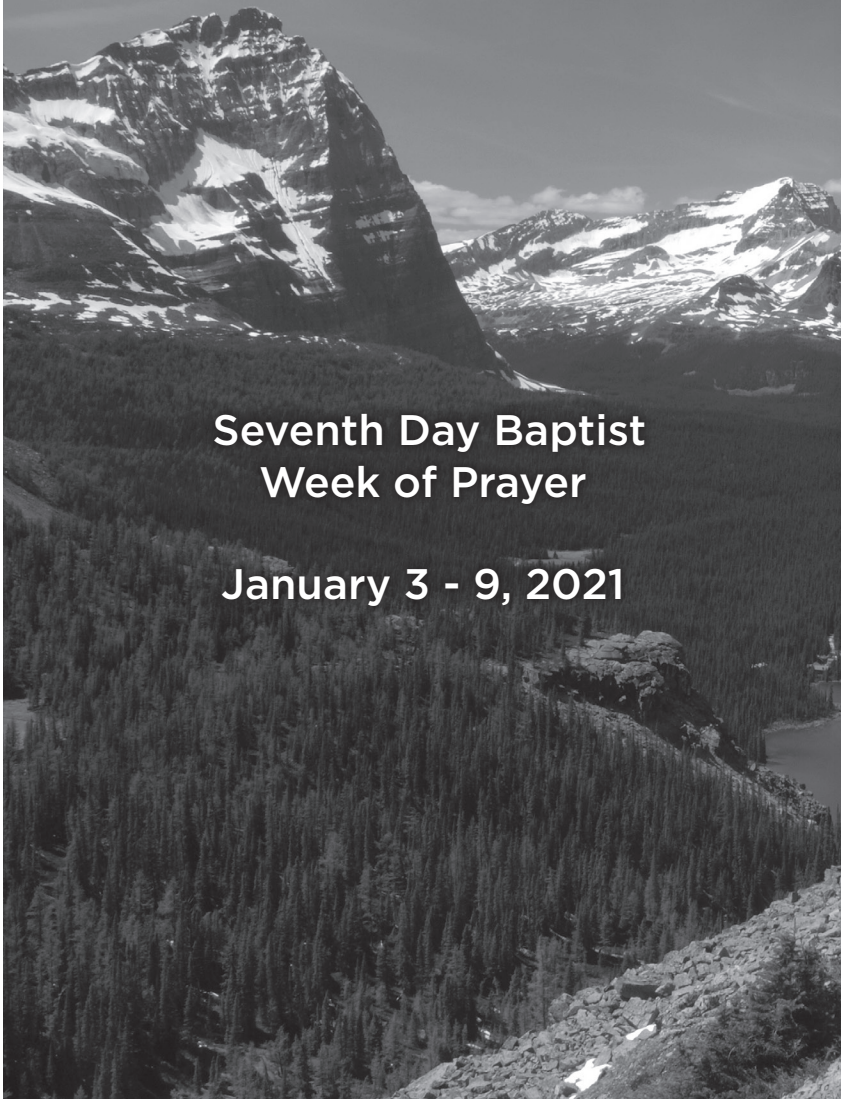


It's A Great...

**Seventh Day Baptist
Week of Prayer**

January 3 - 9, 2021



Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer January 3-9, 2021

Sponsored by the

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During the first full week of January since 1967, Seventh Day Baptists around the world have united in prayer by sharing in meditations centered on a theme chosen by the author of the SDB Week of Prayer booklet. This year's theme is "It's A Great..." authored by Sister Nilda Albino, President of the Philippine Seventh Day Baptist Association, an umbrella organization which embodies three Philippine Seventh Day Baptist Conferences. We are encouraging prayers each day of the week for all countries in the world where Seventh Day Baptists exist; not just the countries which are members of the World Federation.

Purposes of the SDB World Federation include:

1. **To provide increased communication** among Seventh Day Baptist groups around the world.
2. **To promote projects of mutual interest** which will benefit from international cooperation.
3. **To stimulate fellowship** among Seventh Day Baptist Christians through periodic meetings of representatives between Conferences or groups and programs of mutual aid.
4. **To receive and evaluate statements of need** as may come to the Federation and to share such expression of need with its members, inviting their response as the Lord may lead.
5. **To provide leadership training** for Conference leaders, pastors and lay leaders appropriate to each individual conference, as determined through consultation.

Contributions:

The SDB World Federation encourages all member Conferences to designate an offering from their churches at least once a year in support of the purposes of the SDB World Federation. Other contributions and designations from Conferences, churches, and/or individuals are also welcome. Please make all checks or money orders out to SDBWF. Contributions may be mailed to: Treasurer, SDB World Federation, P.O. Box 1311, West Palm Beach, FL 33402 or you may also donate via PayPal at treasurer@sdbwf.org

Sessions:

The last General Session was held in Brazil (Curitiba, Parana) on January 22-28, 2017 with the theme, "The Kingdom of God is Like...". The next General Session is planned to occur in the United States, July 17-24, 2022.

Officers for the World Federation include General Secretary Andrew Samuels (general.secretary@sdbwf.org); President Luciano Baretto Nogueira de Moura; First Vice President & Vice President for Caribbean Claudia Ferguson; Treasurer Garfield Miller (treasurer@sdbwf.org); Assistant General Secretary Michael Spearl; Recording Secretary Karen Umana; Regional Vice Presidents: Canaan Phiri (Africa), Douglas Machado (South America), and John Pethtel (North America). Luis Lovelace serves as Editor of Publications.

About the Author

My name is Nilda Paborada Albino. I was born in the Philippines on March 28, 1970 to Eutiquio Albino and Dolores Paborada Albino. I am the eldest of eleven children. My father passed away as a result of an accident. I am single, and am happy with my single status, dedicating myself to God's service, striving to obey and to do His will. I was brought up by my parents at home, being exposed to all kinds of hardships and struggles in trying to meet the family's needs. My parents were very religious and devoted to the Roman Catholic Church. Their desire for me was that I would become a nun. When I was in my secondary level of education, I received an invitation to attend a Nun's seminar and although I was interested, somehow I refused. I chose to continue with my studies in a private school because I had obtained an academic scholarship and I then graduated from that private school as the class valedictorian with high honors.

I entered the working world after having to drop out of college because of financial hardship. While working in the city of Manila, a friend invited me to her church. I attended the church and was touched by the friendliness of the people, the sincerity of the pastor, and the anointed atmosphere of the church. In response to the sermon, I gave my heart to the Lord and He became my Savior and Lord.

As I grew in the Lord, I developed a desire to go to Bible College, so I went back home to the Province of Zamboanga and spent time in the Word, seeking the Lord and asking

Him to fulfill that desire. During that time, I discovered the truth of the Biblical Sabbath, and began looking for a Sabbath-keeping Church. By the grace of God, I found the Seventh Day Baptist Church, and God opened a door for me to attend the Baptist Theological College in Cebu City, where I graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theology, with a major in Religious Education.

The Lord allowed me to relocate to the city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, where I lived for more than eleven years. While working there, I had opportunities to engage in ministry, and had the privilege of leading several people to the Lord, including people from Egypt, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and the Philippines.

When I returned to my home country of the Philippines, I prayed to God to open for me another way of serving Him in the field of ministry and God answered my prayer. I am now serving Him under the SDB ministry with new responsibility as President of the Philippine Seventh Day Baptist Association. At the same time, I'm working in the ministry of my local church exhorting, lecturing, discipling, and providing other services. I am happy in the service for our God and still striving to do His will. To God be the glory.



Introduction

The world today is always aiming for a life that is full of prestige, advantages and success, while the Christian life can be compared to an Olympic race where the aim is to finish the race with great excellence. The Apostle Paul gave his remark on this by saying, "Run in such a way that you may win" (1 Cor. 9:24). Yes, the Christian life is like an Olympic race. The difference is that while the Christian plays for eternal stakes; that is, eternal life through Jesus Christ, the worldly man who wins in the temporal games of life, obtains a prize that will fade.

Amidst the turmoil of our present day, we can find God's power to live above the sin that prevents us from winning in the games of life. As the Apostle Paul made it very clear, a Christian's life is not just trying to convince ourselves that life can be different, but it's finding God's power as Christ comes to indwell a person's life. When Christ called His disciples, He wasn't concerned about what they have in life, such as political background, popularity, church creed or membership. He knew that when they followed Him, they would find God's power to live great lives. Christians today can find God's power by letting the Holy Spirit control and empower our lives so that we would be able to stand firm in the midst of any great crisis we are facing.

As we begin this year 2021, there will be a lot of resolutions that we will call upon

to help us as guidelines throughout the year. We can lead great lives. So, I will use the unfinished concept of, 'It's A Great...,' and I will fill in the blank each day for the week. The word 'great' is one that is used to ascribe or express God's wonderful works and ways that are far beyond excellence. And we as Christians are called upon to manifest all our works and ways, as well as our heart attitudes in the likeness of Jesus, who is our perfect pattern. This theme is encouraging us to glorify and honor God. It's driving us to the highest desire of achieving much more than worldly things.

The gospels record a humorous but instructive episode, when a group of Christ's followers were arguing over who was the greatest in the kingdom. Perhaps, each one boasted about their achievements in life, his closeness to the Master, or his leadership abilities. So, they went to Jesus to settle their argument, but they were all surprised at Jesus' answer to them. (Matt. 18:1-4)

In this week of prayer, we will be dealing with the theme, 'It's A Great...,' which will consider different topics that will motivate our hearts and minds to look forward to achieve great things that bring glory and honor to our God.

To Him be the glory forever!

It's A Great Day – The Big Change.

2 Corinthians 4:16 *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”* (NKJV)

There is a fundamental difference between man and nature, and that is the matter of renewal. Wherever man goes, he pollutes the environment. He doesn't care. The environment or nature is groaning with pain caused by man's undisciplined actions. The carelessness of man toward the natural environment brings more negative effects, and it affects us all. God has given to us good natural resources for us to enjoy as long as we live and He gave us good climate too. Everything which God has given is really good and perfect. But somehow, due to increasing knowledge and ability, changes in almost everything has occurred, both positive and negative. There are changes to our physical world which have also affected our spiritual lives. Yes, we are being helped through the rapid advancement of technology. But our dependence on technological power has weakened our spiritual dependence upon God. This present condition of our times, causes people to almost ignore God who has provided for all mankind.

Thanks be to God, for He has applied the natural principle of restoration, and in time, renewal begins. As we commence this year 2021, perhaps we have already developed our own personal guidelines of what we want to achieve in our lives. It is my earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit will be the administering power in our hearts as we make our personal decisions for the year's achievements. It is also my earnest desire that

by God's amazing grace, people will be desiring deep within their hearts to have spiritual renewal in their lives. Renewal in spirit means a change of heart. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man, and yet spiritual renewal is only possible as a person allows God's grace to work inside one's heart. It is then a great day when you can have the big changes in your life. The big changes in life begin with your changed heart. May the Holy Spirit help us to have a heart that has an eternal perspective; a heart that keeps on reaching forward to what lies ahead as the Apostle Paul says in Philippians 3:13-14; a heart that can help to change the world by demonstrating your changed life. If the people of God have a great change in their lives by letting the Holy Spirit govern our hearts and minds, then we will be like a well-organized orchestra as we do our part while we are still in this world. As we travel our life's journey for a thousand miles, let us begin with a single step.

To God be the Glory.

REFLECTION:

Have you noticed the great changes in the world today? How are you responding to them? What is a major change that God has brought about in your life?

Pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Australia*, Bangladesh, Brazil*, Burundi*, Cameroon, Canary Islands, and Chile.

***Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.**

It's A Great Power – Faith And Determination.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”* (NKJV)

As a new year approaches, people are thinking about, and listing new year's resolutions. To some people, it is an inspiration for life's focus all throughout the year. So, a list is made. But somehow, we fail to achieve our goals, so we end up with a feeling of frustration. Some of us blame friends, family members, and others. Failure occurs sometimes, when we do not anticipate ahead of time, the things which can possibly cause us to fail. There is nothing wrong with making new year's resolutions, but the question is: Can you keep them? Are we able to convince ourselves that this year will be different?

One of the primary reasons for our shortcomings and failure is our negative chains of habit. Habits are the patterns of conduct that we perform. Negative chains of habit are often too weak to be felt, until they are too strong to be broken. The force of habit is often stronger than the force of resolution made by will that is weak and defective. So then, if a person is going to change his negative habit, a double force must be applied that is greater than the pull of the negative habit. That's where faith in God and the determination to obey God's will must be applied, rather than a list of new

year's resolutions. When a person takes the step of faith to let Jesus Christ enter into his life as a living person, then everything within his life is made new. A new life declaration with faith and determination begins, and the power to live a positive life begins as well.

The means for a higher level of success is in the power of one's faith in God and the determination to follow and obey His will. Faith can move mountains and make everything possible. Faith can cause heaven to open for you and me. The Apostle Paul made a life resolution when he says, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”(Philippians 1:2) That is far beyond simply a resolution statement. It is coupled with a determination proving his new life in Christ. Let us then have a strong faith in God and the determination to obey His will, for everything is possible with God.

To God be the glory.

REFLECTION:

As the Apostle Paul made a definitive new life resolution statement, how about you? Have you made yours?

Pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Democratic Republic of Congo, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, England*, and Ethiopia.

*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

It's A Great Journey – Continuing Toward Our Goal.

Philippians 3:13-14, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

(NKJV)

All people who are spiritually mature can think the way the Apostle Paul is thinking. A mature person has a set of goals in life. Sometimes difficulties occur in reaching those goals. The Apostle Paul uses some principles in reaching his goals. One of them is, “forgetting the past.” But realistically, to do such a thing is quite difficult. Those past experiences of failures and mistakes, of sorrows and disappointments, have already engraved in the mental memory of a person, that such things are too difficult to remove. They keep on ringing in the mind and heart. Therefore, many people are struggling with this reality, and some people just live in a world of broken pieces that they just can't put behind them. The Apostle Paul had been successful in forgetting his past. Perhaps he used the principle of “delete.” He did not dwell on the mental rehearsing of his past, but

instead, he reprogrammed his mind, by thinking about positive things which are good and worthy of praise and honorable in God's sight; things that are beautiful and respectable to all. I believe that the Apostle Paul also used a special element to reach his goal; the power of self-determination through faith in God. He also said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13) With strong courage, that allowed him to surely reach his eternal goal, which is equal to life above.

To God be the glory.

REFLECTION:

Have you ever made a goal? Is it a short-term or a long-term goal? Or is it an eternal goal just like the Apostle Paul. Have you forgotten your bad past experiences in life, not allowing them to defeat you?

Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Guyana*, Haiti, and India*.

***Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.**

***It's A Great Reminder —
The Precious Memories Of Yesterday.***

Joshua 4:1-6, 20, 24. Key verse: 24
"That all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever." (NKJV)

There is an old folks saying that is worth repeating here: "Today is the yesterday of tomorrow." Perhaps it is. Joshua led the people of God, the Israelites, to cross the Jordan river toward the promised land. After they had crossed, God told Joshua to choose twelve men from among the people; one from each tribe, and to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan river right where the priest stood. So at the order of Joshua, each of them had carried a stone upon their shoulder and put it in their places where they stayed that night.

The stone served as a tangible memorial object for their encounter with God's supernatural intervention upon them crossing the Jordan river. This shows us that when we encounter difficulties as we travel along life's roads; difficulties we can hardly bear, we can be sure that God's mighty hand is there for us to help us all the way through.

The stones serve as a memorial for the future generations to know how God is faithfully directing His people by His mighty hand. God is a God of the past, present, future and forever. He never changes. God, in His faithfulness, is continuing His mighty act in preserving, directing, intervening, and maintaining or sustaining life on earth. Therefore, whatever lies before

us, we can trust the faithfulness of God and we are secure in His mighty hand. The effect of our personal encounter with God serves as our memories for tomorrow, so that the next generation may see and develop their own personal faith and trust in our God. If during the time of Joshua, they had stones as tangible objects that the future generation could see and touch, we who live in this present time called Christians, have also the cross of Jesus as a tangible object to show to the next generation about our personal encounter with the Lord Jesus. Our salvation was completed on the cross, and we receive it by having faith in Him who died on that cross. The essential evidence that we have encountered the Lord, is our changed life, and we have the precious memory of that moment. And the cross of Jesus serves as a great reminder.

To God be the Glory.

REFLECTIONS:

Do you remember one spiritual event in your life that you could consider a precious memory? Does the cross bring any meaningful reminders to you? Do you believe that the cross is a tangible object that reminds us of our faith toward Jesus?

Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jamaica*, Kenya*, Lebanon, and Liberia.

***Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.**

It's A Great Realization – Thinking More About Time.

Psalm 90:12 *“So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”* (NKJV)

The most important thing that a man should think about with regards to time is the brevity of life. Time is precious, because it is a God-given gift to be used by us, given in His grace. It is of far greater value than any monetary figures. Therefore, we must take advantage of every opportunity that time provides us, to serve God and to do His will. Of course, that does not mean that we have to work every single moment of our lives. No, we have to take a break and look around us at our surroundings to enjoy them. God made them for us to enjoy. But it means we must use our time wisely with appropriate breaks.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven”. We are so grateful that God doesn't sell time. He gives time freely to us. So, let us spend our days redeeming the time, because the days are evil, as the Apostle Paul said. We should redeem our time by using every opportunity to live for God (Ephesians 5:15 and Colossians 4:5). Time is precious, so handle it with care. God has given us time equally. We all have 24 hours in each day. We need to manage our time so carefully, because there can be no substitute for it. We have to realize that life is short and time is passing by, so we

need to live with meaning and purpose to our lives in every moment. Knowing God deeply gives us a meaningful life, and we discover great purpose in obeying and doing God's will. We need God's wisdom to be in our hearts and minds, in order for us to grow wise in using our time. We cannot afford to be unproductive with the use of our time. An example of unproductive use of time is someone who possesses “afterwards mentality,” because of worldly entanglements or family cares, such as portrayed in the scriptures in Matthew 8:21. “Afterwards mentality” is also exemplified in the form of personal convenience in Acts 24:25. But our highest aim in life is to glorify and honor God. Therefore, we must manage our God-given gift of time as we reverence the Lord our God. Let us invest our time for eternity.

To God be the glory.

REFLECTION:

How do you value your time? Do you have enough time for everything you need to do? How can you make better use of your time, to ensure that you are honoring God and investing for eternity?

Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Malawi*, Mozambique, Netherlands*, New Zealand*, Nicaragua, and Nigeria*

***Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.**

It's A Great Chance – Life's Opportunity.

Revelation 3:8a, "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it." (NKJV)

Some people say, "Opportunity often knocks only once at the door of life." Failure to hear its sometimes dim sound can cause us to continue doing something the same way, day after day, not realizing that there is a better way. Opportunity has been defined as "a special arrangement of circumstances, offering a person a chance to step in with ideas for something new, something better, something unique." Opportunity indicates a favorable occasion, time or a place of learning. It implies doing new things. It offers a means to express oneself. Opportunity does not always arrive neatly gift-wrapped. There are times that it will arrive in the form of failure, disappointment, or even persecution. The Apostle Paul is an example of that. When he was seized and put in prison, probably in Ephesus, Paul grasped that dangerous or risky opportunity of presenting his claim of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He defended his claim in court with aggressiveness as we see in Acts 24-26.

I believe opportunity does not always appear only to a single individual. Sometimes it appears in the purview of thousands of people's vision, and yet only few persons will have the keenness to recognize it. So, some people are able to grasp it, while others bypass it, and they don't realize that an opportunity was there. Some people take advantage of every opportunity because of personal greed, and they become opportunists. Many opportunities require the willingness

to step out and take a risk. For opportunities to have success, they need a reliance upon the help of God. God's provision and supervision through His Word, are available and He exhorts us to complete obedience to Him. Joshua 1:8 says, "Do not let the word of the Lord depart from your mouth; meditate upon it day and night so you will be careful to obey it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

We do not need to wait for the opportunity to knock at our door, but we need to be diligent and continue doing productive things, while looking out for our breakthroughs. We must always check our heart motives which help us to evaluate the reason for pursuing our opportunities. The right motive must be for the glory of our God, focusing toward eternity and the life above.

To God be the glory.

REFLECTION:

What are some opportunities in your life that you are glad you seized? What are some that you regret that you missed? How has the Lord redeemed some of your missed opportunities? Have you claimed the opportunity of salvation?

Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in Pakistan, the Philippines*, Poland*, Rwanda*, Sierra Leone, South Africa*, and South Korea.

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It's A Great Will --- The Unity Of The Believers.

John 17:20-26; key verses - 22-23, "And the glory which You gave me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. I in them and You in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (NKJV)

Unity of all believers in Christ is the absolute will of God. All Christians must strive to attain that unity. Jesus Himself prayed for the unity of all believers, with the highest objective that the world may know and would understand the depth of His love. God, the Father and his Son Jesus Christ are united in one mind, regarding their decisions and plan for saving humanity. They are united in the spirit of having the attitude of loyalty toward each other. Christians as well, ought to imitate this positive attitude of Christ, in the spirit of humility and obedience (Philippians 2:5-8).

We are told to have the mind of Christ. It is God's will also that Christians are not only united in mind, having the mind of Christ, but we are also told to be one in heart; having a heart of love. Let us open our eyes of understanding to see that our heavenly Father and His Son love each other. Love pertains to a heart attitude. Love is not just an emotion; but it is accompanied with action. Therefore, love

is God's will in action. Christians ought to be united in heart, united in purpose, having compassion accompanied with action. We will have a clear conscience as we practice the love embodied in 1 Corinthians 13. It is also God's will that all Christians be united in our appetite. In the physical realm, appetite has to do with a craving; a craving for something needed in order to live and to be strengthened. The same is true for our spiritual lives. Christians ought to be one in our craving for spiritual enlightenment so that we will have the same objective as the body of Christ. This can be attained by consistent reading, meditating, and applying of the truth from the Word of God in our daily living. May the Spirit of unity bind us together as one.

To God be the Glory.

REFLECTION:

How can you do your part to preserve unity in your local church? What are some of the hindrances to unity in the body of Christ?

Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda*, Ukraine, United States of America*, Canada*, and Zambia*.

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