

The
Sabbath
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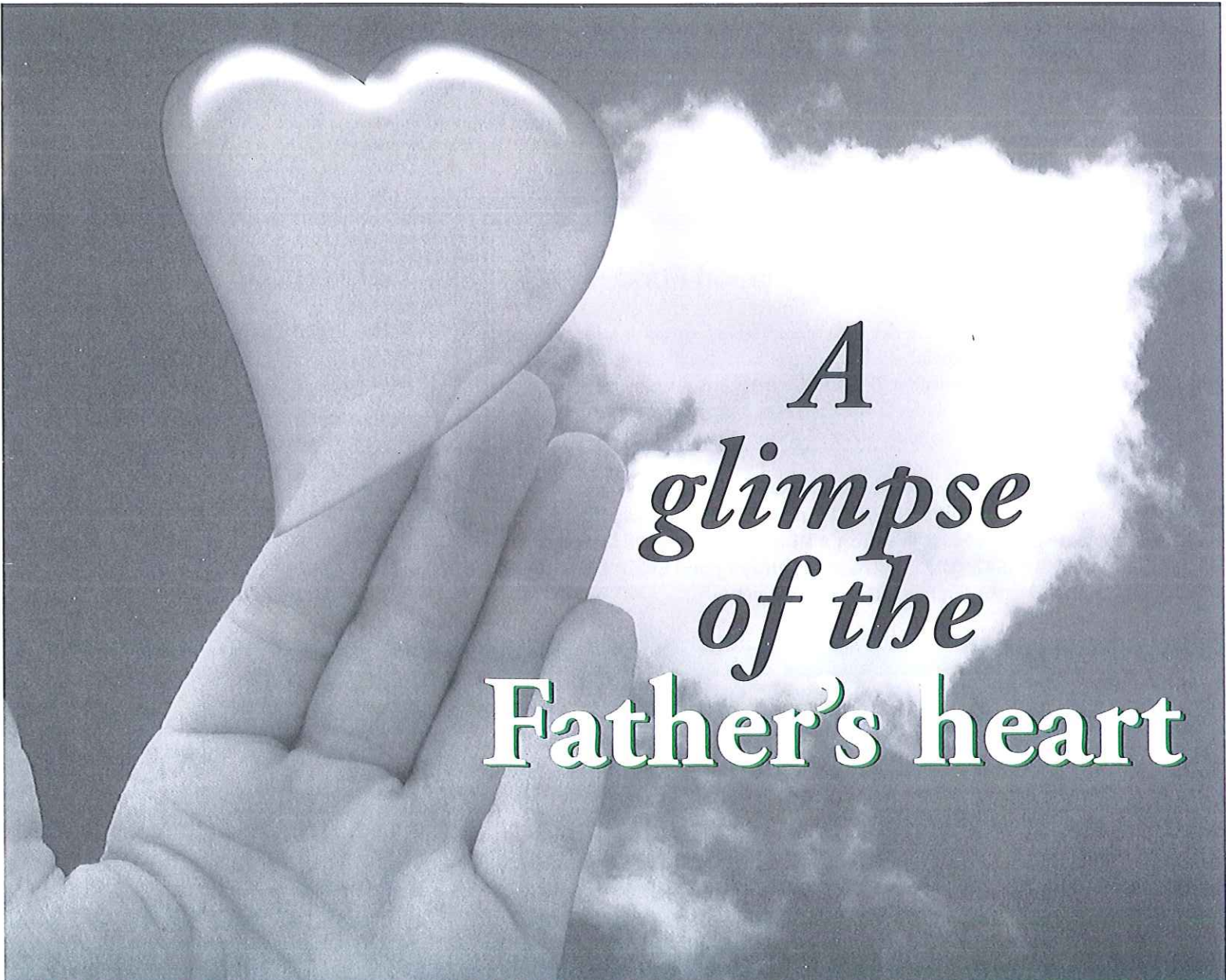
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Get Involved!

Alfred has
awakened

October 2010

News for and about Seventh Day Baptists



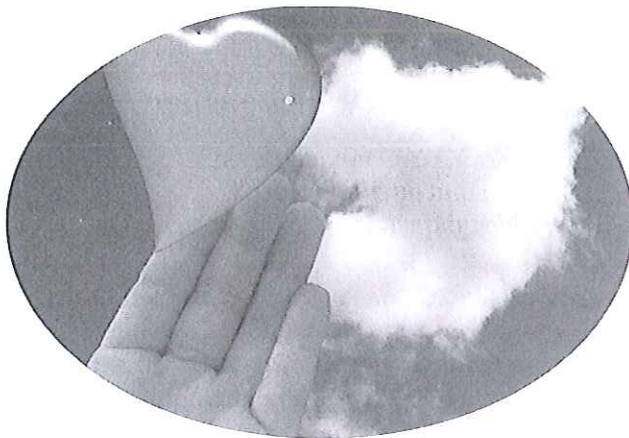
A
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A glimpse of the Father's heart

("He Lives!")

by *Renée Sanford*
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I know that He is living, whatever men may say

In the last year, my husband and father-in-law's Godly passings into eternity brought into vivid focus the contrast between the assurance and peace at the bedside of a believer, compared to the deaths of my father and brother.

My peace was troubled. I couldn't get my father and brother out of my mind. Repeatedly I took my grieving thoughts captive and brought the burden for their souls back to Jesus. But peace did not return.

I asked for prayers that I might regain my peace—believing this was an attempt by evil ones to trip me up and send me into a spiral away from God.

He's in the world today

Recently I was convicted of having no heart, no passion for the lost, no enthusiasm for missions or for the Great Commission. So I asked the Lord to show me, to change me, to give me a heart for missions.

I did my part—I read missionary biographies and studied Scripture and "coincidentally" was asked to help with drafting a missions policy. So I thanked God for answering my prayer and asked Him to continue showing me the way.

It was one of those almost casual "throw away" prayers. I should know better.

I serve a risen Savior

My father died nearly 20 years ago without ever experiencing the joy of salvation. In my intense grief, the Lord gave me peace and assurance that He loved my father more than I did.

I could leave the issue safely in His hands. All that needed to be done would be done. In eternity, all tears would be wiped away.

My brother died about two years ago. To the best of my knowledge, he also was not a believer. Again the Lord gave me His peace and the assurance that He loved my brother more than I did.

I was comforted knowing God had done, was doing, and would do all that needed to be done.

I see His hand
of mercy,
I hear His voice
of cheer

Peace and assurance still did not return. What would have been my brother's 60th birthday approached and the grief became intense. I longed to see my brother, to hear his voice; to know that we'd be together again.

I tried to turn from the reality of the Scriptural teaching that some will be lost forever, but I couldn't shake it. Tears welled up at the slightest remembrance.

I cried out to God, "When will You answer? Why, for years when I was distant from You, did I feel so assured? And now I am so aware of your constant presence, yet I have no peace?"

And just the time
I need Him,
He's always near

And then He answered.

Not with peace but a piercing wound. When I once again thought of my brother and my longing and my fear—and, once again relinquished it, praying for his salvation and asking God for His peace—I got His answer.

"NO."

What?? The dread of eternal separation did not leave. It became deeper and stronger and more wrenching. Tears, sobs, I tried to stop the feelings.

"NO. Don't push this away.
Hold it close to you."

What?

"Dearheart, it isn't an attack of the evil one that is shattering your peace. I have withdrawn the comfort to answer your prayer."

Huh? What prayer? I want to know I'll see my family and spend eternity with them.

"Not that prayer. Remember. Remember. You asked for My heart for missions. And I am giving you what you asked for. Come and see."

But my brother and my father,
Lord...

"For years you held on to a truth and it gave you assurance. It is true. I do love your father and brother more than you do. It is true. Everything has been done, is being done, will be done. I love them. SEE how I love them. FEEL how I love them."

He Lives, He Lives— Salvation to impart

Then I saw and felt His love for them. A heart-wrenching love. Tears didn't just flow from my eyes, they splashed.

*“SEE HOW I LOVE THEM.
FEEL HOW I LOVE THEM.
Your father. Your brother.
Are more precious to me
than you can imagine.
“SEE HOW I LOVE THEM.
FEEL HOW I LOVE THEM.
MY HEART BREAKS WITH
LOVE for those who do not
know Me, who have rejected
Me.”*

Then came the faces. Not of my brother. Not of my father. But so many faces. Faces around the world.

A laughing child in Africa. An elderly woman in Lithuania. A man setting off to work in China. My next door neighbors.

Faces, faces, faces. And so much grief I thought my heart would break from it.

*“SEE HOW I LOVE THEM.
FEEL HOW I LOVE THEM.
I LOVE THEM ALL. ALL.
ALL of them. ALL of them.
I see each face as clearly
as you see your father and
brother. I yearn for their
voice. I want to spend eter-
nity with them.
“SEE HOW I LOVE THEM.
FEEL HOW I LOVE THEM.”*



*THEY ARE JUST AS LOST.
JUST AS SEPARATED from
me as your father and
brother. You are yearning
to be united with your loved
ones; you fear separation
for eternity. SO AM I yearn-
ing. SO AM I longing. SO
AM I facing separation from
them for eternity. WEEP
WITH ME.”*

I could not speak, only weep. I weep even now as I put on paper what can really only be felt.

It's a sea of faces, but not a blur. Each distinct. Each unique. Each beloved of God.

You ask me how I know He lives?

My heart is broken for my lost loved ones. For His lost loved ones.

*“Dearheart, I have taken
your peace to give you
My heart. This is the heart
for missions that you asked
for. To seek and to save that
which is lost with the depth
of grief and love you feel
for a lost parent, a lost sib-
ling, a lost child. For these*

*are MY beloved children
and they are lost.
“When you miss your
brother, when you long
for one who has died with-
out knowing My salvation,
this is but a taste of My long-
ing for My children—My
longing for them to experi-
ence the saving grace I AM
dying to offer. For some
have never heard and others
have heard but not under-
stood.”*

He lives within my heart!

The deep heart-wrenching sadness and yearning lingers. Yet it isn't depressing or fearful as such emotions frequently are. It is not something to flee from or try to quiet—rather, something to be embraced.

It feels just a breath away from deep joy. A glimpse of the Father's heart.

**Have you asked Him for a
heart for the lost? *SR***