

Sabbath Recorder

The image features two large angel wings. The left wing is vibrant and multi-colored, with a gradient from yellow at the top to green at the bottom. The right wing is in grayscale, showing the intricate feather structure. The background is split vertically, with a colorful, ethereal light on the left and a dark, smoky gray on the right.

The
Great
Masquerade

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication
October 2015

masquerade noun: a false show or pretense; the wearing of disguise: dressing up, role-playing — verb: pretend

something else *masquerade* noun: a false show or pretense; the wearing of disguise: dressing up, role-playing — verb: pretend
to be someone one is not; be disguised or passed off as something else *masquerade* noun: a false show or pretense; the wearing of disguise: dressing up, role-playing — verb: pretend

Satan
himself

masquerades

as an
angel of light

— 2 Corinthians 11:4
Excerpt From: Zondervan. "Holy Bible (NIV)."

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Sabbath Recorder

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- 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.

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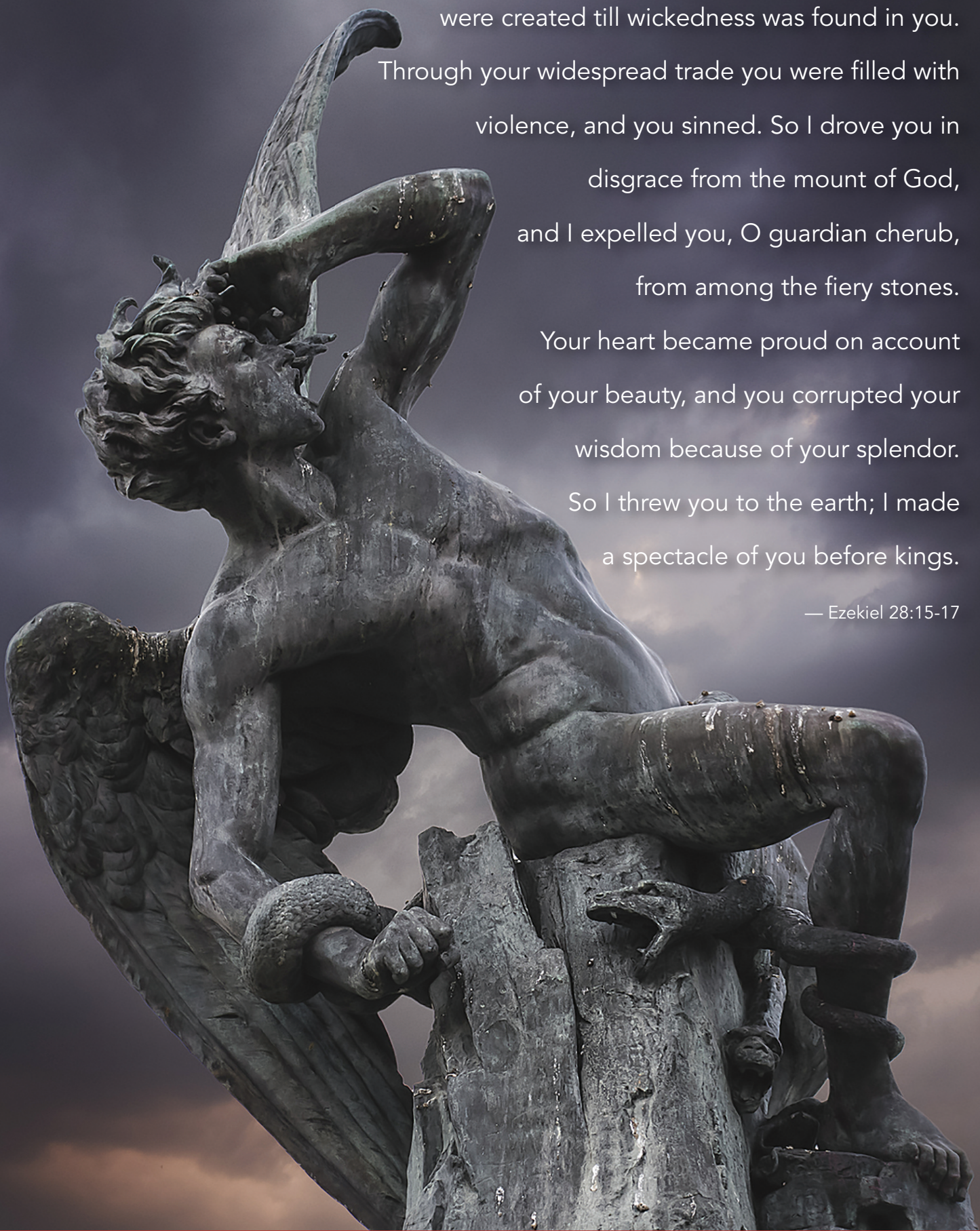
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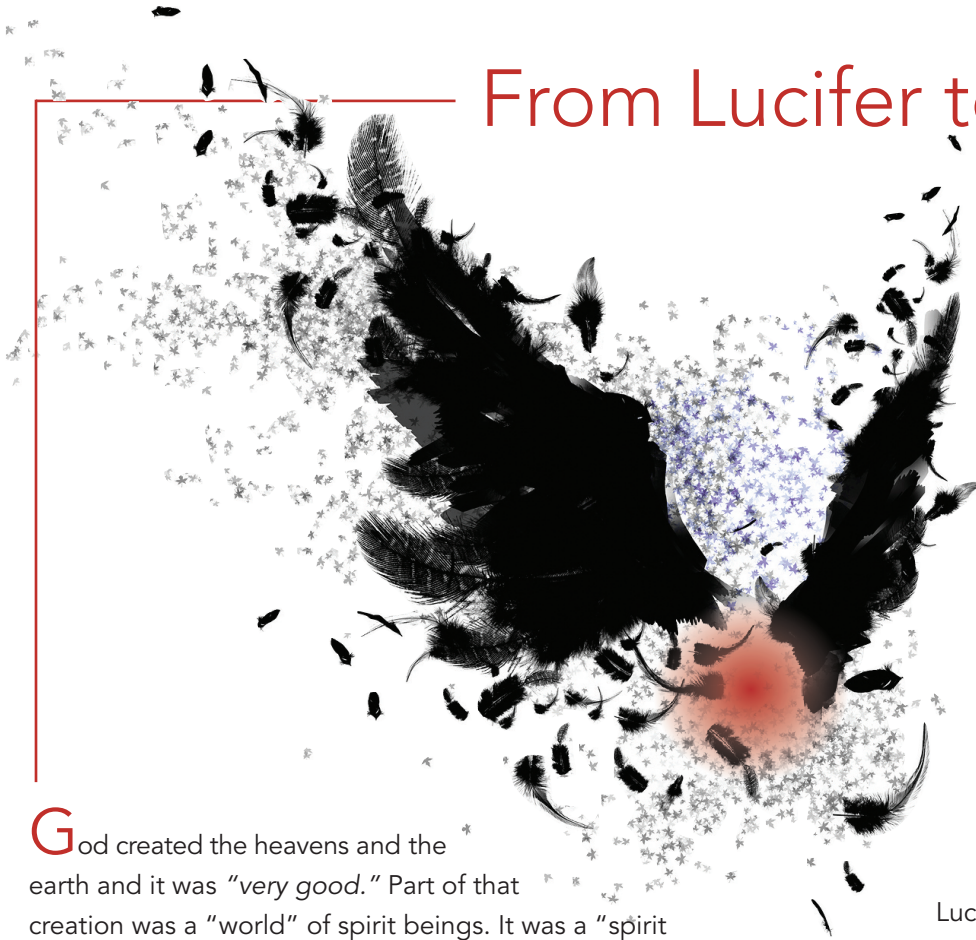
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You were blameless in your ways from the day you
were created till wickedness was found in you.
Through your widespread trade you were filled with
violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in
disgrace from the mount of God,
and I expelled you, O guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.
Your heart became proud on account
of your beauty, and you corrupted your
wisdom because of your splendor.
So I threw you to the earth; I made
a spectacle of you before kings.

— Ezekiel 28:15-17

From Lucifer to Satan



God created the heavens and the earth and it was “very good.” Part of that creation was a “world” of spirit beings. It was a “spirit world” of perfection and beauty. However, one of those beautiful angelic beings led a rebellion in heaven which would drastically change everything. The leader of this angelic revolution was Lucifer, who then became Satan.

Scripture does not lay out for the reader a systematic theology of Satan. It is necessary to develop this theology by seeing Satan interact with both God and man in Scripture.

Very little is told to the reader of Scripture about the origins of Satan. He enters the Biblical drama at the beginning of human history in the Garden of Eden. Without introduction, he appears as a serpent in all his evil and deceitful ways to tempt Adam and Eve into rebellion against God.

The Bible suggests that Satan was not created in the evil state in which we see him in the Bible. Isaiah 14:12 calls him “the star of the morning” from the Hebrew word, “Lucifer.” Lucifer is his pre-rebellion name.

Ezekiel 28:12-15 describes Satan in terms of the King of Tyre. The clue that this passage may also be referring to Lucifer/Satan is, “You were in Eden, the garden of God.”

God created Satan, as he also created man—in perfection and beauty. Lucifer is described in Ezekiel as “the model of perfection,” “anointed as a guardian cherub,” “full of wisdom,” and “blameless.” But he was also created with the variable factor of choice. Lucifer’s evil and deceitful nature was not part of God’s creation but the result of his own perversion. Lucifer became Satan because he chose evil.

You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. Ezekiel 28:15-17

Satan’s beauty warped and corrupted his wisdom, becoming his downfall. Isaiah 14:12-15 gives more help in understanding the corruption and rebellion of Satan.

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Isaiah 14:12-15

Satan's heart was in rebellion against God when he declared his "I wills." But in the final "I will" Satan declared, "I will make myself like the Most High." Satan never ceases to try to make himself equal with God, which puts him at odds with God. For this sin and rebellion, God cast him down to the earth, his current domain. Lucifer became Satan, the "adversary" to God and also to human-kind. In Isaiah 14:12 God told Satan, "You have been cast down to the earth." And in Ezekiel 28:17 He said, "Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth."

On earth Satan would have to live under the authority of man. When man was created, God said to him, "rule... over all the earth...and all the creatures." (Genesis 1:26) Satan had been cast down to the earth because of his sin, to live under the authority of the man and woman. It was God's plan that the perfect man and woman He created would exercise authority over Satan based on their perfect relationship with God. Their relationship with God provided them the authority and power to rule over Satan.

The story of the man and woman losing their authority on earth to Satan is told in Genesis 3. Here, Satan appears to the humans in the form of a serpent. It appears from the text that Satan has no power or authority to force Adam and Eve to do anything. He simply tempts them with the same sin that caused his own fall, the temptation to be like God. (Genesis 3:1-5)

The key element of Satan's temptation is in the words "and you will be like God." Compare this to Satan's words in Isaiah 14:14, "I will make myself like the Most High." Satan knew that man was the object of God's love. He also knew that if man could be enticed to sin then the God/man relationship would be broken in the same way that Satan's own relationship was broken by sin.

Man was created to live under the authority of God and to exercise God's authority over "all the earth" which included Satan. Satan tempted them to reject God's authority and instead "be like God." They believed the lies of Satan; they sinned. The consequence of sin was their separation from God. This separation caused man to forfeit his authority over the earth and Satan. Subse-

quently, Satan became the god and prince of the world (2 Corinthians 4:4). I John 5:19 declares that, "the whole world is under the control of the evil one."

Satan is not omnipresent like God. So, his work is mostly carried out for him by angels who are loyal to him, called "demons." The Devil and his angels are determined to keep humans separated from God by sin and blindness to the gospel. "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age ("world" KJV) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

These forces of evil also attack believers. The Apostle Paul warns us that our struggles on earth are "not against flesh and blood ...but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) Paul also tells us, "But I am afraid just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:3) Satan is a deceitful and powerful liar. Jesus called him "a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44)

The only way to fight against the deceitful and lying forces of evil is by re-establishing our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Separated from God by sin, we have no authority and no power to fight the forces of evil. However, our relationship with God can be restored by putting our faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is in Christ that we have restored authority in our position in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:4-6). And it is through faith in Christ that we have the indwelling Holy Spirit to give us power (Acts 1:8). In Christ, we have both the authority and power to have victory over Satan and his demons.

All spiritual warfare will be successful if the believer recognizes and exercises his position in Christ (authority) and his power from the Holy Spirit. "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). SR

— Rod Henry, Asst. Pastor
Next Step Christian Church
Thornton, CO

Not Ignorant Of Satan's Schemes?

The Apostle Paul was concerned about the life and health of the believers and churches that he had been privileged to help birth into God's Kingdom. As issues arose in these lives and fellowships, he acted decisively to address them in order to restore health and life. The unrepentant sexual sin in the church of Corinth merited serious response — the man was removed from the church fellowship. Equally appropriate was Paul's response when repentance occurred — "forgive and comfort him." He concludes with the comment, "for we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:6-11).

I have to admit that I found those words confusing for much of my Christian life and role as church pastor. I was saved when in college, called into training two years later, and into pastoral leadership after three years of seminary. While seminary provided many resources I needed for my calling, there was no training in spiritual warfare nor discussion of the schemes of the enemy. As a pastor I found myself struggling to help people with significant brokenness in their lives and lacking answers. Praise God He did not leave me helpless.

One of the key insights that was shared with me highlighted the reality of the enemy's character and kingdom. Satan is characterized by darkness, as is his realm. In fact, he and his fallen servants are "kept in bonds of darkness" and are referred to as "world forces of darkness" (Jude 6, Ephesians 6:12). Paul teaches that believers who were "formerly in darkness," were rescued from the domain of darkness" and should "lay aside the deeds of darkness" (Ephesians 5:8, Colossians 1:13, Romans 13:12). Darkness is the native soil of Satan's work. And I have discovered that when believers allow darkness to remain in their lives it provides a platform for the enemy's attack and influence in their lives.

Few Christians would knowingly or willingly give Satan a foothold in their lives — but he is master at discovering those dark things that remain hidden in our lives. From my experience in 35 years of seeking to help family and friends find peace, health, and freedom in Jesus, I have recognized three specific areas of darkness that the enemy manipulates.

The first area is hidden sin. By nature sin is darkness, as it is rebellion against God, Who is light. Furthermore, anything hidden in our lives is dark in character, because we are unwilling to bring it into the light, into the place where it can be seen, confessed and abandoned. Since it remains in darkness, it is freely accessed by the enemy and grants him freedom to bring mental and emotional torment, guilt, shame, and a host of harm against the unrepentant. If it remains unresolved it

becomes a stronghold for the enemy's manipulation of behavior and lifestyle. Demonic oppression diminishes the peace, joy, and freedom which Jesus died for us to experience.

The second area of darkness manipulated by the enemy is personal brokenness. By brokenness I am referring to episodes of mental, emotional or physical wounding that remain hidden or unresolved in an individual's memory. These are episodes of pain that we are unwilling to acknowledge as real or are unaware of how to resolve. As a result, we tend to "stuff" them away and try to forget about them. Again, anything we hide away becomes by nature darkness and an environment for Satan's influence. A young woman was brought into my office suffering from agoraphobia. She was unable to go out into the community without being overcome with fear. Even as she came through my door, I could see her physically trembling. She hid her face in the shadow of a hood. As we talked with her she reluctantly began to tell us of an event when she and some cousins had disobeyed their parents, which resulted in a cousin's death. She had assumed personal accountability for this tragic event and was unaware of the forgiveness available to her. Her 18 years of life since the accident were characterized by broken relationships and depression. As we prayed with her she accepted Jesus as her Savior and Lord and confessed her sin, asking for forgiveness. We proclaimed her forgiven in Jesus' name as the tears flowed down her face. Then she began to shake again and threw back her hood, this time revealing a glowing smile. I see her regularly around town, living normally, free from the oppression of darkness. The enemy seeks to "devour" God's beloved creation, seeking to "kill, steal and destroy" wherever he can find access (1 Peter 5:8, John 10:10).

The third area of darkness which I have observed is that of generational sin and curse. The scriptures instruct us that God "visits" "the iniquity of fathers on the children and the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations..." (Exodus 34:7). My observation confirms that various characteristics of parents are passed on through following generations. "Like Father, like son," "the fruit does not fall far from the tree," and "a chip off the ol' block" reveal that this tendency

is evident to many in our culture. I understand that to be a pre-disposition to a particular sin that is transmitted to future generations, opening a "back door" for the enemy's influence. Abram's sin of deception was transmitted to his sons — Isaac, Jacob and his sons, even to Joseph.

In a camp setting, a young woman sought me out, desperate to get free from a sin pattern with which she struggled. She confessed to a problem with lying. She had repented, sought forgiveness and counsel, and had others pray for her. She had even been to a deliverance counselor, and believed she had been freed from demonic control. Yet the pattern was back. I felt prompted to ask if anyone else in the family dealt with this issue and she quickly acknowledged it was rampant

in the family, who were prominent in her home church. As she again repented and sought freedom, we asked God to break the generational transmission of this sin into her life, to close any "ancestral gateways" used by darkness to gain access to her life. We commanded any demonic presence to leave her, and asked the Holy Spirit to cleanse and fill any areas of her being that had been defiled by demonic activity.

The strategy of the enemy is to gain access to any darkness resident in a believer's life and to use it as a means of keeping him from a full and fruitful life in Christ. The remedy we are given is to expose the darkness, bringing it to the light of truth. We must repent

of denying or hiding past experiences, however painful or humiliating they may seem. Repent also of any sin attached to them, inviting God to bring His healing and freedom to all that is broken or in bondage, and His truth to any lies or deception.

Jesus came to free the captives from darkness, and we must not be ignorant of the devil's schemes to use darkness as his tool to keep God's people from fullness of life in Christ. "If we walk in the light as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7). Light always overcomes darkness. Let us walk as children of light, free from the manipulation of darkness. SR

— Pastor William Shobe
Dodge Center SDB Church, MN

"we must not
be ignorant of
the devil's schemes
to use darkness
as his tool"





The Conflict

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His power. ¹¹ Put on God's complete set of armor, so that you will be able to stand your ground against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For our struggle is not against other people, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this spiritual darkness, and against malicious evil spirits in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up God's complete set of armor, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

(Ephesians 6:10-13, Nate Crandall Adjusted Version)

We are to reflect God's image, but not just during times of peace and comfort. It must also happen during times of difficulty, during times of persecution and during times of intense struggle. In fact, we are not able to fully reflect God's image until we have learned how to respond to our struggles in a spiritually mature manner. This is why the Lord allows us to go through trials. His purpose is to develop in us the character of Christ. As it says in James, *"Consider it pure joy when you face all kinds of trials because you know the testing of your faith produces perseverance and perseverance character..."*

When my sister and soon to be brother-in-law were dating they developed what they called "rules for fair fighting." It was an acknowledgment that there would be conflict in their relationship and that they needed to resolve that conflict in a consistent, fair and God-honoring way. Likewise we must acknowledge that conflict is a part of this life and that the Lord has the tools we need to respond to conflict in a righteous or God-honoring way. You could think of them as "rules for fighting God's way."

We live in a spiritual battlefield, but I think that the term "spiritual warfare" or "spiritual battle" can be a little misleading. That is because every conflict or struggle is spiritual in nature. Every playground fight or boardroom brawl is a spiritual battle. It is a spiritual battle because we must learn to respond to every conflict in a spiritual way or by the Spirit of God. If we take these commands to heart and put them into

practice, we will become more like Jesus and reflect His image.

Be strong in the Lord

Everyone who is "in the Lord" has by faith received the Holy Spirit. If you are "in the Lord" the Spirit of Jesus Christ lives inside of you, but the paradox is that you are also "*seated in Christ in the heavenly places.*" (Eph 2:6) In Him you are strong, much stronger than you think — not because of who you are but because of where you sit, in Christ, in heavenly places, far above the strongest forces of this world.

Do you feel condemned and ashamed because of your past? In the Lord it cannot hold you. "*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*" (Romans 8:1-2) People may continue to hold your past over your head, but they have no power because, "*It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns?*" (Romans 8:33-34) To be strong in the Lord is a command, not a feeling. Do you feel weak in Christ? That is a good place to be. Bring your weakness to Him, and He will exchange it for His strength. The good news is that anyone can be strong in the Lord by recognizing how weak he is in himself and humbly turning to Him. The message of the world is to be strong in yourself, but that is not God's way.

Be strong in the strength of His power

Why settle for the limits of human power when you can have God's power? His power is inexhaustible. We say that God is omnipotent — all powerful. He doesn't need or want to keep His power to himself. The truth is that the Lord is willing and ready to give us the strength that we need at the time we need it. It is the power to live by faith, to give glory to God in every nook and cranny of our lives, to be a light and a testimony to the people around us, to overcome the mountains that stand in our way. Have you been fighting your battles in your own strength? You need His power. How specifically can we get His strength for the struggles we face?

Put on God's armor

It is the complete set of armor. Everything that we need in our struggle is provided for us. If we put on God's armor we are fully geared up and ready for whatever comes our way. We put on His armor because we are in spiritual battle. If we think that the struggle we face is not a "spiritual" one, then we may think that we don't need spiritual armor. The truth is that we should put on His armor and never take it off. If we fight using the

weapons of the world we can be sure that we will lose. Even when we think we have won a battle, if we fight using the weapons of this world, we are the losers.

God's armor is more than enough to defend us in any conflict we face. His assignment is for us to stand our spiritual ground. Our weapons of spiritual warfare are powerful enough "*to demolish strongholds.*" (2 Cor 10:4) A stronghold is a fortress of either truth or lies. As we put on God's armor and engage in our struggles according to His ways, we have more than enough power to pull down those strongholds of lies from the evil one. Instead of retreat, in the Lord we will be able to stand our ground.

We need wisdom because the evil one has devised wicked strategies against us. The schemes of the devil are designed to drag us back into spiritual darkness. We've been watching the Star Wars movies at my house. Just as the evil dark lord tries to continually seduce Luke Skywalker to the dark side, so also the evil one, Satan, the deceiver, tries to lure us from the light of Christ back into the darkness. The darkness is anything that keeps us from reflecting the image of Jesus.

His lies, his schemes are described by the classic Christian writer John Bunyan in his book "Holy War." He says that "the tactics of intimidation and insinuation" are the devil's "twofold infernal policy." In other words, he works by "force and fraud." He is a "bully and beguiler." The devil fights dirty — but not only is God's armor enough to defeat these lies, it is more than enough. So then what is the nature of our struggle?

We are in spiritual hand-to-hand combat

It is like the struggle between two wrestlers who grapple for control or like two soldiers whose guns have been tossed aside and are fighting for their lives in hand-to-hand combat. The spiritual warfare that we face is not fought from a distance with drones. It is up close and personal.

One of the first rules of warfare is to know who your enemy is. Our spiritual hand-to-hand combat is not against people. Even though they may be under the influence of the evil one, they are not the enemy. They are captives who need to be set free. Rather than spend our time and energy fighting against people, we must learn how to pray for others. When we celebrate the "wins" against others, it is the devil who ultimately wins.

Instead our fight is against evil spirits. Christian writers and preachers have always understood that the rulers,
continued on next page...

The Conflict

continued from previous page...

authorities, world-rulers, and spiritual forces of wickedness are evil spirits. The question that I asked when looking with fresh eyes at the four different descriptions which Paul gave was, "how do we fight in hand-to-hand combat with each of them?"

The rulers. The word for ruler means "beginning." What are the "rulers" we fight against? These are the spirits which have been with us from the beginning of our lives. They are the demons which have gained access to our lives because of generational sins which have been passed down to us. We are born in sin. Along with that sin, evil spirits seek to control our lives through that sin.

The authorities. Authorities are those who are "invested with power." These evil spirits are the ones we give power to by believing Satan's lies instead of God's truth. We empower them when we continue to live in our deceptions.

The world-rulers. World-rulers are those spirits who control parts of the world. Even before Paul wrote these words in the first century, the Greek culture believed that spirits controlled parts of the world. This word was used in Astrology in reference to the planets which were believed, along with the Greek gods, to control the fate of mankind. Though Satan, in his deception, twisted the real nature of evil spirits in the Greek culture, the truth remains that some spirits have control over regions and nations and cultures.

Our struggle against these demons, these world-rulers, is hand-to-hand combat because we are pressured to believe like the culture around us instead of like the Bible teaches. It's personal. Try as we might to avoid these battles, these evil spirits do not stop until they are in control. They desire to rule.

Racism is a world-ruler. Back in the 90's, the country of Rwanda experienced a spiritual battle against the world-ruler of racism. Overnight people from the tribes of Hutus and Tutsis, who lived alongside each other in peace, began to kill each other. These groups of people would describe themselves as Christian, yet they were not immune to the attack of racism. After the conflict was over, people testified that it was like being in a dream, like not being in control of their bodies. This is why we "Christians" must be prepared to stand our ground against the evil spirits which seek to control and destroy our culture. We need to know our enemy and be prepared to fight using God's methods and His ways.

The spiritual forces of wickedness. These spiritual forces are demons which are pure evil. They are malicious

and conniving and without remorse. They fight dirty and they don't care who gets hurt or how they accomplish their goal.

They fight "in the heavenly places." They fight in the heavenly places because that is where Christ-followers live and because they aim to strip us of our rightful inheritance as children of God. Joshua led the children of Israel into the promised land with the mission of destroying every enemy in the land. His fight and our fight is a fight to the death. We must either take control and push back our malicious enemy out of the inheritance in Christ that is rightfully ours, or our enemy will take it from us.

Our struggle is for "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" which is the kingdom of God. This is our birthright as God's children by faith in Jesus Christ. We have been made "children of the light." Everyone that is in the light obeys and follows after God. Yet, just like Joshua, we must defeat these enemies of our soul in order to experience the promises which God has for us. So, again, how do we do this?

Take up God's armor

...to stand against and resist the evil one. On the evil day, that is when the attacks are particularly bad, we need His armor to stand our ground. God's armor is not just the tools to fight. It is the strength, first and foremost, to respond to our struggle in a manner that is honoring to God.

...to keep standing. God's strength allows us to stay standing until the last round. When the smoke clears, because of his strength working in us, we will still be on our feet. We need perseverance. When we are in the middle of the struggle we can easily lower our shield and take off our armor or protection. We need this reminder: keep your armor on, keep your armor up.

Our weapons are spiritual ones. We must learn to use them because we are not strong enough to endure when we fight any other way. Our enemy is too strong, too smart and too well-equipped.

The fight is contrary to our sinful nature's tendency for fighting. The battle is the Lord's. He will win. Truly when we stand "in the Lord" we will be on His winning side.

— Sermon series by Pastor Nathan Crandall
Senior Pastor, Milton SDB Church, WI

Coming next month: the weapons of our fight are those which lead us towards God and towards becoming more like Jesus. [SR](#)



Did “The Devil Make Me Do It”

Years ago, comedian Flip Wilson had a catch phrase that became the byline for his comedic routines. Maybe you remember him. He would pull a stunt that was problematic for other people, and when confronted he would say in an impish sort of way, “The Devil made me do it!” I found myself getting angry when I saw this because I thought it treated sin in a frivolous way. One thing we must recognize is that sin is serious, and God requires each of us to take responsibility for the sin in our lives.

Don’t get me wrong. There is a real devil and he is out to deceive us by causing us to fall into his snares. (I Timothy 3:7b) For instance, I sometimes have disturbing thoughts go through my mind...so foreign to my way of thinking, I realize it must have come from some external source. Perhaps you have experienced this same thing. The Bible does say the devil is our adversary and that he wanders around *“like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* (I Peter 5:8) We need to take him very seriously.

It is important to understand that the world, as referred to in I John 5:4-5, is the dominion of Satan. When God created mankind in Genesis, it says that He gave mankind dominion over all the earth and all the plants and animals that filled it. (Genesis 1:28-31) But as we go into Genesis 2 and 3, we see that mankind, represented by Adam and Eve, sold dominion over the earth to Satan. As a result Satan has become the ruler of this world. Jesus acknowledged this when He referred to Satan as the ruler of this world in John 12:31. This means that, though God created every one of us to be “very good” (Genesis 1:31), that as soon as we landed in this world, we were polluted by sin. It is to redeem us from this corruption and certain destruction that Jesus came into the world, the dominion of Satan. He broke Satan’s claim on all that was in the world by giving His lifeblood as an atonement for sin. (John 3:16)

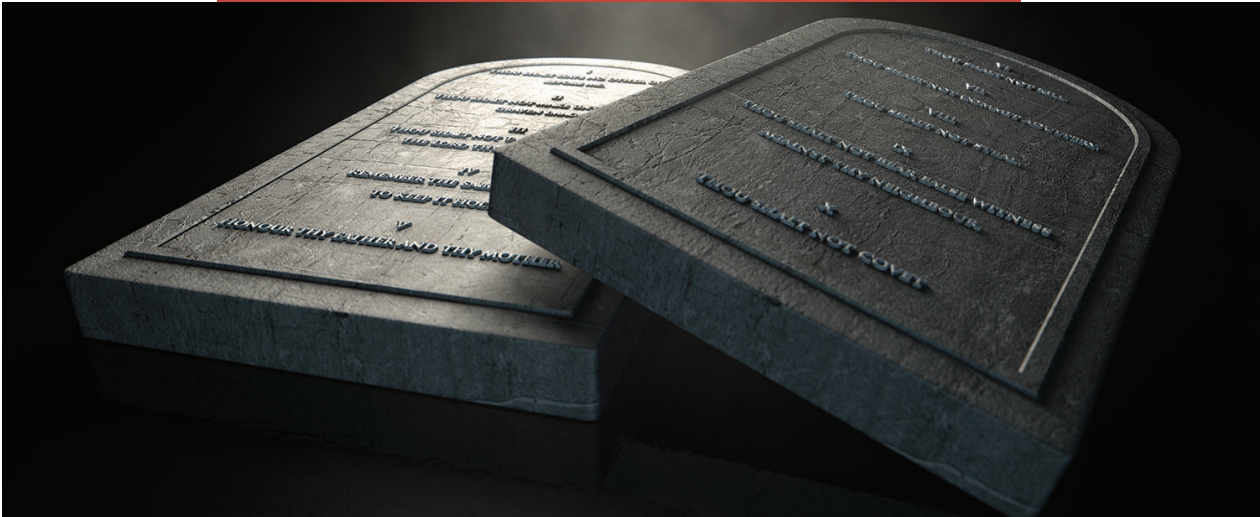
This puts those of us who are the redeemed, who understand the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross and have accepted His gift of salvation, in the interesting position of living in a foreign dominion. Philippians 3:20 states plainly that our citizenship is in heaven. The old hymn stating *“This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through”* makes sense. But we are more than just “passing through”; we are ambassadors, representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, to those who are still held in the bondage of darkness that characterizes Satan’s dominion.

However we must be careful not to credit Satan with too much power. We are not possessed by him such that we have no choice but to respond to his enticements. We are people of free choice. The Scriptures teach that, unless we of our own free will choose to turn away from sin and accept the redemption as offered in Jesus Christ, we have already chosen Satan’s dominion. (John 3:18, Isaiah 59:1-2, Romans 1:19-21) We cannot blame the devil for the sin that pollutes our lives. We must take responsibility for that ourselves. Only when we take responsibility can God move in with His power to redeem us and overcome the works of the devil. If we refuse to take responsibility for the sin in our lives, we have no authority to invite God into our lives to cleanse us from sin. We cannot exercise authority where we have no responsibility.

This is a great paradox. On the one hand, the devil is a very powerful being who exercises a tremendous influence on our lives. On the other, each of us and all of us together are responsible for the sin in our lives. How can we be responsible if the devil has such power? Let’s take a closer look. There is only one way to overcome such power, and that is by the power of God. I John 4:4 says, *“Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world.”* 2 Corinthians 10:4 says *“The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”* The paradox is that only by taking responsibility for the sin in our lives, and by acknowledging our hopelessness in the face of the devil’s power, can we release the power of God into our lives to overcome the devil and receive God’s redemption. It is our choice. It is by our free will that we choose either to linger in Satan’s dominion or to appropriate God’s saving power.

Consider the story of Adam and Eve. Read it carefully in Genesis 2 and 3. Satan did not force them to sell out to him in eating the forbidden fruit. They chose that of their own free will. Yes, Satan did deceive them into thinking that this was the best choice...he did that by sowing lies and jealousy into their lives. Nevertheless it was their choice — which is true for each of us. It is important to know Satan’s tactics on the one hand, and to know God’s Truth on the other. These are important tools for us to use in confronting Satan’s tactics. In the power and truth of God, we can overcome. Let us take responsibility for the sin that is in our lives. Let us not “give opportunity to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:27) [\[SR\]](#)

— Dale Rood, Retired Pastor
Dodge Center, MN



Top Ten Words

How Much Do Your Parents Weigh? – Exodus 20:12

Sermon Series by Pastor Dusty Mackintosh, Next Step Christian Church, Thornton, CO

The command to honor our mother and father calls us to **weigh heavily** our parents in every way: their needs, their opinions, their words and deeds. In the ideal, **honoring parents teaches us to love and honor God and love and honor others**. In practice, we are commanded to honor sinful and broken human beings. This is difficult, but it comes with a promise to you and generations to follow.

Tip the scales towards your parents.

Honoring the Parents — Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

The father and mother part, well that is pretty clear. We can expand that to include things like spiritual fathers and mothers, mentors and the like. But, we cannot simply substitute any of these in place of our biological parents.

Honor – Weight

What is honor? I heard recently that “if you need it defined, you don’t have it.” We sort of have a conception of what that means. In the Greek, it has to do with assigning a high value to something. In my Hebrew word study, I discovered a new metaphor and I found it tremendously useful. The root of “honor” is the idea of weight, like a heavy burden. So my parents are a heavy burden? Some of you might say “Yeah, I knew that!” Okay, not exactly. Considering something as heavy, ascribing to it that property, we can see how the idea of honor develops:

I am going to honor your payment of gold — it is heavy enough.

I am going to honor your word of payment — I ascribe to it a heavy weight.

I believe you have a lot of honor.

When you say something to me, I weigh it heavily, I consider it carefully on the scales of my mind, on the scales of relationships.

Even in the medieval, chivalrous sense of honor, the knight’s reputation had “weight.” So many good deeds, so much accumulated trust, such “Honor!”

Isn’t that crazy helpful? I don’t think I had ever heard that definition before.

So honor grants weight: or a position of respect and authority in your life. You weigh (or count) someone’s word more heavily, you weigh someone’s relationship more valuable.

Honor tips the scales

Honoring — a financial obligation

This can get ridiculously practical. Before we expand and explore this commandment, let’s be sure we have the most straightforward possible applications of this.

First, to children in the household of their parents: Honor your parents; obey your parents. Weigh their word, their commands, so heavily in your mind that you simply do them. Simple.

Another practical and primary application of this commandment: Shoulder, take on, the financial burden of your parents. Weigh heavily their needs and take care of them. This is social security.

This is the sense addressed by Jesus in Matthew 15: Jesus addresses a practice the Pharisees had of declaring their possessions “devoted to God” and thereby dodging their responsibility to “honor” their father and mother, in this case, to take care of them financially.

So this commandment sets up a generational Social Security system, which makes one very practical application of the

promise at the end. You take care of your parents, and if everyone follows suit, you will be taken care of in your old age. “That you might live long in the land...”

The Pharisees were dodging Social Security tax, but face to face, with their own parents. Jesus rebukes them, quoting Isaiah saying, “You honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me.”

You are using a legal loophole. I am after your heart. We will come back to Matthew 15...Jesus lays it out so clearly, really summarizing all of the commandments: **it is all about the heart.**

What is so important about parents?

So we have two very practical applications, but if this applies to all of us (my parents aren't in a home yet), and if it is all about the heart, what is so important about parents?

This is in the top 10.

Only two human relationships are called out in the Top Ten Words, written by the finger of God, spoken to all the people (three if you count “neighbor,” but that's a little more generic): your parents and your spouse. Your parents come first. The Ten aren't necessarily arranged in descending order of importance (in fact I think this one comes here for a different reason) but this is top billing. This honoring is really important.

Parents are universal, foundational and representative.

We all have parents. No matter who you are, no matter how involved they end up being, every human being on the planet has parents. This is a universal. So God speaks here into the universal and fundamental human arrangement.

They are your earliest social relationship. The way you relate to them forms and shapes the rest of your life. You learn how to relate to others, how to love and honor others. Every interaction you have with them throughout life is magnified by those early times. Freud got crazy, but he was on to something here. You are who you are in relation to them. Just as damage and wounds or even abuse in that relationship cascade through the rest of your life, so health and love strengthens the rest of your life. What is your responsibility in a healthy parent-child relationship? **Honor.** There is a sense in which your parents already *weigh* a lot in your life, regardless of what you admit. They loom large in your life. They have power. They have affect in your life.

Honor recognizes that...**the scales are tipped toward your parents.**

And, finally parents are representative.

From Vertical to Horizontal

We are in the midst of a shift in the Ten Commandments from “Vertically focused Commandments” (the holiness of God, teaching us to love God with all our heart, mind and strength) to “Horizontally focused Commandments” (teaching us to love our neighbor as ourselves).

The last two commandments we've studied bridge this gap. The Sabbath is God's Sabbath, rooted in His Creation, an invitation into His holiness. It is made *for* man. It is rest. It is celebration.

It is freedom from slavery. It is an awesome chance to learn to love one another as well as love God. (*May 2015 SR*)

Now we look at the fifth commandment: honor your father and mother. The horizontal component is immediately obvious. In the ideal, through our parents, we learn to love and honor others.

But we also have “father and mother” as a living metaphor for God. Hundreds of times, God calls Himself our Father. Occasionally, poetically, there are maternal references. Profoundly, Jesus calls Him Father, which means in the very heart of the Trinity, in the midst of eternal 3-in-1, there is this kind of relationship — this kind of Honoring happens in the being of God from eternity.

When we picture the ideal father/mother-child relationship, we see how this plays out. Children depend upon the parents for life — their life proceeds from Mom and Dad: their daily bread, their knowledge, each moment is from their parents. At the start, in the ideal, this Honoring (weighing heavily) happens automatically. Mom and Dad loom large, they are the stuff of the child's life.

Now this shifts as children grow. Children get to know Mom and Dad as persons — that echoes our growing relationship with God. But they also get to know that Mom and Dad aren't actually omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent beings. True story. So they are prepared to discover the Truth behind the metaphor, the Being, the Heavenly Father who is everything they once thought Mom and Dad were and more. In the ideal circumstances, this interplay of metaphor, of relationship — us to God, us to parents — continues to teach and mature us. We learn to honor our parents, and so we learn to honor God. We honor God even as we honor our parents. And we learn, in the oldest relationship we have, how to love others as a reflection and continuation of our love for God.

Parental honor becomes Divine honor. Divine honor commands Parental honor.

Parental love becomes Divine love. Divine love commands Parental love.

It's a vicious circle! A feedback loop: earthly family to Heavenly family. Horizontal to Vertical — from that closest, earliest earthly relationship, we extend out to love our neighbor as ourselves.

How Much Do Your Parents Weigh? Are They Worthy of Honor?

So, the question for you is, how much do your parents weigh? Are they heavy? Too personal?

Tip the scales toward your parents. Among all your relationships, give a little extra weight to your parents simply because they are your parents. When they speak to you, lean into what they are saying. Listen a little harder. When it comes to time, tip the balance in their favor — give them more time than you would others simply because they are your parents. When you speak about them, honor them in your words.

Full disclosure: honoring my parents is natural and easy. My parents are worthy of honor. People who know them honor them for who they are, without having a Commandment to do it. *continued on next page...*

Top Ten Words

continued from previous page...

I have walked alongside some friends who struggle with this, whose parents are making this really difficult, if not impossible.

How do you honor your father and mother...if you're parents aren't worthy of honor?

This whole ideal of Mom and Dad teaching children what it looks like to love and honor...it is all horribly wounded and crippled by sin, and Mom and Dad are both sinners. Now the weightiness of parents, the authority and position they have, is being used to hurt. *You want me to give them more?*

Let me make it worse.

The Promise

This commandment is the first commandment with a specific promise: *"that you may live long in the land the LORD, your God, is giving you."*

Or, as repeated in Deuteronomy, and then later in Ephesians 6, it is expanded: *"That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."*

This is not a guarantee that the length of your life is directly proportional to the extent that you honor your father and mother. Nor that if you honor your father and mother, everything else is guaranteed to go perfectly.

Well, then, what is it?

Here I was surprised. What I expected to find was that the "you" was plural. It is a kind of generic social good — it is good for you as a people, you will dwell long in the land as a people if you are the kind of people who honor father and mother. There is a generational legacy there, a continuity, as well as the Social Security kind of care of the elderly by their children.

However, the promise is apparently to **you**. In the same way that it is **you** who are commanded to honor your father and mother, it is **you** who gets some kind of temporal benefit. "It is well with *you*, *you* will dwell long in the land..."

Isn't the value you get related to the honorableness, the wisdom and honesty, the virtue of the parent you are honoring? That makes logical sense...but it doesn't show up here.

The apparent claim is that something happens in you, or to you, in this ongoing process of "honoring your mother and father" that corresponds to some form of blessing. There is a "possibility" in there, a "might," not a guarantee. But what is going on here? Could it be that honoring your father and mother is good for you? Regardless of their worthiness? This is easy if your parents are honorable. All of our parents are sinful and broken human beings. All of our parents have made mistakes...when they have hurt you, wounded you, maybe in ways or at moments when you were most vulnerable...

But could it be that God desires healing and redemption in your earliest, most basic relationship? Could "honor" include things like forgiveness, reconciliation and hope?

Does honoring still have room for being careful and setting appropriate relational boundaries...all of that? Absolutely. But for you, for your sake, that it might be well with you, and

honoring God's commandment to you, teaching you to honor and love Him...take a step in honoring your mother and father.

Tip the scales toward your father. Honor him.

Tip the scales toward your mother. Honor her.

Application

How do we do this? How do we "add weight" to our parents? I want whatever blessing is associated with that. God clearly believes this is fundamentally important, and that this is a necessary component of loving Him and loving others.

One small step towards giving "more weight" to your mother and father. What does that look like?

Perhaps your mom or dad have already passed. You can still honor them. Take some time today to remember something they taught you, a lesson you learned from them, a story you shared. Better yet, share that story. One of my great memories is painting Logan's nursery with my dad, and he's just telling me stories about his dad. Generational honor.

Perhaps your parents are alive and kickin'...Make a special effort, today, to lean in to that relationship. Call them, have dinner with them, thank them, tell them you love them or honor them. You know what your relationship looks like — give it a boost, give it an extra step, give it weight, give it honor. For me, if my parents weren't here, I'd Skype them tonight. I don't do enough of that, but I can honor them that way.

Perhaps your parents are alive...and you kind of wish they weren't. Or you are pretending they aren't. That is because there is real pain there. There is history and hurt and garbage. They are not honorable...but that isn't the point. You are called to honor them.

Maybe it looks like a phone call...or a letter...a little crack in the door of reconciliation...or it is a prayer of forgiveness...or just "God, help me to want to think about trying to start forgiving." Give it some weight. The truth of your human experience is you can't make your parents weightless. Lean into forgiveness, lean into the relationship.

Find a way, today, to honor your father and mother.

Not only for their sakes, though it is for their good.

Not only for your sake, though it is for your good, that "it may be well with you." You strengthen your foundation for relationship, your capacity to love others, and your capacity to love and honor God.

Ultimately, honor your father and mother to honor God. He commands "this is the course of righteousness" and we follow, we trust, and we discover love. SR

How to contact General Council:

Email address to all of the General Council members:

sdbgeneralcouncil@seventhdaybaptist.org

Regular mail can be sent to:

Susie Fox, General Council Chair

1722 Taylor Station Road, Blacklick, OH 43004.

The Faith Thing

Pastor Scott Hausrath
SDB Church
North Loup, NE



This morning, as I was sitting in the North Loup Cafe getting ready to eat breakfast with some friends, one of my neighbors asked if she could speak with me when I had some time. After breakfast I went to talk with her, and she said that she had a story to tell me.

She told me that she had never been a regular church-goer, or a very spiritual person, but a few weeks ago she had a vision that changed everything. In her vision, she saw herself on her knees in a church, praying and asking God to relieve some of the heavy burdens she was feeling. When I asked her if He had done this, she said yes, God had lifted those burdens from her. The thing she said that struck me the most was that she finally understood “the faith thing.” After many years of misunderstanding and judging others for living a life of faith, she finally “got it” when God just gave it to her.

What about you? Do you understand “the faith thing”? Are you struggling, trying to “get” faith? Do you believe that you need to do something in order to have the kind of faith that every other Christian seems to have?


A typical dictionary definition of “faith” goes something like this: “confidence or trust in a person or thing.” When we talk about our Christian faith, we tend to focus on the first part of this definition: confidence and trust. We focus on trying to build a stronger trust in God. Perhaps this is our reaction to an often-memorized Scripture passage, Hebrews 11:6a, which states that, *without faith it is impossible to please God*. We want to please God, so we try to build up our faith in Him.

I’m wondering, however, if we might be going about this backwards. What if we were to focus on the second part of the definition, instead of the first part? Instead of focusing on confidence and trust, what if we focused on the person or thing that is the object of our confidence and trust? If we “get” God, we won’t need to “get” faith, because I believe He will *give* us the faith we so desire.

A wonderful way to start getting God is to look to the second part of that Hebrews passage. Hebrews 11:6b says that, *because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him*.

These are two truths that are foundational for our connection with God. Of course we must first believe that He exists; otherwise we’d be fools to pursue something/someone that is not there. Secondly, the fact that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him is the invitation we need to head out on our journey toward Him.

But take a closer look at the verse. It’s not calling us to seek faith; it’s calling us to seek God. That’s what I’m talkin’ ‘bout! Scripture calls us not to religion about God, but to relationship with God. May our goal be God, and nothing less. Then, along with Himself, He will provide us with everything else we need, including faith.

Would you like to talk more about this faith thing? I encourage you to join us next year in Houghton, New York, as we explore other facets of our Christian faith, and as we dive into the subjects of family and education. It will be a very rich week. Please join us, and add to the richness. 

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Chroniger
Alfred Station SDB Church, NY

President’s Page



CoWoCo 1964



From 10 Member Conferences



1st Session - 1971 - USA

Delegates from
Brazil
Britain
Germany
Guyana
Jamaica
Malawi
Netherlands
New Zealand
USA



Delegates traveled 65,880 miles

6th Session - 2003 - Brazil



2nd Session - 1978 - USA



5th Session - 1997 - Jamaica



3rd Session - 1986 - USA



All member groups represented!

4th Session - 1992 - New Zealand



Become A Semi-Centennial Global Partner With The SDB World Federation



The year was 1965. It was the year that Sir Winston Churchill died. It was also the year that Ferdinand Marcos was elected President of the Philippines. And the year that Singapore was admitted as a part of the United Nations. 1965 was also the year that Rhodesia proclaimed independence from Britain. And the year Malcolm X was assassinated. That same year Israel and West Germany began diplomatic relations. And India and Pakistan began engaging in their border fight. And Tibet became an autonomous region of China.

But for Seventh Day Baptists globally, 1965 was the year the World Federation came into being with a composition of four (4) conferences, although there are ten (10) charter members, since that distinction was given to any conference becoming a member up to one year after August 1965. A world consultation of delegates had taken place in Clarksburg, West Virginia, USA in 1964, which furnished the embryo for the birth of the international organization. The primary purpose of the establishment of the Federation was to provide increased communication among Seventh Day Baptist groups throughout the world. Other purposes were added in subsequent years.

Since 1965, the Federation has met seven (7) times — 1971, 1978, 1986, 1992, 1997, 2003, 2008 — in four (4) countries: USA, New Zealand, Jamaica, and Brazil. It has been ably served by six (6) Executive or General Secretaries, namely Alton Wheeler, K. Duane Hurley, Dale Thorngate, Frits Nieuwstraten, Jan Lek, and Andrew Samuels. Presidents of the organization have also numbered six (6) in the persons of Loren Osborn, David Pearson, James Skaggs, Gabriel Bejjani, Joe Samuels, and Dale Thorngate. So, to date, Rev. Dr. Dale Thorngate has the distinction of being the only individual to serve the SDB World Federation as both Executive Secretary and President.

2015 then is the fiftieth (50th) anniversary of the Federation. That is a milestone worth recognizing and celebrating. We are very grateful to the Lord, without whose enabling power none of the above would be possible. We are also appreciative of the current 18 member conferences of the Federation, as well as those who have been members in the past, for their support of the organization's work over the years. The current officers who make up the Executive Committee, plus those previous officers, also deserve special mention and commendation.

The purposes of the Federation have been broadened in 50 years, and the facilities for international communication have greatly improved with the development of technology. The Federation's leadership remains committed to positioning us to be world class Seventh Day Baptists, where we change our thinking from local to global, and our perspective is adjusted from self-centered to other-centered.

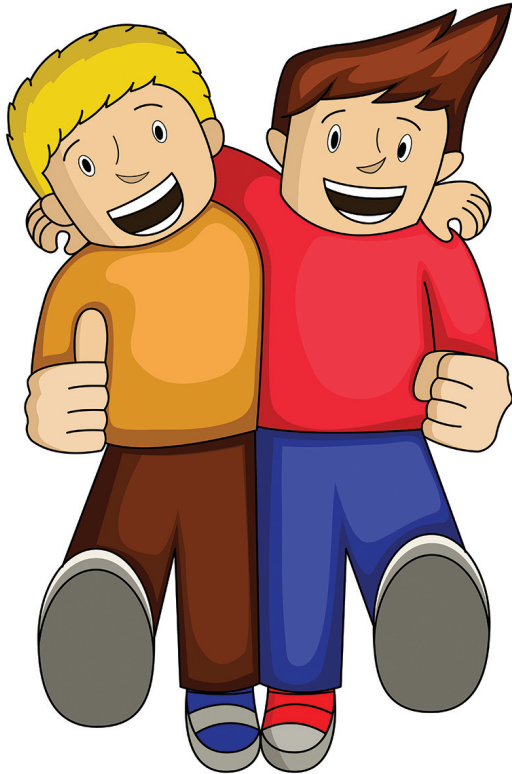
As we continue to plan for the next Session of the World Federation in Brazil, January 22-28, 2017, we want to use this semi-centennial (50th) year to give Seventh Day Baptists all over the world, an opportunity to join us in raising funds to ensure that at least one delegate from each of the member conferences will be able to attend the upcoming Session in Brazil in 2017. The Session is not just a meeting. It is more than simply an event. It is an integral component in the all-important and continuing process of uniting Seventh Day Baptists globally.

As we celebrate 50 years of existence, we are hereby launching a campaign to raise US\$50,000 by asking 1,000 Seventh Day Baptists to invest the equivalent of US\$50 each. This drive will continue until June 30, 2016, and for your donation you will become a GLOBAL SEMI-CENTENNIAL PARTNER WITH THE SDB WORLD FEDERATION. As a further incentive, the first 500 donors will receive an inflatable globe which can be helpful in locating each of the member conferences in the world, and motivate you to pray for them even more. 1,000 is only 3.3% of the estimated 30,000 SDB's worldwide in our member conferences, so this should not be a difficult goal to reach, even with great disparity in the availability of disposable income among our people. We urge you to view this as an investment, not as an expense.

Of course, this specific fundraising drive does not mean that larger or smaller donations will not be accepted. Nor does it mean that churches and/or other entities may not contribute. We continue to encourage you to be responsive to the leading of the Lord in your stewardship to the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

Donations may be sent directly to the Federation Treasurer, Gavin Fox, at P.O. Box 7755, Silver Spring, MD 20907, USA or by paypal at treasurer@sdbwf.org.

Celebrate 50 years of worldwide ministry with us. To God be the glory! 



The Best Support

by Caleb Crouch
Edgewater SDB Church, FL

Have you ever wanted a friend to spend the night at your house? Nothing fancy, just a regular old sleep over. To a kid — or even a youth, really (I'm sixteen and my view hasn't changed a whole lot), to us — the logistics seem simple. Your friend packs a change of clothes and a toothbrush, and goes back home in the morning. No biggie.

But there's an obstacle in your way: the parents (cue intense piano score). Normally asking them wouldn't be a problem, but you know they've had a rough day, and then there was that spat this morning over the state of your room (Hey, the room is clean. They didn't say anything about the closet.) and, all things considered, you're rather nervous about asking them. Scared, even.

So what do you do?

I've found there's a common (and simple) strategy often deployed by young folk in this tough situation: bring your friend. Now, you'd never be able to convince him to ask for you, but there's some psychological benefit to

just having him with you. Having him stand in the room as you ask seems to soften the atmosphere, and makes you more at ease. (I bet some European scientist has done research and figured out the "sciencey" bits as to why this works. Someone Google that and get back to me).

But anyway, I've found that this is one of those cool examples that God gave us to help us understand our relationship with Him better. You see, sometimes God asks us to do a lot of stuff for Him. Not that I'm complaining (to be honest, there's no way we could do enough for Him), but sometimes the things He asks of us are hard. Sometimes they're scary. Often they're uncomfortable.

More than once I've gotten that same queasy ask-my-parents feeling about doing something He's asked of me. I get nervous, and indecisive, and sometimes outright scared. But here's the neat thing: if following His will is the metaphoric asking-your-parents, then God Himself is the metaphoric friend-asking-with-you.

It doesn't matter where you are or who you're with, if you're a child of God, His presence is always with you. He'll support, encourage, and empower you through any and all tasks He's set before you. So don't be scared to follow God — He's the best support you can get.

"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). [SR](#)



Pumpkin Spice Christian

by Dakota Watt
Central SDB Church, Mitchellville, MC



This is the time of year we look back and remind ourselves what we are thankful for. This is also the time of year where we are reminded that there is such a thing as pumpkin spice. Pumpkin is everywhere, pumpkin spice coffee, pumpkin spice cookies, and pumpkin spice smelling underwear. The list goes on and on with what people do with pumpkin spice. They market it super hard. They want you to know that pumpkin spice is a thing. People anticipate pumpkin spice. Then, pumpkin spice is gone. Everyone forgets about it until next fall. That is how some Christians are.

I know I was like that for a long time. There were months at a time where I did not give God a single thought. I would live in the world and be miserable. Then, something would happen and I would see God everywhere. He would be on my mind. I was happy. Then the time would be over and I would go back to what I would normally do and forget all about God once again. Instead of fall, it was the summer time where I would remember him.

During the time when I was working and going to school, I got so busy thinking about me that I completely forget about God and all the wonderful things He does for me. I got so caught up in my life that He went onto the back burner. Then as soon as I was free, I started to remember that God exists and I got really excited again. "Yay God! I'm so glad you are in my life!" He doesn't want that at all. What can He do with me as a perpetual prodigal son?

At some point I would have to choose what kind of follower I was going to be. I needed to be with Him for the whole year or not at all. I looked through my Bible and found Colossians 2:6-7. *"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and establish in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving,"* (ASV). It doesn't say anywhere in that verse that we should walk with Him sometimes. It is telling us to be with Him all the time. I read that and realized that I needed to change the way I was living. I should stop being a pumpkin spice Christian! God doesn't want that. He doesn't want to be the thing you crave for a few months. He wants to be the thing you crave every month. He wants to be the thing that is on your mind every day. It says in Proverbs 3:5-6, *"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths."* (ASV) He wants to lead you, and you should let Him.

If you are being a pumpkin spice Christian, I strongly suggest you start to turn your life around. Trust me when I say that you will be a lot happier. ^{SR}

Being the Evidence



“Ugh! You just ruined that for me. I wasted 13 years of my life with the whole Christian thing and I don’t want to even be reminded of that.”

This was the reaction of a friend to an offhand comment made about the resemblance of a piece of décor she had previously liked to a Christian symbol. Right then was not the time or place to enter in to a theological, or obviously emotionally charged, conversation regarding Christianity. It wasn’t a good time to ask why she felt that way. But because of the obvious vehemence with which she delivered the words, it was a hard statement to ignore and even harder to forget.

Hearing things like this make me wonder why people turn away so forcefully from Christ? Thirteen years is a long time to believe and then do a 180 to adamantly reject the life that was being cultivated. It’s not just belief that lost its enthusiasm and became a stagnant zombie-like religion, a poor mimicry of the real covenant between Christ and his followers. This is flat-out hatred of the things which used to be valued — a bitterness.

I don’t know why this particular person is so bitter about faith, but I do know that she is not the only person who feels that way. There are many people who have grown up in church, been happy there and later bitterly rejected their faith. But, you don’t always get to know the reason why someone leaves their faith behind. I get caught up in thinking that I can’t affect anything unless I know all the particulars of a situation. But that’s not the truth — it’s my curiosity and helplessness. Because I am so tied up in figuring out the exact best way to defend God to a specific person, I miss the opportunity to do it. I can’t know the best way without having all the variables — right?

The truth is, the person who really needs that information already knows all the particulars of the situation: the ones able to be expressed and those unexpressed. God knows. We really don’t need to know the particulars of every situation. Perhaps we just need to understand one thing.

The root cause of people turning away from Christ stems from an inaccurate view of God. Somewhere along the journey their sight of a sovereign, omnipotent, loving creator has become

scarred, marring their vision and leading them to reject the true love of Christ. It is difficult to understand the perfection of God in this fallen world, where there is only imperfection. If we, those who follow Christ can understand that, no matter the circumstances we can be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks about the hope we have in Jesus, no matter how bitterly the question is put. When the truth of who God is comes to light, who can turn away?

Our role in life on this earth is to be the evidence of God’s character, helping to heal the scars and provide proof of who God is to the world — correcting a fallen perception of God. This may take a moment or a lifetime. We don’t have to have the perfect thing to say or provide a bulletproof argument to those with an opposing view (though sometimes that will happen). What is truly in question is God’s character, not ours. We don’t have to worry. He’s perfect. Even though we are still imperfect vessels prone to weakness and sin, every time we choose to follow Christ, a little more of the truth shows through.

Knowing why a person has decided to leave the faith may help us to understand her but isn’t necessary. As long as we are striving to follow Christ, His truth will shine through us and provide the best evidence of His love we can give. SR



SpringsLife Church in Colorado Springs Seeks Lead Pastor

SpringsLife Church in Colorado Springs, CO is seeking a new Lead Pastor to join its pastoral team.

This pastor must meet the biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28-31) for a pastor, be called by God to serve in a pastoral capacity, and be gifted to exercise the office of pastor. The primary ministry of the Lead Pastor will be preaching, prayer, visitation, and pastoral counseling. The Lead Pastor will also help provide spiritual leadership along with the pastoral team.

The worship at SpringsLife Church includes blended worship music (praise songs and hymns), Scripture reading, congregational prayer, and expository preaching from the Bible. SpringsLife Church, as a family of faith, does participate in community outreach opportunities and has begun an outstanding children's program.

Previous pastoral experience is preferred but not required. Formal theological education is helpful but not required. Love for Jesus, His bride (the church),

our community, and children is required. Agreement with the SDB Statement of Belief is necessary. Colorado Springs (located approximately 70 miles south of Denver) consistently ranks as one of the best places to live in the United States. With a population of 420,000 (including 5 military stations, two universities, and the U.S. Olympic Headquarters), Colorado Springs is large enough to have everything one might want to do with a much smaller town feel.

Please prayerfully consider if God might be calling you to live and minister in Colorado Springs!

Cover letters and resumes or inquiries may be addressed to
John Pethtel at
pastorjohn@springslifechurch.org
or 304-629-9823.

Please include audio or video links to previous sermons.

The deadline for submitting interest in this position is October 15, 2015.

Leadership Needed for SDB Startup in Phoenix

Pastor Bob Peet and the Kingdom of God Church have been mobilizing people for over a year to begin an SDB church in the Phoenix, AZ area.

Phoenix is the most populous state capital city in America, as well as the sixth most populous city in the USA.

Someone is needed now on the ground to help build, lead, and focus the congregation. The Phoenix SDB group has been meeting monthly. Pastor Bob has been providing leadership but we know that God is calling somebody to commit to serving in this Arizona mission field.

Do you know such a person? Are you a pastor, church planter, or lay leader who would be willing to provide leadership for this fledgling group?



Would you be interested in financially supporting Pastor Bob Peet's travel to minister to these SDB saints in Phoenix?

If you feel God's pull in this direction please prayerfully contact:

Pastor Bob Peet (kingdomofgod@frontier.net) or
John Pethtel (jpethtel@seventhdaybaptist.org).

Commitment

The dictionary says that commitment is a promise to do or give something, a promise to be loyal to someone or something, the attitude of someone who works very hard to do or support something.

Does commitment still exist today? Can we still find people today that we can call committed people? Are you and I committed to the Lord, to our church, to each other? Many times we look around and see a world that has thrown this word out the window — with the exception of being committed to self. Even in our churches, many times we attend the Sabbath service, yes we become a member, but are we committed to being a vital part of its ministry? Are we committed to putting God and the work of His Church first in our lives, ahead of our personal desires? If you say that you are going to do something, do other people know for a fact that it will be done, or do they see you go off and do something else that strikes your fancy, leaving God's work undone? Psalms 37:5 says, "*Commit your ways to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.*" Proverbs 16:3 says, "*Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.*" And in 1 Peter 4:19 it says, "*So then those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*"

Commitment is not a word that we should take lightly. When we commit ourselves to a task, we need to put our all into it and be sure that we complete it to the best of our ability. When we commit ourselves to the Lord's work, we have a special responsibility to succeed — through that commitment we are representing not only ourselves but we are representatives of



the Church and the Lord himself. He has told us that He will never leave us or forsake us. He will be there with us each step of the way if we commit ourselves to Him.

I would like to tell you of someone who made a commitment and then stuck to that commitment even though everyone would have agreed that it was above and beyond the call of duty. When we were asked to host the 2015 Conference in Lancaster, PA, I knew that we would need a bus driver to transport the youth from PreCon at Jersey Oaks to Lancaster; to transport the kids to youth activities at Conference; take a busload of people to *Sight and Sound*. In 2009, we had two people who could do this. This time we had only one. I asked my sister-in-law, Jan Moncrief, if she would be willing to drive the bus and she said yes. Fast forward to this spring — I found out that Jan had to have an ankle replacement on her left foot the first week of July. My thought was, "What will we do now?" Well, the surgery was completed

and she rested. She told me that she didn't use her left foot to drive and that she had committed to driving the bus and that she would still do it — with God's help she did. You didn't see her around much because she had to go back to the motel in the evenings and put her foot up and rest it. I didn't know until after we were home just how much that was hurting her and how nasty-looking the incision was. But through it all she had a smile on her face and a praise for the Lord.

Commitment. That is commitment. Are you and I ready to complete our commitments under conditions like that?

Thanks Jan for showing us what real commitment is like. God is good! SR

— Steven Moncrief
Shiloh SDB Church, NJ

OBITUARY

TANNEY – Donna Jeanne Spooner Tanney passed away Sunday, July 19, 2015, at the Presbyterian Home, after a brief illness. She was 12 days short of her 91st birthday.

The daughter of Jean and Verah Honer Spooner, Donna was born July 31, 1924, in New Hartford, NY, where she spent her early childhood. Most of her life was spent in Brookfield, NY. She was predeceased by her husband, Charlie Tanney; her parents; and three brothers, Robert, William and Mac Spooner. She is survived by six children, James Elliott (Sharon), Thomas Elliott (Barbara), Debra Lattimer (Roger), Nancy Elliott (Jim), Douglas Elliott (Terry) and Daniel Lum, as well as 21 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren. As well, she is survived by her stepchildren (Charlie's seven children), many of whom have continued their contact with and caring for her. Donna was a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Brookfield, NY, where she enjoyed teaching

Sabbath School and performing special music. She labored over distant family history to the beginnings of the Town of Brookfield to author a book of local interest, *The Eternal Hills*. Donna and Charlie owned and operated The Gates Hill Homestead, an area favorite for sleigh and stagecoach rides. She was also very active in the Brookfield Historical Society and the Travellers Club in Waterville. In recent decades, her passion was genealogical research with a focus on the early families of Brookfield Township. She was very proud of the part she played in acquiring an historical plaque for Mertilla Miner in the township.

Calling hours were on Thursday, July 23, at the Brookfield First Baptist Church, followed by the funeral service. Interment following the service was at the Brookfield Cemetery. Funeral arrangements were under the personal care and direction of Jeffrey T. Paul of the Paul Funeral Home of Brookfield.

MARRIAGES

HAMM – WANDSNIDER

Kevin Hamm and Tianna Wandsnider were married on April 18, 2015, at Camp Wakonda, Milton, WI. The wedding was officiated by the bride's pastor.

LEE – SUTHERLAND

Luke Lee and Claudia Sutherland were married on May 2, 2015, at the SDB Church of Milton, WI. The groom's uncle, Rev. LB Lee of Colorado Springs, CO officiated.

HARGETT – EARLY

Joel Hargett and Tamatha Early were united in marriage on May 17, 2015, at the Davis Farm, Rome, GA. The Rev. Luis D. Lovelace officiated.

GALLEGOS – DAVIS

Richard Gallegos and Chris Davis were married on July 10, 2015, in Delavan, WI. The wedding was officiated by Rev. Nate Crandall and Rev. Jon Grice.

LIMA – HEGLE

James Lima and Lexi Hegle were married on July 25, 2015, at Bethel Baptist Church, Janesville, WI. The wedding was officiated by the bride's pastor.

NEW MEMBERS

GRACE SDB CHURCH

Greg Olson, Pastor

Joined by baptism:
Ted and Faith Whelan

Joined by testimony:
Wes and Marcia Schnaidt
Jeff and Becke Rieck

METRO ATLANTA SDB CHURCH

Atlanta, GA
Rev. Luis D. Lovelace, Pastor

Joined by baptism:
Carissa Ann Hale

MILTON SDB CHURCH

Milton, WI
Rev. Nate Crandall, Lead Pastor

Joined by testimony:
Ryan Holbrook
Josiah and Joanna Koniecki

BIRTHS

LUBKE - A son, Theodore Roland, was born to Katie (Zamzow) and Neil Lubke of the Milton WI SDB Church on June 18, 2015. He is welcomed by siblings, Josiah, Calvin, Henry, and Eleanor.

CHRONIGER- A son, Brayden Jaymes, was born to Jennifer (Layton) and Tyler Chroniger of the Shiloh NJ SDB Church on August 25, 2015.

OBITUARIES

van DALEN-de GRAAFF – Elisabeth van Dalen-de Graaff, 87, of Milton, WI, passed away on March 16, 2015, at the Edgerton Care Center.

Elisabeth was born on March 25, 1927, in Schiedam, The Netherlands, to the late Willem and Johanna de Graaff. She married Dirk van Dalen on September 15, 1948, in Rotterdam. After spending time living in Holland and Indonesia, they moved to the United States. Elisabeth trained to be a Registered Nurse. She moved with her family to the Milton area in 1973 and joined the Milton SDB Church in 1982. She is survived by her ex-husband, Dirk van Dalen of Florida; 5 children: Frank, Willem, Ronald, Marian van Dalen-Anderson, Caroll Foster; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; 1 great great-grandchild; brothers, sisters; and many nieces, nephews and friends. Memorial services were held Saturday, March 28th at the Milton SDB Church with Pastor George Calhoun officiating.

ROOD – Anna (Anne) Loofbourrow Rood, 97, died in Berkeley, CA, April 15 (tax day!), 2015.

Anna was the widow of Dr. Wayne R. Rood, who taught at the School of Theology, Alfred University for a number of years, and then many years at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley. She was a long-time member of the First Alfred (Alfred, NY) SDB Church. She is survived by children Suzanne Rood Cox and Wayne Randall Rood and two grandsons.

Please send announcements from your SDB Church about New Members, Marriages, Births, and Obituaries to the Editor at sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org

OBITUARIES

MULFORD – Frank B. Mulford, 70, of Stow Creek Twp., NJ, passed away on April 22, 2015, at Millville Center-Genesis Health Care.

Frank was born in Bridgeton, NJ, the son of Marie T. (Robinson) Mulford Table and the late John L. Mulford.

Mr. Mulford was a 1963 graduate of Bridgeton High School, attended Bordentown Military Institute and graduated from Morris Harvey College in WV, now known as the University of Charleston.

After graduation, he worked for Ford Motor Company. He served in the US Army Reserve. Desiring to help others, he later received a degree in counseling and counseled at Faith Farm, Seabrook House, Southern State Correctional Facility, and the Institute of Human Development in Atlantic City. In June of 2014, he retired from driving a school bus van for Stow Creek Board of Education.

Mr. Mulford enjoyed guiding children and teens in sports activities. He was a former coach of baseball, basketball, and soccer, and was a certified soccer referee.

Frank was a long-time member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Shiloh.

In addition to his mother, Frank is survived by his wife of 34 years, Clara R. (Richardson) Mulford; two sons, Shawn W. and his wife Andrea of Media, PA, and Kyle J. and his wife Alison of Newark, DE; 3 grandchildren, Kaelyn E., Maxwell C., and Taylor L.; one brother, John W. Mulford and his wife Wendy; 2 nieces, 2 grand nephews; stepmother, Jeanette Mulford; and sister-in-law, Miriam A. Richardson. Frank was predeceased by a nephew; his stepfather; and his in-laws, William H. and Anna Mary Richardson; and his brother-in-law Robert W. Richardson.

Rev. Donald Chroniger officiated at the memorial service on April 26, 2015, at the Shiloh SDB Church. Interment was at the Shiloh SDB Cemetery.

STEPHAN – Frances Elizabeth Billingsley Stephan of Louisville, CO, died at Family Assisted Living, Arvada, CO, on Sunday, May 24, 2015. Frances was 93.

Frances was born in Red Hill, AR, on January 29, 1922, the daughter of Edward Monroe Billingsley and Nella Catharina Crawford Hammond. Frances married Melvin Edward Stephan on June 15, 1940, in Elkton, MD. They were married for 55 years.

Frances, Mel and their family arrived in the Denver Area from Nortonville, KS in 1955. Frances and family joined the Denver SDB Church when it was located at Kalmath Ave., Denver, CO. Frances, a skilled homemaker, worked as a cook and kitchen helper at two schools in Wheat Ridge. While a member of the

Denver church she purchased and stockpiled food and supplies in preparation for summer camps at Camp Paul Hummel. For a few years she was secretary of the SDB Woman's Board and participated in the Denver SDB Ladies Aid. In 1973, Frances and Mel moved to Lafayette from Wheat Ridge. They transferred their memberships to the Boulder Seventh Day Baptist Church where Frances was a faithful member the rest of her life.

Frances is survived by five children: Rev. Melvin Francis Stephan of Rensselaer, NY; Donald Lee and wife Bonnie Stephan of Redondo Beach, CA; Robert Edward and wife Janet Stephan of Westminster, CO; Donna Rose Stephan and husband Keith Rogers of Alfred Station, NY; and John Michael and wife Patricia Stephan of Tijeras, NM. She has 10 grandchildren; 24 great grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren. Frances was preceded in death by her parents, husband Mel; two sisters; a brother; a grandson, Lee James Stephan; and her daughter-in-law, Yvonne Louise Stephan.

A celebration of the life of Frances was held August 15, 2015, at the Boulder Seventh Day Baptist Church. Memorial contributions in memory of Frances may be made to the SDB Memorial Board, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678 designated to the SDB Retirement Plan, her favorite cause, or to the Boulder SDB church. Burial of her cremains will be in the cemetery, Nortonville, Kansas.

CHEW – Audrey L Chew, 77, of Upper Deerfield Twp., NJ, died on June 13, 2015, at Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia surrounded by her family, following her battle with leukemia.

Audrey was the only child of Joseph "Reds" Lykens and Sara Brandriff Lykens. She was the wife of Louis S. Chew, Jr.

Before her retirement, Audrey worked for the State of NJ Department of Labor as an employment interviewer in the Bridgeton and Vineland, NJ, offices. She took time off to raise her family and then returned to work.

Audrey was a graduate of Bridgeton High School and Glassboro State College. She was a member of the Shiloh Seventh Day Baptist Church. She was also a member of the Cumberland County Historical Society and enjoyed spending time with her family and gardening.

She is survived by her husband, Louis, her son, Douglas Chew (Denise); and her daughter, Debora Lynn Eckert and her husband Harry; 4 grandchildren; sister-in-law, Patricia Chew Peer; several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held June 19 at the Padgett Funeral Home in Upper Deerfield Twp. Interment was at the Shiloh SDB Cemetery.

But the Lord is

faithful

and He will
strengthen you
and protect
you from
the evil one.

– 2 Thessalonians 3:3 NIV

Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices

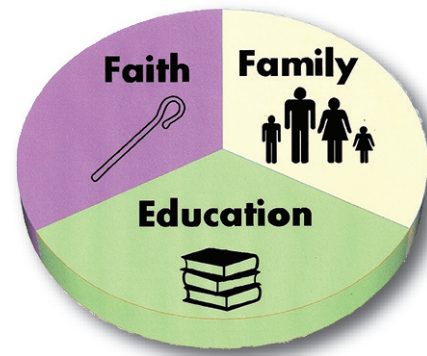
celebrating **175** years

the connecting
church Milton
Seventh Day Baptist

The Milton WI SDB Church
invites you to join us as we celebrate
175 years of God's blessings
Sabbath, November 14, 2015

Worship, music, food!
Shared memories of the past,
joys of the present
and excitement for the future.

Contact the church office at 608-868-2741
or check the church website at
www.miltonsdb.org
for more details.



Coming Next Summer:
**Seventh Day Baptist
Conference 2016**
July 31 – August 6
Houghton College
Houghton, NY

Facebook: SDB Conference 2016
#sdb2016
<http://www.sdb2016.com>

Now **faith** is the *assurance* of things hoped for
the *conviction* of things not seen.

– Hebrews 11:1 NAS