Love carvings—
from a stone
to a tree
to our hearts
Who are Seventh Day Baptists?
If you've never read The Sabbath Recorder before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are. Like other Baptists, we believe in:
- salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.
- the Bible as the inspired word of God. The Bible is our authority for our faith and daily conduct.
- baptism of believers, by immersion, witnessing to our acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord.
- freedom of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- the congregational form of church government.
Every church member has the right to participate in the decision-making process of the church.

The seventh day
God commanded that the seventh day (Saturday) be kept holy. Jesus agreed by keeping it as a day of worship. We observe the seventh day of the week (Saturday) as God's Holy Day as an act of loving obedience—not as a means of salvation. Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus our Lord.

The SDB Women's Society is accepting nominations for the Robe of Achievement for 2004. Please consider a woman in your church who meets these criteria for the Robe of Achievement nominations:
- 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 resume must be submitted containing a life history, including her achievements and activities. Without a resume 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 resubmit the name as well as the resume.

Send all nominations to:
Robe Nominations
Audrey Fuller
908 N. Colonial Cir.
Daytona Beach, FL 32117

Robe Nominations
Audrey Fuller
908 N. Colonial Cir.
Daytona Beach, FL 32117

or apply on-line at
www.sdbwboard.org

Deadline: March 31, 2004

Year-end Retreats
Young Adult
December 28 – January 2
Camp Wakonda, Milton, Wis.

Registration form in November SR)
kecialiatih@hotmail.com

Youth
December 28 – January 1
Pacific Pines, Crestline, Calif.

Information and registration at
www.educatingchristians.org

For both: See Board of Christian Education website (above) for travel assistance form.

SCSC Application
Deadline is now
January 15, 2004
Are you willing to serve with next year's Summer Christian Service Corps? Contact Grace Crouch for an application atsuccotash95@bakpaka.net

Send the application, postmarked by January 15, 2004, to:
SCSC Committee
139-141 First Ave.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114

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Life as a labyrinth
Love carved on a tree

by John Conrod

Although He allows us the freedom to move beyond His boundaries, outside them we are on our own. Freedom comes with a very high price. To obey the law is our blueprint for living.

We can trust the Bible

The Bible is reliable because God does not lie, forget, change His words, or leave His promises unfulfilled. We can trust the Bible because it contains the words of a loving, holy, trustworthy, and unchangeable God. What we need is loving guidance by a loving Lord, a map for living that gives us landmarks and directions and a constant companion. We need a Guide who has an intimate knowledge of the way, Someone Who will make sure we interpret the map correctly. The Bible is such a map, and God is the constant companion and guide. Who points out the safe routes as well as the obstacles to avoid. If we ignore the map, we will wander aimlessly through life and risk missing eternity with Him.

Watch where you step

In this life, we walk through a dark forest of hatred and evil in a world that has turned its back on God. His Word is our light to show us the way ahead so we won't stumble as we walk, revealing the entangling roots of false values and philosophies.

When we study His Word, we will see our way clear enough to stay on the right path. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we also accept His confirmation of the Bible as God's Word. His Word is not just for our information; it is connected with God's love that has turned its back on God. His Word is our light to show us the way. Discovering God's Word is the only trustworthy foundation.

Timeless and timely

God's love is both timeless and timely; it applies today and always. Because it is connected with God's changeless character, it is also changeless. His Word has withstood the test of time. Because God is its source of truth, we can trust its guidance. The power to follow Jesus comes from an assurance of who he is. Some try to make the claim that God's people in the Old Testament were under law, but the people of God in the New Testament were under grace. God wrote of His love in both the Old and New Testaments because He wanted His people to love Him in return. Way back in Deuteronomy, He said He would show mercy to the thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments.

God lamented, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" (see Deuteronomy 5:10, 29).

Will we ever learn?

King Saul never seemed to learn what God desired. The prophet Samuel said to him, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

David learned that lesson and wrote, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

Even the prophet Jeremiah predicted that "The time is coming, says the Lord; when I will make a new covenant... This is the covenant that I will make says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be My people." (Jeremiah 31:31, 33). Read the fulfillment of this prophecy in Hebrews 8:10. When Jesus shared the Passover before He died He declared, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." (Luke 22:20).

cont. on next page

December 2003
We should keep the laws and the Sabbath because we love the Lord, and because He carved His love on a tree.

John Conrad, SDB pastor and former missionary, is Director of New Covenant Ministries and editor of the Fishermen’s Net News Letter in Denver, Colo.

Jesus “came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16).

Keeping the Sabbath in the New Covenant—as well as keeping any of God’s laws—has nothing to do with righteousness. We should keep the laws and the Sabbath because we love the Lord, and because He carved His love on a tree.

A loving and obedient people??
by Rev. Francis D. Saunders

The new SR Committee (see page 22) has encouraged me to reprint special and pertinent articles from our archives. The following feature first appeared in our October 1978 issue.—Editor

This writer had been deeply impressed with the amount of emphasis placed on “obedience” during the 1978 General Conference study and worship hours. He has heard strong voices at the opposite ends of the debate on denominational reorganization; one saying, “God has not yet said ‘go!’” and the other contending, “Too long have we hesitated, let’s get on with it!”

The voices calling for obedience, however, have been vibrant and alive, and perhaps the reason God’s directive has not been sooner, clear, and unmistakable is that we have not learned the lesson of consistent, day-by-day, moment-by-moment obedience to the revealed will of God.

“The First Commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”
No other gods? No other preferences? Not one thing?
How about personal possessions? How about riches, popularity? What about family, friends, social status? How about security, a bank account, permanent funds?
Not anything before God? May each explore the depth of his own soul and respond.
A loving people? An obedient people?? “If you love me, keep my commandment.”

The Second Commandment: Thou shalt not make any graven images, nor bow down to them.
How careful are we of the words that slip from our tongues? To what extent are we obedient? To what extent do we spend in worshipping the God of heaven?

How much time do we spend in worshipping the God of heaven?
As much time as we spend with that new car, or boat, or house? As much as in fishing, or hunting, or golfing, or working, or whatever?
Let each soul explore the distribution of his time and respond accordingly.
A loving people? An obedient people?? “If you love me, keep my commandment.”

The Third Commandment: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
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A loving people? An obedient people?? “If you love me, keep my commandment.”

Living Branches
by Clifton C. Bond

I set in thought one Sabbath Death an oak tree huge and green.
I looked up in its branches— The prettiest sight I’ve seen.
The winds so strong had tried This giant oak to fall.
But it had felt the windstorms And stood against them all.
Just then I saw another branch So bare—you, it was dead.
The wind so soon would break it, By sap no longer fed.
Am I a branch that’s growing The life of Christ to tell?
Or will some neighbor lonely Spend shriveling in hell?
So may I stand more firmly, Put His hand again in mine; For heaven’s is the watchword—If your life is in the Vine.
Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches.”

A loving people? An obedient people?? “If you love me, keep my commandment.”

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A loving people? An obedient people?? “If you love me, keep my commandment.”
The Fourth Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

This Commandment includes a directive to committed hours of labor and completed tasks. A denominational distinctive! A holy blessing! A professed tenet of faith!

How holy is our Sabbath time? Listen to the voice of God, spoken by His servant, recorded in His Word, and let obedience be the measure of your love.

Are they merely sacred words flowing from tongues activated by hard deduction and cold knowledge? An hour of worship? A few moments of Bible study? A word of prayer? Listen to the voice of God, spoken by His servant, recorded in His Word, and let obedience be the measure of your love: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Spiritually delightful time? Holy time? A time for seeking after selfish things? A time for doing one's own thing? Take a spiritual inventory of your Sabbath hours! A loving people? An obedient people? "If you love me, keep my commandment."

The Second Commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus interpreted in these words: "He that is angry with his brother without cause has committed murder in his heart!" How deeply the Savior penetrates into the depths of our desires! Petty grievances. Jealousies. How easily we succumb to the temptation to react violently to every real or imagined attack upon our personal philosophy of life or way of behavior. We become angry, vindictive, mean! Search your own temperament and give answer.

A loving people? An obedient people? "If you love me, keep my commandment."

The Fifth Commandment: "Honor thy father and mother" (with attending promises).

We see parents provoking children to wrath! We are aware of children rebelling against all restraints and direction! It may be that the chief reason for the chaotic moral climate in our society is the breakdown of the traditional, Biblical family unit with its honoring of parental wisdom and control. Look at your own family and determine! A loving people? An obedient people? "If you love me, keep my commandment."

The Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."

Here again the Savior interprets with a spiritual note: "He who looks with lust has committed adultery already in his heart." Actions are the outward response to the inward condition of the heart. How desperately we need the inward cleansing and power of the Spirit of God.

The administrative potential of the Church's program is not as important as the spiritual purity of God's people. So, in order to go forward for God, we need to be cleansed by His power. How about the purity of your heart? A loving people? An obedient people? "If you love me, keep my commandment."

The Seventh Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

James speaks of the tongue in these words: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that defiles the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." We know this is true, and each of us who will carefully consider his own language will confess. Gossip! Halt-truth! Twisted meanings! A loving people? An obedient people? "If you love me, keep my commandment."

The Eighth Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal."

Lack of financial integrity is one of the world's prevailing sins! No, we don't deliberately go out and steal something belonging to another. But actually, how honest are we in our daily monetary dealings in business and personal affairs? How about unearned profits? How about income reporting? How about taking advantage of others in business transactions? How about "little white lies" for personal gain? See if your daily business is above reproach.

A loving people? An obedient people? "If you love me, keep my commandment."

The Ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

Selfishness seems to be the order of the day; and mankind seeks first those things which will supposedly enrich his temporal living.

Astounding things happened on the day of the first declaration of God's moral law: "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off" (Exodus 20:18). Today, we stand in the frightening atmosphere of the righteous demands of Almighty God. And we have added to that righteous awe the even more demanding love and presence of His Holy Son, Jesus, and the indwelling Spirit. The Holy Spirit can be no less than the Spirit of love, for "God is love."

Seventh Day Baptists stand at the summit of the mountain of denominational growth and accompanying reorganization. It is imperative that our attention be focused on the righteous demands of the Law of God. We must listen not only attentively, but also responsively to the Savior's plea: "If you love me, keep my commandments!" It is most probable that our spiritual commitment and growth will be in direct proportion to our response to His plea. 

Prior to his death in 1989, Fran Saunders pastored churches in New Jersey, Colorado, Nebraska, California, West Virginia, Rhode Island, and Illinois. Two of his sons—Herbert and Stephan—are also SDB ministers. His widow, Lila, lives in Milton, Wis.

The Tenth Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet."

Selfishness seems to be the order of the day; and mankind seeks first those things which will supposedly enrich his temporal living. He is discontent with the way things are. He seeks higher wages and greater benefits, primarily for the betterment of his own self, regardless of the welfare of others. This is the day-by-day testimonial of labor-management controversies and the traps which we all so easily fall.

Coveting the things belonging to others is the sign of our discontent. How about you? A loving people? An obedient people?? "If you love me, keep my commandment."
Feeling like Gideon

Another testimony to God's transforming power

by Linda Lawton

I came face-to-face
with God at the edge of
that precipice, but His love—
and the love of the SCSC staff—allowed me to step off.

Fear kept me away

As a youth, I wanted desperately to be in the Summer Christian Service Corps, a fact which may surprise many who knew me then. But I never mentioned it because I was afraid.

I was afraid of traveling by myself, afraid of leading people I had just met. And I was scared to speak in public, let alone converse with people I had just met. And I was afraid of leading anything. So I never applied to SCSC.

Two years ago, the Little Geneseo (N.Y.) church decided to ask for an SCSC team, and guess who was named Project Director? Do you think 20-plus years as a pastor's wife had cured my fears? Guess again. I was terrified.

I felt like Gideon

Despite feeling strongly that this was God had told me to do, all those old fears came crowding to the surface at once. I was also terrified at the thought of being responsible for two young people over the summer. I felt inadequate, unprepared, and ill-equipped. In short, I felt like Gideon.

You remember Gideon; He was the least in his family, and his clan was the weakest in Israel. When God told him to destroy his father's altar to Baal, he did what the Lord told him. But he was afraid, so he did it at night.

Gideon was the one who asked God to make the ground dry and the fleece wet as a sign that He would really do what He had promised. When God complied, Gideon was still so frightened that he asked God to make the ground wet and the fleece dry as a little extra assurance.

Not real confident

Gideon was not a terribly confident person. When he gathered a army from over 30,000 men to just 300.

Then God spoke to Gideon again (see Judges 7:9-15). What struck me most were verses 9-11: "if you are afraid... you will be encouraged."

God knew Gideon's fears, and it was okay. He didn't just say, "Don't be afraid, Gideon." He didn't say, "If you really believed, you wouldn't be afraid." And He didn't say, "Shame on you" or even, "Just do it!"

God did say, "If you are afraid, do this, hear this dream, and you will be encouraged."

How God dealt with me

That is how God dealt with me. He very clearly told me what He wanted me to do and that He would be with me. Yet He knew my fears, and it was okay. He provided me with encouragement at the SCSC training sessions. I felt safe right away at training, which was a miracle in itself.

The topics we studied and the activities we were asked to do led me way, way, way out of my comfort zone. Many times I felt like I was walking towards a tremendous cliff, and that wonderful training staff kept pushing me, lovingly but oh so firmly, directly at that cliff! They also provided a safe place for me to deal with myself and my fears.

I came face-to-face with God at the edge of that precipice, but His love— and the love of the staff—allowed me to step off. God stretched out His love and the love of the staff—allowed me to step off. God stretched out His loving arms and caught me and lifted me up.

A stretching time

I began to know God in a more intimate way during training, and that has continued since arriving back home. I now have a hunger for God, and my devotions are no longer just an obligation. If I miss my time with God, I feel I've missed an appointment with a friend.

SCSC training was a stretching time for me. It changed me. I am a different person now; just ask my children. Sometimes—for a little while, at least—I return to the person I was two years ago. When I wrap myself in an old, cozy bathrobe. But I don't stay there long. It is no longer comfortable, no longer the person I want to be.

Benefits of SCSC

We hear a lot about how SCSC benefits and changes the team members, but it does so much more. It changes the lives of Project Directors, campers, Vacation Bible School kids, and congregations.

Those changes are permanent and ongoing. Those who have been touched by SCSC have a different view of service, a closer relationship with God, and new appreciation for His work in the world. The things that are learned at training and during projects will be used over and over in all stages of life; in the lives of others as well as SCSCers.

The training continues

I was a Project Director again this year. In the safe place of training, God showed me that He has more challenges in store for me—breaking through new comfort zones, exploring new areas of service, experiencing deeper levels of acquaintance with Him.

God gave me a better understanding of who and where I am now. He also granted me a glimpse of what He wants me to be, a quick look at the dream He has for this next part of my life.

I admit that I'm still a little afraid, but I have been into the camp of Midian, and I have heard the dream. I am encouraged and, like Gideon, I worship God.
The recorded history of Man's attempt to find God covers roughly 4,000 years, from Abraham to today. Taking the stories of Noah—and even tracing back to Adam—we can add more years to that total. Why, then, in all of this time, did Jesus appear when he did? Why did God wait until Quirinius was governor, Herod was king, and Caesar Augustus was emperor before becoming Incarnate? Why did Paul (in Galatians 4) think of this as "the fullness of time?"

Three factors converged during this period in history, giving it a certain "fullness" that Christianity used to gain a foothold in the world. Three cultures—Hebrew, Greek, and Roman—at this time and contributed, in varying degree, to the impact of the Gospel. For the Hebrews, the religious climate allowed Christianity to take root. The high standards of the Jewish Law influenced the social and ethical mores of the people. Their worship was based on their experiences of true devotion found in the Psalms.

The prophets also contributed to the religious thought of Israel. While Amos spoke of a God of justice, Isaiah knew God in His righteousness. Jeremiah and Ezekiel paved the way for the personal devotion of a people in exile, and the Psalms and the Proverbs, experienced the presence of God even in enemy territory. It was they who delivered the messianic prophecies which gave the people expectant hearts. They had an ideal for which they yearned.

But Christ came into the world, not as a reward for the Israelites' religious fervor, but as a servant and the Jews offered fertile ground for this message. Even though they had their spiritual giants, they were a sinful people. They were arrogant and bold, and had broken their covenant with God many times. They had attempted to take matters into their own hands, forgetting God and even turning from Him in rebellion. Here, then, was the raw material from which God could work His plan of salvation through repentance and the forgiveness of sin.

From the Greeks, a common language could be understood throughout the known world. Their great learning and philosophies also marked Christian teachings. Such concepts as the "Logos" doctrine of John 1, and Greek thoughts concerning matter and spirit, provided a framework in which Christians could more easily express their beliefs concerning Christ, as well as their own experiences of rebirth and immortality.

At points, this may have diminished the miraculous in favor of a rational approach to religion. On the other hand, Greek thought, linked with Hebrew experience, was able to produce a champion like Paul, and the world has never been the same. Lastly, the Romans contributed both stability and mobility to the entire Mediterranean world. The "Pax Romana" which gives stability to our world, but there are few geographic barriers today prohibiting the spread of the Gospel to all lands. It may be possible for each generation to say that the "fullness of time" is come whenever Christ enters into our history as a new and vital force in the affairs of mankind.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."  

God in History

This editorial by A.H. Lewis appeared exactly 28 years before Pearl Harbor. Now, 62 years after that event, our nation and the world continues to struggle against occurrences and forces that we can never fully understand. Perhaps we can again find meaning in the words of the psalmist, and in the faith of one of our most respected denominational leaders of a century ago.

Lewis reminds us that, "The full meaning of human history... cannot be understood unless the truth be kept in mind that the history of the world is the history of God seeking to redeem and uplift the world."


The history of Christianity is rooted in redeeming love. Neither its power nor its development can be understood from any other standpoint.

As the study goes on he will find how God sustains and comforts men, executing righteous judgment for the oppressed; how He reveals Himself in endless ways; how mercy waits on human weakness and ignorance, and destroying justice is set aside because God does not exact from men 'the pound of flesh,' although it may be 'so nominated in the bond,' but rather, He pushes our transgression as far from us as East and West divide.

"Human history must be seen in the light of divine compassion; compassion which, 'remembers that we are dust.' But for this compassion the whole race had been swept out and flung on the dust heap of forgetfulness many times and oft. Equally, is it plain that human history—individual and collective—would have perished long ago in the jungle of human devices and the morass of human perversity, had it not been that God's mercy is everlasting to everlasting in eternal endurance, and that above the freaks and failures of human weakness and ignorance, and human perversity, had it not been that God's mercy is everlasting to everlasting in eternal endurance, and that above the freaks and failures of
God’s object lesson

Of the people God chose to have included in His record, Jeremiah is my favorite Old Testament character. Chosen by God before birth, Jeremiah was to be a spokesman to the nations. Even before Jeremiah could be called anything other than young, God called him as a prophet. As a prophet, he heard God’s voice, and God promised that He would protect him.

As Jeremiah lived in this protection, his words were ignored, his writings were shredded and burned by the king, he was thrown into a well, and he was kidnapped by the people the Babylonians thought unworthy of deporting. Yet, through all of this, Jeremiah remained faithful to the One who had called him. Even in the midst of miserable situations, he recognized that God’s gracious hand was protecting him.

One day, the Word of God came to Jeremiah: “Get up! Go to the potter’s house. I want to tell you something.” So, he got up and went. As Jeremiah waited to hear the message God had for him, he looked around and noticed the potter making something on his wheel. As he watched, something went wrong. The clay object that the potter was working on was suddenly ruined.

The potter responded by starting over with that same lump of clay and formed another object. It was at this point that God brought His message to Jeremiah:

“Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom, to pull down, to pull up, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it” (Jeremiah 18:10-11).

This is God’s object lesson. He took something common—something the people of the day could visualize—and set the image before them as an example of how He operates in the world.

One of the reasons that Christians can feel safe in using objects to teach truths about God is that God, Himself, used this method. Moreover, this was not a message aimed at children; it was aimed at adults. We can use the events and objects of our everyday life to introduce others to who God is and how He works.

As a starting point, we can learn from the prophets, and we can learn from Jesus. Then, we can open our eyes and watch what happens in the world.

Compare what you see and what you want to share with what God has revealed of Himself in Scriptures. When they match up, use your insights to help others grasp what God has shown.

These images and words combined into God’s object lesson. Yet, He was not content to simply give Jeremiah an object lesson. He also provided explicit instructions for its application to life:

“So now, then, speak to the men of Judah and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, Behold, I am fash­ioning calamity against you and devising a plan against you. Oh turn back, each of you, from his evil way, and reform your ways and your deeds’” (Jeremiah 18:12).

Although God’s message and its application was clear and compelling, He knew it would not be received. The effort to teach was going to be futile. God knew they would say, “It’s hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart” (Jeremiah 18:13).

Part of the reason God used Jeremiah to record these words was to give us an object lesson of an object lesson. We are called to be unlike Jerusalem—a city declaring the intention of God void, a people declaring the situation hopeless. God can and does change lives. To declare a situation hopeless is to declare God impotent. We must not do that!

Instead, we can consider this object lesson from God “a call.” Like Jeremiah, we can listen for God’s voice and be ready to act in obedience when we hear it. And, remember, we hear God’s voice even now. He has spoken to us in His Son, thereby declaring His love for us.

FOCUS on Missions

Updates from Africa

Nigeria

As the year between Muslims and Christians continues in Southern Nigeria, a real threat exists for our Seventh Day Baptist churches. Rampaging Muslims have chased many SDBs away from their homes and churches.

Since the Muslims burned many churches after ransacking them, our brethren have been left in a quandary, trying to rebuild their meetinghouses and churches without adequate funds. We pray that they will be able to rebuild, but few donations are coming into the Missionary Society office for this purpose.

Unlike in the U.S., most of our SDB churches in Nigeria openly experience persecution, often on a weekly or even daily basis. We need to pray for our Nigerian brothers and sisters, as well as for other North African countries.

Kenya

Some donations have come into the Missionary Society office to help the work in Kenya. Pastor Ber­nard Mose has been leading the work there since his father died in an automobile accident in 2001.

Rev. Mose has been in contact with several other SDB groups in the country and is presently trying to pull the churches together. The loss of his mill cow—an important source of food—was a sad event. Happily, a donation from the United States enabled him to buy another cow.

We praise God for working in the hearts of people, leading them to provide funds to aid our brothers and sisters abroad. Kenya continues to need money to finance Pastor Bernard’s travels as he works in the Kenya Conference. Please support him as he journeys from town to town and church to church.

He hopes to eventually receive enough money to purchase an automobile, which would make it possible for him to travel the hundreds of miles needed to help organize, educate, and advise developing churches. Also, financing is needed for public address systems. This equipment would allow them to broadcast church services over a larger area.

In Pastor Mose’s latest message, he wrote, “We shall be having a camp meeting from November 24 through 28, 2003, and at the same time a memorial ceremony of our beloved Dad, the late Pastor Arpachshad Mose. This will be a time of so many visitors that I cannot manage alone. May you assist, please? We will need funds to help house and feed our guests. We would be forever grateful.”

Please keep members of the Kenyan Conference in mind as they continue to plan their activities and strive to improve their churches.

Ghana

Pastor Seth Tetteh reports that they are still trying to raise money so that they can decide what programs to include in their budget.

As the year draws to a close, the churches in Ghana plan to set up a fund-raising program to meet a long­standing need: $20,000 to purchase land and build a Conference Center, which will establish them as a permanent organization in Ghana.

Without a Conference office/center, SDBs in Ghana are looked upon as a temporary, “fly-by-night” organization, causing the government to have misgivings about their work.

We would like to help them establish an office so that people will know that Seventh Day Baptists are in their country to stay.

Funds are also needed for a car. Public transportation is slow and expensive in Ghana, and our sister churches are often far apart, with many requiring several visits. An automobile would help the leaders stay in touch with individual churches while saving time and money. The vehicle would also enable them to transport visitors to the various meeting places.

The SDB churches and leaders of the Ghana Con­ference appeal to their sister churches in the USA and Canada to help with these expenses. They would also enjoy simply hearing from you.

You can reach the Conference by e-mailing them at sbdhana@yahoo.com.

Please send donations to: SDB Missionary Society, 119 Main Street, Westerly RI 02891.

December 2003
There's a new editor in town

by Robyn Somers

"Hey, hey" to all the readers of the Sabbath Recorder.

My name is Robyn Somers, and I am the new Beacon editor. I was appointed this summer after Eowyn Driscoll resigned to go off to college. I would like to thank the SDBYF for recommending me for this position. Eowyn for the amazing job she did for the last two years, and SR Editor Kevin Butler for accepting the recommendation from the YF. So, who is Robyn Somers?

I am a senior at John W. North High School in sunny Southern California. For all of you Angels fans, it's the same high school that Adam Kennedy graduated from. I have attended the Riverside (Calif.) Seventh Day Baptist church practically my entire life. I like playing softball, listening to music, playing board games (Monopoly rocks!), singing, going to the movies, traveling, hanging out with friends, photography, spending time with family, and going to the beach.

Laughter is an essential part of my life. To be able to laugh and enjoy life in every way possible is a gift that most people take for granted. God has blessed us with so many things. Through laughter and smiles, we can show the people around us what He has truly done in our lives.

My favorite subjects are math and science. I'm involved in school clubs and participate in committee service projects during my spare time. I always look forward to year-end retreats, camps, and Conference. I am considering applying to the University of California, Los Angeles, this fall and would like to major in chemistry. I hope you enjoy The Beacon during this coming year.

Robyn Somers

"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." (Genesis 8:22, NIV)

I've always had a love/hate relationship with winter. I love the sparkling shawls of snow that God draped over my mailbox, but I hate the dreaded dunes that inevitably barricade my garage door. I love to walk down snow-packed sidewalks, but I detest driving down slippery streets. I love the feel of the winter sun kissing my face, but I abhor the pain of half-frozen ears.

To me, winter is a delightfully frustrating mixture of the good, the bad, and the ugly. One of the good aspects of growing up in Milton, Wis., was "snow-days." When the weather was so nasty that educators closed area schools, every child in town spent the entire day outside in that same nasty weather—sledding, building snow forts, and engaging in snowball fights.

Winter was a wonderful time to earn money. One of my favorite merchandising schemes was to gather pine cones from the woods behind our house and transform them into Christmas ornaments using paint and glitter. Then, like a greedy gypsy, I wandered up and down Plum Street, hawking my wares. (Most of my customers probably never used them.)

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Seeking God in the Incarnation

As believers celebrate the Incarnation, I am asking that we get past the shopping spree and renew our commitment to following Jesus as the Christ.

I, too, shop for gifts for my family, and sometimes the holiday here in the U.S. seems like a shopping spree as well. This realization moves me to once again focus on our Conference theme, "Seeking God With All Your Heart."

In the first passage quoted above, we are with the shepherds in the field as they hear the angels announcing the arrival of Jesus, the Christ, into the world. This was an event that had been anticipated for hundreds of years. Yet, when Jesus began his ministry, many did not accept him as the Messiah, and his calls to repent and believe were rejected by the religious leaders of his time.

This month, as believers celebrate the Incarnation, I am asking that we get past the shopping spree and renew our commitment to following Jesus as the Christ. By studying the Scriptures, we know that Mark doesn't begin his gospel by telling about our Savior's birth; he starts with John preparing the way and baptizing Jesus. The Spirit then descends upon the Messiah, launching his earthly ministry. The Mark passage above has Jesus proclaiming the kingdom and preceding to call his first disciples.

I want us, as Seventh Day Baptists, to experience the Christmas event as another opportunity to "seek God with all our hearts," reminded that He continues to seek us. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Immediately following this passage, Jesus walks by the Sea of Galilee, calling his first disciples. Later, Jesus sends those same men out on a preaching mission to proclaim the kingdom of God to the world. When our Lord challenges his disciples to "seek first the kingdom of God," we sense that he understands that this is his purpose—to bring others into God's kingdom. This is why he was sent; this is what we are called to do if we follow him. He continues to seek us. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...through him all things were created—things in heaven and on earth,可见 each other. His hands were formed them" (Col. 1:15-17).

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Paint Rock happenings
by Pastor John Bevis

On Sabbath, September 6, 2003, Pastor Don McPhearson and his wife, Diane, were special guests of the Paint Rock, Ala., Seventh Day Baptist Church. The McPhearsons have answered the call to serve the Cornerstone SDB Church in Pontotoc, Miss.

Following Pastor Don’s sermon, the deacons and I laid hands on the couple with prayers of consecration for their new ministry. Cornerstone was a branch church of Paint Rock, and we are happy to see the growth there.

At Conference this year, the Crystal Apple Award for Sabbath School Teacher of the Year went to our own John W. Griffin. John, who has his own computer business, has taught John W. Griffin for several years. We thank the Board of Christian Education for this recognition. Church moderator Donald Monroe and I presented the award during a special service.

The New SR Committee

In early October, the new Sabbath Recorder Committee gathered in Nortonville, Kan., for its inaugural meeting. The committee is made up of members from the Nortonville and North Loup, Neb., SDB churches.

Signing on for this five-year assignment are: (top row) Jennifer Pluff, Jean Jorgensen (chairman), and Michael Graves; (middle) Chris Mattison, Peg Van Horn, and Shirley Cargill; (bottom) Steve Saunders, Brian Goodrich, and Katie Colvin.

Many good ideas flowed at the meeting—along with the food. We’re off to a great start!

Attendance Contest heating up

After 10 weeks, the average weekly increase is up. The cumulative numbers beyond the base average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Station, NY 71</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Gabriel, CA 21</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"At stake" is a case of California oranges or a gallon of New York maple syrup. Better yet is the increased bonding between the two groups and their pastors.

Department Index for 2003

(Feature Index & Kevin’s Korner on back cover)

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  - Music on music
  - Name changes are a part of history
  - Leaders from 'the outside'
  - Spicing up the joint
  - In History

- Christian Education
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- Al is A-1 with me
- God made faith real
- Freedom and responsibility
- Al is A-1 with me

December 2003
Nakamoto.—A daughter, Sara Virginia Nakamoto, was born to Pastor Robert and Sherri Nakamoto of Burns, TN, on October 18, 2003.

Lanzer - Spaur.—Terry Lee Lanzer Jr. and Heather Alene Spaur were united in marriage on September 6, 2003, at the Hunter Hills Evangelical Friends Church in Greensboro, NC. Rev. Dale Dragomir officiated.

Kolbo- Jackson.—Jerry Kolbo and Nella Jackson were united in marriage on September 17, 2003, in North Loup, NE, with Rev. Christian Mattison officiating.

Nakamoto.—A daughter, Sara Virginia Nakamoto, was born to Pastor Robert and Sherri Nakamoto of Burns, TN, on October 18, 2003.

Central, MD
Justin Hibbard, pastor
Joined by letter
Karlene Hibbard
Joined after testimony
Lydia Thompson

Columbus, OH
Robert Van Horn, pastor
Joined after testimony
John Thomas

Doniphan, MO
Ronald Ekston, pastor
Richard Book
Angela Rice
Sandra Long
John Roberts

Little Rock, AR
Hoyd Van Horn, assistant
Join by letter
Leis Harris

North Loup, NE
Christian Mattison, pastor
Katon Ingraham
Betty Rienks
Kevin Severance
Crystal Severance
Joined after testimony
Charles Rienks

Sriven.—Mildred P. Malby
Scriven of Adams Center, N.Y., died on January 15, 2003, the day after her 100th birthday. She had been a resident at Samaritan Keep Home, Watertown, N.Y., for two years. She was born on January 14, 1903, in Adams Center, the daughter of Newton and Jennie (Browmell) Parker. She graduated from Adams Center High School in 1921 and from the Watertown Teachers Training class in 1922. She then taught at Wilson Hill School in Burrville, N.Y. Mildred married Lawrence M. Malby on June 15, 1924, at the home of her parents in Adams Center. Mr. Malby died in March of 1931. On October 12, 1944, she married Harold L. Scriven, who died in December of 1977.

As a young woman, she helped in birthing and family care. At age 21, she left home and worked at an uncle’s restaurant. During the war years, she operated a ball bearing machine in Cleveland, Ohio.

After the war, “Gerry” and her family moved to a farm near Indian Creek, where she tended a large garden, canned produce, and raised sheep. She was also a 27-year employee of Economy Industries in Harrisville. Upon retirement, she worked for the Ritchie County Committee on Aging, preparing and delivering meals to homebound seniors.

Gerry attended a number of churches. After marrying Rev. Donald E. Richards on September 3, 1989, she joined the Middle Island Seventh Day Baptist Church in New Milford, W.Va.

She was a member of Hope Bekah Lodge #40 and the Ritchie County Historical Society, and was a former member of South Fork Grange. She loved to read, embroider, and make clothes. She also played the guitar and banjo, and enjoyed singing.

Survivors include her husband, Don; two sons, Hollis and Calvin; four stepchildren, Daniel Richards, Timothy Richards, Elizabeth Wright, and Doneta Osborn; two brothers, Stephen and Thomas; three sisters, Wilda Locke-Trickett, Sarah Reed, and Leonaurt Nixon; five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. She is also survived by 19 step-great-grandchildren, two step-great-great-grandchildren, and many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Gerry was preceded in death by her two husbands, Hollis "Pete" Moyers and Daniel Cox; one stepdaughter, two brothers, and three sisters.

Services were held on September 24, 2003, at the Raiguel Funeral Home in Harrisville, with the Revs. Carlton Wilson and Dale Thongrage officiating. Burial was in the Harrisville I.O.O.F. Cemetery.

Swanson.—Lucile Swanson, 91, of Ord, Neb., died on September 29, 2003, at Tiffany Square in Grand Island, Neb. She was born on March 10, 1912, in Narnab, Neb., the daughter of Jay and Hannah (Vaughn) Davis. She graduated from North Loup, Neb., High School and then attended Kearney (Neb.) Normal College. She taught rural school in Garfield County.

On October 27, 1934, she married Herman Allen Swanson in Basset, Neb. They farmed many years in Rosevale and joint communities before retiring and moving to Ord. She worked for the Garfield County Election Board for several years and also helped with the federal and farm census.

Lucile was a lifelong member of the North Loup Seventh Day Baptist Church and participated in church activities when her health permitted.

She had memorized many Bible verses and often quoted them to her own children when they needed encouragement or instruction.

Life insurance is a legal contract issued by an insurance company to provide financial protection to an individual or family in the event of death. It can be used to provide a death benefit, cover final expenses, and provide income for survivors. Life insurance can provide financial security for your loved ones in the event of your death, helping to ensure that they are financially secure in their absence.

Obituaries

Search for the best life insurance policies to protect your family's financial future.
Obituaries, continued

Lucile had a flair for writing poetry, and her children compiled a book of her poems in honor of her 90th birthday. She also enjoyed various kinds of handwork. She regularly sent greeting cards to friends and family, as well as young people in the community. She was devoted to her children and had many friends of all ages who were drawn to her lovely spirit.

Survivors include three daughters, Lucile Heitz of Canyon, Texas, Vivian Looper of Westerly, R.I., and Kathy Zulkoski of Barre, Neb.; one son, Allen, of Grand Island; 11 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband.

Funeral services were held on October 2, 2003, at the Ord Memorial Chapel, with Rev. Chris Mattison officiating. Burial was in the Ord Cemetery.

Collings.—Harold L. Collings Jr., 81, of Ashaway, R.I., died on October 18, 2003, at the Westerly (R.I.) Hospital.

He was born on July 20, 1922, in Killingly, Conn., the son of Harold and Margaret L. (Caffrey) Collings Sr.

He had been a member of the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hopkinton in Ashaway since 1955, and served on the Ashaway Fire Department for 59 years.

Survivors include one daughter, Margaret "Peggy" McNulty of Wakefield, R.I.; two sons, Fred of Ashaway and Todd of Delta, Fla.; nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife, Dorothy (Barber) Collings; a son, Reit; one daughter, Adele Cran dall, and his sister, Ruth Sitar.

Funeral services were held on October 21, 2003, with Rev. Edgar Wheeler officiating. Internment was in the First Hopkinton Cemetery, Ashaway.

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White Christmas Gift Requests 2003

- Bibles for most of our sister Conferences and churches. They use these to help their members as well as gifts to prospective members.
- Bicycles for women and pastors in Malawi, Ghana, Rwanda, India, the Philippines, Burma, and Ghana.
- Medical supplies and medicines in Malawi, Cameroon, Rwanda, Jamaica, the Philippines, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Many of our sister Conferences and churches need medicines for their members. Others use them to replenish their clinics. Then they provide the medicine at a much lower cost (or free) to those too poor to pay the full price.
- Food and clothing for refugees in Liberia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Rwanda.
- Bible study materials and books in Malawi, Cameroon, Rwanda, Jamaica, Myanmar, Ghana, the Gambia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Benin.
- Scholarships for Makapwa Bible School, $500 per semester.
- Business machines—such as computers, printers, FAX machines, typewriters, and telephones—for the business center in Ghana and the Gambia.
- School supplies, books, desks, and equipment for the Gambia, Malawi, and India.
- Translation and printing of tracts and study books for Mozambique. Brazil does the translation and printing.
- Hymnals for Jamaica, Guyana, Benin, the Gambia, Rwanda, the Philippines, and Cameroon.
- Keyboards and musical instruments for Kenya, the Gambia, Rwanda, and Sudan.
- Leadership training and supplies for most of our sister Conferences and churches.
- National outreach and growth materials for new startup churches in the United States and Canada.
- The Helping Hand for most of our sister Conferences and churches, who cannot afford the cost of the subscription.
- Computers and printers for Guyana, Jamaica, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sudan, Benin, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and other Conferences.

Please send your gift to the SDB Missionary Society
119 Main St., Westerly RI 02891
and designate where you would like your gift to be used.

Kevin's Korner

On a recent weekday visit to a Sunday church, I headed toward what was once a meeting room.

As I approached the room, I could see that someone had removed the tables and chairs. The lights were dimmed and some soft music played.

Upon entering, the total transformation of that room left me stunned!

Placed in the center of the floor was a huge swath of cloth. Sewn onto a purple background were a great number of off-white pieces forming a strange yet symmetrical design.

It took a few seconds, but I was finally able to focus on the big picture before me: a beautiful labyrinth. The white pieces connected into one long path leading from the outside in.

What in the world?

An accompanying trifold explained that labyrinths have been around for thousands of years, with the earliest known Christian version showing up in 4th century Algeria.

This particular labyrinth at the church was made for more than just decoration. It was meant to be interactive.

A sign politely directed me to remove my shoes (to avoid lawn damage) and enter through the door on one side. I could easily survey the entire journey I had just completed.

"I took in" all the turns and straight-aways and also saw how each variation and sudden change was still part of one path—part of the intricate plan to get to the center.

This metaphor of a Christian's journey worked for me, and apparently for others who shared their testimonies in the brochure.

Okay, I know we're Baptists. I know how we like to keep things simple and that we don't fall into "high church" categories. I know that we have direct access to the Lord in the priesthood of all believers. But sometimes sensory aids can fortify our earthly journeys.

Perhaps you can visualize yourself taking that walk with me as you look at the graphic and share in the insightful prayer below.

Focus on your journey with Him today. Remember where you have been, try to project where He may take you tomorrow (expecting some hair-raising), and realize that it's all part of His intricate and ordered master plan for your life.

Labyrinth Prayer

O God of many paths, I stand before this labyrinth today, metaphor of my journey to You. In the Western world I have been taught that "the shortest distance between two points is a straight line," and being an impatient person, I am uncomfortable with waiting. I have often modeled my journey to You on the straight line. But You, God of infinite patience, have shown me that there is another path, a curved path. On this path, my anticipation is heightened as I approach the center, only to be led again to the periphery. But Your path more closely resembles life itself. On this path, I can just put one foot in front of the other, it may seem at times as if I am not approaching my goal, while in fact I am drawing closer all the time. You are a God of surprises and mystery, and I don't control the path. The Labyrinth is a symbol of my surrender to mystery, of trusting the path even if it is too easy, for certain, that path which curves in and out, ultimately leads to the Center, which is You.

—Jean Summerfield
Bon Secour Retreat Center
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### Microfilm Form

**Reel No.:** 1  
**Date Filmed:** 09/04  
**Camera No.:** Canonfile  
**Type of Camera:** Rotary 35mm

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