

60<sup>TH</sup>

*Anniversary*

**SCSC DEVOTIONAL**

BOOKLET REDUX

These are fabulous stories of God  
at work in so many different ways  
through the years! Enjoy!



**Authored by 60 years of SCSCers**

**Background:** *The devotions in this booklet were previously released in 2014 for the SCSC's 50th anniversary. The booklet of 62 devotions submitted by 40 people was distributed at the 2014 Women's Banquet at the SDB General Conference in St. Paul, MN.*

*(Two devotions included here by Rachel (Hargett) Fox and Micayla (Neher) Crosby were mistakenly omitted from the original published booklet.)*

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# Firsts and Foundations

I really wanted to be in SCSC but for all the wrong reasons. I was trying to get away from home and to escape the pressures of life. Even though my intentions were wrong, the Lord used the experience for good. He is much smarter than I am. That summer was a time of many firsts and foundations for who I am and what I do.

God showed me several times that He was always a step (or more) ahead of me. I had said I wanted to go to Seattle before I even knew whether they had requested a team – and that’s where I ended up. Before I left, I read an article in LIFE Magazine about a shelter called The New Horizon – and yep, we got to work there during our project sorting clothes and mailing letters to families of runaways.

Starting at training, I began to feel God’s call to ministry, and it just got stronger during our time in Seattle. Even though I loved being involved with special music, testimonies, scripture reading, leading worship and prayer during the Sabbath services, I thought I wasn’t a good enough reader, speller, or writer for the Lord to use me in ministry. On top of that, I had just completed my first year in college to be an architect, which I liked. I fought God and was mad at Him. I grew to appreciate Pastor Duane Davis and the ministry as he spent time showing me what he did during the week. Without SCSC, I would not be a pastor today.

There were a lot of firsts also. It was my first time at Camp Paul Hummel for training and I loved all the beautiful views from the mountains and meeting some great people. It was the first time eating many foods I didn’t like (strawberries come to mind) as we ate with many different people in the Seattle church. Going down the Green River in inner tubes was a memorable first, white water rapids and all! These experiences were fun, they stretched me, and many continue to help me even today.

For me, SCSC was life changing. I learned to listen to God, trust God, and follow God. The Lord showed his faithfulness even when I was unfaithful. God showed me the world was a much bigger place through all my new experiences. I had (and still have) more to learn, but I’m thankful for all the firsts and foundations I learned during my summer at SCSC.

*Paul Andries served in SCSC in the summer of 1983 in Seattle, WA. Along with partners Howard Green & Rod Noel, they were Team Obedience, the “O” in VICTORY. Their Project Director was Tom Brown.*

# Hearing God's Voice

*The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"  
Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." 1 Samuel 3:10*

How do you hear God's voice? This question was put to me by a camper when I was privileged to direct a camp for fourth through sixth graders for one year. When I answered with examples of the many ways people have heard God speaking, this camper, who was already spiritually wise beyond her years, asked if she could prayer walk around our campgrounds. Upon returning from her walk, she told me that she had heard God's voice during her walk. God talked to Abraham and His descendants Jacob and Joseph, as friends through dreams, circumstances, and angels.

- Noah heard God give him very clear and precise directions on how to build the ark. He had more than one conversation with the Almighty, including when it was safe to leave that life-saving boat.
- Moses heard God's voice first through a burning bush because God had to get his attention. Thereafter, Moses heard God's voice many times in many ways, sometimes directly out of the heavens, sometimes when alone on Mt. Sinai.
- Samuel was dedicated to the Lord. As a child, he learned to recognize when God was speaking to him. He continued to hear and serve the Lord throughout his life.

These are just a few of the people you can read about in your Bible who heard the Word of the Lord directly. It has been my experience that God still speaks to people today. Based on the many biblical examples, it seems to me that four things are key to hearing God's voice in your life:

Be dedicated to Jesus as your Savior and Lord in daily walking and talking as in a best-friend relationship. Learn how others have heard God by reading the Bible passages about God speaking to people and talking to other Christ followers who have testified to hearing His voice. Be prayerfully willing, open, alert, and ready to respond to His calling. Once you realize and recognize that God spoke to you, practice listening to Him and hearing Him.



# Living In Limbo

Some of the toughest times in our lives are when we are in “limbo”; having to wait, being unsure of the future, and living between major life changes. Sometimes we find ourselves living between the end of one job and the beginning of another, not knowing what that new job will be, or where it will take us. Or perhaps you know you will be moving, yet you don’t know all the details of where you will be moving to. Maybe you cannot stay in your house, or you must move because there is a change in your rental agreement. Not knowing where your next home or job will be can be quite stressful. Students who are unsure where they will go to college, or what they will do after graduation find themselves in that uncomfortable place called “limbo.”

God has a lot to say about living in limbo. Jeremiah 29:11 is just one of many verses on this topic: *“For I know what I have planned for you,” says the Lord. “I have plans to prosper you, not to harm you. I have plans to give you a future filled with hope.”* This verse of promise was an anchor for me through months of unemployment for my husband, not once, but twice in our marriage. We knew each time there was a job change (and there had been more than a few of those), it would most likely mean our family would move— again.

In each large city we had lived in, whether Kansas City, Milwaukee, Chicago, or the college town of Mankato, MN, we had driven over an hour to attend the closest SDB church. So, when faced with yet another move, I took my usual stance, on my knees with the map spread on the bed in front of me, crying and asking God once again, to put us near an SDB church where we could raise our kids. The months of job searching dragged on. Our fifth-grade daughter babysat her brother while I worked two part-time jobs. Rob was out of town networking and interviewing for jobs. Our medical insurance coverage ran out. For nine months, no one in the family had anything worse than a cold or flu. No emergencies, no trips to the hospital. *“For I know what I have planned for you,”* says the Lord.

We could no longer make our house payments. I went to the bank and sat crying in the president’s office. I was embarrassed and humiliated. The bank president was kind and understanding. “Pay us what you can each month, and thank you for letting me know,” he said. *“For I know what I have planned for you,”* says the Lord. Believing that God wants us to be honest with Him, I knelt by my bed crying out in anger over the map. “I don’t even care where you put us Lord! I am sick and tired of asking to be put near a SDB church where we can raise our kids! It’s *your* problem. They are *your* kids. You put us *wherever!*”

Within what seems to me now a short time (probably a month) Rob had a job in Delevan, WI which meant we could move back to the Janesville area (our 3<sup>rd</sup> time doing so) and attend the Milton SDB Church. Close to Rob’s family and a great place to raise kids! *“For I know what I have planned for YOU,”* says the Lord, *“Plans to prosper you, not to harm you, plans to give you a future filled with hope.”*

What “land of limbo” are you living in? What is God saying to *you*?



# Flexibility Isn't Easy

*“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.  
Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.”  
(Proverbs 19:20-21)*

Be flexible, be flexible, be flexible were the rules given to me and my husband on a mission trip we went on early in our marriage. This isn't easy when you put a bunch of type-A people together. They like a plan, and they like to be in control. As I look back, I realize that SCSC was some of my early training grounds for being flexible. SCSC asked young people who don't know each other to live together with a host family, eat new foods, serve God in ways they haven't thought of doing and do jobs they have never done. Let me give you a few examples from my own experiences. We got to fix the siding on a parsonage. I never even put siding on before let alone fixed it (but that the siding is still there). I was able to help a church introduce new kids to camping by doing a mini-camp (and years later had the pleasure of seeing one of those campers direct my own son's camp). One year my teammate and I shared a room and another year I stayed by myself with a family. Every year was different, but the Lord taught me so much each time. One enduring message was that God has a plan, He has a purpose, and He is in control. You have a choice whether you believe that or whether you stress over all the things you can't control. Proverbs 16:9 says, *“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.”* I have learned that it is a whole lot easier to trust the Lord – you know the One that controls the universe. I take this lesson with me at home, at work and church. I have by no means mastered this principle, but SCSC helped me take the first steps. As the words of the songwriter says,

*I don't know about tomorrow;  
It may bring me poverty.  
But the one who feeds the sparrow,  
Is the one who stands by me.  
And the path that is my portion  
May be through the flame or flood;  
But His presence goes before me  
And I'm covered with His blood.  
Many things about tomorrow  
I don't seem to understand  
But I know who holds tomorrow  
And I know who holds my hand.*

*“I don't know about tomorrow” By Ira F. Stanphill*

*Amanda (Graffius) Barbee served in SCSC for three years: (1995) Team Nourish in Boulder, CO with Jaci Neher and PD David Thorngate; (1996) Team Expectation in Columbus, OH with Cathy Payne and PD Lana Van Horn; and (1997) Team Agape in Riverside, CA with Cathy Rogers, Brian Heath, Daniel Van Horn and PD Vicki Burdick.*

# Abide, Not Strive

## Part 1

While being rushed to the emergency room, God encountered me in the back seat of the car. God whispered: “Why should I let you into heaven?” Shocked, I reminded God, “I’m ten years old!” Had God forgotten up there in His busy universe? I mean, come on, people don’t die at ten. They die when they are one hundred and ten.

God had an agenda that night. He spoke: “*For the wages of sin is death [hell].*” Reviewing my life, I saw myself arguing with my sister, and disobeying my mom. I was in trouble with a holy God. He spoke again: “*God’s gift is eternal life [heaven] through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” I bargained: “If You let me live, I will ask Jesus in. If You don’t let me live...well, I am going to hell.”

After surviving the ER, I decided God had nothing to do with my close call and I did not need Jesus. The deal was off. But my insomnia started. After six months of sleepless nights, I surrendered to Jesus, not only asking Him in but wanting to be a disciple—like one of the Twelve in the Bible.

## Part 2

Since then, following Jesus has been the passion of my life. More than anything else in the world, I want my life to count for Jesus. I am a zealous zealot for Jesus. This week, God reminded me how to have one’s life count for Jesus. Being so passionate about Him, I find I can strive to serve! But all He really wants is for me to abide in Him. It is not to strive; it is to abide. Abiding is a rest, a peace. How do you do it? I start my day with worship. “*God inhabits the praises of His people.*” If I want God’s daily presence, praise welcomes Him. He is looking for people to worship Him in spirit and truth. Reading His love letter (the Word) adds to my daily encounters. Then, talking with Jesus is a part of this moment-by-moment walk.

How does it work? Amid trauma or a hectic schedule, I just pause and welcome Jesus into the situation. I call it dialling down or centering on Jesus. “*Fix your eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith.*” I visualize or imagine Jesus seated on His throne!

I can either fix my eyes on Jesus or I can get a fix (food, shopping, etc.). But, once I encounter Jesus and His abiding presence, other things lose their “charm.”

There is fullness of joy in His presence. So welcome Jesus and His Holy Spirit to be in you and with you in your day today—moment by moment walking with God!

# More Than You Can Imagine

Our Seattle SCSC team in 2002 was named Team Imagine. Why, you ask? There is a lovely prayer written in the middle of Ephesians at the end of chapter three. The words of this prayer inspire and empower us as they are digested and grasped. It is, however, the final two verses that give me cause to worship and praise my Lord God Almighty.

“Now to *him* who is able to do *immeasurably* more than all we ask or *imagine*, according to *his* power that is at work within us, to *him* be Glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen” (vs. 20–21).

Our God is able. This is a statement of fact. It is not questionable or debatable. He can do it (Dan. 3:16–18; Matt. 9:27–29). Think about God’s Sovereignty, His omniscience, and His overall plan.

Not only is God able, but He is willing and wanting to go beyond the expected or requested to the supernatural (Psalm 145:7; 2 Peter 1:2; Rom. 10:6–13). That is mind-boggling! Think about God’s abundance, His desires, and purposes for you. Consider His omnipotence, His plans beyond man’s hopes and dreams. God gave us multiple examples to reinforce this truth. Just a few are Abraham, Joseph, Job, and Solomon (1 Kings 3:10–13).

God’s power works within us. He is indwelling (Eph. 3:16–17). Think about God living in us. How awesome is that? We are a temple for His presence, to work through us for His glory.

God is glorified in the church and in Jesus (John 8:49–50, 54–55; John 17:1–5; Daniel 4:34–37; 2 Thess. 1). Think about how we can honor, praise and extol Him more perfectly. He alone is worthy. To glorify God is the ultimate purpose of all created things (Rom. 11:33–36).

God is eternal. He offers the gift of eternal life to us (Psalm 93; John 8:58; John 17:1–5). Think about the present joy, hope, confidence, and peace that we enjoy now and forever. How can we *not* share this?

Amen (Jude 24). So be it.

# A Poem?

The year? Nineteen ninety six.  
The place? South Jersey, in the sticks.  
A band of wily, fearless teens  
invaded that South Jersey scene  
with hearts, heads, and stomachs primed for filling.

Our bodies? Strengthened. Our spirits? Willing.  
Prepared for all God had in store  
we began our summers in the Corps.  
We split that scene for parts well-known  
watering seeds others had sown.  
Cathy's first year? Riverside.  
Johnmark's was where the corn grows high -  
that's North Loup, if you didn't know.  
But there were more places to go.

From ninety seven to decade's end  
we did it all again and again.  
Dodge Center, Salem, and Lost Creek,  
White Cloud and Daytona Beach.  
Adventures mounted and spirits soared.  
Each year? We grew more in the Lord.  
Each place we traveled challenged us  
to place our hopes in God and trust  
that we could follow where He'd lead  
each summer of SCSC.

In ninety nine, the summer found  
the both of us Daytona bound.  
For both of us, that was summer four.  
But it was Johnmark's farewell tour.  
Then two thousand, just one year more,  
was Cathy's fifth year in the Corps.

At summer's end, on August fifth,  
we gave each other ourselves as gifts.  
And now, we serve the Lord together  
no matter where we go - forever.  
But it all began out in the sticks  
way back in nineteen ninety six.

*Johnmark served in SCSC in 1996 Nike (North Loup, NE), 1997 Voice (Lost Creek, WV), 1998 Rhomphaia (White Cloud, MI), 1999 Eternal (Daytona Beach, FL). Cathy served in 1996 Agape (Riverside, CA), 1997 Immanuel (Dodge Center, MN), 1998 Endurance (Salem, WV) and 1999 Eternal (Daytona Beach, FL), 2000 Noble (Salem, WV).*

# Trust Your Navigator

*“Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them.”* Proverbs 4:5  
(Team Navigator 2011 team verse, single team member)

In the months before training that year, situations were happening in my life bringing me down spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Once I got to training, my heart began breaking as soon as I stepped out of the car. I was so worried about the situation at home that I was having great difficulty shoving the worries aside as I had done so many times before. I couldn't let anyone know how weak I was feeling, but I finally broke down. One night, Kris North invited us to pray and leave our burdens at the Cross. She prayed with me, asking for strength and courage and for hurts to be mended. ***(Lesson 1: We all have problems. We ARE weak compared to God. He wants us to come to Him for help. As a result, we will be stronger and closer to Him.)***

Kris asked me to state the names of all the people who had hurt me that I wanted to forgive. I cried and amazingly was able to rattle off the names. One detail that needs to be said, I carry a lot of my burdens in the tension on my shoulders. My shoulders had hurt so much those first few days of training. With every name I spoke, I could feel the pain in my shoulders disappear. Never had I ever felt that kind of healing. ***(Lesson 2: Holding on to unforgiveness or burdens that aren't ours is not what God wants for us.)***

Finally, I was at a point where I was willing to listen to what God was telling me. I am a “fix-it” kind of person. I want to help others and think if I don't do it, who will? I heard God tell me, *“This is not the burden I planned for you to carry. You need to give it back to Me and let ME take care of it. I know the plan and purpose of the situation. I have a perfect plan of the who's, how's and when's that will be involved. This is not your time.”* ***(Lesson 3: Sometimes God just needs us to pray and let Him move mountains in the background until it's time for us to act.)***

During my project, I experienced things I hadn't expected to experience any time soon in my life. There was a situation where one of the young adult's friends was in a rock-bottom kind of mindset. He felt there was nothing to live for any longer. We tried to talk to this young man, but it felt like our words had fallen upon deaf ears. A few days later, he apologized for how he acted and said he wanted to grow in his faith in God. I didn't expect our words to impact this young man. To see a seed sprout into a desire for God is an experience I will always keep with me. ***(Lesson 4: Faith is being ready for the unexpected. Our lack of control doesn't mean that God is not in control.)***

A big part of my project was to work with the host committee for conference, and in particular to work with registration. In the past I offered to do administrative tasks because there wasn't anyone willing to step up, I never realized that I have a gift for administration. I was asked to create a chart of various information we needed. Seeing the expression of gratitude, relief, and peace in the face of the person I presented it to was all I needed to confirm God's gift. ***(Lesson 5: There is freedom and joy in recognizing and using our gifts.)***

The lessons I learned in my 4<sup>th</sup> year of SCSC were hard, but life changing. I learned to trust God as my life Navigator, give Him the burdens that are not mine to carry, and listen closely to His guidance and His perfect plan.

# Heavenly Places

What does a team do when told their team's name must start with "O"? Well, look in the Greek dictionary of course! The year was 1987 and I was serving my first year in SCSC, teamed with Steve Osborn and Nate Crandall. We were headed to Washington, DC, to work with Project Director Paul Andries at the church there. As we scanned the Greek dictionary, we looked for something not only original but with significance. We came up with *Ouranious*, meaning heavenly. Our verse was Ephesians 2:6: "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."

I had never considered this verse before but had skimmed over it, reading for the more well-known verbiage to follow in verses 8–9. Now that it was our team verse and I knew I would be asked about its significance, I spent some time looking at the context. "But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:4–10). God used this passage to speak to me not only that summer but to remind me through the years who I am in Christ and the incredible nature of His love towards us.

Throughout childhood, my parents taught me about faith in God and I witnessed examples of His faithfulness in our family. I was also taught to be self-sufficient and to face any challenge as if it could be conquered. While this perception of life often helped me look positively at difficult circumstances and help others do the same, at times I forgot to allow God to take the lead, jumping out in my own abilities. During our project that year I was reminded of the grace of God and that I cannot work to receive this grace or to bring the good works to fruition that He has planned for me.

One such time was in planning to lead the adult Sabbath School class. Each of us took a turn leading during their study of the book of Romans. My week fell on Romans 7. This passage confused me every time I read it, and I anguished over the task before me, begging my teammates for their assistance. They refused, except to pray that I would hear from God and that His Holy Spirit would speak through me.

What followed was hours of prayer and study of the Scripture, commentaries, concordances, and Bible dictionaries. And then clarity came. It truly was not my own understanding but new insights from the Holy Spirit of what Romans 7 really means. God never put it there to confuse or discourage us but to demonstrate to us how much we truly need His grace to conquer sin. We can't do it on our own and will fail until we lean on and walk in His Spirit.

Later that summer I was reminded again as I acquired a severe case of poison oak. After a few days the poison had entered my bloodstream and not only did my skin itch and hurt but I was sick and weak. I eventually required a trip to the emergency room, several hours of waiting and many vials of blood before being sent home with a prescription. My team was beside me the whole time, and we discovered later that the church had gathered to pray for me for strength and healing. I am so grateful God put people around me who reached out to Him on my behalf when I was weak.

The good news is that God never intended for us to face anything on our own. If we begin our days seeking His wisdom, guidance, and grace we will not find sin as much of a challenge. And God will place other believers in our lives to help lift us up when we are weak. When we remember that we have not only been saved by God's grace but are seated with Him, He is with us every moment we include Him in our lives.

May you experience the grace of God and the guidance of His Holy Spirit throughout today and each day of your life.



# The 40-Year Director

You may not realize it, but the Bible does advise on being a good camp counselor. Moses spent a good portion of his life, at least 40 years, being the director of the Israelite camp (it's hard to imagine having the same director at camp for 40 years!?). For the most part, Moses did an excellent job following God's instructions and leading the people, but Moses certainly was not perfect.

In Numbers 20, we hear the story of a particularly difficult year of camp for Moses. Moses was worshipping God, and God told Moses to go and *speak* to a rock and God would provide water (v. 7-8). Moses, however, did things his way rather than God's way. He struck the rock with his staff (not mixing metaphors here; he used a wooden staff, not a staff member), hitting the rock twice and calling the people rebellious while he did it (v. 10-11). Despite Moses' disobedience, God still provided water from the rock. Yet, there were consequences for Moses' disobedience.

Moses was barred from entering the Promised Land (v. 12). When God speaks to Moses, he gives the reason, not of pride or anger, but "because you did not believe in me..." This sounds crazy, considering Moses had been one of the people to see and even be God's means for accomplishing some of the greatest miracles on record! Even still, Moses sinned by lacking faith in God, and so was punished.

Throughout history, God has used imperfect people to accomplish his perfect plan. One of the ways God continues to do this is through the SCSC program. SCSC students are not perfect, yet God uses them at camps, Vacation Bible School programs, and churches from Cali' to Rhod' as a means to an end. God can use flawed people such as college students to point glory to Himself and to see His will be done. The flaws in these people, both SCSCers and even Moses, do not glorify the sins of the people, but they do point glory to a God who is abounding in grace. From training to evaluation, the SCSC process can bring out both the best and the worst in a person, but the takeaway should be to rely not on the greatness of one's character but on the abounding grace of God.

Moses, though an incredible man, was not a perfect man. He could not provide water in the wilderness on his own. Yet the Bible does speak of a perfect man, and this man had "water welling up to eternal life" (John 4.14, ESV). Jesus perfectly kept every commandment of God, and his perfect obedience is the wellspring of God's grace. When we believe in Jesus and repent of our sins, the Holy Spirit works to *substitute* Jesus' perfect life for our sinful life. The process is ongoing, and God's people still mess up from time to time. But, as God removes more and more of the sinful "us" and gives more and more of His perfect Son, we are changed and better able to love and serve God. Praise God that He is loving and abounding in grace!

*David Fox served in SCSC for three years from 2003-2005.*

# The Parable of The Campers

One of the things I did as a SCSC'er was being a counselor at camp. Camp can be a place where some kids are first introduced to Jesus, or where some get to experience God in a new way. Mark 4 tells us about the parable of the sower, which is a good illustration of what can happen in a camp setting. In this parable, a farmer goes and plants seeds, which then fall into different kinds of soil with varying results. Jesus used this sower and seeds analogy to represent the way that the gospel falls into people's lives, and it inevitably happens the same way for kids at camp. Some seeds fell on the path and birds came and devoured the seeds (v. 4). This could be the case as some sit idly by throughout the week of camp and go away to find more exciting things elsewhere once the week of camp is over. Some seeds fell into rocky soil, where they sprung up fast and withered away for lack of roots (v. 5-6). This could be the case for kids who, while on fire for God at camp, go home and forget about the passion they had once the week of camp ends. Still, other seeds fell among thorns and were choked (v. 7). This happens to campers who go home and are stifled by ungodly people who choke the life out of their walk with Jesus that might have begun at camp. But lastly, Jesus spoke about some seeds that were planted in good soil, and how they grew to be a plentiful and abounding harvest (v. 8). It is very exciting to have seen God use the experience of camp as a means to draw a lost child unto Himself.

No camp, even an SDB camp, died for anyone's sins. Only Jesus lived a perfect life, died a painful death on the cross, and rose from the grave. Jesus conquered sin and death, and only through repenting and believing in Him can anyone be saved. While camp does not save any child, God certainly uses camp and SCSC counselors at camp to plant seeds that will eventually "*grow up and increase and yield thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.*" (Mark 4:8b, ESV). Seeing this happen is one of the best parts of being in SCSC!

*Rachel [Hargett] Fox served in SCSC 2005-2007.*

# Ask Me About My Miracle

In 1976 my partner Debbie (Kellen) Knight was assigned an SCSC project in Schenectady, NY with Pastor Dave Taylor as our Project Director. The acronym for the 1976 SCSC team was “MIRACLE” and we were team Lovingkindness, the “L” in MIRACLE and the miracle I most remember from that summer is how God provided a very special partner for me. A few months before training, the SCSC training director (Gerry Van Dyke at that time) called me at home one evening. She said there was an odd number of SCSC applicants and an extra project request. They were deciding whether one of the veteran SCSC’ers should be assigned without a partner so that all the church project requests could be filled. She asked me to pray about going to Schenectady, NY for the summer without a partner. Looking back now, it doesn’t seem like such a big deal, **but it was for me at that time!** After a lot of prayer, some tears, and listening to God through the scriptures, I was compelled to do whatever God called me to do. I realized God was enough for whatever I would face. He would be my partner.

Well, fast forward a few months to the miracle. When I walked into SCSC Training that year, there was an even number of SCSC’ers. There had been a last-minute addition (before the strict deadlines we have today) who would be my partner! God had been faithful in preparing for “the project that almost wasn’t” in Schenectady, NY that summer and I was completely sure that’s where He wanted me to be.

During SCSC Evaluation we shared about our projects and found there had been MANY miracles happening that summer. So we decided to make paper rainbows for each person to wear during the week of Conference so people would ask us about the miracles we had seen. It has faded over the years, but here’s a picture of my rainbow. I kept it to remind me of the miracle God did in providing an SCSC partner for me that year!



# Anticipation

If I could only pick one reason to explain my belief in God, it would have to be answered prayer. I've heard it said, *"When we get to Heaven and see how many things were changed by prayer, we will regret that we didn't pray more!"* Over the years, God has blessed me by answering many prayers (more than I deserve) showing the wise and loving and personal friend He is.

The first summer I was in SCSC, God answered many prayers, but the one that stands out in my mind is when my partner Marion (Jacob then, Fick now) and I were trying to decide on our team's name. One thing about SCSC I learned early is that being away from all your usual support and family *REALLY* improves your prayer life!

We had been assigned the letter "A" and decided the best way to make this decision was to pray and ask God for a name. Marion wasn't feeling well that afternoon, so I found her resting over at the church parsonage. We began praying together asking God to provide us with just the right name for our team – one that was meaningful to us and would convey an inspiring message to others when we shared it. As we prayed, the Carole King song "Anticipation" was playing in the background. At the same moment, Marion and I looked up at each other and we knew our team's name would be "Anticipation".

(Another lesson is that God answers prayers in many ways.) Neither of us had any idea what that summer would hold, but we were eagerly looking forward to all that God had for us to do – we were filled with *ANTICIPATION!*



*(Picture of the 1975 SCSC and Lightbearers at training in Salem, WV)*

# The Perfect Gift

*“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.” Exodus 12:13*

The Hebrews were in the final stretch for freedom. Moses, their fierce leader, stood firm in his faith, commanding Pharaoh to let God’s people go. Terrible times had fallen over Egypt; the Lord’s power was not to be trifled with, yet the Pharaoh paid no heed to the warnings. Thus, the Lord brought the final plague, the death of all firstborns of Egypt. Moses instructed the Hebrews to sacrifice one pure lamb and paint its blood across the door of each Hebrew homestead. If this was done, the spirit of the Lord would pass over them, sparing the firstborns of that family. In the end, Pharaoh was defeated, and Moses led the Hebrews towards the promised land.

This was just the beginning. It would be so when God’s people suffered persecution yet again, and a Savior would come into this world, freeing God’s people and purifying the souls of all who truly believed. Jesus Christ was the precious lamb of God. His blood was spilled to wipe our hearts clean of sin and deliver us from evil. Just as God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt, Jesus gave himself for us, and He will come again. John 3:16 is written, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” What better promise is that from God?

## **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the precious gift of your son, Jesus Christ. In sending Him to dwell among us, you showed us the depth of your love and mercy. Allow us the strength to follow your teachings, love to share with others, and wisdom to discern your will. May we strive to walk in the light of your glory and grace. Amen.

# Here Be God!

*“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10 ESV)*

Though this was written to the Israelites in exile, it has application for us today. We need not fear because the Creator of the universe is at our side. God promises to help each of us, but not just help us, to give us strength.

Before 1492 when Columbus sailed the ocean blue, the common belief was that if a ship from Europe sailed too far west, it would either fall off the edge of the world or face terrible danger. There was fear of the unknown. An ancient nautical map in England dates to the time of King Henry IV. On it, the mapmakers wrote these words over the Atlantic Ocean: "Here be dragons; Here be demons; Here be danger." Based on those superstitious warnings, sailors were afraid of sailing there. However, an English navigator named John Franklin was a mighty man of God. He knew the Word of God that says God sits above the circle of the earth. He took that same map, crossed out those fearful words, and added these three words: "Here be God!"

With God, there is nothing to fear, for if He is with us then nothing can stand against us. I do not have to be powerful, because God is. In those times when our fears rise, will we say, *“Here be God!”* We can be bold and courageous because God is with us, our Emmanuel.

*Chris Galarneau was the Project Director for Team Emmanuel in 2013.*



# Stand Up to Timidity

*“I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.** So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.” (2 Timothy 1:6-8)*

Overcoming timidity is a challenge that all SCSCers face at some point during their summer. We have all found ourselves outside our comfort zone. Team Empowered consisted of two rookies, so we both found ourselves in this situation several times. Fortunately for us, we didn't have to do it alone. First and foremost, God was (and is) always with us when we do his work! If God is with us, who can be against us? I often find that when God presents me with a task, I immediately doubt that I have the skills necessary to achieve it. I feel inadequate to serve God fully – and therefore move forward with timidity. Never was this truer than when I was an 18-year-old SCSC rookie in North Loup. But what I constantly remind myself is that God did not choose people with all the right skills for the job at that moment, He equipped them throughout their ministry exactly at the right time. The same was true for Timothy who had a strong faith but was still a young church leader learning on the job.

The second lesson team Empowered learned was that we are not alone in doing His work. We were blessed with an experienced and encouraging project director. Helen was a constant strength for us as we worked throughout the summer. We also found that the church, camp directors and VBS teachers were all unified in their mission to have a positive impact on young people's lives and share the love of Christ with them. I challenge you to take time to learn from those people you meet who are experienced in the ministry. Again, the same was true for Timothy as he was encouraged and strengthened by Paul's letters based on his own ministry experience.

Paul's encouragement to Timothy in 2 Timothy doesn't just apply to our SCSC summer or serving your local church. Overcoming the spirit of timidity can be even more difficult as we begin our young adult lives. You have reached the time where you leave your home and take the faith instilled upon you by your family and church and must make it your own (2 Tim 1:5). It is a time, possibly for the first time in your life, your beliefs and faith in Christ will be constantly challenged. You will find yourself struggling between what is popular and what is right. I challenge you, as Paul challenged Timothy to grow in the knowledge of Christ, shake off your timidity and not be ashamed to testify the love of Christ.

*Gabriel Graffius and his partner Lydia (Davis) Solomon served in 2003 as Team Empowered in North Loup, NE. Their Project Director was Helen Goodrich.*



# God's Got Your Back

During my first summer in SCSC (1980), I was selected to go to a new church in Upper East Tennessee where we stayed with John and Linda Camenga and their newest baby Johnmark who was only 6 months old at the time! We helped with camp, children's bible school, and door-to-door evangelism. The summer was hot, and A/C was not something most folks had. Fans ruled!! But it sure was nice when we went on our evening visits, and someone had A/C. It was two years later, during my second summer in SCSC, that God got my attention in a way I'll never forget. A certain young man in the youth group had a knack for picking fights. This often occurred even when we were around. One evening we were out walking with this young man.

Suddenly were surrounded by two carloads of young men with boards and chains. It occurred to me that 11:4 odds were not in my favor. So, I politely listened to their argument, looked at the guilty party, and thought, I'm going to get beat, badly. Since I saw no resolution to the situation, I called loudly for a moment of prayer before we began the fight. I bowed my head and thought if there is ever a time to believe in God and have His mercy shown upon us.... NOW...would be it. I said AMEN and looked up.

There was a lot of disbelief on both sides. An older man in the car said, that perhaps they should let us go this time. I agreed. We all focused on the young man and together told him to stop this nonsense now (*actual words are not fit to print*). They drove off and we finished our walk. I asked if there were any doubters about God or the power of God today.

Everyone, including me, thought that was the most impressive power of God ever experienced. It taught me that God will always have my back and protect me. I am grateful for the many times God has spared my life. I know that my job on earth is not complete so I continue to stand up for God wherever and whenever I can.

*Norman Green served in SCSC for two summers, 1980 in Upper East, TN and 1982 in Seattle, WA with partners Brian Owen, Lorrie Boatright, & Veronica Zwiebel and Project Directors John Camenga & Dixie Inabnit.*

# Trusting God with The Seeds

When I was in SCSC in 1970, our training was in North Loup, Nebraska. We were instructed to go through the town, knocking on doors, and sharing the gospel through the Four Spiritual Laws. My partner, Patti Jo Pederson, and I came to one door where a woman answered. I went through the pamphlet with her, in fear and trembling as I was very shy at that time of my life. She prayed the prayer at the end. I was just so relieved to be done with the whole thing that I didn't even stop to rejoice that another soul had been added to the kingdom of God. I even wondered if she went through the motions just so she wouldn't have to say no to us. (I didn't think God could use me to lead another person to him!)

Years later, my husband, Bob (who had been my SCSC partner in Milton in 1969), and I hosted a Bible Club in our townhouse in Middletown, Connecticut, while he was serving as the pastor at the Pine Street Gospel Chapel there. We distributed flyers throughout the complex where we lived. Amazingly, about a dozen children came. But even more amazing was the fact that all the children prayed to accept Jesus as their Savior except one, who was already a Christian!

Also, during the time we were in Middletown, we served on the staff of Junior Camp at Camp Lewis. Pastor Rex Burdick was the director. On Friday night, he showed a film about a boy losing his toy boat on a pond. A while later, he passed a store window and saw his boat for sale. He scraped up enough money to buy the boat back. The film ended by saying that we once belonged to God but got lost. God sent his Son Jesus to buy us back, so we could be his once more. Pastor Rex encouraged the children to seek out a staff member to help them make the step of becoming a child of God through a relationship with Jesus. On the way back from Vespers that night, I heard some whispering behind me. One boy was from our church and had become friends with another boy at that camp. "Are you going to do it?" one boy said. "I don't know. Are you going to do it?" "Maybe. ... Let's ask Linda. She's a soft touch!"

So, when we got back to the lodge, I sat down with the boys and led them both to accept Jesus as their Savior. Then at bedtime, several girls came into my room together. "We want you to tell us how we can invite Jesus into our hearts." So, four or five girls also made the decision. What an amazing evening that was!

We left Connecticut not long after these two events happened. Pastor Mynor Soper visited us just before we left. I asked him why God would move us just as we were beginning to minister to these children. He said, "Don't worry about the children. You have planted seeds in their hearts. God will make sure the seeds grow. Just continue to pray for the children."

Out of the few people I have led to Christ, the only ones I know today are my two children. I have no idea who that woman in North Loup is or where the children from camp and Bible club are now. I don't know whether they have continued in the faith they professed. I do have the children's names written down somewhere because I prayed for them regularly for many years. But I don't have to wonder where they are now; I know God oversees growing fruit from the seed.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6, NASB).

# Camp Joy Memories

Anyone who has been to Camp Joy in West Virginia in the 1980s shares my vivid memory of the smelly water. (Just so you know this was before bottled water was widely available or the more recent water filter system at the camp.) Since it was summer and hot, any activity we did worked up a thirst you couldn't escape. You had to drink something! After the first few days, you didn't care anymore and, of course, you didn't have any choice. You smelled it and you drank it –It made coffee taste weird, and it made Kool-Ade taste even weirder. Taking a shower in the water made you wonder if you had that odor after drying off. There was no escaping the smell or taste – but it sure made you appreciate good, clean, refreshing water forever after your stay at Camp Joy. This verse had an all-new meaning to me, *“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”* (John 4:13-14)

A second Camp Joy memory was one hot humid day we went down to a creek below the campsite to stick our feet in the cool water. I didn't think much of the idea but joined in. It wasn't until I came out of the water that I saw some leeches attached to my feet. It didn't hurt. There was no pain whatsoever. I knew they were parasites that needed to be removed. Someone helped me detach them and everything was fine, but I never entertained the thought of dipping my toes in that water again. I am reminded of how sin can come into our lives. It can look bad and be unattractive to someone in the beginning, but in the desire of the moment we give in. We do it over and over enough, so it becomes part of us without thinking about it. Sometimes we believe it's not a big deal. It becomes part of our nature – part of our behavior. It is still a sin. When we get to this point, we have been seared with the callousness of sin. It isn't until we repent of the sin and ask Jesus to forgive our sin and remove the leeches that are sucking on us and preventing our relationship with God. Jesus can remove the sin and the leeches in our lives. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9)

*Ralph Hays served in SCSC in the summer of 1981 in Salem, WV with partners Annmarie (Johnson) Bennett & Dale Wheeler. Their Project Director was Chris Sias.*

# Keep On Going

*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. “*  
(Galatians 2:20)

We couldn't have had a more beautiful setting for our SCSC project in 1982 than we had on the mountainside at Camp Paul Hummel. Being up that high, the night sky makes the stars seem that much closer and brighter and the sky a deeper color of blue. Some people say you can see the state of Nebraska from the campsite. I was part of an 8-person team that I think was the largest single team in SCSC since it began. Our main job was to conduct camp activities, visit the local churches and help build a border fence for the camp. Four at a time would conduct camp while the other four worked on the fence line, alternating to give each other a break. Some fence work sites were closed – others were a healthy hike away. We had to carry the equipment, barbed wire, water, lunch, and anything else we might need for the day because some areas were very isolated. While our team constructed a three-strand barbed wire fence around the border of Camp Paul Hummel, each person chose a nickname. I can't remember all of the nicknames, but I know what mine was: Stretch. Stretch, because I got the job of stretching the wire with the block and tackle guitar string tight as the others were stapling the wire to the posts. Some days the hike to the job site was strenuous and we were already exhausted when the team got there. We would sing camp songs as we worked to boost our morale. For me, remembering our theme verse in Galatians 2:20 gave me extra willpower. I was reminded that the work I was doing was not something I did for myself, I was putting my faith in HIM who gave me his life for me. Realizing his life in me gave me a renewed sense of strength and purpose to ignore the voices that said to stop or quit. Why? Because Jesus didn't stop or quit. And if Jesus can go to the point of death what is a little exhaustion to me?

*Ralph Hays served in SCSC in the summer of 1982 at Camp Paul Hummel, CO with partners Vivian Bass, Cindy Hays, Robert Mieke, Rod Noel, Tim Osborn, Gary Salyers, and Barbara Schock. Their Project Director was Gerry Van Dyke.*

# Mapping Out Your “Ministry Mile”

In Verona, NY, we’ve had the privilege of hosting two SCSC teams in the recent past: Marissa and Steven, and Patrick and Megan. My wife, Debbie, and Mallie Petrie directed both teams.

While the teams had the normal opportunities to serve—such as in VBS and camps—I had the privilege of working together with them on connecting with those on what we called our “ministry mile.” Looking straight out from our church’s front door, one can see several homes on either side of a straight road called Verona Mills Road. Where the proximity of homes stops and another road connects to the right, the distance is almost exactly one mile—hence the name.

We went door to door, conducting a simple survey about life issues, and giving out bags of M&Ms, which stood for “ministry mile” as well as the millennial year 2000 when the first team and I did this. The survey helped our church get a pulse on our neighbors’ views as well as allowing us to serve them with encouraging words and even praying with and for them. Not everyone was receptive, and at least one neighbor was a bit hostile to our activity. But our hope was that all would know a group of people, calling themselves Christian and gathering regularly as a church just down the road, cared about them.

At one point in His ministry, Jesus encouraged His followers: *“If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles”* (Matthew 5:41, NIV). Often in the days of the disciples, Roman soldiers would force another, usually a resident, to carry their gear or other goods. While doing so was loathed by many, Jesus, as was His practice, takes a situation and goes further and deeper. He says, in effect, to “go the extra mile” with and for others.

Is this our attitude daily? Do we set out to “go the extra mile” for anyone we encounter—friend or foe? Are the words, “How can I help you,” rolling off our lips consistently? Do the needs of others compel us to do all that we can for them?

Pastor Russ Johnson has often said, “How will those within a mile of our churches know that God and we love them?” Those words convict me whenever they echo in my mind and heart.

Look around you, how will anyone within a “mile” of you know that you love them? That God loves them? What is your “ministry mile” at home? At work? In your social life? In your church life? May the needs of the world around us, within a “mile” of us, compel us to serve—to do ministry, as Jesus would do.

# Search Me O God

*Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23-24 NKJV*

As Christians, we are expected to live a noble and pleasing life unto God, a task that might not always be easy. As we enter a new year, month, week, or a new day. Let us make time for reflection and self-evaluate our Christian walk. Let us ask God to search us and reveal our faults so we may work towards a better path for our lives. Romans 12:2 says, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* Romans 12:2 KJV.

As young adults we tend to get caught up in the trends and lifestyle of the world, therefore distracting us from the mission the lord has set us on. Despite where most of our time is spent, we should allow God to transform the way we think. Making sure that our thoughts and goals are aligned with God can be accomplished by seeking his word daily.

As Christians, we need to regularly step back and reflect on our hearts and motivations to grow a healthy spiritual relationship. By taking time to do a self-inventory of our life we can seek the advice and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Remember we aren't perfect; we may sin but in everything, there is a forgiving and loving God.

## **Prayer**

Gracious God, I thank you for being so loving and kind. Search me and show me my faults so I can work on them and grow my relationship with you. As I reflect along with you, let me be attentive to your presence and reminded of your grace and love. Help me to know myself, Lord, so that I might be able to give more of myself to you each day. Amen

# Bearing the Fruit of Righteousness

*“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”*  
(Colossians 2:6–7 NIV)

*“He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”* (Psalm 1:3 NIV)

At Camp Wakonda, the SDB camp outside Milton, Wisconsin, there is a burr oak tree. It is many decades old and shows its age in the scars of lost branches and the thickness of its bark. Each autumn, the tree rains down hundreds of acorns. These acorns are proof of the tree’s health, even at its advanced age. When we consider trees like the stately oak in the front yard at Camp Wakonda, it is not hard to imagine why the author of Psalm 1 would invoke the image of a tree to explain the benefits of righteousness.

Trees and other fruit-producing plants have much to teach us as believers. As it relates to the two passages above, however, there are two important lessons we can learn from plants. The first is that *where we are rooted determines what resources we have access to*. The tree in Psalm 1 is healthy and produces fruit because it is planted by water which keeps it healthy. Paul tells the Colossians to be rooted in Christ because he wants them to have access to godly resources. Being rooted in such resources allows us to be built up and strengthened in Him.

The second lesson we can draw from these two passages is that *the resources we draw from determine what kind of fruit we produce*. Plants which are rooted in unhealthy water sources or diseased soil produce poor or poisonous fruit, if they produce any fruit at all. Paul encouraged the believers in Colossae (and us) to be rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ because by doing so we can bear a bumper crop of thankfulness. As believers, if we fail to remain rooted in him, we will be drawing endlessly from sinful sources in a futile attempt to produce righteous and lasting fruit. The world does not need the rotten fruit of our sinful efforts. The world is in dire need of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are powerful to transform us and bring the seeds of the Gospel to others. Such fruit is borne by us when we drink deep from Him.

Jesus Christ is our righteousness, and it is only in Him that we can bear the fruit of righteousness. As you consider your own life, where are you rooted? Are you rooted in the Lord Jesus or in something else? What kind of fruit is your life bearing? Are you trying to produce the fruits of the Spirit by your own efforts? As you go, sink your roots deep in the Lord today!

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”* (Jesus to his disciples in John 15:5 NIV)

*Nick Kersten was part of Team Thankful, serving the summer of 1998 in North Loup, Nebraska.*



# The Meaning of Sacrifice

*“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living SACRIFICES, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)*

When we picked our team’s name, Cheyane, Kecia, and I all separately concluded that we should be Team Sacrifice. I believed God wanted us to choose that name, but I was not passionate about it. I didn’t expect *sacrifice* to be at the center of the work God did in me this summer. Throughout the summer God taught me three powerful lessons about sacrifice that I will never forget.

The second week, God impressed on me that everything I have is a resource He has given me to give back to Him on the altar as a living sacrifice. That was a paradigm shift. Since everything – including my physical body – is intended to bring God glory, I realized I should be exercising, eating healthy and staying fit. Not because it is in vogue or out of vanity, but because my body is a resource God has given me that works better when it’s in good condition. The call to stewardship extends even to my own body.

Another seismic shift that rocked my view of things was Colossians 3:23 where it says we should “work with all your heart, as working for the Lord not for men”. I already knew that I needed to do my best to the glory of the Father. But what hit me afresh was that He calls us to give our best without shame even when our best is light-years from perfect. God reminded me that comparing myself to others is truly ludicrous. God gives the gifts -- who am I to tell God that He didn’t know what He was doing? God also showed me, that it is okay to be talented. Therefore, I have no reason to look down on those with less or to envy those with more. The only appropriate response is to use all that I have been given (meager or great) back to God for Him to use.

The third lesson I remember from that summer is learning that worship is not simply singing pretty songs or *feeling* worshipful. Worship is giving God back what He deserves. He deserves all of me. That summer, I worshipped by leading singing, cleaning bathrooms, disciplining children, dancing, listening, shouting, and laughing. I learned when I do *everything* to bring glory to the One who gives me the ability to do it, I worship. I offer my body as a living *sacrifice*. . . which is a spiritual act of *worship*.

*Elizabeth Camenga, now Lawton, served in SCSC in 2011 in Milton, WI with partner Cheyane Blevins. They were Team Sacrifice (the “S” in HARVESTIN’) and their Project Director was Kecia Thompsongordon.*

# Team Dorian

*“In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control and self-control with patient endurance and patient endurance with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:5-8 (Team Dorian 2013 team verse)*

I have had the unique experience of being the sound technician for Stained Glass for the last four years (2011-2014). To be honest, when I was first asked to be the sound tech, I was not sure how much I could bring to the table or if I was needed. But they asked, and I accepted. Upon my arrival at training, it became obvious how I was needed in the group and the rest of the summer amplified that confirmation. It was not until the third year, however, that I finally figured out how to express that. Our team’s name that summer of 2013, was Team Dorian. In layman’s terms, Dorian is a mode, a type of musical scale, which is a certain pattern of notes that build upon each other. My mind immediately went to 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, the metaphor of the Church as a physical body. We all have skills that others don’t have, or that we just have more of. And this is a wonderful fact. For if we were all an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? Or applied to Stained Glass, we could all be on stage shredding electric guitars. Sounds cool, right? But it wouldn’t. For one, I have no idea how to play an electric guitar and make it sound good. And if we were all on stage, who would do the sound mixing? We’d be booted off the stage faster than we could finish one ‘song’. It takes all of us working together at our jobs to make the music sound good!

Being a part of Stained Glass, I was also able to see many of our SDB churches. During that summer, as I was musing about this concept, I began to see in each church, there were individuals with certain skills. But also in the Church universal, there are individual churches who are better at some things than others. I’ve observed that throughout the denomination, there are churches with vastly different strengths, experiences, and environments. I could see our team verse about supplementing ourselves with a series of virtues and traits in light of the church. The more we grow in these virtues, the more we are able to work with others and the more useful we will be. It is great that I don’t have to (and can’t) do everything. God has given me what I need to fill the spot (on stage or behind the scenes) where I’m needed!

# Refuge

*“In you, O Lord, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame! In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me, and save me! Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may continually come; you have given the command to save me. For you are my rock and my fortress”* (Psalm 71:1–3).

I remember when Lindsay Crouch and Willy Villalpando were trying to decide what their team’s name would be for their summer project in 2013. They had come up with three words for their name: refuge, rock and rescue. The verse they chose had all three, but they settled on refuge. This winter I have been thankful for taking refuge from cold weather! It may have been the refuge of my home, my car, or the office—any place that was warm and out of the snow! When Team Refuge was here last summer, they were grateful for refuge from the summer heat and humidity. Sometimes we had to get creative with that refuge.

After a hot, humid day at the Family Fun Day on the church lawn, we loaded into our car where there was air conditioning and took a ride. That ride fulfilled the request to be able to experience driving from one corner of the state to the other, in under an hour. It took 43 minutes to go from the southwest corner of Rhode Island to the northeast corner on I-95. And then we took refuge in a restaurant for dinner and continued cool air.

David took refuge many times in caves when Saul was threatening his life. But he also knew that God was his refuge in times of trouble, or times when it just seemed like he needed God’s reassurance that God was still there for him, or even when he needed to repent of his sin. He needed to know his Rock had not moved and his life was still built on solid ground. He was grateful that he could turn to God when he needed to find a place of refuge.

We all have days like that when we need the reassurance that the Rock who is our Refuge is still there. It is those days when we need to find a place of refuge. God is our Refuge, just as He was David’s Refuge. There are the cold days when we run to our Rock and take refuge in His comforting arms when we feel like everyone has turned against us. And on the hot days when we feel stressed and overwhelmed, we go to our Refuge to rest and to be reassured that everything will turn out for our good. We can know that our God will be our Rock and our Refuge no matter what we are going through. We can go to Him with anything, and He will incline His ear toward us and save us. When we go to God for refuge, He will calm our spirit giving us the peace that we need to see us through.

We can find that peace by having a quiet time reading Scripture and talking with the Father. Or perhaps a time of praising Him through song or just being thankful for what He has done in our life. Whatever method you use while taking refuge in the Rock of our salvation to find His peace, you will find Him. He inhabits our praises. We can stand as we take refuge in His hallowed hand, through the storms of this life. We can stand firm on our Rock because He is our Refuge and our Fortress.

# God Uses Imperfect People

*“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.”*  
(Romans 15:4–5)

Paul seems to have written a companion verse to 2 Timothy 3:16–17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” God’s Word was written for us so that we might learn and grow in spirit. Growing and learning give us the encouragement to step out in our faith and boldly proclaim the truth.

We see in Scripture so many men and women of faith who were encouraged by God’s Word. These were people who probably felt the same way we do many times in our lives: “God can’t use me. I’m not good enough!” Or “My faith isn’t strong enough.” Or He asks us to do something that is not one of our strengths. But if we look carefully at those people, they were used by God even with their faults.

Looking at just a few of the people in the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews 11, we can see that God uses ordinary, weak people to step out in faith and show His love to others. Abraham was an old liar who gave into others’ plans when God’s wasn’t in man’s timing. But God made him the father of the nation that would be “as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore” (v. 12). David was an adulterous murderer who at times feared Saul’s threats more than he trusted in God’s faithfulness. But God still fulfilled His promise to make him king of Israel.

And we see David’s faith, his doubts, his repentance, and his praise for God’s faithfulness in the many psalms that he wrote. Rahab was a prostitute, but she encouraged the spies Joshua sent out by welcoming and hiding them. The encouragement was returned to her that she would be saved when the walls of Jericho fell. Her faith in God not only gave her a place in the “Hall of Faith,” but also in the lineage of Jesus (see Matthew 1:5).

If God can use people like this, then be encouraged that He can use us too! And He will give us the endurance to complete the task, finish the race, and go through the trial.

“Lord, when we are feeling that we cannot be of use to You, help us to remember that You are with us through it all. And we can be encouraged by saying ‘I am weak, but You are strong!’ Amen.”

*(Nadine was the Project Director for Sylvia Bond & Becky Young who were Team Encourage serving Westerly, RI in 1997)*

# Team Accepted

*“Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.” (Acts 10:34-35)*

1982 was one of the last years that when you arrived at training you only knew where the projects were, but you didn't know where you were going and with whom you were going! Director, Gerry Van Dyke, pulled me aside one afternoon and told me who my partner would be and why she was telling me ahead of the revealing of teams and project assignments. She told me that Todd and I were being put together because I was mature enough to handle someone different. I thought, “Mature? Maybe because I'm one of the older girls here! But are you sure about attitude maturity?” From our conversation, I knew what our team's name would be: Accepted! I wanted my teammate to know that he was accepted.

Todd was different. He was a philosophical musician! I never really noticed that he practiced his cello and saxophone in the men's bath house at Camp Paul Hummel during training. But I did know that he practiced in the sun porch of the parsonage of the Westerly Church since that was his room while on project. And when it came time for team letters, I did the newsy part and he got philosophical about whatever was on his mind.

Did I live up to Gerry's expectations? I don't really know. I tried to accept Todd for who he was and to work with him as my teammate. Did I do it perfectly? Probably not.

The bridge of Casting Crown's song “If We Are the Body”, says “Jesus paid much too high a price for us to pick and choose who should come,” fits well with Acts 10:34-35 and what I wanted for Todd as my teammate. That's why I chose accepted as our team's name. The church should not be an exclusive club, where we pick and choose who gets to come to it! God doesn't show favoritism! Jesus didn't die for the elite, those that dress a certain way, have the perfect job, or those that have the best complexion with the prettiest smile! He died for all of us, no matter how different we are from what Society is comfortable with, or those that are outside of our comfort zone. If Jesus accepted me with all my faults, quiriness, and weirdness, then what would give me the right to tell Him that He can't accept others with their faults and quirky weirdness? When others choose to come to Christ and accept Him as Lord and Savior, it is up to us as the family of God to make them feel welcomed and accepted into the family.

Father, thank you for accepting me into your family! Please help me to let others members of the family know that they also are accepted! Amen.

*(Nadine (Wear) Lawton and Todd McCrory made up Team Accepted serving in Westerly, RI in 1982)*

# Do Not Be Anxious

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 NIV*

God instructs us not to be worried!

In Philippians 4 verse 6 we are instructed by the Lord not to be worrisome, so every time we are anxious about life, we're actually demonstrating uncertainty towards God's abilities. Let that resonate for a second. Instead of trusting in God's promises, we doubt His abilities or that He cares for us because we are going through a rough time. Or we tend to trust Him to work the small miracles in our lives but are unsure of His ability to perform the bigger ones. The scripture reminds us that we must trust the creator not just in a few of our issues but in ALL SITUATIONS. We must remember that our God is not a lesser God according to our circumstances or the current state of our faith. His power and presence in our lives is unchanging.

So how can we get rid of our anxiety? Well, God tells us that we should pray to Him with thanksgiving and make our requests known to Him. Feeling Stressed out? Pray. Worried? Pray. Anxious? Pray. Overwhelmed? Pray. Our problems sometimes appear so large because we have turned our attention away from God and toward them. He is greater than our troubles by far. There are moments when we need to remind ourselves of who or what we should be focusing on—He is our everything, our healer, our provider, and our shelter.

Finally, let go! Once you have prayed and have asked God for His help, let go and leave it in God's hands. The end of the verse explains that the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The peace we experience once we give our problem or concern to God is like no other because we are no longer dwelling on the issue. When letting go, give it to Him completely. Our focus is no longer on the trial but on Jesus. The feeling of peace that follows, knowing and believing that God is in control and will work it out all for His glory, is priceless. Therefore, when life's challenges arise and you begin to experience stress, worry, anxiety, or doubt, just take a deep breath, recall all the times God has previously helped you through a difficult moment, pray, share your worries with God and ask Him to take control of the situation, and then let go—give him all of your worries and stop worrying about the matter!

## Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for your continued grace and mercy over my life. Please help me to remember that I am your child and that I need not worry or fear anything. Grant me peace of mind and calm my troubled heart in all circumstances. Give me the strength to deal with whatever situations that may arise and help me to stay steady in you and your word. In your mighty and matchless name, we pray. Amen.



# Emmanuel, God with Us

*“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)*

That was the team verse Karissa and I decided on, to complement the team’s name we’d just chosen, “Emmanuel.” You see, Emmanuel means “God with us.” We thought both these things carried a fitting theme. God was with us as we were getting ready to fly to California to serve with the Colton church for the next few weeks. It was Karissa’s first year with SCSC, and she was nervous. I understood that we were going to be especially busy this year and that it’d take a lot of work and energy, and to be honest, Karissa and I both thought about the possibility of our personalities clashing a bit as we worked together. But despite that, we knew God was with us. He allowed us to be placed on a team together for a reason. He brought us to be assigned to work on this project, and He is God! He would help us through all the rough spots.

In this verse, it’s like He was personally telling us: “Don’t be discouraged, I personally will help you, and strengthen you! I’ll take care of you with my own right hand! I am God, and there is no one more powerful or righteous than me. Now Daniel and Karissa, don’t be scared, I’m with you. Trust me.”

As we went, humbly trusting that God Himself would be with us and take care of us, He really brought this verse to life for us. Karissa was nervous about the different tasks she never had the opportunity to serve in before. But God sustained her in His power and grace, and she grew in her abilities and trust in Him through those new experiences. I got tired out on many of those days, with long hours of service throughout the weeks, but God continued to provide the energy and heart to keep going strongly. God cancelled our fears about us clashing as teammates as He brought His wisdom and love to guard our hearts and minds as we worked and interacted together. In fact, He blessed our partnership so richly that we became very good friends by the time our project was completed.

We saw God’s gracious and loving hand moving powerfully through our whole time serving in California that summer. When He said, “I am with you,” He meant it. So what about you? What are you facing in your life right now that’s too big for God? Why cling to it so tightly, depending on your own strength and ability for it instead of trusting it in His? He is God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Master of the universe! When you’re in Jesus, forgiven and purified by His finished payment for you, He’s with you! But are you humbling yourself before Him to receive the help and strength that He so graciously and freely offers you?

When God says He’s with you, He means it. So, trust Him at His Word. Spend time growing in His Word and talking with Him about what’s going on for you and live your life with Him.

*Daniel and his partner Karissa St. Clair were Team Emmanuel serving in 2013 in Colton, CA.*



# Loving Through God's Eyes

The summer started when I stepped off a plane in California for the first time. I wasn't sure what to expect. I knew God had been dealing with my heart a lot about His pure, genuine, and generous love for His children. The message is that He just loves us because He is love, not because of what we can do for Him. And then my project started. In the early days of our project, my partner Karissa and I began to build a relationship by honestly communicating with each other and making an effort to understand each other. This attitude not only reflects God's caring and true heart but really helped us to know how we could help each other out. We discovered sometimes it's hard to talk about what's bothering us, but when we bring it out, it can be dealt with in the right way rather than chafing away at our hearts and relationships.



During our project, we passed out flyers, prepared and ran Vacation Bible School, and worked at a homeless care facility and a food pantry warehouse. We gave out snacks one time and flags and hundreds of Bible books another time.

We helped lead the worship service for one week and had lots of opportunities to talk and share with people in the church. It was great to see God at work and giving us the grace to serve, but it was definitely tiring as well.

My partnership with my teammate continued to grow stronger as God richly blessed us both.

We talked about many spiritual matters and encouraged each other in our identity in Christ. As we understood each other better we were able to look out for each other's weaknesses and build on our strengths. I saw a beautiful picture of the genuine partnership and fellowship that God brings His children when they are redeemed from their sins through Christ's work on the cross.

By the end of the project, when I stepped back on the plane to return from California, I realized our project had been a great time of service with God strengthening and leading throughout. I was able to use my gifts and strengths to serve God and at the same time, God used this time to deepen my love and trust in Him. He taught me the importance of His own love for me and sharing that love with others around me. I will always be thankful for the opportunity to share and experience God's love in Colton in the summer of 2013.

*Daniel Lovelace served in SCSC in 2013 on Team Emmanuel in Colton, CA with his partner Karissa St. Clair. Their Project Director was Chris Galarneau.*

# When SCSC (& I) Was Young

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." (John 14:26)*

OK, you youngsters. I was in SCSC in 1969 – some of you weren't even born yet – it was only the 6th year of having SCSC teams! I left high school early in my senior year, skipping prom, grad night and my graduation for the adventure of SCSC. I was on a team with Alfred Hill, Martha Welch, and Lynne Skaggs as my partners. We were one of 11 SCSC projects that year with workers in Alfred Station, Alfred, Boulder, Little Genesee, Little Rock, Milton, North Loup, Plainfield, Verona, and West Virginia churches. Our team served in North Loup, Nebraska and Pastor Duane Davis was our Project Director. We did camps, door-to-door canvassing and church projects.

God created us with an amazing capacity called memory, so I think it's OK to look back and reminisce at times. One memory I will never forget from this summer in SCSC was being in the parsonage basement during a tornado warning huddled around a hazy black and white TV watching as the astronauts first landed on the moon!

The next year (1970) I was in Texarkana, Arkansas with Pastor Ralph Hayes as Project Director and a team of Geneva Wells, Robert Cartwright, Shelly Austin, and myself. I can still remember some unusual encounters and interesting times in a South that still had strong remnants of segregation. Our team's name was "Expectations" and our team was the first "E" in SERVICE that year.

Since then I've had the opportunity to be involved in several areas of our denomination, including the early beginning of the Stained Glass music ministry, serving on the General Council and being Conference President in 2013, but I will always be grateful for those early years when a lot of faithful people joined me as SCSC trainers, project directors, and fellow workers ... back in a time when we were all a lot younger!

*Ralph Mackintosh served in SCSC in 1969 (North Loup, NE) & 1970 (Texarkana, AR).*

# The Sovereign God (Psalm 24)

As a little boy growing up, I have always heard the phrase “God is Sovereign” and for years I grappled with what it means. As I grow and mature in the Christian faith the more and more, I understand the meaning of this term, But the meaning came alive to me during the latter part of 2023 as my entire church went in prayer with all faith for our dear friend and sister, Victoria Richards. We believed wholeheartedly that God would show up and do the impossible, a miracle and heal her. God did his thing, and it was not the answer that we expected, and the thoughts were in my head thinking God failed. For days I was stunned and didn’t even know how to talk to God and then in the stillness of my room, I heard “God is Sovereign”. He makes no mistakes, and everything is under his control. There are absolutely no limits, no bounds to God’s rule and authority. He is Sovereign over the entire world and everything that happens in it. He is never helpless, never frustrated, never at a loss and most of all he never fails.

Whenever God acts or whenever he does something, he acts in a way that pleases him. God is never obliged to do whatever he doesn’t see best. He is never backed into a corner where he is forced to do something outside of His will. He does whatever he pleases and that makes him Sovereign and God. Psalm 24 gives us an understanding of God’s majesty and sovereignty. The earth belongs to him, he is the manufacturer of the globe that we call our home. His ownership extends to every living being that was and still exists today. God has all rights to the Earth and all who dwell upon it because he created it and them. Let us understand that God knows all things whether it is past, present, or future. His knowledge is way beyond our human understanding (Romans 11:33). So even in the most difficult circumstances of our lives, when we feel all hope is lost, we know that God is in control over all and everything that we go through will work together for our good.

Finally, I want us to know that God’s Sovereignty provides us with comfort. Think about it, because God is Sovereign and he loves you, then it means that absolutely nothing will come into your life that he is not aware of or nothing that happens he didn’t allow. Provision has already been made to accommodate every season that you will face. He is the King of Glory, the Lord of Host. He is mighty in battle, he fights for you, and he is undefeated. So, open your hearts and allow the King of Glory to come in, the most Holy one who is sovereign overall. He can heal every brokenness, every pain, every scar because he is our creator, and he knows us better than everyone. So, Rest in God’s Sovereignty.

*In Memory of Victoria Richards*

# God's Purpose in Our Suffering

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 (NIV)*

It is no secret that life can sometimes be painful. Almost everyone is living with some kind of pain whether physical, relational, mental, emotional, spiritual, etc. Pain is inevitable; none of us can opt out of it but that is not the end. I've learned that pain should not be wasted but used for God's purposes. As I write this devotional, I am in the middle of my pain. So, what I tell you is not just theory, but truths that I've learned through experience.

As Christians, we have hope amid suffering. What is that hope? That God can bring good out of anything, even pain if we trust Him. Because of that hope, we no longer have to see our pain as dragging us down, instead, it is now God using our pain to build us up. Our Scripture focus comes from James 1: 2-4. *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

Here, James asks the reader to process and consider something. What are we considering? That all the pain of suffering produces a beneficial product. According to James, the test of faith is the start of a chain that perfects the Christian, so that in the end, they are lacking nothing. This perfection does not mean we are flawless, but rather that we become more and more complete in our spiritual maturity. The point is that when we undergo trials, there's more to it than the trial: we are being tested, and the testing of our faith produces perseverance, and that perseverance produces maturity and completeness. When you experience pain in the form of trials, testing, or adversity, consider it as all joy because the pain will produce a gain that far exceeds the felt loss. God would not allow pain or send it if it were not beneficial; the benefit, of course, is the development of a Christlike character. Such a character will not develop in our lives without adversity. Understanding that God never wastes pain does not mean that we rejoice that it hurts; rather, we rejoice over what God is going to do with that hurt.

## **Prayer**

Lord, thank you for the challenges set before us, for walking the hard road with us, and for loving us enough to build our faith, drawing us closer to you. Help us to embrace trials not as burdens but as blessings, opportunities to grow in faith and draw close to You, God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# What's on Your Mind

*“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there is any virtue or anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.” (Philippians 4:8)*

Although I didn't know it at the time, my team verse was being prepared for me from the moment I left for SCSC training. I was going through a bit of an identity crisis and was unsure of everything I thought I knew to be true. I was a junior in college but had just changed majors. I didn't know who I was or what my place in the world was. My older brother, who was also my best friend, had just gotten married and was beginning a new life. My own life was not really going as I had planned. Pick any one of the adjectives from the verse above—pure, noble, lovely—and I was probably thinking on the exact opposite at that moment in time.

The summer of 1989 was my third year in SCSC. As always, while at training we were tasked with preparing and presenting our salvation testimony to the entire team and training staff. This was something I had done the two previous years, but this year I really considered my salvation testimony anything but inspirational. God had always been a part of my life. I knew from a young age that Jesus came to earth, died and rose again to take away my sin. I was saved and baptized by the age of nine. Sometimes I didn't feel very saved, though. As I was pondering my testimony, I realized God just wanted me to get out of my own head so He could transform my thinking. My salvation wasn't based on how I felt. It wasn't based on how eloquently I could recount my walk with Christ. I didn't have to make my testimony inspirational. He did that for me, just by imparting His forgiveness, grace and mercy on undeserving me. Once my thoughts began to change, my heart began to change as well. I always knew the “right answer” and I was good at telling people what they wanted to hear. Any good preacher's kid can do that. When I began to truly meditate on the pure, the good, the noble, the lovely, the virtuous, that's when I began to allow God to really start molding me into the person He intended me to be.

Today, this verse often springs into my mind. It's so easy to lose focus of what we really should be thinking about. There are many things in this world that grab our attention and subtly cause us to think on other things. A friend or co-worker tells an off-color joke. TV and movies are full of violence and sexual situations. Even our schools subject us and our children to ungodly ideas and principles. We get weighed down with the worries and cares of life. How will I pay all my bills? Are my kids going to turn out okay? What if this or that happens? It's no wonder Joyce Meyer calls our mind a battlefield. Once even a seed of those thoughts comes into our minds, they can so easily take over. It's like telling someone not to think about pink elephants. But God has given us an entire book of virtuous, pure, lovely and noble things to think on. He works in our lives every day, reminding us of who He is and what He has done for us. He calls us to seek His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33) first and foremost, and then all these things—the answers to daily cares, needs and concerns—will be given.

So how do we “seek first”? It begins with changing those things that constantly invade our thoughts. We have to work for a living, or attend school, and take care of our daily chores, but those things don't have to consume our thought life. We are called to let the Word of God dwell—

to come alive and stay as a permanent resident—in us (Colossians 3:16). This all begins by meditating on those things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, and praiseworthy.

Are you weighed down with the burdens of responsibility? Do your thoughts constantly turn to what you must get done today or tomorrow? Are you more interested in what is on TV tonight than what God wants to teach you today? I challenge you today to consider what it is that consumes your thoughts.

*Dina and her partner Stacy Wagner made up Team Noble in 1989, serving North Loup, NE with Project Director Ruth Ryschon.*

# The Lost Sheep

*“If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it?”*

Luke 15:4 NLT.

In the Bible, Christians are often likened to sheep. Some of us may be wondering, of all the animals, a sheep. Why not a lion? I am sure we would all prefer to be likened to a lion; lions are brave and independent. The analogy of Christians being like sheep in God’s eyes shows how vulnerable and dependent we are. Just as how the sheep is dependent on its shepherd for guidance and food, we too have to be dependent on our Good Shepherd, Jesus.

Without Jesus, we would be spiritually lost wandering without a flock or a shepherd. At times, though we have received Jesus as Lord and Savior, we do tend to wander off when we pursue selfish desires and choose our way. As any great shepherd, our God pursues us and welcomes us into His family of love. He is the God that leaves the ninety-nine for the one. When I begin to think of how forgiving God is when we stray from His path, we ought to want to love Him more and strive to please Him.

After some time in the faith, it can become easy for us to forget all the sins we have committed and how God has forgiven us. We should desire that our families, acquaintances, and others who do not know Him would one day receive the love and forgiveness God has to offer. We should remember that before we were His, we too were like the lost sheep wandering, but He pursued us. May we not lose heart in doing His work, in evangelizing and praying for others.

## **Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving me even though I don’t deserve it. Please teach us to love others from a place of sincerity. Lord, if anything is clouding our hearts from truly loving our neighbors be it bitterness, unforgiveness, envy, or comparison, please rid us of it so we can love others the way you intended. In Jesus’ name, I pray, amen.



# Own the Peace of the Rock

*“You must not let yourselves be distressed—you must hold on to your faith in God and to your faith in me.” (John 14:1, Phillips)*

The devotional title came from the theme for a retreat held in the area I served next. The verse is part of a passage long ago memorized in a different version; but this version makes it a good fit for what I went through, anxious at first to serve, but again becoming homesick as holidays were celebrated.

My third experience as a dedicated service worker was different, as it was not as part of an SCSC team, but rather through a request I made to the Missionary Society at the General Conference following my second summer with SCSC, and an Easter break from school spent with Lightbearers for Christ, sharing the “Four Spiritual Laws” on the beach of Daytona Beach, Florida. I wished to be considered for special dedicated service projects and received a tentative invitation to serve six months at a church on the East Coast and follow that with six months at one on the West Coast. While waiting for more definite plans, I remained home with my family. I still didn’t have a driver’s license and college was on hold after one year for time to prepare for these service fields, and to continue to explore the direction I should go.

In a diary/journal begun September 11, I wrote that I just felt a need to write my thoughts, and blank paper stored in a box would suffice. I had an ear infection keeping me from participating in any social setting. One of my brothers and my sister had also been “under the weather.” He was diagnosed with shingles, but her doctor’s appointment on September 17 brought the news that I was to be an aunt. By September 18, I was getting anxious and bored. My mother was canning tomatoes, but I didn’t know then how to help. I tried helping with other things but ended up watching television or reading, and wondering if I shouldn’t be looking into returning to college. It had been a while since I’d had a chance to talk to a friend, so I had moments of loneliness as well, but I began using the time to make a quilt for my sister’s first baby. My entry for that date adds that my father did not keep a commitment to pick up one of my brothers from school, instead staggering home nearly three hours later and going to sleep. My mother, choosing not to argue with him, spent time talking to me. I wrote: “She still loves him I’m sure, but he’s discouraged and discouraging. Oh, Lord, I want to be strong, to do something and pray it may be in the churches; and Lord, I pray you to help my folks, and thank you for hearing and answering.”

On September 20 I wrote: “This morning was special from the beginning. Instead of routine (gray days lately), when I opened, the shade, I saw sunshine, ... God’s wonder. I made both boys’ beds and swept the steps, then took a call from Alton Wheeler concerning Westerly: it’s still on, maybe next week! [Aunt] Joyce called to say my cousin learned today she got the lead in a UW-Rock play, on her birthday!”

On September 26, my mother was still making calls for the best arrangement to get me to the airport. I left that day, concerned that she couldn’t get new clothes for me (no need, in my opinion) and for expenses all along the way. While gone, I was to call and write. My service involved starting and teaching a kid’s club, participating in worship services and Bible studies, and assisting

with a variety of projects in the pastor's office. The pastor and his wife both had health issues that came up, but they continued their work with me, guiding me as one of their own, and I became comfortable there. I helped babysit their grandchildren and was hired to clean the house for another couple. When I came home on an unscheduled break for Christmas, my parents couldn't stop me from helping with chores. I may not have served as expected, but I learned much about God and myself. I was ready to move on with my educational and career goals when my service time there ended, and the West Coast church decided they did not have a project for me.

Although my service in Westerly ended in March, I have an entry from September 30 to share in closing this devotional thought. "I thought of another idea for keeping a diary, besides recording a day's event. Not all encounters or events will be recorded, but they will be remembered, as words are written and in them, we thus see cause for thanksgiving or need for forgiveness or a special person's need for prayer. Even a thought like this keeps me in touch, to know God is as real now as ever."

# Pray Without Ceasing: My 1972 SCSC Experience

*“Let your hopes keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times.”*  
(Romans 12:12)

My first entry in my scrapbook is a circle of words going inward, saying “Flight number one towards great expectations and you bet I’m going in circles with anticipation. But though flight plans say Janesville to O’Hare, then on to Dallas, my Uncle Jerry drove my family and me to the airport.” And then outside the circle is the paragraph, “Thanks to Uncle Jerry for three very roomy luggage bags at the last minute, then the tour of O’Hare in that hour before flight time.” My service was off to a rough start, as my graduation was later than others headed to SCSC training, and my grandfather died, taking my father from any possible plan of providing transportation by his departure for his father’s funeral. The SCSC training started but was combined with an event called Explo ‘72, which I was able to attend in its entirety.

The Summer Christian Service Corps theme was “Holy Spirit” with team names of Harmony, Onesimus, Light, Yielding, Sing A’lone (a team of one), Prayerful, Involved, Radiant, Inspiration and Tempest. My team was Chris Ayars and myself, working out of Paint Rock, Alabama. Being there, we were almost like a three-person team, with Debbie Pearson participating alongside us in what we did. We would teach Bible School, participate in worship services, do visitations, and do a canvass of the area for the pastor.

In our first team letter, one paragraph reads, “Fellow workers and supporters, Team Prayerful are especially thankful to the Lord. Chris thinks that her new middle name is Job. On the trip her ears were painful, and she couldn’t hear, plus the [return of the] old throat trouble. After several visits to the doctor, that has been relieved, but now the itch has set in. It seems that her medicine causes it. But give thanks in all things. We’re thankful to the Welches for the help they have given her. They’ve been really good to us. We pray that all those other sore throats don’t turn into ear infections. ... Chris’s present challenge, besides the itch, is learning to drive a standard shift car. ‘I hope I don’t ruin the poor car.’” Chris’s ear infection did clear, as she was quick to hear and to pick up the Southern accent all around us. She also was more adventurous, as letters noted that she milked her first cow and rode “Nellie Belle,” dressed as a “real cowgirl.” There were numerous references to trying to put weight on me, unsuccessfully. (Ah, those were the days!)

We had times of sharing the “Four Spiritual Laws” sometimes getting someone to at least consider inviting Christ into their heart. We struggled to teach active young people who scooted under the pews during class. We discovered that there are rewards for those who sow as well as for those who reap.

Another letter said: “Ever since we first left you we have kept praying and asking God to help you understand what He wants you to do and to make you wise through the Spirit that the way you live will please and honor the Lord, that you will always be doing good, kind things for others all the time learning to know God better and better. We are praying to God that you will be filled with His mighty, glorious strength so that you can keep going no matter what happens, always full of the joy of the Lord. (Check out Colossians 1.)

Borrowing from a letter by Team Sing A'Lone (Debbie Barber), a similar thought to the above paragraph seems fitting as the closing:

Wisdom and Understanding, God of truth,  
Grant to all who teach,  
The wisdom to know  
They are not wise;  
And to all who learn  
The understanding  
That they do not  
Understand.

*A'Lone (Debbie Barber)*

# Trust

*“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” (2 Timothy 2:11-13 NIV)*

What does it mean to be trustworthy? Webster defines trustworthy as “worthy of confidence” and “dependable.”

Trust can be a fleeting thing. Some people can be too trusting. They believe in the best in everyone and every situation. Trust can also be difficult to obtain. One must prove themselves as reliable, as someone who can be counted on.

As I write this more than 30 years after being in SCSC I wonder if I was too trusting at that time. I left for training at the age of 18, less than 72 hours after my high school graduation. I had never been away from my family for more than a week at a time. But, hey, God had told me to do this, so I trusted everything was going to be just fine. There would be no problems. I had trust in Him.

I was greatly mistaken. The first problem hit me during training. I developed bronchitis so bad that I kept many awake coughing. Pastor Randy took me from Camp Paul Hummel down the mountain to a doctor in Boulder whom I did not know for antibiotics. Lessons one and two in trusting. Those who knew Pastor Randy will certainly understand that.

The second problem occurred as we were leaving training. We had problems with the flights for both our team and a team that would be serving near us. We did make it to our projects, but it was not by the arrangements that had been made for us. Lesson three is trusting. And I had only been away for ten days. There were still five more weeks to go.

Yes, there were more problems as that summer progressed. But I quickly learned I could not solve them on my own. I had to trust that God was there with me. Trust that He was dependable and worthy of my confidence. He put the problems in my path to further increase my trust in Him.

As the years have passed, I find I have problems at times trusting people and ideas. And I imagine you do too. We have all been burned by someone whom we trusted when that trust was broken. Trust can be broken by something as simple as a broken promise. Or it can be as difficult as someone breaking confidence. Either one makes us less likely to trust, especially when it happens more than once.

But this I know and trust, He is worthy of our confidence, and He is dependable. He will always be there no matter what we do. He will remain faithful even as we try to push Him away. As Timothy wrote, *“because we have died with him and endured with him, we will live and reign with Him.”* He is worthy of our trust. And always will be.

# I Know the Plan I Have for You

It has been 22 years since I spent my first summer in Colorado as part of SCSC. That summer was life-changing in many ways; but in particular, it was a catalyst which helped change the direction I was going in life. Because of the things God showed me during our project that summer, I changed my college major and eventually selected my career.

There were two primary experiences which really made a difference in my life. The first was the opportunity to provide counseling at Camp Paul Hummel. God showed me that I was able to help others in need and planted a seed of love for counseling which has continued to grow ever since.

The second area was learning how to lead and work with others. We had an 8-member team (probably the largest single team ever) sharing responsibilities of both camp counselors and workers to build a fence at Camp Paul Hummel. We didn't have a lot of adult direction, so we had to figure out how to work together. God showed me that I could be a leader with others and planted a seed of leadership which has also continued to grow since then.

At first, I thought God was leading me into pastoral ministry, but as I listened more closely, I realized His plan for me was in counselling. Today I own a family counseling practice which requires both skills from those SCSC project seeds of counselling and leadership. God has also blessed me with opportunities to minister in these areas within the church as well as my secular job.

In hindsight, I'm glad I didn't miss that summer in SCSC, or the life-changing lessons God taught me. I wholly agree with what the Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11, “*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” I know God's hand was in my SCSC experiences that summer in Colorado and I praise Him for helping me see the plan He had for me!

*Rod Noel served in SCSC in the summer of 1982 at Camp Paul Hummel, CO with partners Vivian Bass, Cindy Hays, Robert Mieke, Ralph Hays, Tim Osborn, Gary Salyers, and Barbara Schock. Their Project Director was Gerry Van Dyke.*

# I'm Not the Same

My SCSC “era” was the six years from 1998 to 2003. As I look back on these years, I remember the whole experience of leaving the familiar surroundings of home and being stretched outside of my “comfort zone”. It builds your faith when you must depend completely on the Lord. Even though most SCSC’ers experience this; what amazes me, is that EVERY year is an entirely new experience and EVERY year I grow and learn more about myself and my relationship with God.

I’m an introvert, or at least I prefer to be in smaller groups of people that I know. In SCSC, I had to be more outgoing and in charge. With God’s help, I discovered a little more each summer that those you are leading will only be comfortable if they think you are comfortable and enjoying what you are doing. I’ve heard it said, “The best way to learn something is to teach it”. I found this to be true during my projects when I had opportunities to share my faith. You do learn more about your relationship with God when you share Him with others.

The friendships I had with other SCSC’ers have been a real blessing to me. It’s like you have a whole new family while you are away from your own. And just like our families at home, I had to learn how to work with, get along with, and support my partner each year. Many of the people I met in SCSC are still my closest friends today.

Each year I experienced new things during SCSC that I would never have even encountered at home. I have fond memories of first eating carob chips in California, my first airplane ride on my way to training, learning how to cook for camp in Australia, and eating nasturtiums on tuna sandwiches in New York. Yes, thanks to SCSC, I have been enriched in many ways and I am not the same!

*Marissa (Van Horn) Patterson served in SCSC for 5+ summers: 1998 (Laughter) in Milton, WI; 1999 (Expectation) in New Auburn, WI/Dodge Center, MN; 2000 (Overjoyed) in Verona, NY; 2001 (Eschew) in Riverside, CA; 2002 (Lilly) in Columbus OH; and part of a team sent to help set up SCSC in Australia.*



# Tender Hearts

It was my second year in SCSC, and training was held in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. That year (1977) during training we were invited to attend a Christian concert at Red Rocks, a natural outdoor amphitheater in Colorado. When I came back that night, I was criticizing some of the crowd for the way they were worshipping. I don't remember exactly what annoyed me but I know I looked down on them. The SCSC training director, Gerry VanDyke, overheard me and quietly took me aside. Gerry pointed out that I might not know people's true motivations; and that I might be misjudging them.

It was then in our conversation that Gerry asked a probing question, "Your parents divorced just a few years ago, are you feeling badly about that?" I broke down crying. She had located a huge source of hurt. I hadn't understood how much that wound was affecting my behavior, prompting me to be irritable, critical and short-tempered.

That night God healed me of the hurt I didn't even know I had. Thanks to Gerry's willingness to confront me in love and help me, I was able to truly forgive my parents. What a difference that made in me! Ephesians 4:31-32 says "*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*"

Of course, God has continued to teach me many lessons through the years. That summer wasn't the only time I've had to deal with inner hurts or get along with others, but God has compassionately and generously poured out his loving forgiveness on me over and over again!

What a great example He shows us. . . to be tenderhearted to others. . . just as He is.

*Patty (Burdick) Petersen, 1975 "Invincible" in Paint Rock, AL and 1977 "Gloria A Dios" in Schenectady, NY Partners: Sharon Schattenburg, Debbie Kavarnos, Project Directors: Barry Clapper, Dave Taylor*

# We Need to Get Along

The other day I heard someone mention Ephesians 6:7 “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people.” Like it was yesterday, memories of my SCSC summer in Battle Creek, Michigan when that was our team verse came to mind. We learned to focus on God and serving him. That doesn’t mean we didn’t have some differences of opinion within our team – we did! God was faithful to help us work through some areas of friction and learn how to work together. (God is very good at that!) We had a great summer serving Him wholeheartedly together and we remain good friends today.

One of my most fun memories took place during our 3 weeks of camp with Pastor Kory Geske. We were deciding on work group names at camp. For some reason, Jonathan Lawson and I both decided on the name Albatross. He said he would arm wrestle me for who got to use the name. Then we “took it outside” and surprisingly (to him), he had a hard time taking me down. Even though he eventually won, I found that I gained some respect from the kids by not backing down.

I don’t even remember today why we both wanted the name Albatross. I do find it interesting, that not only does Albatross describe a large white ocean bird, but it is also defined as “something that causes persistent anxiety that hinders our accomplishment”. God taught our SCSC team that summer not to hold onto or bury problems between us, but to deal with them in God’s love. That lesson really helped us to eliminate the issues before they hindered our project and allowed us to serve the Lord wholeheartedly!

*Jessica (Patterson) Pradetto served in SCSC in 2010 on Team Wholehearted in Battle Creek, MI with partners Lauren Telford & Jonathan Lawson. Their Project Director was Samantha Fick.*

# The Summer a Tree Fell on Me

Our team verse from Proverbs 27:17 (“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”) was illustrated repeatedly throughout our project. We were three girls – each very different – serving the Lord that summer in the Paint Rock SDB church. Looking back, I can see how well it worked out. We complemented each other in many ways *like iron sharpens iron*, and we learned a lot from each other.

My biggest memory (*figuratively and literally*) from that summer was when a 60-foot Pecan tree fell on me! It started when we were unloading some paving stones at the church and a big storm came up. As we were starting to go inside, there was a big CRACK – and suddenly there was a huge tree branch on the ground and on me.

Amazingly, we had just spent time earlier that week cleaning house for a couple needing our help and he was an EMT! He showed up right after the tree fell! People kept asking me what year it was (*so I will always remember it happened in 2009*) and checking to see that I was alright. With lots of prayers, all the right people around, and a GREAT BIG GOD watching out for me, I was back on my project the next day.

For team Iron, the “I” in SECURITY, the rest of our project was less dramatic, but equally as blessed by God, who continued to strengthen and protect these three girls far away from home.

*Jessica (Patterson) Pradetto served in SCSC in 2009 on Team Iron in Paint Rock, AL with partners Dorothy Noel & Melody Rankhorn. Their Project Director was Ellen Griffen.*

# The Beginning of Wisdom

*The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.  
Proverbs 4:7 (NIV)*

When this verse came up in my devotions one night, I had to reread it. God, really? The first step to wisdom is just getting it. And on top of that, it will cost everything I have to get understanding. I sat there for a while, contemplating, and praying about what that verse could mean. As my life is changing around me and will only continue to, I often pray that God will give me wisdom in my decision making to follow His path. Wisdom is not simply knowledge of something, it is knowing how to soundly apply the knowledge you have. It is from God. That's when I remembered another verse. Proverbs 9:10, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*" Now it makes more sense. God tells us exactly what to do. If we fear Him, we get wisdom. And getting understanding will cost everything because we must die to self to truly know the Holy One. Life can be hard to understand, especially if we lean on our own understanding. However, God tells us that if we know and follow Him, He will direct our paths. He will give us wisdom.

## **Prayer:**

Thank you God for being our light. Though life may throw challenges our way, we thank you for giving us wisdom and understanding as we follow your path for us. Amen.

# SCSC 1964, a Life Changing Experience

*“For I know the plans I have for you” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)*

I had the privilege of serving on the very first Summer Christian Corps (SCSC) team in 1964, serving in Metairie, Louisiana with the Metairie Seventh Day Baptist Church. In reality, it was New Orleans, as the church was located only two blocks from the New Orleans city line and much of our work was done in New Orleans in housing projects there. SCSC was not a known term then. There was no training session that year. There was no identified project director. The idea of summer dedicated service was conceived in the mind of the then Youth Field Worker Linda Bingham, who that fall became Mrs. Jack Hays. She presented the idea to the Seventh Day Baptist Women’s Board which was then headquartered in Milton, Wisconsin, and the idea took root. The Women’s Society put their resources behind it, and they have never let go of it since. I was asked to serve on that team along with Alan Crouch and Judi Van Horn, with Linda serving as team leader.

I’m not sure why I was chosen but I’m sure glad I was. It was life revolutionizing for me. It offered an opportunity for my first ever commercial airline flight, flying in the brand new Boeing 707 jet plane. (Jet planes had just been successfully introduced into commercial airline service only one or two years before.) It put me into a church situation different from my home church, allowing me to experience life in Seventh Day Baptist churches other than Milton, the church where I grew up. It allowed me to taste life in big cities, of which I had had minimal experience. I was able to be mentored by thoughtful pastors and Bible teachers like Earl DeLand and Ralph Hays, and to be encouraged by caring Christian workers like Persus DeLand, Jack Hays, and of course Linda Bingham. It allowed me to experience spiritual realities I had not had contact with before, all while sitting under the tutelage of trusted Christian leaders. My horizons were greatly broadened, and my faith deepened.

By that summer of 1964, I had completed two years of college. I was a mathematics major at Milton College with my sights set on a career in meteorology. Pastor Victor Skaggs, then dean of the Seventh Day Baptist Center on Ministry, had been to town sometime during those two years and talked with me about entering the pastoral ministry. My memory is fuzzy about that now, but I seem to recollect telling him I was not interested because I was not a people person. SCSC did not change who I am, but it did change my perspective on who I was and what God was calling me to do. It was within the next two years I made my commitment to pastoral work and set my sights in that direction. It is also interesting to note, that Pastor Vic was dean all the years that I was in seminary, from 1967 to 1970.

I made a fascinating discovery when I was in SCSC, that I enjoyed being on the front lines where I could see God work in the lives of people. I’m not a people-oriented person; I’m more of a project-oriented person. To tell you the truth, I still am that way. But in SCSC I learned I could orient myself toward caring for people and that I delighted in bringing the power and love of God to prevail upon their lives. It was perhaps the major influence in directing me toward the work of pastoral ministry, a life decision I have never regretted.

# What Happens After SCSC

*“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.” (1 Timothy 4:15 NIV)*

Perhaps some of the most awesome things for me that came out of SCSC happened after my summer in New Orleans in 1964. For me, the project itself was a training session as there was no training session at the beginning. I did have some training for the summer. I got lessons from my mom on how to iron my clothes, lessons I still use to this day. I began using a slide camera that I had inherited from my dad and initiated its use on the project that summer. But the real training I had was on the job. There are two things one can say about this. First, on the job training does not mean that the work you do while on the project has no value other than training. But then second, it also means there is more once the project is completed. SCSC summers are not only ends in themselves but also means toward still greater ends.

The Seventh Day Baptist Conference was in Salem, West Virginia, that year at Salem College. Pastor Rex Burdick was conference president, and the theme was “Christ Is the Answer.” Al Crouch and I came by train to Salem, which worked out well as the railroad still ran through Salem and there was frequent passenger service, which was good because we missed our connection in Cincinnati and had to take a later train. Pastor Mynor Soper was director of Youth PreCon that year, and while in New Orleans that summer I had prevailed upon him to allow me to serve on staff. I was perhaps presumptive because I was only slightly beyond being able to go to Youth PreCon as a camper, and many of my good friends from Milton were going to be campers at that camp. Considering the circumstances I am deeply thankful that Pastor Mynor allowed me to serve.

I began using some of the things I learned that summer right away at that camp. One was to be willing to take authority. I was in charge of the boys barracks at night, and I remember having to get up in the middle of the night to direct some of the campers to quiet down and go to sleep. I was somewhat terrified by having to do that but then was likewise equally amazed when they did indeed quiet down. It is important when one is a leader to be a leader and not a pal. Yes, there were times I was able to just be friends with some of my buddies, but I learned when I needed to lead stand up and lead.

But perhaps the most significant thing that happened at PreCon was I had the opportunity to talk about my summer and show pictures. Back then there was no PowerPoint, not even computers except monsters that filled whole buildings. But I did have slides as opposed to prints and was able to put pictures of the summer on the screen. This was the first accounting on an SCSC summer, and it was to an extremely important audience. Opportunity was given during the Conference that year for young people to sign up for a summer dedicated service project the next summer and most if not all the team that went out in 1965 was there at that PreCon, Reflections I heard later on seemed to indicate that the presentation was directly responsible for at least one of the next summer’s workers deciding to go. I was using my SCSC on the job training right away. And it has not stopped being valuable.

# Trouble Believing God?

*“It’s impossible to please God apart from faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists and that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6, The Message)*

A couple of years after my SCSC experiences, I went through a time of doubting my faith and I remember praying the above verse. In looking back on that time, I realize that amid my doubt, I desperately wanted to be in a relationship with God and wanted Him to be more real in my life than He had ever been.

Despite that, in my “intelligentsia,” I had tried to “prove away God.” Intellectually, I had done a pretty good job of being able to “explain away” God’s interventions in my life. However, an experience from one summer in SCSC thwarted my attempt to explain away God’s activity in my life. The incident that I could not explain away was an answer to a person’s desperate prayer.

My partner and I were crossing the Mississippi River bridge heading for “home” one night at about midnight (we didn’t have curfews in those days), when my partner and I turned to each other and said that we felt we should turn around and visit a person in the church on the other side of the river. What I could not explain away was that when we knocked on that person’s door in the early hours of the morning, the person said, “I was praying that you would come.” The person was hurting, and we had the opportunity to pray with her. Little did I realize at the time that this incident was not only a blessing for her, but that God would use this experience later in my life.

God has a wonderful “ways and means committee” and in His economy, experiences we share with others are often for our mutual edification. Are you struggling to believe in God? Or are you just struggling? Our God does care enough to respond to those who seek Him because He loves us so deeply!



# Need Motivation or Ability?

*“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”*  
(Philippians 2:12-13, NLT)

This is my life verse and one that I adopted after my two summers in SCSC. I wanted so desperately to live for God, but I didn't always seem to have the motivation or the ability to be what I believed God wanted me to do or be. As I was reading through the Living Bible one day, these verses jumped out at me. It was as if God said, “You've got it all wrong. You're trying to be something you can't be. But I am not a capricious God who motivates people to desire to be something that they can't be. I am not a halfway God. I am a God who will give you the desire when you need it—and then I will give you the ability to do what pleases me.”

This verse has revolutionized my life with God. It has kept me from frustration. As I served on the SCSC training staff, there were many occasions when I recognized that I either lacked the desire and/or ability to do what I needed to do in a particular situation.

Knowing that I have a God who delights to give me whatever I need in order for Him to be seen in my life, has kept me from panic, given me peace, given me strength, and given me confidence—not in myself but in Him.

Do you lack motivation or desire to do what God wants for you? Do you lack the ability to do what pleases God? Then you are a perfect candidate for God's army. He is a wonderful God and He delights in using weak people! He's just waiting for each of us to ask!

*Althea met her husband in SCSC and later married Pastor Dale Rood. She also went on to contribute to SCSC as the training director and President of the SDB Women's Society for several years.*

# Eat Your Vitamins and Say Your Prayers

Not everyone knows that I have always wanted to be a professional wrestler. Ever since I was a child, it has been my dream to be a big strong 6' 5" giant with 24-inch biceps. Even though I knew a lot of the fighting was pretend, I just really wanted to be strong! Unfortunately, I stopped growing at 6 feet, and didn't bother measuring my biceps because, well . . . I never lifted any weights.

Was it just coincidence then that our SCSC team in the summer of 2008 serving in Milton was called "Samson"? We were a team of four and we were the coolest team of all time (self-proclaimed). Our team verse was Philippians 4:13 *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

During our project, I learned what my team verse meant by strength, and that I wasn't even close to done growing. I went into SCSC insecure, depressed, and hiding behind fake laughter. I looked at everyone else and saw talented people but looked in the mirror and saw nothing special. There were so many times I felt weak. One day I told God "I feel so weak and worthless, how can I sit here and tell people you make them strong when I'm not strong." The next morning after that conversation I felt new and dare I say it 'strong' not in my Macho Man Randy Savage perception of strength, but that I could do anything. I knew this new feeling was not by my own doing but instead by Christ who strengthened me and still strengthens me today.

I learned a lot about strength that summer. Not just physical strength, but spiritual strength. I learned that I didn't need to look like Hulk Hogan to be strong. As I remember the story of Samson, he took a while to learn that same lesson. The apostle Paul also says it well in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 *"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me . . . For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

*Benny Uhlich served in SCSC in the summer of 2008 in Milton, WI. Together with partners Ashley Henry, Gawane Bennett, and Joshua Rankhorn, they made up Team Samson (the 'S' in CHOSEN). Their Project Director was Stephanie Sholtz.*

# This Little Light of Mine

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)*

Our team verse was about letting your light shine before men, and we were Team Shine...the “S” in the overall team’s name NEVER ASHAMED. Our project was in Milton, and we started out doing a lot of painting at camp. Then we did a week of VBS and finished out our project by doing two weeks of camp (Intermediate and Jr. High) at Camp Wakonda.

While we were at Intermediate Camp that year, something that I will always remember happened. Pastor Dale Rood was directing, and he told me that he saw me as a leader. That may not sound very dramatic to you, but no one has ever told me anything like that before! It was certainly not how I saw myself at the time. I saw myself as someone who tried my best to follow the path set before me, not as someone making a path for others to follow. This seed planted that summer has grown as I learned more about who I am in Christ and is just one example of how SCSC has affected my life. *(I even ended up moving to Milton 5 years later because of the great experience that I had during our project there.)*

Another way God opened my eyes that summer was that, for the first time, I realized I was part of something so much bigger than myself. Going into that summer, I was a pretty self-sufficient person, who didn't need to rely on other people (at least not much). But everything about the SCSC experience, from training, throughout our project, and even evaluation, was so much bigger than anything we mere humans could pull off on our own. As I reflected on our team verse, I could look at the people surrounding me, see their good works, and know that it was God empowering them. My prayer to this day is that people will be able to see that it is God who empowers me to do what I do as He continues to SHINE through me.

*Jenni (Osborn) Wangsness served in SCSC in 1999 on Team Shine in Milton, WI with partners Ben Calhoun & Nathan Davis. Their Project Directors were George and Lannette Calhoun.*

# God's Hug

For many of us, SCSC was one of the first times to be away from home for an extended period. That was certainly true for me when I went to Milton, WI my first year in SCSC. I loved everything about the SCSC experience – camps, meeting new people, and going outside my comfort zone. But it was the first time I had been away from home for more than a week, and one afternoon partway through our project, I got homesick.

I can remember so clearly being in my room at Doris Rood's house. Suddenly, I missed my parents, my siblings, and all my friends so much. I was lying on the bed crying as I reminded God that He promised to always be with me. Psalm 139 says we can never be lost from God, that He knows exactly where we are, and Romans 8:38-39 says there is nothing that can separate us from God's love. But right then, I just needed a hug!

God showed up! At that point, my spirit calmed and I felt so warm and comforted -- I felt more hugged than I ever had in my life. It was a wonderful feeling I can still remember nearly 34 years later.

I knew without a doubt that God *was* always with me and knew exactly where I was and what I needed. Matthew 28:30 says, "*I am with you always*" and Hebrews 13:5 says, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*" These words were more than just Bible verses to me that day. My tears became tears of joy, and I began to praise God for his loving presence. My homesickness was gone. I fell asleep comforted and woke up refreshed and ready to do His work!

*Raakeli (Goodson) Watt along with her partner Ben Stillman served in Milton, WI the summer of 1980.*

# Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

*“Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.”  
(Psalm 105:5)*

*“I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands  
have done.” (Psalm 143:5)*

*“I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.”  
(Psalm 77:11)*

It will be 30 years ago this summer that I was in SCSC working at the SDB Center in Janesville, Wisconsin. MaryJo Johnson, Eric Inabnit, and I were Team Confidence, the letter “C” in VICTORY. One of my favorite parts of our project was going through all the artifacts in the SDB center that are centuries old. I love history and there is so much history in that building!

There were highs and lows during the summer. Once during our project, we went to a Christian rock concert with the band Petra. I remember feeling the Spirit moving while we were there. Then I remember feeling low when I had to have an emergency wisdom tooth extraction. Eric and I stayed with Pastor Herb and Barbara Saunders, and they treated us as if we were part of the family, which is one of the best things for young men spending their summers away from family and friends.

I would have to agree with the Psalmist when he tells people to remember all the great things God has done in the past. God did some pretty amazing things! You wouldn't think people would forget His great love and power, but all through the Old Testament, God is repeatedly telling the Israelites to “remember” what has happened before. It is true that looking back not only puts the present in perspective, but it reminds us of what kind of God we serve.

Aldous Huxley once said, “That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons of history.” As we remember the past 50 years of SCSC, I am glad I was able to be a part of it. This is a great opportunity to remember all God has done through SCSC and praise Him for being the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow!

*Sean Wells served in 1983 as Team Confidence in Janesville, WI with partners Eric Inabnit & MaryJo Johnson. Their Project Directors were Scott and Jeannie Smith.*

