

Sabbath Recorder

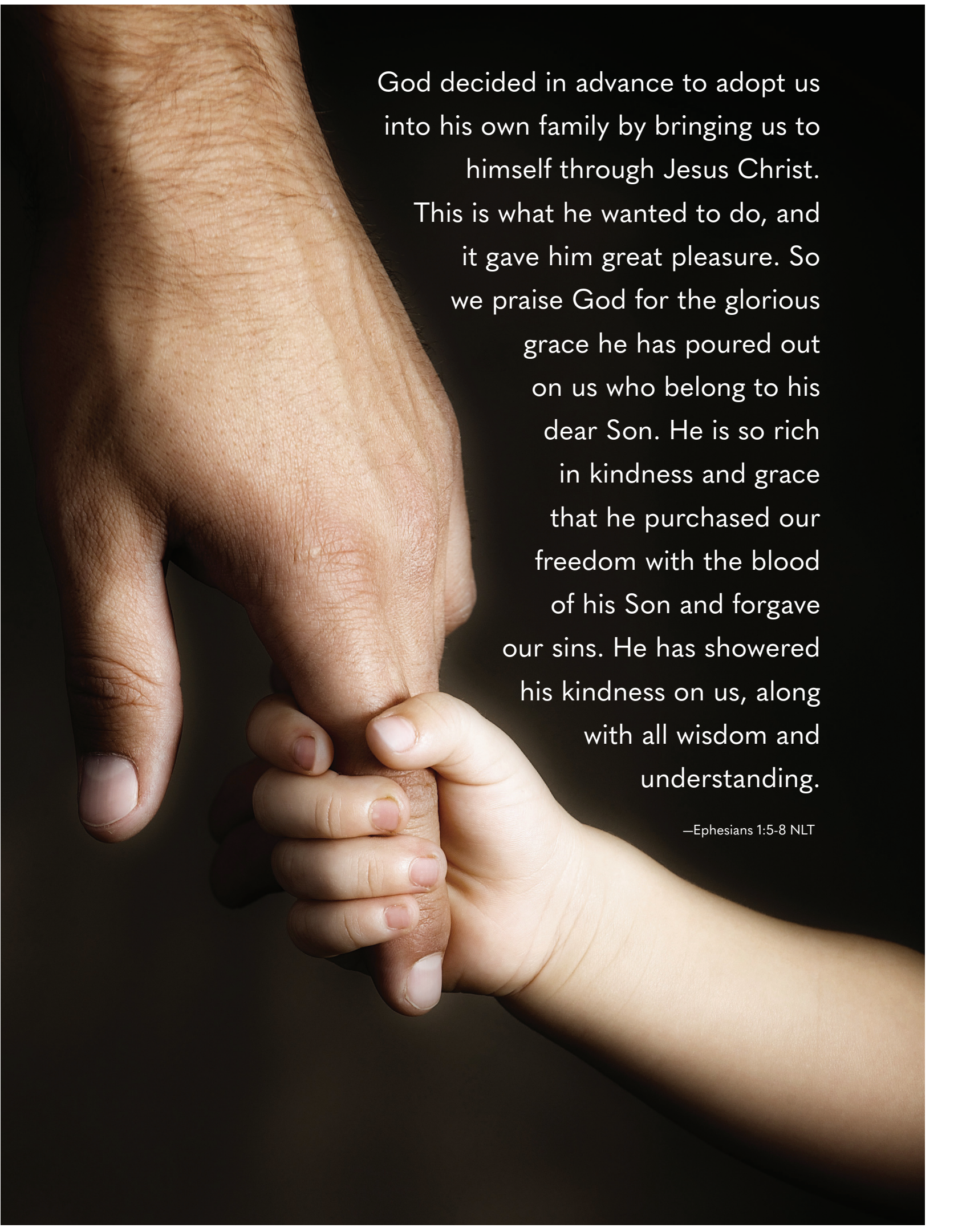


Adopted



December 2019

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication



God decided in advance to adopt us
into his own family by bringing us to
himself through Jesus Christ.

This is what he wanted to do, and
it gave him great pleasure. So
we praise God for the glorious
grace he has poured out
on us who belong to his
dear Son. He is so rich
in kindness and grace
that he purchased our
freedom with the blood
of his Son and forgave
our sins. He has showered
his kindness on us, along
with all wisdom and
understanding.

—Ephesians 1:5-8 NLT

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AboutTheAuthors

Jane Mackintosh is the mother of five sons and one daughter, mother-in-law to four kids so far, and grandmother to twelve grandchildren so far. Husband, Doug, had his part in this large family also! Both Doug and Jane are retired and living in Colorado since June 2018, but laugh at the word "retirement." Doug has a shirt that says, "I am not retired, I am a full-time Grandpa" and Jane has a little plaque that says, "Just when a Mother thinks her work is done, she becomes a Grandmother."

Wayne North ministers at Freedom Community Church in Wisconsin with his wife, six children, and two grandchildren. His calling is to equip the churches to carry out the Great Commission in the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit bringing salvation, healing, and deliverance through the Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit.



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WHO ARE SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS?

If you've never read *The Sabbath Recorder* before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are.

Like other Baptists, we believe in:

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

THE SEVENTH DAY

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

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Because God's children are human beings—
made of flesh and blood—
the Son also became flesh and blood.
For only as a human being could he die,
and only by dying could he break
the power of the devil,
who had the power of death.

—Hebrews 2:14 NLT





Adoption: The Spiritual Side

Do you believe Genesis 1:26 where man is made in God's image and likeness? That is foundational in our calling to be active in foster care and adoption. It was man who turned his back on God and His truth. In man's rebellion, he chose to be like God in much the same way Satan did. All of creation, including families and children, has been feeling the effects of the fall ever since.

What does this have to do with adoption and even foster care? God implanted in our hearts the need to bring restoration and relationship back into people's lives. To destroy humanity, the enemy had his sights set upon the foundation of society: the family. If he could deceive the fathers and mothers with distraction, addictions, affliction, depression, division, divorce, lusts, and so much more, he could destroy the family and its future.

Romans 8:15 tells us, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Sin separated us, but God's plan was to restore us back to Him through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost. We are called the sons of God, co-heirs with Christ, partakers of the divine nature escaping corruption, etc. We have a new family line of nobility and godliness. As partakers and participators in the grace and power of Jesus Christ, shouldn't we share that with others?

I believe God used my family to bless dozens of youth and their families through foster care and ultimately adoption. Many trials and tribulations, many heartaches and headaches—but we always knew that God was using this as a ministry to bring Light into dark situations. We were to invest eternity into their hearts. We planted seeds of truth and life into their hearts. Our battle wasn't against the flesh and blood. To make a difference we had to take the fight for these kids into the spiritual realm.

It started with one: Jace. Doors opened for a second: Zerek. And when we said enough, a third entered into our life: Ezra. All came through the foster care system. Let me say, the road to adoption was hard. It was emotional and tearful. Some days we almost gave up. We had to choose to fight for them. Though the battle was very physical and emotional, it was mostly spiritual. We created prayer teams that would saturate us in intercession. Even after adoption, our battle still continues. Most of us have heard of the discussion between nature vs nurture. Which one is most important? Well, I can tell you that the main one is the supernatural.

God gave us three natural children and three supernatural children. While all six are of equal blessing, watching God birth three children into life in a non-traditional method just blew me away. Maybe it was because I carried more of the burden. Our three daughters were carried by my wife for nine months. I was there but didn't really share equal responsibility in the birthing process. But, with the three supernatural children, my part was more equal. I had to participate in the "birthing pangs" of many visitations, court dates, and so much more, which lasted for years in each case. But with God all things are possible.

Through the many tears, sleepless nights,
anxious thoughts, and fearful moments,
God would remind me that I was also adopted.
He has a heart for adoption and
He is the God of miracles.

As a man, husband and father, I began to fight for these children from my position of victory in Christ. I truly began to fight the good fight. Daily, hourly, and sometimes minute-by-minute, I would pray in authority in the spiritual realm against any forces holding them back from becoming part of our family, part of our inheritance, and especially part of our Godly heritage they would enter into. Through the many tears, sleepless nights, anxious thoughts, and fearful moments, God would remind me that I was also adopted. He has a heart for adoption and He is the God of miracles. I still had to do my part of this new type of “labor.” Our family fought for them!

We were very intentional in who we asked to pray for us: people who know their God, encounter His miraculous power in their own lives, and are devoted to living a righteous and holy life. We wanted God’s “Spiritual Special Forces” to be our team. It worked! Sometimes I feel bad when I know couples who wait decades, or even a lifetime to adopt, and we are 3 for 3 in our adoption endeavors. We are blest. Our victory came through following God’s plan and using the spiritual tools He has given us to fight the good fight. These weapons are for all areas of life. Our faith was being built. We already watched God bring victory over addictions, sickness, disease, and anything the world and the realm of darkness would throw our way through miraculous wonders in our life, as well as many others. He now gave us a new testimony!

Prayer, fasting, study, worship, binding, loosing, anointing, breaking off family curses, speaking blessings over them, etc. have become tools we use every day in our spiritual toolbox. When we see behaviors or emotional changes, we have come to assume it could be because their biological family may be doing drugs, alcohol, in trouble with the law, etc. These soul ties need spiritual severing only His weapons can do—and sometimes on a daily basis. Our weapons are good for the pulling down of (every) stronghold. As the child grows, we equip them with the same tools so they learn how to fight through the victory of Christ!

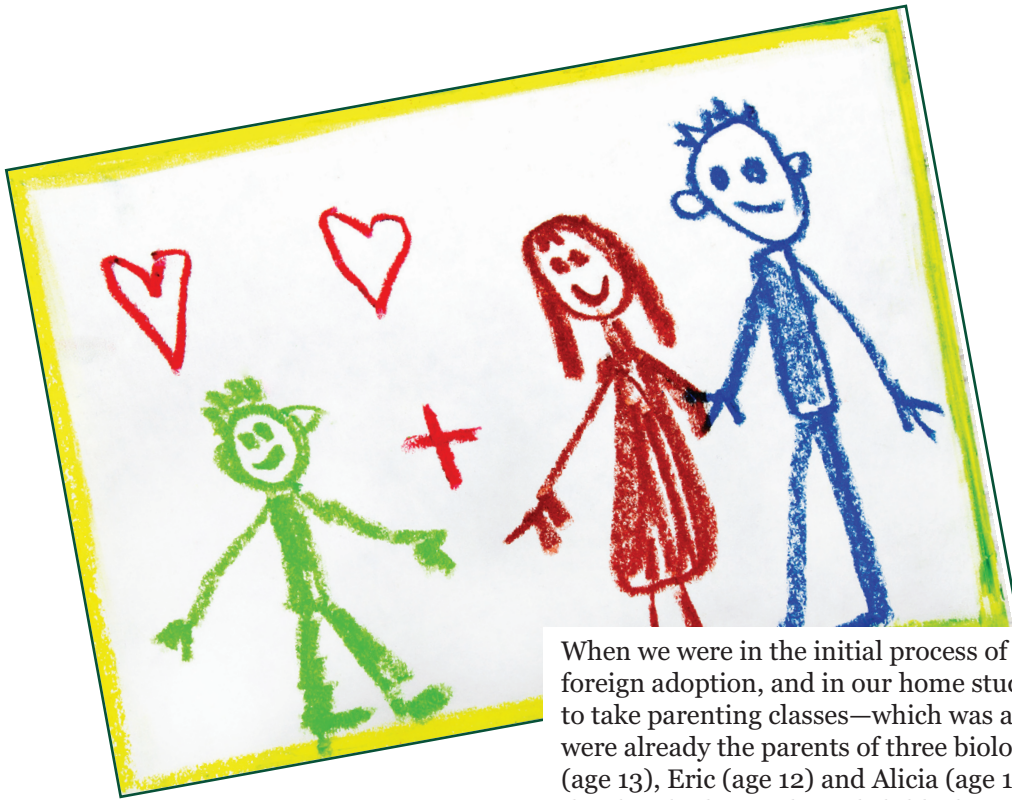
We have watched weird behaviors show up out of nowhere numerous times, only to find out later that their biological parents were struggling at the exact same time. The spiritual realm is weird. There are what are called soul ties between people. God designed them to be good and bring life. But, in this fallen world, we see these spiritual connections cause depression, addictions, confusion, anger, etc. Even spiritual (demonic) entities showed up in our yard representing “things” the biological families are into. Even the kids see them! Is this too much for you to believe?

They say adoptive children struggle with identity, rejection, and abandonment. Maybe these areas are rooted more in the spiritual realm than in the physical or emotional realm? Maybe the key is totally spiritual sometimes? All I know is that the spiritual realm is real and it affects the physical and emotional. Others that have adopted have noticed the same things, even in foster care. There is a connection between their adoptive child and their genetic ties. We must learn to fight where the battle really is.

So, we continually fight spiritually for all of OUR children. We have broken off the spiritual ties from their former lives. I believe it is very important to go through an “adoption dedication” service in your local church to physically and spiritually adopt these children into the family. These experiences have enabled me to think and walk more spiritually when behaviors and habits arise. Live spiritually! As His Church we have a major calling to have a heart for adoption. The Great Commission is about adoption that is definitely spiritual, and translates into the emotional and physical. Adoption is a symptom of a heart that is made in God’s image and likeness. It is not by our might, nor by our power, but by His Spirit! Rely upon the power of the Gospel!

Feel free to contact me if you would like to continue this conversation or have any questions! [SR](#)

—Pastor Wayne North
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Adoption

By Jane Mackintosh

When we were in the initial process of being approved for foreign adoption, and in our home study, we were required to take parenting classes—which was a bit ironic since we were already the parents of three biological children: Adam (age 13), Eric (age 12) and Alicia (age 10). The man teaching the class had one adopted child who was a toddler, which left us as the “experts” on child-rearing in the room. We had been to Bill Gothard’s seminar on “Basic Youth Conflicts” and heard him say that adoption is not “just another way to build a family” but a calling, and those couples looking into adoption should consider whether this was a call from God or merely a desire for children. He was not expressing opposition to adoption, just a different way of looking at it. I remember being very incensed at this thought, thinking children are children, no matter what their stories. I was certain I could love and nurture any child into wholeness, and any child who became my child would be loved and cared for as much as the ones I had given birth to. And the second half of that statement proved to be absolutely true. I also learned just how naive I was in my certainty that I could love and nurture any child into wholeness.

After a solid year plus of paperwork, classes, more paperwork, having to retrieve every birth certificate, our marriage license, parents’ birth certificates, parents’ marriage licenses, plus doctor’s visits, all financial records, proof of employment, tax returns for multiple years, notarized character references, proof from every county that a notarized document came from that the notary was licensed in that county, then everything translated into Brazilian Portuguese and all documentation to the Brazilian Consulate in San Francisco to guarantee that California was indeed a state in the United States and the counties of the notaries were indeed counties in California, we were ready to send our paperwork to Brazil for approval for the placement of the children we would adopt. This was 1990, and at that moment, Brazil was an open country, meaning Brazil was allowing children to be placed for foreign adoption. During the process, Brazil’s terms for adoption changed (change is a constant in foreign adoption) and any family wishing to adopt a child under the age of five must have at least one parent able to reside in Brazil for six weeks.

Would we do it again? IN A HEARTBEAT!!!! Even knowing what we do now...

This was a blow to us, but soon became a blessing, because it moved us higher up the list for placement since many adoptive parents could not do this. (The other factor that moved us up the list was that we were looking for a sibling group of two to three children.) We decided we could, and within three months of our final submission of paperwork, we got the call that there were three children, ages 5, 3, and 1, and were we interested? And the rest is history.

Wouldn't it be special if that was all there was to this story? I suspect our story is not unlike most adoptive families. It is full of victory and defeat like most parents of biological kids experience—except as adoptive parents, we had to deal with much of what we inherited from early trauma in our adopted kids. When my daughter-in-law, Rachel, was looking into adoption, she found a book which she had me read to see what I thought of this perspective. It was written by an adoptive mom also with biological children. She said that success with your adopted kids is related to the stories of trauma in their early life from which they were dropped on their heads. This sounds harsh, but her point was to raise our kids according to their abilities to process their early trauma rather than our expectations of what we think they should be doing. Our son, Adam, and wife, Rachel, and their experiences with their adopted/bio kid mix, introduced them to newer research on the impact of early childhood trauma and the neuropathways that are rerouted because of the trauma. We have learned from them about parenting ways to help restore those neuropathways to a healthier outcome. We wish we had known about this when we were raising our kids, but we do have a chance to understand better our grandchildren, who are adopted. We do know very well the impact on the bio kids when adoptive children are added in.

Now for the important part. Would we do it again? IN A HEARTBEAT!!!! Even knowing what we do now about the impact of one of those children having a terminal illness and dying? IN A HEARTBEAT!!!! Even knowing what we know now about the negative impact of adoption on our bio kids? IN A HEARTBEAT!!!! I will tell you emphatically that there will be damage to your bio kids, but if you could see from my perspective the way God has used those damaging effects to make our bio kids into the men and woman of God they are

today, you will understand in a profound way the promise of Romans 8:28 of how God takes all things and uses them for good. If you could see, from my perspective, the joy our adopted sons have brought to our family, and that our adopted sons, all three of them, are evidence of the promise of the Psalms that “children are a heritage from the Lord, and blessed is the man whose quiver is full.” I use the terms bio/adopted to describe how they came to us, but believe me when I say, all six are our kids! Our story is a story of blessing and triumph. It is also a story of hardship and deep loss, but we have seen God work in ways we never would have gotten to see and the very thought of not having all six of our kids makes us all shudder with what we could have missed had we not been responsive to God's call to adopt. Yes, God did call us, and yes, now I do agree with Bill Gothard's assessment that adoption is a “calling,” not “just another way to build a family.” It is not an easy “calling,” but the gifts of children given by God, whether through biology or adoption, are a “heritage from the Lord.” To turn any down may be the easier way out, but the blessings you will miss makes me weep for you if you decide to turn them down.

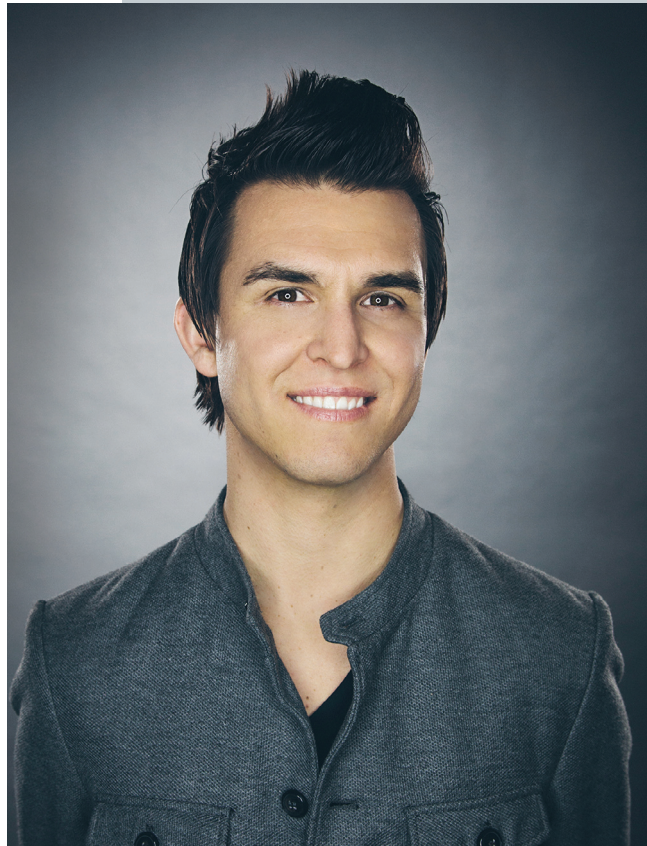
This brings me to my final soapbox. We despise abortion, and rightfully so. We know that God despises abortion. It flies in the face of the very core of who we are created to be—especially mothers, as any mother who has had a child die knows. Those who lose a child in the womb, have still lost a child and mourn that loss deeply, regardless of how that child was lost. It is in our DNA and those who feel they have no choice but to purposely abort a child, still bear the deep scars, no matter how much they pretend they do not. It is in our DNA. Those who cannot conceive also mourn deeply, and we must find a way to minister to them also. It is in our DNA. Here is my point. When abortion is no longer legal, which will come at some point, we, as the Church of Jesus Christ, must be ready and willing to adopt these children from mothers who may feel they cannot raise them. We need to understand God's heart for the helpless and find ways to support the mothers who wish to keep their children, and those who believe they cannot raise them. We must be the answer that God is calling us to be. This is His heart and we have His heart. After all, He adopted us! [SR](#)

This family of SDBs is special.

I am here because of
the Lord using you.

I am a proud SDB.

I am thankful for us.



***** To my fellow SDBs *****

I write to you from Somewhere-On-The-Road, USA. CITIZEN WAY has been touring in support of our new album “LOVE IS A LION” which is named for the Lion of Judah...our Savior Jesus. We just celebrated 15 years of music and ministry.

I started CITIZEN WAY in 2004 after Alison and I married. I, Alison and our three girls are committed to serving the Lord with our lives and we choose CITIZEN WAY as our primary outlet. As hard as this whole thing is—we feel right at home. To help you understand our world a bit better, consider this rough sketch of the life of a touring Christian artist a smidgeon of our reality...

This band. Wow. Haha. I could have easily justified calling it quits so many times. Practice. Pray. Start a band. Loving life. Minister to anyone who will listen. Jesus! Make music we like. This is fun. Fight with each other about direction. Fight about tempos. Fight about fighting. Maybe I should have been a solo artist? Come together stronger. Living the dream. Play for free. Play for free some more. Play for hot dogs. Pay to play. Pay to play some more. Play for rowdy teenagers. Play for sleeping pew warmers. Play for judges who judge you ruthlessly cuz they are judges who just like to judge anything in general. Play for the janitor. Be away from home. Long days. No sleep. Make two independent records we love and will barely be heard. Write a hit song. Get rejected by record label...again. Keep going. Sign to a label 7 years in. Ahhhhhhh...we finally made it!!! Change our name cuz label says so. Start over on social media. Hand over rights to songs. Woo hoo! we're on a label. Pay to play on big tours. Van. Drive through the night...again. Van dies. New van. Transmission dies. New transmission costs more than the van is worth. Still feeling called to this. Management retires from the music biz. We got this!!! Alison and I lose our son Jeremiah to a miscarriage. Cry. Hurt. Hopeful. Jesus. Don't quit. Move to Nashville to be with family more. Lose my other job that pays for this job. So much good out of the hurt. So much!!! Start over. New life will come. Release a record we didn't play on. Hit song off new record isn't wanted by the record label unless we pay for it ourselves. Song goes #1 for 10 weeks. No real help to promote it so the song kinda fizzles. Lost opportunity. Bummer. Hire new management. Run merch for other artists to make money for food and gas. Band members can't afford it anymore. Band members (our actual brothers) retire. Sad. Booking agency thinks we all retired and stops booking us. Pray. Hard. New management. Can't afford them. Fire management. New management. Can't ever get a hold of them. Fire management. New management. Wow haha. Next single didn't work at radio. Still feel good about this. People forget about us. People can't get our name right. Super fans can't get our name right. It's CITIZEN WAY—no "S". Still loving the best parts of all of this. This is hard. Promoter forgot to pay us. Promoter forgot to advertise. Promoter never even showed up. "Oh, we are vegetarians as stated in the rider we sent you months ago thanks!"—caterer says "great...I made salmon!" Sigh. Pray. Feel compelled to give away 10% of our merch money to local ministries wherever we perform. Start GENEROSITY ROCKS. Awesome! Way awesome!!! Totally works. Feel good. Raise money for a bus through GENEROSITY ROCKS. Buy old bus. Bus

burns down. Embarrassed. Still loving this somehow. Flights cost more than our paycheck. Pray. Smile. Choose joy. Tired. Make new record we paid for through our amazing donors who join us in the studio. Buy new bus (used). Bus driver is a no show. Loving making music. Loving each other still. Loving serving the Lord. Thankful we're not working a desk job. Thankful our families are behind us. Thankful to write songs that matter to people who matter. Songs like "LOVE HAS WON." New baby girl. Happy tears. Kept that take. Jesus. We made it to today. Thank You Lord! Flat tire.

Haha...it's just so true. All of it. Haha. I laugh as I write this thinking of all of the crazy stuff we have seen. Like the time the pastor tried to ride a Harley on stage but fell over on the ramp and broke the bike. Hahahahaha-hahahahahaha. Wow that was funny. I can't quit. How could I?! The story in the making is too good. It makes me cringe sometimes thinking about what we've all lost and what we've all sacrificed. But I can't quit. It's a calling. It won't leave me alone even though I wish it would sometimes.

Phil. 1:6 says, "He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus".

If you're called to something you'll likely not sleep until you do something about it. As a follower of Jesus, and if you're breathing, you're called to something. Stick with your strengths. Bloom where you're planted. Pray in the morning for wisdom and joy. Do it. Something. Build His kingdom. Not ours. It's worth it.

So many of you have a brick in my foundation with your name on it. Some of you taught me how to do this. Some of you support us every month. Alison, the band, and I just want to say thank you. Wow...thank you!!! We need you. If you feel called to support us please consider becoming a monthly donor to CITIZEN WAY at www.generosityrocks.com. We are thriving because of donors like you.

This family of SDBs is special. I am here because of the Lord using you. I am a proud SDB. I am thankful for us. I'm also three classes into my SDBU ordination. Woo hoo!!! Please feel free to write to me anytime at ben@bencalhoun.com

*In Jesus' name,
Ben Calhoun*

ORPHAN MINISTRY

James 1:27 says, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

This verse mentions two groups of people who need particular care and attention: widows and orphans. For this article, due to lack of space, I will focus on orphans and not address the widows.

According to UNICEF, between 143 million and 210 million children in the world are orphans. That is between 46% and 70% of the population of the United States of America. Every day, 5,760 more children in the world become orphans. Every 2.2 seconds, another orphan ages out, with no family and no home.

On a variety of levels, Seventh Day Baptists in different parts of the world have sought to be responsive to James 1:27, by initiating and operating orphan ministries, as part of their fulfillment of the Great Commission. In Africa, SDB Conferences in Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and other countries have active orphanages, and are doing an outstanding job of ministering to children who find themselves in the unfortunate position of losing their parents. We’ve also had such ministries in India.

I recall going on a teaching mission trip to Zambia in 2017 and being accommodated at the Faith Orphanage there. Although this is not a direct Seventh Day Baptist orphanage, it was very interesting to see the vibrancy of the ministry. In fact, the young people who prepared our meals were orphans who, as part of their upbringing in this Christian environment, were being taught and mentored in culinary, hospitality, and etiquette skills. They had a chance to practice by serving their overseas guests. As they had been cared for, they were caring for us.

The Uganda SDB Conference has had their orphanage project for about 15 years. “Graduates” of the project are now gainfully employed in careers



IRENE



KELVIN

such as carpentry, hair design, secretarial duties, and others. One of those graduates that you would enjoy meeting is 23-year-old Irene Babirye, who has acquired a degree in accounting, now works with Prudential Insurance Company, and also volunteers with the “Raven” ministry project and Maranatha SDB child care program.

In Kenya, one of their orphan “graduates” is Kelvin Mose Sarotas, 20 years old, who has been living with the General Secretary of the Conference and his wife Dorcas. Kelvin is now a devoted helper in the church and conference, engaged in their music ministry, as well as children and youth empowerment and training. He feels a call to pastoral ministry, but at the moment his college studies are on hold because of lack of funds.

Older orphans are vulnerable...to abuse, suicide, prostitution, slavery, becoming child soldiers, immorality (and as a result, vulnerable to AIDS and disease). Yet, as orphans are rescued and saved by the Lord, and brought into His Kingdom, the enemy’s plans are thwarted. Instead, these older orphans can live joyful, productive lives and help to advance God’s cause and mission purposes.

At the recent annual General Conference gathering of Seventh Day Baptists in USA and Canada, a fundraising 5K event was held. The theme was “Bringing Orphans Home.” Participants raised funds for SDB orphan ministries worldwide. With over 75 participants, just under \$3500 were raised. More is needed. More money. More Irene. More Kelvins.

Through the Missionary Society, you may donate funds to orphan ministries. Please consider sending a gift. More importantly, commit to a regular time of praying for orphans and for our conferences which are dutifully engaged in ministries rescuing orphans.

In Psalm 27:10, David says, “Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.” You and I have the opportunity to be the Lord’s instruments in helping to rescue orphans. You may not be able to take an orphan into your home, but you can give a financial donation and make a difference in the life of an orphan. SR



FOCUS on Missions

Andy Samuels

Chief Executive Director
SDB Missionary Society

The Waiting Period

There is a time we all dread, the waiting period. We know God is going to answer our prayers, but then there's the period of waiting for it to come. The period of time that we dread and are confused.

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." —Romans 8:28

I am in the waiting period. I am struggling through it. Something that I have learned is that you can't focus on the situation. What we need to do is look at the situation through God's eyes knowing this is something way bigger than us. We must know that everything works together for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose. You need to find comfort in knowing that once you come through your situation you will be a victor and you will be shifting to the next level spiritually, mentally, and physically. Know that God will never allow you to go through more than you can bear. Most importantly, God loves you.

When I am going through something, I like to research it and then write an article about it. This is my own journal which I decide to share once a month. In my research I found five reasons that God makes us wait.

1. **Waiting Reveals Our True Motives.** People who don't have good motives won't wait long because they're not interested in the commitment it takes to see something through. God is testing our true intentions when we are waiting for something. Even though He knows all our intentions, He wants us to know our own intentions.

2. **Waiting Builds Patience in Our Lives.** Patience in waiting for small things leads to having patience in the bigger things. If we can't wait for God to do a small thing, we certainly can't wait for something bigger.

3. **Waiting Builds Anticipation.** We tend to appreciate things the longer we have to wait for them.

4. **Waiting Transforms Our Character.** Waiting has a way of rubbing off the rough edges of our lives. We see this example in the story of Moses delivering the Israelites from the Egyptians. It's a grand story of God doing great miracles. But few sermons talk about Moses having to wait in the desert 40 years before God came to him. God used this time of waiting to transform his character. We know this because when he was a young man he was brash and impatient. In his impetuosity he killed a man and hid the body. When his sin was made public, he ran for his life and was exiled to the desert. When he was given a second chance he opted to do it God's way and in God's time. In the end, the Israelites were delivered from slavery and Moses became a great leader. Waiting transformed the life of Moses and it does the same for you and me.

5. **Waiting Builds Intimacy and Dependency Upon God.** Waiting during the difficult times developed their relationship with God. Some of the most intimate relationships we have in our lives are because a friend stood in the trenches with us during the heat of the battle. Maybe this is what the scripture means when it says we have a friend that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

In the end, God is just as interested in the journey as He is the destination. SR



YOUNG ADULT

By Sarina Gumness

A Second Invitation

In my first season of high school sports, my team went 2 and 12. That would be 2 wins and 12 losses. It was a character-building year to say the least. The second season brought a winning record, but we still lost some close games that we really could have won. We lost in the waning moments of those games because we had allowed the previous year to shape our expectations: we would fall short in the end.

Bad news has a way of shaping our expectations and the amount of effort we invest in more than just high school sports. The same is true when it comes to inviting people to visit our church family. Think about the bad news that we are handed all the time about how Christianity is failing to keep up in this day and age. A recent headline from Pew Research recently caught my eye: “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace, An update on America’s changing religious landscape.”¹

I hear a clear message between the lines here: “buckle up, we are on the decline;” “give up now, because nobody cares about your faith.” Make no mistake, the rise of “nones” in the United States is worth our attention: from 2009 to 2019 the religiously unaffiliated have risen from 17% to 26% of the population.² However, we can get so wrapped up with ringing the alarm bell that we distort the headlines³ and end up hurting our churches.

Here is the fruit of this alarmism and defeatism:

- Nearly half of all Christians (48%) maintain that most non-Christians are not interested in having a conversation about Jesus.⁴
- 71% of unchurched individuals report that they have never had a conversation with someone about how to take steps to become a Christian.⁵
- The shocker is that nearly 4 out of 5 unchurched (79%) report that they are fine with talking about faith with a friend—as long as that friend truly values their faith.⁶

There is a huge disconnect here on the part of the team convinced that they are losing. We gave up before the game was over. What if there is a better approach to being winsome in our faith than the belief that the sky is falling? What if rather than looking for gloom and doom we instead sought out how our communities are actually brimming with people in search of Good News? What if we listened a little more closely to Jesus’ words in John 4:35?

“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.”

Here are some statistics of interest that might provide a picture of fields ready for harvest in the face of defeatism headlines:

- The Protestant churches most focused on evangelism have not been shrinking.⁷
- 49% of currently unchurched Americans who identify as Protestants intend to return to regular church attendance. ⁸
- 75% of unchurched individuals state that a friend or family member inviting them to visit a church would be effective.⁹



By Carl Greene
Executive Director


Now at this point in the conversation is where the writer often throws the zinger to make each one of us feel ultra-guilty about our lack of evangelism performance. As a result, the reader either (1) discredits the author or (2) makes a personal vow to drastically change their evangelism style and then promptly not do it.

That would be the alarmist approach to evangelism. I am going to advocate using the One-Degree Rule as advocated by Kevin Harney. Evangelism is not a lost cause in the face of a degrading culture—it is an opportunity to connect with people searching for Jesus.

Every follower of Jesus has an outreach temperature, whether it's hot, cold, or somewhere in the middle. This temperature impacts the way we live and interact with those who are far from God. It is our responsibility to increase this temperature so that our hearts burn hotter for those who are spiritually disconnected.¹⁰

The beauty of the One-Degree Rule is that we are not looking to instantly become a “10” on the evangelism temperature scale. We are looking for practical ways to increase by a degree. I hope that a practical step that each one of us takes is to stop being alarmed by statistics and see the fields white with harvest. It is with that vision that we warm up to offering people a second invitation to visit our church family.

Want to learn more about the One-Degree Rule?

Read Harney's book *Organic Outreach for Churches: Infusing Evangelistic Passion in Your Local Congregation*, or check out <https://www.organicoutreach.org/> 

1 Pew Research. 2019. “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace, An update on America's changing religious landscape.” October 17. <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/> Accessed October 24, 2019.

2 Ibid.

3 Smith, Christian. 2007. “Evangelicals Behaving Badly with Statistics.” *Books & Culture*. January/February 2007. <https://www.booksandculture.com/articles/2007/janfeb/5.11.html> Accessed October 24, 2019.

4 Barna. 2018. *Spiritual Conversations in a Digital Age*. Barna report. www.barna.com/spiritualconversations/. In Richardson, Rick. 2019. *You Found Me*. Downers Grove: IVP. 33.

5 2019. “Unchurched Report.” Billy Graham Center Institute and Lifeway Research. April 24. www.billygrahamcenter.com/youfoundme/research. In Richardson 2019, 60, 61.

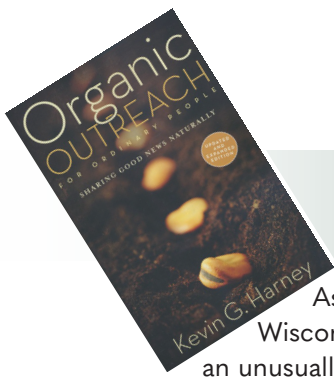
6 Ibid. In Richardson 2019, 59.

7 Richardson 2019, 36.

8 Richardson 2019, 89. Based on additional analysis of the *Unchurched Study* by the Billy Graham Center Institute.

9 Ibid.

10 Harney, Kevin. 2018. *Organic Outreach for Churches: Infusing Evangelistic Passion in Your Local Congregation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 120.



The One Degree Rule

As I sit to write this month, Wisconsin has been “blessed” with an unusually cold late October which has culminated in a couple of rare October snows. It is much colder here than it usually is this time of year. Nevertheless, I expect even this “cold” will seem pleasant as the frigid cold of January and February approaches. When the bitter cold hits, every degree matters. If you don’t believe me, consider the nearly magical difference between 33° Fahrenheit and 32°. The one-degree difference can change the character of any moisture from relatively innocuous liquid to a potentially dangerous solid or semi-solid! It is not only in wintery weather where one degree can make a difference, though. Small changes can make a big difference in our world, and most importantly, in our walk with Jesus Christ.

There is one area this month where I want to highlight the importance of making a one-degree change: sharing our faith. I think many SDBs would agree that sharing our faith is important and that we should do it. Sadly, however, many of us do not burn with hot passion for sharing with others the gift of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. If we’re honest, many of us really aren’t even particularly warm to the task. We are cold. Sometimes ice cold.

Overcoming this frozenness in our faith is often delayed by guilt. We know we should be doing more; we can’t commit to the next step we should take; we imagine a high bar for competency in sharing; we compare ourselves unhelpfully and unrealistically to the evangelists we know; we fear we don’t measure up or that we will make a mistake; and we do nothing. Our temperature drops another degree.

Last year, I read a very helpful book on evangelism by Kevin Harney called *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People*.¹ In it, Kevin lays out what he calls “The One Degree Rule.” He hangs more words on the Biblical reasons to do evangelism and the reasons why we sometimes do not. Then he asks his readers to pray:

“...Lord will you increase my burden for lost people, break my heart for those who don’t know you, and increase my evangelistic temperature?”

He goes on to suggest that no matter how cold or hot we are to share our faith, there is always a way for us to go up one degree. He entreats his readers to pray and take steps every day to increase their evangelism temperature by this single degree. He warns against comparing ourselves to others, as we don’t know where others are coming from, and instead to find little ways to increase our fire. He gives five helpful suggestions about how to accomplish this:²

1. **Engage in prayer consistently.**
2. **Make time to be with those who are far from God.**
3. **Tell stories** (inside the body of faith about what God is doing in unbelievers you know).
4. **Make celebration natural** (especially by highlighting obedience in this area, even when it doesn’t immediately lead to someone coming to faith).
5. **Spend time reflecting on eternity** (and ponder the potential consequences of our action or inaction in this area).

As we approach a new year, I would like every reader of this publication and every SDB in our Conference to commit to increasing their evangelistic temperature by one degree each week in the new year by praying the prayer of dedication Kevin suggests and then adopting his strategies.

I am undertaking this challenge myself. If you undertake it and would like accountability in it, let me know you’re doing it and I will check back in with you to see how your commitment is going! I hope to print stories in this next year from all of you about how God is making a huge impact with our collective gain of evangelism temperature! SR

¹ *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People: Sharing Good News Naturally*, by Kevin G. Harney. Zondervan. Grand Rapids, MI 2009. ISBN 978-0-310-27395-0. I have cited this throughout the column and would highly recommend this resource to anyone reading this.

² If you want more suggestions, Kevin also has a website with free resources: <http://www.organicoutreach.org>.



Christian
Education
Council

Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten
Director of Education
and History

Watch your Mailbox!

Readers of the print version of the *Sabbath Recorder* should already have received in their mailbox our most recent edition of *History Happenings*, our newsletter for history updates for the past several years. If you haven't had a chance to read that mailer yet, you should check it out, as it includes...

- Updates on the digitization of our library
- A tribute to our most recent Gold-Headed Cane Award winner, Rev. Andrew Samuels
- A list of resources we are seeking to add to our collection by donation
- A special offer for the purchase of Janet Thorngate's Newport book
- An opportunity to contribute financially to the work of history preservation of Seventh Day Baptists
- News about a church records preservation survey we have just sent to member churches of the SDB General Conference.


This final item merits further discussion.

When the Historical Committee of our General Conference (which preceded the Historical Society) was formed, one of their main concerns was for the preservation of records of local SDB congregations. There was concern that significant records were being lost or destroyed. They wanted to sound the caution of preservation, volunteering to aid local churches in the work of saving their records.

The methods have changed and we have access to preservation technology that first committee could never have dreamed of. The Council on History remains concerned that this same technological change may present a present crisis for our contemporary church records. While paper records are easy enough to destroy, it takes something active—water, fire, mold, etc. to destroy them. If the records of a local church are kept on a computer's hard drive, it doesn't always take an active thing to see them destroyed. The simple and passive phasing out of a computer in the church office is sometimes all it takes to erase the records of a church—and that's before we consider power surges, failed hard drives or thumb drives, or other digital demons!

For this reason, the Council on History is asking churches to fill out the survey we have already sent (it should've arrived in early November), so that we can understand better the needs of local churches in record preservation—so we can generate the appropriate resources. It is our hope that every member church will fill out the survey by the end of the year and return it to us so that we can evaluate the data and then work to aid churches by whatever means possible. In addition, we aim to tabulate and report the results if enough of the surveys are returned.

If you are participating in a local SDB church, please help us by insuring that the survey is completed and returned!

If you would like to see either *History Happenings* or the survey online, you can find them on the Conference's website (where they will be highlighted in blog posts) or on the SDB Historical Library and Archives website (www.sdbhistory.org). 



Council
on History

Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten
Director of Education
and History

Information from the SDB Memorial Board

by Don Graffius, President



RMD to SDB?

Whether or not you are actually retired, when you turn 70½ you typically must begin taking required minimum distributions (RMDs) each year from your tax deferred retirement accounts (IRAs, 401(k)s). This additional income will be taxable and could push you into a higher tax bracket or trigger higher taxes on your Social Security benefits and/or result in a Medicare high-income surcharge.

You could avoid these additional taxes with a charitable gift to a Seventh Day Baptist ministry! However, be sure to do it in the most tax efficient way! Folks who take an RMD and then use it to make a gift to ministry may not be able to deduct it on their income taxes, especially if they opt to take the new, higher standard deduction.

Instead, take what's known as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) to give up to \$100,000 annually to charities. QCDs are available only to owners of traditional IRAs who are age 70½ or older.

You direct your IRA custodian to send a partial or full contribution directly to the SDB Conference, Memorial Board, Missionary Society, or a church. The distribution still counts toward your RMD for the year, but the amount is not included in your adjusted gross income. That gives you a chance to receive a tax benefit for your charitable gift even if you do not itemize!

Another tax-saving idea to consider is a gift of appreciated personal property such as shares of a mutual fund or stock. Instead of paying capital gains on that appreciated stock (such as Amazon), when it is sold, give it to your favorite SDB ministry and receive a charitable income tax deduction for its fair market value on the date of the gift and avoid all that capital gains tax. The SDB Memorial Fund also accepts gifts of appreciated real estate.

Prayerfully consider these giving opportunities and discuss them with your financial advisor or tax professional. We will gladly work with your financial professional to transform your gift into SDB ministry. [SR](#)

Heading to General Conference every summer was always on our calendar.

I began attending as a seminary student, then as a pastor, then had no choice but to show up for 25 years and work my “butt-ler” off as Director of Communications and *Sabbath Recorder* editor.

My way was paid. But believe me, I do know about the challenge and forethought and sacrifice it takes to bring along a young family.

Why do we do it? Because it’s worth it.

There are so many travel apps available these days to help navigate your way, avoid traffic bottle-necks, find cheaper gas prices, and motels and camping sites.

Back in the day, we had AAA travel agents create a personalized “TripTik” (yes, a paper map), and we actually had to make long distance phone calls to book our lodging.

Over 20 years later we still smile when we refer to “The Trip.”

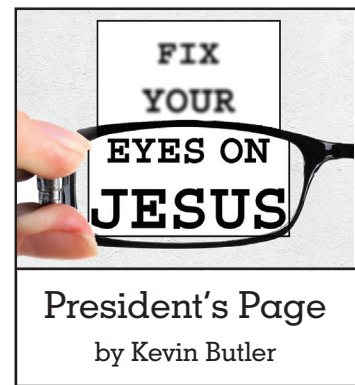
Conference was in Lacey, Washington. I’d like to offer you some snippets from a Kevin’s Korner, plus other remembrances, reflecting on our cross-country trek in 1996:

We (Janet) scrimped and saved and planned; we (Jan again) mapped the route and booked the motels; we (Hi, honey) secured a car-top carrier for the three-week haul. Hey, I had to get ready for Conference!

The trip included memorable roadside picnics; the majestic scenery of the Badlands, Mount Rushmore, and Yellowstone Park; and rating the various motels (usually according to the pool).

While trapped in a traffic jam in the Badlands, we can still picture a young couple ahead of us jump out of their vehicle and proceed to dance happily to the music blaring from their car radio. We needed that attitude adjustment.

Matthew was the first to spot the wild buffalo at Yellowstone, screaming out, “Bison! Bison! Bison!!”



And we’ll never forget his little brother Jackson literally shaking as he anxiously waited for some mini-geysers to erupt. When they did, our skinny 7-year-old declared to the whole crowd of onlookers: “This is the BEST DAY of my life!!”

Once arriving in the Seattle area, we rode to the top of the Space Needle; happened to hear the governor speak to the newest state trooper graduates in the capital rotunda in Olympia; and while Jenny went to Pre-Con and I attended General Council, the rest of the gang got to the ocean, the rain forest, and Mount St. Helens.

What a grand way to head into Conference week! And add collector magnets to our refrigerator.

One of the greatest joys of the summer came right before school started, as the children reflected on their expanded postcard and keychain collections. Listing the church camps, mission trip, vacation, and Conference, they declared almost in unison: “This was the best summer EVER!”

That made these tired and poor parents feel like it was all worthwhile.

But when Crystal wished that Conference could be held every other week, thoughts of dollar signs danced in my head...

I encourage you to scrimp and save and make the trip to the upper Midwest next summer. In the coming months, we’ll highlight some of the attractions around Grand Rapids. Beyond the spiritual significance of Fixing Your Eyes on Jesus, it could be “The Trip” that your family will remember for decades. SR

Grand trip to →

Grand Rapids

July 26 — August 1, 2020

Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI

Ask to be included in our Facebook group: “SDB Conference 2020”



Adopt Authenticity for the Holidays and Beyond

Authenticity. Take a moment to let that word sink into your bones and meditate on its meaning. It has become a buzz word within the business community in recent years because many people have realized that the more authentic and genuine their brand and company seems (and hopefully is) the better their product or service sells. The church isn't a business, I know, but we have the same PR problems that a business so typically does. Many non-Christians have preconceived notions about the church and feel Christians are inauthentic and untrustworthy—sometimes it is unjustified and sometimes their wariness and unbelief is understandable and completely justified. The church has a PR problem and I think the beginning of rectifying some of that is learning to be more authentic in our actions.

Right or wrong, people know if they trust you or not. Recent figures show that, in general, people believe about 30% of human beings are trustworthy. However they believe that out of the group of people they know that figure more than doubles to roughly 70%. So allow me to ask—how well does your community know your church and its members? This is an important question in light of the statistics, because if the community doesn't know you, chances are much better that they will never listen to the Good News.

If people who know you understand you are a Christian and attend a church, what sort of message are you sending them about your church's identity? How do you get into that 70%? A really good way to start is by being authentic. A big part of building authenticity is taking an interest in getting to know the people around you, asking questions, and actually taking time to listen to the answers. Many people are desperate for someone to listen to them, even about just small things. It doesn't have to be huge, deep secrets that you're listening to. If you demonstrate that you are listening and paying attention when a person speaks to you, especially with the small things, it's more likely that they'll trust you with bigger things, too.

This goes in the other direction, too. You don't have to air out your dirty laundry to everyone you meet—but learning to admit when you're wrong, owning up to the fact that you're in a mood, or that your day has been tough—it is okay in appropriate moments. People who see you often tend to have an idea when things are off, even if you're good at putting on your "church face" (church face has many connotations with inauthentic, if you were wondering), and just admitting that your life isn't perfect helps build your credibility—nobody's life is perfect. Pretending otherwise makes others wonder what you're hiding. Conversely, when people already know you're in a mood because you've been snapping at them all day—that is the time to apologize and admit you were wrong, not admit that you're in a mood. Trust me, they know.

With the holiday season upon us, it's an easy time to get out into the community and get to know people. Typically communities have many holiday events and you might even see people at church you haven't seen in a while. Now is the perfect time to practice building authenticity within your church family and community. This time of year tends to foster good will and pleasant feelings for those of us who have hope in Jesus—because this is the time of year when we celebrate the beginning of the plan to save us coming to fruition. We have a little jump start: the challenge will be carrying this level of authenticity and genuineness into and throughout the new year, demonstrating that Christians don't care only at Christmas and Easter. [SR](#)



Women's
Society

By Katrina Goodrich



Becoming a Dementia-Friendly Faith Community

Dementia is **NOT** normal aging. It is a diagnosis: an overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease may be the first to come to mind when dementia is mentioned but there are other types. These include: reversible dementias, vascular dementias, mixed dementias, frontotemporal dementia, Lewy Body dementia and others.

Effects of dementia include the following:

- Long-term memories can seem more real, sharper or more immediate
- Time does not have same meaning: living in the present moment
- Long term memories and skills (artistic, music, prayer) often remain
- May be able to recognize people/things even when he/she cannot identify them

Usually you can't recognize someone with dementia. There are some clues however:

- Most people are over 65—but more are being diagnosed at a younger age.
- Some people will tell you if they are having problems and how you can help.
- Some people carry a card which explains the problems they have.
- You might notice people doing or saying things which suggest that they are having problems that might be caused by dementia. These might include: looking like or saying that they are confused or lost; looking like they don't know what to do next; searching for something they can't find; problems understanding what is being said.

There may be unique problems that present themselves in a church community. A person may have problems handling money or other church commitments. They may be suspicious of close church friends and family. There may be changes in appearance or hygiene, behavior or language. Family may confess frustration, impatience or difficulty handling their relative or spouse.

The church environment may be difficult for a person with dementia because people talk too quickly, give too much information and are impatient, making the person feel unworthy and unrespected. The environment may

be hurried, loud, and distracting. It is important to remember that a person with dementia may remember routines, can read non-verbal cues, detect kindness, know how they feel to be with you and may make either/or choices.

People with dementia can be uplifted by worship services and visits. Some may stop attending regular worship to avoid social situations they fear or no longer understand. Families may feel embarrassed or reluctant to bring a loved one to church or to ask for help. However, family members also have spiritual needs and need to be able to attend. Caring for a loved one can leave caregivers weary, isolated, frustrated, and depressed. It is important for the congregation to understand these feelings and give loving support to both the person with dementia and their family. Sometimes those with dementia may make inappropriate or loud remarks during a worship service. We don't blame babies or small children when they do the same. Why would we make someone with dementia feel unwanted for doing something they can't help?

As a congregation we need to know how to provide spiritually engaging worship services for those with dementia—such as using Bible readings, responses and prayers (Psalm 23, Lord's Prayer) that they may be familiar with. Hymns, symbols, and familiar verses, expressions and objects are important. Involve the person in activities that connect them with others such as choir concerts, Sabbath school, repetitive tasks such as stuffing bulletins and participating in intergenerational programs. Foster an atmosphere of joy, trust, and comfort. Validate their feelings and show tolerance for the person and the caregiver.

You can become a welcoming congregation by being respectful, greeting the person warmly, using simple sentences and a calm voice. Wear name tags, be patient and accepting of behaviors and appearances, ask family members how they are and how their loved one is doing. Try to remember the people as they were before dementia became a part of their life. They may very well remember that person and be grieving their loss of memory. Treat them as you would like to be treated if you were in their shoes. It's about how we can make people feel, not how they make us feel. SR

(Wisconsin Alzheimers Institute)

MULTIPLY

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE



SDBs gathered in Colorado Springs to learn about "From Unbeliever to Church Planter" during the 5th annual MULTIPLY Church Development Conference.

Twenty-five SDBs from many different churches came together on Thursday, November 14, 2019, for a pre-conference event with our SDB cohorts. On Thursday evening and Friday, the group gathered at Vanguard Church along with a few hundred others for the MULTIPLY conference sponsored by Frontline Church Planting. The main sessions and speakers were phenomenal and inspiring. This was interspersed with breakout learning, conversations, and worship to make the day complete. The main speakers included John Onwuchekwa of Cornerstone Church (Houston, TX), Nathan Lorick from Colorado Baptists, and disciple-making expert Bill Hull.

For worship on Sabbath, November 16, 2019, the group joined SpringsLife Church for their gathered worship service. Pastor Nate Crandall delivered a meaningful and impactful sermon on "Why Should I Follow Jesus?", tying into the theme for the weekend. Our SDB cohorts meeting completed our conference by sharing about the steps and skills needed to disciple someone from unbeliever to church planter.

Make your plans to come to MULTIPLY 2020!

As information becomes available, it can be found at seventhdaybaptist.org/multiply.

Don't miss out on an opportunity to see what's next for you or your church!

PASTOR SEARCH

The following SDB churches or groups are looking for pastoral leadership. Please keep them in prayer as they search for their churches' next leaders.

Shepherd's Fold SDB Church (Johnson City, TN) Assistant
Bay Area SDB Church (Pinole, CA)
Covenant SDB Fellowship (Hungry Horse, MT)
Pataskala SDB Church (Pataskala, OH)
Remembrance SDB Church (Ft. Worth, TX)
Edgewater SDB Church (Oak Hill, FL)

There are other potential vacancies in the near future. If you are interested in one of these vacancies, if you are called to pastoral ministry, or if you know someone who might be interested in pastoral ministry, please contact the Director of Pastoral Services by email at: jpethtel@seventhdaybaptist.org or call **608-752-5055 ext. 702**

Church
Development &
Pastoral Services

By John J. Pethtel
Director

ORDINATIONS

Greg Olson, Pastor of Grace SDB Church in Bloomington, MN, was examined for fitness to gospel ministry before an ordination council that convened on May 19, 2019. After reviewing his testimony and asking questions to test his fitness for ministry, the ordination council found that Pastor Greg has beliefs that are in accord with the SDB Statement of Belief and recommended that he be ordained. The ordination service was held on September 14, 2019.

Congratulations Rev. Olson!



Philip Lawton, Assistant Pastor of the Shiloh SDB Church in Shiloh, NJ, was examined for fitness to gospel ministry before an ordination council that convened on September 7, 2019. After reviewing his testimony and asking questions to test his fitness for ministry, the ordination council found that Pastor Phil has beliefs that are in accord with the SDB Statement of Belief and recommended that he be ordained. The ordination service was held on October 19, 2019.

Congratulations Rev. Lawton!



Keith (JR) Shick, Pastor of the White Cloud SDB Church in White Cloud, MI, was examined for fitness to gospel ministry before an ordination council that convened on June 15, 2019. After reviewing his testimony and asking questions to test his fitness for ministry, the ordination council found that Pastor JR has beliefs that are in accord with the SDB Statement of Belief and recommended that he be ordained. The ordination service was held on November 2, 2019.

Congratulations Rev. Shick!



The Dodge Center Seventh Day Baptist Church celebrated the 160th Anniversary of their legal organization on June 29, 2019, by celebrating their past and looking forward to the future life and ministry of this body. The morning worship included hymns "O Worship the King" and "At Calvary;" a saxophone solo by Althea Rood accompanied by Jacinta Robinson on the piano; and Burt Bonser singing a song he wrote, "On My Knees Again." The message, "Covenant Connections," was given by Pastor Bill Shobe using Jeremiah 31:30-34 and 1 Samuel 18:3-5 focusing on the central doctrine of Seventh Day Baptists being a relational people instead of doctrinal people. It was followed by communion and covenant signing renewal.

The time together included the monthly fellowship dinner with a special decorated cake. The afternoon concluded with a DC SDB trivia game created by Althea Rood and moderated by Pastor Bill. There were two teams of adults and children vying to answer such categories as: Who Did It? What Ministry? Interesting Practice, When Did it Happen? How Much? How Many? Some questions were: "What was the annual salary of the first janitor?" (\$7.00 probably in 1866). "What was the cost of the first church building in 1865?" (\$800). "How many different names has our church had?" Points were given for each correctly answered name (3). The starting question was: "Who were the two founding families of the church?" Four options were given as Babcocks/Bonds/Greenes/Tappans. The comment had been made that we still had one member descended from the founding families. Amid some good laughter it was learned that there are at least eight families of direct descendants and the one was a relative descendant. (Never forget the contribution of women to the growth of generations!) The final trivia scores were separated by 20 points. The afternoon finished with each one attending having an opportunity to share about the influence the Church had on their lives.

August 18-22 was our Vacation Bible School, "Rolling River Rampage." There were 16 children in attendance, but over 20 volunteers participating as teachers, snack servers, activity leaders or participants in skits and music. Everyone benefited from the excitement and involvement in the week-long times of fellowship and learning. The final program was held Sabbath night, August 24, with parents invited. Throughout the week the mission focus was on the need for Bibles for the Seventh Day Baptist Conference in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The offerings from the week allowed us to send funds for 17 Bibles to the pastors there. One of the best evaluations of the week was by a community mom of three saying of all the VBS programs her girls had been to this summer, this one was the one they liked the best. [SR](#)

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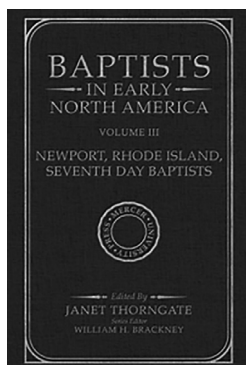
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OBITUARY

OTT—Albert L. “Elbow” Ott, 79, Martinsburg, died October 27, 2019, at his residence after a battle with cancer.

He was born in Cambria County, PA, son of the late George Orville and Alice Gertrude (Kauffman) Ott. On June 23, 1960, he married Ruth Robinette in Salemville, PA.

He retired from New Enterprise Stone and Lime Co. with over 40 years of service. He was a member of the Bell SDB Church, Salemville, PA.

Elbow enjoyed playing the banjo, woodworking and fishing.

Surviving are his wife; three children: Timothy L. Ott, Terry L. Ott, and Tina L. Ott, all of Martinsburg; seven grandchildren: Jesse, Shanna, Travis, Tracie, Tanner, Devyn, and Julia; and eight great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by two sons: Tony L. and Troy L.; two sisters: Evelyn and Irene; and two brothers: Harry and Charles.

A funeral service was held on October 31, 2019, in the Bell Seventh Day Baptist Church, Salemville, Pastor Darwin Steele officiating. Interment will be made in Salemville Cemetery.

Contributions in Elbow’s memory may be given to the American Cancer Society, Blair Unit, 1004 N. Juniata St., Hollidaysburg, PA 16648, or the National Kidney Foundation, 30 East 33rd St., New York, NY 10016.

NEW MEMBERS

FIRST HOPKINTON SDB CHURCH

Ashaway, RI
Dave Stall, Pastor

Baptisms

Pastor Dave Stall baptized 22 people on June 1, 2019:
Danny Gonzalez, Michelle Gonzalez, Nathan Gonzalez, Maddie Gonzalez, Tim Hayward, Terry Hayward, Cassie Fitts, Randy Miller, Tracy Segar, Nate Segar, Tre Segar, Tom Tassias, Zachary Tassias, Maureen Black, Ron Wright, Joe Whewell, Mykell Rodriguez, Peyton Pierce, Ashley LeClair, Kim LeClair, Laura Constantine, Scott Osborne

Joined in July

Margaret Taylor
Danny Gonzalez
Michelle Gonzalez
Nathan Gonzalez
Maddie Gonzalez
Carol McPhail
Mac McPhail

Joined in November

Terry Hayward,
Tim Hayward,
Jonathan Hunady,
Emma Hunady,
Paula Maynard,
Harold Rakowski,
Mike Whitehead,
Justin McCormack

CHURCH NEWS

Faith Seventh Day Baptist Church of the Bronx, NY

Here at Faith Church, we have embarked on an endeavor to revitalize our Sabbath school involvement. We want our members and friends to value studying the Word and sharing with each other. 1 Timothy tells us that we should study to show ourselves approved.

Recently, our Sabbath school superintendent (Hope Miller-West) painted beautiful artwork for some of our younger members as an incentive for good attendance. The pieces were beautiful and were well received. Who knew we had an artist among us?

In August, to round out the summer in fellowship, we spent the day at F.D.R. State Park. We enjoyed the time playing games and having fun at the pool together. Our children were able to bond with each other and we were able to relax and enjoy the great outdoors. We look forward to more events in fellowship and sharpening our knowledge of the Word together.

We’re interested in hearing about some of your strategies for engaging your members in Sabbath school and Bible study. Do you have any tips for more enthusiastic teaching? Do you use incentives to encourage participation? Let’s share together and build strong, empowered, and knowledgeable Christ-followers. [SR](#)



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Sometimes the ordinary things we experience can help us appreciate the extraordinary things God does. Over the summer, for example, Linda started feeding a stray female cat that appeared in our yard. As far as we could tell, she did not belong to anyone, and we assumed she sought shelter at night in a nearby barn. When fall came and the temperature dropped, Linda was concerned the cat might not survive the winter (succumbing either to the cold or to the coyotes), so she prevailed upon me to adopt the cat and bring her inside. After making that decision, we learned that she came with two kittens. (It was, I discovered, a package deal.) The three of them have since made several trips to the vet for their obligatory checkup and vaccinations. It has become an expensive investment, one that, to protect, requires they now remain inside, away from predators and contagious feline diseases.

We have noticed that adopting them is similar to what God did in adopting us, albeit on a far grander scale, by sending His son at Christmas.

- Similar to but more significant than the situation with the cats, God has taken us in and given us hope for a future better than any we would have on our own.

*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full....
I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*

—John 10:10, 28

- Similar to but more significant than the situation with the cats, God has paid a considerable price for us, one we could not afford on our own.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

—1 John 4:10

- Similar to but more significant than the situation with the cats, God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves.

The Son of Man [came] to give his life as a ransom for many.
Matthew 20:28

- Similar to but more significant than the situation with the cats, God has intervened in our lives for good in ways we do not know.

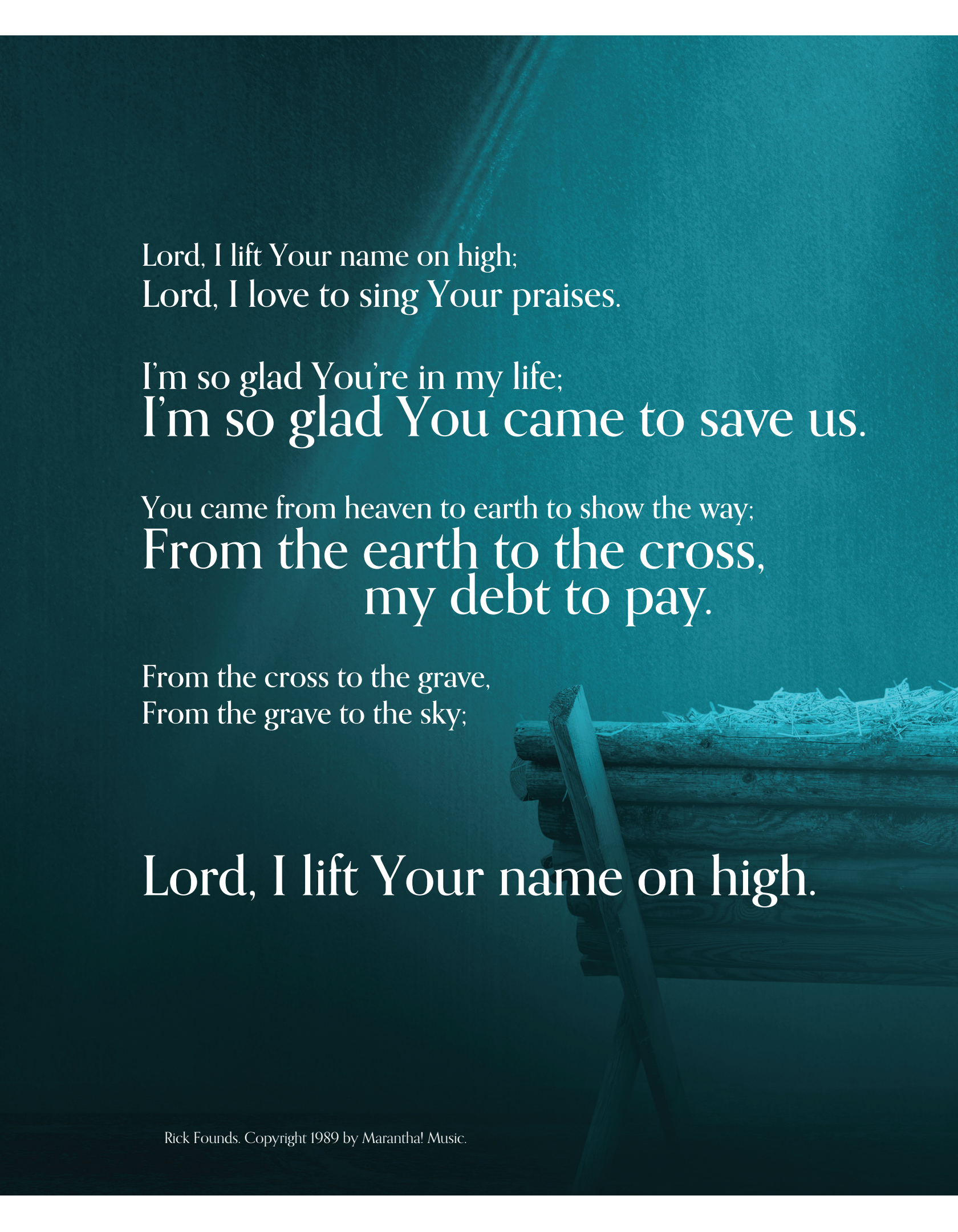
*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him.*

1 Corinthians 2:9

Sometimes the ordinary things we experience can remind us about the extraordinary things God did for us when He sent Jesus that first Christmas.

The cats are providing us with hours of entertainment since we made them part of our family. I do not know if God finds us entertaining since He has made us part of His family. In any case, He does not ask that we entertain Him, only that we serve Him. As Jesus also said, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only" (Matthew 4:10). May God find you faithful as you worship and serve Him this season and throughout the New Year. Merry Christmas!

— Dr. Paul Manuel, Christmas 2013
German Seventh Day Baptist Church, Salemville, PA



Lord, I lift Your name on high;
Lord, I love to sing Your praises.

I'm so glad You're in my life;
I'm so glad You came to save us.

You came from heaven to earth to show the way;
From the earth to the cross,
my debt to pay.

From the cross to the grave,
From the grave to the sky;

Lord, I lift Your name on high.

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and additional offices

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Grand Rapids, MI

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