



PASTOR'S PEN

Dear Friends and Members of Sychar,

For this month's *Scroll*, I wish to have an educational focus. The issue I want to look at is the belief system of Jehovah Witnesses that we encounter at the door.

To begin to understand the Jehovah Witnesses. You need to understand the period and religious culture of their founding. Several religious movements sprung up in the later half of the 19th century whose primary emphasis was date setting. Date setting is trying to figure out the date of Christ's return through interpreting hidden Biblical formulas. Among movements founded in this period were the Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah Witnesses, and Scofield movement.

It's also important to note that a popular political movement that sprung up in the later part of the 19th century called Populism¹. Populism's defining traits are its skepticism of big government, big business and other large institutions such as the Church as oppressive forces within society. The influence of Populism can be seen in Jehovah Witness resistance to things like voting, serving in the military, and serving in political office.

The founder of the Jehovah Witnesses was a man named Charles Taize Russell. Russell grew up as a Presbyterian in the Pittsburgh Area. Russell soon became preoccupied with Seventh Day Adventist end times speculation. Russell came in contact with a man named Nelson Barbour who led Russell to conclude that Christ had returned in secret in the year 1874. Russell having amassed a considerable amount of money in the clothing business in 1879 initiated his publication called *Zion's Watchtower*. Russell's credentials as a Bible scholar are dubious. Whereas Martin Luther was well versed in Biblical Hebrew and Greek, Russell was known for having no such background in these languages. *The Watchtower* would study things like the measurements of the Great Pyramid of Giza as a way to discern the date of Christ's future return.

What should we make of Jehovah Witness beliefs?

Why don't Jehovah Witnesses celebrate birthdays?

The only two Biblical mentions of birthdays are Pharoah (Genesis 40:20-22) and Herod (Mark 6:21-29). The Jehovah Witnesses believe it's important that the root of birthday celebrations are pagan in origin. The Jehovah Witnesses would also point out that the earliest Christians did not partake in the practice of birthdays. The critique that I would make of these beliefs has to do with the Jehovah Witnesses reading way more into these passages than they aren't meant to convey. The Lutheran Reformers made mention of the concept of adiaphora. Adiaphora means that a practice can neither be forbidden or required as a matter of an individual Christian's conscience. The birthday issue tends to point towards the Jehovah Witnesses legalistic nature in that they tend to see their relationship with God maintained by following a series of rules. The provision against blood transfusions shows a similar trend within their movement. Engaging in blood transfusions is thought to be a violation of scriptural prohibitions against drinking blood (Leviticus 17:10, Acts 15:20,29). What I should note is that this belief didn't arise within the movement until a generation after Russell's death.

What about 144,000 people in Heaven?

¹ A really good background on the beliefs of the Jehovah Witnesses can be found in Ruth A. Tucker's *Another Gospel* on pages 117-148 published by Zondervan in 1989. Tucker's writing influenced the background for this article.

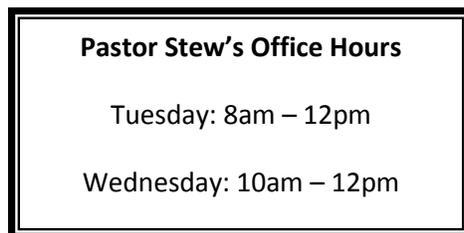
The belief in 144,000 residing in heaven comes from a very literal reading of Revelation 7. When one reads through Revelation, you can recognize that it is not intended to paint a literal description of heaven. Scholars know apocalyptic literature as the genre of writing that John engages tends to use images, symbols, and numbers to paint a vision of a future event. One of the key hints that Revelation 7 isn't intended to give a literal number of the residents come in heaven occurs in Revelation 7:9 where John describes his vision as such *"After this I looked, and **there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.**"* John freely admits within his vision that he was unable to count the inhabitants of heaven because they were so numerous.

What is the greatest criticism of the Jehovah Witnesses?

-From my perspective, it would be their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Jehovah Witnesses believe the Council of Nicea, where Christians from all over the world came to a consensus over their beliefs about the Trinity was the beginning of the "Great Apostasy". The claim that God would abandon his church for 1500 years to Hell until the studies of Charles Taize Russell seems to be a dangerous view of the relationship between God and Man.

Best Wishes,

Pastor Stew



FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Hope this article finds everyone well. I am submitting this article from New Mexico as I'm heading Merlefor, Arizona. Sure would be nice to have a Vice-President, Oh well, we must move forward.

This month our Operations people were busy once again. Jon Mattila & Reynold Grothe replaced a motor on the boiler that wasn't supplying heat to the social room. Mark Davies and Reynold are working on the church dimmer switch and hopefully they will have that fixed by the time I get back. North Shore Heating & Plumbing did fix the plumbing in the women's restroom and now we only have to repair the hole in the wall.

The last item I would like to mention is the sign-up sheet in the Narthex for READERS, GREETERS, and USHERS. It would be nice to have some people volunteer for these positions.

God Bless,

Merle McDonald, Council President

THE PEOPLE OF SYCHAR

WHO WE ARE

The person next to you in the pew on Sunday may be your closest friend or someone you don't know. Perhaps you taught their children in school or Sunday school or are a neighbor, a past or present co-worker or a business associate. This series: Who We Are, attempts to better acquaint you with your brothers and sisters in Christ, through sketches of the lives of our Sychar family members.

HOWARD SULHEIM

There were good jobs at Reserve Mining in Silver Bay. After graduation in 1960, that is what lured Howard from a farm near Mountain Lake in southern Minnesota. He was from a family of five children and said his leaving left one less mouth to feed.

Howard's job at Reserve was in maintenance. He lived for a time in a cabin in Beaver Bay. He met and married Marilyn Wisner in 1961. They had a mobile home in East Beaver Bay and built on the same spot in 1967. Marilyn died in 2005.

Any young fellow having dinner at his girlfriend's home for the first time wants to make an impression—a good impression. Salad was served; Howard took the bottle of French dressing and shook it. Unfortunately, it had already been shaken and the top was loose. A shower of dressing landed on everyone and everything.

Howard attended a Norwegian Lutheran Church in Mountain Lake and joined Sychar not long after coming to the area. When Reserve closed, he worked construction until returning to the plant when Cyprus took over. After retirement, with a companion, he spends winters in his RV touring various places in the southwest. At home, shooting, inland lake fishing and 4-wheeling keep him busy. In the past, he did more photography than he does now, including a number of graduation pictures.

A true highlight for Howard, who is 100% Norwegian, was a trip to Norway in 2011 where he was able to locate and visit the family farm of his great-grandparents. To stand on the place where his ancestors lived was overwhelming.

LOIS TIBBETTS-DURKEE

It seems prophetic that Lois now lives across the road from Palisade Head after growing up in Palisade, MN.

After high school in Aitkin, Lois worked as secretary to the high school principal. She married Dick Tibbetts in 1961 and they moved to Silver Bay in 1965. She worked at the Credit Union for a total of 23 years, interrupted by three years at the Finland Air Base. The Tibbetts owned and operated Whispering Pines Motel in Illgen City from 1988-2003. After selling, they built a house on Edwardson Road. Unfortunately, Dick was only able to enjoy their new home for two years before his death.

Lois has been active at Sychar since joining in 1966. She was Tuesday School superintendent, taught Bible School, participated in bell choir and was church treasurer. Presently, she sings in the choir and is active in her circle. Recently she did an audit of the church accounts.

In 2009, Lois married Francis "Durk" Durkee. They enjoy traveling in their RV, spending winters in the Florida Keys. They toured around Lake Superior this past summer.

An accident with a power saw a couple years ago almost cost Lois a finger. It has healed in such a way she can no longer play her piano and organ as well as she once did. She belongs to the Lois Club, likes to read and previously did knitting and crocheting.

At age seven, Lois was a victim of polio. She spent many hours soaking her legs in hot water and there were long years of follow-up exams at Gillette Hospital in St. Paul.

BOARD OF WORSHIP NOTES

AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE IN FEBRUARY: 55

ASH WEDNESDAY: 33

Wednesday, February 25th: 27

Wednesday, March 4th: 35

THE WELL: February: Food Shelf - \$133.29

March: China Service Ventures

April: DAC of Lake County

When you read this article, please take a moment to think about our Lenten schedule. Please share with Pastor Stew, or me, or any Worship Board member, your opinions about:

1. The Soup Suppers
2. Did you like the procession of the palms on Palm Sunday?

Write a note or give us a call. We like to know your thoughts. Wasn't it great to have Confirmation students there!?!

Thanks to Fred Mismash for leading worship on Wednesday, March 4th and Sherri Olson and Betty Carlson for bringing the message on March 8th.

Looking Ahead: Compassion Sunday will be on April 26th. If you are thinking about sponsoring a child, that's a good time to sign up to do it. Our Board can help, and Peggi Potter knows the most about it! Confirmation Sunday will be on May 17th. Let's fill our church with support for them.

Hoping you are reminded daily of the blessing of Easter!

Sychar Board of Worship: Deb Johnson, Marion Shamblin, Kathy Toland, Connie Wanderi and Mary Bauman.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Bauman, Secretary- Board of Worship

SLCW NEWS

Our charitable donation for March was sent to the Food Shelf.

It was decided to use 3 circles for large funerals due to the fact that the circles are getting smaller and fewer people are able to work.

SLCW will serve the final Lenten soup supper. Thank you to the boards for their participation in the previous suppers. The soups have been delicious.

It is Sychar's turn to provide bars for the Credit Union meeting on April 21st. The circle chairs will be called with the details.

There will NOT be coffee fellowship after the service on Easter Sunday.

CIRCLE 2 serves in April.

MISSION CIRCLE

Mission Circle ladies would like to thank all those who have donated material this year. We really appreciate it.

Mission Circle Attends Chum's Open House

Several weeks ago an article was in the Duluth News Tribune, that Chum would be opening up a new facility for the homeless. A call was made to Chum to see if they would need any quilts. They said "Yes!" – "How many?" Well they had 44 units, room for 69 residents. Our Mission Circle voted to take 69 quilts down.

Sherrie Grindeland was going down on Friday and would take them.

They extended an invitation to our group to the open house which would be on Tuesday. Saturday was spent calling members, as to who would like to go. We had 3 drivers and 11 ladies. Chum was called that we were coming down. In the meantime they had 2 newborn babies, so we took 2 baby quilts with us on Tuesday.

We got to attend the Formal Program and tour one of the beautiful units (almost made us wish we were homeless).

We all made it home just in time to turn on the T.V. to see if we could see any of us. I didn't but the paper said there were about 500 there. So we were lost in the crowd. It was a fun day and we are very thankful that none of us are homeless.

BOARD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Thank you to Mary Bauman, Debora Johnson, Susan Kiernan, and Linda Sjol for helping getting the February Scroll in the mail.

We hope that you will continue to available to help, or better yet, JOIN THE BOARD! We meet once monthly to get the news out.

Anyone else interested in joining us, please contact Marie Kaiser (226-4196). Thank you!



GIFTS RECEIVED

February 2015

In Memory of:
Lois Kind

Given By:
Bob Kind

Every Little Bit Really Does Make A Difference!

WOW! What started as a brief remark to Delores Johnson over 2 years ago has turned into a very worthwhile endeavor with multiple benefits. I am talking about our "Recycle for Mission" project which has yielded **\$1,400** in the since we began participating in this program through NewPage Pulp Mill in Duluth. That means that you have eliminated 14,200 pounds of paper and magazines from your homes by packing them up and bringing them to the church. And it has not gone into landfills, benefiting our environment which positively impacts everyone! When any of that money is used in Belize, one American dollar is worth 2 Belize dollars and is worth so much more in terms of doing God's work. When some is used right here in Silver Bay to help a neighbor, the true value cannot be measured. It's priceless.

One magazine at a time. One piece of paper at a time. That's all it takes. Keep collecting:

Magazines (shiny paper)

Catalogs

Shiny Newspaper Inserts (examples: Target, Kohl's and JCP ads, etc.)

White paper (copy paper etc.)

PLEASE REMEMBER NOT TO PUT ANY NEWSPAPERS, ENVELOPES WITH PLASTIC WINDOWS, OR COLORED PAPER. These cannot be used. Each bag we get must be gone through by one of the Mission Team to remove these items before we take them to Duluth. Thank you for making our job easier. And thank you to all who have brought your magazines in. Keep them coming. If you would like someone to pick your bags up at your house, please let the church office know. Also, a big thanks to those who have loaded up their trucks and brought our donations to the paper mill where the bags are unloaded by hand. A good work out, for sure! WOW – 14,200 pounds of trash turned into priceless opportunities to show God's love!

Submitted by Judy Waxlax

PRAYERS FOR THE SHEEP

Family of Chase Dedominces; Guss Krake, Carol Johnson, Phil Amundson, Lorraine Hendrickson, Joe Fredrickson, Karl Jevning, Chris Strande, Sheri Stephensen, Diann Hodson, Shirley Hanner, Linda Stegmeir, Jill & Wayne Hansen, Myrna Benoit, Deb MacMillian, Arnold Overby, Lyla Grace Santos, Gary Garlie, Don Hedin, Shirley Moschet, Pat LeBlanc, Angela Cook, Jake Anderson, Faith Gose, Roger Gale, Dave Huseby, Betty & Bob Oslund, Pam (Haldorson) Christiansen, Donna Dorrow, Larry Shanno, Cindy Milne, Betty Rabold, Lenore (Fralich) Skoglund, Brad Schlatter, Pastor Robin Bjella, Steve Clarke, Harold Koepp, Michele (Bauman) Bernardy, Floyd Sve, Kent Shamblin, Rachael Thompson, Peggy Holty, The Church of the Living Water and Pastor Transito; law enforcement, fire & ambulance personnel; & our military service men (Army: Lucas & Megan Milne, James Friddle; Navy: Kris Topp; Air Force: Sam Andrus) and women.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FOOD SHELF

Fill the box in the Narthex for your neighbors. **Needs: Canned tomatoes, kidney beans, pork and beans, tomato soup, tomato sauce or paste, toothpaste, cake mix, saltine or graham crackers, 1 lb rice and pasta. Also in need of FULL size paper grocery bags and plastic grocery bags.** Please, no baby food, no home canned, outdated or opened items. Questions - call Jenny at 226-4444.

HIPPA Privacy and Security

Due to HIPPA Privacy and Security rules it is no longer customary for the hospitals to inform churches of patients and their status. If you or a loved one is in the hospital and would like a pastoral visit please contact Pastor Stew or the church office as soon as possible.

Address Changes

Kathryn Samuel has moved. If you'd like to write her please do so at the following address: Village Manor Retirement, Apartment #235, 9501 East Highland Road, Howell, MI 48843. Her new phone number is: 810-632-0481

PASTOR STEW

If you should need to contact Pastor Stew you can call him on his cell phone (651) 207-3939 or at home (218) 226-3491 or at the office (218) 226-4424.

Board of Worship Meeting Date

The Board of Worship will be meeting on Wednesday, April 1st at 9:30am NOT on the regular Thursday.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1	Heather LaBerge	17	Mel Schlatter
4	Al Thorngren	18	Craig Johnson
5	Jon Mattila	20	Margaret Grothe
6	Megan Hangartner	23	Betty Josephson
7	Susan Kiernan		
8	Diane LaBerge		
15	James Davey		
16	Dorothy Ives		





APRIL FLOWERS



April 5th – *EASTER LILIES*

April 12th – Given by Fred Mismash in memory of Paul Mismash.

April 19th – Given by Rebecca & Marc Davey in honor of their 19th Wedding Anniversary.

April 26th – Given by Dan & Judy Waxlax in memory of Anne Stegmeir.

ACOLYTES

April 5th Hunter Monson
April 12th Gunnar Frahm
April 19th Sylvia Davey
April 26th Jarred LaBerge

ALTAR GUILD

Candy Helgeson
Nancy Clarke