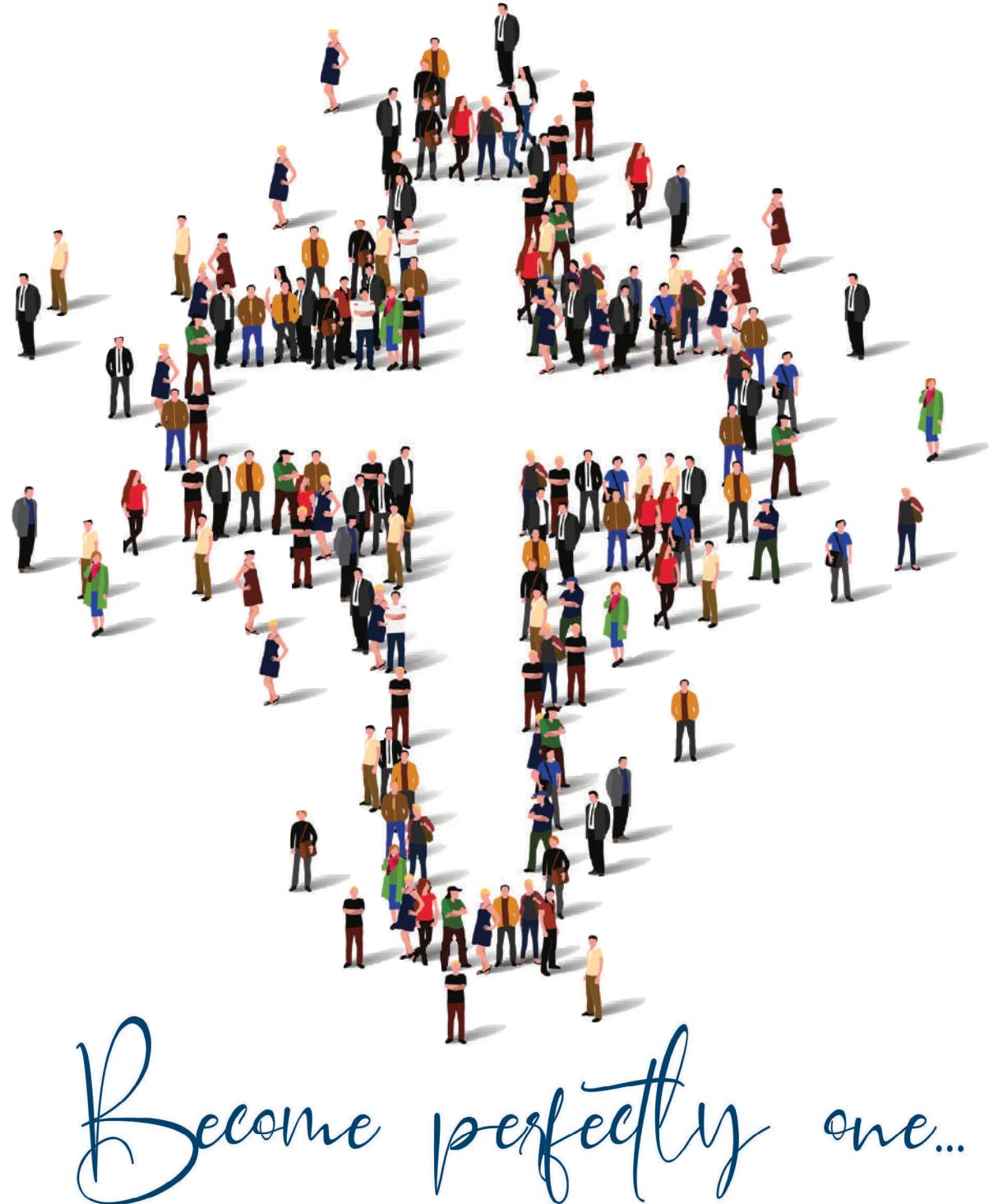


Sabbath Recorder



Become perfectly one...

Seventh Day Baptist World Federation Sessions
held in Malawi

A Seventh Day Baptist Publication

February 2024



Aperfeiçoados na unidade

Convertirse en uno perfecto

Kuwa mmoja kikamilifu

Word volmaakt één

Di ḥokan ni pipe

Yε biako kora

Word perfek een

Maging ganap na isa

Devenez parfaitement un

Fuuka omu mu butuukirivu

Stań się doskonale jednością

Khalani m'modzi mwangwiro

Kutemwa pantu wabula wakunwa

Become perfectly one...

Sabbath Recorder

A monthly journey into the mind and heart.

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Editor
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WHO ARE SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS?

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

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

THE SEVENTH DAY

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

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Editor's Note: "Thank you!" to Guest Editor General Secretary Douglas Machado for this special edition *Sabbath Recorder* about the World Federation.

Threats to the SDB World Federation Sessions: How We Got to Malawi!

By Andrew Samuels
Assistant General Secretary

When the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation assembled in Brazil in 2017, it received an invitation from the SDB General Conference of the USA and Canada to meet in North America for the next sessions in 2022. The gathering voted to accept the invitation, and all was well. Three years later, in 2020, the entire world was engulfed in a pandemic brought on by the dreaded coronavirus called COVID-19. International travel came to a halt, churches were closed, gatherings in large crowds were banned, hundreds of thousands of people died, and many wondered if the world would ever recover from such a catastrophe. Would things return to normal?

When 2021 was ushered in, with the pandemic still very much a part of the world's reality, the World Federation Executive Committee needed to make some decisions pertaining to the scheduled sessions for 2022 in North America. The annual North American SDB Conference Week gathering was canceled in the summer of 2020, and also in the summer of 2021. Eventually, it was also canceled for the summer of 2022. It meant that the World Federation gathering would also not take place in 2022. So, the Executive Committee decided to postpone the sessions for one year, and work towards planning for it to happen in 2023.

Another factor which had to be considered was the country in which the sessions would be held. During the pandemic, the closure of Embassies and Consulates around the world was another reality, and many of them were slowly reopening and attending to only emergency cases. That scenario created a major backlog for visa applications, and the United States Department of State developed a website which provided information on the estimated waiting time for a visitor's visa interview after submitting an application and paying the required fee. When we consulted that website and searched for each World Federation country to see how long it would take our delegates to wait for a visa interview appointment, most of them were indicating that it would take 6 to 12 months just to get an appointment. The World Federation Executive Committee then realized that the United States was no longer a feasible country in which to hold the sessions, if they were to happen in 2023.

Another big decision had to be made: shift the host country from the United States of America to a different country. But, which one? That is when our eyes turned to the continent of Africa. There were eight African

member conferences of the World Federation, and although some of them might not have been in the position to assemble a Host Committee, there was the feeling that there were those African Conferences that could. The World Federation Sessions had never been held in Africa. This would be historic.

After some deliberation, the evaluating of strengths, the availability of personnel, and other relevant factors, Malawi was approached and asked if they felt that their conference had the infrastructure and ability to take on such a task. In fairly quick time, they responded in the affirmative, and the serious planning began full speed ahead. The visa process would be significantly less demanding, and many of the citizens of our member conferences would not even need a visa for a short stay.

About two months into the planning, we were hit with the news that there was a major outbreak of cholera in Malawi. First, COVID was the hurdle; now it is cholera. Doubt crept into the hearts and minds of some of our executive members, recognizing that we were now facing another very real and credible threat to the sessions. By faith and due diligence, we managed all pertinent information, navigated the cholera threat, and the good Lord blessed us with favor, so that we were able to execute a successful World Federation gathering in September, 2023. Much credit goes to the Malawi Host Committee, led by Dr. Alfred Chanza and Dr. Bright Molande, who did an outstanding job negotiating their own hurdles to fulfill a mammoth task, coming out of the COVID era and the threat of cholera. All the glory goes to God, who once again demonstrated that with Him nothing is impossible. SR



Host Committee during Pastor Andy's visit in May 2023

Hosting the World Federation Sessions in Malawi

By Dr. Bright Molande
Host Committee Chairperson



Warm welcome at the airport

Time has a way of writing history. This is what happened in Malawi.

Indeed, there are times when history is never written by the hands of men. And God always writes His own history on the tablets of time, as He did His law on stone with His own finger.

The stewards who decided the idea of coming to Malawi and the local servants who hosted the 2023 World Federation Conference were all tools in the hands of time, tools in the hands of God.

If hosting this Conference was a privilege, then it was a privilege we never deserved. Time was short and the post-COVID effects were complex. It all looked impossible until it was done.

As a hosting committee, we saw our work in the mirror of those who came to attend, in the impressions of those who gave us feedback. One of them was the outgoing General Secretary Pastor Andy Samuels.

It was “impressive,” “outstanding,” “spiritually uplifting,” and the Sabbath of the 16th of September was “particularly memorable,” we were told.

On that Sabbath morning, we came from all over the world to pray together and launch the Conference. Malawians had traveled from all over the country to be part of this day, a day that may come once in a lifetime for most of them.

And we made a proud spectacle of it. On that Sabbath morning, in a memorably huge crowd, we marched through the City of Blantyre singing our hymns loudly above the brass band that led the march to the hall of prayers.

We prayed together. Together, we remembered the only African who co-founded the World Federation 59 years ago. But Pastor Otrain Manani was not here with us physically, because age and illness were now failing him. Yet, he had lived to see the first coming of the World Federation to Africa.

Together, we remembered the first American missionary who established the Central African Conference. But Pastor David Pearson and his wife Betty did not live to see this day because age and death had taken them from us. Yet, their daughters, Deborah and Joanna, had come from America to stand in for their father and mother.

After prayers, delegates marched back into the hall hoisting their countries' flags high above the marching songs. It was a dramatic spectacle of moving speeches, and the Federation President Luciano Barreto Nogueira De Moura duly declared the Conference open.

Later, the incoming General Secretary Douglas Machado spoke of a “smooth execution of the event” which “made a significant impact.”

Continued on next page...



Sabbath choir at the Malawian conference



March through the City of Blantyre



Sabbath program at the Malawian conference



Delegates at the Malawian conference Sabbath

Continued from previous page...

The Conference was very historical in every way you think of it. This was the first coming to Africa since the birth of the World Federation. This was after the SDB Church had existed in Africa for 124 years. This was the first global gathering in Africa after nearly 400 years of the existence of Seventh Day Baptists in the world.

Many people in Malawi had heard of the World Federation. But it never meant much regarding what that Federation had to do with us. Hosting the Conference brought in us a deeper sense of belonging to something bigger, something beyond us. Those who saw us marching in our numbers and praying in our unity now know that the SDB Church in Malawi is bigger than they may have thought. Those who saw us include those who are not us.

A World Federation Conference of any year is more than an administration of sessions and making decisions. It is a way of deepening the church we planted and making it more visible wherever we go. It is a way of evangelization in our modern times, almost following footprints of the old missionaries

Personally, it evoked childhood memories that inspired in me a higher idea of belonging. I was a little boy when Pastor David Pearson came to my village and played his trumpet while his wife played the accordion to the tune of our hymns. It all left this feeling that my church comes from somewhere far away—that I belong to something bigger. This is what happens when we go where we are least expected.

For most Malawians, the Conference was the word made flesh. It was the first time seeing people from every part of the world physically coming together as a people of “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” This is the unity of our calling. That message was unspoken but loud, simple but powerful. Whatever nationality we come from, whether we are black or white—we are the Seventh Day Baptists. Our unity lies in “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

It was a time to “become perfectly one” as a global community of one faith. It was a time to become one with the Lord. In spirit, in flesh and blood, we came to gather around the Cross of Jesus Christ in one place.

That was the power of the theme of the Conference, “Become perfectly one” (John 17:23). Gathering in Malawi was a historical symbol of our gathering at the Cross, our becoming one in Christ and with Christ.

It was a gathering that left us looking forward: shall we gather in Africa again or some other part of the world with another Conference where we least expect to go?

It was a coming together that reminds us of one question. Having met and perfectly gathered in our lifetime, “Shall we gather at the river?” in heaven? Shall we “Gather with the saints at the river, That flows by the throne of God?” It is a prayerful hymn that opens questions of our unfinished work. It is a prayerful hymn that I close with. SR

Become perfectly one...

The theme of the World Federation Sessions, "Become Perfectly One," was centered on our union with Christ. This union with Christ is the condition and foundation for eternal life, salvation, and the unity of the Church. This union takes place in two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. The personal and individual dimension with Christ is the vertical dimension, and our communion with our brothers and sisters is the horizontal dimension. To love God above all things and with all our strength, understanding and heart necessarily implies being able to love our neighbor and our brothers and sisters as ourselves.

Throughout the sessions of the World Federation, at every moment, we experienced this union with Christ and with our brothers and sisters. Whether engaged in business discussions, participating in moments of praise, attending morning prayers, or sharing meals, everything was led by the Holy Spirit. We exercised fellowship and worship, and always sought understanding to better serve the Kingdom of God.

On a personal note, I can attempt to convey the spiritual impact I encountered in times of praise, worship, and preaching the Word. It was an experience of, many times, not understanding the message of praise, which was often in the Chichewa language, but feeling in my heart the consolation and strengthening of my faith. In the same sense, every interaction, every conversation, was edifying. The moments of relaxation at mealtimes were opportunities to get to know the brethren better and learn a lot from their experiences. Adoring and experiencing God's presence in every moment of that encounter was a constant.

What about the visit to Makapwa? It was an indescribable feeling. The testimonials of children, adolescents and teachers left deep marks. Seeing a health center unit established in that place and being able to pray for young mothers and their babies made me see God's hand working through all who work in that place.

It was a privilege to know the mission and try to understand the size of the love and dedication to the service of the Kingdom, on the part of the family of missionaries who helped to build that place, namely the Pearsons. And to strengthen this testimony, the Pearson sisters, Debbie and Joanna, were with us, daughters of missionaries

By Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura
President



David and Bettie Pearson, who lived part of their childhood and adolescence in Makapwa. It was a case of union with Christ lived fully in all dimensions. When the topic came to me, in a Bible reading, I didn't have the dimension of understanding of what I would live in Malawi.

Much more than meditating on the Word and seeking to understand what God requires of us, this meeting threw all of us into living in the presence of God, in communion with our brothers and sisters. This is what we must seek in the coming years until the next sessions of the World Federation, under the theme, "A Life Before God": *Coram Deo!* SR



World Federation Visits Makapwa Mission Station

By Nick Kersten
Vice President from North America

As part of the meetings of the World Federation in Malawi, attendees had the opportunity to visit the Makapwa Mission Station, which was established in the early 1950s by an SDB missionary from New Zealand named Ronald Barrar. The station served as the headquarters for the Central Africa Conference into the 1970s, when the headquarters was moved to Blantyre. The station includes the SDB meeting house, a health center, and a primary and a secondary school, in addition to several other supporting buildings, including residences. It was also the home for many years of the SDB Bible College in Malawi.

The visitors from World Federation were treated to a tour of the entire station and were warmly welcomed at all the major installations of the station, including by the pastor and leaders of the Makapwa church (by a wonderful choir!), the teachers and students at both schools (more music!), and the administrators, doctors, nurses, and support staff at the health center. The faith and dedication of SDBs in Makapwa was clear throughout the visit, though those living at the mission still face many challenges.

Some of those challenges are made worse by declining support for the mission over the past two decades. The schools are sorely in need of refurbishment and expansion, and the secondary school does not have electricity and needs a transformer to be installed to increase student study times and to increase the curriculum in science and technology. The medical facility at Makapwa has been downgraded from a hospital to a health center by the Malawian government because of declining facilities. All of this is in the face of recent natural disasters in the form of typhoons that caused additional damage.

Despite these challenges, the people of Makapwa station continue to live faithfully, though they are sorely in need of partners in ministry to support the necessary maintenance, repairs, and expansions of their facility so that they can continue their ministry into the next generation. Knitting together global partners to achieve Kingdom outcomes was an unofficial theme of the World Federation meetings more generally, and so the visit to Makapwa was appropriate, inspiring, and challenging in equal measure. We ask that you join in the work of SDBs worldwide so that missions like those in Malawi at Makapwa can continue their good work into the next generation.

For more detailed information, a collection of pictures, and to access the document highlighting the needs of the health center in Makapwa, we invite you to visit our website.

Simply go to SDBWF.org/news or scan the QR Code on the right. We believe that this additional content will offer a deeper understanding and provide ways for you to also make a positive impact in this community. If you are interested in offering specific assistance, please read page 20 (back cover).^[SR]



Secondary School



Primary School



Makapwa Primary



Makapwa Church Visit



Health Center



Doctor explaining their needs in the Makapwa Health Center

A Call to Selfless Giving



Bernardo Damiaõ (Secretary) and Pastor Antonio Citora (President) receiving the donation for the motorbike



Image from the video the Mozambican brethren sent thanking the WF conferences for their contribution

By Douglas de Senne Machado
General Secretary

In the spirit of unity and compassion we witnessed a remarkable display of generosity and solidarity among the global Seventh Day Baptist community.

During the conference reports, Mozambique, a fraternal conference, shared a prayer concern that echoed the sentiments of many—a need for bicycles and motorcycles to enhance their ministry efforts. Responding to this heartfelt plea, Pastor Garfield Miller from the USA took the initiative to launch a campaign aimed at raising funds to purchase a much-needed motorcycle for Mozambique.

As the sessions progressed, the goal wasn't reached, prompting a collective effort on the last day. An offering was raised, again led by Pastor Garfield, and delegates from all conferences rallied together to contribute. In that moment, echoes of the Apostle Paul's words resounded: "In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity..." (read 2 Corinthians 8:1-6).

The generosity exhibited during this campaign mirrored the sacrificial spirit of those first century churches. Delegates gave not only as much as they were able to give, but, remarkably, beyond their means. Their eagerness to participate in this service to the Lord was a testament to the transformative power of unity and selfless giving.

This passage resonates as a timeless reminder of the beauty that emerges when communities come together in the spirit of generosity. The Macedonian churches, facing

severe trials, became a beacon of inspiration through their overflowing joy and rich generosity. Likewise, the global Seventh Day Baptist community, drawn together by a shared commitment to service, demonstrated a profound sense of unity during the SDBWF sessions.

In the middle of this commendable collective generosity, the Malawian brethren stood out, leaving a lasting impression on me. A visit to Makapwa a couple of days earlier allowed firsthand insight into the pressing needs of the local church, primary and secondary schools, and the health center. Witnessing their commitment and response to the call for support was very inspiring.

This story serves as a compelling reminder of the spirit of unity and generosity that can flourish within the Seventh Day Baptist community. Beyond the borders of our own congregations, there exists a broader mission. Let this narrative inspire us to be generous not only with our resources but also with our time, talents, and prayers. In a world that often emphasizes individual pursuits, may it spark a movement within our churches, fostering a culture of giving that reaches far beyond our immediate circles. As we join hands in this collective effort, we embody the essence of the Macedonian churches, demonstrating that, even in our limitations, we can make a profound impact through rich generosity.

In closing, let us consider: In what ways can you personally and as a church demonstrate generosity? **SR**



United States: Debbie Hargett, Nick Kersten, Andy Samuels, Joanna Lovelace; Jeffrey Hargett, Michael Spearl, Laura Mirabal, Garfield Miller



Brazil: Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura, Douglas Machado, Amaury Moitinho



Guyana: Abel Caeser, Elnora Andries, Akeel Shepherd



Jamaica: Marcia Nembhard, Kevin Carter, Claudia Ferguson



Mozambique: Bernardo Damiao, Antonio Citora



Burundi: Benoit Nzokizwa



England: Carlene Wynter



Ecuador: Fabian Loachamin Parreno



2023 SDB World F

BAPTISTS GLOBE



Malawi (CAC): Canaan Phiri, Fred Maduka, Enos Ganunga, Muthethiwa Magalasi, Royal Mkandawire, Enid Mzumara, Kingsley Gauti, Bright Molande, Malumbo Mkandawire, Elias Ngalande, Aniziah Laita, Grace Masamba, Napier Banda, Nairet Molande, Paul Katete, Moses Banda, Charles Luwanda, Smart Nkhoma, Joice Mangame, Lekeni Nantikwa



Malawi Shiloh Mission: Booker Champhiza, Alexander Masujeno, and Frackson Kaziputa

World Federation in Malawi



Kenya: Benard Nyakebere Mose



New Zealand:
Ian Ingoe



Rwanda: Jean de Dieu Karimutumye



Uganda: Victoria Nakalanzi-Nsubuga



Zambia: Mathew Mweleka, Jenipher Sakeni, Duba Zimba, Benson Tembo, Christina Mutembo, Charity Mukumbo, Pascal Mutembo



Abel Caeser: VP Caribbean; Douglas Machado: GS; Canaan Phiri: VP Africa; Luciano B. N. Moura: President; Nick Kersten: VP N America; Andy Samuels: Assistant GS; Carlene Wynter: VP Europe; Marcia Nemhard: Recording Secretary; Debbie Hargett: Treasurer

Fraternal Conference Experience at the 2023 Sessions in Malawi: Lessons Learned and Applicable Insights

By Dr. Fabian Loachamin Parreno
Ecuador Conference

When our Lord Jesus Christ prayed that all believers would be one body submitted under one head, encouraged in one spirit, through their union with Christ and the Father in Him, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, He mentioned “become perfectly one.” When we think about unity in any type of machine, or even the human body, accepting the term “perfect” becomes unreal; certainly not of this world.

This year, I was invited to attend the sessions of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation held on September 16-23, 2023, in Blantyre, Malawi, Africa, as a delegate. I was pleasantly surprised to encounter that, besides all the work we did in the business sessions, all delegates became a family outside of those meetings. From the first moment I met an SDB brother from another country, I received the customary hug, and within days I became close friends and confidants with brothers I just met a few days before.

There are a lot of lessons learned from other SDB conferences during those days in the sessions, from the warm smiles and cheerful dances of all Africans, to the big hugs of Latin Americans and Caribbean people, and of course, all the sincere love and promise of prayers from the North Americans and Europeans. We learned about the cultural diversity of every church, even within the same nation. All of us could also express our different or similar problems in our countries and churches. However, those words of Jesus Christ telling us to “become perfectly one” resonated every time I heard a story or learned about any aspect or problem of a church or conference, because they felt like my own.

I am certain that the Holy Spirit was there, teaching valuable lessons to all of us every single day about what it is to be one body in Christ.

I had the blessing of being the moderator for the worship service at the beginning of our final Sabbath together, and God guided me to ask for worship songs in all the languages represented there. Brothers and sisters, that was a lesson we all should learn: that no matter where you are, what language you speak, how you sing or dance to worship, we are all part of the same body, members of the family of Christ around the world, and God loves us. We finished that night singing in unison “How great is our God”—everyone in their respective language—and, dear brothers, we felt His presence.

Let us be resolute to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, praying that all believers will become more and more united in one purpose and one mind, starting with Seventh Day Baptists, but extending the love and peace to the whole Body of Christ around the globe. In this way, we will convince the world of the truth and excellence of our religion and find a sweeter communion with God and His saints. SR



No matter where you are,
what language you speak,
how you sing or dance to worship,
we are all part of the same body,
members of the family of
Christ around the world,
and God loves us.



What was most meaningful or memorable for you

in the 2023 World Federation Sessions?



“ World Federation 2023 has made an impression on me that will last a lifetime. Our opening and closing services have given me great hope for our denomination. I am humbled by the courage, dedication and progress made by the CAC, especially with the Mozambique and other regional conferences. I left the sessions burdened, but in a good way. I am recommitted, energised and determined to do my best in proclaiming the good news of God’s Kingdom.”

— Abel Caeser, Guyana



“ The Sessions united me with my other brothers and sisters in SDB. The care in Malawi was remarkable; from the time I arrived in Malawi to the time I left, I was warmly welcomed. It was a pleasure for me to represent the Uganda conference. One thing that I got to understand and learn further is that God is not segregative; He loves us all as His people. I got to draw closer to God and understand Him which gave me a motivation to continue spreading the Word as much as I can deliver it. I can’t thank to the fullest everyone who is behind the organization but am glad just to pray for God’s blessings.”

—Victoria Nakalanzi-Nsubuga, Uganda



“ The 2023 WF Sessions in Malawi was my first ever conference experience, and first time traveling to Malawi. I realized we have a big global family with lovely individuals, the fellowship was just great, short of words to explain the lasting joyful and spiritual experiences.”

—Peter Ashiley Tetteh, Ghana



“ This was an incredible experience! They were so hospitable that I felt at home. Furthermore, I was able to learn from them that I don’t need many resources to work for God. I can do my best even in times of scarcity. Finally, it is amazing to see them smile and sing to God, being grateful for what the Lord God has done for them, even when some needs are not met.”

—Amaury Moitinho, Brazil



“ The sharing of ministry experiences, particularly the visit to the mission sites in Malawi, being able to meet in one space to plan for the growth and development of our denomination, and to have Bible studies especially on missions and evangelism.”

—Carlene Wynter, England



“ Warm and joyful connections made with fellow SDBs from around the world touched my heart! I was especially impressed by the Christian love displayed by those who offered immediate help to meet a need for one of the conferences—money was collected for a motorcycle for the Mozambique conference. We rejoice in our LORD who gave His Son. He reigns over the whole world (see Psalm 9:7-11)! ”

—Joanna Lovelace, USA



“ The most memorable things are scripture topics about unity in Christ where we were called to be united in Christ. I was very excited to meet people from different places all over the world.”

—Jean De Dieu Karimutumye, Rwanda

Major Decisions

An Overview of Major Decisions

By Douglas de Senne Machado
General Secretary

As I sit down to write about the momentous events that unfolded during the last sessions, I am filled with a profound sense of awe and gratitude for the collective spirit of unity that permeated the discussions and decisions taken by the delegates. The sessions demonstrated the power of collaboration and a commitment to our shared beliefs. The sessions were structured with a keen focus on efficiency, dividing the business into several committees, each tasked with specific responsibilities. What struck me most was the interconnectedness of the recommendations emanating from these distinct committees. Despite the diversity of topics, it was evident that the committees were working in harmony towards a common goal—a testament to the unity we strive for as mentioned in other articles.

One of the major outcomes was the establishment of several committees geared towards advancing the mission of the Federation. It reflects the commitment of the Federation to foster international cooperation and promote mutual interests and fellowship.

Committees and Their Objectives:

Statement of Beliefs Review Committee:

The establishment of the Statement of Beliefs Review Committee signifies a crucial step in updating the foundational beliefs of the World Federation. With three decades having passed since the last comprehensive review of this nature, and considering the substantial growth of the Federation during this period, the approval for this review aligns seamlessly with our theme this year—focused on our unity in the faith.

Endowment Committee:

The Endowment Committee focuses on financial sustainability, aiming to secure resources for the long-term stability and growth of the Federation. This strategic approach ensures that the World Federation can continue its mission effectively.

Youth Engagement:

Recognizing the importance of involving the younger generation, the Youth Engagement Committee aims to create meaningful opportunities to exchange ideas, meetings, fellowship, and integration between the youth from the SDB conferences around the world. This initiative seeks to cultivate a sense of belonging and active participation among the youth.

Empowering Conferences for Sustainable Growth (EmpowerCon) Committee:

EmpowerCon concentrates on training and equipping conferences with the tools and support necessary for sustainable growth. This forward-looking committee will seek to empower local conferences, ensuring they thrive and contribute meaningfully to the broader Seventh Day Baptist community and beyond.

Evangelism & Discipleship:

This committee underscores the commitment to spreading the Gospel globally. The committee will plan, spearhead, and facilitate a set of focused, tangible and deliberate strategies for the SDBWF, which member Conferences would be encouraged to adopt, so as to profoundly evangelize communities and disciple many new followers of Christ.

Historical Preservation:

The purpose of this committee is to collect, preserve, and promote the history of the Seventh Day Baptist denomination on a global scale. It will seek to encourage member Conferences to preserve and write their own histories and see to the preservation of those written histories. It will collaborate with member conferences to encourage their participation and contribution to the historical preservation efforts. Working closely with member conferences to educate and inform them about the importance of keeping their own records and preserving their local history will also be a part of this committee's responsibilities.

Major Decisions

Communication and Marketing:

This committee will play a pivotal role in enhancing the visibility and outreach of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation. As we navigate an era of rapid information exchange, this committee is poised to leverage various platforms, enhance our communication strategies, and strengthen our online presence to fortify connections and foster a sense of unity among Seventh Day Baptists globally. This is an exciting opportunity to share our stories, achievements, and the essence of Seventh Day Baptist identity with a broader audience.

In line with the commitment to effective communication, the World Federation invites volunteers to contribute to the newly formed Communication and Marketing Committee. If you are interested in playing a role in this area, you can apply by visiting this link sdbwf.org/volunteer or the QR code.



New Member Conferences and Future Sessions:

During these sessions, the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation welcomed new member conferences from Ghana, Ecuador, and Chile. Officers were tasked with visiting less active member groups to strengthen connections and foster engagement.

Two conferences, Guyana and the British conference, expressed interest in hosting the next World Federation Sessions. We look forward to meeting again in 2028 in one of these countries, with the decision to be announced in the near future.

A New Executive Committee:

A new Executive Committee was elected to steer the course of the SDBWF. The diverse leadership includes:

Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura
(Brazil) as President

Douglas Machado (Brazil) as General Secretary
Andrew Samuels (USA) as Assistant General Secretary
Marcia Nembhard (Jamaica) as Recording Secretary
Debbie Hargett (USA) as Treasurer
Nick Kersten (USA) as Vice President for North America
Abel Caesar (Guyana) as Vice President for the Caribbean
Amaury Moitinho (Brazil) as Vice President for South America
Canaan Phiri (Malawi) as Vice President for Africa
Carlene Wynter (England) as Vice President for Europe.

The Vice Presidents for Asia and Australasia are yet to be appointed by the Executive Committee.

Looking Ahead and Call to Action:

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation in 2024, we invite everyone to be an active part of this global community. Whether through prayer for the Executive Committee, supporting Seventh Day Baptists worldwide or volunteering time in the Communication & Marketing Committee, every contribution matters.

The future of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation is shaped by the collective efforts of its members. Let us unite in purpose and continue to build a vibrant and thriving global Seventh Day Baptist community for generations to come. SR



What it means to Africa for hosting the SDB World Federation



Pastor Quistin Chalwe
General Secretary,
Conference of SDB
Churches in Zambia

The SDB World Federation event shed light on God's work taking place within the African continent with many African conferences being initiated into the organization. This meant a lot for Africa as it showed that Africa, as a fresh ground for ministry, is expanding and that we are equal partners with other conferences across the globe, reaching people with the word of God. The Federation provided new connections, new networks and acquaintances necessary for all SDB conferences to foster the good news of Christ in unison to the world.

The present leadership of different conferences from other parts of the world had the opportunity to learn from each other through sharing of their ministry reports. The reports gave some ideas of what is happening in other African conferences as well as other regions of the world. From these reports, Africa learned to develop realistic future plans and action plans for each conference.

The Central Africa Conference (CAC) of Malawi hosted the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation sessions for the first time in its history, allowing Africa to celebrate the recognition of its potential to host world events, and the event left Africa feeling as an equal partner in the Gospel.

It also means that this is a wake-up call to show that there's a paradigm shift on mission perspectives. The African conferences should now wake up to educate, train, equip, and empower more of their own missionary teams—composed of five-fold gifted people ready to go on mission fields all over the world to teach, train, preach, evangelize, equip, and empower to fully understand the importance of collective missions and evangelism to fulfill "THE GREAT COMMISSION" as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.

It means that we now should have a transformation mindset based on Romans 12:1-4. Africa should now change the understanding of the work of the Kingdom with urgency to do it better than we have done before. That should give us an opportunity to look at our Vision, Core Values and do the SWOT analysis to come up with the changes we desire to have. Why do we exist? What does God want us to achieve before He comes back? Africa has a job to do. Its people have the greatest opportunity to witness to our non-believing people like Muslims, Bahai, Hindu and those from traditional religions.

Further, the hosting of the SDB World Federation Sessions in Malawi is the recognition that Africa is part of the World Church and SDBs, and other believers have been greatly encouraged. Africa is now open for evangelism, as fellow pastors from other continents have discovered the potential within Africa. It has helped Africa to build a network that can speak with one voice, and more leaders from Africa are now exposed to the World Federation and its functions.

Africa hosting the SDB World Federation through the CAC in Malawi demonstrates the unity of purpose as the SDB Family. It further gives more meaning to our saying that "WE ARE A FAMILY," and fulfills the true meaning of the SDB World Federation Sessions Theme, which said "BECOME PERFECTLY ONE." Glory to God!

The splendid display, the atmosphere, the spirit of oneness exhibited, the joy, the hospitality, the praise and worship, the teamwork, the work of organising committees and that of the CAC Leadership in Malawi, and the full participation of African delegates, speak volumes of how capable Africa is in organising and hosting world events.

Africa stands to believe that the SDB World Federation Sessions in Malawi opened to a new dawn of SDB family unity of purpose through communication, enhancement and evangelism among SDBs and beyond. Africa further believes that the spirit of oneness exhibited throughout the sessions in Malawi broke the cultural and language barriers that might have been a concern to some other friends in other regions of the world.

Therefore, Africa appreciates the spirit of the Lord that fell upon the SDB World Federation leadership at the time, to appoint Malawi CAC to host the sessions, for the first time in Africa. May all the glory be to our Almighty God! SR

Reflections

From An Observer

By Jeff Hargett

At the World Federation Meetings in September we met with representatives from all over the world, literally from A-Z (Australia to Zambia). This meeting of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation was historic due to the fact that it was the first time that the SDBWF meetings have been held in Africa, which allowed many more Africans to attend than usual. Holding the meetings in Malawi was appropriate as there are more Seventh Day Baptists in Malawi (approx. 20,000) than anywhere else in the world! While there, we were blessed to join with an estimated 1,500-2,000 Seventh Day Baptists for the Sabbath kickoff meeting, which was possibly one of the largest meetings of Seventh Day Baptists ever.

During the regular daily meetings we met with delegates and observers from Brazil, Burundi, Ecuador, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, and Zambia.

During our sessions we heard reports of the successes and needs in various countries. The problems and needs in many of the countries are similar to those in Malawi so that my comments here in regard to Malawi would often apply to our other member conferences. We listened to committee reports and voted on recommendations. In the evenings we joined in worship, with pastors from different countries presenting the worship message each night. Music was led each day by Pastor Michael

Spear with contributions by groups from other countries. I enjoyed the music tremendously, even though I often did not understand their language. Most of the attendees spoke English but at times interpreters were needed. While our experiences there strengthened our friendships and relationships with SDBs worldwide, as well as our appreciation of the work of the World Federation organization, the SDB Missionary Society, and Memorial Board, due to Debbie's being born and growing up there, our hearts are more aware of and attuned to the needs in Malawi, a country with one of the poorest economies in the world.

As an attendee of the historic Seventh Day Baptist World Federation meetings in Malawi last September, I traveled out of the U.S. for the first time in my life. I was no stranger to stories and pictures of the Seventh Day Baptist work in Malawi. For almost 50 years I had heard about Malawi through stories, writings, and pictures of my wife, Debbie, and her parents, David and Bettie Pearson. I thought I knew about Africa. But, knowing that many of the stories I had heard and pictures I had seen were from many years ago, I assumed much had changed over the last 50 years. We were fortunate to do some additional traveling while we were there to see what it was really like today. What I discovered was a strange dichotomy of modernization mixed with old-world privation. Some things have changed.

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Others remain as they have been for many years. In the countryside, instead of mud walls and thatched roofs, I saw mostly walls of mud bricks roofed with rusty tin or sometimes no roof at all. Then, oddly, I might see a small attached solar panel that provided electricity for a few lights or to recharge a cellular phone. According to statistics, about half of the Malawian population own a cell phone while only about ten percent have electricity in their homes! In the city there were larger buildings and many cars (with long lines at the gas stations), but in the countryside there were thousands who rode bicycles, or simply walked. Again, statistics show that there are only eight vehicles per 1,000 people in Malawi. The hotel where the World Federation meetings were held had most of the modern conveniences, while many of the countryside homes had no electricity and relied on water carried from community wells and pumps. Fields were being hoed and cultivated by hand. We never saw a tractor plowing a field or even a garden tiller. In Malawi I saw, for the first time in my life, the charcoal burners that I had only read about in history. They still cut wood, partially burn it to create charcoal sticks/logs, and transport it on bicycles to nearby markets for communities that still rely on wood burning for cooking.

As part of the World Federation meetings we had a chance to visit one of the mission stations in Malawi. We could choose either Makapwa or Thembe. For obvious reasons we chose Makapwa where Debbie was born. Traveling on a very rocky, bumpy dirt road to the remote station we found the village had grown. The primary school that Debbie attended for a year back in the 1960's has many more students, few teachers, and many basic needs (desks, chairs, tables, electricity, teachers, repairs, etc.), as does the secondary school. Can you imagine the outcry in the U.S. if your child was in a classroom

where they had to sit on a concrete floor due to the lack of space, chairs, or desks? The administrator at the Makapwa Elementary School made a plea for help. "This is your school," he pleaded. Others in the World Federation group visited the school at Thembe where they also saw a strange dichotomy of technology and the lack of basics. Although we did not see any technology at Makapwa, some students in Thembe were packed into a classroom, using electronic devices while sitting on the concrete floor.

The health clinic in Makapwa serves the village and a large surrounding community, providing basic medical services as well as maternity care, yet with few resources and personnel. The large church at Makapwa, built in the 1960's with the assistance of Dr. Victor Burdick and Missionary David Pearson (Debbie and Joanna's dad) is in need of repair. I was overwhelmed by the needs I saw everywhere.

Since my return I have been reminded of the verse in Acts 16:9, "*During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'*" But, to me, that verse now says, "**Come over to MALAWI and help us.**" Having just returned from there in September, I've got the "come over" part covered. What remains is the "**help us**" part.

As a retired educator, my heart yearns to help the Makapwa schools with teaching materials, teachers salaries and housing, electricity, and desks. As the husband of a retired public health nurse, I am stirred to help with the health clinic needs. As a Christian, I feel the need to help the poor, the widows, and the orphans. As a son who worked at his father's building supply store, I am touched by the need for many church repairs and construction projects. So, you can see that the experience touched me deeply for many reasons. If you have a chance to participate in a mission trip or other activity with the Missionary Society, the World Federation, or your church, I highly recommend it. I was greatly affected by the experience. I have to admit that I had concerns about visiting Malawi. I am too attached to American food, air conditioning, and personal comfort. However, the Malawians were extremely welcoming and helpful in everything from assisting with transportation to interpreting. Truly, Malawi lived up to its nickname, "The Warm Heart of Africa".

At Metro Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church, we have discussed the overwhelming needs in Malawi and the fact that many of their needs are on-going and will not be satisfied by a one-time fundraising project and are exploring how to best meet them over the long-term. If you feel led to help meet these needs and/or needs in other parts of the world, see the back cover (page 20) to see how funds may be sent to the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation. We hope you will join with us to become a partner in the work of Seventh Day Baptists worldwide.

You can see videos of some of the music presentations I recorded at: <http://tiny.cc/malawi> SR



Reintroducing the Annual Sabbath Giving Week

By Debbie Hargett

The Seventh Day Baptist World Federation is pleased to announce the re-introduction of an annual Sabbath Giving Week dedicated to supporting its mission and initiatives. This special week of giving will serve as an opportunity for conferences, churches, and individuals to contribute to the ongoing work of the World Federation. All collections made during this week will be sent directly to the World Federation office, ensuring that the funds are utilized for impactful projects and activities.

Date and Theme:

The annual Sabbath Giving Week will occur on the last Sabbath of May each year, starting from 2024 onwards. For this year, the recommended theme is “**Give Freely and Increase**,” inspired by Proverbs 11:24. This theme reflects the spirit of generosity and abundance that the WF seeks to cultivate among its members and supporters.

Purpose and Impact:

The World Federation is driven by a deep commitment to advancing the Kingdom of God and making disciples in all nations. **As a volunteer organization, it relies on the generous contributions of conferences, churches, and individual donors to carry out its mission.** Donations have a significant impact, supporting various crucial aspects of its work, including:

Increased Communication: The funds raised help facilitate improved communication among SDB groups worldwide, fostering collaboration, sharing of resources, and the exchange of ideas.

Mutual Interest Projects that benefit from international cooperation. These initiatives aim to address common challenges, promote unity, and maximize the collective impact of member conferences.

Fellowship Enhancement: The federation seeks to foster fellowship among SDB Christians globally, creating opportunities for fellowship, networking, and the nurturing of spiritual relationships.

Operating Costs: Donations contribute to the essential operating costs, including travel expenses, administrative expenses, and the organization of the World Federation Sessions that take place every five years.

Call to Action:

The SDBWF encourages all member conferences, churches, and individuals to participate in the annual Sabbath Giving Week, supporting the Federation's mission and initiatives. Contributions are welcome throughout the entire year, ensuring ongoing support for the crucial work of the World Federation. For some, it may be easier to donate weekly or monthly as a part of their personal budget. Read page 20 (back cover) to see ways to give.

Your support and contributions play a vital role in furthering the mission of the World Federation. Together, we can make a significant impact in advancing God's kingdom and spreading His message to all nations. By participating in the annual Sabbath Giving Week and giving generously, we contribute to the growth, unity, and effectiveness of the Seventh Day Baptist community worldwide. SR



Periodicals postage paid
at Janesville, WI
and additional offices

Your generous contributions
empower the World Federation to
make a positive impact worldwide.

Ways to give:

To support our global mission, consider the following giving options:

By Mail:

Make checks or money orders payable to SDBWF and mail to:
Treasurer, SDB World Federation
P.O. Box 581, Silver Creek, GA 30173, USA

PayPal:

Conveniently contribute through PayPal at treasurer@sdbwf.org.

Online:

Visit sdbwf.org/donate to make secure online one-time or
recurring donations.

Thank you for being a vital part of our global family and helping us
spread the light of Seventh Day Baptist values across the world.