April 2003

Christ Has Set Us Free

The 2003 Sessions of the SDB World Federation
Summer Institute on Sabbath Theology
June 9-20, 2003

Seventh Day Baptist Center, Janesville, Wis.

Taught by
Rev. Gabriel Bejjani, Dean
Council on Ministry

Please contact Rev. Bejjani for more information:
(920) 682-2002

Sabbath Renewal
Day 2003
Celebrated on
May 17

Worship packets and bulletins will be sent to each church. Watch your mail!

General Conference is August 3-9 at George Fox University, Newberg, Ore.

Transportation pick-up service for Conference begins at 6:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 3. If arriving earlier, there are local motels available for individuals to arrange until the 6:00 a.m. time. Transportation will be arranged to George Fox University from:
- The Portland, Ore., International Airport
- The Portland Amtrak Station
- The Portland Greyhound Station

There is no Greyhound service into Newberg on Sunday or Wednesday. Bus service is available all other days, if needed.

There will be an SDB contact person in the airport baggage area throughout the day on Sunday. When you arrive, see this person for travel arrangements.

Please contact Ruth Burdick by e-mail (ruthburd@yahoo.com) or phone her at (935) 333-1195 to verify transportation plans.

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Kevin Butler
Editor
Leanne Lippincott
Assistant Editor

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April 2003
Freedom for our world

World Federation Sessions
February 10-16, 2003
by Janet Thorngate

As a space shuttle exploded into earth's atmosphere and threats of war shot round the globe, Seventh Day Baptists from nine nations flew to Brazil to celebrate freedom. "Christ Set Us Free" the week's theme declared. Preachers uncovered many types of freedom and many forms of slavery. Some Bible study leaders—and some participants—were accused of preaching when study and discussion were the order of the day.

"Do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery," proved a heavy theme to ponder. The morning studies and evening sermons posed hard questions and provoked intense discussion. But the opening verse from Galatians 5 continued to ring out loud and clear:

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then..."

Translation takes time.
Understanding was never complete, which reminded us of the curse of the Tower of Babel.

In the end, celebration won out. Hope won over tears, laughter over fear. From each morning's praise to the final communion circle at the close of Sabbath, it was not the knowledge of our freedom in Christ that united us. It was the experience of Christ's spirit alive among us.

Linguistic challenge

A typical morning began with a sleepy American or African, or Australian or Jamaican, greeting a group of Brazilians with a practiced, "Bam Dla!" [pronounced something like bole geeaj.]

The Brazilians, disappointed that the one conversation they were ready to field in English had begun in Portuguese, would reply with a not-too-confident but clearly recognizable, "Good Morning!"

It wasn't long before both sides discovered that such phrases were about the limit of their linguistic skills. A few more stabs at words or phrases from both groups produced blank looks, embarrassed smiles, and finally a call for "Lelia!" or "Luciano!" or one of the other translators.

For the first time in its 38-year history, the SOB World Federation met in a country where English is not the national language. Sessions were conducted in English with continuous translation into Portuguese.

For the formal presentations, a translator stood beside the presenter and translated a few sentences at a time, giving the speaker time to formulate what he would say next. Or time to forget what he was going to say next because the translator had stolen the show!

Translation takes time.
It slows the work process, and frustration levels rose during impassioned appeals or emotional issues. Understanding was never complete.

More often, we experienced the grace of Pentecost. We realized that we are still one in the Spirit, which overcomes all barriers.

Translation takes time. Understanding was never complete, which reminded us of the curse of the Tower of Babel.
Down to business (in the castle)

The World Federation's main functions have always been to foster increased communication and fellowship among Seventh Day Baptists across national and cultural boundaries, and to promote projects of mutual interest that will benefit from international cooperation. Its committees worked toward those ends in Brazil.

When in session, the Federation assigns delegates to committees. These, in turn, bring forth recommendations for the whole body to consider. Perhaps the busiest during this session was the Restructuring Committee.

Its main concern was to strengthen the Executive Committee, which carries out the work of the organization between its every-five-year sessions. They again gave special attention to the role of regional vice presidents, with a goal of broader participation. They recommended movement toward salaries for the executive secretary and president so that officers could devote more time to the Federation’s work and generate more resources for its support. (Currently all work of the Federation is done by volunteers.) Other recommendations included moving toward more frequent sessions, perhaps every three years with meetings of the full Executive Committee—including the seven regional vice presidents—between sessions.

Most of the reorganization proposals would require Constitution or Bylaw changes, thus were recommended to the Executive Committee to draft such changes before referral to the member Conferences for approval.

The Projects Committee listened to proposals from the various member groups for “projects which could benefit from international cooperation” and brought these to the whole body with suggestions for their implementation or funding. Since the Federation’s financial support comes solely from voluntary contributions of its members and other interested individuals, the Executive Committee is encouraged to find new ways to communicate the needs to all potential donors and participants.

Several projects call for short-term service of individuals from one country to another, and particularly for teachers of English and of Seventh Day Baptist distinctives (beliefs, history, and polity). Projects range from education and publishing, to outreach.

The Nominating Committee, which had been appointed and began its work before the session, nominated a slate of officers. The Finance Committee prepared a five-year budget and suggested means of expanding the Federation’s income base.

New officers elected and installed on Sabbath evening are: Joe A. Samuels, President; James Siwani, Vice President—Africa; Al Paya, Vice President—Asia; Ewart Cesar, Vice President—Caribbean; Jan Lek, Vice President—Europe; Gabriel Bejani, Interim Vice President—Pacific; Andrew Samuels, Vice President—North America; Luciano de Moura, Vice President—South America; Frits Meuwstraten, General Secretary; Andrea Davis, Recording Secretary; Luan Ellis, Treasurer.

Financial Committee
Restructuring Committee
Projects Committee

[see Conference reports on page 15]
began during the Brazil Conference to which they were all invited before the World Federation sessions started. That week ended with special Sabbath where the Women’s Congress, Youth Congress, and Children’s Congress ran concurrently.

Sabbath morning worship began with a parade of miniature flags from all the World Federation nations. A procession of Brazilian children carried the flags and placed them in a colorful display across the front of the temple.

Worship included a variety of choral selections from the different churches, and congregational hymns sung in Portuguese but to tunes familiar to most international guests who could sing along in their native language. By the end of this “high Sabbath,” all the guests felt lovingly enveloped in Brazilian hospitality and said good-byes to the over 200 people who could not stay for the Federation sessions themselves.

A special place

Meanwhile, the last of the Federation delegates arrived at the airport in Curitiba, greeted by young people in yellow T-shirts emblazoned with the new World Federation logo (see cover). First came the 25-mile drive to Bocaiuva do Sul, reminiscent of Jamaican hill country. Yes, February is summertime in Brazil! Then came the delight of entering “Blessings Ranch” (Chácara de Benção), a peaceful retreat built around a European-style castle but surrounded by ancient araucaria trees that grow only in southern Brazil.

A small stream runs through the valley ringed by lush green hills. As delegates walked from dorm to the main building for meals, or from committee meetings in the castle to the temple at the other end of the campus, they could smell the grapes in the garden and hear the unfamiliar calls and songs of tropical birds.

Chairs on the veranda, benches on the spacious lawn, and paths around the pond always beckoned. Blessings, indeed, awaited every participant—delegate, observer, and host alike.

Conferencing—conferring

President Gabriel Bejjani and Sessions Pastor Salvador Caetano da Silva packed a full schedule between each day’s breakfast and evening snack. Most delegates had opportunity to lead in morning praise or evening worship experiences, and others preached or led a Bible study or workshop. These were interspersed between the committee and business sessions.

Everyone looked forward to hearing full reports on the work of each delegation’s Conference over the past five years. Those, along with the displays of publications and photos led to sharing of helpful information and resources between groups.

A broad range of workshop topics stimulated more sharing. Dr. Lewis “Pete” May, Executive Secretary of the USA & Canada Conference (and a medical doctor), gave a presentation on health issues, impressing everyone by reading it in Portuguese while the Portuguese translator gave the English version.

Official delegates: Andrew Goulding and Marco Solio from Australia; Leonildo Lebkuchen, Salvador Caetano da Silva, Luciano Barreto, Nogueira de Moura, João Telles dos Santos from Brazil; Ewart Caesar and Karlyn Henry from Guyana; Allan Chambers, Naval Harley, and Prudence Robinson from Jamaica; Caanaf Phipi from Malawi; Fritz Nieuwstraaten from the Netherlands; Al Paya and Bernardo Agudera from the Philippines; James and Miriam Siwani from South Africa; Andrea Davis, Luis Elias, Neshaniel Lawton, Joe Samuel, and Dale Thorngate from the USA and Canada; Gabriel Bejjani, President, and G. Kirk Looper (Executive Committees).

Conferences

Memorable moments included musical selections by a 20-member disciplined choir from the São Paulo church; a solo-turned-congregational-anthem led by Caanaf Phipi of Malawi; a duet sung in Philippine Cebuano; a prayer in South African Xhosa; a special formal meal prepared and served by the ranch owner and her husband (nearly 100 people seated at round tables for four or five), and a huge fellowship circle singing “We Are One in the Bond of Love,” Portuguese and English all mixed together with clasped hands and tears of joy. This is Sabbath.

Gracious hosts

We know there is no way to repay the gracious hospitality of our Brazilian hosts: Pastor Leonildo Lebkuchen, chairman of the Host Committee; Pastor Silva and all the others, from Jonas Sommer in the office to Deacon Alven Garcia in his truck; the yellow T-shirted young people who met us, greeted us, and entertained us; Sisters Marlene and Edeline always there helping; Deacons Felício and Silvano; translators Luciano, Liene, Cleber, Leila, Ines, Magda, and Isaéal; and our Brazilian brothers and sisters in the churches—muito obrigado (thank you very much)!
A small bit of a big country
by Janet Thorngate

Long Conference days get tiring, so a highlight for all international guests were the two special tours planned by Jonas Sommer. A seminary student who works in the Brazil Conference office, Jonas was responsible for all delegate transportation and also for communication between the Host Committee in Brazil and the Executive Committee in the USA.

The big tour bus rolled into Blessings Ranch in time for a full Wednesday afternoon tour of Curitiba and a Friday tour to several Seventh Day Baptist churches in the area.

Curitiba, capital of the State of Paraná, is a city of 1.5 million people. It claims "the best mass transportation system in the country," the green parks of "Brazil's ecological capital," and a quality of life enriched by immigrants from many nations.

World Federation visitors enjoyed stops at the famous Botanical Garden, Opera de Arame, New Museum, and Tanguá Park. Those who didn't brave the rain showers still enjoyed views from the bus of the Civic Center, Guaim Theater, the historic district, and several notable squares.

Friday's all-day tour first took the group on a picturesque drive across the coastal mountain range into the neighboring state of Santa Catarina. There we were warmly welcomed first at the Garuva Seventh Day Baptist Church. Members of the congregation had gifts for everyone: small crocheted pieces and banana candy made in their town.

We ate lunch in a churrascaria (a restaurant specializing in Brazilian barbecue), followed by shopping and a visit to the Joinville church, one of the largest in the Conference.

Although our tour group arrived back in Curitiba behind schedule, people in three local congregations were still at their temples, waiting to welcome us warmly. We first stopped at the small church of São José dos Pinhais. Then we visited Boqueirão, where we ate a sumptuous snack and got to see the new church building taking shape outside the walls of the old.

Finally, our group reached the First SDB Church of Curitiba, oldest in the Conference (established in 1913). Here we joined the local congregation for a Sabbath welcoming service, complete with lots of special music and a rousing sermon by outgoing President Bejjani.

Baptisms are important at São José dos Pinhais. An angled mirror on the wall shows each blessed event.

End of our day (and welcoming the Sabbath) at the First SDB Church of Curitiba.
Two wonderful decades
by Dale D. Thorngate

It is hard to believe that it has been 22 years since I accepted the responsibility to be executive secretary of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation. I must admit that I am having withdrawal symptoms since I am no longer in that leadership role. These last two decades have been both a challenge and an honor. It has been an honor to serve God and His "peculiar people" called Seventh Day Baptists. The greatest joy would be the many friends made during this time.

It has been a real privilege to travel and represent our churches in Brazil, England, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, and the Philippines. As the third Federation executive secretary in 38 years, I was honored to come after two of my personal mentors: Rev. Alton L. Wheeler, who had been my pastor when I was baptized, and Dr. K. Duane Hurley, the President-emeritus of Salem College.

To follow in the footsteps of these two Christian giants is indeed a humbling experience. I am especially pleased to remember that during these past 22 years we have grown as a Federation. We received Poland, Nigeria, Kerala (India), South Africa, and this year—Australia into membership during this time. We also held three of the four Federation sessions outside the United States: in New Zealand, Jamaica, and this year in Brazil. (The previous three gatherings—plus the founding meeting—had been hosted in the United States.) This year, we took another giant step forward by electing an executive secretary from outside the United States. With Internet technology, communication around the world can now be done so much more quickly and efficiently. A person with English language skills and international experience could function very well in this position. I am pleased that the Federation selected a long-time friend from the Netherlands, Rev. Fritz Nieuwstraaten, to serve in this position. It helps that he comes to the U.S. at least twice a year on other business, and thus can meet with others on the Executive Committee face-to-face.

The Restructuring Committee that met during the sessions also made some significant recommendations to our Executive Committee. If implemented, the changes can move the Federation into the 21st century with the intention of growth for Seventh Day Baptists around the world.

At our sessions in February, we honored two of the three living signers of the original document that established the World Federation back in 1964. Rev. Joe Samuels and Naval Harley, both representing Jamaica at that time, were recognized at the Sabbath service along with Rev. Jacob Tyrrell of Guyana, who was unable to attend.

One of the most exciting developments in the Federation's work is the involvement of a new generation of young people. Of those listed as official delegates, four were in their 20s, five in their 30s, seven in their 40s, seven in their 50s, and six in their 60s. Having many other young people involved as observers and participants brings energy and excitement to our common mission—a hopeful vision for our work in the world.

As we gathered in Curitiba, Brazil, we once again brought together a group of people with very different cultures and backgrounds. Yet our common understanding of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord brought us together under the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that we all were assured that God is at work among us, challenging us to share the Sabbath truth around the world.

Yes, I will miss the work of the Federation. But I am thankful for its growth during these years and the many international friendships it has nurtured.

I look forward to new opportunities in the future. Janet and I hope to visit SDB churches in other countries and to teach about our beliefs, history, and distinctive as a people of God.

I am excited about the potential for the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation as we continue to share as sister Conferences, reaching out around our world to bring God's love and Sabbath freedom through Christ. May God bless us all!
Christian stewardship: The old, the new, and the biblical

In 1852, when the first SDB church building was erected in Milton, the congregation apparently sold the pews to raise money for the building fund. In 1863, they appointed a committee "to see how many of the slip owners will be willing to donate their slips for the benefit of the church per year, provided three-fourths of the membership will do the same."

Two months later, the church minutes read, "Voted that each pew be allotted to the highest bidder, and that the present owner, if present, be allotted the first chance to bid." J.M. Greenman was the auctioneer and sold 32 of the pews, amounting to $334.

When the Milton Junction (Wis.) SDB Church was established, one of the four reasons given for their withdrawal from the Milton church was that some felt that its pew or slip rentals were too high. I could not find any mention in the minutes of renting stalls in the church's horse shed, but this was not an uncommon practice during those days. Today, I am aware that one of our churches has meters in their parking lot, but these are not operated on Sabbath day. (They do provide additional spaces where public parking stalls are at a premium during the week.)

Some churches which have gone to electronic withdrawals point out that donating by credit cards or checks allows people to be more intentional in their giving. Does any group notes, "God knows what will happen!" Parish Pay gets one percent of each donation, plus a one dollar service fee.

The new

My eye also caught an article in the January 2003 issue of Baptist Today, reporting on a new plan that many churches have already adopted to help with current finances. The piece was entitled, "Churches Now Taking Credit Cards to Fill Coffers."
The opening paragraph stated: "These days it seems almost everybody takes credit cards. Even God. While you won't find credit card terminals in many churches and synagogues, a growing number are accepting donations by systematic billing to credit cards. This approach allows people to donate to religious groups in the same way they pay their utilities or other monthly bills."

I have had people order books from the Historical Society and then ask if they can pay by credit card. Others have inquired if they could pay conference registration fees with their credit cards. The cost of Conference travel, housing, and meals—particularly if young people are going to Pre-Con—can strain the bank accounts of many families.

A group called "Parish Pay" has created a service which preserves confidentiality by allowing no one in a church to see a family's account number. "If you have a credit card number lying around a church office," the group notes, "God knows what will happen!" Parish Pay gets one percent of each donation, plus a one dollar service fee.

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The Philippines

Updates: The two groups of SBs merged last year to become the Seventh Day Baptist Churches in the Philippines, Inc. (SDBCPI). Sixty-five people were baptized and two new churches organized. Five T.I.M.E. graduates, with 18 now enrolled.

Pray for: Continuing unification between the two SDB groups.

Guyana

Updates: There are 10 churches and a number of outreach groups, with 600 members. Two young men are at the Guyana Bible College, while four are in T.I.M.E.

Pray for: Camp Glory outreach program in Surinam, and a new telephone prayer and counseling ministry. Also for a caretaker to tend the coconut, citrus, and pine plants that the Lord has entrusted to them.

Australia

Updates: This newly-received Association has learned that to be a church, you need to be a team. There are two churches in Brisbane, one in Melbourne, one in Sydney, and two in Argentina. They have sent young people to the U.S. to train in SCSG and plan to start their own summer program.

Pray for: Upcoming seminars, a pastors' retreat in June, and camps in September and January. One goal is to plant a church in each capital city by 2005.

Jamaica

Updates: Three new groups formed after mass crusades. Eight graduates from Jamaica Bible Institute, with 14 now enrolled. The Conference is celebrating its 80th anniversary.

Pray for: Completion of their Conference Centre and future evangelistic activities (modeled after Evangelism Explosion).

Netherlands

Updates: Working jointly with other Sabbathkeepers, the Sabbath issue has been proclaimed via newspapers, TV, and radio. There is an active group called SYO (young people keeping the Sabbath).

Pray for: Outreach for the homeless that provides food and the Gospel.

Central Africa

Updates: There are 200 churches, four clinics, six schools, and one secondary school. Their main objective is to evangelize.

Pray for: Reconciliation from a church split; recovery from natural disasters; and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

USA and Canada

Updates: Overall membership seems to be in decline, yet there are new churches being started along with an existing increase in activity among the young people.

Pray for: Upcoming transitions in denominational leadership and possible realignment of executive tasks.

South Africa

Updates: Work continues in translating material into the indigenous languages. Ten recent baptisms and seven currently in baptismal class.

Pray for: A distance-learning program to train church leaders; the AIDS epidemic.

April 2003
You can be a good teacher

Not only are you a teacher; you can be a good teacher. With God's love and equipping in your life, you can be used by Him to teach others. Every Christian is, in some way, included in the commission that Jesus gave to the disciples. We are one body and called to help build one another toward the fullness of the maturity of Christ. While we are all teachers, some of us are called to that designated role and need help to become better instructors. Maybe you knew the phone call was coming. This year the committee was having a hard time finding people who could commit to teaching a Sabbath School class. You had taught in the past and had let them know that you'd be willing to do it again.

Or maybe the call took you by surprise. You had never thought of yourself as a Bible Study leader and yet when asked to lead, the words, "Sure, I'll do it," slipped from your lips.

Or maybe, the last thing you really wanted to do was to give up a week to help teach Vacation Bible School and you knew that your help would significantly reduce the stress of others, so you agreed. In any case, you accepted an important role and can now change lives.

In the Christian life, teaching is important for a variety of reasons. One of the most significant is that God has given all Christians responsibility for teaching each other. Another reason is the simple reality that teaching brings about change in the lives of others. This change can be exciting. As a teacher, you have the firsthand opportunity to witness the "eureka" moments in others. You can watch students change in their perception of the world and their reactions to it.

As a teacher, you have the firsthand opportunity to witness the "eureka" moments in others. You can watch students change in their perception of the world and their reactions to it.

As a teacher, you learn to see the world in new ways and are enlightened by the questions and insights of the people you teach. Christian teachers help learners grow, even as the teachers grow. Because your teaching is important, improving your ability to teach is important. While improving your skills will require work on your part, there are resources that can make that work easier.

After the Bible, I have three books that are an immense help in thinking about and practicing Christian Education. They are: Ernest K. Bee's, The Teaching Leader; Israel Gallindo's, The Craft of Christian Teaching, and from Elmer Towns, What Every Sunday School Teacher Should Know.

The subtitle of Towns' book, 24 Secrets That Can Help You Change Lives, indicates both the thrust and the structure of his book. In 263 pages, he includes 24 chapters that share the wisdom he has gathered from more than 40 years of teaching. Towns' gathered wisdom is valuable. Each short chapter focuses on the teacher, the student, or the act of teaching, and reveals or reinforces some of the best practices that Christian teachers can follow.

The book reminds us that we can make a difference, that we are equipped by God, and that prayer is crucial. It presents a good method for preparing a lesson every week and explains how to incorporate teaching methods that reach out to people who learn in different ways. It also challenges us to watch for moments when the Gospel can be presented and then to help people with those early steps in their Christian walk. For those of you who are looking for a book that will help you become better at the teaching tasks assigned to you, consider this book. It is well worth the cost.

The Brazilians would like to participate in the International T.I.M.E. program, believing it can encourage new pastors. That would like to participate in the International T.I.M.E. (Training In Ministry by Extension) program, believing it can encourage new pastors. We urged them to continue with the T.I.M.E. program, and will send them the materials that we use in other countries.

These books relate to the study topics. The materials provide answers faster than the older T.I.M.E. materials and can be located more easily. We had hoped that the study books could be purchased in Portuguese, but those translations are unavailable. So, they will have to study in English, which is a slower process but still effective.

In our discussions with our Brazilian brethren, they indicated that they are interested in reaching out to bordering countries. They need help to train and instruct several of the "missionaries" who will implement this project. This will entail study at both the local level and some seminary classes.

I explained that there are those who are willing to donate funds to help in this outreach, but we need to be patient, waiting for the Holy Spirit to move the hearts of those searching for a worthy cause to support.

Our Brazilian friends would like to see some of their members "activated" in the United States. We received the addresses of several of these people and contacted them, asking if they would be interested in visiting a nearby SDB church or starting one in their own area.

We are always interested in this type of outreach. Just send your name and address to:

SDB Missionary Society
119 Main St.
Westerly, RI 02891

Or contact us by e-mail: sbdmissoc@mindspring.com

We encourage Seventh Day Baptists from Brazil to contact us, also. We would enjoy helping you find fellowship with those who believe as you do.

FOCUS on Missions

Outreach in Brazil

by Kirk Looper

A leisurely trip to Paraná, Brazil, will place you at ease as you meet a group of Seventh Day Baptists who are active in their churches and excited about your visit. They will view you as a guest and treat you with special attention.

While attending the World Federation sessions in Paraná in February, their excitement for the work of God's Kingdom was also evident. They are eager to expand their ministry and move into difficult-to-reach regions. We were pleased to learn that they plan to send pastors into these areas to establish SDB churches in spite of the danger of traveling up the Amazon and its tributaries.

Speaking with those who minister in outlying areas, we learned that many tracts and study materials need to be translated into the local languages. These ministers can use the Conference office's computer, but they also need a photocopier.

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The materials they are translating can be used in other countries where the language is also Portuguese. Presently, they translate the Helping Hands into Portuguese and share it with congregations in Mozambique, Africa. These copies could possibly be sent to their contacts in Portugal.

Kirk Looper (standing, second from right) met with these SDB pastors from Brazil. Magda, a seminarian from Curitiba (seated, right) served as translator.

We would enjoy helping you find fellowship with those who believe as you do.
Neither angels nor demons
by Aubrey Appel

Few would guess that nestled in the sunny, mountainous beauty of California, a filthy, soot-black battle is ensuing.

When I first saw Rocky Peterson, I was definitely not thinking "rugged warrior." That is because, looking through my own eyes, I couldn't see what was and has been going on all around me, in every part of the world. But looking through God's eyes, our earth is the greatest battleground ever designed.

The Annual SDB Young Adult Winter Retreat at Rancho Ybara Christian Camp in Southern California was a rousing success and we had fun too!

Rocky is from the Foothill Community Church (SDB) in Monrovia, Calif. Each day, he shared how the Lord uses him and can use us. He is a wonderful, down-to-earth, loving man who kicks demons out of people's lives.

Rocky must have shared a hundred stories with us, telling how he—with Christ's authority—commanded demons to leave people. He also told of using prayer to heal people who had chronic illness.

Rocky prayed with us and guided us to pray for each other. On December 31, we each looked into our own lives for "garbage to clean out of our closets." We prayed alone or with a small group, and then gathered to burn pieces of paper representing our garbage. We also celebrated Communion to bring in the new year. It was a time of cleansing, crying, and rejoicing. Praise the Lord for gathering us in His name, and for opening our eyes and hearts!

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, nor the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Mom made faith real

On January 21st, my 85-year-old mother, Bernice Martinsen, went home to be with the Lord.

Mom's life was a frustrating mixture of good times and bad as she fought a lifelong battle with anxiety and clinical depression. Her last few years were especially difficult as her quality of life faded and her "earthly tent" shrank to 70 pounds. As difficult as things were, she was able to live at home with her 90-year-old father until five days before her death. I'll always be grateful for that.

For as long as I can remember, I've had difficulty coping with Mom's illness and its far-reaching effects. But her affliction has also been a blessing to me over the years. It brought me closer to God, which helped me immensely when I later fought my own battles with anxiety and depression.

When I focus on my mother's "good days," I'm reminded of the many times when seemingly insignificant experiences later helped mold me into the person I am today—a blessed child of God.

Mom's maiden name was Kutz, not Bond, Burdick, or Green. With all of her relatives migrating to the United States from Germany, her religious heritage was Lutheran, not Seventh Day Baptist.

One of my earliest memories of Mom is sitting on her bed at night while she read from a devotional book. They weren't easy-to-listen-to Bible stories, illustrated with large, colorful drawings and geared towards children. (And they certainly weren't stories on an audio or video tape!) I remember feeling special because Mom took the time to read to me, even at the end of a long, busy day.

My mother made certain that all three of her children said table grace and bedtime prayers. She wrote the
How do you behave and think in your everyday activities?

When we are at church or engaged in activities with other Christians, we are expected to behave as Christ would. Therefore, it is relatively easy to keep a proper appearance, to "talk Christian," to look out for the needs of others.

But what happens when we are "out in the world," where no one knows we are Christian? No one expects us to behave in a certain way, or talk in a certain way. We can blend in with those around us and no one cares. Except God.

"The President's Page - April 2003"

George Crusen

I am in Christ

Nurture Series re-do

The Nurture Series helps children and youth grow in their Christian experience by understanding God's Sabbath Day and our mission and history as a covenant people. After more than 10 years of use, the series needs to be recreated, which will take several years. We need monetary gifts to help us write, prepare, and print this new edition. Please send your check (memo: "Nurture Series Support") to:

SDB Board of Christian Education
P.O. Box 115
Alfred Station, NY 14803

"Now I ain't trying to act smart, it's just the way I feel. And I was wondering, could you tell me, what the heck's the deal?"

Peter listened very patiently and when of Jake's was done, there were smiles of recognition, when he said, "So, you're the one!! "That day your truck, it wouldn't start, and you sent your prayer a flying. You gave us all a real bad time, with hundreds of us trying. A thousand angels rushed to check the status of your file, but you know, Jake, we hadn't heard from you in quite a long while. "And though all prayers are answered, and God ain't got no quota, He didn't recognize your voice, and started a truck to Minnesota." —from the Internet

Better keep in touch

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thess. 5:16-18.)

"Exercise! And walk with the Lord.

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

Keep in touch

"Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud. And He shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17).

Jake, the rancher, went one day to fix a distant fence. The wind was cold and gusty, and the clouds rolled gray and dense. As he pounded the last staples in and gathered tools to go, the temperature had fallen, wind and snow began to blow. When he finally reached his pickup, he felt a heavy heart; From the sound of that ignition, he knew it wouldn't start. So Jake did what most would do if we had been there. He humbly bowed his balding head and sent aloft a prayer. As he turned the key for one last time, he softly cursed his luck. They found him three days later, frozen stiff in that old truck.

Now Jake had been around in life and done his share of roaming, but when he saw Heaven, he was shocked — looked just like Wyoming! Of all the saints in Heaven, his favorite was St. Pete. (Now, this here line ain't needed but it helps with rhyme and meter.) So they set and talked a minute or two, or maybe it was three. Nobody was keeping score; in Heaven, time is free. "I've always heard," Jake said to Pete, "that God will answer prayer. But one time I asked for help, well, He just plain wasn't there. "Does God answer prayers of some and ignore the prayers of others? That don't seem exactly square— I know all men are brothers. Or does he randomly reply, without good rhyme or reason? Maybe it's the time of day, the weather, or the season..."
Marlboro’s wonderful news!

Here at the Marlboro SDB Church (near Bridgeton, N.J.) we were without a pastor for almost three years. During that time, we were able to maintain the activities of our church. We met each Sabbath morning for worship, our choir practiced on Thursday nights, the Ladies Aid did service projects, we printed our church newsletter from time to time, and we held fellowship dinners. The “usual” business of the church continued as everyone pitched in to keep things going. This resulted in us becoming a stronger, closer-knit group.

Guest ministers filled the pulpit most Sabbath mornings, and we planned and led the services quite often ourselves. Thankfully, along with keeping the business of the church going, we were able to keep ourselves fed spiritually. But that’s not all a church is for. The church is here to reach others, to grow, to make a difference. We were able to “maintain,” but we needed someone to lead us to more.

On October 19, 2002, our new pastor gave his first sermon as shepherd of the Marlboro SDB Church. In his sermon, he noted that it was time for the Marlboro church to set some goals and to start moving forward. When Rev. Robert Babcock gave that sermon, we knew that our prayerful search for a pastor had been successful.

Since then, we have gotten better acquainted with Pastor Bob, his wife, Nelta, and their granddaughters, Lorian and Leilani. We have been blessed by having their family become part of our church family.

Pastor Bob’s sermons are inspiring and thought-provoking. He gives us much to think on and to pray about. In February, we began a series of discussion meetings to help us discover where God wants to lead our church.

The Marlboro congregation is praising the Lord! We are thankful for the minister He has sent us, and we are excited about our future.

Church dedicates new elevator

With 18.5 percent of our county 60 or older, a growing population of persons who are physically impaired, and with our outdoor lift having served both its purpose and its time, the Alfred Station (N.Y.) SDB church made a faith decision to install an indoor elevator.

The members of the Richburg, SDB Church continued their ministry by giving us a monetary blessing, for which we praise the Lord.

We also needed human resources. Men and women of our congregation gave of their time, energy, and skills for months in order to install the elevator. This was yet another way our church proclaimed, “There are no second-class worshipping.”

On Sabbath afternoon, January 19, 2003, we held a simple service in the vestibule to dedicate the new elevator. As a gathered community, we recognized the work of God by singing “Amazing Grace.” We then acknowledged our blessings by sharing in the Lord’s Prayer.

The co-chairpersons of our Trustee’s Ministry honored those who had worked so diligently on the installation. They presented a certificate—framed by actual pieces of the old steps—to the chief architect and engineer. Pastor Patricia Bancroft of the First SDB Church of Alfred, N.Y., offered a prayer of blessing. Church President Rod Noel then cut the ribbon and, with clasped hands, we declared our commitment to ministry by singing “They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love.”

As with most traditional SDB celebrations, there was food. A reception followed where we ministered God’s grace in fellowship with one another.

—From the “Quest” newsletter

Beautiful music together

by Julie Perine

Reprinted with permission from the Clarksburg (W.Va.) Exponent-Telegram.

With dedication in her heart, Elaine Kennedy served as organist for the Lost Creek (W.Va.) Seventh Day Baptist Church for 57 years. With tears in her eyes, she accepted a plaque of recognition at the church’s service and fellowship dinner on January 4.

“I had no idea anything was going on,” said Kennedy. “It was a very pleasant surprise.”

Kennedy, Bo, who recently decided it was time to step down as the church’s organist, has been part of a musical family since she was a little girl. Known then as Lola Elaine Sands, she said she took piano lessons weekly.

“My dad was quite a singer,” said Kennedy. “He sang a lot at the McWhorter Methodist Church.”

As a young woman, Elaine served as pianist for that church. Once married and with leadership and commitment to serving in the church and community, said Shackleford. “I’m glad we were able to commend her for 57 years of faithfulness at the organ.”

Cindy Lawrence said in the more than 40 years that she has attended the church, Kennedy has missed very few services.

“Unless she is ill or there is a family situation, she is there,” said Lawrence.

She said it is obvious how much Kennedy enjoys playing organ music for her church.

“She sits up there very proud,” Lawrence said. “I have always loved to watch and hear her play.”

Elaine has been lifelong friends with Lawrence’s mother, who has leukemia. [Cindy’s obituary is in the next page.]

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“She sits up there very proud,” Lawrence said. “I have always loved to watch and hear her play.”

Elaine has been lifelong friends with Lawrence’s mother, who has leukemia. [Cindy’s obituary is in the next page.]

“She has been an awesome friend to my mom,” said Lawrence. “Mrs. K. is the kind of person who is concerned about another’s needs and problems.”

According to Lawrence, Kennedy’s dedication and commitment to serving in the church and community, she is there.”

Elaine Kennedy was honored for 57 years of musical service to the Lost Creek, W.Va., SDB Church.

Over the years, Elaine has still found time to serve her community in many aspects. She has served as president of several local organizations, and also works each summer at a music camp.

“I feel that this is a talent God has given me and that I should use it for His service.”
Beautiful music, cont. from page 23

musical contributions to the church are many. "When the church had a choir, she played grand piano," said Lawrence. "She also served for years as an officer of the church's Music Committee."

Pat Shackleford said Kennedy's commitment is typical of what she has seen since she has been with the nearly 200-year-old church. "They are very dedicated people," she said. "They tell us some pretty phenomenal stories."

At least for the present, Shackleford will assume Kennedy's duties as a volunteer."We're not considering this a retirement," said Shackleford. "She just won't have the ongoing responsibility."

She said Kennedy has been asked to continue to play for the church's closing numbers.

At the January 4 service, Elaine said, "They tell us some pretty intriguing stories. We've heard a lot of them since she has been with the church."

"Commitment is typical of what she has seen since she has been with the church."

"They are very dedicated people," she said. "We always look forward to listening to her弹奏 the piano."

"I feel like we are here to help others and when you can't, there's no use to be here."

"Kennedy has always had a love for playing the hymns, "Let's Just Praise the Lord."

Lawrence said she will forever think of Elaine when she hears that song.

Note: Elaine Kennedy's husband, Gene, passed away in 1979 at the age of 57. Her son, Gene, lives with her in Lost Creek; her daughter, Judy Hertzel, lives in the Charlesbourg area. Her daughter, Jane Reinhold, lives in South Bend, Ind. Kennedy also has four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Births

Noyes.—A daughter, Johannah Christina Vivace Noyes, was born to Charles and Melodie Noyes of Kent, WA, on August 13, 2000.

Uhlisch.—A daughter, Rebecca Rose Uhlisch, was born to Ronald and Karen Uhlisch of Kent, WA, on September 1, 2000.

Dutcher.—A daughter, Julia Leanne Dutcher, was born to Jamie and Jennifer (Lippincott) Dutcher of Janesville, WI, on January 17, 2003.

Pistulka.—A son, Zachary Michael Pistulka, was born to Troy and Joi (Rice) Pistulka of Grand Island, NE, on January 30, 2003.

Stall.—A daughter, Lexia Taylor Stall, was born to David and Jennifer Stall of Peterborough, NY, on February 8, 2003.

Marriage

Hemminger - Cairnes.—Gary Hemminger and Pamela Cairnes were united in marriage on June 2, 2002, at Flaming Geyser Park in Auburn, WA, with Pastor Ken Burdick officiating.

New members

Berlin, NY
Matthew Olson, pastor
Joined after baptism
Erin Hogan
Colby May
Emmella May
Brittany Thomas

Current Giving Budget for 2003
$387,432.00

Current Giving for Year short $18,368.22

Current Giving 2003

The SR

April 2003

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taught at the former Hydorn School in Hebron Township.

She was a faithful member of the First SDB Church of Hebron for 44 years, serving many years as a Sabbath School and Vacation Bible School teacher. She was active in the Women’s Study and Serve Society, and had worked as assistant cook at Camp Harley Sutton. She was also a member of the former Hebron Grange #125.

Survivors include two sons, Robert of Port Allegany, Pa., and William of Coudersport; two daughters, Joan Hagan of Saint Marys, Pa., and Betty Deed Hards of Port Allegany; two sisters, Florence Metzger and Lucille Barnett, both of Coudersport; 20 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren, eight great-great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. In addition to her husband, she was preceded by one daughter, Barbara Duell; two brothers, John and Kenneth Scott; and one grandson, Jeffy Alan Brock.

Funeral and committal services were held on February 11, 2003, at the First SDB Church of Hebron, with T. Lee Bennett, interim pastor, officiating. Burial was in the Woodland Cemetery, Hebron.

Todd — M. Lucile Todd, 61, of Milton, Wis., died on February 14, 2003, at Mercy Hospital in Janesville, Wis.

She was born on May 9, 1941, in Elba, Neb., the daughter of Asa Leigh and Delia Miriam (Monroe) Prentice, the third of four children. In the early 1900s, the Prentice family moved to Kansas.

She attended Nortonville, Kan., public schools and graduated at Nortonville High School. She attended Milton College from 1959–62, then returned to Kansas to attend Pittsburg State College. She trained as a teacher and taught in rural schools throughout Kansas, including the Lane School just outside of Nortonville, and a school in Whiting, Kan. On June 12, 1962, she married Roy Loyd Todd in Milton.

Lucile was a Seventh Day Baptist and continued to worship with SDBs until her death. She was an active member of the Milton SDB Church, especially involved with its methods of church finances, I clicked on my Quick Verse computer concordance. I could not find either “pew rental” or “credit cards” mentioned in any biblical text. But I did discover 794 instances in the Bible where offerings were mentioned, 53 times gifts were listed, 14 times a tithe is called for, and three passages that mentioned collection.

I asked Jonas Sommer, the main worker from the Conference office, to come forward.

“I asked Jonas Sommer,” handing him my prized possession, “that you are now the new ‘Fan Man’ of Brazil!”

We hugged. The crowd went crazy.

Elmo Randolph’s handcrafted bolo ties are on sale again!

Pastor Randy has a new stock of bolo ties for only $25, with the proceeds going toward the Sabbath Recorder. Randy has already raised over $500 for the SR. Call or write today!

Elmo Randolph
773 Sky Trail
Boulder CO 80302
(303) 443-3849
fit773@stol.com

Christian stewardship, cont. from page 14

they argue that church credit card use is simply keeping up with the move to a “cashless” society. We use debit cards everywhere else, so why not in the church?

As a clincher, one proponent says, “I pay most of my bills by credit cards because of the convenience. I also do it for a more selfish reason: my credit card gives me frequent flyer miles for every transaction. How I love these frequent flyer miles!”

The biblical method

After reviewing the old and new methods of church finances, I clicked on my Quick Verse computer concordance. I could not find either “pew rental” or “credit cards” mentioned in any biblical text. But I did discover 794 instances in the Bible where offerings were mentioned, 53 times gifts were listed, 14 times a tithe is called for, and three passages that mentioned collection.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do I. Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (1 Cor. 16:2–4).

This “plan of stewardship” meets the five “Ps” of Christian stewardship: Personal, Periodic, Proportionate, Providential, and Purposeful. 5

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April 2003

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Kevl's Corner

It was probably the last thing most people would purchase on a wintry December day in Maine. I'm glad that I'm not "most people."

In two months, Janet and I would be in Brazil, and that weather would be a far cry from the frigid climate up north. February in Brazil would be like August in Miami, and I despise hot weather. (Now watch, the Lord will call me to Florida or Arizona...)

I found it in one of those personal-gadget-travel-speciality-stores-at-the-mall: a variable-speed, powerful yet whisper-quiet personal fan. This was not one of those whiny handheld models. This baby took four DC batteries and really put out the rpms.

Do you know how much weight a dozen of those big batteries adds to your luggage?

After arriving in Brazil, my new toy went everywhere I went. Sure, people stared and pointed, but when the temperatures started soaring, I thought, Look who's laughing now!! (Unsent maniacal laughter here: Bwah-Hah-Hah!)

Two of the local teenage boys seemed to be tickled the most. I soon found out why.

"They have given you a new name," an interpreter said.

"Oh? I replied. "Yes. "Then he rattled off something I didn't understand.

"And that means?" I asked.

The teens started giggling. I expected the worst.

"Well," the interpreter continued. "Basically, it means 'Fan Man.'"

And that's how the legend began. (It was fun to hear the Brazilians yell "Fan Man" in English. It's one way to teach them our language.)

On the night before we were to leave for home, we had a little variety show and evening of fellowship. I felt that it was time to pass the mantle.

I asked the emcee, Luciano, if I could say a few words. Stepping up to the podium—with my fan, of course—I asked Jonas Sommer, the main worker from the Conference office, to come forward.

Jonas had done so much work for all of us, and he had become a special friend. Trying to sound as official as possible, I thanked Jonas for his successful work of the week. As Luciano translated, he looked painfully puzzled when I said, "And hereby declare..."

"Okay," I continued, "I now say to you..."

Luciano "got that," and translated.

"I say to you, Jonas Sommer," handing him my prized possession, "that you are now the new 'Fan Man' of Brazil!

We hugged. The crowd went crazy. There was laughter, there were tears (mostly mine in giving up one of my biggest fans). After the applause died down (it didn't take that long), I said that I had one more request of Jonas.

"Could I borrow the fan for one more night?"

People laughed.

And Jonas said, "No." I cried.

Death Notices

R. Wendell Burdick, 81, of Albuquerque, N.M., died on January 22, 2003.

Thelma (Pierce) Hurley Hall, 81, of Sherrell, N.Y., died on February 19, 2003.


Buy a Bolo—Help the SR

Net profit donation to the SR

No, it's not the portable one I carried, but Andrea Davis had me pose next to this fan at a Brazilian church.
The freedom and responsibility of choice is one of the basic tenets of Baptist beliefs. Seventh Day Baptists, as a part of this Baptist heritage for 350 years, have upheld and practiced that right. The decision to follow the Bible instead of ecclesiastical authority and tradition led them to accept the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath holy unto the Lord. This choice of the Sabbath sets them apart from other Baptists, but as Dr. Winthrop Hudson noted, “Seventh Day Baptists are separate but not sectarian.”

*A Choosing People: The History of Seventh Day Baptists* documents the history of this oldest Sabbathkeeping Christian denomination within the framework of both religious and secular history, from the Reformation in Europe to modern times in America.

From their origins in mid-17th century England and American colonial Rhode Island, the book traces their development of associational relationships during the 18th century; expansion with the Western frontier, the organization of General Conference and related societies in missionary and education outreach in the 19th century; and grappling with social, theological, and organizational issues in the 20th century. (448-page hardcover, published by Broadman)

Price: $20

Two or more books to the same address, $15.00 each, postpaid.

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