

Sabbath Recorder

Summer Camp: an SDB Heritage

March 2020
A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

Heritage:

Something that is passed down from preceding generations;
a tradition.



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who sent photos for this SR!*

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LAST CHANCE!!

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Patricia Cruzan
Editor

sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org

Contributing Editors:

Kevin Butler, Isaac Floyd, Katrina Goodrich,
Barb Green, Carl Greene, Sarina Gumness,
Nicholas J. Kersten, John J. Pethtel, Andy Samuels

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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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Seventh Day Baptist Center

3120 Kennedy Road

PO Box 1678, Janesville, WI 53547-1678.

Phone: (608) 752-5055; FAX: (608) 752-7711

E-mail: contact@seventhdaybaptist.org

SDB Website: seventhdaybaptist.org

Director of Communications

Jeremiah Owen

jowen@seventhdaybaptist.org

cell: (818) 468-9077

Editor of Sabbath Recorder:

sdbsr@seventhdaybaptist.org

SDBs ONLINE

<https://seventhdaybaptist.org>

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A Sending Heritage

By Carl Greene, Executive Director

I grew up in the Berlin Seventh Day Baptist Church in upstate New York. There are some interesting historical pieces from my fair town of Berlin (total population less than 2,000). According to some, Berlin was the world's leading exporter of maple sugar during World War I (amazing how sugar rationing and a railroad siding can create unique historical factoids). While both the railroad and abundance of maple sugar have long since subsided, an enduring feature of the town is the Berlin SDB Church.

I find it especially interesting how a church's heritage can have a way of replaying itself in the present. When my family and I moved away from the Berlin Church to serve as Pastor of the Hebron (PA) SDB Church, we were intentionally sent with a mission. No doubt about it, there were tears and difficulties, but Cindy and I will be forever grateful to our church family who had encouraged and prepared us over the years. The kindness and generosity that the church showed us during the process of moving went above and beyond what we could have expected. The list is long: help packing, cleaning, and moving; generous gifts from the church, the Ladies Aid, and members of the church; the on-going guidance and mentoring offered by Pastor Matt and Ellen—I am sure there are more items that we have forgotten. We were sent out from the church to live out the mission God had called us to, thanks to the preparation we had received from our sending church.

This was a difficult season to say goodbye. The church was sending us out just a year after sending Pastor David and Jennifer Stall along with their family to Ashaway, RI. It is part of the difficult task of being a sending church. This is not my phrase—something I stole from Pastor Matt (just like most of my sermons). The idea that the Berlin Church is seeking to share the gospel and disciple new members to not just grow the local church—but to further God's kingdom is obvious. As I have reflected on this, I am surprised by what a tradition Berlin has in this role.

I will take you back to the 1800's—the heyday of Berlin as a town—and a time when the Berlin Church was a hopping place to be—much like today. During this time there were lots of baptisms, a lot of ministry, and lots of activity—but also a time of on-going sending. The pastor for much of this time period was the venerable William Satterlee. He was a tremendous Elder who not only pastored in Berlin, but would also oversee the development of daughter churches as people moved west from the Berlin Church. During this time period the church was also served by a total of six associate pastors, and would send out four pastors to other churches.



In addition to pastors sent, Solomon Carpenter was sent from the Berlin Church to China by the Missionary Society to start an amazing ministry there. In the world of church planting, when the Hebron Church was organized in 1833, an Elder was sent by the Berlin Church to assist in formally organizing a church covenant. That Elder, Stillman Coon, had witnessed his father pastor the Berlin Church, and was himself sent by the church on a lifetime of missional service. Stillman would go on to serve as a “pioneer evangelist,” not only organizing churches along the Allegany frontier, but eventually to the frontier of the Northwest where he would serve as the first pastor of the Milton (WI) Seventh Day Baptist Church. Apparently, it is in Berlin's DNA to be a sending church.

This idea of a sending church is really pretty neat. The Berlin Church was directly involved in sending people to help start the church in Hebron and beyond. The Berlin Church is continuing to live out its role as a sending church today—continuing to press into the activity of planting youth groups and fellowships in places where God is inviting them to join Him in His work in the Capital District of New York as well as in Southern Vermont. The church continues to train up and prepare emerging leaders to actively advance God's Kingdom. At the same time, the church remains faithful to continuously reach those who need to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ in their own community.

I hope that you are also excited to hear about how God is at work in the communities where we as Seventh Day Baptists have sent pastors and missionaries. We, as an SDB family, are certainly grateful for the churches who are faithful in their calling as sending churches. I know that my family has been blessed by the gracious sending of the Berlin and Hebron SDB Churches. I look forward to witnessing the increase of the sending capacity of Seventh Day Baptists as our churches equip, empower, and send healthy leaders. That is a legacy well worth building upon. [SR](#)

A Camping Heritage

Camp Paul Hummel — Colorado



By Katie Moore

Next Step Christian Church, Boulder, CO

Camp Paul Hummel—Camp Coordinator

“Wouldn’t this make a great church camp?” Mary asked her father, Paul. Eight-year-old Mary and her father had walked up the mountainside and came across a beautiful ranch in the foothills of Boulder, Colorado. Several years later Paul read the property was for sale in order to pay for the owner’s funeral expenses and unpaid taxes at the courthouse. This was during the Depression, money was scarce, and Paul was the only one who showed up at the auction. Paul Hummel was now the owner of 240 acres of land which he desired to use as a camp for the youth of the Boulder and Denver Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) churches.

Fast forward twenty years: It was the early 1960’s—JFK was president; the Vietnam War had just begun; the Denver Broncos defeated the Boston Patriots 13-10 in the first American Football League game—and Paul was backing his cattle truck into the Denver SDB parking lot. Along with the help of other staff, Paul stacked mattresses into the back of his truck (very cautiously, I’m sure) and placed a group of young adults atop the mattresses (very safely, of course) for the drive up the long winding mountain road to his ranch for summer camp. Gene Davis was one of the campers waiting in the parking lot of the Denver church and vividly recalls the long winding journey up the dirt road and shared memories of “new camper” initiations. New campers had to ride on the side of the truck bed closest to the steep drop of the mountainside, their faces filling with terror as the truck twisted around “windy point”...!

For over 60 years, Camp Paul Hummel (CPH) has continued the legacy of Paul Hummel. It has been a place of refuge, crazy fun, and ministry to thousands of children through its camp program. CPH hums with history, camp memories, and ridiculous stories. However, more tangible than the comforting weight of its campy heritage is experiencing the presence of God. The Holy Spirit is alive and well at CPH. (I’m convinced that CPH is the Lord’s summer home!) CPH has been, and continues to be, a sanctuary, a place of peace, an opportunity to take a breath and simply soak in Jesus. Campers can detach from the distraction of technology and the pressures of their lives. Camp is unhurried, there is time to ponder, and there is relaxation and renewal. But, what is it that makes CPH so special for hundreds of campers and staff decade after decade?

The FOOD! The food is why camp means so much to so many! Sing along with me, “We want to thank the cook (bang, bang), we want to thank the cook (bang, bang)...!” I tease, but the food at camp really is part of the experience. We have favorite camp meals we make year after year and grin as campers devour their strawberry pretzel salad. Aside from camp food, there is so much to experience. It is commonly campers’ first time away from home for an extended period of time and is a perfect opportunity to try new things outside of comfort zones. At CPH campers get to try out archery, swimming, moonlight hikes, chores (yes, this is part of the experience!), stargazing with the CPH Astronomy Club, getting dressed up for banquet night, and of course the hilarious campfire games!



Another aspect of camp that is special to so many is the staff. The directors, nurses, cooks, counselors, and numerous other roles that make camp happen are amazing people. Campers usually find a favorite counselor and many times their interactions are life changing. Our camp staff is a safe place to ask questions, offer a listening ear, and, when appropriate, offer Spirit-led advice. For some campers, camp is the only outlet they have for this type of experience—one of the few and precious opportunities they have to learn about God’s love for them. How honored are we to be able to provide this opportunity?!

Camp is also a place to create lifelong friendships. Campers quickly make new “camp friends” and get to know old friends in a new context. A unique trait of CPH is our relationship with the North Loup SDB Church in Nebraska. We coordinate our camps through our Association and the campers get the opportunity to meet and reconnect with other campers from Nebraska. The community between our SDB churches is special and something that campers from both states look forward to each summer.

Camp Paul Hummel is a place where many kids first experience God and learn about the love of our Savior. Jesus always shows up at camp! It is a place where believers can ask difficult questions of, and grow closer to, God. Camp is a place of miracles as campers who have lost their faith come running back to the arms of Jesus.

At the end of the week, many campers (and staff) find themselves plotting ways to extend their stay. However, we all eventually have to go back down the mountain to reality... and start planning for next camp season. [SR](#)

If you would like to join us at camp for 2020, our Junior Camp (grades 3-6) is June 21-26 and our Intermediate/Senior Camp (grades 7-12) is July 5-12. Registration opens in March at nextstepchurch.org/camp. If you are interested in serving at CPH 2020 or have any questions, please contact Katie Moore at cphcoordinator@gmail.com

*Camp Paul Hummel is a place where many kids first experience God
and learn about the love of our Savior.*

Jesus always shows up at camp!

A Camping Heritage

Camp JOY — West Virginia



Reflections from a Camp Board Member

By Amanda Barbee

As once again the program committee is working hard to find directors, staff, and cooks, I sometimes wonder, in the craziness, why we do this. Then I take a deep breath and reflect and count our blessings.

I have had the opportunity to read over the beginning minutes of the camp. They had a vision of providing a place where people could come, learn about and be surrounded by His amazing creation. I have read of the pros and cons they debated about having a permanent location for camp and all the maintenance that would mean. But when they finally had a permanent location, those early leaders poured their heart and soul into making it happen. This is not to say that it was not rustic to start with to say the least. Tales are told of boys sleeping in tents and girls sleeping in the basement of the Berea (WV) church. Stories of wonky plumbing and a Ritchey's dairy truck turned into a walk-in refrigerator. People speaking of surviving the sulfur water, that same water making their hair feel great, and that water which sat in the fridge to get the smell out. (For anyone who hasn't been here lately, we have an awesome water filtration system and we no longer have our unique tasting water—but your hair is still nice and soft.)

So why do we continue to upgrade and improve a small camp in the middle of wild and wonderful West Virginia? I am going to take a moment to name a few.

1. Camp and camping provide a unique opportunity in today's world to help youth gain independence. This is for many kids the first time away from parents. We know that times are different today so we have been offering a pre-camp every other year for future campers—they can come with their parents and try it out for a weekend.
2. Camp provides a place for youth to come who may not come to a traditional church event. They come to be with their friends. They come

to have something to do in the summer other than be at home.

3. Camp provides an opportunity for youth to hear the Gospel presented in a different setting and in different ways and from different people. It is here for some kids, myself included, that they make a personal commitment to Christ. Some people feel a call to ministry here.

4. Camp provides opportunity for youth to try things that they wouldn't do at home. This includes presenting things in worship, leading different activities, trying their hand at presenting a message/sermon, canoeing, doing cannon balls off the diving board, and even washing dishes.

5. Camping can provide opportunities for youth and young adults to try their hand at service and find their strengths and weaknesses.

6. Camping creates friendships that can last a lifetime. I began writing to a camper after her second grade year of camp. Our friendship continues to this day. I am better for it.

7. Camping can reach the community. Over the last few years our camp has been used for weddings, family reunions, high school cross country retreats, women's retreats, 4-wheeler groups, and people who just want to stay a weekend. Some of these groups are SDBs but many are not.

These are just a few reasons that camping is a valuable thing. As a member of the board, I am blessed that we are able to provide these opportunities for our youth. As a board member, I send out this call: We talk about investing in our youth and this is a very tangible way to do it. So when the announcements are made, consider answering the call. Like our youth, you may discover that you have gifts and skills you didn't know you had. You can learn to do cannon balls, too. SR

Amanda Barbee lives in New Enterprise, PA and attends the German (Brick) SDB Church. She is married to Perry and has 3 children. She is part of the Camp JOY Board and the SDB Missionary Society.

What Camp Joy Means to Me

By Hanah Smith

When I think or hear of West Virginia I automatically think of the perfect place on earth. Camp Joy has been a huge part of my life. I have made many friendships and thousands of memories. When someone asked me what Camp Joy meant to me, I thought of a few things—they were the simple things like making memories, creating new and stronger friendships, and learning about God. But I forgot the real meaning of what it actually means to me. It's a place where I can go any stage in my life, and I can just hear very clearly what God wants for me. I always go into the week very unwell to say the least. But by the time I leave, I feel rejuvenated in my faith and almost like a whole new person.

I have been going to camp and serving on staff for almost ten years. I have served as a camper, counselor, and have helped in the kitchen. I look forward to going every single summer and enjoy what I will take home with me from it. My favorite study which we did while I was in senior camp was learning about our identity and who we are as Christians and how we should be. I learned that it does not matter who views you and how people judge you—but how God views you. That was the week which hit hard for me, the one that really showed me why I am a Christian and why I serve my almighty Lord.

My favorite time of the day is vespers. When the group starts to walk over to the vesper knoll, we start to quiet down to be at peace with the Lord and the place we are occupying. People read their favorite scripture, sing their favorite songs, and reenact Bible stories. It is so peaceful and calming. One year we did this thing called "Why Jesus?" People told why they chose to follow Jesus. The "Why Jesus" moments happened mostly at vespers. It was very heartfelt hearing how God has worked in different lives in different ways. I remember sharing mine, and how special it felt to be surrounded by the people I have grown close to throughout the week and open up to in a meaningful way. I love being at camp sharing jokes, playing games around the campfire, getting a little too rough during recreation, eating way too much food, and learning about God's amazing work. I am very thankful to be part of something like Camp Joy. SR

Hanah Smith lives in Roaring Spring, PA, and attends the Bell SDB Church. She attends the local community college, works multiple jobs, helps with youth and is a long time camper and counselor.

Junior Camp – June 22 – 26

Senior Camp – June 28 – July 5

Middler Camp – July 5

Women's Retreat – Last full weekend in September

For more information about registration at Camp Joy go to the website: campjoywv.org



Photo credits: Leah Martin and Susie Fox.

Quotes about camp JOY

Girl age 8: *It was fun and I got to hang out with new people.*

Boy age 18: *Such a beautiful place to praise and serve our Lord.*

Girl age 13: *It is the week I look forward to all year.*

Boy age 16: *What I liked best about camp was the way that the classes were presented and all of the recreational games.*

Girl age 12: *Camp Joy is the best experience ever. I think if people haven't been here they really need to come.*

Girl age 12: *You should come with friends so maybe they will become a believer in Jesus just like you are.*

A Camping Heritage

Camp Riverview — Nebraska



Memories


By Pastor Scott Hausrath

One of the things I enjoy most about church camp is playing. I'm just a kid in an adult's body, so I really love playing the classic campfire games, e.g., Prince of Paris, Mrs. Mumbles, and Psychiatrist. I don't participate in the "recreation" times as much as I used to (getting old!), but I like seeing the campers having a blast with Duck Duck Goose, Ships & Sailors, and Link Tag.

I've had the privilege of serving as Camp Pastor many times, and I love interacting with the campers and sharing our journey as both they and I are growing in our connection with God. Whether it's during our daily Bible class, our vespers service, or a one-on-one conversation, I love sharing spiritual truth with souls who are open to God. It's also been a deep joy whenever I've had the honor of baptizing some of the campers in the North Loup River. That's a special experience! We do it on the last day of camp, with the campers' family members present, and it lifts everyone's spirits tremendously.

Another thing I enjoy each year is witnessing, once again, the "flow" of camp. At the beginning of the week, most of the campers are tentative in their connections with others, but as the week progresses they start to let down their guards, and they become more vulnerable and more open to connecting. By the time their parents come to take them home at the end of camp, many campers don't want to leave their new friends. It's such a joy to see young souls learn how to open their hearts to new people and new experiences.

Finally, I appreciate the opportunity to build friendships with adults during the week of camp. I've been blessed to pray with fellow camp staffers during our daily staff meetings; I've enjoyed talking with the parents of campers during special events; I've felt the fellowship of connecting with church members as they've come to camp to bring snacks, to do some maintenance work, or to give us rides to/from the North Loup swimming pool.

For me, it's all about the relationships. Over the years, church camp has served as a catalyst for building my relationship with God, and my relationships with others who are seeking Him. I'm a much richer person because of church camp. 

Scott Hausrath has been pastoring the North Loup, NE Seventh Day Baptist congregation since 2012. He seeks to walk with Jesus.

It's such a joy to see young souls learn how to open their hearts to new people and new experiences.

June 21–27:
Junior/Intermediate Camp for campers going into 4th–8th grades this fall.

Registration forms and information at www.northloupsdb.org/camp-riverview



A Camping Heritage

Camp Harley Sutton — New York



Camp Harley Sutton is the center of church camping for the Seventh Day Baptist Allegheny Association of Churches. The camp is located in Alfred Station, NY, on land that was donated to the Association in 1951 by Dr. and Mrs. H.O. Burdick. In 2000, an adjacent parcel of land (about 7 acres) became available and was purchased through a generous gift from the Richburg (NY) SDB Church. In 2010 an additional 85 acres was purchased from the Burdicks' daughter. So altogether we have nearly 100 acres to "play" with and in.

The first major building on the Camp grounds was a building that came from the Alfred University campus, being a building constructed in the late 1800's and was used for a variety of purposes – a gymnasium, a blacksmith shop, etc. The building was dismantled and piece by piece re-erected at the Camp site by volunteers and was dubbed the Burdick Lodge.

Through the '60's and '70's three sleeping dormitories were constructed. In 1993 and 1994 the SDB Senior Saints were engaged to construct an addition to the Burdick Lodge to house two modern bathroom facilities. Several of the Senior Saints who worked on that project returned to the Camp in later years to help make further modifications to Burdick Lodge—to build a pavilion and replace the original Crandall Dormitory with a much larger, heated, building with bathrooms, sleeping facilities for 32 and a meeting room. This building has expanded our ability to host meetings of Association, church and General Conference agencies, etc. year around.

All of these "projects" have involved a very great number of people donating their time, talents, and financial support. From this there have developed some long-term relationships and friendships spanning the breadth of the country and with many, many SDBs representing many SDB churches. The memories are priceless! We are exceptionally proud to have facilities that we can provide (year around) for denominational groups, church groups, and families where they can enjoy a relaxing atmosphere and come to know and/or renew their understanding of God's wonders in nature and how closely one can feel to Him without the "clutter" of other worldly distractions.

Following are some testimonials from attendees expressing their impressions and appreciation for their experiences at Camp Harley Sutton camps.

- A WONDERFUL place, some of my BEST childhood memories come from Camp Harley. Hopefully my daughter will one day look back and think the same thought.
- Crandall Dorm made Senior Camp more intimate and inviting. Because everybody stayed in one dorm, we had more opportunities to spend time together.
- Personally, having helped build the dorm made the camp experience that much more meaningful because I felt I had a little ownership of the building.
- When I was a camper at Camp Harley, I thought I was the luckiest person to be able to be a part of this awesome place every summer. When I graduated from high school I thought my Camp Harley days were over. As an adult, I responded to a need for staff one year and have been a part again since then as counselor, director and cook. What a blessing to watch my children also enjoy the benefits and love of Camp Harley.
- I thank God for all those who sacrificed their time and talents to make Camp Harley enjoyable for the campers. The Crandall building is just one more expression of their dedication to God's service as they continue to work towards making camp a fantastic, life-changing experience. God delights in you and the work that you do in His service.
- Making friends at Camp Harley was always special. Some years we were friends for the week and then never heard from each other again. Sometimes we wrote each other every week. As we outgrew Camp Harley and went on with our lives we didn't realize that these friends would always be a part of us no matter whether we had heard from them or not. I have encountered several of my Camp friends through Facebook and other opportunities over the last year and when we communicate, either electronically or face-to-face, it seems as if no time has elapsed since our days at Camp Harley.



By Lyle Sutton
Alfred Station SDB Church, NY

Reprinted from the Sabbath Recorder 2014

- Evenings were my favorite time at Camp Harley Sutton. Each evening one of the work groups led the campers in vespers which they had prepared earlier in the day. Next was campfire fun including silly songs and skits. After snacks, the boys and girls were sent off to their respective dorms for lights out. To quiet a dorm of giggly girls one year, a wise counselor read them a bedtime story : *“Two from Galilee.”* The love story of Mary and Joseph and the dreams they must have had for their growing family as told by Marjorie Holmes enthralled a group of preteen girls. *“Two from Galilee”* remains one of my favorite Christian fiction books.

- My memories go back farther than I care to admit. The ones that stand out include vespers on Burdick pond during family camp. My goodness, how SDBs can sing! *“Day is dying in the west...”* In fact, I was baptized there. In the liturgy of the church to which I belong, we are called to remember our baptism, and it is such a joy to relive that time in my young life. Believe it or not, we used to be able to swim there, too!

- I remember getting baptized in the Burdick pond also... Mine was made all the more memorable because Pastor Russ Johnson dropped me!! I trusted him (and the Lord!) and waited, under water, until he “found” me and was able to bring me back up. I was definitely washed (can’t say washed clean—that water was pretty dirty!) after the extended stay under water...

- Camp Harley holds so many memories for so many people. Dean sure did enjoy it when he could get over to help with the Crandall building and he would just love it. This old lady remembers kitchen duty and putting the lye down the old holes and especially trying to sleep with the bats flying all around our heads. Yes, Camp Harley has come a long way. I loved vespers and the campfires.

You may ask why should I go or send my children to a Seventh Day Baptist church camp? These testimonials are part of the reason but there is more. At Camp Harley Sutton there are several churches represented by the campers. These campers have their relationship with God and His Sabbath reinforced at the camps and take those back with them to their home churches. Their experiences are related to their fellow youths thereby creating a web of enthusiastic youths who we all know are the future of our denomination.

Come and enjoy as we do whenever we enter those gates. 



More information about Camp dates and registration will be posted on the Camp Harley Sutton Facebook page.

A Camping Heritage

Jersey Oaks Camp — New Jersey

By Valerie Probasco

Jersey Oaks Camp, located on 12 acres of fields and woodlands in Salem County just outside of Shiloh, NJ, will be turning 60 years old this year. This article could tell you a detailed history of its inception, but let's take another perspective. A generational perspective. There are some families of our congregation who now have the fourth or fifth generation being touched by this camping ministry. We have Primary Campers whose great-great-grandparents served at the very beginning of Jersey Oaks.

With this in mind, four questions were posed to some of our members, spanning multiple generations:

Question 1: *Who do you think of when you hear "Jersey Oaks"?* Our young campers quickly named Pastor Don and Charlotte Chroniger. These are the faithful shepherds who have served as camp administrator, director, teacher, leader, and all-around fun coordinators for the entire lives of these kids. The parents and grandparents fondly named Pastor Charles Bond and his vision and excitement for camping ministry. So many others were listed as well, and we are beyond blessed by their friendship and selfless dedication.

Question 2: *What is a favorite memory you have of camp?* Our grandparents remember the hands that built Jersey Oaks. Many physically helped their parents, joining in the vision. "I remember going with my Dad to look for land for the camp." (RD) "I loved building it. I was in high school and learned so much about construction. We had 30 Sundays of work in a row with no rain!" (PB) Others also recalled times of volunteering and enjoying the early days. "I remember Mom went down as a nurse, registered kids, and did physicals." (RP) "I was an exchange camper to Jersey Oaks from West Virginia the first year it opened." (CD) "Canteen! We could take \$1 and buy 10-cent candy bars. All the kids loved Canteen." (KS) "Charlie Harris did a tree book that I kept for years. I got poison oak doing an initiation with Pastor Herb." (SL) "No A/C and bunks full of SAND." (JS) For our kids and not-so-young adults, Jersey Oaks has been all about the fun and fellowship. Softball, swinging on the swings, going to the pool, singing camp songs, doing crazy activities, and playing guitars together are memories in the making.

Question 3: *If you were going to talk to someone about camp, what would you say?* One response sums it up. "It's just a little part of Heaven." Take a minute and consider how you would respond to this question regarding your own camp or any other outreach. Then, find someone to tell so they don't miss out!

The final item posed to our multi-generational survey participants caused unexpected discomfort. **Question 4: *What if Shiloh Church didn't have Jersey Oaks?*** Everyone responded with a pause. Everyone pondered the weight of that concept. Young and old alike did not want to think about that. After the initial shock, the rally began. "We'd have to replace it by renting or building elsewhere...We'd be missing out on outreach to a whole lot of young people...We'd have to see how to start it up!...I know people I went to camp with who send their kids there now, even though they're not connected to a church. It's their only connection to God...I feel it fulfills a mission we're supposed to do."

Jersey Oaks Camp was a vision that has had a generational impact. It was a vision centered on sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a safe, beautiful environment where relationships could grow and discipleship could begin. My prayer for all of our churches is that we would make GENERATIONAL decisions. Our heritage of SDB camps is an example of how God wants to bless us from one generation to the next. Please PRAY for the Holy Spirit to reveal His plans for your church 25 and 50 years into the future. When He does, move forward together with your time, people, and money resources into His more preferable future. Stop simply living from program to program, activity to activity. Stop being distracted by the "low hanging fruit" that might deplete your time, people, and money resources. Seek Him and He will make Himself known. May God continue to bless us all with a rich heritage in Him and a legacy that points only and always to Jesus. SR

For more information about Camp dates and registration forms go to: <http://www.jerseyoakscamp.org/Home>

Valerie Probasco serves her Savior as a Sabbath school and youth group teacher at the Shiloh SDB Church and has a passion for church—and association—revitalization. She works for a local school district as a Speech Pathologist and lives in Shiloh, NJ, with her husband Bill, daughter Holly, and son Liam.



STRENGTH OF MINISTRY THROUGH CAMPING

By Donna Bond
Shiloh SDB Church, NJ

“I HATE camping,” a now-departed, well-respected SDB pastor (not my relative) declared, “but it’s a good way to show children how Christians live.” (No doubt it was in his job description and I hasten to add, camping is NOT vacation for a pastor/director!)

I became aware of the importance of church camping when we moved to White Cloud, MI. I was surprised to learn that my dad was willing to drive two hours each way to ensure I would be in Junior Camp at Camp Holston near Battle Creek. If he were otherwise occupied, another family would make room for me in their fully-occupied sedan.

I am not an avid outdoors person, but I have slept in seven SDB-owned camps, and visited two more—as camper, retreator, SCSCer and PreConner. Perhaps this is why our Editor thought I might answer the question: “What is the impact of camping on our churches and denomination?”

To quote another now-departed SDB pastor who IS related to me, “...the real strength of ministry comes from laity.” He further asserts that “...no camp can function without the hundreds of donated hours. From cooks, counselors, recreational leaders, and bus drivers—to the spiritual and financial assistance of the churches and the cooperation of families who provide the campers—all are equally important in the grand scheme of SDB camping.”¹ To Dad’s list, I would add medical personnel, water safety instructors and child protection agents.

The impact of camping experiences on our own youth is incalculable. Skills learned by campers that produce capable church leaders include: teamwork, vesper planning, alone-with-God time, scheduling, tolerance, face-to-face interaction, “adventurous” cuisine...the list is endless. Adults who want to contribute to ministry can find their niches in church- or Association-owned camping programs.

Additionally, unchurched community children are exposed to the Gospel. Forty years after Charles Bond retired, middle-aged former campers ask me, “Are you related to Pastor Bond?” No doubt the same can be said for many of our pastors and other camp staff members. The camping program provides one means of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). SR

¹ Sanford, Don A., “Camps: Extension of pastors and laity,” *The Sabbath Recorder*, (Janesville, WI) May 2006, 12.



A Camping Heritage

Camp Wakonda — Wisconsin



Wakonda Memories: Then and Now

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

My Christian experience has been deeply impacted by Camp Wakonda, the SDB camp owned and operated by the Milton, WI, church. I was loved well there as a little person at Day Camp and shown and told about the love of Jesus. As a camper at Wakonda, I was taught the faith and ultimately responded to a presentation of the Gospel there in the early 1990s. I built friendships which have lasted from those early days to now, growing deeper and more important to me as time goes on. As I grew in the faith, first as a high school student and then as a college student, I was privileged to be a part of the ministry staff at Wakonda. For one twenty-year stretch of my forty years of life to this point, I spent at least one week at Camp Wakonda every year. In many ways, my life in Christ is inestimably better because Camp Wakonda exists. I am one of the many followers of Jesus Christ whose current ministry was built on a foundation that was laid at an SDB camping ministry.

For this reason, given the theme of the *Recorder* this month, it's important that I double back to the history of Camp Wakonda—in part because it's a perfect partner to my other column this month, but also because it's important to see the importance of all of our SDB camps, many of which have similar stories to Wakonda's. The ministry that I and so many others have benefitted from over the years boils down to a testimony of God's leading and human obedience embodied in faithful labor over the long haul.

Camp Wakonda was founded in the early 1950s, during the pastoral ministry of Elmo Fitz Randolph in Milton. Pastor Randy (as he was frequently known) became a strong advocate for starting a camp and led the church through a careful process of finding a site and establishing some of the first buildings that later became known as Camp Wakonda. Though some of the politics around these processes are somewhat obscured in his written account (*Wakonda Memoirs: 1950-1966*), Pastor Randy couldn't hide in the narrative that he feared not everyone would support the creation of

the camp inside his congregation, however impassioned he personally was about it. In the years since, several have related to me that at least one person in the church at that time thought of the purchase of the camp property for \$3700 in the fall of 1950 as "Randy's Folly."

Yet through the diligent work of Pastor Randy and his wife Madeline and so many others in the Milton Church (seemingly all of the contributors in the 1950s and 1960s are named and credited in *Wakonda Memoirs*), over a period of years, the camp ministry flourished, not only spreading the fame of Jesus among SDB kids from the North Central Association, but also in the broader geographic area—with kids from the Milton Church's "ministry neighborhood" trusting the work at camp to benefit their children and youth. Conference meetings and retreats have been held at the site. Visitors from around the world have benefitted from the creation and maintenance of the space as a devoted site to Kingdom work. Some folly! The wisdom of those in Milton who wanted to see the establishment of a camp is, at least to my way of thinking, totally vindicated.

Similar stories could be told throughout our Conference, from coast to coast, as we consider the many other great camps which have been established and obediently and faithfully run by our churches and associations. Now, nearly a century from when the first impulse of camping ministry sprang up among our people, camping ministries have reached a crossroads. Amid societal change and technological disruption, it has never been more important or necessary to separate people from their towns and cities and their devices so that they can experience the God of Creation in the midst of his beautiful handiwork. Likewise, longer and intensive retreat and camp ministries force people to drop their masks and deal honestly with one another. There remains good work for us in our camping ministries around the country.

Pastor Randy closes his *Wakonda Memoirs* with a quote from Shakespeare that I have long enjoyed: "...*what's past is prologue.*" May the next chapter of our camping ministries be blessed by God for His glory and for the increase and advance of His kingdom. [SR]

Winning With the Kids

By Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten

In the summer of 1995, Alex Ferguson had a decision to make. His Manchester United soccer team was one of the most famous in the world, but they had not won a major competition the previous season, narrowly losing several close important games. Three of his best players were aging and nearing the end of their careers. Ferguson, as the manager, had to make a decision about these players: would he keep them and give it one more run, or would he get rid of the players and try new ones? In the end, Ferguson, now regarded as one of the greatest managers in the history of soccer, elected to sell his old standbys and play a group of precocious young players they had trained in their youth program instead. The move was widely questioned, with English television pundit Alan Hansen famously ranting, “you can’t win anything with kids.” Ignoring the criticisms, Ferguson’s decision was validated as Manchester United won their league that season, along with many other trophies in the years to come. Ferguson made a bold decision to play the kids (kids like David Beckham...perhaps you’ve heard of him?) and it paid off, both in the short and long term.

In this month’s *Recorder*, you’ve had the opportunity to read about SDB camping ministries and the impacts they’ve had on so many lives. But there is another quiet upside to the ways that Seventh Day Baptists have run their camping ministries: it has given our ministries a chance to “win with the kids.” In SDB camps, senior ministry staff have been aided by younger believers in a variety of roles. Whether it comes in the form of junior counselors or Summer Christian Service Corps students, we have routinely filled out camp staffs with talented young people who are put in positions of leadership and influence with younger students.

I suspect there are two reasons that younger leaders have been drafted into service at camps. The first reason amounts to availability, especially with summer camps: students with the summer off can spend a week away at camp without having to leave a “day job.” This makes plenty of logical sense. The second reason, however, is a bit more interesting.

Much has been made over the last thirty years of statistics which suggest that most conversions to Christianity happen before someone turns 18. This has led to a (correct) emphasis on children’s and youth ministries as evangelism opportunities. Often, this emphasis is on older adults and parents striving to share the Gospel with their children and youth, and that’s a perfectly understandable reaction. But in the camping environment, SDBs have either accidentally or purposefully stepped into another outreach strategy to reach young people: to see them reached by people their own age, or near to it. In our camping ministries, we trust believing campers to share Jesus with their friends both in word and deed, incarnationally doing life together during a camp. Likewise, students may hear the Gospel from someone younger and closer to their own age, which may help to raise their receptivity—teenagers hearing about the faith from a “cool” college-aged staff member or someone their age may get a very different reaction than hearing that same message from their parents.

But beyond the Gospel sharing opportunities, there is another important reason to bring younger believers onto camp staff: It is a great opportunity to disciple them in ministry work in an intensive and integrative way. Leaders get a chance to see young leaders in “real” life—a camp week grants the chance to see people up close and uncensored! For that reason, it’s a potent ground for leadership training, which many of our wise leaders have successfully used.

It may not only be in our camping ministries where we would be wise to make more concerted efforts to “win with the kids.” As our world changes, statistics show that the average age of church leaders is growing progressively older. Bringing younger people into leadership is a good long-term strategy. Despite cultural narratives about younger people, especially millennials, there is an abundance of evidence to suggest that younger generations care deeply about their world and will give sacrificially if they are listened to and they care about the mission. The next leader of your local church may be much closer than you imagine! Let’s give them the opportunity! SR

Information about Camp Wakonda at
<http://theconnecting.church/wakonda/>



Bug Spray

By Damian Greene

Do you have a smell that quickly moves you to another time and place? Is it a pie baking, a forest after a rainstorm, a turkey in the oven, or a pine tree just after being cut? For me, it's the smell of bug spray. Any bug spray can act as a portal to take me back in time to another place. It is loud and exciting, and young people far outnumber the adults. It is dusk, and it is hot. With the help of bug spray, I've been catapulted back in time to my church camp days. Come along on the journey...

Here I am surrounded by loud, excited teenagers. We are spraying on bug spray like it is our favorite perfume. We are headed to vespers soon. It's my first year at camp—I have no idea what this churchy word means. Vespers is not something I have ever heard of. It turns out vespers quickly becomes one of my favorite activities at camp. Silently, we hike down a path to a nearby lake and perch on a large, beautiful rock, as the sun sets. While we are there, we sing praise songs, listen to Scripture being read aloud, enjoy some silent prayer and time for reflection. An adult counselor has a guitar that is used as accompaniment. It makes an impression because of the stark difference between this guitar and the church organ I am more used to. To me, it is a whole new way of worshiping. Although vespers is my favorite activity at camp, it is the Bible lessons that teach me the most.

This week, we are studying Psalm 139 every single day. As a junior high student, it seems intense, laborious, and albeit unnecessary. However, it quickly becomes my favorite Bible passage. Perhaps because I understand it so well. Or maybe because it is now so familiar. I learn from this; there is not a better time in life to learn and commit to memory parts of Psalm 139 than in middle school!

Another camp lesson is about communion. Pastor Dave Taylor and Pastor Dale Rood lead us in the celebration and remembrance of communion. I have taken communion with my Seventh Day Baptist church family of course, but I have never taken communion in a camp great room, or with almost all teenagers. There are no deacons here to serve it; no navy blue suits; no fancy, pressed, white tablecloths. The pastor informs us of the importance of letting go of unforgiveness prior to having communion. He gives us time to talk with others, and clear up unforgiveness. It is near the end of the camp week. We have been together day in and day out. We have had not quite enough sleep, and some of us are homesick. Of course, we had made friends, but we have also made our disagreements known. The pastor encourages us to seek out those we have wronged and ask forgiveness before participating in communion. There is not a dry eye in the place. I don't know it now, but this is a lesson I will take with me to the communion table years later as an adult. Ever wonder why our churches announce communion a week ahead of time? I'm pretty sure it is to allow time to ask the people around you for forgiveness.



Carl Greene followed by David Stall as they were heading into the main lodge at the beginning of Lewis Camp, Summer 1991.

The bug spray is gone, but the memories remain. As an adult, I now reflect back on my camp experiences. I would like to say every bug spray memory is a positive one, but that is not true. As I reflect further, I am reminded of being terribly homesick. I had never been away from home for more than a night or two. A week felt like forever. Of course, this is no one's fault. I felt loved, valued and respected by every camp staff member. Nonetheless, homesickness was a part of my camp experience.

The first year or two of camp I faced another challenge. In an attempt to know me better, the adults at camp kept asking who I was. As a middle school girl, I felt I asked myself this question daily. I realize now, these adults were trying to make a loving connection into my SDB circle. Who did we both know? Was my grandfather an SDB pastor? Was my uncle from Milton? Now, I realize that I should have said, "I am a first generation SDB," or "You don't know me yet, but you will someday." Given my background, I had trouble comprehending what these adults were looking for. I came to dread the question, and had a great deal of angst when being asked, "Who are you?" As a small church conference with a long history, I think there is a lesson in this for us. New people who join our church families want to be known by who they are, not whose relative they are, or who they know. Next time you are tempted to ask someone who they are related to—don't. Just love and welcome them for who they are.

Bug spray... It's odd that something like that can transport me through time and space, and back to my childhood. Some of the lessons learned at church camp this summer will stick with them for their whole lives. Trust me—I know. As adults, our response should be to ask ourselves, how will I support SDB camps this year? What can I do? Can I give financially? Cook meals? Prepare snacks? Be among the brave who staff? What will you do to make sure a whole new set of teenagers have bug spray memories? [SR](#)

Damian Greene lives in Berlin, NY, with her husband John Greene. They are deacons at the Berlin Seventh Day Baptist Church. Damian has her Bachelor of Science degree from Russell Sage College in English and Elementary Education. She is the mother of four children, most of whom are now adults (insert cheering here). Damian is employed at Grace Christian School as a middle school teacher, in Bennington, VT. She enjoys hosting family and friends, playing board games, and cooking for church camp.

Don't toss out those old specs!

This year's Conference theme of "Fix Your Eyes on Jesus" carries a dual meaning. We are called to affix our spiritual gaze on the Lord and follow Him (Hebrews 12:2). We might also need to take some corrective action to improve our physical vision so we can read God's Word more easily.

Part of my Conference promotion has been asking people to collect older prescription eyeglasses and reading glasses to help those in need. Can those old (and new) pieces of eyewear really do any good?

Here's some encouraging news that I found at the Zenni Optical website:

"Donating old glasses to charities who help needy people is certainly going to change lives for the better. It can be difficult to fathom that these days, with so many bargain-priced glasses available on the internet, that anyone wouldn't be able to buy a pair of eyeglasses. In actuality, many people in developing countries earn less than \$1 a day, and according to the World Health Organization, there are an estimated 246 million people who need but cannot afford or access eyeglasses.

"Since old prescription eyeglasses were first created for another person, sometimes it is difficult for charities to find an exact match to help a needy person. Yet, without even as close of a match as possible, many people who need vision correction will have no chance to improve their vision with eyewear, so donating old eyewear is still very important. There are cases in which people were nearly blind, but were then able to see much better thanks to someone donating an old backup pair of glasses that otherwise would have been thrown in the garbage. So it is crucial for old eyewear to be recycled and distributed worldwide."


Seventh Day Baptists are now an active part of this positive movement! I made a couple of quick Facebook mentions before last summer's Conference gathering in Pennsylvania and came home with over 100 pairs of glasses.

Since then, we have increased the promotion, providing artwork for signs (available at seventhdaybaptist.org/conference-2020/) for your local collection boxes, and it's working! THANK YOU to all who have been and will be contributing.

We picked up dozens of glasses at the Lost Creek, WV, church in the fall. I know others are adding to their boxes and plan to bring them to Conference in Grand Rapids this summer.

One pretty miraculous story to share: A member of an outreach group of the Texarkana, AR, SDB Church connected with a woman in Little Rock who collects glasses for overseas missions. Knowing that I would be visiting North Loup, NE, in December, Pastor Dan Richards from Texarkana—stay with me now—arranged to pick up some boxes in Little Rock to drop them off in North Loup, on his way to the Multiply Conference in Colorado. When I left North Loup, my car carried several hundred pairs of glasses back to the SDB Center in Janesville, WI. Those are some well-traveled eyeglasses!

And they've only just begun their journey. We hope to send glasses to some of our Conferences in Africa and possibly Central and South America.

Gather up those glasses and help others fix their eyes on Jesus! 

Donate Your Glasses for Conference 20/20!

Help others "Fix Their Eyes on Jesus" by giving them better vision to read the Word of God! Donate your old eyeglasses or new/old reading glasses. The eyewear will be taken to Conference in July 20/20. Thank you!!



SDB Conference 20/20

July 26 - August 1

Calvin University

Grand Rapids, MI

President's Page

by Kevin Butler

Former Conference President Don Graffius shared with me his mission experience in providing eyewear to the needy in Honduras. As part of the "fitting" for the correct prescription, those in charge asked the recipient to read the words of John 3:16 in their native language. Brilliant! That's a pair of glasses that could truly save a life!



Healing Division



Churches today are heavily divided. There are many different ideas between politics, church polity, culture, and the type of music we play for worship. Churches are split between people, families, belief systems, denomination, and so on. Differences in opinion are just fine. Most of us have heard the joke *ad nauseum* that you put two Seventh Day Baptists in a room and there are three opinions. We still mostly get along at the end of the day. But when we can't let go of an opinion or a feeling enough to agree to disagree and then go eat ice cream peaceably together, we get into trouble.

Exclusivity is the opposite of Christianity. Churches today are as full of cliques as any high school—and the thing about cliques is they breed exclusivity by definition (*clique: a small group of people, with shared interests or other features in common, who spend time together and do not readily allow others to join them*). Gravitating toward others who have similar interests is natural; however, it becomes a problem when group mentality takes over and others with differing opinions are left out, shunned, mocked, or not taken seriously due to “outsider” status. It may not be intentional, but I can almost guarantee you it feels that way to the person standing on the outside. As brothers and sisters in

Christ we are called to build one another up and share the good news of Christ. Guess what isn't happening when the church is rife with exclusivity?

Change oftentimes begins at the top. What does that look like in the church? I've got an idea for a starting point—the rest of this article will focus on that, but I think that these ideas can be applied in other contexts as well.

When we examine church hierarchy we see it is heavily populated with men. The struggle between genders originated in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3) and continues to this day—but that doesn't necessitate that we should perpetuate that relationship by default. That being said, it is necessary that both sides of the gender struggle do better. But men, if you are going to quote two popular verses in Ephesians 5 as a basis for your leadership, make certain you are enacting the whole of that Scripture.

I realize that Ephesians 5 is mainly directed at husband/wife relationships. However since it is often used out of that context and that analogy can be applied in other situations (*i.e.* the church is the bride of Christ, etc.), I feel comfortable applying it to the greater context of brothers and sisters in Christ—and in that context these verses pretty much spell out a great idea.

Paul says love your wife as you love yourself—in this context, men in ministry should treat women in ministry how they would want to be treated. Support them as you would want to be supported. Guys, how many of you would be deeply offended and hurt if someone devalued and disrespected your ministry to your face on the basis that you are a man? How would you feel if you weren't included in decision-making or if your opinion was only asked for to cover all the bases but not really listened to? How would you feel being an afterthought or a token representative? That's what happens on a regular basis to women in ministry—whether consciously or unconsciously.

Men, treat the women around you as you would want to be treated. Listen to their ideas, ask for opinions and listen to the answers. It doesn't have to be in every situation and you don't have to agree or enact ideas—but acting toward others with the same consideration you would give yourself makes a big statement and goes a long way toward healing a very real and wide divide. SR



Women's
Society

By Katrina Goodrich



The Sign of the Fleece

The story of Gideon can be seen as a story of trusting God to lead us step by step. In a time of unsureness, of not fully feeling the belief in ourselves, we can trust that there will be a positive result and we will come out on top.

Gideon's story starts with him threshing wheat in a wine press to hide it from the Midianites so they could not take it away from him. While Gideon worked, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him, "The Lord is with you, valiant warrior." Gideon questioned the angel asking, "If the Lord is truly with me, then why is all the bad stuff happening to me?" He was asking where the Lord had been as if He wasn't there. The Lord spoke through the angel and told Gideon that he was to lead Israel into battle, and that he would lead the country to victory.

Gideon was not the typical man who was expected to be chosen for a leader, especially for Israel. But as we know from other stories, God never goes the typical route. Gideon had faith in God, but his faith was said to be weak. God chose this man for His work and then equipped him with the Spirit for the task.

Gideon had a cloud of discouragement over him because of the troubles and poverty of his people. It took him time to come to terms with what God wanted for him. Gideon decided in order to believe what he was hearing was true, he needed a sign. He told the angel, "If you will remain here until I return again and bring you a present, then I will believe that you have surely spoken to me the words of God." The angel waited until Gideon returned with some food, but then instead of eating it, the angel told Gideon to place the meat and bread upon a rock nearby and to pour out the broth. Gideon did as told. The angel then touched the meat and bread with a staff which he carried in his hand. Like a flash the rock flamed up in fire and burned the meat and bread. The angel then disappeared out of sight. This gave Gideon the confirmation which he needed in order to believe.

The people where Gideon lived were worshiping the idol called Baal. Even Gideon's father had an altar of

Baal standing in his yard. The Lord spoke to Gideon again that same night and told him to tear the altar down and destroy the trees nearby where the people bowed down before the images of Baal. Gideon knew people would grow angry if they saw him tear down the altar, so he did it in secret with the help of some servants. He cut down the grove of trees where they worshiped the idol and tore down the altar of Baal. A new altar was built to the living God and a sacrifice was offered.

Judges 6:34 says, "then the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon." With the Spirit, Gideon sent messengers to different parts of the land and called the soldiers of Israel together. But first, Gideon wanted to be sure that God would be with him before he tried to drive the Midianites away. So he asked again for a sign from God. This time at nightfall he placed a piece of wool on a smooth floor where no roof had been built overhead. Gideon asked God to cause only the fleece of wool to become wet with dew. When morning came, he found the ground dry everywhere, but the fleece of wool was covered with dew. Gideon wrung a bowlful of water out of it. This did not satisfy Gideon. He prayed that God might not be angry with him if he should ask the third time for a sign. This time he asked God to make everything around the fleece wet except the fleece. Just like always, God proved to Gideon, causing him to believe.

Despite all of Gideon's second guesses and need for proof, God continually was patient because He knew Gideon would be able to conquer and save Israel, despite his doubts. Maybe it's time we grow patient with God, learn to trust Him, and understand that His plan is in progress. And no matter how scared, frustrated, or unprepared we feel, we will come out on top with God's Spirit cloaked around us. [SR](#)

YOUNG ADULT

By Sarina Gumness

Fear, Climate Change, and Greta Thunberg

Back in December, TIME magazine named Greta Thunberg as their person of the year. Whether or not you agree with Greta Thunberg, this seemed like a reasonable choice. Last year she quickly became a household name. This is in no small part because of her stance on climate change.

Often discussions of Greta involve some talk of her age and whether or not that makes her worth listening to on social and political issues. Though I think there is a discussion to be had around those issues, that is not the point of this article. What I came to realize quite quickly with Greta Thunberg, and what this article is about, is that the passion and urgency that she speaks with sounded very familiar. I began to realize that she sounded much like a fire and brimstone preacher.

Before I go on, I want to thank all of you who attended the first Q&A for *Everyday Theology*. There are still some kinks to work out, but I think this might be a good way for me to answer questions from you. I want to remind you that you can submit questions ahead of time on the Facebook page for my blog. By the time you read this we will have had our second Q&A, but if you want to see me answer questions about this article, you can come to the Q&A on March 19 at 8 pm EST. See you then.

The Fear of Fire

Fear is a powerful motivator. It can get most people to do things that they would not do otherwise. This is why courts often take into account the duress of a defendant when considering guilt or innocence. The problem with fear as a motivator is that often when the fear is gone people will go back to the old way of doing things. If the fear is gone then the motivation to change the way I live is gone. The best way for some-

one to change is for them to buy into the idea, not just think it is the only thing that won't kill them. But it is easier to scare someone into submission than it is to change their heart.

It is at this juncture of fear versus heart change that Greta Thunberg and pastors overlap. I have heard a lot of evangelistic sermons. For much of my youth these sermons all had a similar theme: "You had better believe in Jesus because your other choice is to burn forever." This method has two problems.

First, it puts the focus of Christianity on the penalties and not the blessings. I don't follow Jesus because He provides me with cosmic fire insurance. I follow Him because He has proven to be just, kind, and righteous. Following Jesus has made my life better—not perfect, but better. He is the King and as the King He knows what is best for me.

Second, when Jesus talked about hell, He directed this wrath at religious elites and not commoners. I wrote a whole article on this (see *Hell is for Christians* in the May 2016 SR), but the short version is that God condemns to hell those people who confess Jesus with their lips, but deny Him with their lifestyle. Interestingly enough, these are the same people whom the world rejects.

So, when I heard Greta talk about how she is fearful every day and that she wants us to panic because the world is on fire, I begin to see similarities. I have no doubt that Greta Thunberg is scared. I also know that if people are only motivated by fear, and that fear turns out to be unfounded, then the cause that Ms. Thunberg is promoting will fall by the wayside. Frankly, as a Christian, there are better reasons to care for the environment than fear.

And He Saw That It Was Good

In the story of creation, we see that everything God created is good. At the end of days three (Genesis 1:9-13), four (Genesis 1:14-19), and five (Genesis 1:20-23) God declares it good and after God creates humanity on day six (Genesis 1:24-31), He declares it very good. As part of that sixth day God commands the humans that He created to take care of the earth (Genesis 1:28). The very first command of God is care of the earth. Humanity was created to be stewards of the earth.

The fall of humanity brings complications into this. Not least is the idea that what Satan stole from Adam and Eve was the authority over creation. But even if that was the case, Jesus reverses the curse (Galatians 3:10-14) of Adam (Romans 5:15) and in so doing restores stewardship of the earth back to humanity. The very first chapter of the Bible makes it clear that part of what it means to be human is to care for the earth. Yet there are Christians who have rejected this idea.

New Creation

I want you to think about heaven. What do you think about? Is there a golden gate? Are there angels with halos? Does everyone have white robes and walk on clouds? I think a lot of people would answer yes to at least one of these questions. The problem is that this is not the image that the Bible gives us. In fact, when talking about eternity with God, the Bible usually uses the term New Creation, not heaven.

I'm not 100% sure where all these ideas came from, but I can tell you their results. They result in people rejecting the physical world and clinging to an idea that eternity with God is only spiritual. Now this idea gets bolstered by a few different Scriptures. Paul regularly talks about the things of the world versus the things of God (Colossians 3:1-4). Paul certainly lived at a time after Plato and was therefore potentially influenced by him. But I doubt that Paul completely rejected the physical world the way Plato did.

The other main Scripture that people use to reject the physical world comes from Revelation. In Revelation

we see that God will in fact destroy the earth. The problem is that we are also told that God will make a new heaven and a new earth (Revelations 21:1). God will re-create. This world may not be your home, but you will get another one just like it. John goes on in Revelation to tell us that in this new creation, heaven comes down to meet earth at the city of Jerusalem (Revelations 21:2). God dwells among his people (Revelations 21:3) in a very real and physical world. There may not be a sun, but the light of The Son is all that we need (Revelations 21:23).

Perhaps the most important point to be made in favor of a physical world is that Jesus' resurrected body was physical. Thomas put his hands in Jesus' scars (John 20:24-29). Jesus ate fish with the disciples (Luke 24:40-43). Sure, it wasn't physical like we know it. He did walk through locked doors (John 20:19), but Jesus' resurrected body was a body. Paul tells us that Jesus was the first fruit of the resurrection to come (1 Corinthians 15:20). That must mean that our resurrected bodies will have something in common with Jesus.

We Need Love, Not Fear

In 1 John we are told that perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4:7-21). As I think about the issues around salvation and, yes, even climate change, I realize that what we really need is love. I am not a Christian because I fear God. I am a Christian because I love God. Likewise, I desire to take care of the earth, not because I fear its destruction, but because I love my Creator. He made this earth and therefore I love his creation.

Greta Thunberg told us that she wants us to panic, not to hope. But the truth is that hope for a better life is the only lasting motivation. Christianity brings hope to a dark world. Part of that hope is knowing that we have a God who cares for us and for our planet. Sin may have brought groaning and pain to the world (Romans 8:18-25), but God has chosen to use me to bring redemption to the whole world. I am thankful for that privilege. I leave you with this question: Do you act out of fear or love? [SR](#)

TRIP REPORT—JAMAICA—January 2020

This mission could be seen as a back-up mission, or a Plan B mission, or a substitute mission, or an after-thought mission, or a re-directed mission, or a hurry-come-up mission. But God, in His foreknowledge and sovereignty, had it all planned out. And He invited us to join the party.

The Miami Seventh Day Baptist Church planned a medical mission trip to Haiti for July 2018. Recruited from several other SDB Churches in the United States, a team of 18 people committed to that mission, and were ready to go. About one week before the trip, civil unrest in Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince caused the cancellation of flights into the country, and inevitably, the well-meaning mission had to be aborted. It was rescheduled for May 2019 and commitments were received from 15 of the original team members. Once again, due to the continued civil and political instability in Haiti, the trip had to be aborted for a second time.

With the tensions in Haiti hovering indefinitely, it was not prudent to plan for another trip in the near future and our travel vouchers, which American Airlines was unusually generous in granting, were quickly heading toward expiration.

What could we do? Well, we prayerfully sought another mission destination—and Jamaica was laid on our hearts, specifically the Coffee Grove SDB Church in the cool parish of Manchester. Communication was initiated with the Pastor of that Church, Rosemarie Wilson, and in a short time the mission was confirmed. Pastor Rosemarie indicated how she had shared with her congregation, at the end of the previous year, a vision for a health fair just about the time for which our mission was being proposed. The hand of the Lord could be clearly seen in the coordination and lining up of many of the details for the mission.

On New Year's Day 2020, a team of eleven people converged on the island of Jamaica and suited up for an unforgettable experience and adventure of service and sacrifice. A medical doctor, two registered nurses (including one who is also a psychologist), and eight others of us comprised the team that the Lord Himself put together. Many of the team members had never met until they either saw each other at the Miami, FL, airport or when they landed in Jamaica. Yet, there was an unmistakable chemistry and

compatibility— one of the strengths of the team and hence of the mission.

Two days of a medical clinic, with a simultaneous Vacation Bible School, a ministry in two jails and on the street, and participation in a couple of evangelistic street meetings were the highlights of the mission. Blood pressure and blood sugar checks were done, dental examinations were undertaken, reading glasses were given to those who needed them, the children received care packages and toys, clothing items were given away, and salvation bracelets were dispensed. In addition to the tangible ways in which the community of Coffee Grove was blessed, we ministered in song, teaching, prayers, and the sharing of testimonies. As we blessed others, we were also tremendously blessed ourselves. In four short days an impact was made, relationships developed, and transformation occurred—all by and through the grace and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many thanks to the eleven team members, to Pastors Desmond and Rosemarie Wilson, to those who opened their homes to us, to those who prepared our meals, to those who drove us around, to the Coffee Grove SDB Church, to the Miami SDB Church for all availing themselves to be mightily used of the Lord. The majority of the funding for the mission came by and through the Miami SDB Church.

The team did not want the mission to end so quickly, nor did the people to whom we were sent. And the recurring question on many lips was: When will we return to Coffee Grove? SR



FOCUS on Missions

Andy Samuels

Chief Executive Director
SDB Missionary Society



Team Members: Elnora Andries, Linda Estime, Christine Francis, Laurence Harris, Maria Harris, Micah Harris, Morgan Harris, Heather Muschett, Andrew Samuels, Ricardo Sepulveda, Gail Transeau.



Vacation Bible School in progress.



Pastor Rosemarie Wilson leading worship



GOD MANIFESTS HIS GRACE AT JERSEY OAKS

By Donna Bond

Some years ago, a windstorm deposited a Jersey Oaks oak branch on the boys' dorm, tearing a hole in the roof inches away from an occupied top bunk. All of the campers slept through the whole event! The following Sunday, a pre-teen at the Baptist church where I play the piano requested that the congregation "pray for Jersey Oaks Camp," testifying to the grace of God in a potentially frightening situation. No doubt this young man will never forget this faith-building event. SR

Missionary Society Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the members of the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society will be held at the Missionary Society Office in the First Hopkinton Seventh Day Baptist Church Parish House, Ashaway, RI, on Sunday, March 15, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. for the following purposes:

- To elect voting members, a Board of Managers and officers to hold office until the next annual meeting and until their successors are elected.
- To hear and act upon the reports of the Board of Managers and officers for the fiscal year January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.
- To ratify the appointment of independent public accountants for the current fiscal year.
- To consider and act upon such other matters as may properly come before said meeting or any adjournment thereof.

The Board of Managers has fixed the close of business on February 29, 2020, as the time at which members entitled to notice thereof and to vote at the meeting and any adjournment thereof shall be determined.

– Kathy Hughes, Secretary

BIRTH

PITTS—Tia and Andrew Pitts, a boy, Jameson Jordan Pitts, on August 16, 2019.

Lead Pastor Opening

Central Seventh Day Baptist Church in Mitchellville, MD, is ready to start the next chapter in its history. We are searching for an SDB pastor to lead us in our three-fold purpose of promoting the worship of God, spreading the gospel of Christ, and nurturing the membership in fellowship and disciplining through the Holy Spirit.

Central SDB Church was founded 40 years ago. Our worship style is traditional with a contemporary music interlude. Our current membership totals 48, with an average attendance of 20 for worship and 5 for Sabbath School. We have a generous, loving congregation that supports several local and international projects.

We are looking for an engaging Biblical preacher and teacher to lead us in worship and study each week. The pastor will play a vital role in equipping and leading the congregation in community engagement and outreach. As requested, the pastor will be responsible for conducting baptisms, weddings, and funerals. This is a full-time position to include Sabbath responsibilities, church outreach activities, and participation in business meetings.

Qualifications:

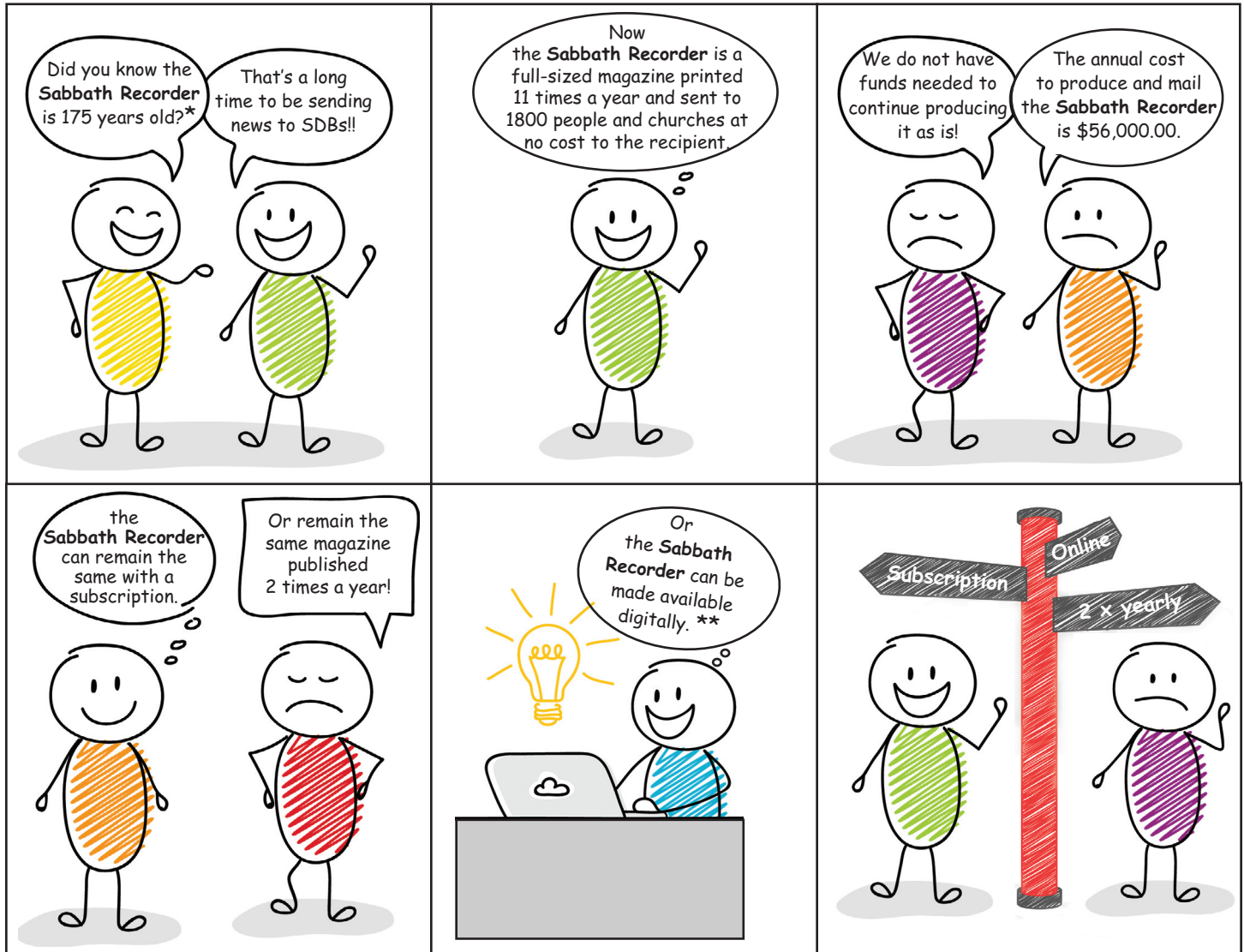
- Member of a Seventh Day Baptist church
- Fully endorse and support Central's church covenant
- Master of Divinity or equivalent is preferred; will consider someone in process of completing a Master's program
- Experience and/or educational emphasis in church growth, preferably in a multi-ethnic context

Benefits:

- Mitchellville, MD, is located in the greater metropolitan area of the District of Columbia. Benefits will align with the "special" salary base in the 2019 Salary Guidelines for SDB Pastors.

Interested individuals please contact:

Keli Watt at kwatt20772@yahoo.com or 301-346-6270



Thank you for your prayers for the Tract and Communications Council and your response to the survey.

**The Sabbath Recorder began publication in 1844 and is one of the longest continuous printed religious publications in the United States of America. For the past 175 years, the Sabbath Recorder has existed in many different formats to provide news about Seventh Day Baptists in the USA and Canada and around the world.*
***The Sabbath Recorder would be made available digitally with the understanding I would have permission to print part or all of each issue as needed.*



Please choose one of the following options that you prefer for the **Sabbath Recorder**:

- I prefer the **Sabbath Recorder** to remain the same printed format through a paid subscription of \$____ a year.
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- I prefer the **Sabbath Recorder** to remain in the same printed format but with only 2 issues each year.
- I prefer the **Sabbath Recorder** to be made available digitally only with the understanding I would have permission to print part or all of each issue as needed.

LAST CHANCE: Please send your response to:

Attn: SR Survey
 PO Box 1678
 Janesville, WI 53547-1678

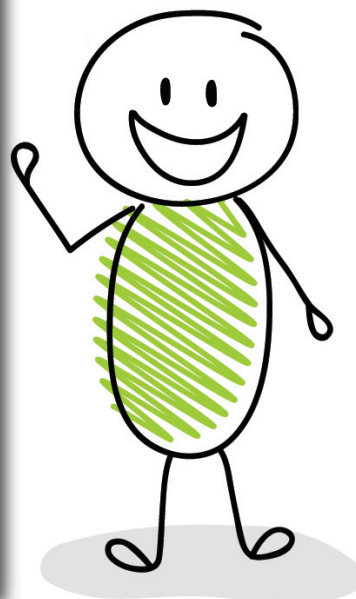
Or answer online at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SRSurvey2020>

Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices



Last Chance!

Please tell us
what you think
about the
Sabbath Recorder!
Survey Inside



Coming soon!



SDB Conference
20/20

July 26 - August 1

Calvin University

Grand Rapids, MI