

Sabbath Recorder

September 2023
A Seventh Day Baptist Publication



How Great
Is Our God!

208th Annual Session of the
Seventh Day Baptist
General Conference of USA
and Canada, Ltd.
Calvin University,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

How Great Is Our Good!



Great is Thy Faithfulness



Wonderful Grace of Jesus



Victory in Jesus



Because He Lives



The King is Coming

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Sabbath Recorder

A monthly journey into the mind and heart.

September 2023

Patricia Cruzan, Editor

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

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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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Welcome to Conference 2023



How Great Is Our God!



President:
Charlotte Chroniger
(left)

Preacher:
Wayne North
(right)



Worship Leader:
Steven Hinton
(bottom left)

All evening Worship
services can be viewed
online at:
bit.ly/sdb2023yt

Thank You, President Charlotte Chroniger

A picture might be worth a thousand words, but some of the most important words might be missed. As we share an amazing Conference Week 2023 through pictures, we would be remiss to neglect specific mention of our Conference President. Charlotte initiated and organized powerful ministry content. She carefully led us through significant Conference business sessions. She assembled gatherings to worship our great God through music and the Word.

But there is more.

Who Charlotte is matters. Her caring, sincere heart was evident throughout the week—along with the other 51 weeks of the year. Through serving our great God, Charlotte has modeled what living for Him looks like. That is a great blessing indeed! [SR](#)

—Carl Greene, Executive Director



Business Meeting

Children's Message



Morning Devotions: Early Pioneers of SDB Faith and Practice



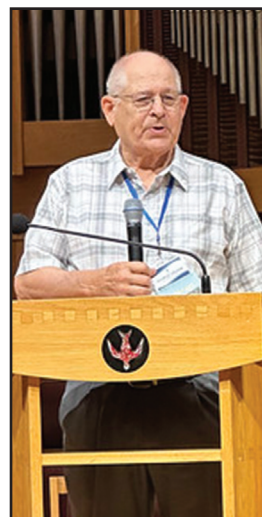
Henry Clarke
led by Nick Kersten



Francis Bampffield
led by Dennis Coleman



Edmund Dunham
led by Bill Probasco



A.H. Lewis
led by George Cruzan



Tacy Hubbard
led by Donna Bond



Worship Leader: JR Shick



Shiloh Praise Band



Children's Message: Kristine North



Preacher: Tyler Chroniger

Never Failing Faithfulness

How many of you feel like people let you down? You ask them to do something only to have them forget. Since people let us down, I believe that we sometimes transfer that to God. We would say that God didn't answer the prayer the way we wanted. God didn't come through the way we desired. Did you catch it? The way **WE** want. You see, just because someone lets us down doesn't mean God does. How many of you have ever been there with God? How many of you have ever doubted God's faithfulness? How many of you have ever been at that moment and said, "I don't know if God will come through"? We need to have an understanding as to what it means to be faithful. Faithfulness is the fact or quality of being true to one's word or commitments, as to what one has pledged to do, professes to believe, etc. We would group this idea with someone having integrity. We would group this idea with someone who is trustworthy. We would group this idea with someone who is consistent. I came to encourage someone tonight as we look at the hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness." In this hymn there are four truths about God that should assure us that *God is Faithful* even in the midst of our sometimes distorted view of His faithfulness.

The second verse of the hymn says,

*Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.*

Continued on next page...

The problem isn't with God it—is with us.

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What is this telling us about God's faithfulness? Creation speaks to the faithfulness of God. When we open the beginning pages of scripture something comes out of it that I want you to see. Read Genesis 1:1-31 and see if you can pick up on the idea of God's faithfulness. In Genesis 1:3, it says God said and there was. In Genesis 1:6-7, it says God said and it was so. In Genesis 1:9, it says God said and it was so. Do you see this picture? God speaks and things happen. "It was so," or "it came to be." It wasn't like God said something and nothing happened. If that were true, there would be an inconsistency with Him. No—God speaks and it was so. This idea of Him speaking and the things coming to be also has to do with humanity. You were part of that. Psalm 139:13-14 tells us that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. God designed you. He spoke and you came to be. Your very existence is evidence of God's faithfulness. All of creation speaks to the faithfulness of God!

The chorus of the song says,

*"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!*

What is this telling us about God's faithfulness? Provision speaks to God's faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-24 tell us *the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.* Sound familiar? The lament is about how hard life is and there is bitterness, tribulation, heavy chains, and a crooked path. The writer is dealing with a lot of stuff. In the midst of that the writer says there are new mercies every morning.

This idea of mercy has to do with compassion or the concern for the suffering of others. The writer says, I see these new mercies every morning. I see the fact that God wakes me up in the morning. I see the fact that God has given me breath in my lungs. I see the fact that yesterday was full of struggle and trials but today is a new day. All of these are the compassions of God, the mercies of God. This tells us that God is concerned about the suffering. God is concerned about the struggle. God is concerned about your enemies being against you. God is concerned about your financial situation. God is concerned about your health situation. Since He is concerned, He provides us with new mercies or new compassions every morning. The fact that God consistently provides new mercies is an indication of His faithfulness. In the same vein as new mercy, let me ask you if you have everything you need.

"All I have needed thy hand hath provided."

When we read Matthew 6:25-33, we get a better understanding that God provides for all of our needs. Look at the birds. Look at the grass. Why then do you worry? Do you have clothes to wear? Do you have a place to sleep? Do you have food to eat? These questions have less to do with the quality

of things but are more of a recognition of the things you have. Your very needs have been met, and met by God. He cares about you deeply and provides for your every need. In fact, God is called Jehovah Jireh, isn't he? In the story of Abraham and Isaac, God asks Abraham to kill his only son. As Abraham is laying his son on the altar, God shows up with a ram caught by his horn. In that moment of despair God is shown as faithful. When we get to the New Testament, Paul says to the Philippian church that *"my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."* The fact that your needs are met is an indication of God's faithfulness.

The third verse of the hymn says,

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

What is this telling us about God's faithfulness? The cross speaks of God's faithfulness. When we read John 3:16-21, we get a better understanding of the faithfulness of God: *God said that this is the plan. God said that this is the only way. God said that it is through my son that you can and will be saved. I sent my son, my only son, to take the punishment for all the sin; to put my wrath upon him; to give you a peace that surpasses all understanding.* You see God spoke it, and because He spoke it, He had to complete it. Jesus in His ministry on earth recognized that this is the way. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus said, "all who believe in me will be saved." Without the cross there isn't salvation. Without the cross God would be seen as unfaithful, inconsistent, or just flat wrong. Without the cross and the promise of salvation, God would seem to be this overlord who doesn't care about His people. In God's care and provision for people, He knew that we couldn't follow the law perfectly. Since we couldn't follow the law perfectly, God made a promise for the Messiah to come and save the world. He never took away that promise. He never changed His mind about that promise. He knew Jesus had to come to not only save, but to show that He is again faithful in what He says and does. The fact that God sent Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for humanity is an indication of His faithfulness.

The first verse of the hymn says,

*"Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.*

What is this telling us about God's faithfulness? It is part of God's character to be faithful. We read throughout all scripture about the faithfulness of God. In Hebrews 10:23, we read how

Continued on page 25...

Preacher:
Steve Osborn



Worship Leader:
Nathan Crandall
(right)



Children's Message:
Kevin Butler
(bottom)



Wonderful Grace of Jesus:

What in the World is Gospel Saturation?

Wonderful grace of Jesus, greater than all my sin; how shall my tongue describe it, where shall its praise begin? Taking away my burden, setting my spirit free, for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

Beautiful song, right? It is one of our favorites to sing when we get together as SDBs—with all the parts. I get goosebumps just thinking about it. Surely it is a sneak preview of what Heaven will be like. And the rich depth of meaning...it never gets old. But do we get it? Maybe a little. We understand the basic concept of grace and that we are saved completely by Christ's work and not our own. But do we fully grasp and experience the mind-blowing, earth-shattering, life-changing promise of the wonderful grace of Jesus? I doubt it.

GRACE...we love to talk about it; we love to sing about it (a quick search of the word "grace" in the Christian Copyright Licensing International database reveals 42,299 titles); we claim to understand it; some churches and ministries are even named after it. But I have come to the startling conclusion that VERY FEW CHRISTIANS ARE EXPERIENCING THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S PROMISE OF GRACE.

How do I know? By the way we live our lives, treat other people, and respond to the pressures of life. If we peel back the layers of the lives of most Christians, we will find an unhealthy amount of hidden guilt, shame, brokenness, bitterness, unforgiveness, hopelessness, and a general lack of living out the wonderful grace of Jesus.

Please do not hear me saying that God promises us perfect lives—far from it; in fact, Jesus warned His followers, "In the world, you will have tribulation" (John 16:33, ESV). However, the experience of the fullness of grace should change the way we respond to life because it completely re-orient the way we approach it—flips it right on its head. That is why I think far too many of us Christians may have understood grace on an intellectual level but have never really experienced the life change that grace promises, which has prevented us from fully living in God's grace. We have to allow it to go from our heads to our hearts to our lives.

Wonderful grace of Jesus, reaching to all the lost, by it I have been pardoned, saved to the uttermost. Chains have been torn asunder, giving me liberty, for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

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I think too often we think of grace as ONLY saving us from sin. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. God's plan of salvation is so much bigger than that. Ephesians 1:3-2:10 describes God's plan to "lavish" on you the "riches of His grace." God's *Great Plan to Save the World* began before creation with His election and decision to adopt us, comes to fruition in the crucial forgiveness of our sins, and extends through every aspect of this life to the hope of our glorification and eternal life in Christ.

Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus, deeper than the mighty rolling sea, higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain, all sufficient grace for even me; broader than the scope of my transgressions, (sing it!), greater far than all my sin and shame. O magnify the precious name of Jesus, praise his name!

Just how wonderful is the grace of Jesus?!? If we limit it to just forgiveness of sins like some kind of cosmic fire insurance or a get out of hell free card, it is still pretty awesome...but we miss a huge chunk—the *transformation* God wants to bring into our lives. I cannot hope to delve to the depths of this huge subject in one sermon (or at least those listening/reading will be glad I didn't try). But let me drill down on one specific result of grace we should expect to see in our lives.

The Wonderful Grace of Jesus should transform our lives and our churches so powerfully that people who encounter us can't help but come face to face with the message of the gospel.

In his letter to Pastor Titus of the First SDB Church of Crete, Paul wrote about the transformational power of grace!! As a result of Paul's visit to the island of Crete, multiple churches were started and he left young Titus to make sure the churches got properly established with elders and sound doctrine. After all, there were false teachers in Crete who, among other things, promoted an ungodly lifestyle. Paul quoted one of their own prophets as saying: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (chapter 1 v.12, ESV). (If you ever wondered where the derogatory term "Cretans" came from, now you know.) We can see how these teachings would be popular; these false teachers were essentially saying, "Just keep doing what you are doing! Don't change a thing."

In contrast, Paul wanted Titus to teach that our lives should give dramatic evidence of having been transformed by God's saving grace. He outlined his reasoning in Titus 2:11-14. "*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,*" (v.11, ESV). Paul used the word "grace" here—synonymous with the gospel—to sum up EVERYTHING God has done on our behalf through Christ. "Appeared" (from which we get our word "epiphany") is important because it reminds us that grace was REVEALED rather than being figured out, discovered, or earned. Paul was clearly talking about the revelation of Jesus, when God stepped into our world and took on human flesh. When Jesus "appeared," He brought "salvation for all people." We must be careful not to read this as universalism, but rather the genuine offer of salvation to every person.

Paul went on to talk about this salvation in the past, future, and present tenses. We see the past tense in the historic act of Jesus "*who gave himself for us*" (v.14, ESV). The future tense is wrapped up in our "*waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*" (v.13, ESV). I think we are pretty good about understanding that God's grace impacts our PAST and we love that it impacts our FUTURE, but the PRESENT??? I think this is where we too often miss the boat.

Wonderful grace of Jesus, reaching the most reviled, by its transforming power making me God's dear child, purchasing peace and heaven for all eternity, for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

We get a small taste of present tense salvation in verse 14 where Paul described the work of Jesus "*to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works*" (ESV). The work of Christ was two-sided; He gave Himself to redeem us not only FROM something, but also TO something: FROM lawlessness and sin; TO a life of purity; TO be His own treasured possession; TO be people zealous for good works. In other words, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR CLAIMING TO BE REDEEMED WHILE SHOWING NO EVIDENCE OF A TRANSFORMED LIFE.

In verse 12 we see that grace is "*training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age*" (ESV). Training involves an intentional, ongoing process. He is training us to say NO to certain things and YES to other things "in the present age." He is training us to RENOUNCE (say "no" to) ungodliness and worldly passions. He is training us to LIVE (say "yes" to): 1) by SELF-CONTROL, surrendering our passions, desires, priorities, etc. to Him; 2) being UPRIGHT by treating others justly, doing right by them; and 3) being GODLY, expressed in wanting to hear God, please God, and reflect God in all we do, say, and think.

To be "zealous to do good works" describes a revolution of the heart, a supernatural elevating others above self. Grace says: "I love my neighbor as myself" but also "I choose to love my enemies" (Matthew 5:44); "I can't live in comfort when so many people have such devastating needs;" "I can't go to bed tonight knowing my neighbor is considering taking her own life;" "I have enough love to help take care of orphans and foster children;" "I can't rest knowing my brother won't receive justice;" "I can't keep silent knowing my friend is going to hell!"

And in the light of this transforming grace, the question becomes, "How are we as individuals and as churches communicating the wonderful grace of Jesus to the world around us?" I am grieved that when I look at my own life, I cannot say I have been all that good at it. And honestly, I have been around a lot of SDB churches in my lifetime and this seems to be a crucial missing piece in almost all of them.

This year at Conference, we affirmed support of our Vision Map (<https://www.seventhdaybaptist.org/vision-map/>)

which identifies our mission as actively advancing God's Kingdom together. And we have identified four primary ministry "buckets" where we believe we can do just that: Church Revitalization, Church Planting, Leadership Development, and Gospel Saturation. Wait, what? We are pretty sure we understand what the first three mean. But what in the world is Gospel Saturation? Why not pick a term we already know like "evangelism"? Unfortunately, our typical understanding of evangelism is incomplete. We think of evangelism as something we do (or avoid doing) while gospel saturation describes a state of being and a way of life.

To grasp the meaning of Gospel Saturation, visualize yourself and your church as a giant sponge being plunged into a bucket full of water and soaking up every drop possible to the point of saturation. Next, see the sponge being lifted from the water and note what happens. The excess water drips down from the sponge onto whatever lies beneath it. This is a picture of the life/church that has been transformed by God's grace.

As INDIVIDUALS, we soak in the *Wonderful Grace of Jesus* to the point of being unable to contain the gospel within ourselves by spending time with God and in His Word, by gathering together for worship with our church family, by learning more about Him and surrendering more and more of our lives to Him. When we are saturated, we cannot help but drip God's goodness and love on the world around us. We cannot help but engage in public witness of our faith.

Soaking and dripping—it is a pretty simple concept. If you look at your life and see that you are not dripping, ask yourself what's wrong? Am I a dry sponge? Maybe I need to open my heart and allow God's grace to transform me more powerfully. Am I saturated but I have stayed in the bucket? Or maybe I have wrapped myself in Saran Wrap so I can keep all of God's grace for myself? Find ways to get into the world and start dripping on people. There is more than enough to go around.

As CHURCHES, we are also called to soak and drip the *Wonderful Grace of Jesus*. Everything we say and do must be bathed by grace—every ministry, endeavor, initiative, expenditure, and message must be Gospel Saturated. I think we like to have an "Evangelism Committee" in our churches so that we have someone to blame if it does not get done. "We budgeted a whole \$500; I don't know why anyone didn't come to the Lord." We must commit together as Gospel Saturated churches to live out the gospel in winsome ways through word and deed that highlight the *Wonderful Grace of Jesus*.

As a CONFERENCE, we are committed to assist your church in creating a culture of Gospel Saturation. We cannot do it for you, but we have ideas, initiatives, and resources we would love to share with you to get you started. If you are interested, please contact nkersten@seventhdaybaptist.org.

Being Gospel Saturated churches will require some changes. We cannot expect to do business as usual and expect different results (I think I heard that is the definition of insanity). We will have to plan some things outside our church buildings on some other day than Sabbath morning. We will have to talk to

people with whom we are not completely comfortable. We will have to stop asking, "What do I like" and start asking if others feel welcome in our church services. We have to learn to be more than okay having sinners attend. We may even have to dip into the church's "rainy day fund" to spend more on outreach and ministry. But if we are saturated, we cannot really not do these things.

Pastor Chip Ingram, in his Bible study, *The Book of Titus*, described four Principles of being "zealous for doing good" which I think can be helpful as we consider how to *Soak and Drip*:


1) Doing good reveals GOD'S PASSION for people. Jesus urged us to "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16, ESV). Ask yourself: Am I shining Christ's light in the darkness? Is my church? Am I comfortable hanging out with tax collectors and prostitutes? Would they feel welcome in my church? (What about people who look, act, think, even smell different than me?)

2) Doing good reveals CHRIST'S PRESENCE in our lives. "So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit" (Matthew 7:17). If the *Wonderful Grace of Jesus* is not transforming your life and your church, you need to pause and ask yourself, "Have I really experienced His grace?" How can my church get more saturated?

3) Doing good reveals the PRIORITIES of our lives. "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33, ESV). If I say I love God and my life is all about ME...something is tragically wrong. Ask yourself, "How do I spend my time, my money, my energy?" How about your church?

4) Doing good reveals the PURPOSE of our lives. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10, ESV). Your purpose was locked in before the world was even created—to be zealous for good works. This will look different in each of our lives, but whatever it is involves soaking and dripping. Ask, "Does my life match what is actually inside of me? Is my church pursuing God's purpose for us?"

The *Wonderful Grace of Jesus* should transform our lives and our churches so powerfully that people who encounter us can't help but come face to face with the message of the gospel.

I invite you and your church to explore Gospel Saturation with me. Come Soak and Drip for the praise of the glory of His grace! 



Wednesday

Victory in Jesus



Preacher:
Philip Lawton



Children's Message:
Amanda Barbee



Worship Leader:
Egbert Downes

Pastor Phil's sermon will appear in the October Sabbath Recorder.

Seminars and Presentations: God's greatness and involvement in our lives



Singing to the Lord using ASL
led by Marianna and Reyna Mazza



Genesis to Revelation:
Biblical Overview of Passover
led by Eric Bofinger

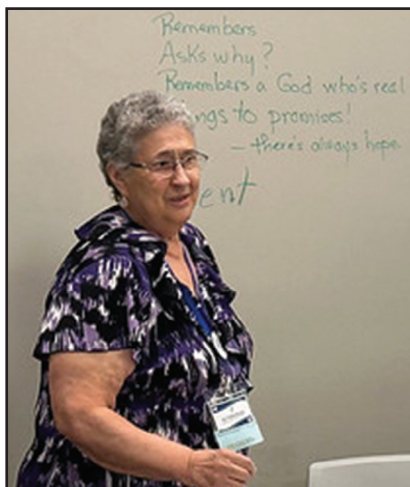


Women in Ministry
and SDBs
led by Miriam Berg

Bible Studies on Psalms



Frank Mazza—Psalm 142



Althea Rood—Psalm 42



JohnMark Camenga—Psalm 75



JR Shick—Psalm 13



Kristine North—Psalm 91



Lisa Moore—Psalm 86

Seminars and Presentations



Team Leadership: Partnering Together to Display the Greatness of God
led by John Pethtel



Prophetic Intercessor for Our Time
led by Julia Coleman



Becoming the Parent/Grandparent
God Wants You to Be
led by Frank and Maura Mazza

Action Items

Drawn from the minutes of the 208th Annual Session of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of USA and Canada, Ltd. Calvin University, Grand Rapids, Michigan

From Interest Committee on Christian Social Action

1. We **urge** all SDBs who have knowledge of useful resources involved in dealing with social brokenness issues to forward them to the Council on Ministry.
2. We **urge** pastors to educate themselves on local resources involved in dealing with social brokenness issues.
3. We **urge** our churches to have a point person in looking for current disaster relief efforts within the denomination and report this person's contact information to the directory.

From the Interest Committee on History

4. As mentioned regarding the Biography Committee in the 2023 Annual Report on page E5, "We **encourage** families to submit obituaries for their loved ones to biography@seventhdaybaptist.org." Please provide a detailed obituary for future reference.
5. We **encourage** churches to contact the Council for recommendations for the best methods of preserving their church history.
6. We applaud the Council for developing ways to educate and communicate our history moving forward. We **encourage** churches to work with the Council on History and use its resources.

From the Interest Committee on Communications

7. Whereas churches have requested there be more news in the Sabbath Recorder, we **urge** all churches to send information about upcoming and past events, church milestones, and member highlights for articles and/or photos to the Sabbath Recorder as they occur.

From the Interest Committee on Missions

8. We **urge** Seventh Day Baptist churches and individuals to connect and partner with other Seventh Day Baptists around the world in support of one another and to bring glory to the Kingdom of God.

From the Interest Committee on Church Development

9. We **encourage** churches to be more than a meeting within the walls of a building, but to reach out and be Christ-loving and visible in the communities where they are located as a means of showing God's love to our world.
10. We **encourage** all churches to have their members find a way to be involved at the denominational level in some way as a means to accomplish a working relationship between the local churches and the national conference.

From the Young Adult Interest Committee

11. We **recommend** all young adults contact Nick Kersten for help with any mentoring, internships, and cohorting questions/needs.

General Council

From the Interest Committee on Christian Social Action

1. We **urge** General Council to review the topics discussed in the CSADR Interest Committee meetings, and decide if further action is needed on these topics, which include:
 - Drugs
 - Homelessness
 - Media Indoctrination
 - Training to assist churches in dealing with mental health, addiction, etc., Child Abuse
 - Statement on Marriage (defining man and woman?)
2. Recommendation 1: We **RECOMMEND** the adoption of the **Statement from SDB Leadership Concerning Racism**, with changes (as modified on the floor of General Conference below).
 - a. We further **recommend** that upon adoption of this resolution that the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of USA and Canada, Ltd. mail every member church, sponsored church, and applicant for membership a copy of this resolution.

From Reference and Counsel Interest Committee

1. The committee sadly recommends the Conference approve the motion from the floor to remove SpringsLife Church from membership in the SDB General Conference due to its dissolution.
2. The committee recommends the Conference accept the Report

of the Committee on Faith and Order.

3. The committee happily recommends the Conference adopt Recommendation I of the Report of the General Council and welcomes Opens Arms Seventh Day Baptist Church (North York, ON, Canada) into the Conference.

4. The committee recommends the Conference adopt Recommendation A from the Report of the General Council ratifying the appointments made by General Council.

5. The committee commends Carl Greene for his outstanding work in the role of Executive Director and as such the committee recommends the Conference adopt Recommendation B from the Report of the General Council extending his term through 2025.

6. The committee recommends the Conference adopt Recommendation C from the Report of the General Council approving the Vision Map Resolution.

First Reading of Bylaw Changes

7. The committee recommends the Conference adopt Recommendation D from the Report of the General Council with the following amendment:
 - a. *General Conference may occur in person or by electronic means, such as video conferencing, that permit speaking, the display of text, and voting by delegates.*

Second Reading of Bylaw Changes

10. The committee recommends the Conference adopt Recommendation E from the Report of the General Council to reduce the number of in-person meetings of General Council from four to three.

From the Budget and Finance Interest Committee

11. The Committee recommends adoption of the Conference Financial Summary Consolidated Income and Expense as amended and Conference Financial Report-Balance Sheet; Balance per Ministry as of 12/31/2022.
12. Concerning General Council Recommendation H, the Committee **recommends** that the Seventh Day Baptist Summary of 2023, Operating Income & Expense Budget Draft #1 as amended, be ratified as the General Conference Budget for 2023.
13. The Committee **recommends** the adoption of General Council Report Recommendation G.
14. In addition, the Committee **suggests** that the General Council periodically communicate their progress on the budgeting process to the SDB membership during the year.

From the Committee on Church Development

15. Having not found an official report, written or video, of the church planting coordinator and recognizing the importance of this program, we **encourage** the General Council to find a means of including such a report in the program of General Conference.
16. We **recommend** that the General Council with the Conference Executive Director investigate changing the standards for church membership in the Conference to eliminate the requirement of a specific number of members but rather concentrate on the areas of leadership, beliefs consistent with those of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference and group stability and survivability with a goal of making a recommendation to the next General Conference session.
17. As a show of example for that model, we further **recommend** that a plan be proposed that would bring about a system of reviewing and renewing the membership of Seventh Day Baptist churches as members of the Conference based on the same qualifications as incoming churches with that review being done in five-year increments based on the year of membership of the church.

From the Committee on Ministerial Interests

18. We **suggest** that the General Council explore making a statement on the Conference's website clarifying that we as a Conference are open to females in ministry; making sure there is opportunity if they feel so called.

Executive Director

From the Report of the Courtesies Coordinator

1. The Executive Director and Conferences Coordinator shall send a letter of appreciation from the General Conference to Hannah Patterson with the office of Event Services at Calvin University.
2. The Executive Director and Conferences Coordinator shall send letters of appreciation from the General Conference to any guest speakers or participants during Conference Week 2023.
3. The Corresponding Secretary shall send letters of greetings to the retired pastors and wives and widows, as well as retired and serving missionaries who were unable to attend this Conference.

Women's Board

From the Women's Interest Committee

1. We **urge** the Women's Board to explore options for making the SCSC program more visible such as using social media, the *Sabbath Recorder*, and creating a promotional video to encourage young people to consider serving. Current SCSCers could be asked to write testimonials about their service for inclusion in the *Sabbath Recorder*. These methods would seek to inform young people and churches of their options for serving.
2. We **suggest** the Women's Board explore the possibility of designating a person to collect stories from local churches about ministries for inclusion in the *Sabbath Recorder* monthly.

Council on History/Director

From the Interest Committee on History

We **urge** the Council to continue developing ways of preserving digital media such as websites for historical purposes.

Council on Ministry/Director of Pastoral Services

From the Committee on Christian Social Action

1. We **urge** pastoral training to continue to develop further education for church leaders on social brokenness issues (domestic abuse, child abuse, conflict resolution, sexual identity, etc.) and develop an adequate referral list of resources and counselors for church leaders to look to for guidance and leadership when these issues are involved.

From the Interest Committee on Ministerial Interests

1. We **suggest** that the Council on Ministry explore guidelines for associate pastors and non-pastoral leaders such as deacons and lay-elders for sabbaticals.
3. We **suggest** that the leaders of SDBU explore offering Spanish-language courses and other practical ministry tools that pastors and ministry leaders may need, with the goal of adding these tools to SDBU's curriculum.
4. We **recommend** that the Council on Ministry make accreditation credentials meaningful and evaluate the holistic health of a pastor (academic, emotional, physical, and spiritual etc.).
 - a. ...In addition, we **encourage** the Council on Ministry to explore some format of a wellness assessment with pastors along with the renewal process.

Missionary Society

From the Interest Committee on Missions

1. We **urge** the Seventh Day Missionary Society to continue to develop and work on their communications and follow up to both individuals and churches as they develop partnerships in missions.
2. We **recommend** the Missionary Society establish at least one time for prayer during General Conference Sessions.
3. We **recommend** the Missionary Society clarify #1 under equipping.

Tract and Communications Council

From the Interest Committee on Communications

1. We **recommend** that T&CC consider the importance of our Spanish-speaking members and make available church publications in Spanish and English.
2. We **recommend** acceptance of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the American Sabbath Tract and Communications Council.

From the Youth Interest Committee

3. We **recommend** that Elizabeth Greene and Thomas Palermo be Beacon Editors for the 2023-2024 year.

Standing Committee on Christian Social Action and Disaster Relief

From the Floor of Conference

1. Following discussion of this recommendation (see Protecting Children from Exploitation Statement) and several amendments, a motion was made to refer recommendation 2 and all ensuing discussion to the standing committee on Christian Social Action and Disaster Relief. The motion was seconded, and after a standing vote, the motion carried.

From the Report of the Interest Committee on Christian Social Action and Disaster Relief

2. We **recommend** the adoption of the Protecting Children from Exploitation statement.
 - a. We further **recommend** that upon adoption of this resolution that the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of USA and Canada, Ltd. mail every member church, sponsored church, and applicant for membership a copy of this resolution.

Standing Committee on Faith and Order

From the Interest Committee on Ministerial Interests

1. We **suggest** that the General Council explore making a statement on the Conference's website clarifying that we as a Conference are open to females in ministry; making sure there is opportunity if they feel so called.

Conference Coordinator & President-Elect

From the Young Adult Interest Committee

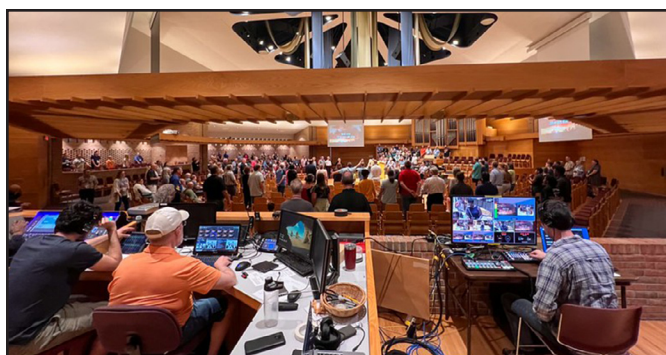
1. We **recommend** that President-Elect JohnMark Camenga appoint a young adult as a Young Adult Activity Coordinator, whose duties will be to schedule and/or oversee young adult activities for the 2024 session of General Conference.

From the Interest Committee on Communications

2. We **recommend** the 2024 conference president plan to include a seminar to assist churches in web design and new technology.

From the Youth Interest Committee

3. We **encourage** the inclusion of youth-led devotions and worship time for all attendees (youth and adult) during the Conference week.
4. We **encourage** the General Conference to pursue ways to make Conference week more accessible for families by offering grants to our churches. SR



Thursday

Musical Vespers



Game Time



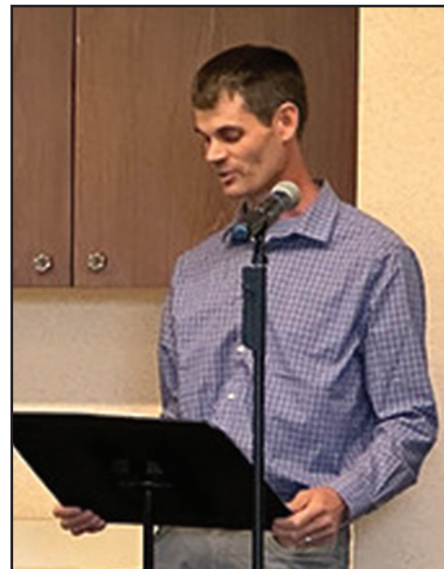
Fearfully and Wonderfully Made Seminar



Panelists: Dr. Elizabeth Lawton and Dr. Julie Stevens



Women's Banquet



Jenni Wangsness WISE Award

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

We know that God created Adam first and that was good, but it was not complete. Adam alone was not a full reflection of his Creator’s image. And so God made Eve that she might complete His image in humans. Men and women both have an incredible and powerful calling to look like God, act like God, and reflect His image to each other and creation.

The Women’s Society would like to “outdo one another in showing honor” as instructed in Romans 12:10 by recognizing the unique contributions of three very special Seventh Day Baptist Women—these daughters of God who are “like corner pillars” (Psalm 144:12) in their communities, their workplaces, homes, and in our denomination.

We’d like to begin with the renaming of the Seventh Day Baptist Women’s Society’s WISE award. For those that don’t know, WISE stands for Women in Service Everywhere. Here we do proclaim:

Whereas, Jenni Wangsness served as a dedicated Women’s Board President.

Whereas, the Seventh Day Baptist Women’s Society created the Women In Service Everywhere award under Jenni’s leadership.

Whereas, the society recognizes Jenni Wangsness for her years of service.

Now, Therefore, the Seventh Day Baptist Women’s Society do hereby remember and memorialize Jenni’s love for and service to the society with the renaming of the “Jenni Wangsness WISE Award”.

The purpose of the Jenni Wangsness WISE award is to honor an SDB woman who is working hard to reach others, serve others, and do it with humility.

This year’s recipient is Jaci Robinson (Cathy Jara will be accepting for her since Jaci was unable to be here).

Jaci has been a member of the Dodge Center Seventh Day Baptist Church (now Anchor of Hope Church) since she was 17. Jaci has faithfully served her church as the Christian Education Committee Chairman and as Sabbath School Superintendent and takes her turn as a Sabbath School Teacher. Some of Jaci’s duties have included ensuring there are SS teachers for the various classes, submitting camper registrations, overseeing the camp scholarships, and conducting the Reducing the Risk training for those participating in our youth ministries. Jaci is part of the church’s Ladies Aid serving on the Service Committee. In addition, Jaci takes turns as musician for the church worship services and accompanies the Worship Team.

Today, we thank and honor Jaci for her loving service to her Savior, her church, and her community.

Robe of Achievement Award

The purpose of the Robe of Achievement Award is 1) to honor a woman each year who has had an influence or contributed “beyond the limits of her own community and church”, and 2) to challenge other women to emulate the qualities of the recipient.

This year the Recognitions Committee (Dusty Davis, Laura Lee Modesitt, Jessica Meathrell and I) chose a woman who has served the Seventh Day Baptist denomination and her church for many years. She served the Conference as the President of the Women’s Board, on the SCSC committee, and has been a regular contributor to the *Sabbath Recorder*.

Our recipient and her husband have been married since 1974. They raised two children.

She graduated as valedictorian of her class at White Cloud High School. She served in SCSC in 1970 and in 1971. She did service in Plainfield, NJ, for one year. She graduated from Milton College.

She was the secretary for the *Sabbath Recorder* editor and at the American Sabbath Tract Society office.

She shares her gift of music by playing piano for a church in her community.

She worked for and retired from the Bridgeton School District at 65.

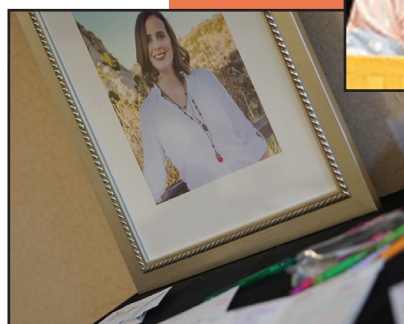
She currently serves as the secretary of the Shiloh Ladies Benevolent Society.

She has recently experienced unthinkable loss and her faith has not wavered. Her anchor holds to her Savior.

This year’s recipient of the SDB Women’s Society Robe of Achievement is Donna Bond of the SDB Church of Shiloh, NJ. [SR](#)



Donna Bond





By Ellie Greene

YouthCon Recap 2023

Conference is ... over! Wow, how did this happen already?

I guess you may be wondering what we youth were up to ... 😊

In the mornings, we had devotions led by Pastor Tyler Chroniger. We discussed Galatians 5, comparing and contrasting the fruits of the spirit to the acts of the flesh. In the afternoons, we had fun activities, like ice skating, laser tag, go-karting, going to a trampoline park, and more. In the evenings we had crazy games and special events like capture-the-flag, night games lit up with glow-sticks, a Youth Banquet, pastors vs. youth trivia, a coffee house, and a very cool worship night (more on that later!!!)

It was a great group of kids led by amazing leaders. (THANK YOU LEADERS!!!) We had a blast together (figuratively! I want to make sure you don't think literally, because with a group of youth you can't trust that explosions won't occur!!) with the activities, games, laughter, chatting, and all-around fun—but the best part was the presence of God really being there with us. I think each and every one of us felt God's presence in some way, however small, during the week.

For me, there were many instances when I thought I could feel God, but I often dismissed them as too small and insignificant. It wasn't until Friday night, the worship night, that I realized what God was trying to tell me. He reminded me that He's there even without the blinding lights and blaring trumpets. The worship night was an amazing experience. After singing praises for about an hour, God led us to one-and-a-half hours of pouring out our hearts to Him in prayer.

I think all of us walked away from that with a chip taken out of our hearts of stone.

I have been mulling over the events of Conference week over the last few days, and I realized something.

We teenagers who attended Conference are all pretty different. We are scattered all over. Without the General Conference, we never would have met each other. A lot of us have nothing in common.

Except God.

Isn't it cool how God can bring even the most different of people together to glorify Him?

This word sums it up: **fellowship**. A leader from my youth group explains it like this: "Fellowship is like two fellows in a ship having a good time. But what makes it real fellowship is when the Lord is the captain of that ship."

The reason that we were brought together was simply this: God is our captain. He was calling all hands on deck for an important message. Though the message was different for each of us, and it may have just been a small, subtle nudge, I know He told each one of us something.

So what is He telling you?

Thank you to all that prayed for the Lord to be the captain of our ship, because I know that He is. SR





Praise God from whom all blessings flow and His blessings were flowing abundantly at KidsCon 2023! Our theme was *Seeing God's Greatness through some of His attributes*. Bible stories, Bible verses, crafts, music and games all followed this theme. A great time was had by all! SR





Missions Awards

SDB Missionary Society

By Andy Samuels
Chief Executive Director

On Sabbath, July 29, the SDB Missionary Society presented two awards at the SDB USA & Canada Conference Week activities. One award was presented to the church which contributed the largest donation for its Missions Sabbath offering. Missions Sabbath is the culmination of Missions Week, and was observed on February 25, 2023. For the third consecutive year, the New York City Church is the winner of that award. Their Pastor, Ericessen Cooper, was presented with a trophy as one of the ways of recognizing the Church for its outstanding effort in missions advancement. The funds from the Missions Sabbath offering were used to help fund a national field worker, as well as church building projects in South Asia. All the churches which contributed a Missions Sabbath offering are to be commended, and much appreciation goes out to them.



The second award is the Global Missions Award. It is presented to the church which gives the largest financial contribution to the Missionary Society over the course of the conference year, that is from August 2022 to July 2023. The winner is the SpringsLife Church in Colorado Springs, CO. This year, there is an unprecedented situation which is worthy of mention. Regrettably, the Springs Life Church disbanded this year and, out of its dissolution funds, it made a significant contribution to the Missionary Society. It is that contribution which earned the Church the award for the largest donation for the year. So, whereas there is no rejoicing at the closure of the church, there can be a celebration that its assets are being used to further the work of the kingdom, and that is a part of the legacy of the church. The winning trophy was presented to Pastor John Pethtel, representing the remaining members when the church closed, as well as Pastor Steve Osborn, representing the church to which many of the remaining members of Springs Life transferred their membership. That church is the Frontier Church in Carbon Valley, CO. Again, the Missionary Society is eternally grateful to everyone who supports its global ministries financially and otherwise. [SR](#)





Gospel Feet Fun Run—Bible Bound


By Miriam Berg

The Friday morning event at Conference was the Gospel Feet Fun Run, a 30-minute event centered around the Calvin University commons lawn area with music, an emcee, and opportunities for those not running to participate by cheering on their peers. Intending to raise funds for Bibles in areas where they are more difficult to access, we raised enough funds to supply 393 Bibles to our partners worldwide! We had over 100 participants, including someone from the local community, and altogether, we walked, ran, jogged, and skipped 150 miles!

Winners are as follows:

- Most Bibles funded by a church:
Abiding Love Ministries (Rome, NY)
- Most laps by an individual:
Eric Bofinger and Carl Greene
- Most laps total by a church:
The Connecting Church (Milton, WI)
- Most laps per person by a church:
Anchor of Hope Church (Dodge Center, MN)

Thank you to everyone who participated! If you're interested in donating funds for Bibles, there's still time. Go to www.sdbmissions.org and click "Donate."

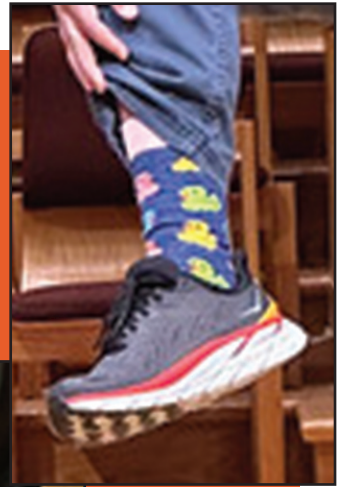
Didn't hear about the Fun Run in advance? Make sure you sign up for our newsletters at www.sdbmissions.org! 



Pastors Luncheon



If you know... you know!



It is impossible for God to be unfaithful.

Continued from page 8...

God is faithful to give grace when we are tempted. In Psalm 33:4, we read that God is faithful in His work. In Deuteronomy 7:9, we read that God is faithful to all generations. In all of these verses we come to this understanding—being faithful is part of God’s character. It is who He is. You need more scripture? Hebrews 13:8, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* Malachi 3:6, *I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.* Isaiah 40:8, *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.* James 1:17, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.* There isn’t even an ounce of inconsistency in Him. It is not in His character. He is unable to be anything else but faithful. He is faithful to His word. He is faithful to the promise. He is faithful to the utmost. I would even be so bold as to say it is **IMPOSSIBLE** for God to be unfaithful.

The problem we have is in our moments of weakness. We wanted that situation to work out the way we wanted. We wanted the diagnosis to go a different way. We wanted the child to grow up in fear and love of the Lord, but that didn’t happen. We wanted all our debt to be canceled, but that didn’t happen. We want all our circumstances to work out the way we want and desire. God has a different plan. God has a different purpose. God is working and doing something that will bring Him more and more glory. So, is God unfaithful or inconsistent? The Bible tells me He is faithful; therefore, He is faithful. The problem isn’t with God—it is with us.

We fail to remember, or even recognize, that God has been faithful in our lives. We need the Holy Spirit to help us. Refer to John 14:26. Remember God’s faithfulness with the Holy Spirit’s help. Allow the Holy Spirit to work in your life to remind you of those times when God didn’t let you down, but God had a different plan. Allow the Holy Spirit, who is with and in everyone who believes, to help you remember. If you can’t remember a time when God was faithful maybe

you need a reset. You might simply need to stand on the truth of scripture and say, “Yes, I know in all things you are faithful.” You might need to make this a declaration with what you are going through. You might have brought all kinds of baggage with you. You might have been at the end of your rope going through treatments, and family issues, and depression, and hopelessness. God is faithful. The reset would also help if you can answer this question—Do you really know God, or do you just know *about* God? I can show you all the evidence. The evidence is what happened when God created. The evidence is what happened when God the Father sent the Son to the cross. The evidence is shown in His character. Until you experience God for yourself, you will be missing out.

Until you know He is faithful—not simply because the Bible told you so—but because you have seen it, experienced it; because He came through time and time again; because He cares for His kids. His mercies are new. We need to get closer to God. To not just have a head knowledge but to really know Him. We need that intimate relationship with God the Father, through Christ the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. For some of us, the call to action is to repent and remember all of the times God has been faithful. For others, the call to action is to repent and draw closer to God the Father, through Christ the Son. For still others, the call to action is to repent of your sin and come to Jesus. When you do any of these things I know you will find God faithful. God is faithful to forgive, faithful to restore, faithful to reconcile, even faithful to love you. Ask God to reveal in your heart all the times when you didn’t recognize His faithfulness. Ask God to help you, by the power the Holy Spirit, to remember His Faithfulness. Ask God to help you to draw closer to Him through the Holy Spirit. Ask God to cleanse you from all unrighteousness by the blood of Jesus Christ paid as a ransom for many. Great is your faithfulness oh, Lord my God! [SR](#)



Friday

Because He Lives

Frank Mazza



Sabbath

The King is Coming

Tom Davis

Sermons from other worship services will appear in the next issue.

CEC Awards

By Nicholas Kersten



Scripture Memory Program:

The New York City SDB church won both the Andrew J. Camenga Award for highest percentage of participants to complete the program AND the Mary G. Clare Scripture Memory Award for the most total participants to complete the program.



SDBU Ministry Leadership Program Graduates since 2019

The graduates are: Chris Galarneau, Scott Paulin, Tyler Chroniger, Christine Lindo, Paula Davis, Joan Small, and Matt Klubeck (not all are pictured at the ceremony below).



Alcott Lynch Pastoral Training Scholarship:
Isaac Floyd
Xavier West (not pictured)



New Conference President: John Mark Camenga

Conference Theme 2024



Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

—Psalm 127:1-2 ESV

When something is unearthed, it is uncovered and exposed: it is a process of digging below the surface to discover what is hiding beneath the surface. The discoveries made along the way can be enlightening and fascinating, but they can also be challenging and humbling.

In Matthew 21:12-14 we read an account of Jesus clearing out the Temple. There were merchants set up on the Temple grounds, selling animals for sacrifice at premium prices, turning commitment into commerce, and essentially making the Temple grounds into a tourist trap. Jesus was moved to anger by what he witnessed and he threw everyone out saying, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers” (Matthew 21:13). As soon as Jesus ran everyone off, Matthew 21:14 says that “the blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them.”

In order for the Temple grounds to be a place where the work of the Lord could be done, Jesus had to get rid of what was getting in the way. The presence of the money-changers, merchants, high priests and scribes served as a deterrent to those who truly wanted to be near God. Those with ease-of-access to the Temple and to the trappings of religious expression had lost sight of why they were there while those who sat on the fringes were acutely aware of their need for God.

This is why we need to unearth the Church: when the Church makes room for selfishness and human tradition, it does so to the exclusion of both Jesus and those Jesus calls the Church to serve. When the Church rejects self-reflection and Holy Spirit conviction, preferring to point fingers at societal ills as the reason it is struggling, it closes itself off from Jesus and it makes itself unapproachable by those who need it most. When the Church refuses to be unearthed, it refuses to meet the needs of those who are most aware of their needs. SR

Cuando algo es desenterrado, se descubre y expone: es un proceso de cavar por debajo de la superficie para descubrir lo que se oculta debajo. Los descubrimientos realizados en el camino pueden ser esclarecedores y fascinantes, pero también pueden ser desafiantes y humildes.

En Mateo 21:12-14 leemos una cuenta de Jesús limpiando el Templo. Había comerciantes instalados en los terrenos del Templo, vendiendo animales para el sacrificio a precios premium, convirtiendo el compromiso en comercio, y esencialmente transformando los terrenos del Templo en una trampa para turistas. Jesús se enfureció por lo que presencié y echó a todos diciendo: “Está escrito: ‘Mi casa será llamada casa de oración’, pero ustedes la hacen cueva de ladrones” (Mateo 21:13). Tan pronto como Jesús corrió a todos, Mateo 21:14 dice que “los ciegos y los cojos se acercaron a él en el Templo, y él los sanó.”

Para que los terrenos del Templo fueran un lugar donde se pudiera realizar la obra del Señor, Jesús tuvo que deshacerse de lo que es-

taba estorbando. La presencia de los cambistas, comerciantes, sumos sacerdotes y escribas servía como un disuasivo para aquellos que verdaderamente querían estar cerca de Dios. Aquellos con facilidad de acceso al Templo y a los adornos de la expresión religiosa habían perdido de vista por qué estaban allí, mientras que aquellos que se sentaban en la periferia eran muy conscientes de su necesidad de Dios.

Por esto necesitamos desenterrar la Iglesia: cuando la Iglesia deja espacio para el egoísmo y la tradición humana, lo hace en detrimento tanto de Jesús como de aquellos a los que Jesús llama a la Iglesia a servir. Cuando la Iglesia rechaza la auto-reflexión y la convicción del Espíritu Santo, prefiriendo señalar a los males sociales como la razón de sus problemas, se cierra a Jesús y se vuelve inaccesible para aquellos que más la necesitan. Cuando la Iglesia se niega a ser desenterrada, se niega a satisfacer las necesidades de aquellos que más conscientes están de sus necesidades. SR

Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices

Look Inside

to see all about

Conference 2023!

Pictures

Sermons

Business Items

All the fun!!

