


Sabbath Recorder

God Reigns  
whether we  
like it or  
not!!



July/August 2023

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication



Let the heavens be glad,  
and the earth rejoice!  
Tell all the nations,  
“The LORD reigns!”

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# Sabbath Recorder

*A monthly journey into the mind and heart.*

July/August 2023

Patricia Cruzan, Editor

## A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

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## WHO ARE SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS?

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

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

## THE SEVENTH DAY

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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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# Our God Reigns

By David Fox

The  
Good News  
of the  
Gospel  
is that  
God reigns  
so that  
we don't  
have to.

Our God reigns, and it's a good thing, too—I'm not sure that we'd like some of the other options. Sure, we could hope for a good president or a powerful king or some other kind of political leader to reign. We might hope for a just local government, or we might even get behind a church leader or some other kind of celebrity who would reign enough to shape our lives for the better. But, what is more likely, is that we might see ourselves as the ones who reign—that we might think, act, or live like we are the authors of our destiny and that we would be the ones who reign over our own lives. (I'll just go ahead and leave out the reality that for many with young children, it often seems like our kids can sometimes be the ones who reign over our lives!)

As tempting as it might be to look elsewhere, the best option is for us to look to God to reign over our lives. This is the best option because it's what actually is true whether we like it or not!

If we believe the words of Scripture, we can see a clear, consistent, and recurring theme that God is sovereign over all of creation. One reason for this is because God created everything and God sustains everything by His power. God foreknows everything, and God even determines everything that will happen. In other words—God reigns!

Whether we like it or not, God reigns over everything. Much of what we struggle with as human beings is wrestling to the ground this tension between our own freedom of choice, which the Bible does speak of, and God's sovereignty over all things. It's difficult sometimes from our perspective because we feel like we can choose to do whatever we like, and yet we see God as the guide and director of all things. With our limited understanding, we simply have to be content to realize that God indeed controls all things, and yet we're responsible to make our own decisions. It's a difficult tension to live in, but that's what it means to be a human being with limited understanding of the incredible universe God has created.

So to some degree, we are indeed responsible for our own lives, the shape they take, and how things turn out. We are guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit, and once we know the truth of the Gospel, we need to respond to what God revealed to us. And, at the same time, we are powerless to respond to the Gospel if God's Holy Spirit is not working in our hearts. Once we do respond to the Gospel in a saving way, we need to

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# God reigns, whether we accept it or understand it or not.

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fight against sin and strive to pursue holiness. Yet, we are constantly in need of God's grace because we cannot follow God's commands without God's grace. Again, even as Christians, we encounter this tension between our efforts and God's Divine will. It's a difficult mystery that is impossible for us to understand and can be hard for us to come to terms with.

But, the Good News of the Gospel is that God reigns so that we don't have to. In some ways, the thought that we could reign over the universe is laughable, but truly that's what we so often do. In every instance when we sin, we make ourselves out to be greater than God—thinking we know better and acting as if our plans and ways are better than God's plans and God's ways; we have a better grasp on things than God, and we know what is right in any given moment or situation.

God reigns, whether we like it or not. God reigns, whether we accept it or understand it or not. God reigns, even if that bucks against our theology or our perception of how the world ought to work.

God speaks to us so clearly through His word. Jesus tells us that He literally *is* God's word in human flesh (John 1:14). When we look at Jesus' life as recorded in the Bible, we learn a few things. We get to see what it looks like for God to come and dwell among us. We get to see God's very nature when we see Jesus' nature (Hebrews 1:3). We get to know the Father by knowing the Son.

But it isn't just knowing Jesus and wanting to be more like Him that we get from the pages of Scripture. Jesus' life and teachings aren't mere inspirational stories! In Jesus' life, we see that the way He reigns as our King is not like a tyrant, but like a shepherd. He is a Good Shepherd that cares for His people like sheep.

Jesus *actually* lived a perfect life and died a sinless death. He really lived and died as the Good Shepherd He tells us about in John 10: I am the good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11, 14-15, ESV). Not many earthly kings would reign in this way! Jesus reigns not in a hypocritical way—but as a servant-leader who demonstrates the kind of love He wants His people to have for one another. Jesus reigns with power, but leads with humility.

Moreover (and this is the often-neglected part of the Gospel message) Jesus is still alive today and is in Heaven reigning! Jesus continues His ongoing work. Having been our perfect sacrifice, He continues as our never-ending High Priest. Jesus is

alive and well and still working on our behalf. Jesus is in Heaven reigning alongside God the Father *right now!*

Everything we read and learn about Jesus from Scripture is not just meant to be encouraging: it is empowering. We are only saved because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross crushed death to death. Jesus is a reigning king who reigns over sin and death because He actually did the work to defeat sin and death. Later, Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to apply this work to our hearts, giving us grace and regenerating us to belief in the Gospel. If you believe this, it is because God has worked in your heart already! It's worth celebrating and remembering that you're saved to a new life because Jesus reigns. Though Jesus is a Humble Shepherd, He is also a Reigning King who God has exalted (see Philippians 2:9-11).

God's words recorded in Isaiah 53 are a prophecy that speaks of Jesus as a "suffering servant" and they describe the way that Jesus would be sacrificed hundreds of years before it came to pass. The 70's folk hymn *Our God Reigns* beautifully and powerfully expresses the Gospel message as it is revealed through Isaiah 53. In the third verse, Leonard Smith writes:

"It was our sin and guilt  
that bruised and wounded him,  
it was our sin that brought him down.  
When we like sheep had gone astray,  
our shepherd came  
and on his shoulders bore our shame!"<sup>1</sup>

It is a very good thing that God reigns and that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. We are so prone to wander, so inclined to go astray. We delude ourselves into thinking that we can reign and that we don't need a shepherd, or we can be our own shepherd. But, by God's grace, Jesus tenderly brings us back like sheep returning to the care of their shepherd. And thankfully, our Good Shepherd is alive and well and continuing to reign over everything from His exalted state in heaven. [SR](#)

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<sup>1</sup>[https://hymnary.org/text/how\\_lovely\\_on\\_the\\_mountains\\_are\\_the\\_feet](https://hymnary.org/text/how_lovely_on_the_mountains_are_the_feet)

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*David Fox has recently begun serving as Lead Pastor of the First Hopkinton SDB Church in Ashaway, RI. He is a graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA, and has served churches in Colorado, Georgia, and Ohio. He and his wife, Rachel, have two elementary-aged daughters, Elyse and Kathryn.*

# Our God Reigns

## God's Wholeness from the View of a Neurodivergent Servant

By Tiffany Anne Crowder

*Trigger Warning: Nonexplicit Testimony on Mental Health*

**M**y favorite part about the stark contrast between God's reign and man's is that it includes ending violence and conflict. Peace and harmony are restored and life is as it is intended. Considering this, it's hard to believe we could use the same term for generations of genocide and war from man reigning across history. As humans, we cannot do all the things intrinsically part of God's reign, though He may use us for moments of it in our lives. God is perfect. The way He rules over us is consistent, all-loving, and whole. We also know that while we are imperfect, God has already won the battle. Nothing can take this away from Him or us. As a chronically depressed adult, I struggle daily with my mental illness. It is often hard to understand why my condition is still here when I know God's already won the battle.

Did I do this to myself? Is God condemning me with BPD because I'm not close enough with Him? Like many others, I allowed myself to fall down that rabbit hole for far too long. God created this incredible concept when He gave us a brain. The things it will do to rewire for survival when we experience trauma are sometimes inconceivable to others. Having lived through some rather unfortunate events, I have experienced how it is not only intentional, but God designed.

I see the beauty in the world around me. I see the small miracles that others sometimes miss. I hear certain choral pieces, and as goosebumps slide across my arms, I wonder, how can someone hear this and not believe in a creator? Then I get to the part where no matter how hard I try to cultivate my walk with God and become close to Him, I still wake up sad. I still have BPD and a strong desire not to be here. How could that be a part of God's reign if what He brings to those who believe in Him is wholeness?

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## Jesus chose a donkey.

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I often think about how Jesus came into the city on a donkey. As a part of Passover, we study this annually, but I still believe we have found our answer about wholeness at this moment. Jesus has proclaimed His sovereignty, and then He proceeds to do the opposite of what a king would do. He chooses a donkey. Not a horse, not a fancy entourage. A simple donkey, wearing simple clothes, and looking like He could be just about anyone who wasn't noble. However, it was a beautiful picture of peace.

This choice is a stark contrast to the warhorse in Revelation. It wasn't at all what the Israelites wanted. As a consistent God, we know both depictions are purposeful and correct. I bring this up because, at this moment, Jesus is displaying for all to see what His reign looks like, that His power incorporates pieces that a worldly king could never provide for others. **Wholeness.** He often has this habit of delivering the exact need in the lives of those He touches on earth that nobody else can see or do. He has this laser focus, regardless of the attitudes or disbelief of those around us, including ourselves.

Our God reigns. Our God reigns. Our God reigns. When I'm overwhelmed, therapy has suggested that one thing that helps some people is to have mantras. I prefer to call them meditations or prayers. These are the moments when I have no words but want to sit in God's presence and listen for His words and love. It's simple to remember and repeat, and it helps me ground myself in Him instead of the world.

After over a year of intensive therapy, I finally say goodbye to the last psychiatrist next week. She was from a team of almost 12 that tirelessly worked on the other adults in IOP/DBT and me. The average person stays in for six weeks. I was in the hospital full-time for six months and then switched to talking on the phone twice a week because of how much I needed to work through. If there was ever a group of people too mentally broken to serve God, I'm a full-time member.

Then I remember the donkey. I take a deep breath in with my eyes closed. I feel God's love wash over me. "You reign. You reign. You reign," I pray to Him. I'm not bound to the limits I put on myself or become burdened by others. What we think whole means and what He knows whole is, creates a contrast not so different from the donkey and the warhorse. He calls, and I listen. That's it. It's genuinely that simple. I no longer worry about the people that say I need to pray more or believe harder.

For my life story on earth, wholeness doesn't include my mental illness disappearing (though this is true for some people), at least not for now. It doesn't make me happy all the time or motivated to do everything. Sometimes it's still a battle to get off the couch during the bad days. I know that wholeness on earth does not necessarily mean the same thing we desperately wish it did. There is something far better I've gained, though, since being released by the worldly burden of what I am or am not doing perfectly. *Freedom. Safety. Security. Peace.*

Perhaps more importantly, a sense of purpose. When I believe that God can use me no matter how broken I am, it ignites my passion for working hard to help others. And I believe that I can finish big projects because of who **He** is. How beautiful it is to know that works result from His presence instead of being a prequalification for it.

*May we all find our belief in Christ's redemption stronger than the voice that tells us we are too wicked or broken to serve. May we feel the peace and encouragement that comes from only the one true King in His perfect reign. May we feel His wholeness in our lives.*

*Amen* SR

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Tiffany is a freelance writer in St. Louis, MO, originally from the Frontier Church in Carbon Valley, CO. She is married to Joshua Rankhorn; they have one child named Noah. Her professional work involves writing custom content for others and creating DBT lessons for free distribution for all.



# Gathering of SDB Churches in the Pacific Northwest

By Carl Greene, Executive Director

I feel at home in the Yakima Valley of Central Washington. First, it is the source of my favorite childhood game, *The Farming Game*. But wait, it gets better. Out of all the counties in the United States, Yakima County is ranked #8 in dairy production, and is the #1 county in the state of Washington. Oh, the vast quantities of ice cream that can be produced in this fertile valley for SDB cravers of the frozen dessert!



But, of even greater significance is that this is the home of the Central Washington SDB Church, and the host of the most recent SDB Northwest Day. Pastor Glenn Denman and the church family provided a wonderful setting for the Kingdom Family gathering that took place on Sabbath.

Sabbath School was led by Pastor Stan Fox, who also took me aside prior to the worship service to tell me that the pulpit is not bolted to the floor. Apparently, he had heard stories.

As the worship service began, Pastor Glenn Denman (Central Washington SDB) welcomed those gathering from the Seattle Area SDB Church, the Portland Area SDB Church, Iglesia Bautista del Séptimo Día, Auburn, along with SDB General Council members, Andrew Camenga, Steve Osborn, Ericessen Cooper, Erin Inabnit, and Maura Mazza. We participated in the Lord's Supper together after the sermon, and then gathered together for wonderful table fellowship.

The afternoon began with a time of remembrance for Pastor Levi Bond, who passed away in 2022. The time of reflection and sharing reflected the impact Levi has had on so many, and his pioneering leadership of the Northwest Association of SDB Churches. There were tears shed, blessings celebrated, and hope shared throughout this time.

The afternoon session continued with a presentation by the SDB General Conference Executive Director about our SDB Conference of Churches—who we are as Kingdom Family and what we do as a network of churches. General Council members shared specific ministry opportunities that we are engaging in: from leadership development to church planting to church revitalization. We also discussed the work of the SDB Memorial Fund, and opportunities for churches to partner with the Memorial Fund to overcome financial hurdles that arise in ministry.

What a blessed day of Kingdom Family gathering! We savored the building of relationships and the mutual encouragement in ministry. Yet, we went beyond good food and conversation—we engaged in



Pastor Glenn Denman

the missional purpose that we are called to as Seventh Day Baptists. We have missional purpose through the use of our gifts, skills, and abilities in our local churches, while also having a biblical call to partner together as churches to join God in His Kingdom work.

Thank you to the Central Washington SDB Church for being gracious hosts of Northwest Day! Also, a thank you to the Seattle Area SDB Church for your gracious hospitality offered to General Council members during our meetings while in the State of Washington. [SR](#)

# SDB North Central Association Gathering

By Carl Greene, Executive Director



What is Pastor Nate Crandall pointing at in this picture? That is a good question—to know the answer, you needed to be at the North Central Association (NCA) of SDB Churches in Fall of 2022.

The White Cloud SDB Church (MI) hosted and organized the NCA gathering. Friday vespers started off with the All Nations SDB Church (Grand Rapids, MI) leading worship and sharing testimonies. Sabbath School and Sabbath worship were led by the White Cloud SDB Church, with participation by seven pastors from five different SDB Churches. The afternoon sessions included an interactive SDB Memorial Fund presentation by Bill Probasco (Shiloh, NJ, SDB) and a seminar about the intersection of Sabbath Theology and Theology of Work by Carl Greene. That last seminar sounds kind of dry, but at least it involved the use of Play Dough.

There were two SDB Conference presentations that are worth noting. First, the Andrew J. Camenga Scripture Memorization Award was presented to the White Cloud SDB Church (Pastor JR Shick pictured) by Gabriela Alonzo (SDB Christian Education Council member) and Carl Greene (SDB General Conference Executive Director). The SDB



Christian Education Council presents this award annually to the participating church with the high percentage of participants. Congratulations White Cloud. Information about participating in this year's SDB Scripture Memory program can be found at: <https://www.seventhdaybaptist.org/ministries/christian-education/scripture-memory-program/>.

The second presentation brings us back to what Pastor Nate was pointing at in the lead photo. Patti Wethington DeJongh was recognized for the many ways that she has encouraged and served Seventh Day Baptists over a number of years. Patti was specifically recognized for her role as a member of the SDB General Council from 2017 to 2022. She was presented with notes of thanks from SDB Conference team members as well as an etched glass token of gratitude. The award was presented by Carl Greene, and a prayer of blessing was offered by Pastor Nate Crandall (Pastor, Milton SDB and member of the SDB Council on Ministry).

So what was Pastor Nate pointing at? Honestly, I do not know—but there is a great figurative point to the picture (note the play on words). He is pointing at us, and the opportunities that we have to join Patti in stewarding our gifts, talents, and abilities for God's glory through serving in our local church as well as the SDB General Conference.

Thank you to the White Cloud SDB Church for hosting such a wonderful Kingdom Family gathering. A specific thank you to Pastor JR Shick and Gabriela Alonzo for the prayer-filled planning that went into this event. Also, a thank you to the SDB Memorial Fund for their participation in the regional Kingdom Family gatherings of SDBs! SR

# Flourishing Seventh Day Baptists

By Carl Greene, Executive Director



What do you get when six Seventh Day Baptists from five different states gather in Nashville, Tennessee? Despite the lame pastor jokes that come to my mind, the answer is flourishing. Individual and corporate flourishing as who God has created and called us to be.

## Who gathered in Nashville?

I am glad you asked. Gaby Alonzo, Jason Gordon, Andres Jara, Tsafiq Samuels, Theo Wilson, and Carl Greene represented Seventh Day Baptists at the first ever Flourish Conference. We gathered with representatives from other churches, denominations, and Conferences of the National Association of Evangelicals (nae.org).<sup>1</sup>

## What is Flourish<sup>2</sup>

Flourish is a gathering sponsored by the National Association of Evangelicals which offers church and Conference leaders a thoughtful time of learning, resourcing, connecting, and mentoring. The first ever Flourish event in Nashville offered engaging speakers and dynamic table conversations where we tackled complex issues and had hard conversations.

## Why Did We Attend?

Along with the NAE, we believe the gospel should transform every aspect of our world. Together, we are seeking to foster thriving communities and navigate social complexity with biblical clarity. We are seeking winsome ways to have a posture of convicted civility in culturally relevant discussions—from sanctity of life to sexual identity to racial justice. We are seeking ways to bring the fullness of the gospel message to younger generations, and to be fully aware of questions that are shaping their lived experience.

*Simply put, we attended to be better equipped for gospel work and to broaden our capacity to serve as leaders.*

The SDB General Conference of Churches is focused on multiplying leaders, specifically with the purpose of actively advancing God's Kingdom through intentional investment in our emerging SDB leaders. For more information about leadership development initiatives, please follow up with this link: <https://www.seventhdaybaptist.org/leadership-development/>.

## SDB Memorial Fund

Finally, thank you to the SDB Memorial Fund for their support of this endeavor. The support from the Memorial Fund as well as gracious opportunities provided by the NAE made this initiative possible for our group of SDBs, and we look forward to Flourishing together with our SDB Kingdom Family.

And, there is more yet to come. The SDB Memorial Board continues to provide innovative catalysts to spark long-term leadership development among Seventh Day Baptists, especially among younger SDBs. The Trustees have endorsed a number of exciting initiatives that will build upon existing approaches while also prototyping new endeavors. This ministry partnership of the SDB General Conference and the SDB Memorial Fund is building with traditioned innovation—building from a sure foundation while simultaneously testing out some new leadership development angles.

Stay tuned for more yet to come. Our story is still being written as Seventh Day Baptists. SR

<sup>1</sup> The mission of the NAE is to honor God by connecting and representing evangelical Christians. The vision of the NAE is a thriving evangelical community that is equipped to navigate complexity with biblical clarity.

<sup>2</sup> Think of flourish here as a verb, “grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly favorable environment.” Thank you Oxford English Dictionary.

# Our Purpose? Praising and Planting

By Valerie Probasco,  
Shiloh SDB Church

## Eastern Association 2023

The Eastern Association of Seventh Day Baptist Churches met on May 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> for a time of worship and equipping. We were so blessed to have 11 churches represented.

Sabbath Day activities and meals were planned and provided through the collaboration of the SDB Christian Church, Silver Springs, MD; Washington, DC, SDB Church; Grace Upon Grace Ministries; and the SDB Church of Shiloh, NJ. Pastor Paul Andries lead the Sabbath School study on Acts 8:26-40. The discussion centered around the divine appointment between Philip and the Ethiopian man. From this study, GOD revealed and reaffirmed that He prepares the hearts and minds of men. He sees each one of us. He directs exactly where, when, and how to speak into someone's situation. Last and most of all, He brings the increase and He harvests the fruit.

The Sabbath morning worship service was led by the SDB Christian Church with Miss Adriana Alonzo serving as lay leader. The Washington SDB Church praise team brought us to the throne room with mighty songs of praise. The 180+ people present raised one tremendous voice of thanks to the goodness of our GOD. Pastor Helmer Umama offered a heartfelt sermon that challenged us to leave a sweet aroma of the Grace of Jesus wherever we go.

In the afternoon, a beautiful tribute was given in memory of Pastor Dave Taylor. Our Metro Area Churches were greatly impacted by this gifted shepherd and wanted to honor his wife Margaret with a wonderful video and words of appreciation.

Updates from some of our Conference leaders were shared. Charlotte Chroniger spoke about our upcoming General Conference session in Grand Rapids, MI. Maura Mazza shared the vision map from the General Council. Bill Probasco gave a brief overview from the Memorial Board.

Pastor Dave Stall, our Church Planting Coordinator, explained the "process" that the Conference is now using for church planting. This has been referred to as "The Funnel." It was incredibly encouraging to hear from five of our church planters. Pastors Phil Lawton, Kevin Palmiter, Reggie Whiddon, Chris Galarneau (via video), and Dave Stall blessed us all with in-person testimonies and updates from their current church plants. Please be in prayer for these courageous men in Illinois, New York, Alabama, Colorado, and North Carolina. Pastor Nate Crandall joined the workshop live via zoom to explain a new initiative for our church planters through a coaching program to be launched this fall. In this way, the Conference will help our planters clarify what GOD is asking them to do by partnering with coaches to help discern next steps in ministry.





One additional highlight from Pastor Dave Stall's workshop was that one of our SDB Associations is going to serve as a sponsor for our church plant in North Carolina. This was absolutely Good News! What a confirmation that our focus and our calling as Associations is to work together to grow the Kingdom in such a way.

An exciting addition to the weekend was a Youth/Young Adult Retreat held at Jersey Oaks Camp! This was a great time of fellowship for our high school juniors, seniors, and undergraduate college students (up to age 23) to enjoy. Special thanks to our SDB Christian Church young adults for organizing this event.

Special thanks also goes to Bill Probasco for creating an original game for our fellowship time on Sabbath night. It was great to have this opportunity to laugh together.

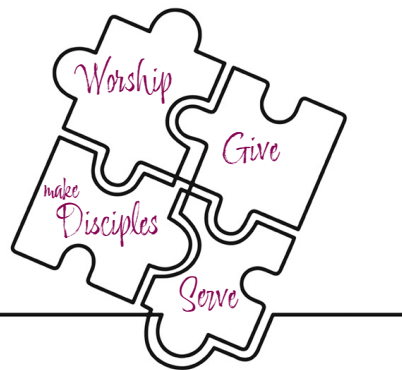
On Sunday, our first official business meeting since 2019 was held. Church reports were shared, evangelism funds were designated, and our constitution/by-laws were addressed. All of this was dedicated first and foremost to the LORD in a season of prayer together.

We are so blessed by what GOD is doing in the Eastern Association. He doubled our weekend attendance in one year. He blessed us with opportunities to pray into and get involved with the work of church planting. We stand believing that He will continue to bring the increase. Thank you to all who helped make this event a success. Thank you, LORD, for preserving us for your purposes. [SR](#)



# Full of Purpose

Part 8 of a Sermon Series at Shiloh SDB Church  
by Pastor Tyler Chroniger



## Identity of Purpose

Throughout the course of our time together, I have used a phrase, among other thoughts, to help us understand our purpose in this world. To understand how we are purpose-filled we need to understand why we were created. We exist to bring God glory. Our very existence is tied to bringing God glory. In order to bring God glory, we need to bear fruit; honor God with our bodies; bring Him glory when we eat or drink; bring Him glory, when we use the grace we've been given, to serve; and bring Him glory by doing good. All these areas of bringing God glory work themselves out in four main pillars of this phrase, "we exist to bring God glory through worship, giving, serving, and reproducing followers of Christ." Your purpose is built upon bringing God glory. Your purpose is built upon worshiping God. Your purpose is built upon giving. Your purpose is built upon serving. Your purpose is built upon reproducing followers of Christ. Your purpose is built upon bearing fruit, honoring God with your body, eating or drinking, doing good, and most importantly following the will of God. Why this all makes sense is because all of these are tied to who you are. If you don't know who you are you will never be able to completely fulfil your purpose.

I start with a story from Luke chapter 10. In this story, we read about the sisters, Mary and Martha. One sister was distracted with the preparations. The other sister sat at Jesus' feet. What I want you to understand from this story is that the level of service you do doesn't define who you are.

We look at Mary and might think she is just lazy and is doing nothing. Translate that to us and we look at a person and say they aren't doing enough. They aren't participating. They aren't doing what they have been called to do. While some of that may be true, we put a label on that person and try to define them by it. We might even verbalize it: you aren't pulling your weight. For some of you, you have been told this your entire life. You have been told you need to work. You need to do more. You need to accomplish something. You need to clean your room. You have taken on the identity of one who does nothing or one who doesn't work hard. You have accepted that identity because "if I don't do it I will never be disappointed. If I don't do it, I can never let anybody down. If I don't do it, no one can reject me." That identity you have put on is not who you are—and it's for sure not who God sees that you are.

# If you don't know who you are you will never be able to completely fulfil your purpose.

We read in 1 Timothy that a “worker is worth his wages.” There are Proverbs (Proverbs 19:15, Proverbs 12:24, Proverbs 6:6, Proverbs 20:4) about not doing work. The Bible is clear about doing work—yet it is tied to action not identity. I need to act yet it's not who I am.

On the other hand, some have taken the “Martha identity.” The “Martha identity” is the one who seemingly does everything. Another way to put it is my house, my responsibility: *I am first to volunteer for everything. I am on or a part of every committee. If I don't do it, it won't get done. I can't ask for help because it won't be done the way I want. I need to be informed and a part of everything. I need to know what's going on because it is how I stay connected. I do and serve and make sure nothing will get in the way of me accomplishing what I must do. I plow through obstacles. Anyone who disagrees with the plan I have set is an obstacle. I get louder and angrier in the hopes they will back down. Nothing is going to stop me. I get mad at people who don't do as much as I do. The reason I always must do is because, as James puts it, “faith without works is dead.” I must do work or that means I don't have faith. It is who I am. I am just a doer and if you don't like it, so what.*

Being the center of it all means that's who you are. People know you as that person. You are the one that always *does*. You find your value in doing. You find your identity in doing. You have accepted that this is just who you are. You are the one who always must *do*. Each one of these is a wrong way of thinking. The level of service or lack of service doesn't define who Mary and Martha are. It doesn't matter if you serve everyone. It doesn't matter if you meet the needs of everyone. It doesn't matter if you sit and listen. These things are not who you are. They are not your identity. Your level of service or lack of service isn't who you are.

The next thought comes in the area of position. Having a position or not having a position doesn't define who you are. This thought comes from Luke 7:36-39. This story is where Jesus is invited to the home of a Pharisee and a sinful woman comes in and anoints Jesus' feet. The Pharisee is an identity of status: *I am a CEO. I am the pastor. I am a deacon. I am a trustee. I am a committee chair. I am the manager. I am a Pharisee. I am someone who has a title. My words carry weight. What I say goes. I am the authority on various topics because I have studied more than everyone else. I have degrees upon degrees. I am what people call an expert. I have a platform, so I am something.*

Just because you have gifts and abilities to be a leader does not mean that is who you are. Your identity isn't in being a leader even though you lead people. Your identity isn't in the title even though it is given. Your identity isn't in how many degrees you have or how much money you make. Your identity isn't in how important you think you are or how others think of you.

The inverse is true about the woman. Her identity is one of unimportance. The woman doesn't even get a name. She is given an identity because she is called a sinner. People look down on her. She doesn't have anything that is flashy. She would fade into the background. You would walk right past her and judge her for the sinner she is. Some of you have taken on this identity. You say: *I am a lowly person. I am someone who no one notices. I am someone who can't be bold. I am an introvert. I don't have it in me. I am useless because I seem to have no skills or abilities. I can't lead people. I will never oversee anything. I just fade into the background. I am unimportant.*

Your position doesn't define who you are. Having it all or having nothing isn't who you are. Having a title or just having a reputation doesn't define who you are. Having prestige or status doesn't define who you are. Not having a status doesn't define who you are.

The next area that doesn't define you is your level of faith. There is a story from Mark 9:14-24, in which Jesus heals a boy and a father cries out, “help my unbelief.” In this story, the disciples are sitting and watching this take place. The disciples have seen a lot from Jesus at this point. They know what He has taught. They are all in as far as following him because they have left their jobs. They have left their livelihoods. You would say that these disciples are those people who have great faith. Most of what you know about God has been defined by the experiences you have. You have taken on the identity of Man or Woman of Faith. Some of us fall in this category. We believe God for anything and everything. When we pray, things change. We see the results. When we get bad reports from the doctors, we are so positive because we serve a big and mighty God. While all those things are good things, I want you to know that having such a deep and great faith isn't who you are. Having great faith isn't who you are. Your identity is having great faith. On the other hand, there was the father of the son. His identity is lack of faith.

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The lack of faith identity looks like this: You doubt a lot about God. You have a hard time believing some of the outlandish things the Bible teaches. Most of your struggle is based on experience; meaning you haven't experienced it, so it is difficult to wrap your head around it. People might say you lack faith or have very little faith. It might be said of you that you need to believe and trust God more. You desire to have greater faith and yet you seem stuck in the space you are in. You find it hard to get past the bad diagnoses. Some of us fall into this category. We have a hard time believing God for anything. We are like this man. He hoped the disciples would help his son. He tries. He brings his son to Jesus, but it seems like he doesn't have the faith as suggested by his statement, "I believe but help my unbelief." You have taken on the identity of a man or woman of little faith or lacking faith. Your level of belief doesn't define who you are.

None of these things define who you are. Whether you work or lack work doesn't define who you are. Whether you have status or lack status doesn't define who you are. Whether you have big faith or little faith doesn't define who you are. How you see yourself doesn't define who you are. You might think: *I am worthless. I am forgotten. I am ugly. I am not good enough. I am not strong enough. I don't have anything of value. I am not loved. You might think you are great, awesome, someone.*

None of these things matter. If these things don't define us what does?

We read who we are in scripture. God defines who you are. In Ephesians 2:4-5: I am beloved. In Ephesians 2:10: I am a masterpiece. In Ephesians 1:4: I am chosen and holy. In Ephesians 1:7: I am forgiven and redeemed. In Ephesians 4:22-24: I am a new creation. In Ephesians 1:5: I am a child of the king. In Ephesians 1:13-14: I am an heir of God.

Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, and this is what defined her, not her "lack of working." The woman who cried and repented is what defined her, not her sin. The man's faith even as small as it was, is found in Jesus Christ. Your worth is found in Jesus Christ. Your value is found in Jesus Christ. Your beauty is found in Jesus Christ. Your strength is found in Jesus Christ. Your love is found in Jesus Christ. Stop allowing your own thoughts or feelings determine your worth or value. God sees you with all the stuff you are going through. God cares about you. His heart hurts when your heart hurts. His love for you surpasses any love relationship you could possibly have.

Who we are is summed up in Jesus Christ. Who we are is summed up in His death, burial, resurrection for us. Who we are is summed up in our belief in Him. It is not how much I do or don't do. I can never earn His love for me. I can neither do enough good or do enough bad for Him to change His love towards me. I don't earn more love because I do good. I don't earn less love because I do bad. It is not what position I am in. No title, no place of authority can change who I am in Jesus Christ. Not having a title or position also doesn't change who I am in Jesus Christ. You might not even be recognized by people. You might live in the shadows. You might just go to your job day in and day out and aren't getting ahead. None of that matters because that doesn't define who you are. Not having big faith doesn't define who you are. Not having great faith doesn't define who you are. Your lowly view of yourself or a high view of yourself doesn't define who you are.

The one who created you gets to define you. The one who made you in His image by His very word, gets to define you. The one who shed His very blood for you gets to define who you are. You are chosen, You are loved. You are valued. You are a prince or princess. You are a child of the King. Your identity is found in Jesus Christ alone. Not what you do or don't do. Not what title you have or don't have. Not your level of faith. It is in Jesus Christ. You are a person full of purpose. You were created on purpose, with a purpose, for a purpose. You exist to bring God glory through worship, giving, serving, and reproducing followers of Christ. SR



*Your identity is found in  
Jesus Christ alone.*





# How Great Is Our God!

By Charlotte Chroniger, Conference President

## FINAL NOTICE!

This is my final *Sabbath Recorder* article about our Conference gathering on July 23-20 at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, MI. It's almost time, after three years of not meeting, to pack our bags, map out our travel plans, and get excited about seeing our old SDB friends and meeting new folks. Thank you, God, for allowing us this great blessing!

Here are a few additional pieces of information you might need to know about Conference:

1—We will have children's activities, including Bible stories, crafts, music, etc. for children age 4 through completed 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Doneta Osborn is heading up the children's program, 8:30-11:30 am each morning, along with several volunteers with teaching experience. The theme for the week is "Seeing Our Great God." The children's program is planned for Sabbath morning.

2—We are still need some people to be with the children during the recreation time, Monday through Thursday, 2:00-4:00 pm. We invite people 16 years old and older to volunteer for this. You would only have to do one afternoon, but could sign up for more days. Let me know if you are willing to do this.

3—There will be youth activities for grades 6-12, led by Pastor Tyler Chroniger, Debbie Bond, and Val Probasco. There will also be some off-campus activities.

4—There will be a children's message each evening except Thursday evening when we will be blessed by the musical vespers. Children will be given a quiet bag after the children's time to use during the services.

5—Pastor Egbert Downs, from the Plainfield, NJ, SDB Church, will be the Conference Pastor. If you have prayer concerns, or need some spiritual advice, he will be available during the week.

6—We are looking forward to many of you joining the Conference Choir. Most rehearsals are scheduled for 1:00-2:00 pm beginning Monday afternoon. Some rehearsals may be held at other times as needed. The choir will sing at the evening services on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. The choir will also sing Sabbath morning.

7—Be thinking about what interest committee in which you would like to participate.

The committees and leaders are:

Christian Social Action—Jessica Veale and Carla Burlingame

Ministerial—JR Schick and Gabby Alonzo

Missions—Perry and Amanda Barbee

Youth—Debbie Bond and Val Probasco

Young Adult—Chris Galarneau and Miriam Berg

Budget and Finance—Ed Cruzan

Historical—Bill and Liam Probasco

Women's Interests—Amy Palermo and Donna Bond

Christian Education—Johnmark and Cathy Camenga

Reference and Counsel—Phil and Bethany Lawton

Church Development—Jim Goodrich

Communications—Butch and Dianne Hibbard

The Interest Committees will meet on Monday and Tuesday; and the business sessions will also be on Monday and Tuesday. Learn about the different ministries and agencies—let your voice be heard!

You can see that we will have many opportunities to work together, to be blessed by each other, to sing and worship together, to learn about our SDB family, and to praise our great God for all He has done and is going to do.

Thank you—thank you to those of you who agreed to be part of the Conference program. I am so grateful for your willingness to serve in this way. May God bless your efforts. Thank you, too, for your prayer support and words of encouragement. I've been blessed by this experience as Conference President.

See you in Grand Rapids! 

# “I Sing the Almighty Power of God”

By Eric Bofinger  
SDB Church of Shiloh, NJ

In 1715, Isaac Watts published “I Sing the Almighty Power of God” in the first hymnal intended primarily for children called *Divine and Moral Songs for the Use of Children*. The bulletin blurb on [hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org) states the following: “In this hymn, we extol the power, wisdom, and goodness of God as seen in the created order. We recognize that it is God who has made all these beautiful wonders, and that it is He who keeps the world in order through His ever-present care.”

A few months ago, my wife, Katy, and I started listening to a wide variety of hymns in our home. We came across an artist, Craig Duncan, and his album entitled, *Colonial Hymns—traditional early American hymns featuring Fiddle, Hammered Dulcimer, Guitar, Recorders, Mandolin, Harp and more*. (You need to check this out on Spotify or wherever you listen to music.) More recently, I started listening to his rendition of “I Sing the Almighty Power of God,” only to realize that Duncan plays five instrumental verses, but Watts only penned three. Therefore, it seemed fitting to carefully write an additional two verses to fit with this hallowed hymn.

It only takes a quick scan of the text to realize this masterpiece is packed full of Scriptural references, as any God-exalting song should be. [Hymnary.org](http://Hymnary.org) says, “The text presents a wonderful view of God’s creation sketched in vivid pictorial language. The creation around us is a beautiful panorama that testifies to its Creator, whose power and wisdom (st. 1), goodness and wonders (st. 2), and providence and omnipresence (st. 3) we confess with awe and praise.” Much of this hymn is based out of the Psalms, with a large amount of text from Psalms 136. “Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever; the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever; the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever” (vs. 3, 7-8).

To summarize the theme of the song with one phrase, it would be “God’s sovereignty over His creation.” Because Watts originally wrote this song for children, the hymn does not go into a deep theology on the effect of sin on the relationship between man and God. In Watts most famous hymn, “Joy to World,” he carefully articulates that it is Christ who will restore creation, namely humanity back into the

right relationship with God the father. Watts also defines the present nature of Christ’s kingdom—“the Lord is come,” “the Savior reigns,” and “He rules the world.” In my additional two verses below, I use the majority of Psalm 2 to artistically explain God’s ultimate rule over mankind and the futility of the schemes of man.

Not only is this hymn theologically sound, but it includes some incredible literary and poetic devices. Originally, it was written in six stanzas with an 8.6.8.6 meter, but was later combined into three eight-line verses. I kept this pattern for my additional verses and used a technique called ‘elision’ to reduce unwanted syllables. Upon careful examination of the original three verses, lines 2 & 4 and 6 & 8 rhyme; I kept this pattern using rhymes or approximate rhymes in my additional verses. The first two verses also use alliteration in lines 1, 3, 5, 7 with the last letter of the aforementioned verses ending with ‘d.’ Verse 3 deviates its opening line away from ‘singing’ of an attribute of God/the Lord, which I match in verse 4 before returning for closure in verse 5 to match verse 1. Verse 3 also rhymes its paired odd numbered lines in addition to its even lines.

Historically, “I Sing the Almighty Power of God” was sung just as such. A more modern approach has been to say, “We sing,” which puts an emphasis on corporate worship and deemphasizes a privatized lordship of Christ. From a textual standpoint, verse 4 derives from Psalm 2:1-8, where the Psalmist explains the futility of man fighting against the loving yoke of God. The end result is that Christ is sitting down on his throne after finishing his work on the cross, where he is ruling and reigning now. As mentioned previously, verse 5 opens with a hyperlink back to the opening line of verse 1. Line 2 summarizes Psalm 2:11. Lines 3 & 4 are yet another link back to verse 1 and a link back to Psalm 136, specifically verse 12, which explains God’s mercy on those who follow him, but it is God who provides the saving grace. The song concludes with lines connected to Psalm 2:10 and 12 with a warning that fighting against God is a losing battle. The last line of the song is the prophecy of the virgin birth of God’s only begotten son in Isaiah 7:14.

Enjoy!

## “I Sing the Almighty Power of God”

Watts (1715) vs. 1,2,3 - Bofinger (2023) vs. 4,5

We sing th' almighty power of God  
That made the mountains rise,  
That spread the flowing seas abroad  
And built the lofty skies.  
We sing the wisdom that ordained  
The sun to rule the day;  
The moon shines full at his command,  
And all the stars obey.

We sing the goodness of the Lord  
That filled the earth with food;  
He formed the creatures with his word  
And then pronounced them good.  
Lord, how thy wonders are displayed,  
Where'er we turn our eyes,  
If we survey the ground we tread  
Or gaze upon the skies.

There's not a plant or flower below  
But makes thy glories known,  
And clouds arise and tempests blow  
By order from thy throne;  
While all that borrows life from thee  
Is ever in thy care,  
And everywhere that we can be,  
Thou, God, art present there.

Why do the nations rage and set  
Themselves against the Lord?  
Say'ng, “let us break their bonds and bands  
And cast away their cords.”  
The one enthroned in heaven laughs;  
He's set his king on Zion.  
“The nations are thine 'heritance;  
Thou art my only Son.”

We sing th' almighty power of God,  
Who with fear men shall serve.  
With a strong hand and outstretched arm,  
Mercy fore'er endures.  
Be wise now therefore, O ye kings:  
Be warned ye rule's of earth.  
Take refuge in and kiss the Son;  
The only virgin birth. SR



# All Roads Lead to Malawi

SDB World Federation

By Andrew Samuels

Traveling to Malawi in May 2023, made it my fifth trip to the country known as the Warm Heart of Africa. This trip was primarily to meet with the Host Committee for the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation Sessions, scheduled to be held there in September 2023, and to evaluate the preparations already being made for that upcoming global gathering.

In his capacity as World Federation Vice President for Africa, Pastor Canaan Phiri was my partner for the visit. Being a native and resident Malawian, he was more than qualified to play his role and did so with tremendous competence and dexterity.

So, from September 16-23, 2023, all Seventh Day Baptist roads will lead to Blantyre, Malawi, for the next World Federation assembly—and all are welcome. Hotel Victoria, with its elegance and charm, waits to usher all into its clean and comfortable rooms, its exquisite dining, and its spacious meeting rooms. The Host Committee, led by Dr. Alfred Chanza, has already done immense work in planning for logistics, publicity, safety, and security, to give full and strong support to the program being prepared by Pastor Luciano Barreto Nogueira De Moura, President of the SDB World Federation.

There are nineteen member Conferences of the SDB World Federation. It is hoped that all of those member Conferences will be represented at this historic meeting. It is historic because in its almost 60-year history, the World Federation Sessions have never been held on the African continent. All eight African member Conferences see this as a well-timed opportunity to welcome the rest of the world to its environs.

On this most recent visit of mine, I encountered a Host Committee very eager to demonstrate their enthusiasm, their preparation, and their readiness for the big event. I was able to visit and preach in two local churches outside of the general Blantyre area; and in both places, there was an intensifying of the effort to mobilize and motivate people to attend—especially the public aspects of the World Federation Sessions. The Malawi Conference leadership, as well as the Host Committee, is determined and committed to investing that same type of energy and passion in all 200-plus SDB congregations in Malawi. Similarly, we are asking all of our member Conferences to commit to sending a delegation to Malawi in September. The Malawi Conference is full of anticipation for the potential of this international event to raise the visibility and profile of Seventh Day Baptists in the country. There is a heightened sense of awareness, and that currency will be further maximized as all forms of media will be used to publicize the event and give it traction. The Host Conference will then be able to take advantage of the momentum gained for its future ministries and programs on a national scale.



*Andy Samuels with Pastor Canaan Phiri—  
WF Vice President for Africa*



*Arrival at the airport and met by the Malawi Conference entourage*

For the week-long event, the program will include seminars, worship services, Bible studies, business sessions, prayer meetings, church visits, and some sightseeing. On a global scale, Seventh Day Baptists will be able to discuss their hopes and vision for the future; we will seek to encourage each other; strengthen our relationships; and we will give cooperative support to each other's ministries, as we are able.

The SDB World Federation was born out of a meeting in 1964 in Salem, West Virginia, United States. Representatives of seven Conferences attended that meeting, billed as the Consultation of World Conferences (COWOCO). They drafted a constitution and proposed the formation of the SDB World Federation. Charter membership was left open until 1966, when 11 Conferences signed on, and the new organization was formed. After almost 60 years, only two of the original nine men who attended COWOCO, remain alive: Naval Harley of Jamaica and Otrain Manani of Malawi. On my recent trip to Malawi, I had the distinct pleasure and privilege of visiting with Pastor Manani and his wife Ethel in their home. Although ailing, he provided very good company and conversation for the visit, which I found very inspiring.

President Luciano Barreto Nogueira De Moura, is inviting us to Malawi in September 2023. His theme for the SDB World Federation Sessions is, "Become Perfectly One." His theme Scripture is John 17:23. We look forward to seeing you there.

You can now register online for the World Federation Sessions. Go to [www.sdbwf.org](http://www.sdbwf.org), click on the "Events" page, and to the right of the page, under "Latest Articles," you will see, "SDB WF 2023 Online Registration." Click there, and complete the registration form. [SR](#)



*Hotel Victoria*



*Andy Samuels with Pastor Otrain Manani— attendee to COWOCO in 1964 in USA*



SDB Missionary Society

By Garfield Miller

## GUYANA—River of Devotion

The Guyana Seventh Day Baptist Conference has been ministering on the South American Continent for over 100 years. Guyana, land of many waters, has a population of 750,000 people representing Indians, Africans, Amerindians, Portuguese, Chinese, and British. In April 2023, a team composed of Kay Samuels (Miami SDB), Brenique Ademola (West Palm Beach SDB), Pastor Michael Cummings (Birmingham and Faith SDB, UK), and I traveled to Guyana. While there, we participated in evangelism outreach, leadership training, Youth Retreat, VBS, and family seminars. Our time in Guyana was spirit filled and exhilarating.

The Guyanese Conference is made up of seventeen Churches, seven on the coast and ten in what is called the “interior.” Two remarkable things, to me, on the trip were the profound dedication of the brethren to God and the many rivers we encountered. We worshiped at the Faith SDB Church, the headquarters of the Conference, which is pastored by Abel Caesar. We also worshiped at the Grace SDB Church, pastored by Ewart Caesar. They were having their annual Youth Retreat. The worship was exceptional, with praise and dancing for hours. We interacted with mainly Africans on the coast. Their worship highlighted commitment and honor to God; we felt very close to God during worship.

We traveled on the Essequibo and then the Pomeroon rivers to get to the interior, which is only accessible by the river. We went by ferry, then two speedboats, one owned by the Conference. Arriving in the interior, we met the Amerindians, who informed us they were Arawaks and Caribs. As a Caribbean native, this was mind-blowing, as our history lessons taught us about Caribs and Arawaks in Jamaica, who all died out due to colonization.

Pastors we met in the interior included Earl Thomas and Denham Garraway. The Indians live simple but fulfilling lives, with humble livelihoods and God as their focus. They are located on different islands connected only by water. As cars are to us in America, so are boats to the people in this part of Guyana. The lives of those on rivers and creeks are built around water. They travel in boats to school, the doctor, the market, and even church. Their way of travel taught me that God provides in different ways. In Guyana, we had the privilege of participating in two baptismal services, one in the interior. A total of nine persons were immersed.



*Pastor Michael Cummings*



We had the opportunity to visit the Conference’s campsite, Camp Glory. The property consists of a developing farm, a church building, and two dorms. They report that during the summers, up to 150 youths are usually at camp. The Conference’s youth arm, led by Brother Akeel Shepherd, is working assiduously to improve the dorms, which have yet to be completed but are already rendered inadequate to house the many campers. The Conference’s vision is to have a fully operational campsite and an established church plant and to develop a farm that can sustain the camp and other areas of ministry. They are working towards this vision one building block at a time, with volunteer labor from church members. They are already bringing glory to God, and as they labor, their camp will one day be the glory of its community.

This trip was a lesson of devotion for me, flowing from the coast to the interior and bringing glory to God. Thanks to the leadership team in Guyana who organized and participated in the mission: Pastor Abel Caesar (President); Deacon Derick Boston (Vice President); Sisters Nadata Caesar-Pryce (Secretary), Tiffani Ferrell (Treasurer), and Delonne English; Deaconess Bernice Trotz; and Brother John Dublin. This trip reminded us that—Our God Provides and Delivers! “The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.” (Joshua 10:8) SR





## The Book of Revelation: The Seven Trumpets

Study Lesson 28 by Dennis Coleman,  
Seventh Day Baptist Church of Shiloh, NJ

*1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. 3 When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."*

—Numbers 10:1-3 (NKJV)

### Prayer Time

Father, as You call us together for this year's North America General Conference, please guide and direct all Seventh Day Baptists as we seek to serve You. As You prepare each of us for Your kingdom, help us to grow and to understand as Your Gospel is spread throughout the earth. Let Your light shine through Your church as a beacon guiding the lost and the prodigals back home. Let Your peace rest on the hearts of Your children as we stand as Your representatives...Your body ministering to the needs of your people here on earth.

### The Seven Angels

*And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*

—Revelation 8:2 (NKJV)

I used BibleGateway.com to look that verse up in about 62 different versions of the Bible. Only five of them left out the word "the" before the seven angels. A quick look at a number of commentaries shows a general feeling that "the" is very important here. I'm not sure if anyone has a count of how many angels there are in heaven but it seems as if there are many. By saying that he saw "the seven angels," John seems to indicate that these angels are a special group.

The commentary for the *Cambridge Bible* (along with many of the commentaries) points towards these being archangels, therefore distinctly different from other angels. Among the commentaries, two references are given in support of the idea of there being archangels who stand before God. The first is from the *Book of the Tobit*, specifically Tobit 12:15. I'll leave it to you to do your own research on what the Tobit is and on whether the verse supports this view. The other reference that is often given is Luke 1:19:

*And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings."*



## *These angels stand before God, equipped with their trumpets and ready to announce something big that is about to happen.*

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*Ellicott's Commentary* points out that John says that these angels “stand” (not stood) before God. This same commentary, while acknowledging the idea of these being seven archangels, points out the symbolism of the number seven as we talked about in the last installment. If the number seven is symbolic in this verse, then these angels might represent God’s complete and perfect judgment. Quoting *Ellicott's Commentary*, “They are the seven, the complete circle of God’s power in judgment.” The commentary compares this with the use of the number seven in describing the “seven Spirits” of God that we saw back in chapter 1, where we talked about seven representing the complete and perfect power of the Holy Spirit and not seven different spirits. (See also *The Book of Revelation: The Benediction* in the March 2021 *Sabbath Recorder*)

In thinking about the two different views of the seven angels, I find myself wondering if in this case both views might be true. Yes, it could be that John literally saw three angels (possibly archangels). At the same time these seven archangels would have to have been chosen by God to stand before Him. Perhaps God chose seven so that they literally and figuratively stand as an example of His perfection.

### **Seven Trumpets**

The seven angels were given seven trumpets. When I think of a group standing before a throne with trumpets I think of a number of old Hollywood movies where trumpets are blown in the royal court before an announcement is made or before the king approaches. (I also think of a Bugs Bunny cartoon where Bugs gets caught taking carrots from the royal garden...but I digress.) I also think of heralds. What do heralds do? They usually serve either to bring important news or to signal that something is about to happen. These angels stand before God, equipped with their trumpets and ready to announce something big that is about to happen. But we will have to wait just a little longer as before these angels carry out their duties another angel steps in with a very special and important task.

*Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar.*

—Revelation 8:3 (NKJV)

Some of the commentaries mention the possibility of this angel being Jesus. The fact is, the Bible does not tell us anything other than this is another angel. I believe this might be because we are not to focus on who this angel might be. Instead our focus should be on what is going on.

The angel comes into the picture and stands at (or above) the altar that we also saw in earlier chapters. He brings with him a golden censer with which he will offer incense that will mix with “the prayers of all the saints.” This is not the first time that we see the symbol of incense in connection with prayer as this is similar to what is written in Revelation 5:8. In chapter 8 we see incense and prayer mixed together as an offering to our God, the smoke of the incense and the prayers going up before God from the angel’s hand (Revelation 8:4). I believe this symbolizes a pleasing aroma and it is yet another reminder that our prayers do reach the throne room of God.

After sending this offering up before God, the angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and throws it to the earth (Revelation 8:5). John describes for us how this is followed by “noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.” According to *Ellicott's Commentary* there are differences among manuscripts in the order of the words. What is clear, though, is that we see a connection between prayer going up to God and changes upon the earth according to the will of God. What comes as a result of the censer of fire hitting the earth is just the start and will be followed by destruction on earth as each angel blows their trumpet, carrying out what we call the trumpet judgments.

With the seal judgments there is some debate as to whether what is represented is figurative (representing the story of the Jewish people or of the church) or if they are things that will happen here on earth. When it comes to the trumpet judgments the commentaries seem in agreement that what John saw in his vision will happen on earth in some way, shape, or form. The events may not look exactly as John describes but I believe that (with the help of the Holy Spirit) we will be able to make the connection between world events and what we see in the Bible.

Over the next four chapters we move from the scene of worship and seeing the scroll unsealed to scenes of destruction that are more like what we expect when we talk about the end times. Here I feel that I must repeat a warning from an earlier installment: God is the judge of all the earth. Yes, He is merciful and He loves everyone unconditionally. But understand that He is both Savior and judge. I feel like much of the early chapters of Revelation point towards revealing Him as Savior, showing us the Lamb. Starting with our next installment we watch as our Savior’s judgments are carried out against those who refuse His gift of salvation. SR

# RESTFUL PARENTING

Less Stress More Fun

By Marqueta Aiken & Cynthia Burgess

Issue I



Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," yet parents are often tired and overwhelmed. Restful parenting demonstrates faithfulness to the Word of God. It is parenting that is built around the idea of becoming a trusted leader that your child wants to follow rather than a parent who rules by force. The 7 principals of Restful Parenting are:

1. Maintain a non-confrontational attitude
2. Plan ahead
3. Be patient
4. Be persistent
5. Be consistent
6. Make adjustments according to the child's needs and abilities
7. Trust God

All 7 principals work together to make parenting a more peaceful and enjoyable experience. For instance, you notice your kid has a meltdown every day at 3:00pm, and you tend to lose your temper. In order to maintain a non-confrontational attitude, you plan ahead, do the activities in this newsletter, and then give the child a quiet time activity, or nap, a little before 3:00pm. Maybe the first quiet activity doesn't work, but since you have had cookies, and a relaxing time on the floor, you have the energy to maintain a non-confrontational attitude, with patience and persistence, as you set out to discover what will work for your child. Then, all that is left is for you to relax and trust that God will guide you to success.



## SUGAR COOKIES

If you have time to bake from scratch, contact us at 1Godmoves@gmail.com, we have an excellent cookie recipe for you. If you don't, buy a bag of Betty Crocker Sugar Cookie mix, grab a stick of butter and an egg. The directions are on the bag. Kids can do most of the work, since there is no measuring, and mixing can be done with a spoon or their hands. You just need to put the cookies in the oven.

### Benefits

Fresh baked cookies with just a little work for parent; an introduction to baking and following recipe directions for the kid(s).



## DR. CURIOUS

### HOW TALL AM I?

**Step 1-** parent, get comfortable on the floor

**Step 2-** choose a group of items (shoes, sheets of paper, cans of veggies, etc.), ask your child how many it would take to be as tall as you, have them write down their guess

**Step 3-** have them line the items up next to your body, and write down their findings

**Step 4-** have them put everything back

**Step 5-** repeat steps 2-4 with other objects

### Benefits

Relaxation time for parent; introduction to writing, record keeping, counting, comparison and measurement for the kid(s).

*"I am so excited about the creation of our new newsletter that I wanted to share it with the SDB family of churches.*

*God inspired me, with the help of two sisters in Christ, to create a parenting newsletter.*

*We are from three different cities, two different states, and are super excited to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the 7 Principles of Restful Parenting citywide in two languages."*

*—Sis. Marqueta Aiken*

*Philadelphia Seventh Day Baptist Church, Kenroy Cruickshank, Pastor*

Jesus answered,  
I am the way  
and the truth  
and the life.

No one  
comes to the Father  
except through

me!

Periodicals postage paid  
at Janesville, WI  
and additional offices

# SDB Conference Week 2023 July 23-30

Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI



Information and updates can be found at  
[seventhdaybaptist.org/conferenceweek2023](https://seventhdaybaptist.org/conferenceweek2023)