

# Sabbath Recorder

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Dear Leader,  
I've got your back!



February 2022  
A Seventh Day Baptist Publication



# How Great Is Our God!

“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.  
...For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him.  
...from everlasting to everlasting the Lord’s love is with those who fear Him,  
and His righteousness with their children’s children.”

—Psalm 103:8, 11, 17 NIV

## God Has Your Back

By Charlotte Chroniger, Conference President

How do we know that our great God loves us so much? How does God show us His great love? To find some answers, we can turn to the Psalms. So many times David was able to express thoughts about God in a powerful way. Psalm 103 is one of those Psalms.

Psalm 103 begins with the command to praise the Lord and continues with a reminder of what to praise God for. Because of God’s great love, we can enjoy some benefits available to us as believers. We can be forgiven of our many sins (but we need to confess our sins first). We can be healed of our diseases. We can be redeemed from the pit of hell and darkness. We can be crowned with love and compassion. We can be satisfied with good things.

David goes on in verse 10. God does not treat us as our sins deserve (which is death—see Romans 6:23). He does not repay according to our sins. (How many times have we rebelled against God and not lived up to His standards? Has God tried to get even with us?) Our great God not only forgives us, but “as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our sins from us.”

Verses 13-14 continue: “The Lord has compassion on those who fear Him, for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust.”

Sometimes we seem to forget that we are not invincible, that we are only on earth for a short while compared to eternity. We are not super-

humans. We can’t do anything without God’s help. And yet, God designed some very incredible bodies for all of us, bodies whose parts can work together like clockwork.

Another Psalm that speaks of God’s love is Psalm 36. Verses 5-6-7(a) remind us: “Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains (picture the mountains of Colorado!), your justice is like the great deep....O Lord, how priceless is your unfailing love.”

Take time to read through the Psalms and find other passages that talk about God’s great love. Do a study on one of the Psalms and share your thoughts with someone (or send me a copy!). Do you have a favorite Psalm?

During our Conference week a number of SDBs will lead Bible studies on their favorite Psalms. So far 12 people have committed to leading these Bible studies which will include discussion and a prayer time. You will have the opportunity to choose which Psalm you would like to learn more about. I’m looking forward to hearing from our own SDB folks about their favorite Psalms. [SR](#)

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Coming soon! Information on registration, Conference fees, etc, will be made available in the near future. Plan to register early! We want everyone to plan now to attend Conference in Colorado!

- 2 **God Has Your Back**  
By Charlotte Chroniger
- 5 **Dear Frank**  
By Maura Mazza
- 6 **Dear Tyler**  
By Jenn Chroniger
- 8 **Dear Dennis**  
By Julia Coleman
- 10 **Dear Andrew**  
By Kay Samuels
- 12 **Dear John**  
By Tabatha Pethtel
- 14 **Dear Andrew**  
By Kristin Camenga
- 16 **Dear Executives**  
By Jan Ehlers
- 18 **The ...ings Needed to Support Leadership**  
By Althea Rood
- 20 **Growing to Support**  
By Cindy Greene
- 22 **Better Together or Best Together**  
By Carl Greene, SDB Executive Director
- 24 **The Book of Revelation:  
How Church Is Done In Heaven: Part 2**  
By Dennis Coleman
- 26 **Columbia–New Seventh Day Baptists**  
By Andy Samuels  
Chief Executive Director,  
SDB Missionary Society

How do you  
support  
your leaders?

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# Sabbath Recorder

*A monthly journey into the mind and heart.*

February 2022

Patricia Cruzan, Editor

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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.

## CONTACT US

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Overseer, manager, officer, conductor, counselor, guide, notable, pacesetter, pilot, pioneer, ringleader, shepherd...leader. I saw my husband as the leader God had planned well before anyone else did, even himself. I knew the man with a gentle tone and a compassionate heart was the man God had put in Shiloh for this time, a time to help Shiloh transition into a new season. For those of you who don't know, let me introduce you to my husband of 20 years. Frank is a trustee, a deacon, Sabbath school teacher, the moderator and part of the ministry leadership team for the Shiloh Seventh Day Baptist Church in New Jersey.

The dictionary definition of leader is a person who leads, or goes before or with to show the way. Timothy adds "Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach," (1 Timothy 3:2). The rest of the paragraph goes on to list another 10 attributes a good leader should have. Along with the Holy Spirit's help, these leaders need helpmates to help them along the way.

When I think of leadership teams, the first one that comes to mind is Joshua and Caleb. Both of these men saw the miracle of God sending the plagues, as well as walking across the dry sea before it engulfed Pharaoh's army. These men were chosen by Moses to go out as spies to give a report for the Promised Land, and these were the only two who said this is what the Lord has promised—He shall give us the victory, despite the size of the army they would be facing. God honored these two men by allowing them to be the only two of their generation to walk over to the land He had promised because they were not distracted by what others had to say. Joshua went on to be the next ruler of the Israelites, but he would not have been able to do it without Caleb being there alongside him, encouraging him and defending him.

The quality I most appreciate about Frank is his steadfastness to follow through with the vision the Lord has given him and the other leaders at Shiloh. He will listen to what others say and, in his gentle tone and patience, he will remind them of what the Lord has said. He will then come home and need to be encouraged that he is doing the right thing, being reminded of the vision the Lord has given him and the other leaders, and reminding him that the promise of our Lord will not be waived, even in the midst of the naysayers.<sup>[SR]</sup>

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*Maura Mazza has been an active member of the Shiloh SDB church for the past 17 years; prior to that she was a member of the Bay Area SDB church, CA. She is involved in youth ministries and planning mission trips. Maura and Frank have been married for 20 years, and have three children together.*

Dear Frank,  
I've got  
your back!

By  
Maura Mazza



Dear Tyler,  
I've got  
your back!

By  
Jenn Chroniger

For those who don't know, my husband Tyler Chroniger has been called as the next pastor at Shiloh SDB Church in New Jersey. He has been assistant pastor and with the ministry leadership team meets weekly, prays over the church and talks about where they see God leading our church. He is a senior high youth group leader and enjoys helping to teach and lead the next generation. Most importantly, his mission is to follow God's lead in all that he does. His purpose, greater than himself, is to "love God, love People." He knows that we have been placed on this earth to teach others about Jesus and to make disciples. Therefore, he strives to live his life with that goal in mind. As his wife, I **NEVER** saw myself becoming a "pastor's wife." I was adamant, the first few years of our marriage, that that was **NOT** going to happen. Years of God working on me and realizing the vision that God has given my husband has changed my heart and now I'm all in for growing our faith, our church and our community, and making disciples.

However, supporting my husband/my leader is not always easy, and it's not a job for one. For example, Moses, a great servant leader, needed help from his brother Aaron. Aaron helped Moses throughout the years—acting as a spokesperson to the people for Moses, facing Pharaoh, bringing down the plagues on Egypt, and leading the Israelites out of captivity. Aaron went as far as being Moses' physical support, holding Moses' hands in the air during the Israelites' battle with the Amalekites. God's favor was upon the Israelites and they prevailed. Every leader needs help. They cannot do it alone and much more can be accomplished for the kingdom with help than could ever be done alone. So how do I, and how can even you, help support all of our leaders? Here are some ideas.

- **Covering them with prayer on a daily basis is a start.** They not only have the stresses of daily life (home, family, work), but they also have the stresses of leading an entire congregation, sharing what God is showing them, and helping them to grow in their faith. That is a lot of responsibility, and it's something they don't take lightly.

- **Be an ear to listen and hear.** Sometimes they just need to talk it out, not even to give an opinion, but so they can decompress and work out a situation for themselves.

- **Be willing to ask them how they are doing.** They are so worried about everyone else—it's important to check in on them and their families. They take on a lot of responsibility of caring for others and it's important that they feel cared for. It could be something as small as checking in, a phone call, a note in the mail, a coffee to say thanks.

- **Let them know if you appreciate them.** If you like a specific sermon, tell them. If you're confused about something and want clarification, ask them. As a wife, I know my husband. He is not a man who goes around looking for praise, but it builds him up when others, besides myself, take interest in what he says and appreciate his efforts.

Leaders are meant to lead, but they can't do it without the support and backing from their family, friends, and church body. Let them know—*I've got your back!* SR



*Jenn Chroniger has grown up in the Shiloh SDB Church, attending since she was born. She and her husband Tyler have been married for nine years and have two boys, Brayden (6) and Nolan (3). Jenn enjoys her job as an assistant in a preschool 3 classroom. She loves reading, the beach, and spending time with her family.*

Dear Dennis,  
I've got  
your back!

*"But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more"*

*—Luke 12:48 ESV*

By  
Julia Coleman

**"Something to pray about..."**

It is inevitable after any meeting or a situation (church or otherwise), my husband asks for my help in praying, bringing me into a ministry-moment created by the LORD. He does not go into details, only provides the necessary information so I can pray and I love that...I love that about him. He sets the tone that he wants the Will of GOD to be realized. He puts things in order so that those who follow know without a doubt Yehovah was responsible. That's my cue, my assignment, my engagement. PRAYER. I enjoy and have a passion to pray: I experience the Presence of GOD, witness His Anointing that breaks any yoke of bondage, and see His Authority as King enforced on the Earth as it is in Heaven. My husband knows that about me and he invites me into Yehovah's Ministry workings, allowing me to join him in seeing what the LORD desires and will fulfill in a situation. Who is my husband? Dennis W. Coleman, Jr; Media Ministry Team Leader, Deacon, and certified to share in the pulpit ministry through preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ at the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Shiloh NJ.

Dennis knows the magnitude of the call the LORD has for leaders; the integrity, the confidentiality, the Anointing of GOD, the humility, the dedication to the LORD, and the compassion and love for the Body of Christ. In the ministry, there are so many pieces leaders are stewarding, sometimes successfully and other times, flat on their faces: literally in prayer, prostrate before GOD. They are not perfect and so mistakes are made. Knowing what the LORD wants, communicating to the Body of Christ what the LORD reveals, executing His Desired Will, and seeing the fruit of obedience each come with their own challenges, requiring a tremendous amount of patience, forgiveness, and care. Even more importantly, having to answer to the LORD for what He desires; accountability to GOD. So, I pray.

**Leadership** is a very heavy word. Then add to it, "I've got your back." That means the weight of the responsibility of the one in leadership also rests with the one who is closest behind them. That usually means the wife and not too far behind her, the children. The minute I contemplated the title, Luke 12:48 came to mind. This scripture speaks of knowing, and that this knowing carries with it an accountability. It is as if the LORD says, "How did you distribute to My People what I have given to you?" The emphasis is on the servitude of the one in leadership.

The relationship of David and Jonathan in the days of Saul, the King of Israel, provides a setting worth looking at. This situation is quite extreme which makes it even more meaningful. You can read the full account of their brotherhood in 1 Samuel 18-20.



<sup>1</sup> As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. –1 Samuel 18:1 ESV

<sup>2</sup> And Jonathan told David, “Saul, my father seeks to kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning. Stay in a secret place and hide yourself. <sup>3</sup> And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you. And if I learn anything I will tell you.” –2 Samuel 19:2-3 ESV

This was a very difficult time for Jonathan, as it is sometimes in leadership in our churches; achieving unity is such a struggle today. Jonathan loved his father. He also loved David, a friend, a soulmate. How does Jonathan resolve this dichotomy? He initially chooses to serve both; diplomat, brokering peace as best he could. Later in chapter 20, Jonathan is fully persuaded of his father’s intentions to harm David, especially when Saul throws a spear at Jonathan’s head. To the end, Jonathan has his friend’s back, giving him signals to protect David from Saul.

I believe Jonathan (Yehonatan: Heb. יְהוֹנָתָן, “Yahweh has given”) in scripture is meant to provide foundational teaching of the Person of the Holy Spirit and the commitment He has to the children of GOD. He loves us as His Own Spirit. He is given (*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever* –John 14:16 ESV) by Yahweh for many reasons, including having “our backs.” I am convinced there are many covert messages and signals He sends us to protect us from harm. And when we receive them, take heed and pray. The Holy Spirit (*Ruach Hakodesh*: Heb. שְׂדוּקָה חַיִּים, “Spirit, the Holy”) sees us during times of distress, anxiety, frustration, misunderstandings, and even disagreements.

Over the years, I have seen the weight of leadership on my husband’s face and body as he seeks to be fully obedient to the LORD’s Will. I see the adjustments he makes to his schedule to accommodate emergent meetings. I see the commitment to joining with the ministry team weekly to pray, discern the ministry plans and direction of the Holy Spirit, catch up on the happenings of our congregation, and provide support and accountability for each other’s life journey with the LORD and each other; to love well. I see the personal prayer and worship times he spends with the LORD,

seeking His Face. I see him week after week serving to ensure the media ministry is adequately supported. I see him train, teach, and disciple young leaders to take bold steps in ministry to the LORD. Occasionally, he preaches as the LORD leads. So, what do I do? I pray, and pray, and pray even more.

Dennis has been very careful about how he handles the weight. He lives by relying fully on GOD and encourages others to do the same. So together, we cover each other in prayer, advise through counsel and scripture, are watchful for emotional and spiritual overload and burn out, ensure our physical bodies are in check through exercise, diet, and rest, and maintain a vibrant home and lifestyle of joy—finding the balance between homelife, churchlife, and worklife. The Ruach Hakodesh has our backs. [SR](#)



*Christ is my life. I can say this with veracity and conviction. About 30 years ago, I had an experience of the supernatural kind that gave me a glimpse into the inner workings of the enemy over the lives of those on the Earth and the Supreme Victory accomplished through the Blood of Jesus Christ, my Savior and LORD. I was born in Kingston Jamaica, a former member of Mountain View SDB Church in Kingston; currently a member of Shiloh SDB Church Shiloh, NJ; the last of four siblings; a mother of two phenomenal boys; wife to one very handsome and anointed Spirit-filled man; and committed to serving the geriatric population and their families. I love to sing, read, write music, sew, cook and clean...yeah, I know that is strange to love cleaning. I was 16 years old when I made a sure commitment to make Jesus Christ LORD and Savior of my life. I enjoy worshipping the LORD; there is nothing like it. I enjoy being with Him through singing, art and composition, meditating on the WORD of GOD, prophetic surveillance, interpretive dance and flagging, prayer and fasting, corporate gathering, small group talks, and direction, and any other way He chooses. I look forward to the day I will see Him face to face and give Him the biggest, longest hug ever! May GOD bless you and keep you; may He make His face shine upon you and give you His Shalom!*

Dear Andrew,  
I've got  
your back!

By  
Kay Samuels

God is truly amazing. There was no way that we would have been able to plan and execute the path our lives have taken. God directs the trajectory of our lives and when we submit to Him it is mind boggling to see the way He connects the dots. I have known Andrew for almost half a century—that is a long time. The genesis of our relationship began as young people in church. From the outset of our relationship, it was clear to me that Andrew was destined for greatness. He was preaching the word of God with such clarity and passion. He was barely 14 or 15. He was the president of his youth group, among other church involvement. I admired and encouraged him then. Looking back today, that is when I think my support started. What was not clear to me then was that I would be part of his journey. As kids we did not think that far. Well, I certainly did not. It was several years after our initial meeting that we developed romantic inclinations. When we finally said, “I do” in 1983, Andrew was in the employment of the Jamaican government as a representative to the United Nations in New York City. I still lived and worked in Jamaica then.

We lived in New York City and went to the New York City SDB Church where he took a very active role. He was involved in many other church activities. In most or all of those activities I was right there with Him. When he was called to pastor the Miami church more than 30 years ago, we packed up and moved from New York City with Tsahai, our older daughter who was only three at the time. That was an easy move as we both agreed that was what God wanted us to do. Additionally, the tropical climate that beckoned us was similar to the climate that we were accustomed to in Jamaica.

Initially in the pastorate, I was more of a silent supporter. Tsafiq, our younger daughter, came in the picture when we were about three years in the ministry. As the years rolled on and I grew in my relationship with the Lord, I took on roles that allowed me to be a more vocal supporter.

I served as the women's group president for several years where I sought to encourage and motivate the women to walk as women of substance. I served as the leader of the prayer ministry in which we met and prayed for Andrew and the church on a weekly basis. I serve on the leadership team as a deaconess helping to lead the church spiritually.

Over the years when Andrew travelled I was in place at the church helping to hold things together. One such occasion was when Andrew was pastoring both the Miami and New York City churches—he would travel every two weeks. Along with the other leaders of the church, we held things together and I believe that this was one of the times that the church experienced exponential growth. This was because the members of the church were taking more responsibilities and Andrew had taught us well. As Andrew travelled, I believe that my support was in making sure that all went well in his absence.

Earl, our third child, joined the family by marriage which produced two grandchildren, Ezaias and Tsklyar. As a family we provided strong support for Andrew. Tsahai and Tsafiq were pioneers in the church's dance ministry which was the foundation for Tsafiq's solo miming ministry. Tsahai also served on our much sought-after praise team. Earl came in and served with the youth group as well as on the trustee board.

In Andrew's new role as the Missionary Society Chief Executive Director, I am privileged to hear many of the ministry needs in various areas. I encourage my church to be supportive of these missionary opportunities. Presently, my

church is involved in a ministry support program for one of our African churches. Presently, I champion that ministry. I am a part of the Missionary Society Prayer Ministry that meets every Tuesday night.

Leaders need to be supported and need to know that there are people that they can count on. One of the best ways to support our leaders is to pray for them and let them know it. Another way is to encourage them with words of affirmation. Another is for family support. One of our greatest joys is that our children were totally involved in the ministry providing support. Dear Andrew, we've got your back! SR



*I am a born again believer trusting God to help me become who He wants me to be. My motto is "God, If you have something for me to do you will equip me." I am a wife, mother of two, a grandmother of two. This is my first ministry. I am an educator by profession whose philosophy is "engage the learner and you will bring out the best in them." I am a member of the Miami SDB Church where I serve in various roles. I believe that God is calling us as believers to be involved in ministry, not just go to church.*

# Dear John, I've got your back!

By  
Tabatha Pethtel

Sometimes, those words are easier said than done. What does it really mean when you say those words? How are you going to have your leader's back? How do you follow through on those words? How do you ensure that they just aren't words but sincere, intentional actions? To be honest, I don't know—however, my family and I have learned a few things over the years that have helped us get through certain times as well as grow in our love for others.

As the spouse of a director for seven years and then as a pastor's spouse for 14 years, you can have a unique vantage point to what a leader endures, agonizes over, prays for, triumphs in, and finds value in his or her service.

Leaders, not just pastors, are called to the roles they assume. It is not a position they take lightly or dismiss out of hand. A true leader is there because they not only feel called to the role, but because of the passion they feel for what they are doing. They want to make a difference, bring about a change, or simply inspire others to become better individuals and/or leaders themselves.

Many times our leaders will feel worn down or failures at what they do for several reasons: no forward growth in a particular area; constant negative feedback; lack of support from those around them; or just simple ambivalence from those they are trying to lead. So, how can we lift them up and show them support in a positive and constructive way? The first and most important answer is prayer!

Yes, prayer is one of the most effective ways to support your leaders. I know it sounds cliché but it really is not. From a spouse's perspective, when I know someone is praying for me or my husband, I feel better. A true, genuine comfort comes over me. It assures me that someone cares, someone out there is concerned for our well being, and knows that God can do all things. When my husband is stressed or agonizing over a decision, I will stop what I am doing and just pray for him. I pray for strength, for peace, for resolution, and for overall guidance in what he is having to do at that moment. I always pray silently but I let him know that I prayed for him. Even when he is not embroiled in something stressful, I pray for him, and I attempt to do it daily if not weekly, because I have faith that it benefits him as much as it benefits me. I also work hard to make sure I am praying for others I know in lead-

ership roles. I may not be the best in letting them know I prayed for them, but I make sure that I am praying for their welfare as well.

Praying is also so simple, yet so powerful. It's our way to communicate with God and let Him hear our woes, our worries, our praises, and our gratitude for all He has given and continues to give. And because it is so simple, you can do it from anywhere. You don't have to be physically or geographically close to someone in order to pray for them. You can do it in the comfort of your own home or even while driving in your car (but keep your eyes open!). You can even send a simple text, email, or social media message just stating that you prayed for them. It will make a huge difference.

Another way to truly show your support for leaders is showing patience and grace towards our leaders. From experience, sometimes people portray leaders as people who must be perfect in every way WE desire them to be. We add pressures onto them that are unfair and unjust. Our leaders are fallible people just like we are. They will make mistakes. They will take longer to respond sometimes. They will fall short of our expectations, but it does not mean they can not lead. We need to offer them grace and forgiveness, and have patience with them. This practice is not only beneficial to our leaders but it will make you a stronger person as well. You will learn to have grace for others in your life and for yourself.

Being intentional in your words and actions is not always easy. I am an introvert. When I get home from a day of work the last thing I want to do is bring dinner to a family, spend time engaging with others, watching someone else's child/children, or take someone someplace across town. But if I say I will do it, I will do it. Afterwards I feel a sense of peace, not just from knowing that I fulfilled my promise but that just a small act of kindness can make a huge impact on someone's day or quite possibly their life. If you tell someone in a leadership role that they can count on you, then follow through on it. Even if you are struggling with that commitment, let them know you

are struggling. They will afford you grace just as you afford them the same. Showing your integrity in support of a leader goes a long way.

Being intentional can also be shown in another way. However, this is probably one of the harder ways to show support because it can cause you to go out of your own comfort zone. It takes patience and a great deal of self motivation. From experience, when you ask someone what they may need or what they may need help with, the majority of the time you will not get a definitive response. I believe this stems from people genuinely not knowing what they need at that moment. You have put them on the spot. Granted, usually your leaders will know what they need help with at a certain moment or can direct you to what needs to be done. However, this is more in the perspective of supporting leaders and their families or just families in general. Over the years, I have learned to listen to others with more intention than usual. I pay attention to discussions about school functions,

*Continued on next page 19*



*Tabatha Pethtel is a kindergarten teacher at a local charter school, serves as deacon at Springslife SDB Church in Colorado Springs, CO, and serves on the SDB Women's Society Board. She enjoys volunteering in her town, helping with both Boy and Girl Scouts, reading, and traveling with her family.*

# Dear Andrew, I've got your back!

*I thank my God every  
time I remember you.  
In all my prayers for all  
of you, I always pray  
with joy because of your  
partnership in the gospel  
from the first day until  
now.*

*—Philippians 1:3-5 (NIV)*

By  
Kristin Camenga

What does partnership in the gospel mean? My husband, Andrew, and I have experienced partnership both with each other and others as we have ministered in several leadership roles over more than 20 years of marriage. Most recently, we have seen this as we have been members of the German SDB Church in Salemville, PA.

Andrew was called to be the pastor of the church, beginning in July 2015. From the start, they were gracious and collaborative, issuing the call in August of 2014, but willing to wait for us to move while I finished my contract as a college professor. We made the four-hour trip from western New York every 4-6 weeks, starting to build relationships and getting to know the community.

While Andrew is the pastor, the church shares leadership for the ministry. Our deacons and elders meet and pray with Andrew each month. They serve as a sounding board for ideas and give direction. But their leadership is more than monthly meetings. Frequently, one of the deacons and elders will go on pastoral calls with Andrew or go in his place. They communicate to be aware of needs and meet those needs as appropriate from the deacons' fund. The larger church body has also met several times to share ideas for the mission of the church, both internal ministries and outreach.

Throughout our time as members of the German SDB Church, I have experienced partnership around our kids' ministries. I share the teaching of one Sabbath School class with another church member, trading back and forth as we finish a quarter of material and covering for each other when one of us is away. When we joined the church, we had a Kids' Sabbath with different members of the church providing teaching, crafts, games, and food over 3-4 hours on a Sabbath afternoon once a month. I came alongside and added my part by leading music. When we changed ministry focus to a summer VBS a few years ago, I took the lead and ministry partners have been invaluable. It is obvious that one person can't lead a VBS alone, but having people who take ownership of different sections like the Bible story, food, or recreation makes a large undertaking a deep joy. Everyone in the church participated, as well as many from our sister church, the Bell SDB Church. Service included leading a group of students, serving as a puppeteer, donating food or supplies, or putting up pop-up tents for outside activities. I'm especially blessed to have had a friend who talks through the details with me and makes sure nothing is being missed. This makes the

experience better for everyone! While the number of kids has grown from year to year, I count success as much in the number of helpers—isn't it awesome to have 27 people help with a VBS for 18 kids?

One of the joys of working with our church community is how they take responsibility to care for each other and the church property. When Andrew's father died last year, church members shared meals with us—each meal lasted for two!—and similarly food is delivered to those struggling with health problems or just needing a token of support. At the end of every fellowship meal, takeaway boxes are packed for singles to take home and for delivery to shut-ins. A bush dies, it is mentioned in a business meeting, and soon a new bush has been planted. These are things done by the initiative and responsibility of various church members.

Our church family is also very generous. This begins with sharing the financial blessings of the church to free Andrew for full-time ministry so that he can focus on the responsibilities of the church and where God is leading. This last October for Pastor's Appreciation Month, our church gifted Andrew and me with a night at a bed & breakfast. They thoughtfully provided child-care while we were gone as well as gift cards for dinner and a movie. It was clear they knew us well since they told us to schedule the night away while I was between semesters of teaching so I could get away without my computer! The regular support and expressions of gratitude throughout the year are even more welcome. Our church is relentlessly supportive of helping Andrew focus on his ministry, commenting on sermons to show they were listening and effective, telling others in the community about how they appreciate their pastor, and protecting his leadership by doing regular tasks around the church. We have a church culture that delights in giving—from the deacon who brings root beer barrels each week for all the kids, to the "candy lady" who brings a bag of miniature chocolate bars for everyone to grab from at the end of the service, to tangible reminders of children's messages.

We also support each other in ministries beyond our church. Our church supported Andrew as he served as SCSC Training Director for several years and now serves as a member of General Council for the General Conference. When I served as Interim SCSC Training

Director in 2020, family and church members gave feedback, taught sessions, and hosted our kids for a few hours, especially as the training switched to on-line. Andrew and I are now working to support Amanda Barbee as SCSC Training Director, passing on materials and ideas, and finding joy as God uses her to bring new ideas to the program. Both SCSC and General Council are also an exercise in partnership, with a group of people contributing the gifts God has given.

Partnership has been central to the effectiveness of our ministry. Partnership gave integrated support for leadership—we were neither alone nor lonely; we had someone to share the burdens and the joys; others with different gifts could do tasks we could not. Where is a place you can partner in ministry? Can you come alongside someone else or find a partner for your leadership? How can you work as part of a team? Are there places in your community where you can take initiative to start a ministry or be responsible to maintain it? How can your generosity of praise or pocketbook make a difference? May God be glorified as we work together in partnership for the gospel! [SR](#)



*Kristin Camenga is married to Andrew and they have two daughters, Elisa (13) and Annika (9). She teaches math at Juniata College and delights in the exuberance of leading kids in VBS songs.*

Dear Executives,

I've got  
your back!

By  
Jan Ehlers

"I have your back" is a great way to let someone know you are there for them and support them in their endeavor. What does this mean specifically to you as fellow Christians? The first thing that comes to my mind is prayer. A long time ago, my husband and I went through a really tough time. We would try to pray, but didn't know what or how to pray. We look back and know that it was the prayers of others that helped us. We could feel the arms of Jesus holding us even when we couldn't put anything into words. Your leaders could use your prayers. I encourage you to pray for them daily and they will feel the arms of Jesus holding them too.

#### **What can you pray for?**

**Encouragement**—Being a leader is hard. They often have to make tough decisions that maybe only half of the people will agree with. Someone once said to me "If two people always agree, one of them has stopped thinking." So, we should expect to not agree all the time—but pray that they will continue on the course the Lord has given them, even when it seems no one appreciates all their hard work.

Isaiah 41:10: *"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."*

**Equip them to do the job**—We often feel, "it's their job" and they know how to do it. Well, I know that many times they are on their knees in prayer when faced with a particular job or situation. I am sure you often feel in over your head too. Pray for them daily, because we don't know when these situations will occur.

Philippians 4:13: *"I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me."*

**Family**—Think of the times when one of the leaders comes to your church. They are leaving a family behind to deal with all the day-to-day problems and even joys that they cannot share right away. A phone call or facetime isn't the same—as we found out this past pandemic year. They also attend seminars to "equip them" to do their jobs better—



more time away from home. Being away from home is one part. Another concern is they probably can't always leave the hard things at work and will bring some frustrations home. Pray the family can support them and understand their emotional needs, too.

1 Peter 5:7: *"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."*

**Remain firm in their faith**—They are pastors or people with *super faith*, why should I pray for that? I believe Satan sets up shop right next to them. He already has a lot of people in his grip and wants to get the prize—men and women of God!

James 4:7: *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*

Many more types of prayers can be said for your leaders. Go to the concordance in your Bible and you will find a multitude of prayer ideas for your leaders.

### **What are some "hands on" things you can do?**

**Support them with gifts to the ministries.** I know—always asking for money. But without it, the ministries will come to a halt. Give what you can, and as often as you can and consider including a ministry in your will.

**Volunteer.** It is hard when everyone is so far away, but when Conference comes to your area, that is a great time to offer your services! When someone asks you to help in any way, please give it prayerful consideration.

The executives get many emails and phone calls. If you have question about mailing of the *Helping Hand*, call or email the office and the administrative assistant is more than happy to help you. Change of address for the *Sabbath Recorder*, email (contact@seventhdaybaptist.org). If you just don't know who you should talk to about an issue, call the office (608-752-5055) and the administrative assistant will help to direct your call to the executive who is most apt to be able to help you.

"I have your back" is more than a neat saying: football players, police officers, and soldiers say it often and mean it. You can mean it, too, with your prayers and everyday help. [SR](#)



Jan Ehlers is Administrative Assistant to the SDB General Conference and the Memorial Fund at the SDB Center in Janesville, WI.

## **Missionary Society Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the members of the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society will be held at the Missionary Society Office in the First Hopkinton Seventh Day Baptist Church Parish House, Ashaway, RI, and via ZOOM, on Sunday, March 20, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. for the following purposes:

- To elect voting members, a Board of Managers and officers to hold office until the next annual meeting and until their successors are elected.
- To hear and act upon the reports of the Board of Managers and officers for the fiscal year January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.
- To ratify the appointment of independent public accountants for the current fiscal year.
- To consider and act upon such other matters as may properly come before said meeting or any adjournment thereof.

The Board of Managers has fixed the close of business on February 28, 2022, as the time at which members entitled to notice thereof and to vote at the meeting and any adjournment thereof shall be determined.

— Renee Sanford  
Secretary

# The ...ings Needed to Support Leadership

By  
Althea Rood

From my experiences, both in giving and receiving, leadership is best supported by the following “...ings”: Listening, Following/Supporting, Encouraging, Giftings, and Praying.

It is invaluable to a leader to have trusted people who truly listen. People who will give a fair listen and feedback are prized sources of wisdom for leaders. People who don’t automatically say or intimate “that’s a crazy idea” but who help to flesh out what God might want to do in the situation. As James states, “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.” (James 1:19) An organization or group is stronger when there is small team or group leadership that supports each other by listening. As King Solomon stated in Ecclesiastes 4:9— “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work.” Listening with discretion brings wisdom which supports and strengthens the leadership.

Leadership without followers is a moot point. People who are willing to support and follow are truly an encouragement to leaders. Leaders can’t do it all themselves, nor should they feel alone in the ministry. Having support to carry out the ministry is a must! God has placed in the body—His Church—varied gifts for the carrying on of the ministry. “Now the body is not made up of one part but many...” (I Cor 12:14) “...to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (I Cor 12:7). Giftings are chosen by God for each of us for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). There is no room for a “lone ranger” mentality here. The body must work together to carry out the ministry. In my own experiences as a leader, whether as training director of SCSC, or leader of a women’s retreat, or SDB Women’s Board president, I relied heavily on the gifts of others on my “team.” Some of the gifts of service that people who preferred to be “in the background” shared were invaluable to my ministry. Choosing “my team” based on their giftings brought real strength and balance to the team. Areas in which I was deficient were giftings that I searched for in selecting others.

However, although the ministry is a group experience, there needs to be a physical “head” in addition to Christ. This leader tends to “get the guff,” “take the lumps,” and get the criticism. It is precisely at this time where a well-placed word of encouragement speaks volumes and strengthens the leader. There is a spiritual gift of encouragement (“But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement, and comfort.” I Cor. 14:3) but I believe that all of us are called to encourage one another. Paul, on several occasions, states “My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in

love...” (Col. 2:2) It is my prayer that God will give me timely words of encouragement for those in my life, not just for leaders. However, leaders probably need this more than any others.

Finally, praying is the greatest support that a leader can have. When I have been in particular leadership positions and for particular events, I have sought out a dedicated team of prayer warriors—because ultimately, we don’t fight against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)

What’s your role in supporting your leaders? Are you listening, supporting, encouraging, sharing your gifts, and/or

praying? God has called you to strengthen His Body through His gifts to you. “Step up to the plate” and support your leadership as God shows you how! [SR](#)



*Althea Rood is a past president of the SDB General Conference, past president of the SDB Women’s Society, former training director of SCSC, and is a retired math teacher who is again teaching part-time. She enjoys family—children, grandchildren— and watching people mature in Christ! She also enjoys watching college and professional sports.*

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## Dear John

*Continued from page 13*

upcoming events or birthdays, upcoming travel for a spouse, sickness that overcomes a household, etc. Depending on the need, I show up. I show up with a pizza delivery for a family whose husband is traveling and they have two events that evening. I show up to watch a house full of children because a parent is in the hospital. I show up and take someone to school or the doctor’s because they can’t be in two places at the same time or a car has broken down. I show up just to sit and listen with a friend because they have had a rough day/week and just need to unwind. If you wait for someone to tell you what they need, you may miss opportunities to pour into someone else’s life—especially the life of the leader and the family.

Lastly, let’s discuss respect of time. Leaders feel called to be in the positions they are in and therefore they desire to be available to those whom they are leading. However, this can come at a cost to your leaders and their families. Being available to others on a non-stop basis is draining mentally and physically for a leader; in fact, it can be for anyone. Respecting a leader’s time and availability is crucial for their mental health and the overall health of their families. Leaders lead busy lives—we all do—but leaders in particular. Most leaders wear more than one hat and can lead multiple committees or groups, but they also have families who depend on them as well. Ten years ago our family made the decision to

follow God’s calling as my husband stepped into a larger leadership role in the denomination. Our children were young, I worked a full time job, and he was also a full time pastor. We knew the position would require lots of traveling, long hours, and little time to be spent as a family. However, we didn’t back down. We made a plan that included lots of prayer, grace, patience, and intentional time together. When we were together as a family there was no returning phone calls, responding to emails or texts, or entertaining non-emergency visitations from others. This was time for our family to be together, intentional time to bond and grow. It was not easy because leaders want to be available, but they also need to be available to those at home as well. There were many times when those times were not respected and others’ needs were deemed more important than family. However, with time and boundaries, this happens a lot less. Just be careful and mindful of whether the time you are asking for assistance is coming at the sacrifice of something else important. You may even find that this assists you in becoming more aware of your own boundaries when it comes to others’ needs.

I pray this article helps someone in their search or desire to support our denominational leaders or any leader in someone’s life. Remember, if you can’t help or support in any other way than to pray, it’s OK. It’s the one thing they need, always. [SR](#)

# Growing to Support

By  
Cindy Greene

It was the fall of 2016. Carl and I had traveled to Central Asia to support and encourage some missionary friends there. On our last day, these friends wanted to take us on a hike into the mountains outside the city. While many experiences on this trip had already challenged me significantly, this hike was definitely the most direct challenge to me physically. They took it easy on me, but it was humbling to be the least physically fit of the group. Our destination was a spot referred to as the “dinosaur prints” which were marks on a rock face that resembled the footprints of a T-Rex. What was significant to me about this destination was that we planned to take a nice long lunch break at this spot which I was greatly looking forward to! By the time we reached the dinosaur prints, I was ready to crash, whereas the rest of the group couldn’t wait to climb the rock face and touch the prints. As I lowered my aching body to the ground, the others tried to get me to join them. I declined, thinking it was better for all of us if my jello-legs didn’t attempt to climb a rock face just then! But as I sat there trying to enjoy the satisfaction of resting, instead I felt left out. I also felt like I was letting the others down.

We went on this trip to “encourage and support our friends.” Initially, I didn’t even want to go because I didn’t see how I could really be much help to them. However, their insistence that our presence would be encouraging finally convinced me. They also knew all along how much I would learn and grow from the experience and they wanted that for me.

As a pastor’s wife, I’ve experienced how much my husband and I have longed for others to learn and grow. Often we think we need to support and encourage our leaders by giving them something or doing stuff for them. Sometimes that is super appropriate and also super appreciated. On the other hand, what if our own learning and growing is the most encouraging thing to those in leadership? It shows them that they truly are making a difference. It also gives them a sense of companionship because when it seems like no one is following, you feel very alone. When we share with our leaders how we are learning and growing, it helps to build community which we all need to continue in this growth.

Since this hike was the end of our time there, I was also reflecting on our other, less physical, experiences from the trip. I realized that I had a tendency to allow fear and pride to get in the way of my willingness to do things. I was frustrated by the number of times I couldn’t (or wouldn’t) handle situations the way I would have liked. As I sat there watching my husband and friends enjoy the comradery of a challenging experience, I had a new realization of the purpose of readiness. I can’t be completely prepared for any and every situation, but I can be ready in my willingness to prioritize what God will provide for me.

I would say I’ve always recognized that being healthy is good. Do any of us really deny that? But I would not say that I have always had sufficient motivation to pursue holistic health. It takes a lot of discipline. And time. And often money. In and of itself, it just has not seemed like much of a priority. In the day-to-day choices,

it has seemed rather selfish. Sure, I've wanted to be physically fit. I've hoped I was spiritually mature. I've assumed I was emotionally and mentally healthy.

I got to see firsthand how, even though our missionary friends were humble and plenty busy, they prioritized their spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health, and the fruit of their labor was noticeable. Others benefited and God was glorified by their healthiness. I realized it wasn't selfish to spend time and money on myself in this way and that I wasn't somehow exempt from this responsibility. Others in my life would benefit from my being healthier. Others in my life should benefit from my being healthier.

This of course requires intentionality. Some differences I can see looking back in my intentionality include:

- contacting a friend to serve as a mentor or just someone to talk with
- looking into Christian counseling options
- sharing my struggles with my husband and really listening to his feedback
- allowing myself to be inspired by someone else's discipline (rather than annoyed—ahem)
- taking note of encouraging words and writing them down
- writing down in a journal at least three things I'm thankful for before I go to bed at night
- calling to set up that follow-up appointment with the doctor

- calling to set up an appointment with that counselor who seems like the best option
- saying “no” to something for the purpose of maintaining a quiet time
- asking someone else to take care of something I normally take care of so I can go for a run or a hike instead
- saying “yes” to something that's risky and giving myself grace if I fail
- then saying “yes” and trying again

It has not necessarily been a pretty process. Or an easy one at times. But I can honestly and gratefully look back and see real progress in all the areas of my health. And see how God has blessed that progress and allowed me to see fruit He has brought forth.

If I'm going to support and encourage my leaders, I want to do it from a healthy standpoint. When my spiritual and emotional growth is stagnant, my gifts for them may end up to be hollow or even self-serving. However, if I focus on following Jesus to the all-around healthy person He wants me to be, my gifts will flow from a pure heart and motivation. This focus itself will encourage my leaders because they will see fruit from their labor, be able to fellowship with me at a deeper level, and be encouraged to labor on.

By the way, I did get my tired legs up off the ground and climb that rock face to touch the dino prints. And I'm confident that I'm not the only one who is glad I did. SR

*Cindy is married to Carl who serves as the Executive Director of the SDB General Conference. Together they have four children who are rapidly becoming adults and together they enjoy making music, reminiscing, and laughing a lot.*



Better  
Together

or

Best  
Together

By  
Carl Greene

I think that we often have the wrong assumption as a Conference of Churches when it comes to the phrase “Better Together.” We usually think of better together as an optional ingredient option—sort of like foods that pair well. Peanut butter and chocolate. Peanut butter and jelly. Peanut butter and ice cream. Peanut butter and yogurt. Ok, peanut butter and just about anything is better.

But, peanut butter is great on its own—sometimes I like it mixed with something else, but only if I feel like it. The same can be true with our association principle as a Conference of Churches. It is better, but only when we feel like it.

### Best Together

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I do not think that the New Testament witness is of churches that are better together. The churches are best together. The churches together are able to live out God’s calling in unique ways that they struggled to do separately. Simply put, they had each other’s backs when they were together so that they could actively advance God’s Kingdom in a sustainable way.

Author John Stumbo words it this way, “We’ve come to see autonomous, unaffiliated churches as normal and common ... Rather than organizing and functioning independently, what I find in the New Testament are churches seeking meaningful, enduring relationships for mutual encouragement and mission accomplishment. We should do the same today.”<sup>1</sup>

Here are some “Best Together” elements that are worthwhile to consider for our network of Seventh Day Baptist Churches, and how we can participate best together.<sup>2</sup>

### Church Planting

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1. **Sending.** Churches sent planters near and far to be part of ministry teams.<sup>3</sup>
2. **Giving.** Offerings were sent abroad for church planting efforts.<sup>4</sup>
3. **Communication.** Network churches were encouraged through hearing about how God was at work in and through planting efforts.<sup>5</sup>

### Church Revitalization

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1. **Correspondence.** Churches had a communication network that held them together. Many letters were clearly written for networks of churches for their mutual benefit and application.<sup>6</sup>
2. **Prayer.** Network leaders prayed for the churches passionately.<sup>7</sup> Churches were asked to pray for the leaders.<sup>8</sup>
3. **Exemplars.** Missional churches served as examples and models for other churches in the network of churches.<sup>9</sup>

## Leadership Development

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1. **Shared Leadership.** Leaders from other network churches served in and assisted at other network churches.<sup>10</sup>
2. **Leadership Support.** Leaders from network churches came alongside one another to encourage at critical times.<sup>11</sup>
3. **Training.** Network churches were intentionally engaged in training up leaders for the long-term benefit of the movement.<sup>12</sup>

## Gospel Saturation

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1. **Gospel Proclamation.** Network churches participated in gospel work within their own communities and abroad, supporting the collective work of evangelism.<sup>13</sup>
2. **Gospel Living.** Churches encouraged one another through their love for one another.<sup>14</sup>
3. **Giving.** Financial gifts were collected and given to care for those outside the geographic reach of individual local churches.<sup>15</sup>

## Together

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One more look at the New Testament witness for insights into how to live as a Conference of Churches: The letter to the Colossians is an amazing letter—and then we get to the list of names at the end of the letter. Yawn. 7/8 of the letter is packed with rich, full writing, and then the final 1/8 tapers off with a list of who is doing what and where they are.<sup>16</sup>

Actually, the final 1/8 of Colossians offers us a fresh look at life as a network of churches. We are best together. Our work together as churches is not an extra credit option that makes us better if we feel like it. Our work together as a Conference of Churches is what makes us best—engaging each of us in actively advancing God’s Kingdom.

We are called to have each other’s backs as a Conference of Seventh Day Baptist Churches. Even when it is inconvenient. Even when there is not a short-term benefit to “my” church. Yes, because we are called to be best together, as Kingdom Family. SR

<sup>1</sup> Stumbo, John. 2020. *A Stained Beauty: The Church Ancient and Present*. Colorado Springs: Nesting Tree, 207. Rev. Dr. John Stumbo serves as President of the Christian & Missionary Alliance denomination and on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Evangelicals. This book is a great read and provides wonderful insights into the New Testament with application for today.

<sup>2</sup> For a full treatment of Best Together, see Stumbo’s treatment of this in Chapter 9 of *A Stained Beauty*.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 13:1-3; Acts 15:39-40; Acts 16:1-3; Romans 15:24.

<sup>4</sup> Philippians 4:15-16.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 14:26; Acts 21:19-20; Romans 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10.

<sup>6</sup> Acts 13-14; Galatians 1:2; Colossians 4:16-17.

<sup>7</sup> Romans 1:9-10; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:4; Colossians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12.

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2; Hebrews 13:18-19.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

<sup>10</sup> Silas: Acts 15:34-40; Timothy: 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2; Acts 17:14; Titus 3:13.

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 6:21-22; Titus 3:12-13.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Philippians 1:3-7; Romans 15:22-29.

<sup>14</sup> Colossians 1:3-6; Ephesians 1:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12.

<sup>15</sup> Acts 11:29-30; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.

<sup>16</sup> Colossians 4:7-17; Stumbo 2020, 205.

## February Memory Verse:

### PRIMARY

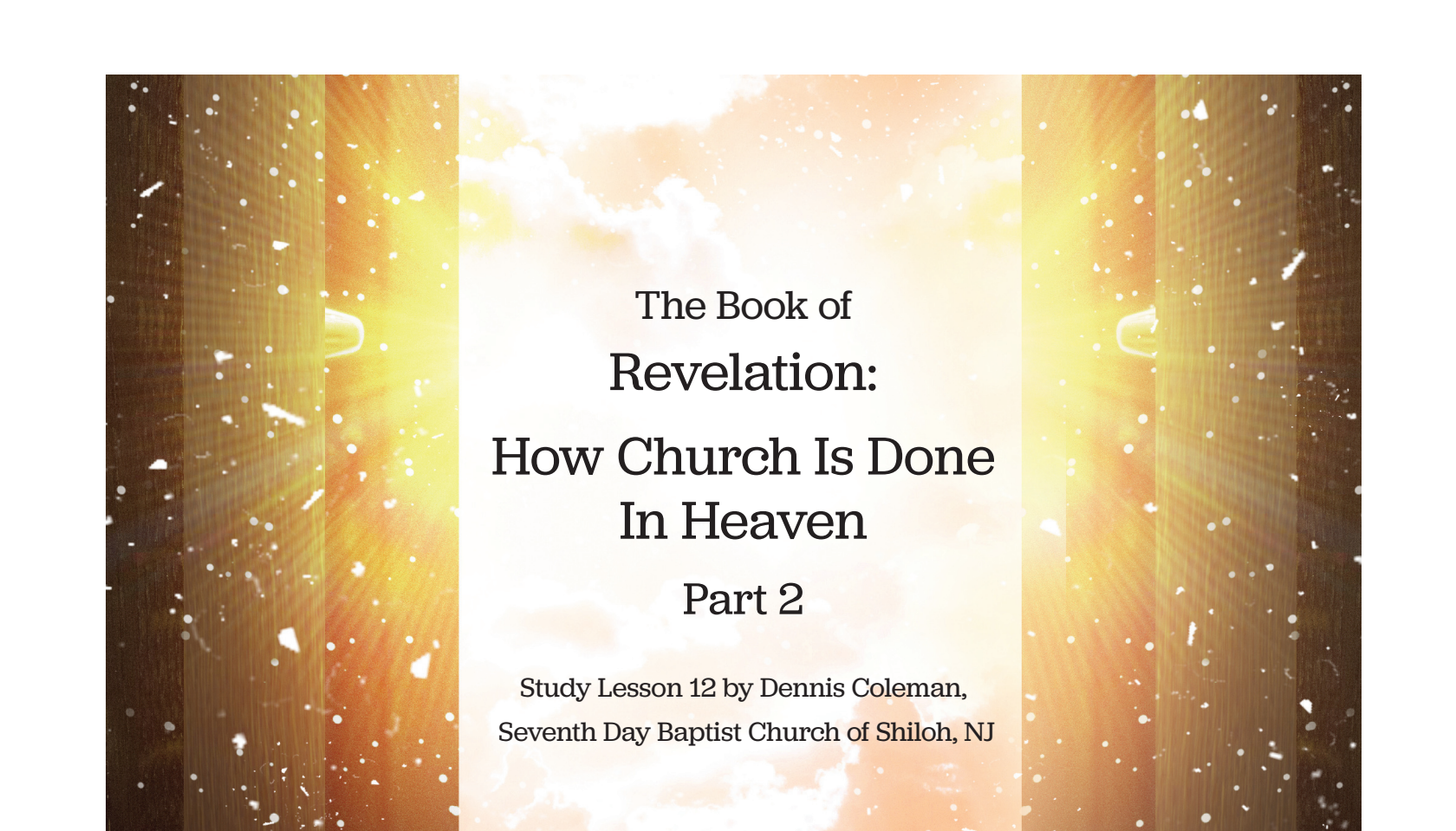
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits...

—Psalm 103: 2

### JUNIOR/YOUTH/ADULT

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.

—Psalm 103: 2-3



# The Book of Revelation: How Church Is Done In Heaven Part 2

Study Lesson 12 by Dennis Coleman,  
Seventh Day Baptist Church of Shiloh, NJ

Last month we were blessed to be able to see through John's eyes as he answered a personal invitation to stand in the spirit before the throne of God. There, he saw God sitting on His throne, a sight which John describes for us as best he can within the limitations of human language. Now the real fun begins as we, through John's eyes, get to observe a worship service in Heaven. But before we see how church is done in Heaven, I want to take two detours. Our first detour will be to take time in prayer. Our second will take us to the book of Matthew where I want to look at a time when the disciples worshiped God here on earth.

### **Prayer time (John 14:15-18)**

By grace each believer is able to receive the Holy Spirit who teaches us all things. Praise God that we are not left as orphans. Our Lord will return for us and our Father has given us another Helper. The world cannot receive this Helper. The world cannot see Him nor do they know Him. Thank You, Father, that this Helper is with us and dwells in us. Join me in praying for our Helper to open our understanding as we study these verses which He inspired.

### **Matthew 14:22-33**

Our detour takes us into a boat where we are struggling alongside Jesus' disciples, fighting against a strong wind which is pushing us in the wrong direction. It is the fourth watch of the night, which puts us some time between 3AM and 6AM. Being dressed to fit in with the times, we no longer have our cell phones nor do we have our fitness trackers, and so none of us are certain about the time. All that we know is that it is dark and it has been a long night.

That early in the morning the last thing we expect to see is a person walking on the water, appearing out of the darkness. Like the others in the boat, our first thought is that this must be a ghost. (Be honest. Even knowing the scripture you would be frightened to see what they saw out on the dark horizon.)



Fortunately Jesus seems to have a loud voice and we are able to hear Him over the noise of the waves as He identifies Himself, encouraging us to not be afraid.

Next thing we know, Peter joins Jesus out on the water. Then, Peter is under water. Thank God (both literally and figuratively) for pulling Peter back up. And as the two of them enter the boat, the wind ceases and all is calm. What would you do next? Would you go on about your business or would you join in worship? What do you do normally when Jesus calms the storms of your life?

The disciples responded by worshiping Jesus. I suspect there were three main reasons (among many) for this response at this time. First, there is the fact that Jesus' true nature was revealed in Him doing something only God can do: calming the storm. Our ancestors looked to higher powers to bring order to disorder and to save them when circumstances were too tough to handle. Someone to whom even the wind and the rains must answer was considered to be either close to the gods or a god in himself. Calming the storm was yet another confirmation that Jesus is the Son of God and seeing this fact revealed, they worshiped.

I suspect they also worshiped because of how His power was revealed—in His ability to walk on water and in how He could confer this power upon Peter so that he too could walk on water. Jesus' power was further revealed in the fact that He was able to pull Peter out of the water when Peter fell in. Think for a moment how difficult this would have been. What did Jesus use for leverage? To pull a fully dressed person up out of water you need to be standing on solid ground with the strength to lift both the weight of the person and the weight of his now soaking clothes. Jesus, with only the surface of the waves under His feet, was able to pull Peter up without sinking Himself. That in and of itself was an impressive feat of strength.

So it is that while we are processing all that we have just seen, we are suddenly face to face with Jesus, Who is now in the boat with us. We are in the presence of the Lord and He has just demonstrated that He is no ordinary man. How do we respond? We worship and I believe that what the disciples demonstrated that day on that boat is a very simple fact. True worship comes

as a response to God. It takes many forms but always begins as a response to God.

#### **Revelation 4:6-8**

In Revelation 4, we see another group responding to the nature of God with worship. (We'll talk about the nature of these four beings in a later article.) The Benson Commentary says that there are two words which are translated into the word "Holy." The one used here gives the idea that all that God is and all that He does is separated both from that which is impure and from that which is created. Holy is used here to point towards the fact that the true nature of God is incomprehensible in how He is excellent and above all, shining in glory over all that He has created. In saying "Holy" three times they say something similar to what we see the seraphim saying in Isaiah's vision (Isaiah 6:1-3). The four creatures here in Revelation are letting us know that our Father is Holy as they recognize God as Lord and as the Almighty, who is eternal and everlasting. These beings worship God day and night, recognizing that He is worthy of complete devotion.

I personally believe that worship in Heaven is not forced. I believe it comes instead from adoration of God and out of a response to His nature. Likewise, it should be the same for us here on earth. I believe we should look at His true nature and we should want to give glory to God. In our hearts we should see the beauty and wonder of Who God is and what He does. We should want to give honor to God and we should want to give thanks to God. These are things we should do in response to Who He is and because we want to do them, not because we are forced to do so or because it is expected of Christians. It is the difference between worship that comes from feeling like we have to do it versus worship that flows from a heart that loves God and is driven by that love to worship Him.

You are on a journey. During this journey you have the opportunity to see God reveal His true nature. The world will try to convince you that you are seeing something different, that everything is some cosmic coincidence. As you see God, you will learn to respond in love and in spirit and in truth. And when you get to Heaven your love will drive your worship just as I believe love drives the four creatures to worship God. SR



SDB Missionary Society

Andy Samuels

Chief Executive Director

## COLOMBIA – NEW SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS



*Our Mission Team along with Pastors Orlando and Patricia Pertuz Gil*

Our team (Danny Lee, the Missionary Society President; Douglas Marianno from Brazil; and me) arrived in Barranquilla, Colombia, immediately after a very encouraging visit to Ecuador. There was more encouragement waiting for us in Colombia. There are two SDB Churches in Colombia, located in Barranquilla and neighboring Malambo, both pastored by Pastor Orlando Pertuz Gil. Pastor Orlando is a former Baptist pastor, who became convicted of the truth of the Sabbath through his own personal reading and study of the Bible. He left his former Baptist denomination, started a church in his home, and then was able to start another church in an adjoining town. Through searching on the internet after becoming Sabbathkeepers, they became aware of Seventh Day Baptists in Chile, communicated with them, and began receiving mentorship and guidance from our Chilean leaders. The commitment of the Colombians to become Seventh Day Baptists took place in 2020, less than two years ago.

So, they are fresh in their new-found faith, enthusiastic of their new understanding of the Sabbath, and eager to learn more that will help them to grow in their walk with the Lord. That was the attitude and mood we encountered from the scores of Colombian believers we interacted with for the better part of one week.

The original church founded by Pastor Orlando, who is also a high school physical education teacher, began in his home in the town of Malambo, where he, his dynamic wife Patricia, and their five children reside. To accommodate the church, they remodeled their home, adjusted their living arrangements, and welcomed the holding of meetings several times per week. The spiritual nurturing of the growing congregation needed to be facilitated, and, without much in terms of material resources, they rallied to the cause and sacrificed as needed. Pastor Orlando and his wife, Patricia, led by example, and have been working together very effectively as a ministry and leadership team to shepherd the church.

On our visit, during the daytime, we engaged in teaching Seventh Day Baptist history and Sabbath theology and had opportunity to respond to questions presented by the congregation. In the evenings, we shared in worship

services where we took turns preaching the Word of God, sharing the Gospel, and giving people opportunities to surrender to Jesus Christ. The people were very responsive, and there was also clear evidences of healing and deliverance taking place as the Holy Spirit moved powerfully through the congregation each night. The services were enhanced by inspiring and engaging times of worship, usually led by Pastor Patricia. The Spanish speaking skills of Douglas, our Brazilian team member, were well utilized as he shared in speech and song, accompanied by his guitar or clarinet.

Pastor Orlando and his people are strong believers in prayer, and they have seen the Lord answer many prayers as they pray for their community. We spent one afternoon walking through the neighborhood, entering into people's homes and praying for them. We visited the second church in Barranquilla to see its location, but did not engage in any services there. That entire congregation had been invited to the main church to spend the few days with us in worship, teaching, fellowship, and ministry. The environment was like a mini-conference and the church sanctuary served as sleeping quarters for those from the Barranquilla Church, who had traveled from a distance.

It was encouraging to see the people being joyful about their faith, to see their enthusiasm in worship, to see their hope in our eternal God, and to see their love for each other.

There is the need for further extension and renovation of their worship facility, as the congregation has grown. We pray that the resources will be provided for those building improvements to be accomplished. There is also the need for teaching materials in Spanish as they continue to be disciplined in their faith. SR



*Our Mission Team and some of the congregation at the Malambo Church*



*Pastor Patricia leading worship*



*The motorcycle was one of our modes of transportation in Colombia*



*The congregation at worship in Malambo*



*Pastor Orlando and members from Barranquilla wearing SDB polo shirts*

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How Great Is Our God!