



Sabbath Recorder

You are
all one
in Christ Jesus.

—Galatians 3:28 NLT

November 2021
A Seventh Day Baptist Publication



The Liberty OF Diversity

HOW FREEDOM
IN CHRIST
EMPOWERS US
TO APPRECIATE
AND CELEBRATE
DIVERSITY

SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST
WEEK OF PRAYER
JANUARY 2 - 8, 2022

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Editor's Note: Thank You to Andy Samuels and Carl Greene who brought us the Week of Prayer themed articles on Diversity.



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Sabbath Recorder

A monthly journey into the mind and heart.

November 2021

Patricia Cruzan, Editor

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WHO ARE SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS?

If you've never read *The Sabbath Recorder* before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are. Like other Baptists, we believe in:

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

THE SEVENTH DAY

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

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Why Diversity Matters to SDBs and Me

Years ago, a large group of builders got together to create a plan around building a skyscraper, a tall building with the latest technology of that time. After finding the perfect land for this project, these builders and architects developed a strategic plan devoting themselves to work in unison, to adapt the building materials to the local market availability, and to build an infrastructure that would gain recognition globally. Initial planning phase started with no major drawbacks and first bricks were settled. Walls were erected and workers felt that they were part of this mega structure—after all, this building will bring recognition to them. The Bible calls this building “Babel.” Genesis 11:4 says that the problem was that the builders wanted to make a name for themselves and to separate themselves from others by building this structure. Their hearts were away from God and full of pride. However, in His mercy and love, the Lord came down to see the building and decided to scatter these people all over the world to deal with their pride. He brought redemption to the world by creating languages, cultures, and diversity.

Diversity is in the heart of God. It was His desire to scatter people around the world and to create different environments in which people adapt and develop a variety of cultures, lifestyles, or languages—all this, for redemption. As the global Christian church, we see the creation of God; we thank Him for everything He’s done for us and start singing *How Great Thou Art*; but, when was the last time you took a minute and admired the colorful creation of God through the lenses of cultures, languages, or diversity in general?

Perhaps the topic of cultural diversity in some parts of the church has been shaped by systematic practices developed by materialistic, political, cultural, or economic influences, and a consequence, diversity inclusion is dependent on Biblical plus (fill in the blank) realities. However, Acts 2 says that at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down and touched the hearts of people assembling together. Chapter 2 says that people from different nations, cultures, and languages came together and were filled with the Spirit of God for the first time—a very special moment in the history of Christianity that God wanted to share with everyone. This is the role of the church: to bring the community together, regardless of differences or worldly views, and be that place where God meets with His people.

So why does diversity matter to us? Because it is a gift of God for the growth of His eternal church. As a consequence, the inclusion of this diversity in the life of the church brings inward and outward benefits: It allows the sharing of cultures, sharing of blessings, and spiritual renewals that build upon one strong church, one global church. And it also allows for an open communication with the community, a relationship based on linguistic/cultural commonalities.

It is exciting to see denominational conversations around the topic of diversity inclusion. There are groups within the denomination looking at strategic approaches to talk about this topic in our churches. It is also important to continue to be intentional about the role of the church in God’s divine plans for eternity: a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language worshipping the Lord forever (Revelation 7:9).

As Pastor Albert Tate stated, “diversity is not an opportunity to fight it’s an invitation to celebrate.” Let’s take part in this celebration and grow together, as neighbors, as community members, as children of God, and build a strong foundation upon which the body of Christ comes together in an effort to tear down walls and to elevate a message of love, acceptance, service, and salvation. [SR](#)

Andres Jara of Dodge Center, MN. An instrument of God’s grace to serve others.

Why Diversity Matters to SDBs and Me

When Danita and I were first asked to write this article, I have to admit, we were hesitant due to the delicate nature of this topic, especially during these times. As we prayed about it, we agreed to give the subject our best shot, based on our personal experiences. As we were driving from Florida to Oklahoma, we began to discuss what diversity means and “Why Diversity Matters” to us. Also asking, why does it truly matter to the Seventh Day Baptist churches around the world?

We realize how important it is that our many differences be recognized and used to improve relationships rather than divide. As we all know, some of the obvious differences in people can be cultural, race, political, sexual confusion, social economics, nationality, etc. These differences need to be embraced, not avoided. From our experience, most people find the easiest way to deal with diversity is through avoidance and just simply staying in their comfort zone.

The question comes up, why should we even concern ourselves with diversity? Some would say, can't we just avoid the subject and all just get along? (Ignore it and it won't exist!) Imagine if Christians chose to take that approach! Or if the Apostle Paul had not been concerned with the diverse groups of peoples he encountered, how would the gospel have been spread? We would not be able to carry out the Great Commission if we chose to avoid interaction with others and stay in our comfort groups/zones.

Most people know Danita and I love to travel and have had a chance to see diversity firsthand around the world. As we travel on mission trips and cruises, we keep in mind that every person needs Jesus and a chance to hear the Gospel regardless of race, culture, political opinion, sexual confusion, and so on. We never lose sight that every human is one of God's children and that God longs to have them in His eternal kingdom. This is what motivates us to reach out to all groups with open arms and loving hearts.

If you study every aspect of what Godly love truly means, you soon realize love conquers all diversity barriers, especially as a Christian. Godly love to us is the answer to why breaking down diversity barriers matters. If we love all people the way God loves, then diversity becomes a non-issue, no matter who you are around. Regardless of the differences, we have to actively show them in deeds and actions God's love through Christ. All over the world, I have yet to meet anyone where a smile and warm hand shake/hug doesn't break down diversity barriers fairly quickly.

So why is the discussion of diversity important to Seventh Day Baptists and personally to Danita and me? As SDB churches continue to break down diversity barriers and become more unified in our efforts to share the Gospel, imagine how much more effective we will be in our Great Commission. Imagine our church growth when we become more inclusive of people who don't fit our mold! Let us be the church that purposefully reaches out to all people groups in all communities, having a vision of being a well diversified church with a common goal of spreading the Gospel!

We challenge all of us to step out of our “comfort zone” this year when we meet at conference. Let us start by breaking down diversity barriers amongst ourselves. Be purposeful in visiting with everyone, not just the groups that are like your group. Let's all take the extra effort to reach out in love to everyone—it is well worth the effort. God brings all kinds of people in front of you on a daily basis. Imagine if we, as Christians, break down barriers by purposefully interacting with all people out of love for our fellow man and (most importantly) the urgency of sharing The Gospel! [SR](#)

Danny Lee, President of SDB Missionary Society, Author, Grandpa; Danita Lee, Christian Social Action Disaster Relief Committee, Teacher, Grandma



Multiculturalism From A Biblical Perspective



All
For
One
and
One
For
All!

What do we mean by “diversity”?

The general Christian vision of diversity is based upon two fundamental doctrines of the Bible: (1) **The unity of humanity**, and (2) **The community-centrality of the Christian church**. Christian communities face significant challenges in applying these truths, and expressing the need for a changed heart in order to overcome the prejudice that dominates so many believers and non-believers.

1) The Unity of Humanity

God teaches us in Holy Scripture that the human race is one. As Paul preached to the Athenian philosophers, “From one man God made every nation of the human race, that they should inhabit the whole earth” (Acts 17:26). It is within this greater context of unity that humanity’s diversity rightly appears. Hence, it is clear that the Bible provides no blanket endorsement of multiculturalism as it is sometimes expressed in the world of ideologies. Such diversity often begins with justifiable suspicions about cultural imperialism and racial prejudice, but ends by shattering the human community into a thousand fragments—each fragment a subculture zealously defending its interests against all the others.

Rather, human diversification receives its first mention in Genesis 1:27, where the text announces the creation of the

one human race: “So God created the human race in his own image...male and female he made them.” The text’s singular term, “human race” (Adam in Hebrew), is specified as diverse in gender, male and female. Diversification immediately receives further stimulus in the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:28, “Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it.” This divine command calls explicitly for the scattering of the race—a theme that shall recur in the Genesis narratives—and thus calls implicitly for cultural diversification.

Later, after naming Noah’s three sons, Genesis tells how “from them came the people who were scattered over the earth” (9:19). This reference to “scattering” hints at the dual nature of cultural diversity in Scripture. On the one hand, cultural diversity is a proper expression of the Cultural Mandate: by scattering and filling the earth, humanity subdues it piece by piece and place by place. On the other hand, it is an expression of the curse enacted at Babel in response to humanity’s monocultural attempt to live in defiance of God: “...as one people speaking one language they have begun to do this.... Come, let us go down and confuse their language.... So the Lord scattered them over the earth” (11:6-8).

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It is precisely these scattered and alienated peoples whom God calls to faith and repentance through the Gospel's ministry of reconciliation. Out of the multi-listings of Genesis 10-11, God chose one family, Terah's, and one person, Abraham, to be a blessing to the world. As God promised him, "all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). Such blessedness does not obliterate the diversity of the peoples. That was the mistake of the Judaizers, who sought to make Gentiles into Jews before they could be received into the church as Christians. Rather, the blessedness of reconciliation affirms the potential validity of a multitude of cultural expressions.

2) The Community-Centrality of the Christian Church

This affirmation of diverse cultures finds clear expression in Scripture in its doctrine of the universality of the church. The Hebrew prophet Joel proclaimed that in the latter days God would pour out His Spirit "on all people," so that "your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions." This world-wide embrace of the Holy Spirit reaches over all barriers of race, class, and gender—a point made emphatic by God's message through the prophet: "Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28-29). It is fitting that this text, so rich in its multicultural implications, became the key text for the Apostle Peter's sermon at Pentecost, when people of some fifteen language groups first heard the gospel preached in their own native tongues (Acts 2:8-12, 16-21). Significantly, the Pentecost event did not involve a miracle of hearing, whereby each person was made to understand one language, but a miracle of speaking, whereby the apostles preached in many languages to the gathered crowds.

As people from various races, classes, and conditions come to faith in Jesus Christ, He reconciles them to God the Father and therefore to each other. The Body of Christ (The Church), therefore, has an inherent and God-given diversity. Elements of this diversity are also experienced at the local, congregational level. As Paul wrote to the divisive Christians at Corinth, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts...so it is with Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12). Paul himself experienced a rich and blessed diversity in the church of Syrian Antioch, where for the first time Jewish and Gentile Christians worshiped God together on

equal footing (Acts 11:19-26). The Antioch church's multiculturalism is dramatically displayed in the names of its leaders as listed in Acts 13:1-2. Included among the congregation's prophets and teachers were:

"Barnabas"—A wealthy Cypriot-born Jewish Levite;

"Simeon, called Niger"—An African proselyte to Judaism;

"Lucius of Cyrene"—probably a Greco-Roman from North Africa;

"Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch"—a Hellenized Jewish aristocrat whose name is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Menahem"; and

"Saul"—a Tarsus-born Jew raised in Jerusalem, otherwise known by the Greco-Roman name "Paul."

The Book of Acts emphasizes the cultural diversity of the Antioch church, because it was here that the disciples were first called Christians (11:26). The newly coined term, meaning "Those of Christ," was invented to describe these believers in their unprecedented mix. Pagan Antiochians knew about Jews worshiping in their synagogues. They also had heard of Gentiles who had become proselytes to Judaism, and they likely were familiar with the "God-fearers," Gentiles who revered Israel's God but who stopped short of full conversion. They could not account, however, for the strange multi-equality of these Antioch followers of Christ. This is in keeping with the Great Commission itself, in which Jesus Christ commands His church to disciple all the *ethnoi*, literally from Greek, all the "people-groups" of the world (Matthew 28:19). Hence, the new term, "Christian," stands as a powerful testimony to the reconciliation of individuals and cultures in Christ.

Christ tears down the walls of hostility that divide Jew from Gentile, making former enemies into friends and equals in the faith (Ephesians 2:14-16). This fundamental redemptive equality is well expressed in Galatians 3:28, where the apostle writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Again, the blessedness of multicultural reconciliation does not mean obliterating cultural distinctions or forming a new and monolithic "Christian" culture. Even the

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surpassing unity of final redemption can be expressed in Scripture with language celebrating the multicultural and multilingual heritage of the redeemed. Accordingly, in the Book of Revelation, “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language” stands before the throne of God and the Lamb, singing praise (7:9).

3) Challenges for the Christian Community

For Christians, the practice of multicultural diversity is motivated by love for God and therefore by love for other human beings. Since God is the Father and Creator of all, His love rests upon all, even upon those who reject Him. He therefore calls Christians and Christian communities to imitate His love in its world-wide embrace. Some cultures have been more deeply impacted by the Christian gospel than others. Nevertheless, within every culture and every age, some patterns of living are rooted more in human sinfulness than in the Cultural Mandate. These sinful patterns do not provide an excuse for Christians to despise the people who practice them. Rather, even while hating sin, we must love sinners (not the sin), just as God has loved us despite our sins. This calling presents an ever-present challenge to the Christian community.

A further challenge arises from the nature of the Christian community itself. Recognizing sin within the cultures of the world, including one's own, requires that Christian communities shall be closed to some expressions of cultural diversity, as well as to some expressions of its own dominant culture. The teachings of the Bible are the final and authoritative standard by which all such patterns, beliefs, and behaviors are to be assessed. Wisely assessing such matters requires the conscious cultivation—both individually and communally—of the Christian virtues of humility, discernment, courage, justice, and love. In our effort to rise to these challenges, God offers us His ever-gracious help.

Multicultural diversity, then, is not to be spurned by the Christian community. Rather, Christians and Christian communities have a special obligation to demonstrate the reality of Christ's culture-transforming love. In obeying the twin mandates of the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission, we will discover more and more of the creational blessedness of multicultural diversity as human beings are reconciled to God and to each other because of Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

—Ephesians 4: 1-6

¹¹ “And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.[a] ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them[b] in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself,[c] that they also may be sanctified[d] in truth.

²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

—John 17: 11-23 SR

Keith L. Ashley, born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, is a Health Instructor (Special Education) and married to Natasha Reynolds-Ashley; they have three children: Luke, Malachi, and Christian. A member of the Toronto SDB Church, he is Youth Counsellor and Assistant Deacon. Mr. Ashley's Motto is “No fear in progression.”—2 Timothy 1: 7

In What Way Is a Person a Minority?

In What Way Is a Person a Minority? The first thing we may think of is race. But there are other ways that one is a minority besides race. Culture and language are other barriers with which minorities have to contend. In many ways language and culture are two barriers which are more challenging than race alone. How can a person who does not know the language worship when they do not understand what is spoken? How do you transition from a church that meets 2 to 2½ hours for Sabbath school and worship to a church that meets for 3 to 4 hours or longer and meets several times during the week? Also, what is the demeanor of the congregation? Do they feel threatened of losing their identity or being invaded by someone from the “outside?”

In the fall of 2018, we attended the Iglesia Cristiana Bautista del Septimo Dia (Seventh Day Baptist Christian Church) in Silver Spring, Maryland. In previous times when visiting the church it was for special events such as Metro day, where other SDB churches from the Washington, DC, area joined in combined fellowship and worship or some other special event that the church sponsored and invited other SDB churches to attend. This time was different. There was no special event or joint worship. It was just us by ourselves walking into the church desiring to become part of the congregation. We were welcomed with open arms.

Many of the members remembered us from the past as occasional visitors, and the time we were invited to lead a seminar (*“How to Talk About Jesus Without Freaking Out”*) which lasted several weeks. We were given translator receivers with headphones and instructions on using them. A translator simultaneously translates the services. Some of the music is sung in both languages. There is one other non-Spanish speaking person who regularly attends.

The young people are bilingual and English is not a problem for them, but for some others, English is a challenge. In spite of the language challenge, we felt very welcomed to be worshipping in this new environment.

New for us was feet washing as part of the Communion service. We had never experienced it, even though the Bible tells us Jesus washed His Disciples’ feet. It’s a beautiful way to show love and humility. We look forward to the next service.

After knowing you are accepted by the people in the church, and they do not feel threatened by your presence, you can take steps to close the gap where you no longer feel like a minority. Here are some of the things you can do:

1. Identify what you have in common. We are followers of Christ. We are of the same faith. We have the same Christian goals. We have similar concerns in life. Look for other things that you have in common such as interests, hobbies, and sports.



2. Build a relationship starting with those common things. Fellowship together other than at church. Visit each others’ homes. Participate in an outing, trip, or overnight family retreat.
3. Be involved in the church program. Participate in Sabbath school, worship, prayer service, work days, and other activities. The church offers many opportunities where one can get involved—such as prayer service on Sunday evenings, ladies Tuesday evening Bible Study, and Thursday night prayer meeting. During the COVID 19 lockdown, we became more dependent using Zoom. It enabled us more time together as a church and increased our involvement in church programs. Our prayer times became deeper and more meaningful. There are so many people sick or that have other needs we feel an obligation and privilege to bring to God’s throne in prayer.
4. Look for areas where your gifts and talents and knowledge can be used and volunteer to serve. Your gifts and talents cross all barriers and can be used among all people regardless of race, culture, and all languages. You may have communication skills, organizational skills, etc. You can be a bridge that closes the gap and plugs the holes which cause unintentional breakdowns and strain relationships.
5. The leaders in your church should always greet the newcomers and make them feel welcome. However, we as members should do the same.

These are only a few ways of including minorities into the church. As a minority, we love it when someone tells us they love the pecan pie we brought to pot luck. But we also enjoy the tamales and pupusas they serve to us. Communication must never end. We may not know the language and we cannot change our color, but all these differences fade into the distance by the tie that binds us in Christian love. [SR](#)

¿De qué manera una persona es una minoría?

¿De qué manera una persona es una minoría? Lo primero que podemos pensar es la raza. Pero hay otras formas en las que uno es una minoría además de la raza. La cultura y el idioma son otras barreras que las minorías deben enfrentar. En muchos sentidos, el idioma y la cultura son dos barreras más desafiantes que la raza. ¿Cómo puede una persona que no conoce el idioma adorar cuando no entiende lo que se habla? ¿Cómo se pasa de una iglesia que se reúne de 2 a 2 ½ horas para la escuela sabática y la adoración a una iglesia que se reúne durante 3 a 4 horas o más y que también se reúne varias veces durante la semana? Además, ¿cuál es el comportamiento de la congregación? ¿Se sienten amenazados de perder su identidad o de ser invadidos por alguien del “exterior”?

En el otoño de 2018, asistimos a la Iglesia Cristiana Bautista del Séptimo Día en Silver Spring, Maryland. En épocas anteriores, cuando visitábamos la iglesia era para eventos especiales como el día de Metro, donde otras iglesias BSD del área de Washington DC se unían en compañerismo y adoración combinados o algún otro evento especial que la iglesia patrocinaba e invitaba a otras iglesias BSD a asistir. Esta vez fue diferente. No hubo ningún evento especial ni adoración conjunta. Solo estábamos nosotros entrando a la iglesia deseando formar parte de la congregación. Nos recibieron con los brazos abiertos.

Muchos de los miembros nos recordaron del pasado como visitantes ocasionales, y el momento en que nos invitaron a dirigir un seminario “Cómo hablar de Jesús sin temor” que duró varias semanas. Nos entregaron receptores traductores con auriculares e instrucciones sobre su uso. Un traductor traduce simultáneamente los servicios. Parte de la música se canta en ambos idiomas. Hay otra persona que no habla español que asiste regularmente.

Los jóvenes son bilingües y el inglés no es un problema para ellos, pero para otros el inglés es un desafío. A pesar del desafío del idioma, nos sentimos muy bienvenidos de adorar en este nuevo entorno.

Otra novedad para nosotros fue el lavado de pies como parte del Servicio de Comunión. Nunca lo habíamos experimentado, aunque la Biblia nos dice que Jesús lavó los pies de Sus discípulos. Es una forma hermosa de mostrar amor y humildad. Esperamos el próximo servicio de Comunión.

Después de saber que la gente de la iglesia te acepta y que no se sienten amenazados por tu presencia, puedes tomar medidas para cerrar la brecha en la que ya no te sientes como una minoría. Estas son algunas de las cosas que puede hacer:

1. Identifica lo que tienes en común. Somos seguidores de Cristo. Somos de la misma fe. Tenemos las mismas metas cristianas. Tenemos preocupaciones similares en la vida.

Busque otras cosas que tenga en común, como intereses, pasatiempos y deportes.

2. Construya una relación comenzando con esas cosas comunes. Compañerismo juntos fuera de la iglesia. Visite las casas de los demás. Participe en una excursión, viaje o retiros familiares.
3. Participe en el programa de la iglesia. Participe en la Escuela Sabática, la adoración, el servicio de oración, los días de trabajo y otras actividades. La iglesia ofrece muchas oportunidades en las que uno puede participar, como el servicio de oración los domingos por la noche, el estudio bíblico para mujeres los martes por la noche y la reunión de oración el jueves por la noche. Durante el bloqueo de COVID 19, nos volvimos más dependientes con Zoom. Nos permitió pasar más tiempo juntos como iglesia y aumentó nuestra participación en los programas de la iglesia. Nuestros tiempos de oración se hicieron más profundos y significativos. Hay tantas personas enfermas o que tienen otras necesidades que sentimos la obligación y el privilegio de llevar al trono de Dios en oración.
4. Busque áreas donde sus dones, talentos y conocimientos puedan usarse y ofrécense como voluntario para servir. Sus dones y talentos cruzan todas las barreras y pueden usarse entre todas las personas, independientemente de su raza, cultura y todos los idiomas. Puede tener habilidades de comunicación, habilidades organizativas, etc. Puede ser un puente que cierra la brecha y cubre los agujeros que causan fallas no intencionales y tensiones en las relaciones.
5. Los líderes de su iglesia siempre deben saludar a los recién llegados y hacerlos sentir bienvenidos. Sin embargo, nosotros, como miembros, deberíamos hacer lo mismo.

Estas son solo algunas formas de incluir a las minorías en la iglesia. Como minoría, nos encanta cuando alguien nos dice que le encanta el pastel de nueces que trajimos a los convivios. Pero también disfrutamos de los tamales y pupusas que nos sirven. La comunicación nunca debe terminar. Puede que no conozcamos el idioma y no podamos cambiar nuestro color, pero todas estas diferencias se desvanecen en la distancia por el lazo que nos une en el amor cristiano. SR

Earl and Dianne are enjoying retirement in Maryland. Our greatest joy is serving God wherever He takes us and using our talents to serve Him. God has richly blessed us with two sons and their wives, Justin (Karlene) and Patrick (Nicole) and four granddaughters, and one grandson.

One Church's Story Regarding Diversity

The dictionary app on my phone gives four definitions of the word diversity. The third definition is the most relevant to the topic at hand which states: the inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc. When the topic of diversity is explored, the main ideas and discussions usually rest, for the most part, on the lack of diversity among social groups with the goal of creating more opportunities for diversity to be established and to flourish. Naturally, the default setting in society is for people to live or congregate with others who share similar characteristics, be it ethnicity, race, culture, etc.

The idea of having diversity is not merely about meeting some type of quota for a group by placing people of various backgrounds or characteristics together. Rather, it's about people embracing the idea that everyone should be given the opportunity to be a part of any group regardless of the background of the person or the makeup of the group. Recruitment is a tool that can be utilized to attract talented individuals from diverse backgrounds for a group's benefit. The church, having the enlightenment of God's word, and having that advantage above all other entities, is well poised to seize this opportunity.

I will expound upon an element that I believe is critical in establishing diversity, and will also mention others of import. Later in this article I will talk about my church, The Philadelphia Seventh Day Baptist Church, and its history of how it became a diverse church organically.

Important Elements Needed For A Healthy Diverse Church

- 1) No Prejudgement: A lack of this very important element would make it challenging for people to come together for a common goal at the onset.
- 2) Impartiality: Church members should not feel that they're being treated unfairly compared to other members.
- 3) Love: Members should feel that their fellow brethren have their best interest at heart.
- 4) Commitment: Church members should feel confident that brethren will support them through the toughest of times.
- 5) Involvement: There should be an environment that encourages congregants to be involved in committees, church activities, etc. Individuals will feel that they have a personal stake in the church and are not just bystanders.
- 6) Teach The Unadulterated Word: There is no substitute for this element. The church can only have validity by the untainted word of God.

Prejudgement (What Not To Do)

In 1 Samuel, we are told about the story in regard to David being anointed king. The Lord had instructed Samuel to go to Jesse the Bethlehemite, so that among his sons one would be anointed king. The Lord, from the start, could have easily revealed the name of Jesse's son who would become king to Samuel, but instead withheld that information. In doing so, we get an opportunity to see the tendencies of human behavior to prejudge aided by the power of the human eye. Verse 10 of the chapter states (NKJV), "Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse 'The Lord has not chosen these.'" Note that Jesse did not make ALL his sons pass before Samuel. Interesting. At this point God had not chosen any one of the seven so Samuel had to "remind" Jesse that he had at least one more son. Jesse informed Samuel that there was still yet another who was the youngest and was tending the sheep. David is brought before Samuel and God directs Samuel to anoint him as king.

Both Samuel and Jesse engaged in prejudgement. In the case of Samuel verse 6 states (NKJV), "So it was when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, 'Surely the LORD's anointed is before Him.'" Why was he so sure? God gave the answer in verse 7 based on His response. God told Samuel not to look at Eliab's appearance nor his physical stature. God also said in verse 7 that He was different compared to man by looking at the heart rather than appearance.

Jesse's version of prejudgement in this story is highlighted by the fact that David did not appear in the original lineup before Samuel. It seems that Jesse did not view his son David as a potential candidate as compared to his other sons. David was an afterthought. Being quite young may have been a potential reason. In any case David was not on the radar. Both Samuel and Jesse covered both ends of the prejudgement spectrum. Samuel elevated a person while Jesse eliminated a person.

The one that was overlooked was the one who defeated Goliath, reigned on his throne for 40 years, wrote Psalms and gained honor when Jesus was referred to as "The son of David." I am using this particular passage of scripture to show that we should avoid the practice of prejudgement. With respect to diversity, prejudgement on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic level etc, will invariably harm its progress. Our potential next best friend, teacher, spouse, business partner or church brother/sister, could be that person whom we reject based on outward superficial reasons but could be

a true treasure to us if we allow the bonds of friendship through love to develop.

Philadelphia SDB Church Story

As mentioned earlier in this article, I wish to share the story of my church's beginnings. A little bit about myself. I was born in Jamaica and have lived in the US since childhood. I am presently a deacon at the Philadelphia SDB Church, having served in this capacity since 1999. I've also been a member since 1989 when the church was known as the Hope SDB Church. I feel very honored and am privileged to have this opportunity to write about a church, that from its inception, was a church which was diverse by nature. The founders of this church, despite their diverse backgrounds, were of one accord being led by the Spirit. Very often, the many are benefited by the hard work, dedication and sacrifice of the few who preceded them. The church's story reflects this truth.

For the benefit of this article regarding diversity, I will provide the name, the racial background, and their relation to me where it applies, to the original charter members of the church formed in 1982. Pastor Kenroy Cruickshank (Jamaican/black); Maureen Cruickshank, (Pastor Ken's wife, Kathleen's daughter and my first cousin, Jamaican/black); Kathleen Findlater (Maureen's mother, my aunt, Jamaican/black); Lucy Griffiths (Kathleen's sister, my aunt, Jamaican/black); Winsome DeJesus (Kathleen's daughter, my first cousin Jamaican/black); Cello Barrett (Kathleen's sister, my mother Jamaican/black); Fred Ayars (American/white); Virginia Ayars (Fred's wife American/white); David Ayars (Fred and Virginia's son American/white); Barbara Ayars (Fred and Virginia's daughter. American/white); Rolleesa Thurman (American/white).

The Principal Players

These five members were important in establishing The Philadelphia SDB church known then as the Ambler SDB church in 1982. Pastor Kenroy Cruickshank, Kathleen Findlater, Deacon Fred Ayars, Deaconess Virginia Ayars,

and Sister Rolleesa Phillips. Sadly three of our beloved members have since passed. Kathleen in 2007, Fred in 2011, and Rolleesa earlier this year.

The Church's Formation

The rudiments of the Philadelphia SDB Church were formed when Kathleen Findlater, along with her daughter Winsome, emigrated to the US from Jamaica. Kathleen was a Seventh Day Baptist while in Jamaica and inquired about nearby SDB churches. She called the then SDB headquarters in Plainfield, NJ, which in turn directed her to a couple, Fred and Virginia Ayars. The Ayars at that time were members of the Marlboro SDB church. According to Winsome, that very same week of their arrival, the Ayars visited them in Ambler, PA. They were staying at the residence of Kathleen's sister, Lucy Griffiths. The Ayars, fortunately, lived nearby in the town of Lansdale, PA. Kathleen regularly held worship services starting in 1976 at Lucy's home and at other places of residence. Kathleen, Winsome, and Juan (Winsome's husband) regularly traveled with the Ayars to the Marlboro church. They eventually became members of the Marlboro SDB church and are believed to be the first black members in the church's history. Winsome recalled how well they were treated and received by the Ayars saying, "They were the real deal, they were like family".

In November of 1980, Pastor Kenroy Cruickshank emigrated to the US from Jamaica to be with his wife Maureen. He boarded a plane in Kingston, the capital. Pastor Ken, as an SDB minister, was sent by the Jamaican SDB conference to various SDB churches on the island as the need arose. One such church was Lemon Hall, which took its name from a rural district located in an area where the terrain was difficult to navigate. While at Lemon Hall, he would regularly hear the planes flying above and sometimes wondered if a flight on a plane could be in his future. The planes that he heard were planes that had just taken off from the nearby Kingston airport. A few minutes into his flight on that November day, he wondered if he was at that moment flying over

Continued on next page...



Fred and Virginia Ayars



Pastor Kenroy Cruickshank and Sis. Rolleesa Thurman



Sis Kathleen Findlater

Diversity is about people embracing the idea that everyone should be given the opportunity to be a part of any group regardless of the background of the person or the makeup of the group.

Continued from previous page...

Lemon Hall. His plane more than likely took the same flight path as the ones he had heard. It seemed as if things had come full circle and that moment was signaling a new chapter in Pastor Ken's Life. Unbeknownst to him at that time, the Lord would allow him to join with people who were different in race, ethnicity, and culture in forming a church where he would be pastor. That church still stands to this day.

Rolleesa Thurman, later Phillips, was a Seventh Day Baptist whose grandfather was an SDB minister. There were no SDB churches locally so she had been attending other churches for more than 20 years. One sabbath she called the Ayars and asked if there was a Seventh Day Baptist church locally they could attend. They said yes, and told Rolleesa that Kathleen's son-in-law, Pastor Ken, had just arrived from Jamaica. Sis Rolleesa met with Pastor Ken shortly thereafter. The meeting took place at Sis Rolleesa's workplace one late afternoon. She recalled that meeting as she chuckled saying, "I couldn't understand him and he couldn't understand me." Pastor Ken's Jamaican accent was more pronounced at that time.

With Pastor Ken's arrival, the possibility of a church locally in Ambler, where he and his family lived, became achievable. With the aid of the Marlboro church, the group consisting of 11 people, previously stated in this article, formed a church that first became the Ambler SDB Church in 1982. The church occupied a storefront building on Main St. in Ambler.

Sometime later, the membership dropped to seven, with some leaving the area to live elsewhere. Pastor Ken recalled the feeling of uncertainty as to what the future would be for the fledgling church. Pastor Ken added that neither he nor Deacon Ayars spoke about the matter to each other, which was clearly the elephant in the room. Later, the membership increased and Pastor Ken said that Deacon Ayars at that time gave his thoughts about the previously low membership situation. Deacon Ayars said to Pastor Ken, "I would have been the last person left; I was never going to leave". Clearly a testament to Deacon Ayars' commitment.

In the mid 1980's, Pastor Ken worked at a medical facility where he would evangelize to four young white adults who were his coworkers. Two of these four are currently members of the Philadelphia SDB church. One of those members, Bill Brooks, is currently a deacon. Bill

also brought along his wife, Janet, who is currently a deaconess. The other member is Elaine Brey who has been a devoted member, serving in various roles over the years. She has also brought along her husband, Kevin. Kevin has become a very valued member, serving in several capacities.

Debbie and Beth were the other two of the four, who, along with Bill and Elaine, eventually became members of the then Hope SDB Church. Elaine recalled how Pastor Ken gained her trust by being kind, caring, and good-hearted towards her. Bill's account of Pastor Ken was very similar. Though Pastor Ken was a man of morals, there was something in addition about him that set him apart according to Bill.

Through the years the Philadelphia SDB church has also gained African American members. Our church has been blessed with the founders' efforts by God's leading and also by others who contributed later by becoming members, adding to the numerical and spiritual growth of the church. ^[SR]

Acknowledgments

Marlboro SDB Church—Contributed financial and spiritual support early in our church's existence.

Shiloh SDB Church—Provided use of their baptismal facilities when we lacked in this area. I, along with others, was baptized at Shiloh.

Plainfield SDB Church—Baptismal facility usage, church functions along with hosting Pastor Ken's ordination service in 1996.

New York area SDB Churches—Supporting our church functions and ceremonies including concerts.

Pastor Val Bennett—Served as moderator and also served in other church positions. He played a critical role in Philadelphia SDB Church's acquisition of the property where we currently worship. Sadly, Pastor Val passed away this past September 2021.

Edson Barrett is married to Seanette and they have one son, Simeon, who's a sophomore at Howard University. He works in the flavor industry.

A Hunger to Belong

Junior high lunch room. Yikes. I had a fear of sitting alone, so I worked hard to find a table where I could belong. I shudder at my memories of trying to earn a place at the lunch table by drinking a bottle of Tabasco Sauce. It took multiple days, and multiple bottles, but I did earn my seat at the table I wanted—it just came at a steep price.

That longing for belonging continues on through life (hopefully minus the Tabasco Sauce). We want a place to belong with other people, but do our churches offer a safe place for a wide diversity of people to belong?

Rather than assuming that belonging simply happens by joining a church, it is important to uncover the hunger for belonging that God has placed in people's hearts. Joseph Myers defines belonging with a rural anecdote:

Being alone. This was something that never concerned most farmers of the past. The family stayed home...The kids were given plots "on the back forty" to build a home and raise a family. When mom and dad could no longer work, the boys took over and cared for the land and the old folks as well. Not so today...People are trying to find their place in this world, not in individualist ways but in ways that connect. They are searching for the "back forty," for a place to belong. They are searching for family.¹

Today, there is not only a hunger to belong, but to belong to an extended family.² There is a hunger to move from being a stranger in need who receives hospitality to becoming "fictive kin" who have been accepted as a part of the family.³ This "fictive kinship" refers to individuals who have family-like relationships, yet are not connected by blood, marriage, or adoption. This kinship is developed through shared experiences in the past and activities together in the present.⁴

As Seventh Day Baptists, one of our identity markers is life together as "Kingdom Family" where "we will communicate and treat each other as if we are family because we are brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. All people will feel welcome and valuable in our churches and Conference."

Our SDB churches should be a greenhouse for growing a sense of belonging! However, there is a dark side to close-knit belonging: in-groups and out-groups. When there is an in-group within a church that loves one another deeply, there might be an unnoticed out-group that is not connected to the church family in the same way.

Practically speaking, watch for these patterns in your church. Do the same people eat together at a fellowship meal? Do the same people speak to each other at the end of the worship service? Do occasional attenders never really seem to "fit in"? Does the diversity within our church look like the community of today or of 30 years ago?

We must aim for intentionally creating a place for people to belong in our churches. We cannot assume they will "feel the family atmosphere" without extra investment. We need to take the needs and preferences of those who are coming with a hunger for belonging, rather than only offering a sense of belonging to people who are like us. We have great opportunities to carve out space for people to belong—but it requires intentionality of truly listening to the hunger for belonging of the people around us. [SR](#)

¹Ibid., 26.

²Breen, Mike. 2013. *Leading Missional Communities: Rediscovering the Power of Living on Mission Together*. Pawleys Island, SC: 3DM, 29.

³Jipp, Joshua W. 2017. *Saved by Faith and Hospitality*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 3.

⁴Taylor, Robert Joseph, Chatters, Linda M., Woodward, Amanda Toler, and Edna Brown. 2013. "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Extended Family, Friendship, Fictive Kin, and Congregational Informal Support Networks." *Family Relations* 62: 609.



God Loves Diversity; How About Me?



By Andy Samuels, Executive Director, SDB Missionary Society

I have had the remarkable privilege of worshiping with Seventh Day Baptists in 22 different countries on six different continents. From these personal experiences, I have made the observation that Seventh Day Baptists have tremendous variety and are very diverse in many ways. From country to country, the variety and diversity may easily be seen. And even within some countries, there are clear differences from congregation to congregation, and from region to region.

The diversity and variety is evident in such matters as worship style or format, some beliefs and practices, manner of dressing, things that are eaten or not eaten, language and dialect, versions of the Bible utilized, length of worship services, posture in corporate prayer, and the way titles are used or not.

One may ask questions such as: Why do all these differences exist among people within the same denomination? Isn't that unhealthy? Aren't all these differences creating a problem for the conferences? Isn't it correct that these differences indicate disunity and disharmony?

Interestingly enough, the Bible celebrates and promotes all kinds of diversity. For example, Acts 17:26 says, "From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands."

In 1 Corinthians 12:28 we are told that "God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues."

And in Revelation 7:9 John tells us that, "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb."

God delights in the plethora of differences His human creatures possess. It is He who has made us all different.

So, here is my question: If God made us all so different, what good reason could we have for trying to make everyone the same?

I can't think of any good reason, but I can think of a few that are not so good. Those "not so good" reasons include:

- a. **Ignorance**—we don't know or understand God's initiative in creating human diversity.
- b. **A desire to control**—believe it or not, some people want to control what others should think and do, so all kinds of control mechanisms are instituted.
- c. **Feelings of superiority**—there are those who, for some misguided reason, embrace feelings of superiority over others
- d. **Prejudice**—it might be a very sad reality that all of us have prejudices of one kind or another, and those prejudices can cause us to think and act in very dark and unChrist-like ways.
- e. **Stereotyping**—in our minds sometimes, people are lumped into categories of our own making and painted with very broad brushes, so that individuality and personal attributes are disregarded or minimized.

My aim in this article is not to glorify diversity. Rather, it is to glorify our God who invented and activated diversity. His desire and exhortation is that we pursue unity while being thankful for our diversity. To do that, we are to resist the tyranny of our ignorance, mortify our desire to control, be delivered from our feelings of superiority, give up our prejudices, and cease the stereotyping. And furthermore, we are to, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3).

I am glad that Seventh Day Baptists are intentionally seeking to practice the virtue of embracing our diversity and celebrating the God who gave us that diversity. My experience of worshiping with Seventh Day Baptists in scores of countries on all but one of the world's continents has been nothing short of enriching and spiritually uplifting. I encourage us all to keep allowing the Lord to use us as an instrument to maintain, among humanity, His heart that bled for the sake of all. That is diversity. [SR](#)



Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society Christmas Gift List 2021



Some families have made it part of their year-end tradition to select items from our suggested gift list to support SDB brethren and families around the world.

Let us celebrate the greatest gift of all, Christ Jesus, by sharing with others around the world.



Sustainable Development

- #1 - Income-generating projects:
*farming, *sewing, *saws for lumber mills, carpentry or * materials for making bricks etc. (*Suggested Gift: \$50*)
- #2 - Freshwater Wells (*Suggested Gift: \$500 / Share the Cost: \$100*)



Community Outreach

- #3 - COVID 19 relief (*Suggested Gift: \$20*)
- #4 - USA & Canada Missionary work (*Suggested Gift: \$25*)
- #5 - Help new churches in developing world get started/reopen (*Suggested Gift: \$100*)

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

Hebrews 13:16

Leadership Training

- #6 - Africa Bible College (*Suggested Gift: \$100*)
- #7 - Ship SDB Helping Hand Overseas for a year (*Suggested Gift: \$30*)
- #8 - SCSC Mission Track & short-term missions trips (*Suggested Gift: \$40*)



Family Support

- #9 - Orphan Support & School Supplies (*Suggested Gift: \$30*)
- #10 - Aid for Children/family distressed by War/disaster (*Suggested Gift: \$50*)
- #11 - Pastors' personal or family assistance (*Suggested Gift: \$40*)



We hope that you will prayerfully consider how the blessings you have received may help you be involved in God's ministry through the Missionary Society - Your support of any amount, for any gift.

~ Andy Samuels, *Chief Executive Director*

To help support this or other SDB missions globally, send donations to:

- Check or Money Order: SDB Missionary Society, PO Box 156
Ashaway, RI 02804
- Donate w/ Credit Card or PayPal on website: www.sdbmissions.org



** Donations exceeding the expense of this project may be used to help other ministry purposes. **

For more information email director@sdbmissions.org



Introducing the Women's Board

by Beth Brown

I would like to present to you the Women's Board as they were elected at the virtual conference for 2021! Among the many smiling faces of the new board are many already familiar to you from last year, but there have been a few notable changes.

Katrina Goodrich has switched positions from Media Committee chair and *Sabbath Recorder* Women's Page editor to President this year.

Jenni Wangsness, who has done such a superb job for six years now, decided earlier this summer to step down for this season.

The board also added two new faces to its ranks as well: Lydia Solomon is taking over the position long held (12 years) by the lovely Karen Payne as Recognitions Committee Chair.



Katrina Goodrich
President



Paula Reynolds
Vice President



Beth Brown
Media Committee
chair and
Sabbath Recorder
Women's Page Editor

I, Beth Brown, am taking a shot at filling Katrina's shoes as Media Committee chair and *Sabbath Recorder* Women's Page editor. The first thing I will need to do is memorize that really long title! I am looking forward to being able to serve my fellow Seventh Day Baptists in this way, and I pray I will bring something of value to your lives as I strive to live out Proverbs 31:26 on these pages. SR

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and on her tongue is the law of kindness."



Vicki Burdick
Treasurer



Lauren Telford
Recording Secretary



Helen Goodrich
SCSC, chair



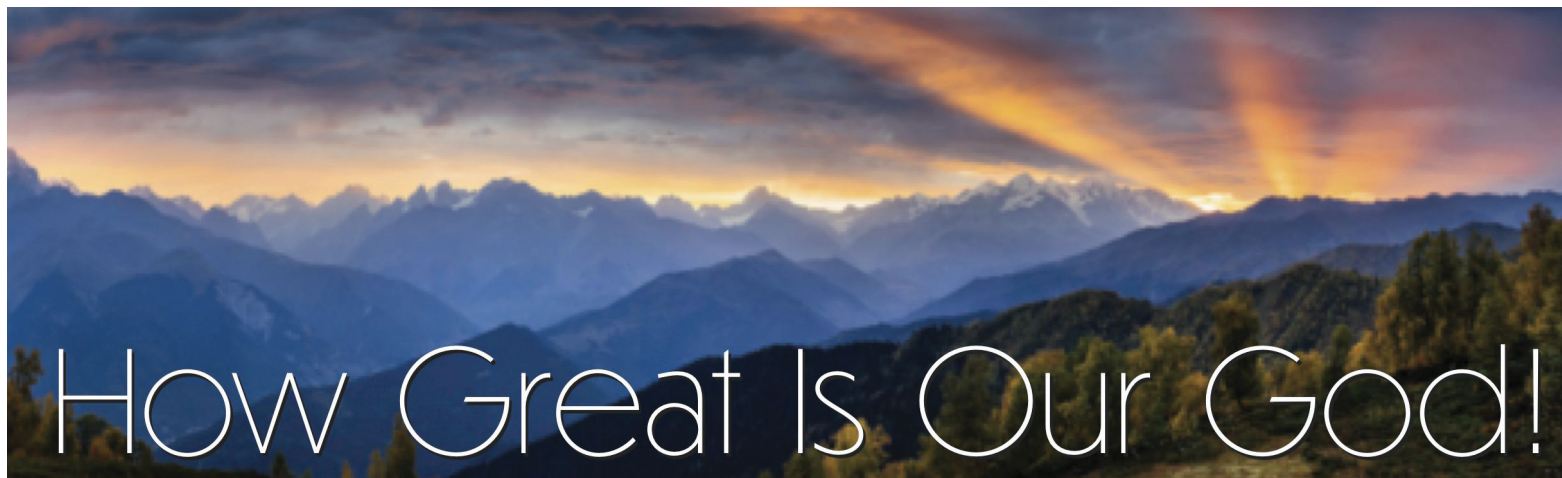
Tabatha Pethtel
Gatherings
Committee chair



Lydia Solomon
Recognitions
Committee chair



Cathy Jara
Women in Ministry Tuition
Fund Committee chair



How Great Is Our God!

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom.

—Psalm 145:3

How Great is Our God!

**Lord, You have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.**

**Before the mountains were born or
you brought forth the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

—Psalm 90:1-2

Don and I were privileged to fly out to Seattle, WA, for Northwest Days the end of September. When we were several hours from landing, the pilot took the plane down lower, giving us a spectacular view of the diverse landscape. We saw light tan deserts and dark brown hills with veins of erosion. We saw ribbons of blue rivers snaking through the land. We saw green crop circles of various sizes, a result of irrigation. We saw black covered hills and what looked like layers of mountains, misty blue like the Blue Ridge Mountains of West Virginia. Several places we saw fields that looked like the stripes of the American flag. And as we were close to landing, we saw Mount Rainier in its snowy glory, along with Mount Hood and Mount St. Helens. What we would have missed if we hadn't flown to Seattle but had chosen to drive instead. Our great God allowed us to experience His creativity and the beauty of His creation.

Psalm 90 is attributed to Moses, making it the oldest of the Psalms. Verses 1 and 2 remind us that God is the creator. The various parts of creation are not carbon copies of other parts of creation. The uniqueness of everything God made or spoke into being is amazing. God never ran

out of ideas. He had His perfect plan for creation of the earth and its inhabitants and the universe.

Psalm 90 reminds us that God is eternal. We are limited by time, but God isn't. Verse 4 says, "A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by." God sees the whole picture of history from beginning to the end. I'm sure that many of you, like me, feel like the days and weeks just rush by. We seem to speed through the months. The older I get, the faster time seems to go. Verse 10 reminds us that the length of our days is 70 years, or eighty if we have the strength. I turned 70 in August. It's humbling to realize that my days are numbered. Are we all making the most of what's left of our life on earth? What do I want to accomplish for God in the time I have left?

Since Don and I began attending Conference with our four children, we have been blessed by God's creation. Traveling to Conference has given us the opportunity to visit many different states and a number of our churches, and see many different natural wonders, including the Grand Canyon, Grand Teton Mountains, the Rocky Mountains, the Black Hills, Yellowstone Park, the Shenandoah Valley, the mountains of New York State, and the list goes on and on. Where have you traveled with your family to attend Conference? It is so worth the trip to see God's creation and to fellowship with fellow Seventh Day Baptists. I hope that you'll consider coming to Conference 2022. [SR](#)

—Charlotte Chroniger
Conference President



Looking Back, Launching Forward

By Nicholas J. Kersten
Director of Education and History

We're now approaching the end of the 350th anniversary year of the founding of the Newport Seventh Day Baptist church, but the celebration marches on! There are opportunities for you to continue to learn and celebrate our spiritual heritage before this auspicious year ends, and to continue our celebration of our heritage as we ready ourselves for 2022.

Those of you who attended virtual Conference at the end of July had the opportunity to view a series of eleven specially prepared "virtual history tours" of the Newport church meant to inform, inspire, and celebrate the heritage we have inherited from that congregation. A seminar on the history of the church and the lessons we draw from it today as well as a panel discussion were also held during the General Conference week!

If you couldn't make it to General Conference or didn't have the chance to engage with that content, I have good news! You can still find the material online yourself, or you can engage it on social media! I invite you to go to the General Conference's page on YouTube (search "7thDayBaptists") and find under the playlists one entitled, "Newport 350th Anniversary Tour," where all the videos created for the celebration are in one place! Another way to engage this material is to check the Conference's social media streams, as the videos are running once a week in the buildup to the anniversary of the church's founding on December 23rd!

As a people and as a group of churches, we face many challenges in our times, but it is our hope that celebrating our history as a group has given you new resources to think carefully about the times in which we live and to reflect on our shared identity as Seventh Day Baptists. We all have much to learn from our past as we remember it and let us inform our present as we envision and move into our shared future as a called and covenanted people. The Council on History is committed to aiding to launch us into the future as we look backwards and learn and are inspired, like the drawing of a bow gathers the force necessary to propel an arrow forward. Our work as a Council is to put the necessary historical resources in the hands of Seventh Day Baptists and to tell poignant stories as we walk step by step into the future where God has called us. We are readying for some big announcements in 2022 which will change the way you can engage with the resources and artifacts from our history. So if you are waiting for what is next from the Council on History, 2022 will bring it!

We hope that this year of celebration has inspired you to dig deeper into our rich shared heritage. If you would like further resources or have specific questions, please check our website or contact us so that we can stoke your fire even further!

More information and updates about the work of the Council on History may have already found you—our fall mailer, *History Happenings*, should soon arrive in your mailbox if it has not already and if you are on the General Conference's mailing list. It is also available on the Library and Archives website: <https://www.sdbhistory.org>. We invite you to celebrate our history as we exit this year of celebration and into the next opportunities to celebrate and move forward in our shared convictions and heritage in 2022 and beyond! SR

MENDING THE CHURCH

MARK 2:21



THE SUMMIT 2021



MULTIPLY 2021

We are combining **The Summit** (a SDB Pastors Conference) and the 7th annual **MULTIPLY Church Development Conference (NOVEMBER 5-7, 2021)**. Our theme will be **MENDING THE CHURCH**. There will be times when these groups will be in separate tracks for the weekend. This conference will be combining our own SDB learning cohort with the one put on by Vanguard Church in Colorado Springs to learn from missional church leaders and each other during this extended weekend.

The Summit (An SDB Pastors Conference) invites anyone who is training for pastoral ministry or is feeling a call to pastoral ministry (their spouses are also welcome) to attend. If you have a question as to whether you should attend this track, please contact the Director of Pastoral Services.

The **MULTIPLY Church Development Conference** is open to anyone who desires to see renewal and revitalization in their church or desires to see new SDB churches in North America.

REGISTRATION—DEADLINE: November 4, 2021

The registration fee is \$125 per person. This fee includes lodging for Thursday-Sunday nights and food from breakfast on November 5 to breakfast on November 8. In order to help us plan effectively, you must pay ahead of time by November 1 by check to the SDB Center (made payable to Pastoral Services) or by credit/debit card through an invoice. If payment is not received by November 1, 2021, we will not be able to guarantee you a spot. Assistance may be available for pastors from our continuing education funds.

TRAVEL

November 4 and November 8 will be travel days. Please make plans to arrive by 10pm on November 4. If you arrive earlier than November 4 or leave later than November 8, all arrangements are on your own. Flights should be booked into the Colorado Springs Airport (COS). If you fly into Denver International Airport (DEN), you will be responsible for your own transportation to Colorado Springs. Please send your flight schedules to the Conferences Coordinator. Trip insurance is recommended to protect your travel plans.

LODGING

Lodging will be provided (with a roommate) with the registration cost. You are also free to make your own lodging arrangements at your own expense.

FOOD

Meals will be provided from breakfast on November 5 to breakfast on November 8. Other meals will be at your expense. Please note on the registration if you have any dietary restrictions.

SCHEDULE

We will begin Friday morning with our own SDB cohort and continue this on Saturday evening and all day Sunday. The Multiply Conference will be Friday evening and during the day Saturday and will include worship music. When a full schedule of events is completed, all those registered will receive an email. If you have any specific concerns about the schedule, please contact the Director of Church Development & Pastoral Services.

For more and up-to-date information and to register, visit seventhdaybaptist.org/MULTIPLY or seventhdaybaptist.org/thesummit. For any questions, contact the Conferences Coordinator.

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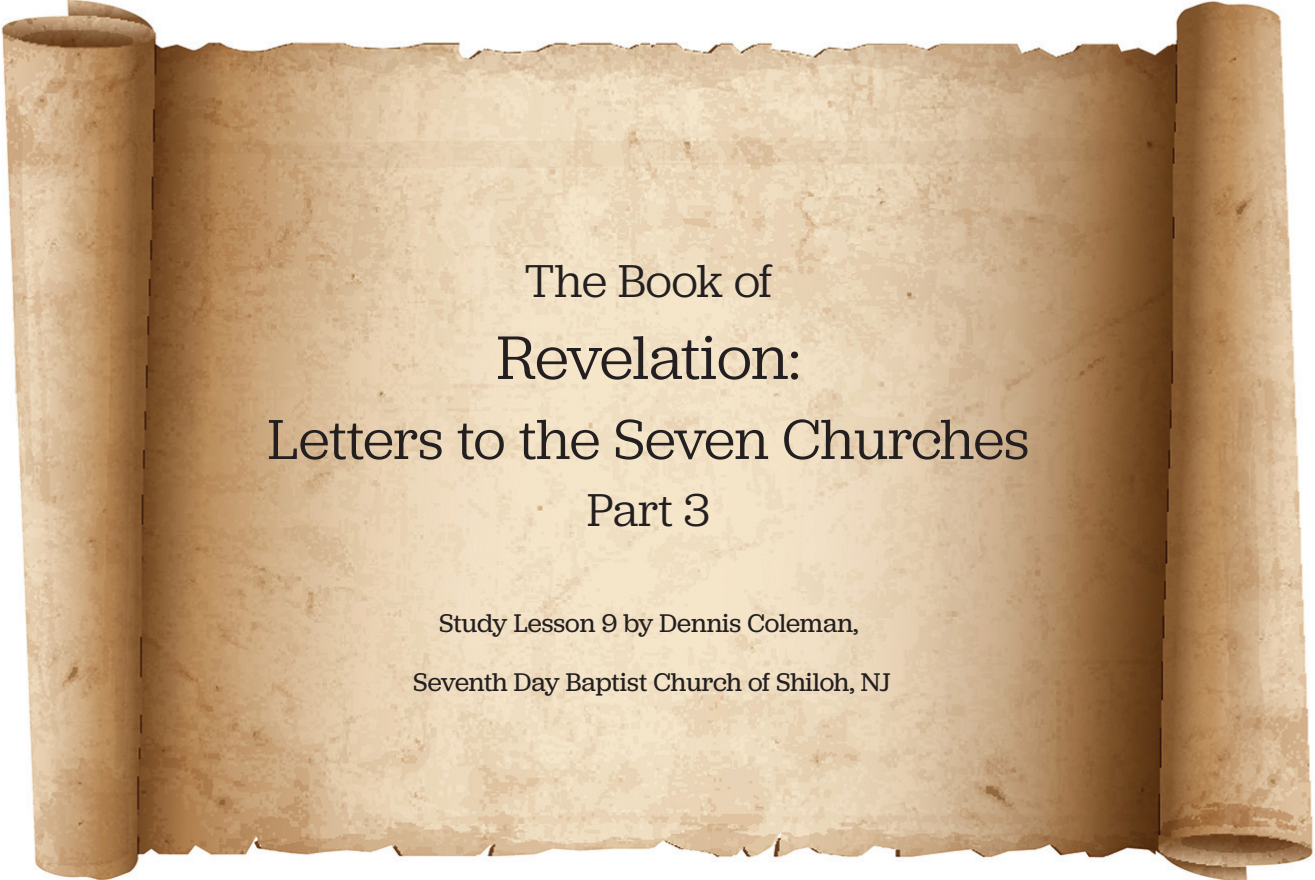
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The Book of Revelation: Letters to the Seven Churches Part 3

Study Lesson 9 by Dennis Coleman,
Seventh Day Baptist Church of Shiloh, NJ

So far we've read letters to a loveless church, a persecuted church and a compromising church. With four more letters to go, let us remember that the lessons Jesus teaches in these letters are as valid today as they were back when John was on Patmos. A healthy church should remain focused on our first love, it should strive to remain faithful even under severe persecution and it should not compromise when it comes to the truth, especially if the false teaching comes from the person sitting next to you on the pew.

Prayer Time

These were real problems being dealt with in these churches. What problems is your church facing today? As we learn from these early Christian churches, let us pray for wisdom and grace when it comes to dealing with issues in our churches today. Remember the goal of each of these letters is edification in which the churches were to hear what the Spirit says and hopefully receive the blessings mentioned at the end of each letter. Likewise, our goal in ministering to each other should be for edification. Ask God how you can help your church achieve God's goals (and yes I am talking to every member, not just our pastors).

Thyatira—The Corrupt Church

In writing to Thyatira, Jesus acknowledges their love, service, faith and patience. Unfortunately, Jesus saw a major problem that was corrupting this church. Jesus speaks of "that woman (NKJV)" which in some texts is written "your wife..." The letter goes on to call "that woman" Jezebel. I suspect this was symbolic and not the name of a specific person in the church. I've read a handful of commentaries which also see this as symbolic, though they differ on whether this verse points to one person or to a group of people in the church.

In scripture, Jezebel was an idol-worshipper who held great influence over her husband, King Ahab—Israel's seventh king. Through her husband she was able to compel the nation to follow forms of idolatry that were found in her native land of Tyre and Sidon. It's likely that the church in Thyatira was subject to a spirit of coercion that was similar to the type of control held by Jezebel, resulting in idol worship and open immorality. The teachings were likely similar to those held by the Nicolaitans mentioned in verse 6 and in verse 15.

This person (or persons) was given a chance to repent but now God declares that He is going to act. This is the difference between Pergamos and Thyatira. Pergamos had not yet reached the point where Jesus was ready to act, although He warned that the time was coming. Thyatira was past the point where it was now time for Jesus to get involved. And while any move of the Spirit is something we should cherish, we should endeavor to not let evil fester in our church bodies until it reaches the point where Jesus must step in.

Still, there is a blessing at the end of this letter just as with the others. To those who did not give in to this doctrine, Jesus promises power over the nations. I checked a number of commentaries and they point to Psalm 2 where Jesus' victory is declared and promised by the Father. The one who holds to the faith, not giving into the pull of culture, will join with Jesus in His victory over the nations.

Sardis—The Dead Church

The church in Sardis had a good reputation. People looked upon it as a church that was doing good Christian work. Jesus saw something different. What He saw was a church that was not living up to the hype. In fact, He said it was not living at all. This dead church was still active but not drawing life from the Vine. The works were likely empty and meaningless because they were not driven by the passion that comes from growing in Christ. Unfortunately, it seems like none of its members noticed the fact that the church was, in fact, dead.

Fortunately, all is not lost. There was a remnant of believers who were still doing their best to serve Jesus. To them He promised white robes and He promised that they would walk with Him. There is also a promise given here that if a person overcomes in the faith, his/her name will not be blotted out of the Book of Life (a book we will

discuss in a later chapter) and Jesus will confess that person's name before the Father.

Imagine Jesus standing before the Father and before God's angels putting in a good word on your behalf.

Laodicea—The Lukewarm Church

I'll come back to the church in Philadelphia in the next installment. For now, let's skip to the church in Laodicea which Jesus describes as being "lukewarm." So, if I handed you a lukewarm cup of water what would you do? The website bibleref.com points out that back when Revelation was written, lukewarm water might actually be dangerous. Cold water was usually from a flowing stream and was considered cleaner than stagnant water. Hot water had been boiled and was safe because of the heat. Apparently people tried to avoid lukewarm water for health reasons and a lukewarm church was a tough thing to swallow.

This was a church that was functional but indifferent, with members who were happy with just showing up for church. There was no excitement about the Gospel nor was there a desire to see change in their neighborhood. They were not really committed to the faith nor were they "cold" enough to realize that something was wrong. Jesus wanted no part of that kind of group.

He challenges them to trade in those things to which they had grown accustomed for His form of church life. He asks them to move from their stagnant form of religion into lives that are noticeably clothed in His glory, responding to His presence. He calls them to change before He spits them out.

This letter ends with two promises. To the person who opens the door and receives Jesus, our Lord will come in and dine with them. Remember, sharing a meal back then was something very special and personal. This is the relationship offered to all by our Savior who stands at the door and knocks. And to Him who overcomes in the faith is the promise that they can join Jesus and the Father as they sit on their throne. We get to join with God in His throne room, not as a commoner down in the court, but as His children there at His throne.

I'll leave you to ponder that for a moment. SR

(For more on what BIBLeref.com says about the lukewarm church see <https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/3/Revelation-3-15.html>)

A New Sign for Seventh Day Baptists

By Carl Greene



There is a new sign on the horizon for Seventh Day Baptists. It marks the start of a new day and reminds us of the fresh calling that God continues to welcome us into as we join Him in the missional work of actively advancing His Kingdom.


The sign referred to here is a very tangible object—the new sign in front of the SDB Center in Janesville, WI. The old sign was showing the wear of time, leaning precariously on its foundation and faded out over the years. The new sign continues on in the same function as the previous sign, but is a fresh, colorful presentation of who we are: alive and well as a Conference of churches being equipped to actively advance His Kingdom through church revitalization, church planting, leadership development, and gospel saturation.

The new sign is also a reminder of a key identity marker of Seventh Day Baptists that makes our missional work together possible: we are generous givers. The sign upgrade was made possible through a very generous gift from Mark Lewis—thank you Mark!

This improvement at the Center continues our overall commitment to enhance the appearance of relevancy of Seventh Day Baptists and to provide a training center for our emerging leaders as well as a practical meeting place for our elected Conference leaders. The Center is hosting the General Council and Memorial Board meetings, while also serving as a hub for virtual meetings and video recording.



The parking lot has been freshly sealed, the roof has been recently replaced, and a number of interior upgrades are underway. Indeed, the sign along the road is a "sign" of transformations that are underway. If you would like to be a financial partner in the ongoing upgrades at the Center, you can go to <https://www.seventhdaybaptist.org/giving/> and select the "Conference Services" tab, or simply send a check to the Center at: SDB Center; PO Box 1678; Janesville, WI 53547.

Blessings as we continue on this missional journey. Together. In service to our Great God! 



MACKINTOSH HONORED

Thornton, CO. –Dr. Ralph Mackintosh (center) was recently honored for his years of service to the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference as a member and Chairman of the SDB General Council. The presentation took place during the morning worship service at Next Step Christian Church, and included reflections offered by SDB Director of Communications, Jeremiah Owen (photographer), SDB Missionary Society Chief Executive Director, Rev. Andrew Samuels (right), and SDB General Conference Executive Director, Rev. Carl Greene (left). Thank you, Ralph! We appreciate the ways you are continuing to actively advance God’s Kingdom!

Each year, the Christian Education Council encourages the members of local Seventh Day Baptist churches to commit themselves to memorizing the Scriptures as part of our **Scripture Memory Program**. The verses selected for the program by the presiding Conference President are usually related to their selected theme. There are three age levels for the program: one for **primary** age groups (ages 5-8), one for **juniors** (9-12) and one for **youth and adults** (13+).

In 2021-2022, our Conference theme is “**How Great Is Our God,**” as selected by our Conference President Charlotte Chroniger. The verses for the program surround this theme. [SR](#)

November Memory Verse:

PRIMARY

Come, let us bow down, for He is our God.

–Psalm 95:6-7a

JUNIOR/YOUTH/ADULT

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for He is our God.

–Psalm 95:6-7a

Passionate Pastor with Heart for Outreach Sought for SDB Church in WV



The Middle Island Seventh Day Baptist Church at New Milton, WV, is praying and seeking a pastor who is passionate about God and the ministry. We are looking for solid Biblical teaching and an interest in evangelical outreach in the community.

We are currently active with Sabbath services and Sabbath school along with continued support of the SDB Missionary Society, local food pantry, and SDB fund requests for special projects and needs including the Christmas Wish List. We wish to return, under pastoral leadership, to such activities as Bible study, VBS, and community outreach. We are open to new activities and programs, and to the discussion and development of said ideas.

We do not require a specific number of hours per week devoted to church-related work. We trust that God will send a pastor who will see needs and address them as they become visible. We trust that a new pastor will pray for the church and the community and the congregation will be willing to support and assist with outreach and meet church needs.

Middle Island is a small congregation and would therefore be able to pay a supplemental salary. A pastor who is employed outside of the church or a pastor who is retired and receiving retirement and/or social security would work best.

Those interested in this position can make that interest known by emailing or calling:

Clara Glover: grannyglover@frontier.com or call 304-758-4243; or

John Pethtel: jpethtel@seventhdaybaptist.org or call 608-752-5055 x702

PART-TIME PASTOR WANTED

Who are we?

The Good News Seventh Day Baptist Church is a church plant in Apex, NC. We are passionate about God, people, and the Sabbath. Our mission is to engage our community by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and meeting the needs of the people. The Good News SDB Church is currently made up of a small core group of committed disciple-makers with the vision of raising up leaders to transform our community one life at a time. We are proudly a part of our Seventh Day Baptist Denomination.

Who are you?

We are looking for a passionate, relational leader who is called by God to plant churches for Him. Do you have a love for the Word of God? Are you Christ-centered and seeking opportunities to point others toward Him? Have you completed formal theological training? Are you relational and community oriented? A servant shepherd?

What's Expected?

In this role you will be expected to lead in our efforts toward reaching our community and creating disciples. This is a part-time position of 20 hours per week. We will expect you to spend time each week:

1. In prayer for the church and the community
2. In the community building relationships outside the church
3. Preparing a sermon and preaching
4. In visitation/member care
5. Being disciplined and discipling

If you are interested in this role, please email goodnewssdbchurch@gmail.com with your resume and cover letter. We are excited to meet you!



The Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society

invites applications for the part-time position of Office Secretary/Bookkeeper.

If interested, please send a resume to: director@sdbmissions.org, or call (954)684-4961 for further information.

The deadline for receiving applications is **Monday, November 18, 2021.**

SDBs ONLINE

<https://www.seventhdaybaptist.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/7thDayBaptists>

<https://twitter.com/7thDayBaptists>

<https://7thDayBaptists.tumblr.com/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/7thDayBaptists/>

<https://www.sabbathrecorder.com>

Find a Listing of SDB Churches offering live streaming of their services:

<https://www.seventhdaybaptist.org/find-a-church/livestreams/>



*Be thankful in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you
who belong to Christ Jesus.*

Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices



Conference 2022*

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs
Colorado Springs, CO

JULY 24 - 30, 2022

*Dates and location are subject to change. If making travel arrangements,
please consider purchasing trip insurance.