

Conference Crier

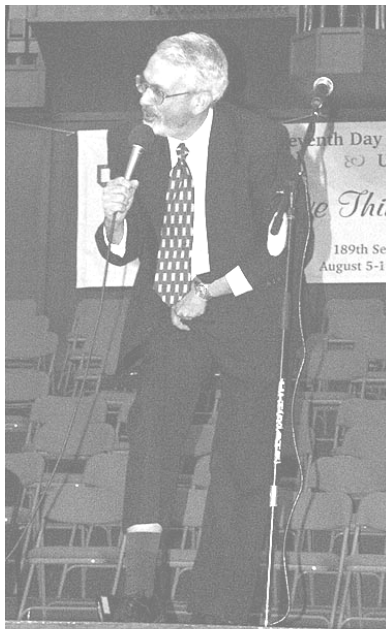
Thursday, August 9, 2001 ** Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas

Covenant... An Offer You Shouldn't Refuse!

By Kerith Camenga

Amazing! Stupendous! An offer you can refuse, but should you? We can look at offers and decide what we can accept or not accept from them or we can completely "buy" into what is being offered because we trust the one who is offering it.

It is always wise to know the character of one who is offering the "deal" we're looking to accept. As Pastor John so clearly illustrated with the stories and accounts of a car salesman who would only accept a reasonable offer on a vehicle (and the buyer did not get to define reasonable the seller did) and the clothing retailer who was not so interested in the fit of the suit, but rather making a buck. These were not exactly stellar examples of trustworthy individuals.



Pastor John Camenga: Do we fit the suit, or does the suit fit us?

But... do we see God in this frame as well? It is a good question. Is God selling us "a bill of goods" or is He offering His best because we lack so

much and depend on His goodness and must be willing to trust that He knows how to "fit" everything together? Well, I think we all know the answer, but are we willing to act upon our knowledge? First, let's review what we have been offered and then let's decide... I mean really decide.

God's covenant to us includes the following, but not necessarily limited to;

1. He offers us His comfort in trade for the anxiety of our life.
2. He offers us His strength in trade for our weakness.
3. He offers us His help in trade for our helplessness.
4. He offers us His righteousness for our rags.

(References: Is. 40:28-31, Is. 64:6, Is. 41:9-13, and Ps. 25:14-15)

Historical Society Reports New Brazil Project

Wednesday morning's Historical Society program featured an overview of their new Brazil History Project. Janet Thorngate reviewed her visit to Brazil Seventh Day Baptists last January and February, showing pictures of her activities there and what she had learned about their history.

After her visit our Historical Society entered into a cooperative project with the Brazil Seventh Day Baptist Conference to publish a history of their Conference (in Portuguese and in English) and to translate our history into Portuguese. The research, writing and publishing of the

Brazil SDB history will be done in Brazil with Janet editing the English version which they hope to have available before the World Federation sessions there in January 2003. The translation of Don Sanford's *A Choosing People: A History of Seventh Day Baptists* and its

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Brazil Project Described

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publication will be done in Brazil. The two-year project will cost \$14,000 with our Historical Society paying half (\$7,000) for the translating and printing.

During the three weeks that Janet was in Brazil, traveling with her husband Rev. Dale Thorngate on behalf of the SDB World Federation, she taught SDB history to about 80 pastors and church leaders during their conference. They also visited 15 of the 80 churches in the Conference, learning a lot about their history. The Conference began in 1913 when six

Seventh-day Adventist leaders left their Conference and formed an independent Sabbath-keeping conference. In 1950 they learned about Seventh Day Baptists through correspondence with Seventh Day Baptists in Germany. Discovering that their beliefs were the same, they reorganized and changed their name to Igreja Batista do Setimo Dia (Seventh Day Baptist Church). They joined the SDB World Federation when it was organized in 1965 and have sent delegates to all their meetings.

Janet reported lots of interest in SDB history among

the Brazilians, especially the young people. They want to establish their identity within their own country as part of the larger body of Christ in the world and want to know better the rich heritage that they share with all other Seventh Day Baptists. Their churches are growing and they are planting new ones. They want the history books to help their own people and their new contacts to better understand who they are and where they came from.

The “C” Word is Not a “Four Letter” Word.

By Laurie Luchowski

Kirk Looper presented an enlightening workshop on local missions. He stated that the biggest hurdle in developing an outreach, whether it is establishing a new church or reaching out for church growth, is the “C” word. Commitment is the greatest ingredient in starting evangelism projects and it is the biggest hurdle in finding those

who are willing to commit to reaching out.

Time is also another factor. Kirk Looper boldly stated that the Seventh Day Baptist Denomination is “not looking for big ideas that need to be done right now in starting churches.” Big events will not give you an instant church. This could also apply in church growth. Fast outreach programs are not always the best solution.

Evangelism projects require patience and a strong foundation of committed believers. These believers should know and use nurturing techniques. These techniques may be taught in Bible studies.

Mr. Looper went into more detail and covered much more than what is mentioned in this article. This workshop gave a small taste of what the Church Planter’s School has to offer.

Missions Short-Term Missions Proposal Discussed

Kirk Looper, Missionary Society executive, met with 22 interested delegates looking for information about missions on a personal or church level.

The Short-Term Missions Proposal has taken several years to develop and was fine-tuned to be self-explanatory.

This concept was developed with overseas missions in mind

but can be easily adapted to a national effort.

Many letters were sent to international conferences and churches but there are some countries that the Missionary Society is not prepared to send a short-term missionary into.

Although no foreign countries have responded, there is hope that this short-term program will fit into their goals.

We were encouraged to ask questions specific to our needs because of the flexibility of this program. Two individual answers were: “yes, the 3-week training can be done in modules at home” and “of course, we would gladly set up an account for individuals that would like to start saving for their short-term project of the future.”