Andrea (Burdiuk) Gage of Gainesville, TX, on April 29, 2001.

Landrum.—A son, Isaac Theodore Landrum, was born to James and Paula Landrum of Kansas City, MO, on August 2, 2001.

New members

Lost Creek, WV
Don Shackleford, pastor
Joined after testimony
Ilia Ryan
Joined by letter
Don Shackleford
Patricia Shackleford
Lisa Shackleford

Milton, WI
George Calhoun, pastor
Joined after testimony
Aubrey Appel
Robin Brewer
Nola Mae Gray
Joshua Harris
Brandon Marteny
Gary Rosenmeier
Sarah Sager
Larry Schultz
Dave Zimmerman
Joined after baptism
Gary Groffle
Sharon Rosenmeier

Jailed by letter
Stephanie Sholdt

Salenville (Bell), PA
Edouard Sutter, pastor
Joined after testimony
Jeff Kargarise
Bobbi Rager

Current Giving 2002

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Table: Current Giving Budget for 2002

March 2002 25

Obituaries

Bethel.—Kirk Bethel, 57, of the Rudement Community, Ill., died on October 17, 2001, at Memorial Hospital in Carbondale, Ill. He was born on December 25, 1943, the son of Lee and Viva (Mor-ris) Bethel in the Rudement Com-munity of Saline County. On June 19, 1966, he married the former Carolyn McSparrin, who survives. Kirk was a U.S. Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, active in the local Republican party, former Special Deputy of the Saline County Sheriff’s Department, and a mechanic for the Highway Maintenance De-partment of the Illinois Department of Transportation. He attended the Old Stonefort, Ill., Seventh Day Baptist Church.

In addition to his wife, he is sur-vived by his mother, Viva; two sons, Rick and Bart; and one daughter, Marla Agin, all of Harrisburg, Ill. He is also survived by four broth-ers, Bill and Frank, both of Harris­burg, Mark of Florida, and Jack of Equality, Ill.; 10 sisters, Margaret Willilams, Linda Barefoot, Marla Vonlilen, and Cindy Blackman, all of Harrisburg; Christine Bowers of Stonefort, Fern McIntosh of Evansville, Ind., Geraldine Martin of Tuscola, Ill., Judy Blankenship of Karbers Ridge, Ill., Janice Bier-man of Elsberry, Mo., and Pat Fer­rell of Scott City, Mo.; four grand­children, several nieces and neph­ews, aunts and uncles, cousins, great nieces and great nephews, and a host of friends.

Kirk was preceded in death by two brothers, Cecil Jr. and James Edward Bethel, and by infant twins.

Services were held on October 20, 2001, at the Reed Funeral Chapel with Pastors Doug Burkhamer and Bob Farr assisting. Burial was in Joyner Cemetery, Stonefort, with full military honors by the Amer-i-can Legion George Hart Post.

Blomgren.—Marjorie E. Blomgren, 94, passed away on November 28, 2001, at her home in Milton, Wis. She was born on December 11, 1906, in Otter Creek, Wis., the daughter of Harry and Florence (Burdick) Robinson. She lived her entire life in the Otter Creek-Milton area.

Marjorie graduated from Milton Union High School in 1925 and was then employed by the Burdick Cor-poration, Milton. On June 12, 1929, she married Albert F. Blomgren. He died in May of 1972.

She was a member of the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church, the Mil-ton Woman’s Club, a charter member of the Milton Historical Society, and past member of the Milton Prairie of the Lae Questers. Marjorie was previously active in volunteer services and was an avid bridge player. Her greatest joy was being home with family and friends.

Survivors include one daughter, Carol Blomgren, of Milton and Santa Fe, N.M.; one son, Gary of Milwaukee; and six grandchildren, two stepgrandchildren, four great-grandchildren, three stepgreat-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by one son, Ronald.

Funeral services were held on December 1, 2001, at the Milton Seventh Day Baptist Church, with Pastor George Calhoun officiating. Burial was in Milton Cemetery.

Van Horn.—Nellie Van Horn, 97, died on January 16, 2002, at Cray Manor in Atchison, Kan., following a long illness.

She was born on February 18, 1904, in Cherokee, Okla., the young­est child of George and Mettie (Pierce) Van Horn. Her parents were in the process of moving to a farm on Seventh Day Lane in Nortonville.

Can., when she was born. She stayed in Cherokee with her mother and two sisters until she was three weeks old, then they headed to Kansas to join the rest of the family.

Nellie attended Lane Country School. After moving to a farm west of Nortonville, she attended the Sugar Bowl Country School. She also attended Nortonville High School, graduating in 1923.

On June 30, 1916, Nellie was baptized and joined the Nortonville Seventh Day Baptist Church. When Nellie’s mother died in 1921, she became the family house­maker, cooking and keeping house for her father. She was a high school sophomore at the time.

In 1923, she traveled to Denver to live with her sister, Laura Benzinger, and enroll in Beauty School. After receiving her license, she returned to Nortonville and set up a beauty shop. After her father’s death in 1931, Nellie worked in a private home in Lan caster, Kan., but came home every weekend to see her sisters and attend church.

In 1932, Nellie returned to Denver to work in private homes. In 1937, she started working for the local tele-phone company and stayed there for 32 years. Upon retiring, she returned to Nortonville and lived in an apart­ment at Community Homes.

When Nellie became ill in 1992, she entered the Atchison Hospi-tal. She was eventually transferr­ed to Cray Manor, which became her home.

She is survived by many neph­ews and nieces, including Kathryn Niemann and Reba Wheeler, both of Nortonville.

Funeral services were held on January 19, 2002, at the Nortonville Funeral Home, with Rev. Stephan Saun­ders of the Nortonville SDB Church officiating. Nellie was laid to rest beside her mother and father in the Nortonville Cemetery.
Understanding, cont. from page 11

**Theological**

•The theological context: *How did existing beliefs shape people's thinking?*

In Peter's speech at Pentecost, he notes that many Jews in Jesus' day did not recognize him as their Messiah, even having witnessed the miracles he performed. Acts 2:22-23—

Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst... you nailed him to a cross by the hands of godless men and put [him] to death.

**The canonical context:** *What does related material elsewhere in Scripture say?*

Because some passages contain only a partial transcript of an event, or because an author may not repeat material his audience already knows, the modern reader will often need to consult other passages in the canon of Scripture to get a complete picture.

Some Christians take this to mean that whether there is a need for a particular thing or simply a desire to possess it, they have only to "name-it-and-claim-it," and God will grant their request. Is this assumption consistent with what God has revealed elsewhere?

As with the earlier section on cultural context, Nave's Topical Bible is a good tool to locate other passages on the same subject. In the section on prayer, two verses in John's first epistle indicate that God is quite particular about the petitions He answers. According to the apostle, who was present for Jesus' instruction and would certainly have understood Jesus' intention, the source of the request must be a person who respects God's will (5:14), and the substance of the request must itself reflect God's will (5:14).—

...whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. The purpose of prayer is not to gratify us but to glorify God.

These six aspects of context—verbal, grammatical, cultural, historical, theological, and canonical—are not the only ones that can help explain the meaning of a passage, but they are among the most important.

Along with diligent effort, a few good tools, and dependence on the leading of God's Spirit, a Christian (even with little or no formal training) can be one who "accurately handling the word of truth" and who, thereby, meets with God's approval.

Dr. Paul Manuel is pastor of the German Seventh Day Baptist Church in Salemville, Pa.

Kevin's Korn

The first thing to go

Chicago's O'Hare Airport, once again. Even with frigid, snowy weather finally heading our way, I was not overly excited about heading to warm—even unseasonably hot—Florida for General Council meetings. Maybe it had something to do with our own "un-season" of a mild Wisconsin winter. Waiting at the gate to board my flight, I stared up at the "Departures" monitor. The names of several cities caught my attention; places where I'd love to return, others that I'd like to explore for the first time.

**Did I really have to go to Orlando?** What if I walked up to the counter, bought another ticket for who-knows-where, and just flew away? Well, of course I didn't do that. And I haven't given in to scores of other temptations that seep into my mind. Why don't I follow those wayward inclinations?

Conference President Gordon Lawton explained it clearly during a devotional time at the Council meeting (which I did attend).

It's called "self-control."

Gordon shared from Acts 24:24-26—"Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke before the judges in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, 'That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.' At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him."

But it doesn't look like Felix wanted to hear more about self-control.

Perhaps some of our youth at Conference didn't either following some costly vandalism at Lindshoog. (The Conference's pocketbook and reputation took a hit thanks to some poor choices and no supervision.) Gordon mentioned how self-control could have prevented that.

Parents and sponsors can provide guidance, too. He said that self-control motivates us to go to work, to pay our bills, to say "no," and actually get to bed early in order to meet the obligations of the next day.

Gordon also observed, "Self-control helps us to choose with long-term eyes."

I like that.

"Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control" (Prov. 25:28).

Let's follow the Lord's righteous example of self-control. His "staying power" provided our salvation. Allow that fruit of the Spirit to guide you the next time you're tempted to "do your own thing." You were bought with a price, and called to be His child, to minister in obedience where He has placed you. Exercise your self-control and honor the Lord.

March 2002 27
Why is Sabbath keeping a significant principle for believers?

What does it mean to keep the Sabbath Holy?

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