

Sabbath Recorder

April 2020
A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

The Love of God

The Love of God

And I am convinced that nothing
can ever separate us from God's love.

Neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons,
neither our fears for today
nor our worries about tomorrow—
not even the powers of hell
can separate us from God's love.

No power in the sky above
or in the earth below—
indeed, nothing in all creation
will ever be able to separate us
from the love of God
that is revealed in
Christ Jesus our Lord.

—Romans 8:38-39

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Sabbath Recorder

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

April 2020

Volume 242, No. 4

Whole No. 7,067



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The Sabbath Recorder (ISSN 0036-214X) (USPS 474460) is published monthly (combined July and August) by the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference's Tract and Communication Council, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678. This publication is distributed at no cost to members and friends of Seventh Day Baptist churches and is made possible by donations from its readers. Periodicals postage paid at Janesville, WI, and additional offices.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to *The Sabbath Recorder*, 3120 Kennedy Road, PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678

This is the 175th year of publication for *The Sabbath Recorder*. First issue published June 13, 1844.



Member of the Associated Church Press.

Sabbath Recorder does not necessarily endorse signed articles.

WRITERS:

Please email your manuscript as a Word document to the Editor at sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org.

Unsolicited manuscripts are welcomed; however, they will be considered on a space available basis.

No remuneration is given for any article that appears in this publication.

Paid advertising is not accepted.

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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The Love of Good Food

By Pastor Scott Hausrath

When friends come over to my place to watch football or a film, we always put some snacks and bowls onto the kitchen table. Each of us uses a bowl to hold our chips, crackers, cookies, and whatever other wonderful carbs we're enjoying that day.

Some of the bowls on the table are disposable, so they get tossed into the trash when people go home. Some, however, are durable bowls so they go back into the kitchen cabinets after being washed. My two favorite durable bowls are the ones that my sister gave me when she was taking a pottery class 23 years ago. On the bottom of each bowl Lynn timer carved her initials and the date she made it.

Both of these bowls are precious to me—because they were made by the hands of someone I love, someone who herself is precious to me. These gorgeous pieces of pottery connect me with my sister.

A while ago someone accidentally tossed into the trash one of my store-bought durable bowls. While I was a little peeved about this, it was no big deal. I simply retrieved it from the wastebasket and washed it. What if, however, someone had thrown into the trash one of the bowls my sister had made? What would be my reaction to that?

Sometimes we treat people in ways that make them feel like trash. For whatever reason, we fail to recognize how much each human being is actually worth. God, however, never does this because He is omniscient. Because He knows the truth about each of us, He deeply loves each of us.

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Yes, part of our truth is not pretty, because each of us has done some ugly things. God would be fully justified in damning us to hell because of our behavior. Something led Him, however, to sacrifice His only Son in order to rescue us from damnation. Scripture calls this the love of God. Paul says in Ephesians 2:4-5, “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

What is it about God that enables Him to love us so profoundly and unconditionally? My best guess is that, because God made each of us with His own hands, and because He made us in His own image, He fully comprehends how valuable we are even if our behavior has tarnished us. In Psalm 139:13-14, David reminds us of how precious we truly are: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

When God looks at us, He sees His fingerprints all over us. His image permeates our being. He sees Himself in us. How could He, therefore, treat us with anything else but love? It’s His intimate knowledge of us that makes it impossible for God to toss us into the trash.

How can we, in our daily living, love each other the way God loves us? Perhaps it begins with our knowledge of ourselves, a Biblical understanding of what a human being actually is. In 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 Paul says, “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are no longer the people we once were. We can now look at the world, including its people, not from a worldly perspective, but from a godly perspective. Seeing the image of God in people helps us to love them the way God loves them. SR



Bringing Them Back

By Rev. Charles R. Meathrell

Recently, the associate pastor at our church in South Carolina had an emergency and was unable to preach as had been planned. Because I hadn't prepared a sermon, we found ourselves preparing to enjoy a sermon which would be as much a surprise to me as to them. It's not all that long ago that a situation like that might have set my teeth on edge—but I've certainly learned to trust that the King will be honored whatever. I've learned that—happily—I'm not all that important in the process.

I found myself turning to Jeremiah as I often do in my quiet time. Jeremiah is a fantastic antihero for us. We like the Samsons and other mighty men, but often it is the rejected (like, ahem, *Jesus*) that bring the most important and powerful message. In Jeremiah, we have an unpopular man saying unpopular things. You have guys like Shemaiah taking the chaos of exile as an opportunity to take power in the temple; he proclaimed that the exile would be brief and that they'd return home quickly. Jeremiah was telling them to build houses, get married, and have their children get married. You can imagine, if you put yourself in the position of the frightened and depressed Israelites, that Shemaiah's message was what they so badly wanted to be true. We all have that in our experience. You would much rather have the words in your ear that comfort your flesh and ease your anxieties. Life is hard, man, and it is too often our own doing.

My favorite part in Jeremiah is chapter 29. People throw around the 11th verse with far too much frivolity—which in some ways can apply to us, too. After all this time of doom and gloom and destruction and punishment, there was, at last, a “but.” (I love this part.) He told them that, even though it was to be a long way off, he *would absolutely bring them back*. It was never about eternal separation or unforgiveness. It was always about bringing them back. (Zing!)

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*Everyone who does not know the Savior has a kind of mortal sickness
for which we have the true cure.*

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Then, in the 31st chapter, God says:

Thus says the LORD:

“The people who survived the sword
found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,

³ the LORD appeared to him from far away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

⁴ Again I will build you, and you shall be built,
O virgin Israel!

Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines
and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.

⁵ Again you shall plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria;
the planters shall plant
and shall enjoy the fruit.

⁶ For there shall be a day when watchmen will call
in the hill country of Ephraim:
‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion,
to the LORD our God.’”¹

I so love that after all the horrible ways that Israel/Judah/
the others shamed and rejected God, He was still saying
that “I have loved you with an everlasting love” and “I
have continued My faithfulness to you.”² There’s a theme
here that gets to me. It’s very much the way I love my own
children; so many times, I have said to one or all of them,
“I love you too much to allow you to get by with this.” Re-
member that line: “those whom he loves, he disciplines.”³

All the pain and adversity—going back and back. It came
down to His mission to redeem and restore the ones He
loves. He has gone to great lengths again and again. He
allowed them to wander in the desert. He allowed them
to be disciplined in Babylon and Persia.

Then, after ages and ages of the failure/redemption cycle,
the surprise climax to the story: Jesus. The Savior who
took our discipline. The King and Lord who took on lowly
human flesh and died the death of a criminal, though He,
Himself was innocent. He was and is the most innocent
creature to have ever walked the earth. He died for me.
He died for you.

Now what?

There’s a point here about perspective. If you truly know
who you are—and you truly know who He is—there must
be a response in order. I can speak for myself here. I am a

broken man. I struggle every day. I get up and walk into a
world full of my every earthly desire and my flesh cries
out for that. I also know who He is. He is flawless in every
respect. He died to pay a bill He didn’t owe. *He saved me
from myself.*

Therefore I must have a perspective about the world
around me that flows from this core idea. I know what
I’ve done. I know that Jesus saved me. I *must* respond to
the people around me as a redeemed person, not as a
“better” person, just a redeemed one. The addict down
the street or the prostitutes in the bad side of town—I’m
not better than those people; I just know someone that
they don’t. Now what? I’ll tell you. If you know Jesus,
you know that it was to those people that He so often
gravitated. He went there to love them even though all
civilization around them had cast them off. He reached
out to the woman at the well and even His own disciples
were shocked. She needed that living water as badly as
we do.

These people (not just societal outcasts, but everyone
who does not know the Savior) have a kind of mortal
sickness for which we have the true cure. Now what?—
how *dare* we not share it? Scripture is clear for us: you
cannot hate your fellow man and love Jesus at the same
time. If you’re going to love them, you’re going to have
to go to them. No more of this sitting in our comfortable
pews and then going home for the rest of the week.

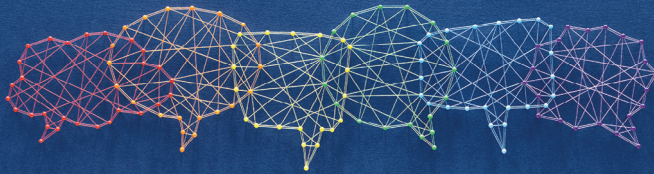
If you’re going to love Jesus you’re going to need to love
His children—all of them: the murderers and the stock
brokers and the cops and the Klansmen. You don’t have
to love what they do—but you’re going to love *them*.

You know—when those moments come along and I need
to think on my feet, so to speak, I’ve actually learned to
trust the Spirit. His message on the day Pastor Martin
was suddenly gone was truly not just for the few who
were able to make it to church on that Sabbath. It was
absolutely for me too. My calling as a pastor is, in small
part, to preach to people who already love the King. Far
more importantly, though, my calling as a Christian is
go out and love each and every one of them with the
love of Christ. May it be my honor to do so for the rest
of my life. SR

¹ Jeremiah 31:2-6 ESV

¹ Jeremiah 31:3 ESV

¹ Hebrews 12:6 ESV



PULSE

By Frank Mazza

I am not a fan of social media. I do not have a Facebook account, no SnapChat, no Instagram. There was a time not too long ago that I held a Twitter account. Twitter gives users the ability to create a profile with their actual name and face; or they remain anonymous with a clever “handle” or username. Anonymity is nice if you don’t want any personal information leaked out to the masses; but there are many people who use this veil of separation between themselves and their online persona for personal benefit. Every tweet from a celebrity, athlete, politician or well-known pastor is followed by comments. Thousands of comments. Most are less than cordial. In fact, they are downright mean.

I eventually deleted my Twitter account because I got tired of reading through the endless snarky, angry, self-righteous comments behind even the most uplifting observation or thought. I don’t write this to try and convince anyone that all social media is evil...it’s not. I am not trying to make you feel guilty if you’ve ever hastily posted an emotionally-charged response to someone you don’t agree with. Instead, I write this to encourage people to consider how this type of content might shape how we react to situations in real life.

Recently as part of our focus on church health at Shiloh, our Sabbath School class studied Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Part of the Pulse curriculum is to evaluate how we set expectations and hold each other accountable as believers. What better place to start than to study the ultimate lesson in relationships! One lesson that stuck out to me was the week we studied Matthew 7. Specifically, the first five verses with the title “Jesus Teaches About Criticizing Others.” Here, Jesus tells us that judgment is imminent. The measure we use against others will be applied back to us (v. 2). Are you quick to dismiss other people’s point of view? Do you find yourself becoming quickly frustrated when things don’t go your way? The

Your measuring stick should not be in “upvotes” or “likes” but rather how effectively you can live the Gospel through word and deed.

next verses remind us that personal reflection is essential before attempting to correct someone else. *“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”*

Perhaps you don’t struggle with social media. Sometimes stress from work, home, or family can push us to living with unresolved frustration. It can be hard to feel valued when it seems no one wants to listen...whether that may be online or in-house. Allow me to encourage you that, while you may not always feel adequate or appreciated, you are most certainly loved by One who is greater than any anonymous tweeter could dream of! Your measuring stick should not be in “upvotes” or “likes”—but rather how effectively you can live the Gospel through word and deed.

Getting back to the Sabbath School lesson, we continued to read and study the Sermon on the Mount. We concluded that God’s expectation for us is love. Not the kind of conditional love that the world offers, but rather pure unconditional love that can only be explained by means of grace. Paul writes in Romans 5: *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* We don’t deserve it. We didn’t earn it. God gave it to us anyway.

As you go through your day, you may encounter miserable people. Perhaps online, perhaps at work, or even in your own home. You yourself may even be struggling with finding joy and happiness. Remember to continually keep the joy of your salvation at the front of your mind and take the time to celebrate what God has blessed you with! [SR](#)



The Love of God

By Pastor Johnmark Camenga

Have you ever been more concerned with being right than with showing love? I know. Right out of the gate, that question may feel a bit like a cheese grater on your knuckles. If it hits you that way, great. If not, I suggest you read again and again until it does hit you that way.

Have you ever been more concerned with being right than with showing love?

Now that we've let it linger a little while, allow me to answer that question for you. Yes. Yes, you have been more concerned with being right than with showing love. Yes. Yes, you do it all of the time. You do it in your interactions with strangers while you're driving your car, you do it in your interactions with "friends" on line, and you do it with your family. In fact, the only times you haven't acted that way have been with great effort and discipline and only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Truth matters. Agreed?

Having the right information matters. Yes?

But none of it will matter to someone else if they think all you care about is being right.

In 1 Timothy 1:5, Paul says that our goal as followers of Jesus is to love with a love "that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." Certainly there is information that goes into the process of developing purity, goodness, and sincerity—the Gospel is, in part, the transmission of information. But that *information* is not what brings about *transformation*. It simply helps us see our need for change. Thus, love.

What happens when this love (1 Timothy 1:5) is not our goal? Paul continues in verses 6 and 7 to say that when people take their eyes off of that goal they wander "away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions." Simply put, when showing love isn't the goal, being right is.

Being an evangelist is not *only* about having the right information. Being a follower of Jesus is not *only* about knowing the truth of the scriptures. Being an effective minister of the Gospel is not *only* about your ability to recite the words of Jesus and Paul and John.

Yes, you must know what you are talking about, but when you begin trusting *what* you know you begin to lose sight of *who* you know, you know? Yes, you must know *what* you are talking about, but when you begin trusting *what* you know you begin to lose sight of that which propels you into ministry.

In 1 Corinthians 13, often referred to as the love chapter, this implicit danger is laid out. Compressing verses 1 through 3 into a few lines, this is what we see: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels...if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...if I have all faith and give away all I have and deliver my body up as a sacrifice...if I have all of this but I do not have love...I am just making noise, I *am* nothing, and I *gain* nothing."

God is love... you are loved by God

Love is an outwardly-focused thing. It has to be. We understand that God is love and that this love is what is at the heart of the work of creation and salvation. So, if love is God looking outside of Himself and sharing Himself with those who do not deserve it, certainly love must also be us looking outside of ourselves and sharing ourselves with those who God puts in our path.

What are some of the attributes of God that theologians like to talk about? Omnipotence? Sure. Omniscience? Okay. There are others, but those are the big two. And what do they mean? All-powerful and all-knowing. These are the big two and these are accurate, for sure, but let's do a little experiment with them, shall we?

How does this sound?

For God was so powerful that He gave His only Son...no.

For God was so knowledgeable that He gave His only Son...nope.

Neither of these is the way Jesus chose to convey the motivation for God's work of salvation. Instead, Jesus said, "For God so *loved* the world that He gave His only Son." Yes, God has all knowledge and all power, but those things, in and of themselves, do not propel the act of salvation. Yes, God has all the knowledge and all the power, but there is nothing about those characteristics that would either motivate or compel acts of creation or salvation. In other words, if God was omnipotent and omniscient but not all-loving, there likely would not be a universe or a Milky Way or an earth or a you or a me.

It is only the love of God that creates and only the love of God that saves. In order for God to have accomplished these two things He also had to be omnipotent and omniscient, but these two characteristics were motivated to create and save by that which was primary about God's character: His love.

What is primary about your character? As a Christian, as a believer in the Bible, as a church-attending member of the body of Christ, what is your primary motivation? Again, I raise this question in hopes that it is an irritant. I am a firm believer that when we read the Scriptures—when we truly open our heart and minds to what the Scriptures have to say—we cannot help but feel assaulted by the words and the Spirit behind them. Look at your life, at your words, at your actions, and at your feelings. Look at these things and ask yourself, "Am I more concerned with being right than with showing love?" Don't lie to yourself.

This is not a call to love for the sake of compassion. And this is not a call to love at the expense of truth. No, rather than those things, this is a call to compassion and truth-telling motivated by the love of God. Share the Gospel of Jesus with all of its challenges and complexities. Confront situations where lies have supplanted the Word of God. Speak into societal concerns and issues of culture that run contrary to revealed truth. Do all of these things, but do not do them simply because they are true or because you are right or because others are wrong—do all of these things for the same reason God created and saved. Do them because God is love, because you are loved by God, and because that love motivates everything you say, do, and feel (1 John 4:19).

Why? Because none of it will matter to someone else if they think all you care about is being right. SR

For the Love...

"...And [Jesus] answered them, 'O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.'"
—Mark 9:19 (ESV)



What does it mean to have selfless love for one another as Christ does for us?

I suspect if you asked the question of most Seventh Day Baptists you would get a variety of answers, but certain themes would repeat. There is a tendency, in our descriptions of God's love for us, to lean to the accepting and comforting side of God's love—and there are good Biblical reasons to think that these are important aspects of His love for us. But they are not the totality of God's love for us. All of us need to be received by God and ministered to by the Holy Spirit. We all can seek comfort and peace in God through Christ and His love.

There are other more difficult, more uncomfortable parts of God's love which we must not ignore, especially as it relates to showing love to one another inside our local churches and Conference. Stated simply, those elements of love are patience and discipline. When we want to show God's love to one another, we must desire and attempt to show all of God's love in our relationships. The comfort we sometimes desire from our brothers and sisters may require patience and discipline from us to deliver, and vice versa.

When God's love is operational in us, it manifests as comfort and care for our brothers and sisters in both proclamation and demonstration. In other words, we will both speak our love and act out our love. Proclamation without demonstration is empty. Demonstration without proclamation is nondescript. The love shown by Jesus throughout the Gospels includes elements of proclamation and demonstration, not only in the showing of care

and comfort in the ways which are most reassuring for us, but also in these areas of patience and discipline.

When Jesus was traveling with His disciples shortly after the Transfiguration, three of the Gospel writers next tell the story of a young man healed from a demonization (Matthew 17:14-20, Mark 9:14-29, and Luke 9:37-43). In all three stories, the parents who bring the young man to Jesus first unhelpfully encounter the disciples who do not aid in bringing the young man freedom—and so Jesus responds to His disciples and those around with the quote above (v. 19 and parallels). Why does this incident, out of all the recorded interactions during Jesus' ministry, cause Jesus to react this way?

While I don't have the space to outline all of the possible reasons for this reaction from Jesus, I do want to suggest a couple of possibilities. The first possibility is that Jesus is frustrated that His disciples, even having been with Him for a considerable amount of time, still have not rightly understood Jesus' heart for the broken and His desire to bring wholeness and healing to them. A second possibility is that He is worn by the constant throng of people who wish for healing from Him. It is not impossible that elements of both options are present. But no matter how you view this, something is testing Jesus' patience.

For this reason, His response to the situation is instructive for us. He heals the young man (vs. 25-27), aids the young man's father in his faith (vs. 23-24), and teaches His disciples about the ministry He is doing (vs. 28-29). If Jesus is frustrated with the lack of faith or skill from His disciples or the constant demands from the gathering crowds, it doesn't come through in His behavior. He remains Himself in perfect love even in dealing with a situation which seems to have tested Him. Ultimately His proclamation and demonstration are in perfect unity with his loving character, frustrated or not.



Christian
Education
Council

By Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten
Director of Education
and History

What does it mean to have selfless love for one another as Christ does for us?

Sadly, and predictably, most of us do not handle frustration as well as Jesus, and can be prone to both impatience or harshness when we encounter it. It is a growth area for all of us. But if we wish to grow in love and be truly supportive communities of faith—Kingdom family—then we must strive to care for one another, and in these difficult instances above all others. There are two primary ways that I believe we all can grow in this love for one another: loving church discipline and prayerful self-discipline.

Taking the second of these first—all of us know it is wrong to take out our issues on others. We have all been on the receiving end of someone else’s misdirected outburst. Unfortunately, it is far more difficult to identify when we are the ones dishing out to others because of our issues. This is in part because of our impulse to justify ourselves: if someone else has pushed one of our buttons, they must deserve what they get. But the reality is usually that the person on the receiving end of our emotional dumping is simply the easiest or most convenient place to put our outflow—someone in the wrong place at the wrong time. No matter how they got in front of our emotional firehose, they probably do not deserve what we give them, either in terms of what we say to them or how we behave towards them.

The solution that Jesus models for us in this story seems to be one of patient restraint. While He may be frustrated with His disciples’ lack of perception or the demands made of Him, He does not pour out the emotion of this on those around Him. Instead, He lovingly serves. When the disciples ask Jesus how He was able to cast out a demon they were not, He indicates that prayer was the difference. I suspect that it was not only the casting out of demons which was bolstered by Jesus’ prayer life, and that Jesus’ ability to “keep His eye on the ball” with respect to the work of His Father boils down to prayerful self-discipline. It is no accident that when the Apostle Paul speaks of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), he begins with love and ends with self-discipline—or that when he speaks about how we should clothe ourselves as God’s people (Colossians 3:12-14), he includes patience, covered over by love.

This leads us to the other primary way we can grow in this: loving church discipline. Repeatedly, the texts of Scripture make clear that God regularly disciplines us. In fact, it is this discipline which marks His real love for us (Hebrews 12:7-17), and that discipline is meant to be continued in His church. When our proclamation or demonstration of our faith is not in line with the Gospel or is not symmetrical, it is love to us for those in our Kingdom family to aid us in getting back on the right track. It is not hatred. This is not meant to be rare behavior in the context of the church, but a regular part of the functioning of the body of Christ. It is to be motivated by real love among church members, in the same way that parents discipline their children—not abusively, but with firm tenderness. Jesus does the same with his disciples in this story, teaching rather than rebuking them for their failure.

This is not new to Seventh Day Baptists—it is our heritage to see discipline in our churches, and more historically normal than how we now sometimes operate—saving “discipline” only for such instances that are too well-known or too damaging to ignore. Our world increasingly moves towards selfish expressions of love which privilege felt needs over Biblical reality: figuratively letting the kids play in the street during rush hour if they want to. But we cannot settle for this in the context of our churches, as love for people must privilege their freedom in safety over the bondage of self-gratification. This is a hard word for those who have believed, along with our prevailing culture, that love can never say “no.” Nevertheless, it is an important part of our faith to receive for ourselves and give to others the benefit of the loving hand of discipline on the shoulder when someone wanders away from the truth of our faith.

For this part of God’s love to be understood by outsiders, we must take it for ourselves in both our proclamation and demonstration. We must restrain our own impatience and instead submit ourselves to our local churches—which are the body of Christ and are meant to share and show His love with the world, but also inside our own Kingdom families. May we all grasp and live in God’s great love for us! [SR](#)

Noticed



When I was about 10 years old, I asked my parents for a bee hive. It was not really an altruistic request—this was an early get-rich-quick scheme in which I hoped to market honey to family and friends for profit. It was like a fundraiser where I had taken out the middle man. Despite the business strategy of a ten-year-old, I had not fully thought through the process of harvesting the honey.

During my first foray into beekeeping, I was all suited up with my mask on. I had the little smoker fired up to puff into the hive so the bees would be less interested in me. Everything went great until the fire in my smoker went out and the bees turned against me. What made matters worse was that my shirt was untucked, so a host of bees scrambled up underneath my shirt and made their way to the inside of my mask. By the time the stinging commenced it is safe to say that I noticed that something was wrong. Picture a dancing Carl frantically throwing off bee equipment at this point.

The interesting thing about this story is that all of my noticing was focused on me. I noticed an opportunity for me to market honey, I noticed how the bees affected me, I noticed that I wanted to get away from the stinging bees. I did not happen to notice the people around me much throughout the experience. I sadly have to wonder if I have outgrown my self-interested noticing. I find it interesting how this contrasts so much with the example of Jesus. I am repeatedly struck by how Jesus noticed people: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them...” (Matthew 9:36a) Listen to two stories of Jesus noticing people—examples that I want to live by all the more.



By Carl Greene
Executive Director

Not only are we noticed and given a place to belong, we are also called to notice others as Jesus did.

Jesus Notices the Potential of People

“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him.”

—Matthew 9:9

Jesus notices Matthew, which is really not novel in and of itself. Lots of people noticed Matthew—as someone to avoid. As a customs official, Matthew is looking to be noticed—so he can draw you in and make you pay. I am confident that nearly everyone noticed Matthew and chose a path around him if at all possible. Not only was it financially costly to connect with this guy, but it was also socially expensive. This sell-out to Herod Antipas and ultimately the Romans was not the sort of person you would want to fraternize with publicly. Essentially, noticing this guy signs you up for paying exorbitant taxes and awkward social exchanges.

And Jesus notices Matthew. And asks Matthew to walk with him. Publicly.

Rather than dismissing Matthew, Jesus saw His potential. Jesus saw who Matthew was created to be rather than simply observing the tax booth that he was sitting in at the moment. Jesus noticed, had compassion, and called him to leave sin behind to follow.

Jesus Notices the Need to Belong

“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” —John 19:26-27

Jesus notices the people around Him even in the midst of the final moments on the cross. Jesus notices his family and his friends. Jesus notices those who have deep hurts around Him. Jesus is concerned for the welfare of his mother. Jesus notices his hurting friend. And then Jesus creates an opportunity for them to belong, to not be left alone.

As we reflect on the love of Christ, it is imperative that we actively remember how God demonstrates His love for us in so many ways, including noticing a need for people to belong. Just as Jesus noticed the needs of Mary and the disciple whom Jesus loved, we too are noticed thanks to God’s love and compassion. Not only are we noticed and given a place to belong, we are also called to notice others as Jesus did.

Our Call to Compassionate Biblical Living

Our daily living should be defined by noticing. We notice God’s deep love for us and His call on our lives away from sin in order to walk with Him. We also notice our own call to notice the potential of the people around us and encourage them. We notice our call to invite others to a place of belonging amidst our churches. I hope that I spend a lot more time noticing the people around me, with the compassionate insights of potential and belonging. I hope that our road ahead holds less self-interested noticing and more notice given to God’s actively advancing Kingdom. SR

Another Trip of Love to Learn From

By Garfield Miller
Director of Outreach
SDB Missionary Society



In the podcast *What is Love* by John Piper (Founder and Teacher, *desiringGod.org*), he defines love in two ways: “love of complacency”—because something is pleasing; and “love of benevolence”—to bring about something beautiful. Based on these definitions we can know with confidence that what we experience from God is the love of benevolence. In reflection, I believe that the greatest expression of God’s love is communicated to us in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This is the verse that motivated Joan Small (New York City SDB Church, NY), Johnmark Camenga, (Pastor of the Lost Creek SDB Church, Lost Creek, WV) and me on our missions trip February 4 -18, 2020, under the theme “*Handle with Love!*”

Our team to Ethiopia and Burundi sought to bring encouragement to our African brethren through leadership training, ministry to children and women, Gospel preaching and needs assessment. SDBs in Ethiopia are refugees from South Sudan struggling to make a life starting from nothing. The Burundi SDB Conference is a World Federation member dealing with the 20 of their 54 churches closed because of government bureaucracy. In both Ethiopia and Burundi, we experienced the outpouring of devotion to God that was strongly motivated by the light of God’s love. We went there to “*Handle them with love,*” but we were the ones impacted when we witnessed them handling their communities with love.

We experienced earnest worship and evangelism with SDBs in both African nations. The manifestation of their love of complacency for God and their love of benevolence to humanity was remarkable! The blind could see their sincere and intense conviction for God and in His mission to save the world from perishing.



When they gathered for worship, it was amazing and infectious to see and hear them sing and dance. In most cases the gathering would be divided into singing groups (each would have their turn to sing) and the dancing just came naturally with very little regard for what others may think, the time, or whether they needed energy afterward to do anything else. They used all they had for the time they had it to worship God. In Burundi in particular, praying is done kneeling, even when they are in public places, again with no regard for others around them but steadfast focus on the subject of their supplication. At prayer time in the sanctuary, they would close all doors and windows, and then kneel for earnest prayer without distraction or invasions.

It was always interesting to hear them talk about addressing the needs of their communities and sharing the Gospel when they themselves needed help. In both countries, we had evangelistic services. Because of the groundwork they did before we got there and while we were there, a total of 65 persons were baptized and many more to be counseled towards this same sacrament. It was an honor to work alongside people who felt they were experiencing God’s love and were passionate about sharing that love. In Burundi, we had more than a thousand community members witnessing the baptism and at the special crusade gathering on Sabbath, there were approximately one thousand five hundred persons. We learned a special lesson of having a good witness and authority in a community.

On this trip, I learned many lessons of being an earnest worshiper and witness. I must thank the Ethiopian and Burundian SDB Conferences for hosting us and allowing us to work alongside them. Thank you Pastor Johnmark Camenga and Sister Joan Small for your service, and a heartfelt gratitude to all who supported this trip. To God be the Glory...For He so loved the world... SR



FOCUS on
Missions

Andy Samuels

Chief Executive Director
SDB Missionary Society

Change is an occurrence in everyone's life. Sometimes we just wake up and our life changes. Lately I have been reflecting a lot on change, as well as looking into my life and seeing what needs to be changed. Sometimes the question comes to my mind—does God change His plans for us?

For the past couple months, I have been waiting to start this new job. Yes, I said a couple months. Due to my pregnancy I cannot complete one of the physical tests called a weight capacity. I've been doing many phone calls back and forth between my OBGYN and the job trying to get certain things done. It's been testing my patience very much—I've had to learn to just step back and pray. I have always been the type of person that likes the independence of working and being able to pay my bills. But lately that has changed and I've had to learn to be comfortable relying on my husband to pay the bills, with the occasional help from my parents. When I quit my second job back in December, I expected to be low on funds with only my one part-time job for a month. I thought that by January I would be starting my new job with the school district. Little did I know that here I am in March and I don't even have a start date for the school district anymore.

Last Friday, I had a frustrating conversation with the district—the conversation ended with me still having no idea how much longer I was going to be waiting. I decided to hop on my computer and start to fill out job applications. I have a kid on the way and I want to be able to help support my family, but I also want to do something that makes me happy. Sitting at home waiting is not doing that! When browsing the internet I found a job to apply for with Petsmart where I would basically be a dog groomer trainee. They give you a paid training/education and then you shadow the groomers they already have. This felt like a dream to me because of my love for animals. I felt excitement for something I haven't felt in a while. So I filled out the application.

Now I am in the wait—I am in the wait of my change trying to understand it. I wait for a sign from God—which job is the right one for me now? Do I go with the job where I work with special needs children or do I go with the job where I would help dogs feel most beautiful? Or can I do both? I believe whichever one, God will show me somehow. This is just the midst of my change, but maybe change is good. It is hard but it can be good. We don't always immediately understand it. Thankfully we have a big God in the lead. SR

*He changes times and seasons,
He removes kings and raises up others,
He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning,
He reveals deep and hidden things;
He knows what is in the darkness and light dwells with him.”*

—Daniel 2:21-22

Change

“For a seed to achieve its greatest expression, it must come completely undone. The shell cracks, its insides come out and everything changes. To someone who doesn't understand growth, it would look like complete destruction.”

—Cynthia Ocelli

YOUNG ADULT

By Sarina Gurness



Some Practical Ways for You to Grow in Compassion

In our Christian journey of walking with Jesus and doing what He does, we must also learn to grow in loving who He loves. He loves those who are like Him and those who are different from Him.

If we truly value all human beings as created in God's image and having intrinsic value and dignity because of this, then we must learn how to become broken-hearted when one of those human beings needs help.

The struggles of this world and the attacks of its Master intend to trip us up and make us think that there is nothing that we as individuals can do to assist ourselves or others to live with dignity.

Here are some practical ways to grow your compassion for others and to see people with the "grace goggles" that Jesus sees others with:

- While you could start your exploration of compassion with any book of the Bible, I would encourage you to read the books of Luke and Acts straight through. These two books, penned by the same author, are the training manuals for Christian compassion. (If you read four chapters a day you can finish this task in 2 weeks).
- Become familiar with the research and challenges of those in poverty. While there are hundreds of online resources, a few that I visit often are the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, The Urban Institute's Low-Income Working Families research, The Pew Research Center, and Feeding America.

- Acting with compassion starts with listening and responding to those in need. As you interact with those in need, you will inevitably learn about the challenges and struggles of poverty.
- Sometimes the most important thing that we can do is to pray. Prayer opens our hearts and minds to ways that we can work to reflect the character and love of Christ.
- Think of how you donate. One way to think about personal giving is to focus your philanthropy on a single or small group of organizations. Concentrating your donations provides consistent support that helps organizations thrive.
- Practicing compassion is at the heart of volunteer service. Volunteering with a program is a great way to learn compassion for others.
- Vote. Christians have the responsibility to engage in public policy.
- Learn about one nonprofit organization each week that works with those in poverty.

While not a complete list, these are some ideas that should build a commitment to the practice of compassion. Certainly, random acts of kindness, as captured in the popular book from over two decades ago, do matter. At the same time, I would argue that God's compassion is systematic and more than a series of random acts. Compassion is an intentional, faith-based discipline wired to our daily actions. SR

PASTOR SEARCH

The following SDB churches or groups are actively looking for pastoral leadership. Please keep them in prayer as they search for their church's next leader:

Shepherd's Fold SDB Church
(Johnson City, TN)—Assistant
Bay Area SDB Church (Pinole, CA)
Covenant SDB Fellowship
(Hungry Horse, MT)
Central SDB Church (Mitchellville, MD)
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
or call 608-752-5055 ext. 702



Considering the timelines for many closures, the uncertainty of travel, the restrictions of bi-vocational employers, and the advice of the state of Colorado Health Department, the General Council made the decision to cancel **The Summit 2020** set to take place in the Denver, CO area, April 24 to 26.

All registrations already paid will be refunded within the next few weeks. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may have caused those who have already made travel plans. Many airlines have been lenient with their cancellation policies and have at least allowed credit for future use if not refunds.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or if you think that I can help in any way. I always look forward to this time together and will surely miss it this year. However, you can make tentative plans for The Summit 2021 (April 23-25, 2021) hopefully in Florida. Continue to lead your congregations well! We appreciate you!



Church Development & Pastoral Services

By John J. Pethtel
Director

VOLUNTEER

How Volunteering Grows Your Faith

By John J. Pethtel



When I was a teenager, I could already see the benefit of not just attending my local church and consuming spiritual goods and services but of serving others and the Kingdom. There were many people at my local church who made a newcomer like me feel at home over the course of a couple of years—from those who greeted me on a Sabbath morning, to those who made sure there was a snack, and those who took time to create a lesson for me to learn more about God and His Word. How could I return that service?

While I knew that there would be intrinsic intangible benefits of helping others, I never realized that in volunteering my time, passion, and gifts to my local church and then to the SDB General Conference I would grow my faith in a good God.

At first glance, it seems as if you may not be needed to help your church or the General Conference actively advance God's Kingdom. However, you are needed more than you know and not just to do some tasks. You need to volunteer with your local church and/or with the General Conference so that you might have the opportunity to grow your faith in God. It might take a bit of time to find the right spot but no time or effort in serving the Lord will be wasted in your spiritual growth. God uses volunteering to change us.

Volunteering has been used by God to change me in four specific ways over the years:

1. **Serving Allows Us to Experience God's Power Firsthand**

When we are able to see how God is moving in and among the people of our congregation and its community, it increases our faith. Nothing grows us like seeing God work towards the miracle of transferring people from darkness to light.

2. **Serving Allows Us to Experience Our Purpose**

We are able to experience joy to the fullest from serving God and others. We were "created in Christ Jesus to do good works." You have been gifted espe-

cially by God and are valuable to Him and the church. God uses our volunteering and that of those we serve alongside to help reveal our gifts and purpose to us. When we operate in our gifts, we experience the kind of joy we were made for!

3. **Serving Allows Us to Experience Authentic Community**

If I had to choose one word to describe how volunteering has affected my life, it would be community. Serving others has allowed me to create a larger family from across the world of those I have served and those I have served with. God has used those people to encourage me, pray for me, and teach me. My relationship with Jesus has flourished because of this family.

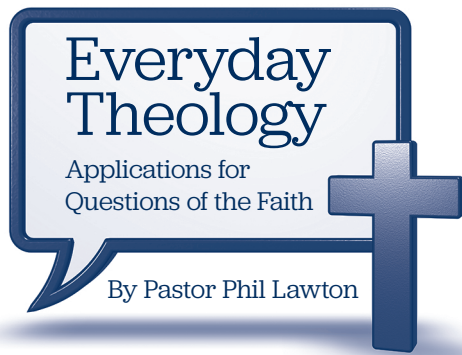
4. **Serving Allows Us to Be Obedient and to Fix Our Eyes on Jesus**

The simplest way to follow Jesus is by doing what He did. Jesus tells us that He came to serve, not be served. In serving, we get to know Jesus in a new way and experience His love for others through our service. This allows us to see people as Jesus does and redirect our focus to Him. There is no better way to diminish the significance of my problems than to re-focus on Jesus by becoming more like Him.

Not volunteering will rob you of the joys God designed for you to experience through serving. Take a risk and get involved. God will honor that step of faith and grow it into so much more!

Is serving in your local church your next step? If so, speak with your local church pastor for how you can help serve God through and with the other members and attendees at your local church.

Is serving all SDB churches your next step? If so, speak to any Conference Director to see if there are some ways to get you involved in your area of passion and gifting. [SR](#)



How Should Christians Respond to Crisis?

At the time of writing this article, all anyone sees in the news is COVID-19. There is a lot of fear and confusion around the virus and it can become easy for Christians to get caught up in the chaos. We can underreact and pretend this is going to be gone tomorrow. We can overreact, sell all our 401k stock, and buy a year's supply of toilet paper. Neither of these options is helpful or really even Biblical.

I have seen many well-tempered and well-informed responses to this crisis from Christians. So many in fact, I thought that perhaps my writing about this was redundant. But this is a series about engaging life with proper theology and so I decided to give my take on the issue. As always there will be a livestream to discuss. The live-stream for this article will be Wednesday, April 15, at 8 pm EST.

If there is only one thing that you take away from this article let it be this: The proper Christian response to any crisis is to bring the peace, love, and hope of our God and creator. I will deal with the specifics of COVID-19, but this is really an article about the response that Christians should have for any crisis—whether it be a flood, a fire, or a pandemic.

Stay Informed (From People Who Actually Know)

The first thing for any crisis is to stay informed. This can be hard because a lot of us get our information from secondary sources. It's a sad fact of our culture today that we don't regularly check information. We just believe people we trust. Here is a secret for you: the people you trust can be wrong. I know your Aunt Debbie works as a medical supply representative, but that doesn't mean she knows how coronaviruses work.

The best source for information in the case of a crisis is the government. A lot of times they will disseminate that information through the news and that can be helpful. But as we have seen with COVID-19, the news can get caught up in the hysteria as well. That is why it is always good to go directly to the source. For our current crisis I suggest going to the CDC's website about COVID-19. That will have the most up-to-date information as well as measures you and your church can take. It is also good to check with local government about procedures specific to where you live.

Follow Advice Given

I really shouldn't have to say this, but every time there is a hurricane in New Jersey I hear about people who do not evacuate. FOLLOW THE ADVICE OF OFFICIALS! If you are told to evacuate, then evacuate. If you are told to stay home, then stay home. If you are told to wash your hands, then wash your hands.

As Christians we are told by both Peter (1 Peter 2:13-17) and Paul (Romans 13:1-7) to respect the authorities of our country. Often this gets pulled out after elections to encourage us to pray for the new President. But this goes so much further. Paul makes it clear that God places authorities over us for our own good. (Romans 13:4) So in the case of a crisis, this means that listening to authorities is not only the best thing to do, it is the Christian thing to do.

For churches in our current crisis this may mean that you have to suspend local gatherings. Many of the churches here in America have the ability to livestream services, so that means we can still worship together remotely. If your government tells you not to have gatherings, then don't have church services.

Respond in Love

Up to this point, I have really just shared what everyone should do regardless of religion, but I think Christians have an even more important calling. I see a lot of people on social media talking about how you don't need to worry because COVID-19 isn't that deadly if you're not elderly and you are healthy. These may be true things, but it can come across like we don't care about people with cancer or about grandma.

Here is the truth. Some people are going to die. Let that sink in. People will die. Not people will get sick. Not people might die. People will die. The most important question for churches right now is not what events do we cancel, it's how do we care for our community through the upcoming tragedy.

As a chaplain, I spend a lot of time listening to families of the terminally ill. I spend a lot of time with grieving people. I spend a lot of time in rooms where someone just died. It can be easy in that situation to talk about why things happened. We can talk about everything happening for a reason, or we can talk about how people just die—but that is not what these people need. What grieving people need is a God who cares.

One of the staff chaplains at my hospital works with parents in the neonatal ICU. That is perhaps the toughest floor of the hospital. What do you say to parents who just lost a baby? Anyway, this staff chaplain said something in a lecture that I will never forget. She said that she often tells these parents, "I may not have answers, but I can help you deal with the questions." My job as a chaplain is not to give answers. I can't do that. God didn't even do that for Job (Job 38:1-3). My job as a chaplain is to bring the presence of God.

The churches' response to crisis needs to be the same as my job as a chaplain. We should be bringing the presence of God to our communities. This doesn't mean telling people how they need Jesus. In a tragedy everyone needs Jesus. This means showing people Jesus. It means showing Him in our love and concern for them, regardless of their faith in God.

Pray

This is the most important response to crisis. There are going to be many times in your life when you are directly affected by a tragedy. With the current COVID-19 crisis, all of us will be affected in some way. Prayer is a powerful thing, whether it be for ourselves or for others.

As a chaplain, my main prayer when I go into a room is that God's presence would be known. I can't really do much to help people who are grieving the loss of a family member. What I can do is point people to the One who understands our every grief. Every time I am asked to pray, I pray for peace. I pray for peace because it is God's weapon against chaos, anxiety, and fear.

I believe that God heals. I believe that God does miraculous healings. I believe that I should pray for miraculous healings. I know that not every prayer for miraculous healing works the way we expect. But I also know that every time I have prayed for God to bring peace it has happened.

For our current crisis, pray that God will bring healing. Pray that doctors find a vaccine quickly. Pray for God to protect medical staff. Pray that people know the peace and love of God. Pray that God's name is glorified in the miraculous healings.

I can think of no better way to end an article about crisis than with Philippians 4:6-9:

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. ^[SR]

Take Care of Yourself



Living life can be exhausting. Between work, school, family, friends, and extracurricular activities it's tough to carve out time for yourself that doesn't involve further skimping on sleep or nailing down your day to the very minute. Really it isn't any wonder that lots of people tend to be stressed and anxious. In pursuit of "the good life" we exhaust ourselves, unable to enjoy the here and now—many of us to the point that it becomes unhealthy.

Taking time for yourself isn't a crime, but it sure feels that way. Recently, I used a personal day. It took planning and I still had to take a few calls, but the world didn't end. I'll let you in on a secret—taking that day for myself felt wrong, even though I needed it and had already put in 40+ hours that week. Nobody made me feel this way—in fact I was considering only taking a half day and my co-workers told me that if I showed up at all I was going to be in trouble. But I still felt guilty—like I did something wrong.

Self-care sounds selfish, but it is so vital especially to those in leadership. Allowing yourself to take time to do something that you enjoy in order to refresh and recharge your spirit is something we need to get better at, particularly in times when we're already stressed. To me, it seems more natural to power through the tough times and busy days.

That works for me up to a point. At the end of the day I'm exhausted. By the time the weekend rolls around I'm good for nothing and I would really rather not get out of bed.

It seems strange to talk about taking time for yourself during the Easter season when people are typically giving things up and practicing

self-denial. But maybe it's the perfect time. When I was in college, every so often we were encouraged to give up a normal piece of our beauty routine and spend that extra time with God—praying, reading the Bible, etc. For me, the idea of Lent is similar—we give up something meaningful to us so we can better focus on Jesus and the sacrifice He made for us. We gain some insight into what sacrifice feels like in order to better appreciate Him.

Here's the thing: pushing yourself toward exhaustion and sacrificing your mental health doesn't often lead you closer to Jesus and, honestly, that's not the sort of sacrifice I think He wants. Reaching the breaking point happens all too often when we're stressed and tired and in that state—and yes, God can use you at that breaking point. But being there week after week is miserable and we aren't called to be miserable. I find that when I'm miserable, it's really difficult to focus on Jesus.

Don't feel guilty when you need to take a time out for your sanity. Take a break and do something relaxing you enjoy on a regular basis, particularly in the stressful times. Taking care of your mental state is just as important as taking care of your body—and guess what, Jesus cares about it all. He didn't die on the cross to perpetuate misery but rather to save us from our sin and give us life.

Sometimes we are facing struggles that a quick mental day or a coloring evening aren't going to take care of and, in those moments, it's okay to seek the help of a mental health professional. Contrary to popular belief, we can't always handle everything with a smile and a prayer. It's okay to admit you need help to be healthy. So monitor yourself—if a break is what you need, take it. If you need more, seek out a licensed counselor. Take care of yourself so that you can have the energy to praise God and carry out His mission for your life. SR



Women's
Society

By Katrina Goodrich



Self Care

January has come and gone but it is not too late to think about changes you might need to make in your life. One of the most important resolutions you can make is to practice self care. Self care is the practice of taking deliberate action to preserve or protect your own health: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. It is the key to balanced living and helps refuel your life when you feel you are traveling on empty. It means knowing who you are and your limits.

Self care is not selfish, something you force yourself to do or something you don't enjoy. It means being mindful and taking the time to pay attention to yourself in a way that ensures you are being cared for by you.

This may sound wonderful but how do you know that you are in need of self care? If you are feeling some of the following symptoms, you may be neglecting self care:


- Low energy
- Feeling hopeless
- Increase in physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, etc.
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Reverting to comfort foods rather than a healthy diet
- Worsening mental health symptoms, *i.e.* anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Distancing in relationships with spouse, children, friends
- Lack of motivation
- Feeling you are indispensable or a martyr
- Feeling like you are losing control

We all should have ways of focusing on refueling when we feel burned out. Some suggestions include:

- Keep a gratitude list. Every day write down something you are thankful for.
- Listen to upbeat or relaxing music.
- Take 5 minutes to sit and put your feet up.
- Walk during your lunch break; exercise daily.
- Turn off your phone for 30 minutes.
- Learn to deep breathe when feeling stressed.
- Unfollow a person on social media who is negative.
- Say "no" to others and "yes" to your self care; create a "no" list.
- Spend time with loved ones; schedule a night out with friends or your spouse.
- Look for opportunities to laugh.
- Pray—caregivers say prayer is the top coping mechanism they use.
- Do whatever helps you relax and pay attention to your needs

The Biblical view of health is summed up by the word "blessed." God's purpose for your life is a positive self image which you can maintain by practicing self care. Spiritual well being can increase life span, decrease blood pressure, increase surgical outcomes, bring about shorter hospital stays, and improve mental health and overall well-being. In 2020, set aside time to concentrate on you and your needs. You can't help others if you are not healthy. [SR](#)

Grand Rapids—Where It's Happening in 2020!



President's Page
Kevin Butler
This month's installment comes from Conference Host Committee Chairman Ed Cruzan. Thanks Ed!

Grand Rapids is a “happening” place because Conference 2020 is coming to Michigan in July! With that in mind, Kevin asked me to write about some things to do in and around the city. The website *experiencegr.com* is very useful for exploring Grand Rapids online.

Downtown Grand Rapids is highly “walkable” and remarkably accessible.

Both Greyhound and Amtrak stop in the heart of the city. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is just 20 minutes from downtown.

Grand Rapids is served by Rapid buses (*ridetherapid.org*). The Downtown Area Shuttle, or DASH, is free to ride and provides convenient connections to all parts of the urban core. There is also a skywalk that pedestrians can use to reach numerous downtown destinations.

Grand Rapids Attractions

The **Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park** is a 158-acre botanical garden and outdoor sculpture area. Experience masterpieces of art and nature that will delight your senses at one of the nation's premier horticultural display gardens. (*meijergardens.org*)

The **John Ball Zoo** (*jbzoo.org*) is the fourth most-attended cultural facility in Michigan and houses over 2,000 animals.

The **Grand Rapids Public Museum** (*grpm.org*) is among the oldest history museums in the United States, founded in 1854.

The **Grand Rapids Children's Museum** has two floors of hands-on interactive exhibits that encourage discovery and learning through play. (*grcm.org*)

The **Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum** is also the burial site of Gerald Ford, the 38th President (1974-77) of the United States. (*fordlibrarymuseum.gov*)

The **Grand Rapids Art Museum** (*artmuseumgr.org*) has collections ranging from Renaissance to Modern Art,

and special collections of 19th and 20th-century European and American artists.

In addition to these, there are the **Meyer May House** (*meyermayhouse.steelcase.com*), the **Heritage Hill** district (*heritagehillweb.org*), the **Urban Institute for Contemporary Art** (*uica.org*), the **African-American Museum** (*graama.org*), and beautiful churches including the **Cathedral of Saint Andrew and Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church**.

July will be an excellent time for strolling Grand Rapids over some marvelous outdoor venues, keeping a person active and entertained without spending money.

The Riverwalk along the Grand River (*grandrapidsmi.gov/Directory*) is one of my favorite activities. The walk can range from half-a-mile to five miles. In addition to the traditional riverside sites, you can see the **Fish Ladder Sculpture**, the **Blue Bridge**, and **Ah-nab-awen Park**.

The **Blandford Nature Center** is your premier nature getaway! (*blandfordnaturecenter.org*) Containing 143 acres of woods, streams and meadows, there are four miles of trails open dawn to dusk daily.

Calvin University Attractions

If you are coming just for Conference week, Calvin has a variety of sites that you can visit for free, all within walking distance.

Founded in 1876, **Calvin University** (*calvin.edu*) is a world-class Christian college. Calvin is ranked #1 in the Midwest among regional colleges by U.S. News & World Report.

The **University Chapel** offers a round stage at the center, unique and purposeful architecture, and an ornate pipe organ. The **Hekman Library** supports the curricular needs of the Calvin community in a hospitable environment. **Peet's Coffee** is a specialty coffee company founded by Alfred Peet in 1966 in Berkeley, Calif.

The **Spoelhof Fieldhouse Complex** accounts for roughly 10% of the total square footage around the campus. **Calvin's Crossing**: try to discover this one on your own. The **Calvin Ecosystem Preserve & Native Gardens** is a one-of-a-kind oasis. The preserve's 100+ acres of native plants and natural habitats offer boundless opportunities to explore and connect with nature.

As you make your plans for Conference 2020 and the attractions Grand Rapids offers, always remember to “Keep Your Eyes Fixed on Jesus!” See you in July! SR

Baptism *Déjà Vu*

“After the baptism we will have the rest of our weekly worship service, and then if anyone else wants to be baptized and isn’t prepared, run home now and get a change of clothes. That has never happened here, but we want to give you that chance.” Thus Assistant Pastor Tyler Chroniger opened the February 15, 2020, worship and baptism service in Shiloh, NJ. I thought, “You’re half right, Tyler; it hasn’t happened in your life time.”

My thoughts went back to a baptism service 40-some years ago in Shiloh. Pastor Charles Bond opened the floor to anyone who wanted to be baptized but hadn’t come prepared. A member of the YF came forward. Pastor Bond asked if anyone in the congregation knew the boy’s parents as he did not wish to perform the ceremony without parental permission. Carol Loper assured him that “They would be pleased” and the young man was duly “dunked.”

Back to 2020. Children in the congregation were invited to come forward and get a bird’s eye view of the proceedings. Twelve-year-old Reyna Mazza and young mother Melissa Scull, resembling “angels” in their white robes, came forward and gave their testimonies. Pastor Don Chroniger did the honors and left the rest of the service in the hands of our Assistant Pastors, Tyler Chroniger and Philip Lawton, while he changed into dry clothes.

Alas! Pastor Don had to change back into his wet clothes as Joshua Garrison had changed into “dunking clothes” and requested re-baptism. A member of a well-known Shiloh family, Josh had grown up in the Shiloh church but had strayed for a few years. He now realized he needed to rededicate his life to Christ. Josh had given a moving testimony the previous week and summarized it on this occasion.

Starting with a beer at 14, Josh eventually spiraled into dangerous behaviors culminating in getting on the wrong side of the law. As he was herded into a squad car, he testified, “God put a policeman in place who assured me ‘God will forgive you.’” Now, at age 29, he was ready to recommit his life. Before going into the pool, however, he asked the church members to hold him accountable for future behaviors. (Needless to say, we all agreed to do so.)

So, Josh, for those of us who witnessed the impulsive baptism of a previous generation, this event was *déjà vu*. We pray that the rest of your life will not be a case of *déjà vu*. Josh, Melissa, and Reyna, may God continue to bless and keep you in His will. SR

By Donna S. Bond
Joshua Garrison, Consultant

Coming soon!



SDB Conference
20/20

July 26 - August 1

Calvin University
Grand Rapids, MI

Women’s Board

It’s Time for Nominations!

The Recognition Committee of the Women’s Board would like to encourage you to submit your nominations for the **Robe of Achievement** (for a woman who has served the denomination, her home church, family and community) or **WISE Award** (for a woman who has given evidence of service above and beyond the call of duty in her home church). We don’t want you to be inhibited by the forms and all the information that is needed. Fill in what you know and don’t worry about the exact dates of activities if you don’t know them. This information can be secured later if your nominee is chosen for the honor of receiving the **Robe of Achievement** or **WISE Award**.

The deadline for nominations has been extended to
April 30, 2020.

The forms are available on the Women’s Board webpage:
<http://www.sdbwomen.org/>
under the Recognitions tab or by requesting a copy from Karen Payne by email at **Karen.payne1127@gmail.com**
or by mail at **13528 595th Street, Claremont, MN 55924.**

Women’s Connection

By Jasmine Lynch

Women’s Connection is a purpose-driven auxiliary of West Palm Beach Baptist Seventh Day Church. Membership is open to all members and by extension their female friends and families. Members are encouraged to join in making a ripple effect in our communities by taking their place and making their contribution. Together we seek out untapped potentials so we, too, can contribute to the change we hope to see in our churches.

Women’s Connection meets the second Sunday of each month from 5:00-7:00 p.m. One of our many goals includes developing sisterhoods of deepened and meaningful relationships. Through coaching/mentoring, building leadership skills, networking, developing, empowering, and serving, we have come to realize other contemporary challenges to ministry and are assessing them for improvement. Women’s Connection administers the worship service every fifth Sabbath in a month.

Last year, we participated in a range of outreach events. Whether the events included empowerment workshops, knitting, jewelry assembling, culinary art, family social, or connecting to resources within our communities, we supported and empowered each other. All things considered, the moment a woman becomes aware of her gifting, she inspires a shift that has the potential to cause mass changes. Under the right guidance and conditions, many could benefit from her talent and it sparks an interest that will hopefully attract other women to join in our cause, therefore, extending the range of evangelism.

This year, we are starting with a tea party. On February 9, 2020, Women’s Connection will be having a semi-formal Tea Party and on February 29 the women will administer the worship service. The theme for this month: “Women Making the Best of Today in Jesus Christ” and the color for the day is Red. [SR](#)



Women Facilitated Worship Service



Women Made Bracelets



Trip to Peanut Island



Vision Board Building at a Brunch

I gave My life for thee;
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave My life for thee.
What hast thou given for Me?

My Father's house of light,
My glory-circled throne,
I left for earthly night,
For wand'rings sad and lone.
I left, I left it all for thee.
Hast thou left aught for Me?

I suffered much for thee,
More than thy tongue can tell,
Of bitt' rest agony,
To rescue thee from hell.
I've borne, I've borne it all for thee.
What hast thou borne for Me?

And I have bro't to thee,
Down from My home above,
Salvation full and free,
My pardon and My love.
I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee.
What hast thou bro't to Me?



I Gave My Life for Thee

Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices



He is Risen

God loved the world so much that he gave his
one and only Son so that whoever believes in him
may not be lost, but have eternal life.

—John 3:16 NCV