



Sabbath Recorder

Testimonies from survivors of abuse...

With Jesus,
there is
always hope.

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication
January 2019



New Executive Director Selected

On December 4, 2018, the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of the USA and Canada Ltd. was excited to announce their next Executive Director. The Rev. Carl P. Greene has been selected and accepted the position of Executive Director. Rev. Greene will assume the full duties starting January 1, 2020. He will be working with outgoing Executive Director, Robert Appel, from September through December 2019 during a smooth transition phase. Mr. Appel has been in the position since May 2004.

Carl Greene is a graduate of Houghton College, NY, with a B.A. in History and Political Science. He received his Master of Divinity from Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, MN, in Transformational Leadership Concentration. He is currently attending Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, for his PhD in Intercultural Studies. Carl was ordained by the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hebron, PA, and is an Accredited Pastor in the Seventh Day Baptist Conference USA and Canada, Ltd.

Carl grew up in Berlin, NY, and worked as a partner with his family on the Mapledale Dairy Farm for 14 years. Carl is married to his wife Cindy and has 4 children.

Carl said during the interview process, "I am passionate about and for Seventh Day Baptists. There is a dimension to my interest that goes beyond practicalities and gift sets. There is a heart to serve in this way."

The Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of the USA and Canada is a 501(c)(3) located in Janesville, Wisconsin. It serves the Seventh Day Baptist churches in the USA and Canada.

If you would like more information about this topic, please call Rob Appel at 608-752-5055, ext. 1005 or email at robappel@seventhdaybaptist.org

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About MORE church news in the *Sabbath Recorder*

A common theme from our readers is a desire to see **more church news**. It has always been difficult to get churches to submit their news!

We would like to direct you to:

<http://seventhdaybaptist.org/church-news-submission/>

This is where you can find a form to **submit your church news!**

We cannot be everywhere.

We challenge our churches and you who want to see more church news to lead the charge in your own church by **submitting the news!**

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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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hope



An Open Letter to Survivors

by Pastor Phil Lawton

This letter is dedicated to all those who in the last year have shared with me their stories. To those of you who have trusted me with some of the deepest hurts in your life. To those of you who years later are now able to look back and find something redeeming about your story. To those of you who are still in the midst of confusion about what the future holds.

I have heard you. And I'm sorry. To all the survivors of abuse, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry that many of you learned very young that the world can be a place of suffering and pain. I'm sorry that your childhood, or your innocence, or your independence was ripped from you in a flash. I'm sorry that the people you trusted to help you failed you. I'm sorry that churches kept secrets for years. I'm sorry that the very place that should be a bastion of light in a dark world has often been a cave festering with mold and despair. I'm sorry that so often the very institutions that are designed to protect you have actually protected those who harmed you. I'm sorry that laws have protected your abuser, because you waited until you were ready to talk. I'm sorry that people have used your stories to promote their own political agendas. I'm sorry that as a pastor I often represent those who have abused you or covered up the abuse done to you.

To those of you who have been harmed by those in the church, I want to give a special apology. I'm sorry that the church has failed you. I'm sorry that rather than bringing this to light the church has often chosen to cover up what happened to you. I'm sorry that the church is so afraid to talk about sex that we can't even help those who are most in need. I know that you have every reason to turn your back on God and the church. I want you to know that God has not turned His back on you, even if the church has.

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Survivor, do you know that, even if the church is afraid to talk about abuse, God is not? Do you know of Dinah, and Tamar, and the Levite's concubine? God sees the wickedness that has been done to you. God has given voice to your suffering when you could not. God does not shy away from you or think less of you because of what has been done to you.

Survivor—I say that because you are not a victim. Survivor, do you know that God understands your pain? Do you know that Jesus was abused and betrayed too? Do you know that He was stripped naked and beaten in public? Do you know He was made to walk in shame? Jesus knows your pain. Jesus understands what you have gone through. His friends and family turned their backs on him too.

Survivor, do you know that Jesus died and rose again? Do you know that Jesus came to declare the Kingdom of God? Do you know that in the Kingdom of God the blind are given sight, the lame walk, and the dead rise again? Do you know that He was prophesied to do this? Do you know that He is coming again to set all things right? Do you know that on that day there will be no more tears and no more pain and no more sorrow?

This is the good news that the church should have told you. This is the message that the church should be proclaiming. For too long the church has been afraid to take a stand for those in need. The church has been like Israel of old, oppressing those most in need. The church thinks that on the day of judgement it will be vindicated, but I fear it may be darkness and not light for many in the church.

For all these wrongs I am sorry.

But it does not have to remain this way. The church can be a place of hope for you. I know this to be true. I know it starts with me.

So I make a pledge.

I pledge that I will never cover up the wrongs done to you. I pledge that any church where I serve will be a refuge for you. I pledge that if it is not, I will work to make it so. I pledge that I will do the work in my own life to make sure that I am able to hear your story. I pledge to do everything in my power to bring you justice—not justice by my definition but yours. I pledge that I will call out those in the church who have sheltered these perpetrators. I pledge to listen to you. To cry with you. To mourn with you. To be angry with you. And, when you are ready, to stand with you against those who have harmed you. SR

hope



Sadly, statistics tell us that there are many survivors of abuse in our world, and more importantly, in our churches. Too often, survivors aren't cared for well in our churches. Sometimes, this is because the trauma they have experienced makes it difficult for them to tell their stories. Other times it is because they have trusted individuals or churches with their stories and the church has failed to provide the necessary support.

In this month's Sabbath Recorder, we asked survivors of abuse to tell their stories and to explain about how God is moving in their recovery to bring healing and wholeness into their lives. These survivors have graciously agreed to briefly share parts of their stories with us. We hope the readers of this month's issue will carefully consider these testimonies as they minister to the survivors in their own lives, congregations, and communities.



“Be still and know I am God”

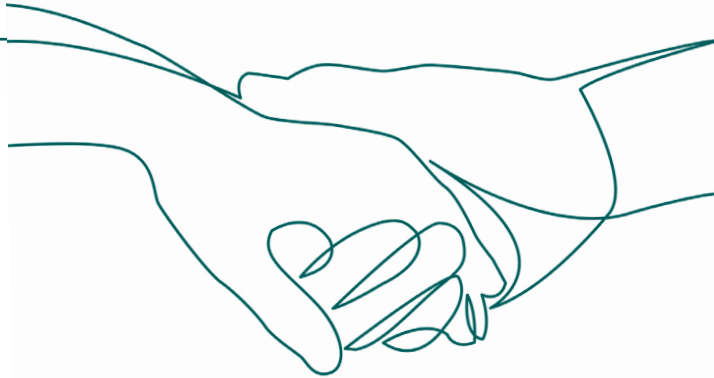
—Psalm 46:10

This is one of my favorite verses. It was the ringing truth for me during the worst part of my recovery from childhood trauma and sexual abuse. Every time I read it, it gives me peace beyond understanding. I wasn't always in that place while recovering. When I was 14 years old, I walked into my now home church broken, angry, and damaged. Due to that childhood sexual abuse, I didn't trust a lot of people, and probably pushed away anyone who tried to come close. At the time, I didn't realize that God had sent those people into my life to give me the love He so desperately wanted to share with me. As I shared more about my story, the consistent love and acceptance from my home church helped guide me through recovery of my childhood trauma.

Youth group was one of my safe spaces in high school. That was where I found my niche. That was where I felt like I belonged. One night after youth group, I was really struggling. It had been a difficult week. I was struggling with flashbacks and the pain. One youth group leader could tell I was hurting and came over to just sit with me. There was no expectation to talk or explain. They were just there.

So, you might be asking yourself, “How can I help those recovering from sexual abuse?” You can be there. You don't have to have fancy words or anything profound. Be there if they need to cry or laugh or be angry. You can be still and know that God is God. SR

—*Karissa Bornemann*
Milton, WI



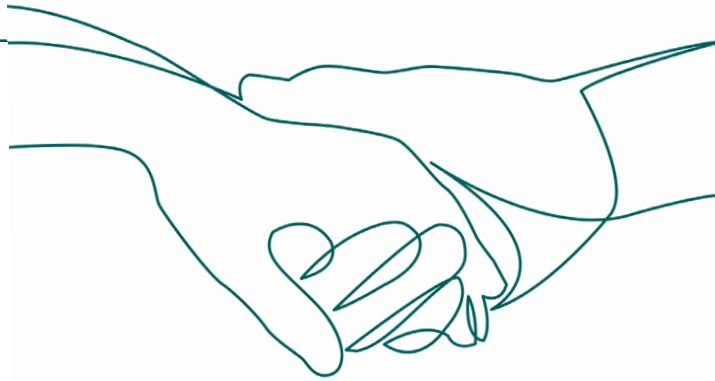
The night everything changed is one I will never forget. I was alone, I was bruised, and I was broken. I had finally given up—for five years I convinced myself I could take care of myself. I'd be just fine. After all, I was stronger than most; at least that's what I would try to tell myself. But I knew I was losing; I was just too proud to admit it. So finally, here I was lying in a bed in a women's shelter trying to keep my crying quiet so as not to disturb the others staying there, convinced I would never be whole again. In complete desperation I decided to call on God. I couldn't handle life anymore, and I was sure He wasn't going to help either—what right did I even have to ask? After all, I'd never really even spoken to Him before, and here I was asking Him to fix this mess. But I was wrong. That moment everything changed—it started with just a calm feeling and being able to drift off to sleep, but it continued.

Over the next few weeks, I was invited to live with one of the ladies from church. I started doing odd jobs for the church (which turned into working for the church for a long while). The church provided clothing, food, help with meds, transportation, and after a run-in with my ex, rented me a room in a sober living home a couple of cities over for safety. Throughout this time I was a mess, still recovering, with all the baggage that brings. But God never let me down—everything I needed was provided, from the basics of food and clothes to the deeper things like friendships and mentors, a loving church family.

But I can't make it sound like it was all easy either—that would be misleading. There were plenty of trials and rough spots along the way. My health had been shaky ever since the worst day (week, month) of my bad relationship, and it took a turn for the worse when I caught a nasty disease and had to be treated with powerful meds. I lost my strength, my hair, and I was an emotional mess. Unrelated, but around the same time, I had to have all my remaining teeth pulled, as they were bad and getting infected all the time. But God provided the funds for dentures at exactly the right time, and now people don't even realize I have plastic teeth. And not one of these times did I have to go through anything alone. My health will never be what it was before, but I'm totally okay with that. I'm alive and loved and that is good enough for me.

So here we are several years later and I'm a whole different person. My priorities are different, my goals are different, my relationships are different. But most importantly, my faith is better than it ever was and I'm not scared anymore. I went from a scared little girl who was sure she had lost all hope of being loved to a young woman who has learned a valuable lesson in what love really means. In a couple weeks I will be celebrating my first anniversary with my husband, and everything is good. We have struggles and we have bad days, but we are never alone, and we were never alone, and we will never be alone. That would have been enough, but God hasn't stopped yet. We are about to start on yet another chapter, and I can't wait to see how this one goes. [SR](#)

—Ann Davenport
Boulder, CO




I was raised living with my mother, dad, and sister in the state of Oregon. Dad was physically abusive to me. The hits would be mostly to my ribs and legs. Because of this I had a very warped view of God and what it meant to be a Christian. He would fight with my mother pretty much daily, unless others were around. There was much more—however, I don't like to dwell on that part. I prefer to look at what God did through it.

Much later, when I was around 31 years old, the phone rang, and it was Dad saying he needed to see me right away. I wasn't prepared for what happened next: he hit his knees begging me to forgive him. In all honesty, I didn't trust it so I asked him, "What for?" He proceeded to cry and recount everything he had done to me, my mother, and my sister. After a short conversation, I told him that I forgave him. Even though I wasn't following Christ, He was still speaking to me that the right thing was to forgive my dad. What followed was a relationship that I never knew was possible.

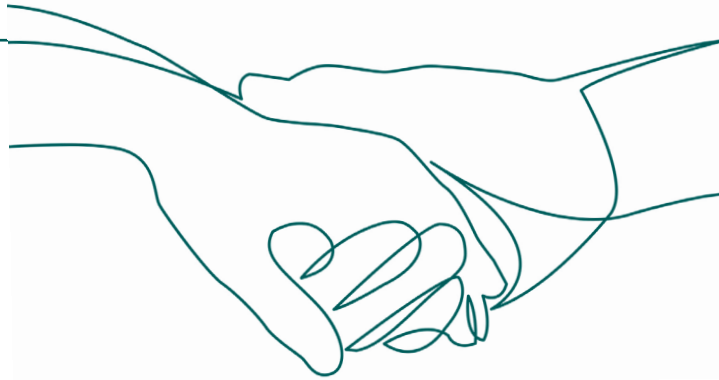
About 18 months later, my dad died suddenly at work. At that moment I became angry with God. Keep in mind—I was angry with a God that I was not following. I was angry and thought, "just when I have a relationship with my dad you take him!" Anger stayed with me as I continued to live a life not following Christ, believing all the lies of the enemy. Then one day about a year later as I was driving to work, the radio played a Christian song and it hit me like a ton of bricks how selfish I was being. Sitting on the side of the road, crying, I lifted my hands to Heaven and begged my Father in Heaven to forgive me for my selfishness. How could I be mad at God for giving me 18 months of a relationship with my dad, when most people in my situation don't ever get that type of healing with the person who hurt them?

It was through this revelation that God began to slowly transform my heart and to soften it. Anger didn't drive me any longer, and the pain I once held onto so strongly began to disappear slowly—but it was no longer fueling me as it once did. I was attending church and beginning to search for who God really was, rather than what I had grown up believing. The more I searched for Him, the more He showed up.

In 2009, I dedicated my life to Christ and was baptized. Since that time God has placed many godly men and women in my path. The more I search for relationship with Christ, the more He reveals Himself and the more healing takes place. God has brought me to a place where I am able to acknowledge what happened to me—which for a long time was difficult. Through God's forgiveness and healing I have developed a passion for Him that burns in my heart like a wildfire. It is somewhat difficult to find the words to describe the joy and healing He has brought in my life. I feel truly humbled and thankful that God has called me to serve Him and spread His gospel.

Thank you, Father in Heaven, for bringing my heart from darkness into your light, where I have been healed and can be a light for you! Amen. 

—Pastor Steve Hinton
New Auburn, WI



Survivor. That is a loaded word—sometimes it makes me feel like the trauma is over. But really it just means that you have learned to fly again after your wings have been broken. Sometimes you never really feel whole. I didn't for a long time and sometimes I still don't. I was abused for several years and each time I can remember feels like another break. I wasn't made whole again until God reached into my life and saved me. I was at a camp and I grew tired of fighting God. I remembered what it was to be loved by Him. It took two more years for me to give Him my burdens. Even now I struggle with trying to take them back.

Even with this, God has turned it into my ministry so I can give hope to those still fighting. Though I still struggle with shame and hurt, He shows me things and takes the time to lay a path before me. I don't know where I will be in five or ten years, but I am certain that by faith I will be serving the will of God—a path that I actively avoided a large majority of my life. I didn't deserve any of the healing God provided me. I cried out to Him and He answered and gave me more than I could have ever imagined.

He showed me mercy when I didn't even know what that meant anymore. I didn't have an identity after the abuse. But God knew who I was, and now everyday He restores me more and more. Even to the point where I feel I am overflowing and then He gives me a bigger cup. Psalm 23 has always reminded me of who I am under the grace of God:

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

This Psalm was attributed to David, who went through much worse things than I did, praising God, the shepherd of his people. He continuously found God's favor even though he struggled terribly, and I hope to one day understand the love of God like he did. SR

—Anonymous

My Hope is in Jesus...Not My Circumstances

The holidays are often the hardest times of year for me because I become reminded so much of what I do not have or what I have lost. I offer this testimony that I needed to write to help me through this struggle. —JP

The worst year of my life was the 12 months between June 2004 and May 2005. In those 12 months, both of my parents died. I was working three jobs at one time (one full-time, two part-time) or working a full-time job with a full-time course load. My marriage was struggling (mostly due to me). We moved across the country and away from all of our family to pursue God. When we arrived, we were told that the house in which we were going to be living was going to be put up for sale. Shortly after arriving, I was told by the person whom I respected more than anyone (my mentor) that I disappointed him and that maybe I shouldn't pursue ministry. I struggled to fit in anywhere or find friends. I started to see a counselor before I lost everything.

2018 has been the second worst year of my life. I have strived to be the best me that I could be only to hear from people close to me how I fall short. I am still grieving the loss of people I love, some of whom have passed recently. I have worked very hard at my jobs in ministry and have seen very little reward. I have been betrayed, lied to, and slandered. I have been told to stop being and acting so much like myself. I have struggled with my classes, feeling overwhelmed and incompetent at times. I have trusted people with my vulnerability and been hurt. I have counted on people to help me and have been let

down. I have had to take a break from a church I love for my own good (and for their good). Even before then, I was rarely able to attend because of my travel for work. I slid into a deep depression for almost a month this summer and had the darkest thoughts that I have had since I was diagnosed with clinical depression at the age of 14. We were denied our dream of owning a home for reasons that we still do not understand. My phone, TV,

and a computer at our house have all failed in the last month. In addition, we wrecked our "new" car. I have had people tell me who I am and what I am good at or not good at that I do not agree with. I have been heartbroken in pursuing some of my life goals.

In short, I am **NOT** okay right now.

I am not telling you this to elicit your pity on me. I am writing this to tell you that I know I am not the

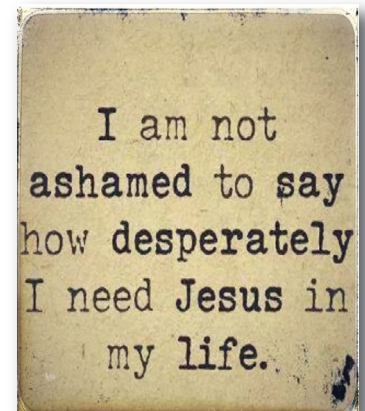
only one who has experienced some bad times. Especially at this time of year, it seems as if all of the hard parts of life are harder. You grieve all of the losses of your past more than at other times (people, things, dreams, etc.).

Your feelings and time get tied up with work/family/friends/life endeavors. You start believing the worst about yourself and about your inability to meet the needs of your family/work. It is easy for this to spiral out of control.

I am writing this to let you know that even in the midst of all of these things, I have hope. Hope that has only been granted me by the faith that I have placed in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. I have so much already given to me and so much yet to be given to me through the promises of Jesus.

If you haven't given Jesus a try to help with your depression or anxiety, check out a local Bible-believing church and ask some questions. Hear about how He had bad days and how He knows what you are going through. Hear about how He can help you overcome this life.

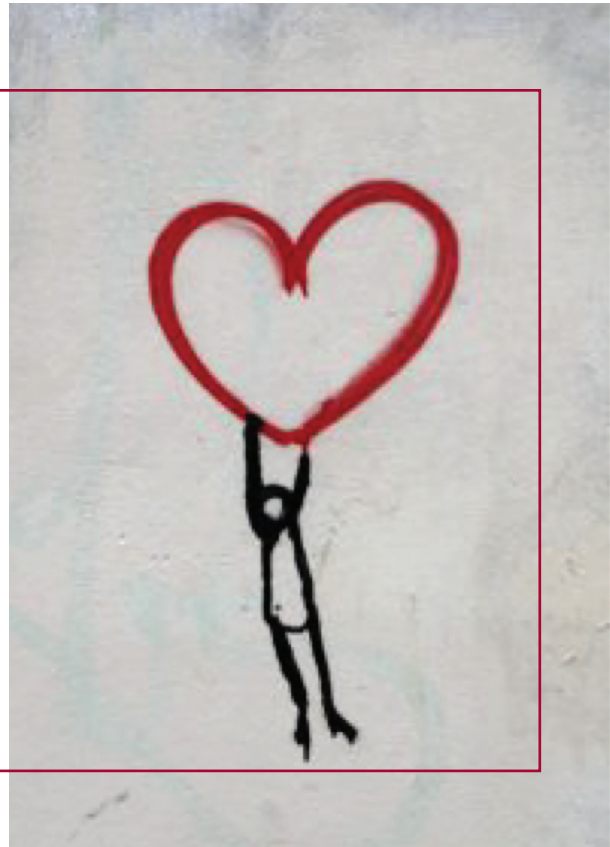
If this is not you, remember that not everyone who looks put together has it all together. Be a speaker, sharer, and liver of hope in the midst of others to help them find the One to whom the anchor holds. [SR](#)



Church
Development &
Pastoral Services

By John J. Pethel
Director

*There Lives a
Monster,
Who Was Once a
Little Boy*



By Lori Roeleveld

A monster moved into Providence, RI, sometime in the past two weeks. At least, that's what the mobs who protest outside his building have written on their signs and shout up at the windows.

He's a monster who preys on young boys and they want him turned out of their neighborhood.

The scenes on the evening news look like the mobs in Frankenstein when the villagers go after Dr. Frankenstein's creation bearing torches and ropes. Even local politicians who claim Providence as a sanctuary city have taken a stand against providing safe haven for this man—because, after all, “he's not a man, he's a monster.”

Civil discourse has fled the scene as panic and fear guide the decision-making, fueled by understandable outrage that the legal system has somehow found a path for release for a “monster” highly likely to strike again.

Only, he isn't a monster. Once upon a time some fifty years ago, he was a little boy. Made in God's image. Vulnerable, fragile, easily twisted and destroyed. In all likelihood, that little boy wasn't protected from abuse by some other predator. Perhaps he didn't receive any effective interventions to cope with the trauma of his abuse and this allowed the monster that can arise in any of us to overcome the little boy who might have been.

And so, the terrible, unthinkable cycle was perpetuated by him, a twenty-one-year-old who hurt children and was caught and put away—but now he lives among us again.

It serves no one to call this man, Richard, a monster. There are no monsters except in our imaginations.

It is our calling to protect the most vulnerable in our midst.

Continued from previous page...

But, there are broken men and women who have wrapped their brokenness around them like armor, carved their pain into daggers and shivs, and stored up their wounds deep in the dark cellars of their minds where they fester and become fuel for demonic thoughts that lead to demonic deeds.

Children are gifts, and since they abound, we sometimes take the treasure of them for granted. Each child is born with their potential to reflect Christ, to step into the freedom He provides, and to inhabit the idea God had when they were conceived. This one with the potential to cure cancer. That one with a composition that will unite the planet. This one to lead. That one to nurture. This one to build. That one to heal. These gifts, our children, are meant to be nurtured, protected, and guided until maturity. They are fragile, complex, and still forming in many ways.

They're vulnerable to the enemy of God who, if he cannot destroy them in utero, will seek to crush them upon delivery or shortly thereafter. Those who injure, abuse, or violate them wield the power to warp their beings at their genesis and create the potential for life-long damage.

Many, many children will grow up without facing abuse. Many children who are abused will find the treatment and healing they need to grow to their potential despite their early wounds.

A few, though, a few of the wounded will be remade in the image of their abuser and the evil one will lure them into the darkness repeatedly to continue the dangerous cycle. While they face strong urges and powerful temptations, they retain their ability to choose, so when they are caught, they must face strong consequences. And there is an argument to be made that they have forfeited their ability to live in the vicinity of children.

Child predators are notoriously resistant to treatment and change. I once heard a training instructor say that he'd never known any treatment to be effective, and had only seen one or two predators manage a lasting change—and these only after authentic conversions to a relationship with Jesus.

With Jesus, there is always hope. As Christians, we declare no man or woman a monster. We remember that we are all fragile, all sinful, all capable of extreme acts of evil. None can boast except in Jesus.

And yet, it is our calling to protect the most vulnerable in our midst. Every child is the responsibility, not only of their parents, but also of those who say they are light in their community. It is our job to shine brightly against the forces of the dark.

So, we cannot afford to be squeamish about the topics of sexual predators, human trafficking, or child abuse.

We can't afford to pretend that predators won't try to infiltrate our churches, daycares, youth groups, or schools—even the ones with crosses on the buildings or Christian statements of faith. We must take proper precautions to make these places less attractive to those who prey on children.

We can't shy away from hard conversations when someone's story doesn't line up, when children make disturbing statements, or when we are made aware of allegations against someone in our midst. Mature adults will endure discomfort to prevent even one child from harm. Predators will try to pressure others to escape the discomfort of discovery.

And when a person is caught abusing a child, we cannot allow tears and immediate pleading for forgiveness to cloud wise judgment that says they must bear fruit in keeping with repentance. We know how easy it is for wolves to weave cloaks that resemble sheep, so we must insure lasting boundaries around anyone who has proven themselves unsafe around children even once.

Matthew 10:16 says, "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." These days cry out for wisdom to be our word and our way. We must be wise about protecting the children in our charge and in our communities from harm.

Jesus fought the powers of death and darkness and defeated them on the cross. We must be willing to face them squarely now and remind them they are defeated in our midst. This calls for courage, wisdom, discernment, cool heads, compassion, and strong stomachs.

We have all we need in Jesus—so let's be the force of light and allow no sanctuary for darkness in our midst. SR

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Lori Stanley Roeleveld, Disturber of Hobbits
www.loriroeleveld.com*

In this issue of the *Sabbath Recorder*, you have the opportunity to read the testimonies of those who have survived the trauma of abuse and have found healing through the work of God in their lives. If you haven't had the opportunity to read those stories yet, I encourage you not to put down this issue until you have read about the work God is doing among survivors. God is mighty to save and loving to deliver, but He is also tender as He brings healing and wholeness to those who are brokenhearted.

Unfortunately, the experiences of survivors in too many churches do not reflect these traits of our God. Too many survivors encounter the body of Christ and walk away feeling accused, disbelieved, blamed, and shamed. These encounters add an additional layer of trauma to their experience and can drive them from the healing presence of God. When those who should help facilitate healing deliver wounds instead, those wounded can end up blaming God.

I have been privileged over the past 15 years in my ministry life among SDBs to be trusted with some of the stories of those who have been subjected to abuse. Too frequently, I have been the "next person" a survivor has talked to after their initial attempt to seek help in the church has led to further pain. My desire for you is to be equipped to take the first individual steps (not all the steps) in serving as the hands and feet (and ears!) of Jesus Christ. To that end, I have some suggestions for you as you serve those who need God's care through you as they seek a safe place as a survivor of abuse.

1. Let the survivor set the emotional level of the encounter.

When someone comes to you and shares a story of trauma, it is natural to have a strong emotional reaction: indignation, anger, sadness, grief and other reactions are normal. But if your reaction to the story is too large, you will put guilt on the survivors and may discourage them from fully telling their stories. If survivors choose to trust you with their stories, your responsibility to them is to let them set the emotional level of the encounter. If they are working hard to restrain their emotions, so should you. Make the encounter about them, not your emotions.

2. Remember their trauma is their burden, not your project.

There is no question that survivors of abuse have been affected by their trauma. But when a survivor comes to you to tell their story, the first need is

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Christian Education
Council

By Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten

Director of Education
and History

not to be “fixed,” as though that was something you could do anyways. Their need is for you to hear their story first without judgment or agenda. As people made in God’s image with dignity, they should be addressed that way first. Reducing survivors to their “problem” or “issue” will communicate that you care more about your need to fix than their need to be seen as a whole person. There may be a point where you can aid them in their journey, but to start, just communicate loving care—it’s the most important step. Don’t demand the survivor move at your pace to find healing—let them set the pace!

3. Avoid questions that communicate blame.

Survivors of the trauma of abuse are already psychologically predisposed to feel personally responsible for what happened to them. Part of what they must overcome to find healing is to acknowledge that they did nothing to deserve what has happened to them. If your interaction with survivors indicates that you believe they are responsible, you will push them away from healing and towards unhealth. Questions about their conduct before, during, or after the abuse, for example, will likely communicate that you are trying to figure out why it happened and that you will blame them for their abuse if they answer. If you must ask questions, be general and don’t pry—let the survivors tell you their stories on their own terms. Research indicates that the vast majority of abuse stories are legitimate—so you can work from a position of trust without being worried about the truth of the account, especially if it is the first time you are hearing about it.

4. Don’t sweep it under the rug—be prepared to do something about it if the survivor is ready (and maybe even if they are not).

Abuse survivors, as part of the psychological effects of abuse, often doubt whether anyone cares or will believe them. Abusers steal the will of those they abuse in such a way that those who are abused do not feel powerful to advocate for themselves. After being believed, being willing to advocate for survivors, even back to them, is a powerful sign that you believe them and that the abuse is serious and should be addressed. Abusers trust that no one will believe their targets, so standing with a survivor is one way to stop the cycle of abuse. Victims are sometimes unwilling to stand up for themselves, and that may mean you will need to stand for them, especially if the abuse is ongoing. Carefully and prayerfully consider what the survivor across from you is telling you—you may have to stand in the gap to stop the abuse. Consult local authorities for next steps if you have questions, as they will likely be able to help guide you to the appropriate resources! This is especially true if the abuser is in a position of authority (including inside the church)!

Given the staggering statistics on abuse, responding well to survivors brave enough to confide in you is a powerful step in stopping abuse and opening doors for God’s healing to work in the lives of survivors!^{SR}



Mindfulness in the Christian Tradition

Mindfulness can be described as being more fully aware of your experience in the present moment in a nonjudgmental way. Mindfulness includes waking up to a sense of awareness in your surroundings, taking time to sit and listen rather than doing, and opening things up so that, in God's time and in God's way, you might be healed or restored.

Those who practice mindfulness may be able to stand back from the chaos in their lives and not react to it. When the brain is practicing mindfulness, thought and feeling patterns result in neural activities in the brain. Repeating this neural activity creates stronger connections between neurons and leads to greater blood flow and activation in particular regions of the brain. Dwelling on negative thought patterns can also affect the brain. It may not be what you think but what you do with such thoughts that actually change or strengthen neural connections in the brain, for better or for worse. The way you think and react can change your brain.

Mindfulness includes stepping back from shoulds, oughts, and other judgments. Many people who suffer from anxiety and depression are flooded by shoulds and oughts and their self-talk does not seem to come from the Lord but from their own opinions. When thoughts race through the brain, the mindful person chooses not to follow them but instead to drink in the creation of beauty around them. This form of discipline must be practiced in distressed times so that it will be available in a crisis. Such is the work of taking every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). It is not an emptying of the mind but an observing of the world from God's perspective.

Mindfulness has clear positive health benefits by reducing our stress responses. It is well known that

small amounts of stress activate the body and larger amounts make you sick. Chronic stress causes release of cortisol and other hormones which cause inflammation that can affect the whole body—increasing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancers, autoimmune disorders, Alzheimer's, arthritis, and digestive problems. Chronic pain and illness can improve with continued mindfulness practice. It does not remove the biological cause, but acts on the brain in a way that helps change the perception and experiences of pain, making quality of life better. Mindfulness also has a positive effect on all kinds of addictions. It has a calming effect on the part of the brain that affects distraction, self-centeredness and craving.

One way to practice mindfulness is with mindful walking. This means being fully present to what your body is doing. Be mindful of your breath, of how your body responds to the environment, of how your thoughts take form. Start with a brief devotional time settling on a word or phrase from Scripture. Make this your focal point as you walk. Pray and invite God's presence into your walk, asking Him to clear your mind and spirit. Feel and notice the small experiences around you. When you find your mind wandering, bring it back to the focal point you chose from the devotional time. At the end of your walk, reflect on what you noticed that calmed you, brought you joy, or connected you to God as you walked. Give thanks to God for the healing moments of your walk in a brief prayer or song before moving on to your day's responsibilities. This technique can be helpful for anything you do from your daily commute, to caring for a loved one, to cleaning your house. The key is to be fully present in the moment noticing the beauty around you and being thankful. Clearly there are physical, mental, and spiritual benefits to practicing mindfulness. SR

—Adapted from *Church Health Reader*, Summer 2018

REMEMBERING PASTOR ROD HENRY

Pastor Rodney Henry passed away on October 24, 2018, at the Denver Hospice after a long three-year period of illness. Rod is survived by his wife of 47 years, Camille Henry; three children and their spouses: Tanya and Bryan McPherson; Erik and Mandy Henry; Edward and Hannah Henry; a brother, Randy Henry; 10 grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

Pastor Rod served in the U.S. Air Force for 4 years as a Russian linguist. Upon completion of his service, Rod returned home to San Pedro, CA, where he began working at the Department Of Water & Power. Soon after, he met Camille. Rod and Camille were married in Rod's parents' home on April 2, 1971. They attended the Los Angeles Seventh Day Baptist church and were members. In the summer of 1973, they felt God's call to ministry and joined the group, *Lightbearers For Christ*. They toured the country performing evangelistic concerts and seeing many come to Christ until November of 1974. It was time to start a family and Camille was pregnant with Tanya.

On their return to San Pedro, they stayed with Rod's parents while Rod returned to the University of California at Long Beach to complete his bachelor's degree in Speech Communication in June 1976, in preparation for applying to seminary. Rod applied and was accepted at Fuller Theological Seminary and began his studies there in the fall of 1976. While at seminary, they added Erik to their family. Rod and Camille lived in student housing in Pasadena, close to the Fuller campus. Rod graduated from Fuller in June of 1979. During his second year, Rod and Camille felt God calling them to the mission field. After much prayer, they felt the field was to be in the Philippines. They wrote Rev. Leon Lawton, of the SDB Missionary Society, inquiring as to possible ministry in the Philippines. He wrote back immediately, stating that they had just had contact with a group in the Philippines who were looking for a missionary to help them grow their churches. There it was—the confirmation they needed! So, for the last 1½ years of seminary, they worked on getting prepared for the mission field while Rod completed his Master of Divinity Degree.

They left for Cebu City, the Philippines, November 1, 1979. Rod and Camille served from 1979 to 1983. They took a one year sabbatical wherein Rod returned to Fuller Seminary to complete the two-year course for a Masters of Theology in Missiology—he completed it in one year from September 1983 to May 1984. Now, it was time to return to the Philippines with the goal of setting up training for the SDBs there to continue the work. Rod's master's thesis focused on theological

education by extension. This became the basis for his return and final work with the Filipino pastors. Rod and Camille returned to Cebu City in August 1984, and remained until May 1985, when the work was done and the local leaders had taken the lead.

Rod went on to take a position at the SDB Center, where he became the Director of Outreach, then took on Director of Extension using the materials for the program he developed in the Philippines to train pastors (Theological Education by Extension ---"TEE"). He modified it and brought theological education to those who were called to ministry but had neither the time nor the resources to go to seminary. This program placed pastors in churches who had no pastors and it helped to plant new churches. In January 1988, Rod was asked to become the Director of Pastoral Services for the Council on Ministry. He accepted that position and continued the TEE training. The position of Director of Extension was eventually passed on to Rev. Russell Johnson in July 1990. Rod developed multiple programs: *More 2000*, *Pastoral Counselling*, and *Conflict Management*—all of which he brought to the churches in the U.S. He travelled extensively nationwide, teaching and ministering and helping churches who were struggling. In addition, Rod also began sending the TEE program to Africa, South America, and Serbia. He travelled extensively all over the world helping other groups to set up training in their own languages so they could provide pastoral leadership for their churches.

In 1999, Rod resigned as Director of Pastoral Services, and accepted the pastorate at the Denver SDB Church (renamed The Next Step Christian Church in 2010) where he pastored full time until 2016. Rod had mentored five young men through seminary in Denver. The final person he mentored, he also trained to be the pastor of the Denver SDB Church—Pastor Dustin Mackintosh. In 2016, Pastor Dusty took over as lead pastor, and Rod stepped down, continuing to do counselling, mentoring, and general spiritual support for many in and outside the church. In August 2018, when Pastor Rod became too ill to continue any work for the church, he resigned his position as Assistant Pastor.

Rod touched many lives, and has reaped his reward of "well done, good and faithful servant." He sits before Jesus, listening to Him as intently as he listened to Jesus in Scripture here on this earth. A memorial service was held at The Next Step Christian Church in Thornton, CO, on October 27, 2018, led by Pastor Dusty Mackintosh and Pastor Steve Osborn. SR

Ethics, Theology, and Discipline of the First American Seventh Day Baptists

by Janet Thorngate

Part 1

Fifth in a series of spinoff articles from recent research on the Newport, Rhode Island, Seventh Day Baptists¹

Their 1671 covenant pointed up the communal nature of a search for guiding principles: “seeking God’s face among ourselves for the Lord to direct us in a right way for us and our children.” It also acknowledged the dynamic nature of the search: “according to what the Lord had discovered to us or should discover to be His mind for us.” In other words, they expected God would continue to reveal new truth to them. By 1708, the purpose statement at the front of their second record book read: “Let us hear the conclusion of the matter: fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man; if ye love me, saith Christ, keep my commandments.”

The staunch adherence to moral principles of the original seven—“according to what the Lord had discovered to us...to be obedient unto”—were clearly based on the Bible and particularly the Ten Commandments. Newport Sabbatarians quickly adopted the motto of those in England: “keeping the commandments of God and the testimonies of Jesus.”

The moral, as opposed to theological, nature of the covenant was clear: “We entered into covenant with ye Lord and with one another and gave up ourselves to God and one to another to walk together in all God’s Holy Commandments and Holy Ordinances.” It was all about relationships. There was a “sense upon our hearts of great need to be watchful over one another. Did promise so to do...” The purpose of the church discipline this promise led to was “edifying and building up one another in our most holy faith.” The results were to be spiritual and visible: “for God’s glory and our souls’ good and others’ example.”

All discipline cases brought before the congregation as they were “watchful over one another” had to do with observable behavior, relationships within the church or with others. The vast majority of cases had to do with “profaning the Lord’s Sabbath,” usually laboring on the Sabbath or, as in one case, “buying wood on the Sabbath and neglecting to acknowledge your evil.” The second most common offense was “absenting oneself from assembling with the congregation.” Some offenses had to do with “differences between” one member and another, almost always resolved amicably.

¹ Sources for this article including the covenant and full church records may be found in *Baptists in Early North America: Newport, Rhode Island, Seventh Day Baptists* by Janet Thorngate (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2017), particularly “Legacy of the Newport SDB Church,” p. cvii-cxvi. The book may be ordered for \$60 from the Seventh Day Baptist Center (PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547) or from *Mercer University Press* (www.mupress.org or 501 Mercer Univ. Dr., Macon, 31207).



Council
on History

Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten
Director of Education
and History

Covenant of the Newport Seventh Day Baptist Church

After serious consideration and seeking Gods face among ourselves for the Lord to direct us in a right way for us and our children so as might be for Gods glory and our souls good and others example, we entered into Covenant with ye Lord and with one another and gave up our selves to God and one to another to walk together in all Gods Holy Commandments and Holy Ordinances according to what the Lord had discovered to us or should discover to be his mind for us to be obedient unto; with sense upon our hearts of great need to be watchful over one another. Did promise so to do, and in edifying and building up one another in our most holy faith

William Hiscox
Samuel Hubbard
Steven Mumford
Roger Baster

Tacy Hubbard
Rachel Langworthy
[Ann]Mumford

7th Day of Decemr 1671

Some included a general pattern of behavior: You have “forsaken the Sabbath and are become vain in your words and actions altogether unbecoming a person that makes a profession of the name of Christ.” Most were very specific in naming the “evil,” including “excessive drunkenness” and the few charges of “the horrid sin of adultery.” Admonition and rejection letters always included “laying before your consideration several scriptures” by which the brother or sister might be “convicted of their evil” and thus led to repentance and hoped-for restoration.

The congregation attended to each other’s temporal as well as spiritual needs, setting regular times to take collections “for the poor of this church.” At one time they sent a delegation to check on the family of Jeremiah Crandall. Messengers returned to report that he was much in debt and not in a way to clothe his family nor pay his debts: “without selling his land.” A collection was taken with amounts from each contributor entered in the records.

Rhode Island Sabbatarians were active in the civic affairs of town and colony throughout the colonial period. Most church leaders from the first pastor, William Hiscox, to the Revolutionary War pastor, William Bliss, held public office and served on boards such as those of the Redwood Library and Rhode Island College. Lay people filled many of the same or comparable roles as judges, soldiers, and governors of Rhode Island (two, one of them also a member of the Continental Congress). At least four of the African American members were active in the Free African Union Society, two as long-term officers and one as teacher in the first African school. According to one count, “Fifty different Seventh Day Baptists served in the Colonial Assembly of Rhode Island prior to 1776, serving a total of one hundred ninety-one years.”

Church records reveal little of the civic activity noted above. Always conscious of the Rhode Island legacy of religious freedom and the separation of church and state, Rhode Island Sabbatarians championed those principles on behalf of Connecticut Seventh Day Baptist and Rogerene brethren from New London in the 1670s to Bristol in the 1780s. In both cases the main issue was the religious tax levied to support the standing order church. As Henry Clarke observed, Seventh Day Baptists were “good citizens, by habits of industry, and bearing their part in public burdens of the States, supporting laws (unless human laws interfered with God’s divine laws).”^[SR]

Part 2, continued next month...

Housekeeper reuses “Das Boot” tarp for village’s summer camps

The Good News Seventh Day Baptist Church, Raleigh-Durham, NC

Our small fellowship is home to an amazing woman—and I want to share her story with you.

Donna Hudson was raised in a Seventh Day Baptist family and community in a remote village in Guyana. Several years ago she, with her husband and children, immigrated to the United States in order to have a better educational opportunity for the children, as well as medical care.

Donna is employed as a housekeeper for one of the resident halls on Duke University campus. As background: Duke University is a highly competitive school in sports—particularly basketball. Each year, during the basketball season, the students erect a shanty town on campus—giant tarp tents where they gather to root their team to victory.

Donna saw those tarps as an opportunity for ministry in her home village in Guyana. She was bold enough to ask one of the founders of the “Das Boot” shanty town at Duke University if she could have the tarps. She explained that tarps like that are so expensive in Guyana—and they would be of great use in the summertime for camps and vacation Bible school. To her delight, the school agreed!

For more information on this, there is a Duke newspaper article written about Donna (www.dukechronicle.com—see the article dated Monday, March 20, 2017).

Donna and some her family return to her village each summer. She prepares well in advance for her trip, sending the donated tarps and many supplies she purchases with her own funds in barrels to her village. Then, she is active in the total ministry programs, as well (camps and VBS).

We have been so encouraged through Donna in our fellowship, that we’re hoping this will be our outreach focus. Donna hopes that there will be a day that someone from our Missionary Society will accompany her in the summer: in her words, “To see what an amazing blessing these children and people are!”



By Debbie Rod and Valerie Heath
The Good News
Seventh Day Baptist Church
goodnewssdbchurch@gmail.com

Sierra Leone Mission Trip 2018

By David Johnson
Sabbath Chapel Branch
of Metropolitan Atlanta SDB Church

Last year when Clinton Brown and I went to Sierra Leone, we found a group of believers in Jesus Christ who were devoted to worshipping our Lord and Savior in Spirit and truth. The Seventh Day Baptists there were an inspiration to me in their worship and strategy for reaching the lost.

There was the beginning of the structure with four walls. After learning that this was the beginning of a church building and that the Seventh Day Baptists in Sierra Leone were failing to meet the labor law requirements for pastors' salaries, a plan was devised to take care of both issues. Sabbath Chapel agreed to pay the pastors the minimum salary if they agreed to donate all or a portion of their salary to the completion of the building that had already begun. Nineteen months later, Garfield Miller and I went to Sierra Leone to dedicate the building to the Lord and see the work the Lord is doing through the efforts of the Sierra Leone Seventh Day Baptists. What we found was that each church had grown in number of members and the number of SDB churches had grown from five to at least thirteen.

The church building is not quite finished but is functional as is. The remaining work is to cover the floor with tile and put in one more gutter. There were 300 who attended the dedication service and Sabbath worship, two pastors were ordained, and 17 believers baptized. God has blessed the Sierra Leone Seventh Day Baptists and given them a strategy for reaching the lost.

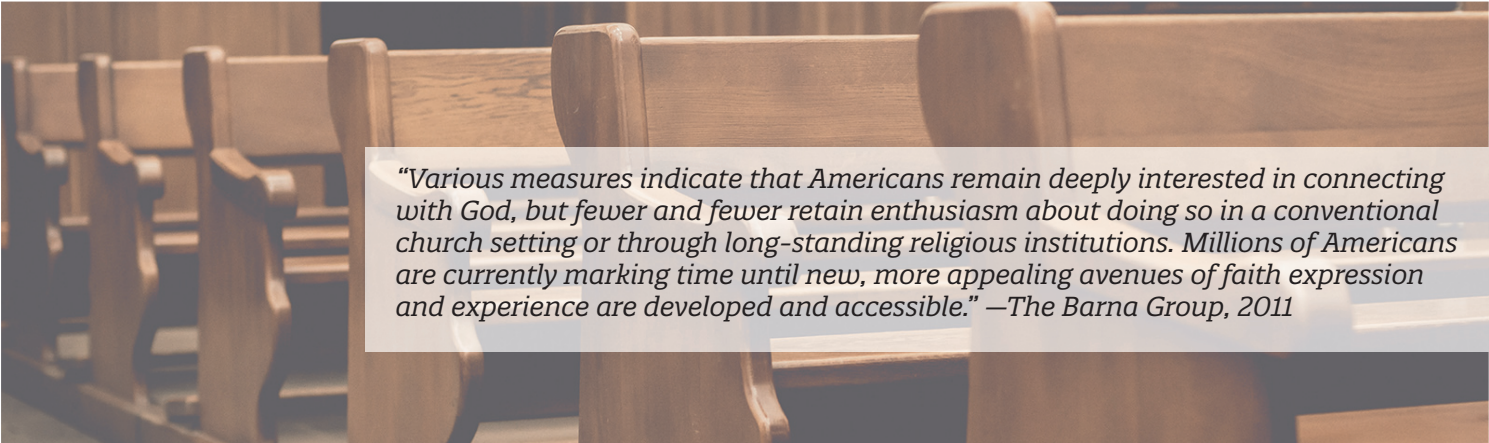
Pastor Francis Mattia, the Sierra Leone SDB Conference President, has initiated the strategy of going into the isolated areas and planting churches and schools which meet in the church buildings until the schools can build their own structures. Most of the teachers are SDBs who volunteer to teach the children reading, writing, arithmetic, and the Bible. I witnessed evidence that the students were in fact learning the Bible. Once the schools are established and have their own buildings and qualified teachers, the government can take them over and pay the teachers, with the stipulation that SDBs have oversight over the hiring of the teachers, presenting a rare opportunity for Seventh Day Baptists to reach the lost souls of Sierra Leone. In two of the villages visited, local citizens have donated their land to the SDB Conference for the purpose of building schools. In one of those villages the women were celebrating the coming of the first white person to their village. With the village being so remote, I asked Pastor Francis Mattia, "Is this the end of the trail?" He said, "No, there are more villages down the trail. We are going there next." Wow! Jesus said, "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). The Seventh Day Baptists of Sierra Leone have a strategy for successfully accomplishing this mission. Let us help them all we can. SR

The Scripture is from the King James Version which is Public Domain.



FOCUS on
Missions

Clinton R. Brown
Executive Director



“Various measures indicate that Americans remain deeply interested in connecting with God, but fewer and fewer retain enthusiasm about doing so in a conventional church setting or through long-standing religious institutions. Millions of Americans are currently marking time until new, more appealing avenues of faith expression and experience are developed and accessible.” —The Barna Group, 2011

WHERE ARE ALL THE PEOPLE ?

More and more the question asked in a church, from the pulpit to the pews, is “where are all the people?” Remember the old nursery rhyme/finger game that goes, “*Here is the church, here is the steeple, look inside and see all the people?*” These days the last line would be more akin to “*where are all the people?*” There are many reasons why the good ole church weekly attendance rate is down and I’m sure there are whole books devoted to puzzling out the question of the empty pews—but that doesn’t change the fact that they are empty. Even Christians are unenthusiastic about conventional church settings. According to the Barna group, there is interest in connecting with God but religious institutions are not where people are seeking to make this connection. Again, there are a variety of reasons for this.

With the trend leaning away from a conventional religious service and the general indifference to regular church attendance pervading society, what do we as Christians do? I believe it is important for the individual to attend church. First of all, existing Christians need to make involvement in their local church a priority. Yes, there are Sabbaths that attending service isn’t going to be feasible, but making it a priority means that if there is a way, you’ll be there. We have to exercise self-discipline in this area and be willing to make the spiritual commitment.

“One of the keys to understanding where we are headed,” explained George Barna, “is how willing people are to engage in acts of self-discipline. We see such restraint being forced on people economically. We are not seeing evidence of such discipline in areas such as moral values or spiritual commitment.”

Second, we have to realize we aren’t going to convince people they need to go to church by singing a few hymns and sitting in a service for an hour every week. People who aren’t attending church already typically won’t just wander in to service. We can no longer be passive about talking nicely to the stranger who shows up at church one day and think that’s good enough.

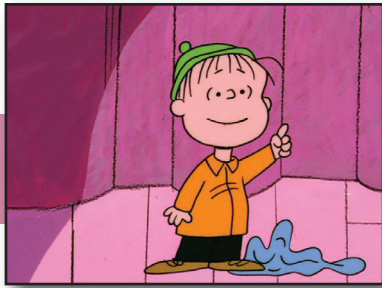
Involvement in the community as a church body—truly connecting with people outside your own membership where they are, instead of expecting them to come to you—is the great commission. Jesus modeled this for us time and time again throughout the New Testament. He met people where they were, even the unclean and uncouth, and He didn’t just speak to them, He provided for their needs because it is extremely difficult to recognize spiritual needs if more basic needs are not met. Yes, Jesus did a fair amount of preaching, but most of His stories center around Him at work in the community. So in order to truly follow Him we need to do the same. But we don’t have to do it alone; we have the opportunity to bring our church along with us. We don’t need to serve our community by ourselves and single handedly fix the world. Now for some ideas...Bueller?!

For the next year I hope to bring you a variety of ideas from SDB churches across the country focusing on what they are doing to bring their churches into the community. It’s time to share ideas and go outside the walls of our church buildings to draw people to Christ. [SR](#)



Women’s
Society

By Katrina Goodrich



Christ in the Comics

Lately I have been very intrigued by the *Peanuts* comics and their background with Christ; more importantly, the life of their creator, Charles M. Schulz. It is something I personally have overlooked but have recently rediscovered through my trips to Knott's Berry Farm. Here we have a famous author who uses his platform to spread the word of God. I have been doing a deep dive of personal research on them and their history, which led me to the idea of writing a series of articles about the research I have found.

In an article, "The Spirituality of Snoopy," Jonathan Merritt records that more than 560 comic strips include a type of religious reference. I felt in order to kick off this miniseries of mine I should introduce you to some of the more famous/my favorite Christ-related Charlie Brown quotes.

The most famous to remember is Linus' monologue in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" where he quotes Luke chapter 2, verses 8 through 14: *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this [shall be] a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'"*

Next is a comic strip of Linus and Lucy, who are brother and sister, and are looking out the window as it is raining outside:

Lucy: "Boy, look at it rain...what if it floods the whole world?"

Linus: "It will never do that..In the ninth chapter of Genesis God promised Noah that would never happen again, and the sign of the promise is the rainbow..."

Lucy: "You've taken a great load off my mind..."

Linus: "Sound theology has a way of doing that."

Another is Linus approaching Lucy while she is jumping rope and ignoring him:

Linus: "Here's something I'll bet you didn't know."

Lucy continues to jump rope.

Linus: "The Bible contains 3,566,480 Letters and 773,893 words."

Lucy continues to jump rope.

Linus: "You're just not interested in theology are you?"

A photo I found from a comic strip: Peppermint Patty and Charlie Brown are leaning against a tree. Patty asks Charlie, "Tell me what love is, Chuck." Charlie Brown responds, "A man named Jesus."

In the series, Lucy has a psychiatrist booth where she offers help for five cents. In one of the comic strips, Lucy says to Charlie Brown, *"I can't help thinking that this would be a better world if everyone would listen to God,"* which is honestly an amazing quote and a very true statement.

Linus is pretty popular for his theological references, and is often the one found to be quoting the Bible. In one comic strip it is Linus passionately yelling a scripture, which I found pretty funny: *Linus: "The path of the righteous man is beset on all sides by the inequities of the selfish and the tyranny of evil men...upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger those who would attempt to poison and destroy my brothers...my name is the Lord when I lay my vengeance upon thee!"*

Charlie Brown: "Is Linus still talking about Christmas?"


Lucy: "Is he waving a pistol?"

Then we come across Charlie Brown, in his bed at night thinking to himself, contemplating *"How would we feel if someone never talked to us till they wanted something? God has feelings, too."* This is something we often overlook—we tend to not go to God unless we are in trouble (which honestly, a sucky thing to do). We should talk to God every day and all the time!

Finally, the last comic that popped out to me that I will share this time is a comic between Franklin and Linus. Even though this is not a direct quote of anything theological, it shows the kindness of the greatest commandment, to love your neighbor greater than yourself.

Franklin: "Hi...I'm Franklin."

Linus: "I'm very glad to know you."

There are so many comics of Charlie Brown that are worth taking the time to read, but then we'd never leave if I were to quote them all. I urge you to look up some of the Christ-related comic strips because they sure made me smile. Lastly, I thank you for making it this far and letting my research nerd have a place to write what I have found. Until next time. *Wink, Wink* 



Young Adult

By Sarina Villalpando

Maranatha Community
Church, Colton, CA



MULTIPLY 2018 Review

SDBs gathered in Colorado Springs to learn about “Bold Ministry in Crazy Times” during the 4th annual MULTIPLY Church Development Conference.

Thirty-five SDBs from many different churches joined together Thursday, October 18, 2018, with a pre-conference event sponsored by Vision Trust International. On Thursday evening, Pastor Carl Greene led the group through guided prayer intended for us to stop and listen to what God is doing and how He is doing it. Director of Education & History, Nick Kersten, then presented what it looks like to share and live faith during crazy times.

On Friday, October 19, the group gathered at Vanguard Church (home to our friend, Alan Briggs), 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.

For worship on Sabbath, the group joined SpringsLife Church for their gathered worship service. Pastor JR Shick delivered a meaningful and impactful sermon on the theme for the weekend. Pastor Steve Osborn, Wayne Moore, and Pastor Carl Greene completed our conference by sharing about the boldness we must take to be faithful to God in the ministries that He has given us and that He is calling us to.

One attender commented, “MULTIPLY is a spirit-filled conference that continues to deepen my relationship with Christ and embolden me to turn my world upside down.” Another said, “If you are not getting fed, get in the kitchen.”

Make your plans to come to MULTIPLY 2019, October 17-19 in Colorado Springs. Don’t miss out on an opportunity to get in the kitchen! [SR](#)

PASTOR SEARCH

The following SDB churches or groups are looking for pastoral leadership. Please keep them in prayer as they search for their churches’ more preferable future.

Middle Island SDB Church (New Milton, WV)
 First SDB Church of Hebron (Coudersport, PA)
 Covenant SDB Fellowship (Hungry Horse, MT)
 Remembrance SDB Church (Ft. Worth, TX)

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

CRM Review

Good news on the Conference database! Our CRM has current information on individual SDBs, the churches, and the many new contacts who want to know more about us. We’ve tweaked the database to fit our ministry needs, done some cleanup and designed processes to keep it running efficiently. A user manual has been created and training sessions are underway to help Conference staff take advantage of all it can do.

Now we can get a complete picture of all communication with a new contact. We can produce the annual *Directory of Churches* for the Yearbook from CRM data. We can help people planting churches stay connected and make progress. We can better encourage and network Sabbath-keepers who are far from a local church. Eventually, we can analyze our data to uncover the traits of thriving or struggling churches.

It is thanks to Patty Petersen that this has happened. To support the work of Patty Petersen as our missionary for the Conference, make checks payable to the sponsoring church: SDB Church of Boulder, 6710 Arapahoe Rd, Boulder, CO 80303. You can also designate a gift through the General Conference. You can help her ministry continue among SDBs as full time through 2019 with your generous support! [SR](#)



Church
 Development &
 Pastoral Services

By John J. Pethtel
 Director





What Does Your Charitable Giving Say About You?

So...we have a new tax law once again as we start to think about our 2018 taxes and our charitable giving. "The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act" that was signed into law in the last days of 2017 did not, contrary to rumors, take away the deduction for gifts made to nonprofit charities. However, the law's effect will be much the same. The reason is the near doubling of the standard deduction that is part of the new law—and it can affect your tax return for April 2019.

Under the previously existing law, the standard deduction (the amount by which taxpayers are allowed to reduce the adjusted gross income declared on their income tax return) for 2018 would have been \$6,500 for single taxpayers and married taxpayers filing separately, and \$13,000 for married taxpayers filing jointly. But under the new law, the standard deduction for single taxpayers and married taxpayers filing separately will rise to \$12,000 and the standard deduction for married taxpayers filing jointly will go up to \$24,000!

For many U.S. taxpayers, this increase means that it will become more financially advantageous to simply take the standard deduction than to itemize deductions on their federal income taxes. And donations to churches and charities are among the deductions that taxpayers can itemize.

Of course, not everyone who donates to charity does so in order to gain a tax deduction. And that is a good thing. However, enough people are moved by this incentive (a tax deduction) that there is a predicted significant decline (in the tens of billions) expected in the total amount of charitable giving.

This brings me to this question: "What will or does your charitable giving in 2018 look like compared to previous years?"

The money will talk about what kind of people we are. Particularly, how we give money away. Charitable giving is as close as we can get to true behavior. You are not obligated to give (and lots of people

don't). Primarily because you are not directly getting in return anything you need to live: like food or transportation or housing. But consider the other luxuries we take for granted like vacations, cell phones, new cars, a summer home, excessive screened televisions, or premium cable channels.

You get nothing out of giving except the satisfaction of your charity. And so, charitable giving displays something about a person's soul. It shows where your heart really is.

We get bombarded every day in the mail, internet, and phone with what seem to be worthy causes. But why did so many, so-called, worthy causes start coming out of nowhere? The answer is that they followed the money. That's right...they knew that most of the world's finances and givers were located in North America. So people developed what they deemed was a worthy cause, received their 501c3, and proceeded to tug at our hearts and our pockets. The problem with this is, a lot of them are **not worthy causes** and they are more likely a place to make a living. Who is hurt by these pseudo-charitable causes? Ministry!

Every pastor I've talked to recently reports a noticeable decrease in giving in their church over the past year. Whether the decline is a result of the new tax laws or not, who cares? Down is down.

Many of our small-church pastors who used to be supported through their congregations are seeking other employment outside the church to make ends meet. Other churches are looking nervously to their last offering of the month, just hoping to get all the bills paid. I'm sure there are churches that are thriving—or at least making their budget work. It is time to tell the stories of those that aren't and see if we can all help in the process.

How's your church faring? How's your money and charitable giving talking back to you? [SR](#)



By Rob Appel
Executive Director



Abba

*Isn't it amazing,
That a being who has molded the Earth,
Who has created the stars and the moon.*

*The same thing created the dunes,
the sand and the crashing waves,
The same being who has created the atom
and molded every particle.*

*The being who knows every step you take,
He knows how many cells are in you on your body,
He knows your favorite food, places and movie,
He knows what you dream about at night,
He knows your mistakes and regrets,
And He chose to love us
I call Him Abba, Father, my God.*



THE BEACON

By Xander Post
Shiloh SDB Church
Shiloh, NJ

BIRTH

Veale – A son, Andrew William Veale, was born on December 2, 2018, to A.J. and Jessica (Chroniger) Veale, members of the Shiloh SDB Church, NJ.

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Circle of Life in Shiloh



Rich, Kate & Anna

“Keep those babies coming.” I like to say to young, Christian, married couples, “because the world needs more Christians.” Well, I can’t really take credit for what happened in the Shiloh area...only God can work the miracles we celebrated on October 20, 2018. On that date, FIVE young married couples brought their babies to church for dedication: Rich and Kate Bond with Anna Lee; Tyler and Jenn Chroniger with Nolan; Dave and Courtney Mattus with Molly; Kyle and Julie Uhland with Kylie; and Travis and Emmily Uhland with Avery.

Assistant Pastor Phil Lawton opened the worship service with devotional comments about “New Life,” which is not limited to infants. The Ladies’ Chorus then sang *How Beautiful*.



Courtney, Dave, Molly, David & Jacob

Pastor Don Chroniger called the families to the front of the sanctuary, where he talked about parents’ unconditional love being a reflection of God’s love for us. He said this love is “caught, not taught.” (Pastor Don also commented that, having served in Shiloh for 29 years, he is the only pastor most of the parents could remember; “such is the Circle of Life.”)

As he blessed each child individually, Don invited the extended families to stand, saying “Some of you will be standing a l...o...n...g time,” since Kylie, Avery and Molly share one set of grandparents and great-grandparents.



Julie, Kyle & Kylie

“May the Lord bless you and keep you; may He make His face to shine upon you...and give you His Peace,” he told each infant as he handed the parents a certificate, Baby’s First Bible, and a white flower signifying purity. Pastor Don closed this portion of the service by praying for the extended families and the church family to support and encourage these new parents in raising their children to follow Jesus. In addition to numerous grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins to the infants, there were at least ten great-grandparents present.

But wait! *Encore! Encore!* On November 10, Colin and Melissa Scull brought Louise Emilee for dedication (because Grandma Scull had been attending “Multiply Conference” on October 20).

Other forerunners in the “Circle of Life” rest in the plot behind the church under stones reading “UHLAND,” “SHEPPARD,” “SCULL,” “DICKINSON,” “DAVIS,” and “BOND.” (“CHRONIGER” can wait!)

As I left the sanctuary on both occasions, I saw evidence that we are EXPECTING the “Circle of Life” to continue in the coming months as God sends even more New Life to His families!



Emmily, Travis & Avery



Tyler, Brayden, Jenn & Nolan



Colin, Melissa & Louise

—Donna S. Bond

Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices

“Here on earth you will have
many trials and sorrows.
But take heart, because
I have overcome the world.”

—John 16:33

