

DECEMBER 6 2014

Adventist Record

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20 YEARS ON THE ROAD page 9

**ADVENTIST LEADERS
IN MOTORCYCLE
ACCIDENTS** page 7

REAL MINISTRY
page 18



Archaeological Diggings TOURS 2015

The tour was fabulous. I had such a wonderful experience. I have learned so much history. Great accommodation, a professional and knowledgeable tour leader, and I will definitely go again.

—Banje Blanch, Casino, NSW

The Diggings tour transformed our lives and understanding of Biblical history. It was so special! —Ian & Bev Story, Victoria

The four weeks were one of the best experiences I have had in my lifetime. The value for money of this tour was outstanding. —Ed North, Sydney

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* Tours subject to sufficient numbers.



HopeChannel needs helpers in Pacific

Wahroonga, New South Wales



HopeChannel
www.hopechannel.com

The ambitious goal of Mega Project Hope PNG is to shoot 300 episodes of a range of new TV programs that will reach Papua New Guinea on HopeChannel. A key partner for the project is Pacific Adventist University, which is providing shooting locations, logistical support and expert presenters on a range of topics.

A team of more than 200 local and overseas workers and volunteers has been assembled, including Kandus Thorpe, director for International Development of HopeChannel International and Adventist media professionals from Australia, Brazil, India, Mexico, Philippines, Romania, South Africa and Ukraine.

"Programs will be produced for children and on topics such as cooking, family relationships, finances and health using preaching, nature, singing and testimonies," said Edgard Lopez, who has been coordinating Mega Project Hope PNG from Adventist Media Network's Wahroonga headquarters.

"Even though the team is essentially assembled, there's still room for volunteers to help with set building and decoration, electrical work and catering as well as multiple opportunities to fill the roles of director, editor, graphic designer, make-up artist, producer, sound/lighting engineer and videographer."

The next challenge is Project Hope Fiji, where the plan is to shoot 150 evangelistically oriented episodes that will bring local faces and voices to television screens across the country. Mr Lopez is calling for volunteers to assist in a similar month-long effort in April 2015. "We need a least 100 volunteers, both from Fiji and elsewhere, to help with all areas of television production," he said. —Kent Kingston

For more information on Mega Project Hope PNG or Project Hope Fiji, contact Edgard Lopez: <EdgardLopez@adventistmedia.org.au>.

Church reaches out to deaf

Logan, Queensland

An Adventist church in Queensland is reaching an often overlooked demographic with a range of initiatives.

For some years Logan Reserve church, in outer south-western Brisbane, has used AUSLAN signers in its services and special programs. Now it's planning a dedicated camp for the deaf in October 2015.

The camp, open to deaf people from across the South Pacific Division, will be held at Log Cabin lodge at Natural Bridge, near the Queensland/NSW border.

Logan Reserve has been consistent in its provision of services to the deaf over a number of years, in 2014 providing AUSLAN interpreters for its worship services as well as for all 24 programs of The Last Empire evangelistic series. The seminars were held in the Butterbox Theatre, Kingston Butter Factory and Logan Reserve church, where a baptism was held at the end of the program.

"We concluded the seminar [series] with a screening of the *Jesus* film with English-language subtitles," said Mark Davey, the church's Personal Ministries coordinator. "We had up to four deaf people at each presentation, including the screening."

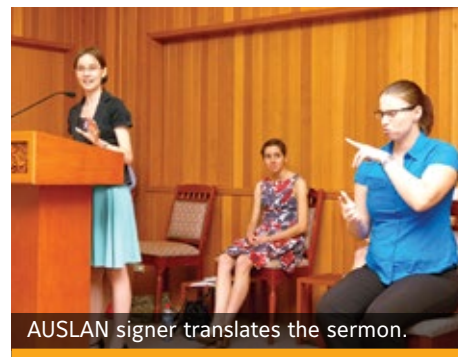
Most recently, Logan Reserve received the first Adventist Media Network-produced *Beyond* series close-captioned for the deaf.

"We put them into the church library and restrict them to people who really need closed captions," Mr Davey said. "As well, we have a number of non-Adventist contacts whom we will approach to see if they would like to borrow them."

Christian Services for the Blind and Hearing Impaired (CSFBHI) provided the funding for the closed-captioning of the series.

"It's great to see a church investing so heavily in this demographic," said CSFBHI manager Lee Dunstan. "Congratulations to Logan Reserve for taking the initiative. For our part, we're glad to assist—to provide a quality evangelistic resource for the deaf after years of focus on the blind only." —Mark Davey/CSFBHI

CSFBHI has a number of close-captioned *Beyond* sets for churches interested in reaching the deaf. See Noticeboard, page 23.



AUSLAN signer translates the sermon.

REVIVED BY HIS WORD

December 6—20, 2014

READING THROUGH THE BIBLE TOGETHER
ONE CHAPTER A DAY

6 – Mark 7	9 – Mark 10	12 – Mark 13	15 – Mark 16	18 – Luke 3
7 – Mark 8	10 – Mark 11	13 – Mark 14	16 – Luke 1	19 – Luke 4
8 – Mark 9	11 – Mark 12	14 – Mark 15	17 – Luke 2	20 – Luke 5



Build

James Standish

"That house must have gold bricks in the basement," I laughed as we passed an untidy home with its woodwork falling off its facade that just sold for \$US950,000. Down the street a home teetering off its foundations was going for more than \$US600,000. No matter the state of the home, no matter how sketchy the location, no matter the barriers to renovation, it was all systems go for the historic houses of Capitol Hill, Washington, DC, in the 2000s.

Only a few years earlier much of Capitol Hill was a "no go" zone. The streets were rife with crack dealers and muggings, and trash blew through the alleys. But now gentrification was underway as the lure of living in part of a real community, ditching the long commutes and fleeing the cultural death by suburbia kicked in. As I walked across Capitol Hill's Staunton Park on a beautiful spring day the bug hit me. Why wouldn't we live in this amazing place full of history, architecture and culture?

We rented a home to see if city life was for us. It was. I loved walking to my office across from the US Capitol, strolling along the beautiful city streets in the evening and down the National Mall on the weekends. Everyone we met on the Hill seemed larger than life. There was the congressional staffer next door—who had loud, late-night parties but was so nice we couldn't really complain. Diplomats, artists, secret service agents, academics, senators, writers, activists, lawyers and journalists. Everyone was right there on the Hill. This was the place for us!

But making it our permanent home would prove difficult. We were getting real estate crushes, putting in offers but having our hearts broken as we were outbid over and over again. Maybe our fate was to move back out to the boring 'burbs?

And then our real estate agent called about a home that was just listed. "It's a little rustic," she said using *realestate speak*. We rushed over. Rustic? The townhouse, circa 1878, was on a little tilt due to subsiding foundations. Inside it looked like a rat's nest. But we didn't see the stark reality—we saw our glorious vision—and we snapped it up. Soon work began.

It turns out I have a gift for demolition. I spent days

covered in dust as I smashed through walls, pulled down ceilings, ripped out the kitchen and part of the bathroom. The difficulty, however, came when it was time to put it all back together. For that you need serious skill. And in our family skill is spelt B-O-B (my father-in-law: Bob the builder).

Bit by bit Bob put the home back together. By the end of it all, it was splendid. Classic yellow interior with broad white cornices, an antique chandelier we found in Manhattan and a fireplace surrounded in marble. Coming home from work on cold winter nights there was something particularly cheering about turning the corner of the block and seeing the warm glow shining out of our little historic gem.

Knocking down was the easy part. But it was in the building up that the magic really happened. Not entirely dissimilar to the world of faith.

It doesn't take a great intellect to knock faith. We all know society's wind is blowing—even howling—against Christianity. Anyone can Google up a mountain of arguments against everything from creation through to the Christian view of sexuality and then repeat them as if parroting these critiques is a sign of intellectual greatness. It isn't. Even a hack can demolish. It takes intellectual strength, high-level critical thinking and insight to build the case for Christ. And it takes courage. Ellen White puts it this way:

When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should ... our courage [...be] the most unflinching. To stand in the defence of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this [is] our test.

That is why I admire the work of intellectual giants like Dr John Ashton, Dr Grenville Kent, Dr Sven Ostring, Dr Ross Grant and my brother, Dr Timothy Standish. They are intellectual builders—standing up against the prevailing winds, putting forth the positive, powerful case for faith. Sure, it's a lot easier to be a demolition man. But I'd much rather be like them; I'd rather be a builder.

James Standish is editor of Adventist Record.

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"One of the actors at Road to Bethlehem captivating the audience."

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Our vision is to be a church that...
knows
experiences
and shares
our hope in Jesus Christ

Committed and professional

Julie, our son, Clayton, and I recently attended an It Is Written partnership Sabbath at the invitation of Bob and Angie Kalaf. Thank you Bob and Angie for giving us an opportunity to spend time together with you, your family and our wider church family. And thank you for the opportunity to listen as our team from It Is Written and Adventist Media Network shared the opportunities that exist for us as we all partner together to share the gospel in this digital age.

It Is Written Oceania has been the most-watched religious program on Australian television for some years now, thanks to excellent production and to the marketing and negotiation skills of our team at Sanitarium, who have been working with TV network executives to have the program aired on two channels.

I greatly appreciated the presentations of the It Is Written leadership. It was totally inspirational. Everyone in our Church should know just what is happening and what possibilities exist. But the point I want to make here is something that was shared with my wife by one of the attendees who shall remain nameless. This attendee commented that she was impressed by the commitment and the professionalism of those who were presenting on behalf of It Is Written on the day. I could not agree more. Our Church family has wonderful, committed, professional people who willingly give their time, talent and experience in the service of the Lord and I thank God every day for you. As a Church we are what we are only as we each give all that we are and place ourselves at the disposal of the Holy Spirit. Thank God for that privilege.

Dr Barry Oliver is president of the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



When God says no

Vania Chew

One look into his eyes and it was love at first sight.

"I think he likes you," his owner laughed as the puppy licked my hand.

I was seven years old and I loved dogs. Unfortunately my parents didn't feel the same way so I was only allowed to have goldfish.

It wasn't long before their novelty wore off. You couldn't pat them, you couldn't play with them and you definitely couldn't take them for walks! Goldfish were a poor substitute for what I really wanted—a dog of my very own.

As I said my bedtime prayers that night you can probably guess my request: "Dear God, please give me a puppy."

I prayed fervently every day. I made a wish as I blew out the birthday candles. And I tried to bargain with my parents. I'd be good. I'd do this chore. I'd never need a present again!

But I didn't get a puppy. And I wondered why God had said no. Was my prayer too selfish? Did I not have enough faith?

Years later I was again praying fervently every day. But this time it was for a person. A close friend had just learned her mother had cancer and wouldn't survive much longer.

My friend prayed sincerely. She began fasting regularly. And she tried to bargain with God.

But she didn't get a miracle. And she wondered why God had said no.

All she was left with was a wretched sense of heartbreak and abandonment—questioning why God seemed silent when she needed Him the most.

The Bible gives us various examples of prayers God said no to. Paul asked for a thorn in his flesh to be removed and his request was denied. Hezekiah's request for healing was denied—and then granted—but granting his request proved disastrous for Israel.

Even Jesus experienced God's no. One of the most powerful scenes in the Bible is the description of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Knowing He was about to take the world's sins on His shoulders, Jesus prayed that this cup might be taken from Him. It's worth noting He also prayed, "Not my will, but Yours."

On the cross Jesus felt abandoned and alone. Who can forget His anguished cry: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"

Yet in the midst of sorrow, pain and despair, the plan of salvation was fulfilled. All because God said no.

In this life we may never understand why our prayers aren't answered as we'd hoped. But one day God will show us He could see the big picture.

For now, we need to trust Him—trust in His love for us, trust in His character and trust that He knows best.

And let's strive to pray as Jesus prayed. Not our will but God's.

Vania Chew is PR/Editorial assistant of Adventist Record.





Fighting back

As violent conflicts in Iraq and Syria drag on, Christian communities are taking up arms to protect their interests. In Lebanon a number of Christian villages are defended by militias who say they've successfully resisted ISIS attempts to cross the border. In Iraq Christians have formed the Dwekh Nawsha militia. —*Daily Beast/CBS*



The wheel deal

Funding is being sought for a film on the life of countercultural Christian evangelist, the Reverend Dr John Smith. The self-described "hairy radical" made his mark in Australia as an evangelist to the poor and outcast, and as founder of the God's Squad Christian motorcycle club in the late 1960s. —*Parham-Media.com*



Hanging gardens

St Canice's Catholic Church, at King's Cross in Sydney's tough inner city, has taken space-saving to a new level and built a community garden on its roof! Along with local businesses, the church employed four asylum seekers to construct the garden space, complete with raised garden beds and a barbecue area.

—*Architecture@Design*



The enemy within

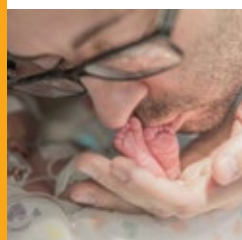
The World Health Organisation (WHO) is warning that tapeworm larvae can attack the central nervous system and lead to epileptic seizures. And the source of the tapeworm eggs is, too often, undercooked pork. WHO says contaminated pork is the number one preventable cause of epilepsy, which affects 50 million people globally. —*UN News*



Shut down

The 13-congregation Mars Hill church network, based in Seattle US, is being disbanded. Criticisms of "emerging church" pastor Mark Driscoll's domineering leadership style and ethical questions over his book promotions saw a drop in financial support and membership, which was at 12,000 in 2013. Driscoll resigned earlier this year.

—*Christianity Today*



Last lullaby

Last month in Loma Linda, Psalter artist Chris Picco experienced the sudden losses of his wife and his prematurely born son. In the hours while his son's life was hanging in the balance, Chris played his guitar and sang to him. The video touched the hearts of around 13 million viewers. —*Adventist Review*

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Adventist leaders in motorcycle accidents

Newcastle, New South Wales

South Pacific Division (SPD) general secretary Pastor Lionel Smith had to be airlifted to John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle (NSW) following a motorcycle accident.

Pastor Smith was on his way home from a meeting at SPD headquarters in Wahroonga when he crashed coming off the ramp at Morisset.

Associate CFO Kelvin Peuser was on the scene minutes after the accident. He was impressed with the professionalism and diligence of the ambulance officers and medics.

"We know God was looking after him—it could have been a lot worse!" Mr Peuser said.

Pastor Smith expressed his apologies that he was unable to attend the SPD's annual year-end meetings. "What some people do to get out of annual meetings," he joked.

Meanwhile, on the way to the same meetings, Professor Ben Thomas, vice-chancellor of Pacific Adventist University, was also in a motorcycle accident during a three-day

ride from Caloundra, Queensland, to Sydney.

Professor Thomas was riding along an open road with grass on both sides when two small kangaroos jumped out of the grass.

"I hit the brakes hard but one of them ran directly into my front wheel," Professor Thomas said. "I seem to have blacked out during the accident as I can't remember anything between the time the kangaroo hit my front tyre and the time I got up from the accident. The kangaroo died within seconds." Fortunately his riding gear protected him from suffering serious injury. It is likely the bike will be written off. —*Vania Chew*



Prof Thomas' bike.



Pastor Jimmy baptises a student.

Record baptism at Adventist school

Santo, Vanuatu

Seventy-three Aore Adventist Academy students were baptised on October 11, setting a record for the number of students baptised at the school in a single year.

Vanuatu Youth Ministries director Pastor Charlie Jimmy conducted a week of prayer at the school in March, with students commencing Bible studies with school chaplain Pastor George David shortly after. Pastor Jimmy, who works at the Vanuatu Mission's head office in Port Vila, returned to the island of Santo in October to baptise the students.

"The principal and the staff [at Aore] are very committed to seeing that the students accept Jesus into their lives and not only be qualified academically," Pastor Jimmy said. "Our schools have huge potential as places of evangelism." —*TPUM newsletter*

New leaders accept appointments Humble-y

Wahroonga, New South Wales

Several leadership appointments were made at the year-end meetings held at the South Pacific Division (SPD) headquarters, including a new SPD field secretary, Dr Graeme Humble, and Trans-Pacific Union Mission (TPUM) general secretary, Pastor Maveni Kaufononga.

Dr Humble is currently Pacific Adventist University's head of Theology and replaces Dr David Tasker in the role.

Dr Humble and his wife Kay have served in the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) three times.

"Their contribution to the life and work of the Church in PNG in pastoral, administrative and academic leadership has been appreciated and they will be remembered," PNGUM president Dr Leigh Rice said.

Dr Tasker has accepted a senior lecturer position at Avondale College of Higher Education's School of Ministry and Theology. He was enthusiastic about the appointment, describing Old Testament studies as his "passion".

Dr Tasker, who in recent years has overseen the SPD Biblical Research Committee's study of ordination, ex-

pressed his hope that the role of field secretary might undergo a change under the leadership of Dr Humble, who is one of only a few Adventist leaders in the SPD with doctorate-level qualifications in missiology.

Pastor Kaufononga has served as TPUM Youth Ministries director since 2009.

He has experience around the South Pacific working in a number of countries as well as his native Tonga. He began pastoral work in Tonga in 1987 and has served as youth director in the Cook Islands, where his wife is from, and as a university chaplain in Fiji.

Pastor Wayne Boehm, the previous TPUM secretary, has been appointed pastor of Wallsend church, NSW. —*Kent Kingston/Jarrod Stackelroth*



Pastor Maveni Kaufononga.

The gift of Signs

World leaders gather for interfaith summit

Brisbane, Queensland

An interfaith summit organised by Griffith University to coincide with the G20 in Queensland focussed on the connection between economic development and religious freedom.

"This event [brought] together scholars, lawyers and political leaders with faith and interfaith leaders from around the world for three days of discussion and dialogue," said Dr Brian Adams, director of the university's Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue.

James Standish, director of the communication and public affairs for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific, chaired a conference session consisting of parliamentarians from Turkey, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa and the ACT.

"We live in an age where religious freedom questions are being asked with increasingly urgency," notes Mr Standish.

"How far should societies go to crack down on religious extremism? How do we balance competing claims to rights? How much religion is too much religion in public life? What can we do to promote social stability in reli-

giously diverse societies? Parliamentarians struggle with these questions. It was good to have a place for them to share their diverse experience and visions."

The G20 Interfaith Summit was held from November 16 to 18. —Record staff



Australian Human Rights commissioner Tim Wilson with James Standish.



James Standish (far left) with international parliamentarians.

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20 years on the Road

by Nathan Brown

Road to Bethlehem began with two rain-soaked nights in December 1995 and with a team of about 30 people and some 700 visitors on the old church campground in the Melbourne suburb of Nunawading. This December—in its 20th year—*Road to Bethlehem (RTB)* will involve more than 300 cast and crew, and they expect to re-tell the good news of the Christmas story to about 14,000 members of their community.

"The first year was very basic," original *RTB* committee member Carolyn Dunne recalls. "With so much water gushing across the campground there were many discouraged team members but somehow we saw the potential. We could see and feel there was something about this idea—and the difference between the first and second year was incredible."

Her father, Geoff Jones, had seen a mission news report of a drive-through Christmas experience presented by a church in the United States. Given the mild summer evenings he suggested the idea could be adapted for a walk-through program in Australia and he talked with the

personal ministries team at Nunawading Adventist Church.

"The original committee of four of us had no idea what we were doing, no idea of how it would be received and no idea of what it could become," Shelley Fairall explains. "But we saw the opportunity to share the story of Jesus with the community. Now I see that first year as a bit of a test—a reminder that we needed to trust God with this."

Twenty years later they estimate that more than 100,000 people have experienced their story of the birth of Jesus. And

there are now seven other locations across Australia and New Zealand that have been inspired by and borrowed from the original Nunawading program, including new locations in Tasmania and South Australia this year.

Each year the lead role has been reserved for a roster of babies less than three months old, coordinated and cared for by Ms Fairall. "I'm very passionate about us using a real baby. There is something that connects with people when they hear a baby cry; they connect the story with a real human being, a live connection between the Baby in the manger with the Man who died on the cross," she says.

"So we're always putting out a call for babies at this time of year. There was one year when we were low on babies and Jenny Bennett went to a local shopping centre and spoke to mothers about whether they would be prepared to share their baby with the community in this way."

Crystal Taylor first acted in *RTB* 12 years ago and has been casting coordinator for the past five years. "My favourite experience is seeing the faces of the kids as they go from scene to scene," she says. "By the time they arrive at the manger, they are not just watching something, they are participating in it. And there are so many comments and conversations that are so rewarding."

For the 20th year, Melbourne's *RTB* will have a new opening scene, something Ms Taylor and her team have been working on over the past two years. "At the end of each year we reflect on what we have done and feedback we have received," she says. "Often actors will give suggestions and, when a few people have the same idea, we feel that we are being led to try something different."

"We have all felt that this whole program has been so God-led," Ms Dunne adds. "In the early days there seemed to be so many miracles, so many ways God provided and encouraged us, so we have been very blessed in our years of working with this."

Not only has *RTB* had an impact in the community, Ms Taylor has seen it change those who have been involved. "This is my gift to my community each Christmas but it has also changed how the Adventist churches in [Melbourne's] eastern suburbs relate to each other," she says. "As a result of working together on this each year, we are now much more one church."

"When I think back to our first year it's hard to put it into perspective," Ms Fairall reflects, "but we can see that God had such a bigger vision for it than we ever had. God is amazing and He can bless something if He wants it to continue and grow."



The big picture

by James Standish

What happens at the South Pacific Division (SPD) executive committee's year-end meetings? A bunch of people get together and enjoy the sounds of their own voices? A lot of back slapping and chatting? A bit of noise that comes from nowhere and comes to nothing? Maybe a bit of all of that. Deliberative meetings, no matter where or who, do have that tendency. But at this year-end meeting there was something different.

By some measures the Adventist Church in our region is tracking along at a reasonable pace. We're among the fastest-growing churches in many of our constituent nations—including Australia and New Zealand. Our institutions are growing bigger and more sophisticated. The finances of the Church in diverse areas are surprisingly robust—PNG, for example, now generates more tithe than the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference. But despite all this apparent good news, the reality is that our Church is still remarkably small and we are not as effective as we need to be. For example, because population growth is outstripping Church growth, the ratio of Adventists to the general population in Australia is actually getting worse. And our growth itself is the kind of incremental growth that doesn't reflect a community on fire for God.

So what to do? Same old, same old? SPD leaders have been consulting widely and working on a strategic direction to use the talents and resources God has entrusted to our Church in a better, more effective manner. Stewardship starts at home. "It's our goal," SPD president Dr Barry Oliver says, "to see our church community not just survive but thrive. We don't want to thoughtlessly repeat what we've done in the past. We need to be much more deliberate, thoughtful, strategic."

So what is the plan?

The new SPD strategic direction focuses on four core areas: discipleship, media, holistic health and urban evangelism. Everything strategic that the SPD does will relate to these four priorities.

Why is discipleship so important? Because one of the greatest tragedies in our Church is that we are baptising many new converts but we aren't keeping believers strong in the faith. There is a gaping back door through which far too many precious people are falling. And being a church member isn't enough. We need deep, strong, abiding

relationships with Jesus Christ. As a community we need to organise ourselves around creating the environment, programs and services to achieve this.

The other three priorities focus on evangelism. While 49 per cent of the people in our region live in large urban areas, only 9 per cent of Adventists live in these large cities. There is a mismatch between where we are and where people are. The drift towards urbanisation is only going to accelerate and we have to focus our attention on how to reach urban people. Christ ministered to people where they were. We need to as well.

Whether it's on a phone, tablet, TV or on the web, integrated media is the language of our generation. It can go where no-one else can. And that's why media is integral to the SPD strategic plan.

Finally we have enormous energy and variety in our health sector. The challenge is to bring these various initiatives together in a coordinated manner so it's a most effective ministry.

We need our media to promote our health message, our health message to reach urban populations, and our urban local churches to work seamlessly with our health and media ministries bringing people to a knowledge of Jesus. And we have to recognise that joining the Church is only the first step in a vibrant life of Christian discipleship.

Integration and focus are key to the success of the strategy. As a first step the executive committee voted to organise the diverse SPD departments into integrated ministry teams. The goal is to have fewer programs that are better coordinated, resourced and integrated with the four overarching strategic priorities.

Strategy is easily expressed but hard to implement. Let's pray for wisdom, focus, resources and skill to execute this plan. By following Christ's example into the population centres, bringing health and communicating God's love through media our society understands, by transforming from church members to disciples of Jesus with a living and growing faith, we can, under the grace of God, go from being a Church that is tracking reasonably well to a Church that is exploding with God-given energy and relevance. Cynicism is a lazy response to vision. Let's not fall for it. Let's pull together and let God make something great happen right here.



Revelation and revival

November 8 was a special Sabbath for a number of Adventist churches in Port Vila (Vanuatu), with more than 1000 people receiving certificates for completing a Revelation Bible study series. Adults and children had been studying the series since late September. At Olwi Adventist Church in Blacksands, 240 certificates were presented to church members and non-members, with 42 participants requesting baptism. —Jean Pierre Niptik

High tea hits the mark

More than \$NZ5000 was raised at Papatootoe Seventh-day Adventist (Papsda) church's "High Tea for Cambodia" at the Davies Gardens in Auckland on November 1. The event was organised by Papsda members Ashlea Davies, Bre Gentry and Keri Maunders, with all proceeds going towards building and teaching materials for a church mission to Cambodia in 2015. —Papsda

Praiseworthy

The Institute of Worship's 50-piece orchestra toured Auckland (NZ) in late September. The ensemble partnered with the Papatootoe Adventist Community church to host four outreach events, including two Sabbath worship programs and two *Hymns and Songs of Praise* concerts. Each event featured a mixture of Australian and New Zealand talent. —Lyell Heise



Strong schools; weak bullies

A positive school climate significantly reduces the prevalence and popularity of student peer bullying, doctoral research by an Avondale College lecturer shows. Dr Kevin Petrie based his findings on data from 604 senior primary students attending 20 state schools in Victoria. The study, which forms the basis for his thesis, *The relationship between student-peer bullying, school climate and peer popularity*, also shows that schools that establish a rights and responsibilities program have better relationships between students and teachers and better peer relations and belonging. —Brenton Stacey

A century for Ivy

Ivy Reynolds celebrated her 100th birthday at the Fremantle Adventist Function Centre on November 3, with more than 150 family members, friends and neighbours coming together for the special occasion. Ivy first embraced Christ as a 14-year-old girl and for the greater part of her life attended the Capel Adventist Church in the south-west of Western Australia. She tragically lost her husband, Lawrence, in a farming accident in 1980. Ivy credits her long life and growing family—including five children, 11 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and six great-great grandchildren—to the grace of God. —Lawreen McIver



Help the hard way

Medical assistance is hard to come by in the remotest areas of Papua New Guinea. In this photo, a group of Adventist youth from the Wamabe District of the Northeast Papua Mission negotiate a fast-flowing stream in order to get a pregnant woman some much-needed medical attention. —Eastern Wind

Outstanding achievement

Macquarie College (NSW) was recognised by World Vision Australia for its fundraising efforts as part of this year's 40-Hour Famine. World Vision Australia representative Rachel Mills (pictured right) presented a special "Outstanding Achievement Award" to the Adventist school in October. She also announced that Macquarie's \$A10,608.55 donation was the highest figure raised by any school in the Hunter region. —Tennille Lowrey

Young lives commit to Christ

Twenty-two students were baptised at Navesau Adventist High School in Fiji in late September. Fiji Mission Education director Savenaca Ramokoso said it was wonderful to see so many young people give their lives to the Lord. "To date, 126 students and staff have been baptised in Adventist schools in Fiji this year," he said. "Let us continue to pray for our children and schools; they are centres of great influence." —TPUM newsletter



Password prayer

by Jinha Kim

FORGET PASSWORDS FREQUENTLY. THERE ARE JUST too many of them, they are constantly changing and they can be so complicated—capital letters, numbers, special characters—it all gets a bit much!

So all too often I must sheepishly click on that link of shame, “Forgot your password?”, and go through the tedious process of resetting it. Maybe you’ve had the same experience.

But sometimes they don’t make it easy. The sites I need to access the most seem to make it the hardest—bank accounts are the perfect example. Of course, there’s always the “security question” option but the answers can be as hard to remember as the passwords! One security question simply asked: “I am?”—“vague and forgetful” was not the answer.

Ah, the good old days when the only password we needed to know was “please”.

“Please” got us through many cheeky requests, siblings’ doors and family dinners as children. “Please” was the magic word that moved mountains—or even better—parents’ resistance to a noisy, smelly, happy ball of fur that joined the family.

Maybe that’s why we use “please” so much in prayer. “Please be with us today . . . please bless the food . . . please heal this illness.” We use it like a password to answered prayers; if only we can phrase it correctly we will access that account in heaven.

But the irony is that the word has been so misused and overused that it has become a prayer space holder. And rather than adding elements of sincerity and humility, the word just denotes another thoughtless repetition.

An interesting book, *Debt: the First 5,000 Years*, analyses the usage of “please” and “thank you” in society and comments that those words reflect the “democratisation of what was once a habit of feudal deference: the insistence on treating absolutely everyone the way that one used only to have to treat a lord or similar hierarchical

superior” (Graeber, p 123). In other words, the original literal meaning of “please” was “you are under no obligation to do this”. However, “etiquette largely consists of the exchange of polite fictions . . . by attaching the word ‘please’, you are saying that it is not an order. But, in fact, it is” (Graeber, p 124).

Have our prayers been reduced to formalities that expect answers if expressed with passwords like “please” and “thank you”? Do we see God as an equal who should respect our rules of etiquette?

What would happen if we self-imposed a temporary ban on the words “please” and “thank you” in our prayers and instead talked to God with a genuine desire to build an authentic, transparent, intimate relationship with Him? What would our prayers sound like then?

I know mine would suddenly focus less on what I want and more on who He is—and who I want to be. Maybe something like, “Today, I was really impatient and judgemental. I’m so grateful You don’t treat me the way I sometimes treat others. How do You love so patiently? How can I

be more like You?”

Perhaps as we truly open up to God as to a friend, the trite, polite “Hi, how are you? I’m fine thanks, and you?” talk common with acquaintances would be replaced with the honest, heart-felt, run-on-sentence-y conversations where silences, emotional outbursts and laughter are acceptable.

Then perhaps when we finally do say “please” it will be cried out in hunger for righteousness. When we finally say “thank you” it will be whispered in awe of His grace.

All is possible when we rediscover that the password to God isn’t a word at all—it’s the powerful silence of surrender.

R

Jinha Kim co-pastors Melbourne City Adventist church plant on Collins street in the Melbourne CBD.

What would happen if we self-imposed a temporary ban on the words "please" and "thank you" in our prayers . . .



Pile up your plate with plants

The energy density of foods is a key concept for maintaining a healthy weight while making healthy food choices. Energy density identifies how much energy is packed into a given volume of food. The reason this concept is so powerful for weight loss is that it can allow us to eat more and lose weight by making choices that are filling because of their physical size but don't contain excess calories.

To help with navigating the maze of choices we have available to us every day, a new app called Calorific has just been launched, which provides visual representations of what 200 calories of a whole range of foods actually looks like. And while calorie counts are not the only thing by which to judge the healthfulness of food, visual reminders can really drive home the idea of energy density.

Next time you reach for that doughnut a quick look at the app can show you that 200 calories is less than one doughnut but whole plant foods can provide much more bang for your calorie buck. For that same 200 calories you could eat 4 1/2 peaches, 600g of strawberries or a whopping 909g of mushrooms. And on top of their lower energy density, these whole plant foods are also packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. So next time you're looking to maximise the nutrition in your meal without maximising the calories, think about energy density and reach for those whole plant foods.



Tofu, pumpkin and spinach curry

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes Serves: 6

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon Indian curry paste
1 onion, sliced
1kg butternut pumpkin, peeled and diced
1 cup reduced salt vegetable stock
1 cup So Good soy milk
2 teaspoons coconut essence
400g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
150g firm tofu, diced
200g baby spinach leaves

1. Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add curry paste and onion and cook over medium heat for 1-2 minutes. Add pumpkin and cook a further 2-3 minutes.
2. Add stock and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 8 minutes. Stir through milk, coconut essence, chickpeas, tofu and spinach leaves. Cook for a further 2 minutes or until leaves wilt.
3. Serve with brown rice.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVE: 1278kJ (306cal). Protein 8g. Fat 6g. Carbohydrate 53g. Sodium 13mg. Potassium 456mg. Calcium 42mg. Iron 2.2mg. Fibre 9g.

Call and arrange to speak to one of our qualified nutritionists at Sanitarium Lifestyle Medicine Services on 1800 673 392 (in Australia) or 0800 100 257 (in New Zealand). Alternatively, email us at nutrition@sanitarium.com.au (Australia) or nutrition@sanitarium.co.nz (New Zealand). For more great recipes and health articles visit our website www.sanitarium.com.au or www.sanitarium.co.nz

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OPENING HIS WORD

Gary Webster

R BOOK LAUNCH

Signs of Christmas: the virgin birth

There is more to the meaning of Christ's being born of a virgin than that being born of the Holy Spirit and Mary makes Him both truly God and truly man. It is also a sign of God's power to deliver from all sin.

The meaning of the sign to King Ahaz

Ahaz, one of the most corrupt kings of Judah, even offered his children as human sacrifices. When the kings of Syria and Israel marched to attack him he was petrified. Yet out of His incredible love and grace God promised to deliver him and his people if he would put his trust in Him rather than Assyria. He even told him to ask for any sign as a token of deliverance. However Ahaz, knowing if he asked for a sign that God would fulfil it and then he would have to rely only on God, responded piously, "I mustn't tempt God." Isaiah replied, "God will give you a sign: A virgin will conceive and bear a son called Immanuel"—a sign that God would be with him to deliver from an impossible situation.

Read 2 Kings 16; Isaiah 7:1-17

Some 700 years later Joseph was informed by an angel that the Child the virgin Mary was bearing was conceived in her by the Spirit of God. He was to name Him Jesus because He would save his people from their sins. Matthew, under the inspiration of God, saw this as the ultimate fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction of the virgin birth of a Son called Immanuel—"God with us". So what is the sign, the significance to you and me, of the virgin birth? Just this: since Jesus is indeed God with us, as with Ahaz, He is able to save us from the impossible—from our deepest sins. He is not only able to forgive but deliver us from them—to give us victory and power over them. May the real message of Christmas sink down deeply into your heart and mine, and we pray, "Immanuel Jesus, cleanse me from all my sin."

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Pastor Gary Webster is director of the Institute of Public Evangelism.

Justice in print and in person

Cooranbong, New South Wales

The telling of a young asylum seeker's journey from Afghanistan at the launch of a justice book has poignantly illustrated the rationale for its publication.

Rahmat, an 18-year-old Hazara, fled to Pakistan with the surviving members of his family after the Taliban came to power. He worked to support his siblings but growing persecution of minority groups saw him engage a people smuggler who organised what would become an almost fatal journey to Australia.

"My hope for my family, and for all people who seek asylum, is to be safe," he told those attending the launch of *Do Justice: Our Call to Faithful Living* at Avondale College of Higher Education. "I've lost my mother, my father and my close relatives; I don't want to lose the rest of my family."

Rahmat is now a Year 12 student at Prescott College in Adelaide. He works at McDonald's so he can send money to his older sister, who is also studying. "Our country needs more Rahmats," said Brad Watson, a senior lecturer in International Development studies at Avondale and the organiser of the launch. "We need more brave, intelligent, articulate, hardworking, moderate, loving and decent people in our country."

It is difficult to ignore a personal encounter with injustice, said Signs Publishing book editor Nathan Brown during the dedication. "It's confronting. Responding with compassion is the first step towards doing justice."

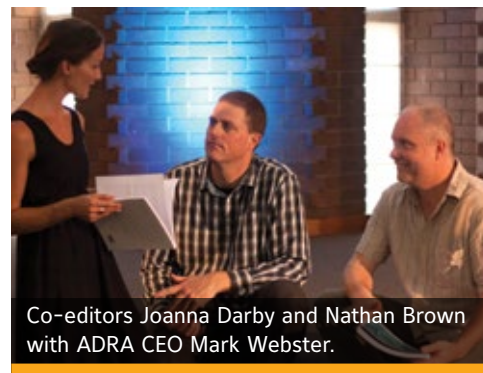
This Micah 6:8 theme, from which the title of the book is drawn, is "simply the answer to the question of what God requires of us," Mr Brown said. We like to answer the question in such complicated ways, he added. He would later criticise some within the Church for arguing against prioritising justice—"but doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with your God is the essence of what it means to live as a follower of Christ".

And it begins in the heart and in the mind. "When we talk about doing, we're not just talking about how much money you've raised, how many campaigns you've supported or how many mission trips you've made," said co-editor Joanna Darby. "We're talking about a whole way of being."

Ms Darby spoke of being encouraged by the book's 27 contributors, who include worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church vice-presidents Lowell Cooper and Ella Smith Simmons, academics Chris Blake and Kendra Haloviak Valentine and ministers Ty Gibson and Dwight Nelson. "We can't say people don't care because there are many passionate, experienced, working-all-over-the-world-for-justice people who do care."

One of the contributors is Mark Webster, who launched *Do Justice* in his role as chief executive officer of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Australia. ADRA has purchased more than 5000 copies of the book for distribution through its offices across the world. "We all have an inherent sense of justice," he said. "The problem is our justice-sensing equipment is biased—we're quick and sensitive to injustices against us but slow and insensitive to injustices against others."—Brenton Stacey

Do Justice: Our Call to Faithful Living, a companion to *Manifest: Our Call to Faithful Creativity*, is available from Adventist Book Centres or from <hopeshop.com>.



Co-editors Joanna Darby and Nathan Brown with ADRA CEO Mark Webster.

LETTERS

Note: Views in letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Letters should be less than 250 words, and writers must include their name, address and phone number. All letters are edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's original meaning will not be changed. Not all letters received are published. See Page 4 for contact details.

BASHFUL VEGETARIANS

Graeme Quick, Qld

The current era is hot for promoting vegetarianism and even veganism. TV and radio abound these days with food topics. Apologists for meat even make paternal comments about vegetarians. But Adventists do not need to be bashful. This is a great and opportune time.

What is frequently overlooked in any discussion about animal meats versus vegetarianism/plant-based nutrition is the simple fact that there are no diseases communicable from plants to humans. Sure, there are plants that are poisonous. But diseases—nil. By sharp contrast there are hundreds of diseases communicable from animals to humankind.

Finally, the sustainability side of any such discussion: a plant-based diet is not only healthier but takes up to one-tenth the land, water and energy. Keep this in mind: 100g of soybeans contains 35g of protein whereas 100g of beef contains less than half that amount—16g. Go for it Adventism!

LESS SERMONS

Bruce Thompson, NSW

There's an even "bigger elephant" than preliminaries ("Elephant prelims", Letter, November 15)—the sermon itself. Sabbath sermons were the exception for the first 50 years of the Adventist Church. Even in larger churches with pastors present, sermons weren't conducted every week.

Mrs White tells us that we don't need, and shouldn't expect, a sermon every Sabbath (7T 19, Ev 348). James Standish lines up with Mrs White (and most children) in disliking long sermons ("Shorter, smarter, better", Editorial, September 11) but looking through the entries under "Sermons" and "Sermonising" in the index to her writings it is obvious she recommends less sermons altogether.

Practical woman that she was, she left us some alternatives for Sabbath worship where the meetings are "most precious seasons" and "interesting to all" (2T 578), where adults are "refreshed and invigorated" (579) and even the children will welcome the Sabbath with joy as "the most interesting day of the week" (584,5).

JESUS' WORK

Joy Butler, via website

This is truly the work of Jesus that these women are doing for the prostitutes and sex workers in Australia ("Prayer, prostitutes and the power of love" Feature, November 6). It is marvellous that they have caught the vision and are ministering to hurting women. God bless them and this beautiful service.

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Magick with a k

Making God in our own image

by Stephen Ferguson

IN 2012 PENTECOSTAL "SERPENT-HANDLING" PASTOR Mark Wolford made world headlines when he died from a rattlesnake bite.¹ Snake-handlers cite Mark 16:17,18: "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any of the deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."

So why did Wolford die—did he lack faith? He probably didn't lack faith as much as test God (see Luke 4:12). His death may also have been a case of magick gone wrong.

Prayer versus magick

The term "magick" (with a "k") was first popularised by British occultist Aleister Crowley. He coined the term to distinguish an ancient religious philosophy from mere sleights of hand or stage magic.²

Anthropologists suggest prayer and magick³ are two universal practices found in almost every culture.⁴ Both are human responses to fear and anxiety yet represent diametrically opposite ways of interacting with the Divine.

Prayer is "devout petition to God".⁵ It comes from the Hebrew *tephillah* and Greek *deesis*, meaning "asking, entreating, entreaty".⁶

Magick by contrast includes "techniques that presumably assure human control of supernatural agencies or the forces of nature".⁷ The concept originally comes from the Persian *magush*, meaning "to have power".⁸

In other words, prayer is entreaty to the Divine will; magick seeks to control the Divine to achieve a guaranteed outcome.⁹ Prayer involves relational conversation with God;

magick uses formulaic "vain" repetition.¹⁰

Prayer recognises humans were made in the Divine image; magick repeats the mistake of Adam and Eve, thinking we are like gods who can make God in our own image (Genesis 3:5). While the Bible recognises miracles through prayer, it considers magick a capital offence (Deuteronomy 18:10,11).

Biblical examples of magickal thinking

In Numbers 20:9-12 Moses strikes a rock in anger to bring forth water. Moses' great sin was to suggest he and Aaron, not God, had the power to do this: "shall we bring water for you?"¹¹ (italics added). As a result of their actions, God forbade Moses and Aaron to enter the Promised Land.

In Acts 19:13-16 we find the story of the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief-priest, who cast out demons in the name of Jesus, "whom Paul preaches". The problem is these men didn't know who Jesus actually was but used His name as some sort of "abracadabra" magick-word. The result is a bemused demon who beats them black-and-blue and sends them running naked from the house!

Law and magick

Magick has always been an integral part of ancient pagan worship so it shouldn't surprise us that God sought to direct His people away from such practices through His law. In the first commandment He decrees that He is the one and only God.

Magick seeks to control the Divine through graven images. Contrary to popular belief, ancients probably didn't think idols were actually gods but rather worked like voodoo dolls—to control the deity.¹² The second commandment teaches we should make no graven images.

Another hallmark of magick involves invoking a divine name because to name something is to subdue it.¹³ The third commandment requires that we not take the Lord's name in vain. God's description, "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14), may actually be an anti-magickal pun suggesting God has no personal name that can be subdued.¹⁴ Even today Jews are careful about saying God's personal name "Yahweh" and modern Bible translations reflect this reverence by instead using the term "LORD" or "Lord".¹⁵

Finally, in the Sabbath commandment we see the ultimate expression of the supremacy of the Creator as against the merely created.

Modern "Christian" magick

We might be tempted to think magick only affected ancient pagans. However, as Adventist pioneer Ellen White rightly observed, "sorcery is practised in this age as verily as in the days of the old-time magicians".¹⁶ While Christians get all worked up over fictional works like *Harry Potter*, many embrace magickal philosophies themselves.

Magickal thinking is still alive and well within Christianity today. Within "traditional" denominations consider the Catholic, Lutheran¹⁷ and Anglican¹⁸ idea of transubstantiation. During Mass a priest supposedly calls Jesus out of heaven and turns the communion wafer into the actual flesh of Christ.¹⁹ The phrase "hocus pocus" may even derive from this magickal act.²⁰

Similarly, within contemporary evangelical denominations, prosperity gospel proponents, late-night TV evangelists and mega-churches alike promise money and health—often at a fee. Brian Houston of Hillsong demonstrated it best with his modestly titled book *You Need More Money*.²¹ Really? In these cases humans do not merely "petition" God but effectively "command" Him through the performance of various actions or by claiming out-of-context Bible promises. God is viewed as a cosmic ATM, controlled by a ritual pin-code, a *Deus ex machina*, a machine-God.²²

Magickal Jesus?

So what about Jesus? The Jewish Talmud argues Jesus practised magick,²³ however the opposite seems true.

Firstly, the nativity story with the three Magi (yes, as in magicians)²⁴ possibly illustrates an anti-magickal theme, paralleling Moses' own battle with Pharaoh's magicians (Exodus 7:10–13,22). Matthew's inclusion of this story for Jewish-Christian audiences suggests Jesus is the greater second Moses who subjugates magick even as an infant.²⁵

Secondly, while Jesus performed many miracles, having every right to use His own power as God, He said, "the Son can do nothing by Himself, he can do only what he sees his

Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does" (John 5:19). In the Cross we see the greatest rejection of magickal thinking where Jesus refused to save even Himself, wholly submitting to the will of the Father (Luke 22:42).

Faith of a mustard seed

The life of Jesus illustrates the paradox of faith. It is only when we give up magickal thinking and totally submit to God, when we are so weak and pathetic, when we have nothing left to bargain with and no delusions about controlling Him, that God can realise His will in our lives.

Paul expressed this idea when he said, "when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). The tiny faith of a mustard seed is when we realise "I am a nobody" (2 Corinthians 12:11). Then, and only then, can God work through us to move mountains! R

1. Spencer Walker, "Snake-Handling Pentecostal Pastor Dies From Snake Bite", ABC News online, February 17, 2014.
2. Aleister Crowley, *Magick, Book 4* (Berlin: Ordo Templi Orientis, 1913), p 127, 134.
3. For the remainder of this article, the term "magick" will be used where "magic" might otherwise be used, to denote a religious philosophy and not mere sleight of hand or stage trick.
4. Bengt Ankarloo & Stuart Clark, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Biblical and Pagan Societies*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2001), xiii.
5. "prayer", Urban Dictionary, <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/prayer?s=t>>.
6. Strong's Concordance at [H8605], at [G4336].
7. "magic", Urban Dictionary, Crowley similarly defined "magick" as "the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will".
8. "magic", Online Etymology Dictionary.
9. Cathleen Falsani, "The Prosperity Gospel", Washington Post, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/opinions/outlook/worst-ideas/prosperity-gospel.html>>.
10. Jesus made this point Himself about the nature of pagan worship in Matthew 6:7.
11. As a side note, observe Moses may have struck the rock with the very same staff he had earlier used to combat Pharaoh's own magicians.
12. "Idols and Idol-Making", Archaeological Study Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 1136.
13. Consider the first task of Adam was to name all the animals to fulfil God's command to subdue the earth. And consider, by contrast, that God never named Adam—it is a title, not a personal name. We even see it in the example of Daniel and his three friends who were given new names by their Babylonian captors.
14. Further reflected in the tradition that Jews, except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, were forbidden from even attempting to say God's personal name: "YHWH: The Name of God in the Old Testament", Archaeological Study Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 89.
15. Also known as the tetragrammaton, which from c.300 BC, the Jews avoided saying and instead used the word 'Adonai': E. A. Livingstone, "Transubstantiation", *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford Uni. Pres., 2006), 579.
16. Ellen White, *Conflict and Courage*, p 343.
17. The Lutherans have a slightly different doctrine called sacramental union but it is similar to Catholic transubstantiation.
18. There remains debate within the Anglican Communion about the Real Presence in the Eucharist wafer but many, especially the Anglo-Catholic faction, do uphold a similar belief of consubstantiation.
19. E. A. Livingstone, "Transubstantiation", *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford Uni. Pres., 2006), 596.
20. From the phrase 'Hoc est corpus meum', meaning "This is my body", which the priest said during the Latin Mass: "hocus pocus", Online Etymological Dictionary, <<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=hocus-pocus>>
21. Brian Houston, *You Need More Money: Discovering God's Amazing Financial Plan for Your Life* (Trust Media Dist., 2000).
22. Best explained by famous anti-Nazi theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Derek Michaud, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer", Boston Collaborative Collection of Western Theology, <<http://people.bu.edu/~wwildman/bce/bonhoeffer.htm>>
23. Sanh. 106b, Sotah 47b; Dennis C. Duling, *The New Testament: History, Literature and Social Context*, 4th Ed. (Belmont CA: Wadsworth, 2003), p 30–31.
24. "magic", Online Etymology Dictionary.
25. Krister Stendahl, *Quis et Unde: An Analysis of Matthew 1–2* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), p 59.

Stephen Ferguson is a lawyer and member of Livingston church, WA.



Real ministry

by Eddy Johnson

JULIE* CAME INTO MY OFFICE ACCOMPANIED BY A prison guard. She had been sentenced to jail for stabbing her partner and a 13-year-old girl. Coming home from doing errands, Julie had caught them taking a shower together. Her jail term had almost ended and the authorities wanted her to acquire some social skills before releasing her into the community.

After what seemed a very long time, Julie began to open up and tell her story. She was the child of white and Aboriginal parents, she told me. When she was eight, her

mother put her on the street as a child prostitute to earn money for her drug addiction. At 13, Julie ran away from home and settled in with the man she eventually stabbed. As most street kids do, Julie got involved in drugs, alcohol and petty crimes. She was a very troubled young woman with no sense of personal worth or values.

Arms folded tightly, she glared at me and asked: "What can you possibly do for me?"

That was seven years ago. After almost a year of counselling, Julie began to feel more positive about herself. She

was released from detention and found a job on a farm. I lost contact with her but often wondered how she was going.

Three years ago, out of the blue, she showed up at my office accompanied by a well-groomed man. It was obvious that they were partners. In fact, she had come to introduce me to her husband Mick, who came from a Middle Eastern background. He owned a small construction business and was doing quite well. He also took in Julie's two younger children. It was obvious that they were very happy, enthusiastically sharing about their life together and their future plans. They came in again on a few occasions, the last time to show me their chubby nine-month-old baby boy Josh.

At this point I wish I could write that things are just getting better and better for this couple. They aren't. Some of Julie's relatives never accepted her marrying outside of her culture. Things have become very messy, with family members accusing Mick of engaging in very disturbing criminal behaviour. Are the accusations true? The courts will have to decide.

While waiting for the judge's decision, Julie is shattered because she is torn between the man she loves and her love and responsibility to her family. At times the pressure is too great to bear and Julie is tempted to go back to her drug use days. She may have succumbed for all I know.

I heard from her a few days ago. "Can Mick and I come and see you for counselling when this thing is over?" "Of course you can," I replied. Whether Mick is convicted or not, whether Julie is back on drugs or not, the ADRA Community Centre at Blacktown (NSW) will always be there for them and for hundreds of people like them.

One time I was talking to Julie about church and she observed rather cynically that church people have no time for individuals of her kind. I reminded her that ADRA was a church organisation. Her quick reply, which I must admit warmed my heart, was, "but you are different. You have never looked down on me and more importantly I've never felt like dirt when I am in your office."

I have often wondered why the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised felt comfortable to be with Jesus and yet felt shunned by the religious establishment. Would I be far from the truth if I said that the church today does not fare any better than back then? Marginalised people still do not feel welcomed in most middle-class Christian congregations. Believers do collect food and clothes for the needy but what the needy really need most are friends; Christian friends who will not be turned off by the vocabulary, the

stench of unwashed bodies, disorganised lives, poor skills and, in some cases, the dirty clothes and smell of beer.

Working for the ADRA Community Centre has given me a deep insight into what Jesus had to accept when He came down from celestial purity to this filthy world. It has given me a greater awareness of Christ's love for people, a disturbing awareness of my own initial reluctance and more importantly an awareness of the work that God has accomplished in my heart so that I can truly say that today I see people through the eyes of Jesus. Because people matter to God, they matter to me too.

I served as a minister for many years before coming to ADRA Blacktown. Those were good years. And my ministry was, by and large, rewarding. But now when I look back I think of those years as a prelude to my real ministry.

The church pastor spends an inordinate amount of time sorting through petty personality conflicts and tangential doctrinal debates. All the while, the most desperate needs in society are not being met. Today, my ministry feels alive and strong—connected to real people with serious needs; people who aren't preoccupied with the state of the bitumen in the carpark, fighting over drums in musical backing tracks and other such trivialities. I feel like my ministry today is following in the footsteps of Jesus who reached out to prostitutes and thieves, publicans and sinners.

I wish every Seventh-day Adventist pastor got to concentrate his or her time and effort serving the most marginalised, the most hurt, those in the most need. What a refreshing use of our manpower! And rather than doing large public events, wouldn't it be remarkable if we spent our evangelism funding on actually helping people like Julie and, through the actions of love, introduce her to our God of love?

Julie believes I have helped her. And maybe, by God's grace, I have. But in truth it's through helping Julie and men and women like her that I've re-found my calling as a minister in its deepest and most profound sense. My regret is that I came to this practical ministry late in my career. My hope is that I'll be able to continue to minister to the marginalised for many years to come. Because it is through them that I have come closest to Christ. R

** All names have been changed to protect privacy.*

Pastor Eddy Johnson is based at the ADRA Community Centre, Blacktown, NSW.

CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

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Nehemiah is a Hebrew a long way from home. He hears about his friends being sad about their destroyed home in Jerusalem. So he prays to God, who gives him this great idea of going back to help rebuild the walls and gates of his city. God gives Nehemiah the wisdom and courage he needs to complete the work He gave him.

JOIN UP THE
WORDS AND FIND
THE **GRACELINK**
MESSAGE

GO IVE SM DG ET HE
GR AC EA ND PO WE
RT OD OH IS WI LL
AND THE **MEMORY VERSE**
TH EG RA CIO US HA
ND OF MY GO DW AS
UP ON ME NEH
EMI AH
2:8



WEDDINGS



Hickling-Nezar.

Codie Allen
Hickling, son of
Barry Hickling

(Broome, WA) and Patricia
Christensen (Port Headland), and
Tammy Jean Nezar, daughter of
Bridget (Scotts Head, NSW) and
John Nezar (deceased), were
married 30.8.14 in the Mackay
Botanical Gardens, Qld.

Mike Brownhill

Kerwin-Gray. Malcolm Roy Kerwin, son of Gregory Robert Kerwin and Doreen Isabel Carruthers, and Jasmine Louise Gray, daughter of Garry Paul Gray and Ana Louise McCausland, were married 5.10.14 at Sandgate church. They will set up their home in Clear Mountain, Qld.

Humberto Rivera



Rutkowski-Wilson.

Raphael
Christopher
Rutkowski, son of
Chris and Jolanta Rutkowski
(Brisbane, Qld); and Victoria Alice
Wilson, daughter of Ashley and

Janeen Wilson (Brisbane), were
married 28.9.14 at Tamborine
Gardens, North Tamborine. We
wish them God's blessing as they
live for one another and Jesus
Christ.

André van Rensburg

Woodward-Burke. Stephen
John Woodward, son of John and
Zona Woodward (Harrisville, Qld),
and Kerry Anne Burke, daughter
of Jim Burke (deceased) and Joan
Luxford (Hervey Bay), were mar-
ried 21.9.14 at Maroochydhore.

John Rabbas

OBITUARIES

Blandin de Chalain, Maud, born
6.1.1922 in Mauritius; died 16.9.14
in Sydney, NSW. She is survived
by her sons, Jean Claude, Jocer-
lyn, Gaetan, Cyril and Clency; and
10 grandchildren. She was pre-
deceased by her husband, Roger,
in 1998. She was a loyal member
of the Campbelltown church and
loved her family. Maud waits for
the resurrection day when she
will hear the Lord's life-giving
command.

Rein Muhlberg

Dunn, Geoffrey William David,
born 13.9.1962 in Mackay, Qld;
died 30.8.14 in Hideaway Bay, Qld.
He is survived by his parents, Pas-
tor Des and Phyllis Dunn; siblings,
Andrew, Christopher and Anthea
and their extended families. Geof-
frey was deeply loved by his fam-
ily and will be missed by all who
knew him. He had a deep passion
for the sea and all things nautical.
Geoffrey valued the natural world,
the principles of forgiveness,
acceptance and unconditional
love. All the kind thoughts, deeds
and the many prayers are appre-
ciated by his family.

Kevin Brown

Hills, Ruth Eleanor (nee Baxter),
born 9.8.1933 in East Brighton,
Vic; died 27.8.14 in Cooranbong,
NSW. On 4.1.1955, she married
Des Hills. She is survived by her
husband; her children, Allan and
Neroli; and grandchildren, Kylie,
Jenna, Shania and Declan. Ruth
was much loved and left a rich
legacy in the many children she
taught and influenced both in
her work as a school principal
and Pathfinder leader. She was
a committed Adventist and will

be remembered for her strong
Christian faith, particularly in the
past two years when her health
deteriorated. We look forward to
seeing Ruth on the resurrection
morning.

Peter Watts

Larwood, Betty Jean (nee Tin-
worth), born 6.9.1943 in Kingaroy,
Qld; died 9.3.14 in Nambour.
She married Lens Larwood, who
predeceased her. She was also
predeceased by Kelvin, Colin
and Sherilyn. She is survived by
her children; her brothers and
one sister. Betty trusted the Lord
always. She served human-
ity diligently and longed for the
day when she would be with her
Maker and Lens.

Joe Webb

Perry, Llewellyn Davies ("Snow"),
born 18.3.1927; died 11.9.14. He
is survived by Dot, his beloved
wife of almost 70 years; his
children, Jim, David, Kelvin and
Robert; nine grandchildren;
and five great-grandchildren.
Snow and Dot were ardent bird
watchers who travelled all over
Australia and New Zealand as

4 in 5 Zambians

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POSITIONS VACANT

■ **Maintenance manager—Adventist Aviation Services PNG (Goroka, Papua New Guinea).** Adventist Aviation Services PNG is a small aviation company run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church based in Papua New Guinea (PNG). It operates two modern, turbine-powered Pacific Aerospace P750XL aircraft with a mission to support the Seventh-day Adventist Church in PNG and help it grow by providing transport and other essential services to the people and church members. Adventist Aviation Services is looking for a new maintenance manager to commence in 2015. For more information please visit the South Pacific Division's Human Resources website at < www.adventistemployment.org.au >. All applications must include your CV and three work-related referees and be sent to: Human Resources, Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Limited, Locked Bag 2014, Wahoonga NSW 2076 Australia; email to <hr@adventist.org.au>; or fax to (02) 9489 0943. Applications close **January 18, 2015.**

■ **Project manager/principal—Currawah Aboriginal Education Centre (Brewarrina, NSW).** The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia is seeking a self-motivated, energetic person to assist the Currawah working group to re-open Currawah Aboriginal Education Centre. Currawah is a year 7-10 co-educational Christian boarding school located 45 kilometres south of Brewarrina. The successful applicant will initially be employed on a 12-month contract with duties including project management responsibilities to ensure physical site compliance and infrastructure completion by the targeted dates; developing and contextualising curriculum and policy documentation relevant to the mission and purpose of the school; preparing and submitting funding proposals to relevant government departments and the submission of the application to reopen the school; working with NSW Board of Studies and the Association of Independent Schools; playing a key role in the selection and appointment of suitable staff for the 2016 school year. While the initial contract would be for a 12-month period, it is envisaged that the successful applicant will transition to the role of principal of Currawah Aboriginal Education Centre in 2016. For further information please contact Steve Piez, director of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ministries Australia, <stevepiez@adventist.org.au> or phone 0409 357 701.

■ **Video editor (intern position)—Adventist Media Network/ADRA (Wahoonga, NSW).** The Adventist Media Network (AMN) and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) have a position available for a video production intern for a period of 12 months. The successful applicant will work as part of the AMN video production team who are responsible for creating two weekly shows that air on commercial TV, in addition to a number of other programs of shorter lengths. In addition the person will work on a number of video projects for ADRA. The successful applicant will ideally have: completed tertiary qualifications in video production—particularly editing and/or camera work; a portfolio of work that demonstrates their ability to technically edit video projects while telling stories in an interesting and creative way; an interest in advancing the work of ADRA by visually telling development stories; be capable of working individually and as part of a team; initiative; skills in Adobe suite of software including After Effects and Premier as well as Final Cut. Commitment to quality and service, together with a respect for Christian values and ethics are essential. Overseas applicants should ensure they satisfy Australian working visa requirements before applying for this position. Adventist Media Network reserves the right to fill this vacancy at its discretion. For further information contact Calvin Dever on (02) 9847 2222 or email <corpserv@adventistmedia.org.au>. Applications close **December 15, 2014.**

Sign up for job updates and find more vacant positions at <adventistemployment.org.au>



well as to many different islands off the mainlands. His love for his harmonica was greatly appreciated, as was his membership at the Gold Coast Central church in Southport, Qld. Snow and Dot were greatly loved for their visits to sick and lonely believers on the Gold Coast. He was a man of God, loved by all who knew him and adored by the ones who loved him most.

Ken Martin, Sean Berkley

Mackay, Betty June (nee Davis), born 22.6.1931; died 15.9.14 in Newcastle, NSW. On 28.9.1952, she married Ian Mackay. She is survived by her husband; her children, Cherie Mackay, Karen Vidler, Stewart and Murray; grandchildren, Crystal, Luke, Mika, David, Matina; and six great-grandchildren. Betty was dedicated to

her children and supported her church's fundraising programs. She will be remembered for her caring attitude, infectious sense of humour and love for her Lord. Betty will be sadly missed but there is a great reunion day coming.

Aubrey Shirley

Parnell, Evelyn Joy (nee Matthews), born 9.11.1920 in Melbourne, Vic; died 16.9.14 in Melbourne. In the 1930s she was baptised in the North Fitzroy church. On 26.2.1942, she married Clive Remington Parnell, who predeceased her in 2000. She was also predeceased by her son, Ian, in 2007. She is survived by her children, Glenys Parnell, Gail Lightfoot and Bruce and Cheryl Parnell. Joy's love for Jesus led her to help others wherever she



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SUPPORTING MINISTRY POSITION

■ **Principal—Karlundi Aboriginal Education Community (Meekatharra, WA),** a co-educational K-12 Christian boarding school that serves the Aboriginal people of Western Australia, is seeking expressions of interest for the position of principal to begin in January 2015. The applicant will have experience in school leadership and an interest in the development and training of Aboriginal young people; be a self-motivated, energetic person who has a passion to share Jesus and His Word; be a hands-on operator with the ability to promote and market the school to the surrounding communities; be responsible for the educational and spiritual leadership of the school; have cross-cultural experience together with a willingness to learn from others; and be a team builder and have excellent problem solving and conflict management/resolution skills. For further information please contact Steve Piez, director of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ministries Australia, <stevepiez@adventist.org.au> or phone 0409 357 701.

The above ministry is independent of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organisation but is supportive of the Church.

could. She is especially remembered for employing newly arrived Polish immigrants, giving them a good start in a new country.

Paul Kotanko

Schubert, Olwyn Betty (nee Dawson), born 26.10.1930 in Auckland, NZ; died 16.8.14 in Melbourne, Vic. In 1952, she married Dr Wilfred Schubert, who predeceased her in 2000. She is survived by her children and their spouses; Beverley and Dr Geoff Edwards, John and Judy Schubert, Peter and Robyn Schubert; 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. After they married, Wilfred and Olwyn set up their home in Cobram. The family later moved to Melbourne and the UK where Wilfred did post-graduate study. They then settled permanently in Melbourne where their home was always open to warmly welcome and befriend people from all walks of life. Olwyn supported many in their time of need and assisted the community through welfare organisations. She was a gracious, loving Christian friend to many.

James Kent

Watson, Gordon Henry, born 13.6.1918 in Smithfield, SA; died 12.9.14 in Goodwood. On 17.7.1948, he married Ella May Green in Strathalbyn. She predeceased him in 2008. He is survived by their children, Trish Woolfe and Kelvin Watson (both of Adelaide); seven grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. Gordon faithfully attended Adelaide City church with his wife and children for more than 45 years. In his day, he enjoyed umpiring church cricket matches on Sundays.

Wolfgang Stefani

Wera, Rhoda, born 8.8.1966 in a missionary home in Wabeg, Enga Province, PNG; died 27.9.14 in Flores Hospital, Lae, Morobe Province. She married Pastor Jonathan Wera (currently stewardship director for Morobe Mission). She

is survived by her husband; and their three daughters, Kaludia, Dalsie, Diane and son, Joshua. Rhoda served as Children's and Women's Ministries director for Morobe Mission for almost five years before she left due to illness. She loved her Lord and her family. Rhoda's funeral service was held at Two Mile church and her body was buried beside her husband's mother's grave at Yanni District Mission Headquarters, Goroka. She will be sadly missed by all.

Roy Tukar

Williams, Ivy May Pearl (nee Rook), born 13.6.1921 in South Melbourne, Vic; died 13.4.14 in Melbourne. She was predeceased by her husband, Perce. She is survived by her children, Karen and Ken, son-in-law, Mark; and grandchildren, Elizabeth and Kathryn. Ivy joined the Preston church in 1961 as a result of the colporteur ministry of Roy Butcher and Bill Thorsen. She was active in the Dorcas Society of the church as well as being a deaconess and Sabbath School teacher. Ivy was a great cook and enjoyed knitting. In 2010, at the age of 89, she moved to AdventCare Whitehorse where she spent her remaining years.

James Kent

ADVERTISEMENTS

100-year celebration, Barossa Valley (formerly Nuriootpa) Adventist Church, SA, April 11, 2015. To register your interest, share photos and memorabilia, contact Wendy Brooks, email <grandy@adam.com.au> or phone (08) 8280 7379. Local accommodation may be limited due to SA camp meeting and community events.

Celebrations: make your special event an exceptional occasion with drinks for both non-drinkers and drinkers from ALCOfree. Check out <www.alcofree.com.au>.

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Mega Project Hope PNG 2015 needs volunteers, Jan 20–Feb 20, 2015. Producing 300 TV programs for Hope Channel. We need: directors, producers, videographers, sound/lighting people, editors, carpenters/builders, electricians, graphic designers, decorators, make-up artists and caterers. Contact Edgard Lopez on (02) 9847 2214 or email <edgardlopez@adventistmedia.org.au>

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Stuarts Point Convention Centre open. The camporee relocation has meant Stuarts Point Convention Centre will again be open for Christmas holiday camping and accommodation as per usual. Bookings essential: 02 6569 0576 or email <stuartspointcc@adventist.org.au>.

Finally . . .

Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently.

—Maya Angelou

Next RECORD
December 20



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