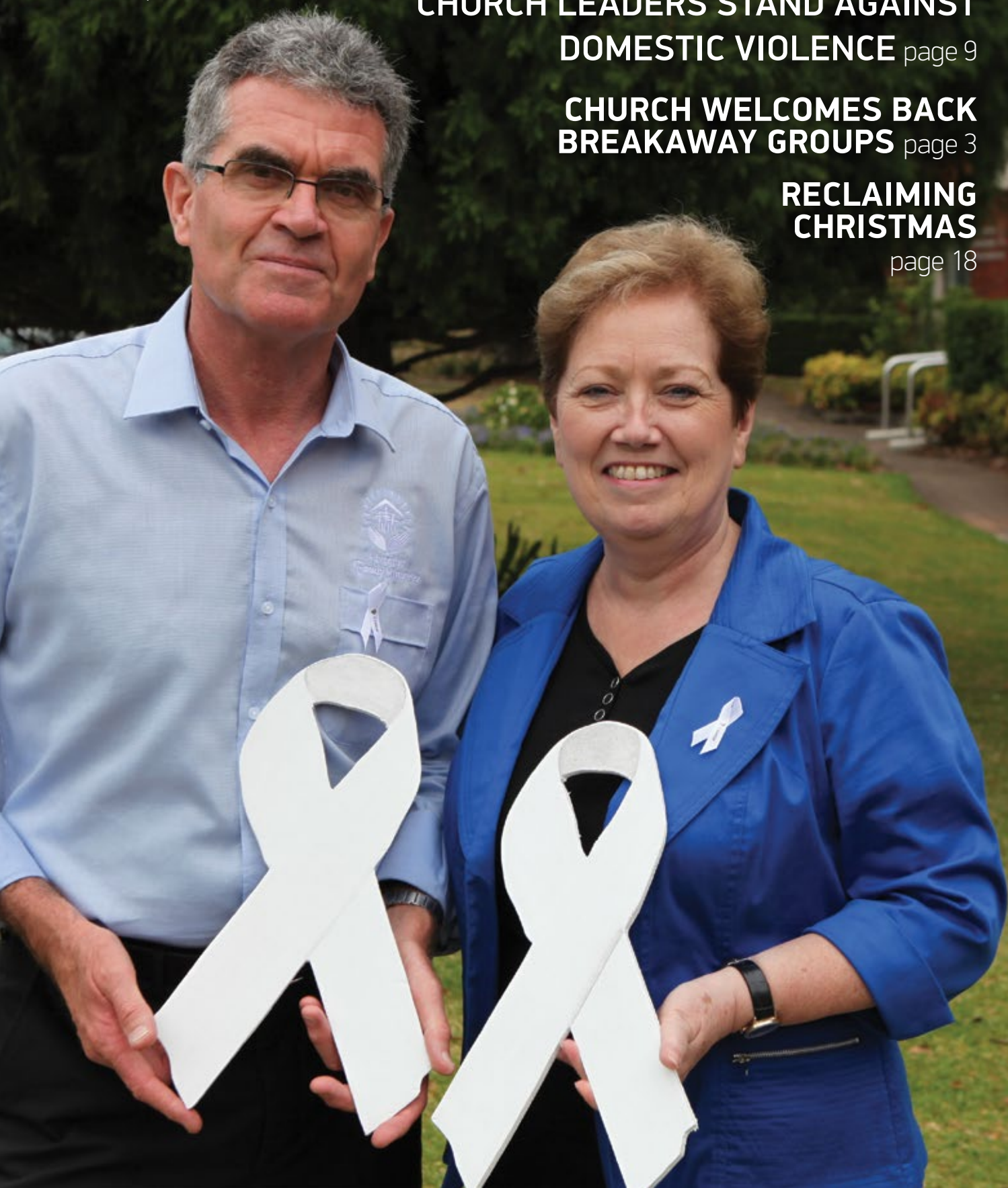


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CHRISTMAS**
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Church welcomes back breakaway groups

Tanna, Vanuatu

More than 200 people from the Tafea District of Vanuatu were welcomed back to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in an emotional reconciliation ceremony at Bethel Adventist church on Tanna Island.

It had been 16 years since Kaio Timothy (senior) led a breakaway group in the district after being disfellowshipped from the Portoroki Adventist church in Port Vila.

In a short but emotional speech at the November 2 ceremony, Mr Timothy stressed the importance of unity as the Church looks forward to the second coming of Christ.

"There is only one Church," said Mr Timothy with tears in his eyes, "and I urge all to become one and be united for the sake of our mission. Jesus is soon to come."

A number of Adventist leaders were on hand to witness the special event, including Tafea District director Pastor Jonathan Moses and a number of representatives from the Beverly Hills, Portoroki and Epauto Adventist churches.

Also in attendance was Vanuatu Mission Global Mission director Pastor Kaio Timothy (junior), who witnessed his father and brothers spearhead the breakaway group in the late '90s. Speaking on their return, Pastor Timothy said the reconciliation was a testament to the "power of the Holy Spirit to break down barriers and mend relationships".

As part of the ceremony, Pastor Timothy read a reconciliatory speech on behalf of Vanuatu Mission president Pastor Nos Terry, who apologised to the breakaway group on behalf of the Church and expressed an invitation for them to return to the "mother church".

Although the event was successful in bringing the two parties together, Pastor Timothy said there were doubts "even on Friday" whether it would actually happen as previous attempts at reconciliation had failed.

"But when God's people humble themselves and confess their sins, miracles by the Holy Spirit become possible," he said. "It happened in Port Vila and it's still happening. It will happen elsewhere in Vanuatu with other breakaway groups."

One such group was the Baiap breakaway party of West Ambrym, which was welcomed back to the Church on the same day as the Tanna ceremony.

The reconciliation between the Church and the 15- to 20-member group took place after a weeklong revival meeting was held in Baiap village.

"We did not expect this to happen," said Ampa District director Pastor Joshua Esau, who hosted the meeting. "But on Saturday when church leaders approached the group and invited them to return to the mother church, they did not hesitate. It was as if they had already made up their mind to return and were just waiting for this opportunity."

Plans are being made for a baptism to be held at Baiap village for returning members.

On November 5, Bethel church held its first prayer combined meeting with members from the breakaway group. For years the two parties had been gathering at different churches separated by only 20 metres. —*Linden Chuang/Simon Luke*



Tanna village guests helped officiate the reconciliation ceremony on Tanna island.

Disability program attracts PAU students

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

"What will we gain from being allocated to work in a small disability organisation?" This was the sentiment echoed by four of the five business students from Pacific Adventist University (PAU) who were assigned to work with the Papua New Guinea Assembly of Disabled Persons (PNGADP) as part of their yearly practicum program.

But after being engaged with PNGADP for five weeks, involved in the real-world finances and struggles of disability services, the students returned inspired to do more for disadvantaged people.

Three third-year students are now pursuing research projects in micro-business plans for people with disabilities as part of their course assessment. Other students are requesting a placement with PNGADP next year.

Business Practicum coordinator Heather Vanua has begun developing training programs for people with disabilities and is in discussions with PNGADP's co-chair

Ipul Powaseu about developing a study program for women with disabilities.

"It's really sad that we lack social inclusion for people with disabilities," said final year business student Maureen Gwand. "We call

ourselves a Christian country yet we don't live up to that. . . I was very blessed to work with people with disabilities. I just want us all to be reminded of Luke 14: it's better to help someone who can't repay you because your reward awaits you in heaven." —*Ipul Powaseu/Kent Kingston*



L-R: Students Seata Mogi, Dibsai Lai, Gayleen Matthews and Maureen Gwand.



New

James Standish

As I walked through the corridors that once were a second home, I bumped into a slightly balding, middle-aged man in a business shirt and jeans. "What are you looking for there, fella?" he asked in his warm mid-Atlantic accent.

"I've come back to visit the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit," I replied. "Well you won't find it here, it's all in the new wing. But tell you what, I'll take you to where it used to be." He gestured to follow him and we strode down the hallway, around the corner, through large double doors. At the next door on the left he pulled out a key and within a second I was walking into a space where the most intense feelings of joy, pain, hope and fear collided all those years before.

It was here that I got to touch my first child for the very first time. Her body so tiny it would be months before she fit into the baby clothes grandparents sent, her eyes covered to protect them from the light they couldn't absorb and her lungs so fragile she could not cry.

I stood in the space looking at the slightly disorganised remnants of the NICU. And tears once again rolled down my face. But this time it wasn't because my tiny little baby was struggling for her every breath; the tears this time were out of profound thanks to God. Because standing right next to me, holding my hand, was that very same baby—my baby, my Shea, but now she was a strong, vibrant eight-year-old.

We'd come to the abandoned NICU for the first time since Shea left hospital because we wanted to see it just once more before we left the US for our new life in Australia.

Like her entry into her first life, entry into this new Australian life was far from easy. Caught between putting Shea forward or back half-a-year due to the differing school calendars, after testing we were advised to put her forward. It was tough. A new country. A new school. New kids, new teachers, new curriculum, new general knowledge, new sports. Having skipped half of first grade how would she fair?

Early the following year the school held its swimming carnival. Shea entered every race—and came last in every

one of them. She was also in the bottom reading group, behind in maths, struggling to keep up. There were times I came home from work, looked into her eyes and thought, "we have made a dreadful mistake".

But I had greatly underestimated the determination God had given my little fighter.

At this year's swimming carnival Shea didn't just compete with all her heart. This time she won her age group trophy and went on to represent her school at a regional swimming championship. She did a similar leapfrog academically. This Australian life is turning out well.

But as I write Shea is about to start a third new life. No, we're not moving. It's much more profound than that. On Sabbath Shea will be baptised.

Our life stories are long, and with many twists and turns. No-one can know how her third new life will turn out. Will she be able to maintain the purity and integrity of her faith, even as she navigates from here? I don't know.

What I do know is that the Christian life is hard. And maybe it's getting harder. There is a growing intolerance of Christian practice and morality in Western society. Media is being used to preach secularity in such a pervasive manner it seeps into almost every open conscious moment. And I know that our natural inclinations are not to a life of selflessness and submission to the will of God. The Christian race is not for the faint-hearted. Acknowledging this, Paul put it this way:

"And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith . . . Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12:1,3).

New lives are difficult but they are also immensely precious. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let's treasure the new life He promises to us. And let's look forward to finishing this new life in the way we started it—full of faith, hope and courage.

James Standish is editor of Adventist Record.

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"Trafford Fischer (Family Ministries) and Erna Johnson (Women's Ministries) take part in White Ribbon Day."

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



Five ways Muslims are more biblical than Adventists

Kent Kingston

I could have easily written this editorial on the 100 ways Adventists are more biblical than Muslims, but I haven't. If we're serious about wanting Muslims to consider the claims of Jesus, we need to begin with an attitude of humility, and that means accepting that there are things we can learn from Muslims.

1. Inshallah: . . . *you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that' (James 4:15).*

In the past Christians regularly used the phrase "God willing". But today there's very little thought given to how we include God in our day-to-day plans. But Muslims regularly modify their statements with *inshallah*—God willing. It's a reminder that God is sovereign.

2. Respect for God: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (Proverbs 9:10).*

Muslims have a very high view of God and are usually careful to discuss spiritual matters with respect. When we rush to criticise their out-of-reach deity, we miss the opportunity for some self-examination.

Contemporary Christians too often take God for granted. In an attempt to connect with the divine we invent a false God in our image—"Jesus Dude", who will never call attention to the vast differences between our tiny humanity and God's eternal majesty. The Muslim doctrine of submission offers something of value.

3. Modesty: *But every woman who prays or prophesies . . . she should cover her head (1 Corinthians 11:5-6).*

Modesty among Adventists in the West is a dying art. Historically we promoted "dress reform"—modesty, quality and simplicity as well as good health (looser, less constricting clothing was recommended).

In contrast, Islam is seeing a resurgence of hijab, particularly among women—although it should be pointed out that Muslim men are also expected to dress modestly. In the mosque and during prayer, women cover their hair—not such a strange practice when we consider the words of Paul, quoted above.

4. Sharia: *Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? (1 Corinthians 6:5).*

In these individualistic times, the greatest social faux pas is to "judge" somebody. It's becoming harder to deal with church discipline matters; it seems impolite to delve into private difficulties. Under sharia principles however, congregational discipline continues. Disputes around ceremony, theology, diet and marriage are heard and decided by a panel of religious leaders. Too formal and legalistic? You be the judge.

5. Prayer and fasting: *She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying (Luke 2:37).*

It's hard to deny that Muslims are people of prayer. And the Ramadan fast, far from being a month of miserable self-denial, seems to be a time of spiritual focus, fellowship and celebration.

These "rigid" Muslims put many Christians to shame when it comes to their prayer life—regular, committed, sincere. And despite the many biblical mentions of fasting, it's a practice that's almost unknown in many Adventist congregations.

Food for thought?

Family and friends

As we again rapidly approach another Christmas (I cannot believe where this year has gone!) I find my thoughts drifting affectionately to my family and friends. You see I am one of those very fortunate individuals who, all my life, has enjoyed a wonderfully strong and supportive network of family and friends. They have shown me the kind of unselfish love and friendship that you just can't buy in the supermarket or even find under a Christmas tree somewhere. I thank God for them every day. I really do.

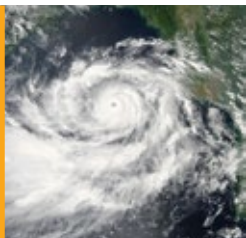
But I am very well aware that there are so many, even some of you reading this *Record*, who do not have a strong family or who do not have friends with whom you can enjoy time or mutual support. For some this will be the first Christmas alone after many years of a loving marriage or because of a painful separation. Some face an uncertain future through illness, financial crisis or because you have been asked to relocate.

I want those of you who have been blessed with family and friends like I have to do something with me. Reach out to someone. Please don't embarrass anyone but do what you can to share some of the love of Jesus by showing how much you dare to care this Christmas. If you let Him, He can show you what you should do and how you should do it. And go ahead. Just do it!

May God be with you this Christmas.

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





Storms coming

Australia's closest neighbours are at increased risk of cyclones, flooding and drought over the next six months, thanks to El Niño climate fluctuations. The warning comes from the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. ADRA offices across the South Pacific are preparing for the worst. —*Record staff*



Adventists massacred

Islamist militants have shot dead 28 bus passengers in Kenya, including at least eight Adventists. In a Sabbath dawn attack, the Al-Shabaab gunmen ordered passengers to read a passage from the Qur'an in Arabic. Those who could not were shot in the head. A small Adventist congregation in Mandera lost half its membership. —*Standard Online*



Ethos challenged

Victorian Labor's election win in November has left Christian groups concerned that faith-based organisations will have their religious freedoms threatened. During the campaign, Labor promised to reinstate anti-discrimination laws that limit the ability of Christian schools and other religious organisations to choose staff who share their beliefs and life-style standards. —*Australian Christian Lobby*



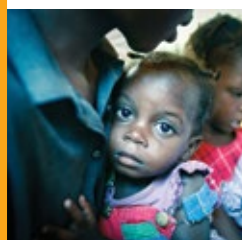
Healing heroics

Mel Gibson is working on a movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, retelling the true story of a World War II conscientious objector. Desmond Doss, a committed Seventh-day Adventist, refused to carry a weapon but his bravery as a medic during the Battle of Okinawa earned him the US Congressional Medal of Honour. —*Hollywood Reporter*



Risk factor

The World Health Organisation says nearly half a million cancers per year are now linked to being overweight or obese. Women in wealthy countries are particularly at risk, with obesity being a major risk factor for a number of cancers, including oesophagus, colon, kidney and post-menopausal breast cancer. —*UN News*



Investment return

Due to funding agreements ADRA International is able to add six dollars to every dollar donated to its hunger program. ADRA operates around 90 hunger and agriculture projects around the world—from emergency food relief to garden and nutrition training. One out of nine people around the world struggle with hunger. —*adra.org*

When it comes to Christmas, it's always better together!

By helping ADRA raise \$500,000 this Christmas, you can multiply the efforts of people like Hilda helping her make the most of her yields, earn an income and support her loved ones.

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My sister?

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Nellie Hamura-oa, is the Adventist Chaplain at the University of Papua New Guinea. But there is something a lot more interesting about her. She is standing up for the religious liberty of women accused of sorcery in PNG.

At a recent religious liberty symposium at Pacific Adventist University, Chaplain Hamura-oa presented her research on the reality of the persecution of those accused of sorcery. In a calm voice, she went down the possible punishments—ranging from complete exclusion from the family, to sexual and physical assault, all the way to cruel deaths.

Is there really an outbreak of sorcery among young women in PNG? “I don’t think so,” said Dr Leigh Rice. “We’ve looked at research on this question, and what we’ve found is that those accused of sorcery are always on the margins of society. It can be old men, young single women, or women whose husbands want to get rid of them. You never see someone who is powerful accused of this. That fact alone should give you a clue about what this is really all about. But, in truth, you are asking the wrong question. Even if someone is involved in sorcery—it doesn’t mean a mob should assault them or kill them! If they’ve committed a criminal act then the justice system must deal with it. But in the cases I’m aware of, no criminal act has

been committed. Religious freedom requires ending these gross abuses of human rights.”

But how does the Seventh-day Adventist Church do its part to stamp out this abuse?

“We haven’t done enough. We need, in our local churches across this great nation, to preach clearly and repeatedly that the practice of persecuting others for their religious beliefs, even when we do not agree with them, is an affront to God,” said Dr Rice. “Christ was a friend to those on the margins of society. We must be too. We have no right to call ourselves Christians if we sit quietly while people are persecuted!”

Dr John Graz, secretary general of the International Religious Liberty Association, presented Chaplain Hamura-oa, with a medal for her work in protecting the religious freedom rights of those falsely accused of sorcery. —*James Standish*



Dr John Graz, Chaplain Nellie Hamura-oa and Dr Rice.

Sanitarium shows spirit of service

Cambodia

Building latrines, planting community vegetable gardens and sailing 300m through the air on a flying fox don’t normally feature in the working week of Sanitarium Health & Wellbeing employees.

But for the 13 recipients of this year’s Spirit of Sanitarium Awards (SoSA) this is exactly what happened in November when they travelled to Cambodia in partnership with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

The team was treated to a crash course in sustainable development by ADRA Cambodia staff before heading into northern Cambodia. There they worked with the community to build latrines and wells, conduct nutrition and cooking demonstrations and participate in environmental awareness campaigns.

Ian Rowe, from Sanitarium’s Brisbane factory, said the service project was a great opportunity to see the positive impact of ADRA’s partnerships with local communities.

“It was an opportunity to work alongside the local people of Cambodia and to be able to join with ADRA in helping those in need in a practical way,” he said.

Helen Ryan, a recipient from Sanitarium New Zealand’s head office, described the experience as an amazing opportunity.

“ADRA is making a difference to these families in a very real way and they work in communities that are most in need. This was no ordinary holiday trip.”

In addition to the group’s efforts, Sanitarium donated \$A30,000 towards ADRA’s ongoing work in the region.

The Spirit of Sanitarium Awards (SOSA), Sanitarium’s annual employee reward program, recognises employees who bring to life the company’s values of care, courage, humility, integrity and passion.

ADRA Connections is run by ADRA Australia to provide groups of people with the opportunity to witness and get involved with the organisation’s work in Australia and across the world. —*Braden Blyde*



Some of the SoSA team build a latrine.



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Hundreds come to Christ in Popondetta

Popondetta, Papua New Guinea

Residents of Popondetta in Papua New Guinea witnessed a great revival as 255 people surrendered their lives to God.

The Popondetta '14 crusade was hosted in July by the North East Papua Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Pastor Tony Kemo, a nationally renowned evangelist, was guest speaker for the two-week crusade. An audience of more than 2000 from all walks of life filled Independence Oval to capacity every night to hear the Word of God.

The support from Adventists in the region was strong. One group from Siu prepared spiritually with 10 days of fasting and then travelled on foot and by boat for three days, negotiating cliffs, snake-infested grasslands and bad weather. In Popondetta they joined Adventists from across the province in a huge street parade featuring Adventurers, Inonda Adventist Primary School students, Pathfinders, Youth and Adventist Community Service members in their respective colours.

The Popondetta '14 meetings were attended by a number of distinguished guests, including Adventist parliamentarians Delilah Gore and Finance Minister James Marape, who brought his singing ministry team "The Footprints" and added to the spiritual feast.

The meetings were followed by a three-week Revelation seminar series. A total of 70 registered members, including newly baptised members, former members, interests and church members of Popondetta Town church, received certificates upon completion of the course along with a handshake from Pastor Peter Yorio, president of the North East Papua Mission. Although only 70 people paid the K10 registration fee to attend the prophecy seminars, interest grew as the church extended its invitation. Each night the church was filled with enthusiastic listeners. According to many who attended, it was one of the best programs ever coordinated by the local church. —Paul Kos with Kent Kingston



Baptisms in the Bangoho River, Popondetta.



REVIVED BY HIS WORD Dec 20, 2014—Jan 17, 2015

READING THROUGH THE BIBLE TOGETHER
ONE CHAPTER A DAY

20 - Luke 5	24 - Luke 9	28 - Luke 13	January	4 - Luke 20	8 - Luke 24	12 - John 4	16 - John 8
21 - Luke 6	25 - Luke 10	29 - Luke 14	1 - Luke 17	5 - Luke 21	9 - John 1	13 - John 5	17 - John 9
22 - Luke 7	26 - Luke 11	30 - Luke 15	2 - Luke 18	6 - Luke 22	10 - John 2	14 - John 6	
23 - Luke 8	27 - Luke 12	31 - Luke 16	3 - Luke 19	7 - Luke 23	11 - John 3	15 - John 7	

White ribbon day

by Jarrod Stackelroth

The statistics are shocking: one woman is killed every week in Australia by a current or former partner; one in three women report experiencing physical or sexual violence in their life; police are called to more than 400 homes in NSW every day to deal with domestic violence incidents. And the issue is present in the other nations of the South Pacific as well. It's estimated that two-thirds of Fijian, Papua New Guinean and Solomon Islands women have suffered domestic violence.

On November 25, almost 100 staff from the headquarters of the Adventist Church in the South Pacific (SPD), Adventist Media Network, ACA Health and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Australia took a stand to declare their commitment to end violence against women by wearing white ribbons.

"We have chosen to support White Ribbon Day because we believe that justice and respect is a right of all people," said Dr Trafford Fischer, event co-organiser and SPD Family Ministries director. "We join all Australians in declaring that any form of abuse against any person is wrong. We especially wish to declare our commitment to do all we can to bring an end to any form of violence against women."

White Ribbon Day is Australia's only national, male-led campaign to stop violence against women and children. "One of the great things about the White Ribbon movement is that it has been instigated by men," said Rita Karraz, director of National Programs at ADRA Australia. "Our experience, both in Australia and overseas, is that any work done to eliminate these issues has to be done together."

Staff from across the offices sent emails of encouragement and support, wanting to add their voices to an often silent, secret problem. "As any Christian male will affirm, there is no excuse for any kind of violence or abuse—be it children, women, men, and also be it physical, mental or emotional," emailed Pastor Lionel Smith, SPD general secretary, who was at home recovering from a motorcycle accident. "I have had the distasteful role of dealing with abuse and physical violence issues within our Church over the years . . . This is not a nice topic but we live in a real and sinful world and to keep quiet on some of these issues is what perpetrators hope for, for they operate best under a veil of secrecy. If you are aware of abuse or violence of any kind, please let someone know. If they don't listen go

to someone else until somebody does listen and will do something about it."

Domestic violence occurs in all countries and all cultures, and across all levels of society. Unfortunately, Christians are not immune to the issue. "The Bible teaches us to love and respect one another as part of Christ's body," said Erna Johnson, co-organiser of the event and SPD Women's Ministries director. "When we love with the unconditional love of Jesus, domestic violence will disappear from amongst us. 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it' (Ephesians 5:25). Any woman who has a husband who loves her that way will love and respect him right back. Adventist Women's Ministries in the South Pacific chooses to support any and all efforts to end domestic violence."

"It would be great if more of our church organisations stood up for causes like White Ribbon Day," said Ben Ashby, a sales representative for ACA Health. "As believers and church organisations we can't afford to be bystanders!"

James Standish, SPD Communication and Public Affairs director, agrees. "We have a forum to raise these issues. It's called church. And we have it every week. I can't recall ever hearing a sermon about ending domestic abuse. It's well past time that we stop talking about abstracts and talk about the real issues we as a community struggle with. God has a plan for our Church and it is to be a community that loves each other. That starts with ensuring every Adventist is treated with dignity and respect."

ADRA Australia is working to eradicate domestic violence. In the past 12 months it provided safety and support through four women's refuges to 138 women and children experiencing domestic violence in Australia. The agency also provided free counselling to more than 300 families and individuals in crisis situations. Overseas, ADRA has numerous projects specifically addressing gender violence, including initiatives in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

White Ribbon Day began in Canada in 1991 and is now active in more than 60 countries.

If you or someone you know is suffering from abuse of any kind, please contact <<http://www.thehotline.org/>> or call the 24-hour Domestic Violence Line on 1800 65 64 63 (Aus). Anyone in immediate danger should call the police: Aus (000), NZ (111).

Walk with Jesus

by Upulilo Melemele

I WAS BORN IN THE TINY CORAL ISLANDS OF TOKELAU in 1954, the sixth of 10 children and with a disability that has made it hard to walk my whole life. Our family always had some connection with the Seventh-day Adventist Church so I attended for much of my growing-up years, especially when we moved to Samoa and later to New Zealand.

But at age 19 I wanted my independence. I had a job as an assistant carpenter with a local council in Auckland so I moved out of home and, away from the influence of my family, I stopped attending church.

For the next 30 years I worked hard, despite injuring my back quite seriously in 1993. By that time I'd moved to Sydney and been living there for 14 years. There were many times when I'd walk past an Adventist church and think I'd visit . . . one day.

In 2002, two things happened that pushed me towards God. Firstly, my mother died in New Zealand. I tried to get home to be with her but she passed away before I arrived. Her death broke my heart. My mother's last words to me over the phone before saying goodbye were: "Son, Jesus never left you—walk with Him."

The second thing was my medical condition. My back injury had become worse and I was falling over and damaging it further. I had to stop work and start surviving off a disability pension.

The doctors became quite concerned. Four years later I found myself lying inside an MRI machine for a medical scan, not knowing what would happen to me—if my injury could be fixed or if I would end up unable to walk. I prayed: "Thank you for looking after me all these years. Lord, my life is in Your hands. If I die, I'm not complaining; but if I live I will come back to You." It was a promise and my first prayer since 1973.

After a successful operation and five weeks in hospital, still recovering and on crutches, I hobbled into the Woollahra Adventist Church in Sydney. I received a warm welcome and soon after started Bible studies before my baptism on December 9, 2006.

After that I found myself praying continuously—I couldn't thank God enough for what He had done for me. But I had a repeated request: "Father, I want to work for You and I want to be a part of Your team." A year after my baptism I awoke one morning from a dream and Tokelau was on my mind—I had the strong sense that God had answered my prayer and that the islands of my birth were where He wanted me to go.

It was a 27-hour boat ride through open ocean from Samoa to Tokelau. This was my first time back in 47 years and I was worried that I might have forgotten my island traditions. The locals were cautious towards me and it was a short visit. But I managed to see a long-lost friend on another atoll before I left. When I arrived he was sitting by the wharf, intoxicated and staring at the stars. He must have recognised me by the way I walked because he yelled out, "Lilo! Is that you?" He embraced me and started to cry. "I didn't think you'd make it here."

"My brother, Jesus brought me here for you to know His love," I told him. The next day he visited me, sober this time. We prayed together and discussed the Bible. I left a copy of *Steps to Christ* and *Desire of Ages* with him.

I've visited Tokelau every year since then. God has opened up opportunities to reach people with the gospel during my travels and has blessed me with the support of Global Mission, the It Is Written Oceania (IIWO) ministry and Church leaders in both Samoas-Tokelau and the South Pacific Division. The Council of Elders on Tokelau's main island, Fakaofo, has formally agreed to receive any assistance IIWO can provide and has also approved the installation of HopeChannel. We are building relationships with many of the Tokelau locals and plan to run a health seminar early next year. I pray that one day a church will be planted on these islands so that God's kingdom can grow. R

—Upulilo Melemele with Kent Kingston

According to General Conference statistics, Tokelau is the last unreached country in the South Pacific Division.





Adventists affected by Hughes' death

Phillip Hughes' death on November 27 shocked Australia and much of the sporting world but no community was left more devastated by the tragedy than the cricketer's hometown of Macksville (NSW). Following the announcement of his death, students and staff at the local Adventist school gathered at the nearby cricket pitch—where Hughes played cricket as a child—to lay flowers and say a prayer. "Our sympathies and prayers are with him and his family," principal David McNeill said. Students also wrote cards to Hughes while he was in hospital, a gesture that was featured in an article in *The Daily Mail*.—*Record staff*

First for singles

The first official Adventist singles event to be held in the Pacific Islands took place in Tonga in October. The program for single mothers was organised by Pastor Mike Sikuri, Family Ministries director for the Trans-Pacific Union Mission. He described it as a "very successful" and "much-needed" event. Pastor Trafford Fischer, Family Ministries director for the South Pacific Division, echoed his sentiments. "There is a growing number of singles in the Island territories who will benefit from opportunities for worship, fellowship and service to others," he said.—*SPD Family Ministries*



Twenty years at home

Macquarie College celebrated 20 years at its Lake Road campus in Wallsend (NSW) on November 15. The anniversary brought together many current and former staff members and students as well as a number of church and community members. Highlights of the program included musical items and an audio-visual presentation highlighting the "early and later years" of the school.—*Bruce Youlden*

Ready to wed

The Eastern Highlands/Simbu Mission (PNG) has 13 new certified celebrants who can conduct weddings. Mission president Benny Soga sponsored participants to complete the training at the Research and Conservation Foundation Centre in Goroka in November. At their graduation, he challenged the new celebrants to faithfully execute their roles in the communities they serve.—*Zuzai Hizoke*

Story in the sand

Millions of television viewers around regional Australia will have the chance to learn the story of Jesus' birth in a whole new way this Christmas. Central Coast (NSW) mother and Adventist sand artist Tiani Page recorded Christmas and New Year messages that will feature on WIN Television during the 2014/2015 holiday season. For more on Tiani's sand art, visit <www.expressionsinsand.com>.



Thirty years and counting

Wellington Seventh-day Adventist School (NZ) celebrated its 30th anniversary last month. Past and present students and staff members came together for the special event, including former principals Pastor Jake Ormsby, Brian Hamilton, Robyn Dunlop and Craig Young (pictured above with current principal Elmer Breedt). "It was lovely to reconnect with everyone after so long," said former student Nerine Fuataga. During church on Sabbath morning, Rosalie McFarlane, Education director for the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference, paid tribute to the Porirua church for its vision to start the school.—*Elmer Breedt*

Media mission

Church leaders from across the Trans-Pacific Union Mission (TPUM) came together at Fulton College in November for three days of intensive media training. Participants were taught how to write scripts and produce local content for HopeChannel, with Adventist Media Network personnel making the trip from Sydney, Australia to host the training event. "Media is one of the strategic goals the Seventh-day Adventist Church is investing in and [looking] to use more," said TPUM president Pastor Glenn Townend. A month-long training event will take place in Suva early next year.—*Adventist Media: Vanuatu*

A walk for water

Cooranbong, New South Wales

I bush-bashed from Swansea Heads past Catherine Hill Bay and into Wybung Head (NSW) on a hot and blowy Sunday. That's 21 kilometres. I was carrying containers of water over my shoulder alongside 20 other students from Avondale College of Higher Education. We walked for change. We walked for water.

I almost caught myself complaining about the unbearableness of it all, then I had a flashback.

Four months before Fit to Drink—the name Avondale student mission club COSMOS gave to the walk—I tried to carry 30 litres of water on my head, Nepali-style. I could walk barely five metres while my 12-year-old friend walked with a full container at a steady pace. She does this every day. She held my hand as she showed me around her family's home and its surrounds in the village of Hoxe, east of the capital Kathmandu.

My Development Field Experience classmates and I travelled to Nepal in June and July. We traversed 19 of its 75 districts to visit 15 villages, all beneficiaries of Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) projects. Hoxe would benefit from a COSMOS donation if the villagers developed a plan and received professional local advice to fund a water project.



Fit to Drink has raised more than \$5000 for Hoxe. With further consultation and follow-up COSMOS will help make the collection of safe drinking water an easier task for the villagers.

What did I learn from this uncomfortable coastal walk? We can all do something to change the world, one step at a time.

Ellyse Brooks is a Bachelor of Arts student at Avondale College of Higher Education and secretary-treasurer of student mission club COSMOS.

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R HEALTH FEATURE

with Cathy McDonald

Give support not judgement

With over half the adult population being overweight or obese, trying to maintain a healthy body weight and avoid the many health issues excess weight can contribute to has become a part of everyday life for most Australians.

Despite its prevalence, widespread media coverage and research appearing daily uncovering more and more of the external factors that have contributed to this issue, it seems a stigma still exists around those who struggle with maintaining a healthy weight.

A recent study out of the University of New South Wales followed 46 adults over a two-week period and asked them to electronically report every time they felt they experienced weight stigma. Following each incident, the participants were asked to fill out a survey providing context to the incident, giving researchers further data on how the participant felt judged or discriminated against.

At the end of the study the average participant had experienced weight stigma 11.12 times, nearly once a day, with one participant experiencing 11 episodes in just one day. What's even more concerning is that participants had these experiences everywhere—at home and in public places—from strangers, spouses, family and friends.

Anyone who has tried to lose weight and maintain a healthy body weight will tell you that the health benefits can be life changing but it's not an easy thing to do. They'd probably also tell you that while it's not easy, it's easier with love and support than with judgement and discrimination.



Pineapple and almond breakfast couscous

Preparation time: 10 minutes Cooking time: 5 minutes Serves: 4

1 cup pineapple juice
1 cup couscous
½ cup chopped fresh pineapple
½ cup diced dried apricots
¼ cup chopped almond kernels
1 cup low fat yoghurt

1. Bring pineapple juice to the boil in a jug in the microwave.
2. Place couscous in a heatproof bowl and pour over boiling pineapple juice. Stir to combine.
3. Stand for 5 minutes or until liquid is absorbed.
4. Fold pineapple, apricots and almonds through couscous.
5. Serve with yoghurt and garnish with fresh mint.

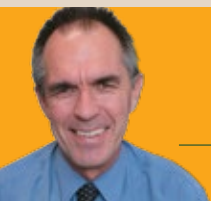
NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVE: Kilojoules 1400kJ (330 cal). Protein 13g. Total fat 6g. Carbohydrate 56g. Sodium 60mg. Potassium 705mg. Calcium 190mg. Iron 1.6mg. Fibre 3g.



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

Signs of Christmas: sign of the manger

Google "Oh Holy Night", sung by Josh Groban. Set to scenes from "The Nativity Story", you will see Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men overcome by who this tiny Baby really is.

In reality, when the shepherds were informed that this Child just born in David's city was Christ the Lord, they understood for two good reasons that He was Jehovah, God Almighty:

1. Micah had said the One to be born in David's city, Bethlehem, and destined to be Israel's ruler or king was from eternity. If You never had a beginning, then You were never created and must therefore be the Creator of all, the First and the Last, Jehovah, God Almighty. **Read** Luke 2:11; Micah 5:2; Revelation 22:12,13; 1:8,13,17; Isaiah 48:12,13; Colossians 1:15-19.

2. The Christ, or Messiah, was understood by men, angels and even Christ Himself to be God the eternal Son. Which is why the wise men worshipped Him, Thomas called Him God and the Jews called Him a blasphemer when He claimed to be the Christ, God's Son. **Read** Luke 2:11; Matthew 16:16,7; 2:11; 26:63-65; John 4:25,26; 20:28. So to prepare them for the unbelievable—the eternal God, Creator and Sustainer of all, lying in a dirty animal feeding trough of all places and wrapped, not in gold and silver-embroidered satin clothing, but rather in strips of ordinary cloth—they were given a sign to assure them that this Child was indeed the Christ, Jehovah Himself! **Read** Luke 2:12.

The sign of the manger was thus the sign that Jesus is God and humble beyond our understanding. But it was more – it was also a sign that this God Child was the world's Saviour. This same Child, God our Creator, descended much lower in the path of humility when He hung naked on a despised cross, bearing your sin and mine. And this Child is given to you and me! **Read** Luke 2:11; Isaiah 9:6.

What love is this! As the song says, we should "Fall on your knees", accepting Him into our lives. Why not do that right now and every day.

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



OPINION

Julian Archer

Nothing/everything

"Are you sure Lord? Do you really want us to go out empty-handed? No gold or silver, not even coppers? No bag and no spare clothes? What, not even a pair of sandals?"

"Yes. Just go. Heal the sick. Cleanse the lepers. Raise the dead. Cast out demons."

In Matthew we read his own eyewitness recollection of this faith-challenging command from Christ. He equipped the disciples with what can best be described as "nothing/everything".

A few years later Peter and James, filled with the Holy Spirit, were walking to the temple when a lame man begged for some coins. Peter's response is as budget-shattering today as when it first shook Jerusalem's stony streets.

"Silver and gold I do not have but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

In the padded-pew affluence of the 21st century we can no longer honestly say, "Silver and gold have I none." However, truth be told, nor can we say, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

Have our finances stolen our faith?

Peter's wallet bulged with nothing/everything . . . and he used it to buy a miracle.

Julian Archer is the author of Help! I've Been Blessed! and writes from Toowoomba, Queensland.

OPINION POLL

Favourite things to do on Christmas day?

- Get outdoors
- Feasting
- Gift exchange
- Attending a church service
- Cooking/preparing food
- Sitting, chatting with family/friends

Visit <record.net.au> to vote.

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.

BIT DISAPPOINTED

Joy Cornell, Qld

It would have been great if November 15's feature "1844: Embracing disappointment" had made it into *Adventist Record* three weeks earlier. How meaningful to read it just before the October 22 anniversary of the Great Disappointment.

Anthony MacPherson is so right: God did indeed foresee it all. How John, on prison rations on dreary Patmos, would relish the vision of eating Revelation 10's "little book . . . as sweet as honey"! And how vividly he expresses the agony of disappointment that followed.

God not only foresaw this result of devouring the once-sealed but now open book of Daniel but also its postscript: "You must prophesy again"—to all the world. And then John's directed to measure the heavenly temple. If only the aged apostle could see the way the divine mandate is being fulfilled! God grant it's not long before John knows all about it as, clustered about our Saviour, Adventists excitedly tell the story.

FINDING MEANING?

Malcolm Ford, NZ

Anthony MacPherson's article "1844" was a fair attempt to extract some positive meaning from the discomfort of the 1844 Disappointment. However in my opinion to try and associate a heliocentric calendar date to a supposed cosmological (heavenly) timetable is inviting a problem.

The non-event of the Great Disappointment was the historical background to our Church's prophetic understanding and the result of a misinterpretation of this. So why don't we accept that and not try to force a timetable to match a doctrinal predisposi-

tion? We can live with 1844 because it represents an honest attempt by our pioneers to unravel prophetic events. Perhaps they were too much influenced by the mathematical/mechanistic process required by the scientific community and so greatly admired by the general public.

Response: Anthony MacPherson

Malcolm Ford rightly highlights the mystery of how earthly time (heliocentric) might relate to heavenly time (cosmological).

Personally I have no idea how it does. That being said it isn't the problem it seems either for us or 1844. We have New Testament precedent justifying us in accepting such a link. The heavenly installation of Jesus as High Priest corresponded to the earthly outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33). Heavenly event and earthly calendar mysteriously but clearly met.

We need not speculate exactly how this is so. Equally we should not deny that it is so.

SEEDS PLANTED

Natalie Biro, via email

The response from Kerry Young to "High school missionary" (Feature, September 20) warmed my heart.

Many years ago when I was a teenager my mum happened to stumble onto an evangelistic campaign presented at the Opera House. She met a young couple who were new Christians and youth leaders at their local church in Liverpool. Their names are Kerry and John Young.

My mum mentioned that she had a wild, uncontrollable daughter at home and was concerned for my welfare—she asked for help. I remember Mum bringing Kerry and John home

and introducing them to me. My first questions to them were: "Who are you?" and "What are you doing trying to convert my mother?"

They responded by answering my many questions about life, death and the future from the Bible, introducing me to a wonderful group of young people who had fun that did not involve drugs or alcohol, and inviting me on camping trips, outreach programs and fun activities.

It took another 10 years before I was baptised. I am still a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. My mum is now asleep but I am eternally grateful for their witness and the many beautiful people God has brought into my life since then. Thank you Kerry and John, and Adele.

Be courageous and strong Emi; God has a bright future ahead for you and all the young people who fully commit their lives to Jesus.

SEASON GREETINGS

Brian Robson, SA

Dear Kent, Dannielle and the *Record InFocus* team.

I would like to express my thanks, gratitude and appreciation for another wonderful year of *Record InFocus*. I am confident that you have brought many blessings and hope to so many of your viewers during 2014.

Thank you for your professionalism and compassionate presentation that makes the program so outstanding and a real credit to Adventist Media and to our Church. Please accept my appreciation for your dedication to the program and to the blessed hope of salvation. May the Lord richly bless you all in your work for Him. I look forward to seeing you all again in 2015.



Rekindling the Fire

by John Carter

WHEN THE HOLY FIRE GOES OUT THE CHURCH grows cold. It becomes a sepulchre where the skeletons of yesterday's triumphs are stored. Talk replaces action and politics the place of the Holy Spirit. Today the church in much of the Western world is on life support.

True evangelism is God's way of keeping the fire burning. History shows this is true: John Wesley attacked the lame legalism of his church and the lewd lawlessness of society with an assault of Holy Spirit anointed evangelistic sermons. These Bible broadsides were delivered for the most part outdoors to crowds of the unchurched. Church and society in Britain were transformed.

"So what is true evangelism?" you ask. The word evangelism comes from the Greek word for the gospel. To evangelise literally means to "gospelise". If I'm against true evangelism it's because I'm against the gospel.

"So what is the gospel?" another interjects. The gospel is God's amazing good news: that the Creator became a man. It's the good news that Christ, unlike us, was without sin but voluntarily took our sins upon Himself. On the cross He became "sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The gospel is the good news that if I, a lost and condemned creature, truly trust in Him alone for salvation I am acquitted of the

charge of "guilty"! Because He took my place, my judgement, and experienced damnation for me, I am free from condemnation the moment I believe and repent. I pass from death to life and my life is radically transformed.

This gospel, in spite of a million sermons to the contrary, is not good advice. Advice tells you what to do. News is about what someone has already done. The gospel is the good news that God has invaded time and space and become my Saviour. Jesus, therefore, is the only name under heaven whereby we can be saved (see Acts 4:12).

What does the Bible say about gospelising, the proclamation of God's good news? Much, as you will see:

1. Jesus commanded His church to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

(Luke 24:46-48; Matthew 24:14; Matthew 28:19,20)

He did not command us to build hospitals, churches, schools or offices, good as those things may be. He told us to proclaim the message of salvation wherever the lost are found. The early church had no buildings we know of, yet they conquered the mighty Roman Empire because they preached with passion the gospel of Christ.

2. People are lost without the gospel.

"No! No!" you say, "People are saved if they live up to the light they have." I respectfully disagree. Scripture is

plain: you cannot live up to the light you have until you are saved. Remember, you don't have to be good to be saved but you do need to be saved to be good. Salvation is not found in my good works or the sincerity of my devotion. It is found in Christ alone, not in a creed and not in a religious system. Paul the great evangelist says that men and women without the gospel of Christ are "dead in . . . transgressions and sins", "by nature objects of wrath", "separate from Christ", "without hope and without God", "far away" and "foreigners and aliens" (Ephesians 2:8-19). The popular idea that these lost souls are somehow saved in darkness and ignorance without Christ is one of the blackest lies that ever came out of hell. It is an opiate that has drugged the church into a state of careless indifference.

3. The most important gifts God bestows upon His people are given for evangelism.

". . . God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues . . ." (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).

These gifts are needed now as never before, especially the first two.

Apostles: heaven's highest calling

An apostle is God's man or woman—doing God's work in God's way in God's place in God's time. The Greek word for apostle is *apostolos* and means "one who is sent". An apostle is therefore a man or woman on God's mission sent from God to search for and win the lost to Christ. It is listed first because it is of first importance. The modern day equivalent for apostle is "missionary" and is heaven's highest calling. When and where this truth is accepted and acted upon, the church storms Satan's strongholds and sets the captives free.

According to Cruden's Concordance, the word apostle is "used as referring 1. Chiefly to one of the twelve disciples of Christ, Matt. 10:2; or 2. *To any of the various other followers of Christ who did evangelistic work*, Romans 1:1" (italics added).

Read that again, friend.

Prophets—with us until the end

A prophet, gift number two in the New Testament setting, is a chosen, anointed, born again believer, gifted by the Spirit to proclaim God's Living Word and build up the church.

"Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy . . . the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort . . ." (1 Corinthians 14:1-5).

There are "big" prophets and "little" prophets. The most important prophets were those who wrote the holy Scriptures, along with Enoch, Elijah and John the Baptist (See 2 Peter 1:21). The inspired canonical prophets include Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, Peter, John and Paul. Two mighty

prophets who did not write portions of holy Scripture are Elijah and John the Baptist, almost in a class by themselves. Lesser prophets mentioned in the New Testament include Agabus, Judas and Silas (see Acts 13:1, 15:32, 21:10; 1 Corinthians 14:29-31). Voice of Prophecy founder HMS Richards talks about "Pedan the Prophet" in his book for preachers, *Feed My Sheep*. This obscure gospeliser proclaimed God's Word many years ago when the state church terrorised and persecuted the saints of God. Prophets may appear when least expected and shake us out of our comfort zone. They will be with us until Christ returns for His people.

". . . Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28,29).

If we learn anything from the history of the church it is that God sends prophets but His professed followers often fail to recognise them.

"But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognise him. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands" (Matthew 17:12).

I therefore ask, "If apostles and prophets are gifts of great importance, and if these gifts endure to the end of time, where are God's apostles and prophets today? Are we quenching the Holy Spirit?"

God's apostles and prophets are not spineless armchair generals. Certainly they are not power hungry, overfed and under-read clergyman; "fox-hunting parsons" such as plagued the church in Wesley's day. They are fighting soldiers of the cross, not hirelings who lead the troops from behind. They are out front where the battle rages the fiercest, preaching the Word and doing the work of evangelism. They are passionate gospelisers.

It's tragic that many have turned God's program on its head and relegated evangelism to the basement, sometimes to the dungeon. Evangelists are a dying breed and in the Western world so is the church. It will take a mighty spiritual revolution to change things. Churches have an almost overwhelming tendency to settle down in complacency and take the path of least resistance.

Individuals can make a powerful difference. Around the world there are no monuments to committees. God uses people not vast corporations of religious power. One person, clothed with the spirit and power of Elijah, can shake up the system and change the world. God did it with Luther, Knox, Wesley and Ellen White. He will do it again.

You could be His special person for this tremendous hour. God has your name on one of His spiritual gifts. Evangelism started the Christian church; it most certainly will finish God's work in these last days.

R

Australian pastor John Carter writes from California where he is president of The Carter Report. He has been involved in evangelism for 53 years. He was recently in El Salvador where The Carter Report hired the National Stadium that accommodates 60,000 souls.



Reclaiming Christmas

by Jarrod Stackelroth

SHOULDN'T YOU BE AT CHURCH?" MY WIFE'S colleague looked confused. He knew she was a Christian and that's what Christians did for Christmas. "No," she replied. "We don't necessarily go to church on Christmas. I'm available to work Christmas morning." It was the first Christmas we would celebrate alone as a married couple, not able to see either family because of our work schedules. A couple of hours' work on Christmas morning was a nice Christmas present for my wife's bank account and we still managed to have a special lunch and a relaxing day.

However, there does seem to be some confusion among Christians, and especially Adventists, about how to celebrate Christmas and what it really means. After all, most people know that it's very unlikely that Jesus was actually born on December 25. So does Christmas really celebrate Jesus' birth? Should it?

Many Christians, like my wife's colleague, celebrate Christmas by going to a mass or some kind of church program on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. For some, this may be one of their only "compulsory" church attendances for the year.

Adventists seem to have three distinct attitudes about Christmas, although there are those who cross over a little.

There are those who say that Christmas is a pagan holiday, hijacked by the Roman Catholic church and now an ode to materialism and excess. And they are right. They tend to boycott Christmas altogether. No presents, no church services, just another day that happens to be a holiday. We'll call them the boycotters.

Then there are those who embrace Christmas in all its glory. It's the most wonderful time of the year! They go all out to decorate their homes and trees, they enjoy time with family and are very generous at this time of year. It's all about the spirit of the season, giving and living and carolling. They recognise that Christmas is not really Jesus' birthday so they separate it from their faith. And they're right. We'll call them collaborators.

Then there are those who make their churches Christmas friendly. They use people's generosity at this time of year to fundraise. They plan big events for their communities to remind people of the real "reason for the season". They have a Christmas tree with presents for the needy and a nativity scene at the front. Their Christmas programs are amazingly produced; seeker-friendly and sometimes leave you with a tear in your eye. They know that there has to be more to Christmas and it's their job to tell the world. And they're right. Call them hijackers.

All these groups are right. They approach Christmas differently but are all driven by good motives and the strength of their convictions.

We all fit mostly into one or another of these groups. Often it depends on our upbringing or the people we surround ourselves with. Different cultural groups tend to do things in a certain way.

However, let me suggest a fourth option. We need to reclaim Christmas. How do we do that? Let me explain by way of an example. A Christmas carol that brings back many fond memories of my mum's Christmas programs is called "Christmas in the scrub". It's an Australian Christmas

carol. A line in it says, "At Christmas time / the outback rings / all for the birth of God." Now as long as Christmas has been around, it's been celebrated in Europe and the medieval world during winter. There is no outback or beach picnic. But here in the southern hemisphere we have a strange mix. Santa wearing a heavy woollen coat with board shorts. The sleigh pulled by boomers (kangaroos). Christmas lunch with gluten steaks, roasted veggies and gravy along with macadamia, mango and avocado salads, summer fruits and barbecues on the beach. We borrow elements of Christmas tradition but insert our own to make it more practical to our needs.

This kind of subversion and substitution is something that Jesus practised during His ministry. Probably the best example I can think of was at the Passover meal. He took the traditional elements of the wine and unleavened bread and imbued them with new meaning.

"Do this in remembrance of me." Passover was a Jewish celebration, filled with meaning and ritual but Jesus reinterpreted it for His purpose. He reclaimed it for His kingdom.

You might be asking what this has to do with how we celebrate Christmas? Well, we need to use Christmas to make an impact in the world. There should be nothing wrong with a Christian celebration or holiday. After all, God gave the Jews plenty of events to celebrate and remember Him by (see Numbers 28 and 29). So let's reclaim Christmas from the culture. Revolutionise it and see if we can flip it upside down. Not sit out on the sidelines. Not get sucked into the materialism or the individualism but take the good elements and fill them with Christ; take old traditions and give them new twists and meanings.

The key is to approach it with intentionality. We are called to do everything for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). So why not how we celebrate Christmas?

Here are some practical things we can do:

1. Use the momentum of Christmas. People may quibble over whether Christmas is actually Christ's birthday or if it comes from a pagan celebration but Christ's name is spoken more around Christmas time in the secular world than at any other time, bar Easter. Christ said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). So use that momentum. Neighbours, colleagues or friends might be more open to talking about Jesus at this time of year than at any other. If they bring up His name, ask what they think is the "reason for the season". We shouldn't be afraid. Although it can have the opposite effect (unless we're very careful) of leading us into a lengthy explanation of why we don't celebrate Christmas because of this and that. If they don't bring it up, find creative ways to work Christ into the conversation. Talk about what He means to you and what His coming to

this earth really means in your life today!


2. Be generous. Don't expect gifts but give them. Buy your neighbours gifts or give them a card with a nice message. It might be a good way to break the ice and meet new people. Go around your neighbourhood and offer to help people with gardening or other chores in the name of Christmas giving. Do random acts of kindness for strangers who will be more receptive at this time of year.

3. Run a Christmas program for the community. Lots of churches do this very well. They hold their yearly Christmas carols or sacred concert at a community park, hall or school and invite the neighbourhood. As brilliant as a program is, it can be intimidating to walk into a church. Go to your community. Run things with them. Maybe as a church you can think of other creative things to do, like carolling in nursing homes or having a trash and treasure day where stuff is free.

4. Open up your home. Throw a Christmas party. Invite friends or neighbours over. Find people in your community who have to work at Christmas and will not be spending time with family. It's terrible to be alone at Christmas so open up your home. Enjoy eating and laughing together. And pray. Pray that you can share Jesus with them before they arrive, and when they do arrive, pray for them and the meal. Just a simple Christmas grace.

5. Buy people charitable gifts. Buy a goat or a sewing machine for someone in Nepal or Uganda and do this for others, especially if you can't think of a meaningful gift for them. Encourage them to pass it on so the generosity continues.

Christmas is a day like any other but it can be a great opportunity and it must be turned toward Christ, whichever camp we fall into. As Ellen White says, "There is no divine sanctity resting upon the twenty-fifth of December; and it is not pleasing to God that anything that concerns the salvation of men through the infinite sacrifice made for them, should be so sadly perverted from its professed design. Christ should be the supreme object; but as Christmas has been observed, the glory is turned from Him to mortal man, whose sinful, defective character made it necessary for Him to come to our world."

I'm sure you can think of other ways to reclaim Christmas. Make it, like the angels proclaimed, a time of peace and goodwill. Be bold and courageous. Jesus loved to eat and drink with people, so much so he was called a glutton and a drunkard (Matthew 11:19). He liked to celebrate. Celebrations are where friendships are forged. So be like Jesus this Christmas. Subvert, be intentional and reclaim Christmas. And rediscover the real reason for the season. 

Jarrod Stackelroth is an associate editor of *Adventist Record*.

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★ COLOUR ME IN ★



WORSHIP MESSAGE

I worship God when I
listen to the good news
about Jesus

MEMORY VERSE

"Glory to God in the
highest, and on earth
peace to men"

Luke 2:14 NIV

ANNIVERSARY



Palmer (Jackson). Bob and Heather Palmer celebrat-

ed their 60th wedding anniversary with their children, Gary and Lauren, Dale and Roslyn, Jeny and Doug and close family friends at a lunch in Montville, Qld. On 25.7.1954, they were married in Moe, Vic, by the late Pastor Harold Gunter. They were also congratulated by their church family in Nambour, Qld, and by the Queen and many members of government. They thank God for His hand over their life together.

WEDDINGS



Chuang--Dorman. Colin Chuang, son of Carla and the late

Lin Chuang (Melbourne, Vic), and Adriana Dorman, daughter of Michealle and Adrian Dorman (Fitzroy Falls, NSW), were married 31.8.14 in St Joseph's Church, East Maitland. Colin's experience in marketing and graphic design, and Anna's fashion sense were seen in many aspects of this special event attended by guests from across Australia and the US. Colin works at Avondale College as a graphic designer and Anna is an administrative assistant at Avondale Retirement Village, Cooranbong.

Sam Leonor, Ian Howie



Despirito--Shields. Matthew Despirito, son of

Leonard (deceased) and Mary Despirito (San Diego, USA), and Halley Shields, daughter of Rochelle and Douglas Shields (Kadina, SA), were married 12.10.2014 at the Morisset Chapel, near Newcastle. Matthew and Halley have set up their home in Cooranbong with Matlee.

Michael Madigan

Koziol--Bustos. Benjamin Andrew Koziol, son of Angela and the late Richard Koziol (Scoresby, Vic), and Marjorie Anne Bustos, daughter of Jorge and Elizabeth Bustos (Endeavour Hills), were married 26.10.14 at Immerse Winery, Dixons Creek.

Morrie Krieg

McDermott--Minns.

Leigh McDermott, son of Kevin and Kerri McDermott (Ryde, NSW), and Kyla Minns, daughter of Heather Cole (Prospect), were married 1.11.14 at St Anne's Anglican Church, Ryde. Leigh and Kyla met over shared Chinese leftovers at Royal North Shore Hospital where they work as registered nurses.

Ross Cole

OBITUARIES

Hartwigsen, Bartel Menzo, born 28.5.1925 in The Netherlands; died 29.10.14 in Ozcare, Malanda, Qld. He is survived by his children, Norma (Coolah, NSW), Carolyn (Noosaville, Qld) and Elsa (Millaa Millaa); and two grandchildren, Ellie and Alexandra (Sydney, NSW). Bart's memory began to slowly decline as a result of a minor stroke in the 1990s but he was still able to work at his passion of transforming timber slabs, including making clocks, until his health rapidly deteriorated. Our hope is that he will be united again very soon with his wife and family.

Norma Hartwigsen

Hartwigsen, Francis (Cis/Cisca) (nee Ketting), born 31.5.1926 in Djakarta, Indonesia; died 31.10.12 in Ozcare, Malanda, Qld. In Indonesia, she met her future husband, Bart, while singing in a choir. They were married in 1951. She is survived by her siblings; her daughters, Norma (Coolah, NSW), Carolyn (Noosaville, Qld) and Elsa (Millaa Millaa); and two

grandchildren, Ellie and Alexandra (Sydney, NSW). As a little girl Francis searched for the truth, asking her mother why people attended church on Sundays when the Bible says Saturday is the day. She always considered Jesus her best friend. She was always a blessing to everyone and had a great sense of humour.

Norma Hartwigsen

North, Elaine Rosemary, born 6.2.1941 in Geraldton, WA; died 8.10.14 in Perth. She is survived by her children, Rochelle and Marcus Werrett (Boya), Lyndon and Piari Skeers (Ferguson Valley); her siblings, Jeanette and Kevin Douglas (Maddington), Ruby and Ian McGill (High Wycombe), Leonard and Beth North (Kojonup), and Madge and John Pettersson (Shelley). For a time Elaine worked as a secretary for the South NSW Conference Office at Wagga Wagga, then in Canberra. Most of her life she lived in Perth, WA. She is remembered as a genuine, sincere, friendly, fun-loving lady who loved the Lord.

Robert Kingdon

Manners, Elva Valmai (nee Sweet), born 24.11.1926 in Adelaide, SA; died 23.10.14 in

Adelaide. On 21.3.1951, she married Owen Manners. She was predeceased by her sons, Wayne in 1998 and Kevin in 2013. She is survived by her husband (Adelaide); her son, Brenton and his family; and her sisters, Dawn Wensley and Yvonne Sweet (Adelaide). Valmai was a long-time member of Adelaide City Church since her 1943 baptism by Pastor Ferris. She cared for the children's Sabbath School and Pathfinders for many years. She was a stenographer at the South Australian Conference for seven years and also worked at Sanitarium. She was much loved and respected.

Wolfgang Stefani, Brenton Wilkinson



Thiel, Peter Siegfried, born 7.3.1941 in Sprottau,

Germany.

Thiel, Celia Mary (nee Hankel), born 3.12.1939.

On 29.8.14, Peter and Celia died in a head-on crash on the Eyre Highway, SA, while returning to their home. They were married 21.6.1969. They are survived by their children, Joanna, Rebecca, Benjamin and Amos Thiel. Peter is survived by his daughters, Esther Wilson and Helena

SUPPORTING MINISTRY POSITIONS

■ **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.

■ **Dietitian/nutritionist--Cedarvale Health and Lifestyle Retreat (Kangaroo Valley, NSW)** is seeking an applicant who is passionate about nutrition and being part of a health ministry team. Other desirable skills that may be helpful include counselling, cooking, fitness instruction, IT and presentation skills. Available from early-mid 2015. For more information email us at <info@cedarvaleretreat.com.au> or phone (02) 4465 1362.

The above ministries are independent of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organisation but are supportive of the Church.



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Buschhueter, and his siblings, Dieter, Anita Dose, John, Christine Hughes and Matthias. Celia is survived by her siblings, Rosemary Winderlich, John Hankel, Eleanor Marafioti, Lois Umbach, Roger Hankel and Susan Hankel. Peter was honest, funny, hard-working and a perfectionist. He worked at Sanitarium and as a bricklayer, painter and postman. He will be remembered for his unbiased advice and willingness to serve. Celia was sweet, empathetic, social and patient. A secretary, dedicated mother and homemaker, she will be remembered for her sincerity and ability to touch and encourage others.

Amos Thiel

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Witness Australia Conference 2015. January 21–25, 2015. Mansfield, Brisbane. Move By His Power. Guest speakers include Pastor John Lomacang, Pastor Taj Pacleb, Andre Waller and many more exciting speakers. To register: <www.witnessconference.org>.

Mega Project Hope PNG 2015 needs volunteers, Jan 20–Feb 20, 2015. Producing 300 TV programs for HopeChannel.

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Endless Praise is taking auditions for 2015. If you are a talented Christian musician between the ages of 19 and 28 with a heart for service and available for a minimum of two years of full-time ministry, auditions are now being considered for our 2015 team. Contact the EP office on (61) 02 8783 7000 or email your audition to <ep@epraise.com.au> or through the website <www.epraise.com.au> as soon as possible. Sharing Jesus with what

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—Charles Spurgeon

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POSITIONS VACANT

■ **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 years 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.

■ **Clinical placement officer—Avondale College of Higher Education (Sydney campus, Wahroonga, NSW)** seeks applications from registered nurses for the position of clinical placement officer. The role will assist the clinical coordinator with organisation of the clinical education program in the Bachelor of Nursing course. Avondale is a Seventh-day Adventist organisation. If you share the passion for delivering Christian tertiary education and can align with our Christian-based principles then we would love to hear from you. Details of the role and selection criteria are available via the Avondale website <www.avondale.edu.au/jobs>. Applications, addressing the selection criteria, with contact details of three referees, should be emailed to <employment@avondale.edu.au>. Avondale College is an equal opportunity employer and reserves the right to make a delayed appointment, not to appoint or to appoint by invitation. Applications close **January 9, 2015**.

■ **IT systems engineer—The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited (Wahroonga, NSW)** is seeking an experienced systems engineer to join its dynamic Information Technology team based at the division head office in Wahroonga. The main focus of this position is to design, implement, configure, monitor, troubleshoot, optimise and maintain a variety of systems, server hardware and software as well as assist in providing level three support and troubleshooting services to sites within Australia and the South Pacific. The successful candidate must be eligible to work in Australia. For the full selection criteria please visit the South Pacific Division's Human Resources website on www.adventistemployment.org.au. All applications, including a cover letter, CV, three work-related referees and the contact details of your Adventist church pastor, must be forwarded to Human Resources, Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Ltd, Locked Bag 2014, Wahroonga NSW 2076 Australia; or email to <hr@adventist.org.au>; or fax to (02) 9489 0943. Applications close **January 12, 2015**.

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