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Small school rebuilt as Vanuatu slowly recovers

Tanna, Vanuatu

The village of Hebron on Tanna Island has celebrated the opening of two new cyclone-proof school classrooms as Vanuatu prepares to mark one year since the devastating cyclone.

Brisbane builder Peter Koolik, who designed the classrooms, is overseeing the rebuilding of schools in Vanuatu alongside the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

"These churches and schools in Vanuatu are the lifeblood of the village," he said. "It is here that students come to know Jesus; where local church members worship together almost daily; where Sabbath is celebrated in a special way each week; and where people can turn to in times of need."

Chairman of the school board Elder Harry, with tears in his eyes, spoke about how distraught the entire Hebron community was after the March 15, 2015 cyclone. They feared it would be nearly impossible to recover from it. "This is such a blessing from heaven to think that we now have cyclone-proof buildings where the village people can go during a cyclone to be safe," he said.

A local chief from an adjoining village, whose community helped in the building work, joined in the celebrations on January 18. Elder Harry acknowledged his support, which was followed by a ceremony where ladies poured water (one of the most precious resources in Vanuatu) over the chief's head as a sign of gratitude.

After the success of this rebuild, ADRA has ordered another four school buildings, plus eight centres of influence benefiting entire communities, which will double as evacuation centres to protect people in future disasters.

Across Vanuatu, work continues to rebuild the 53 Adventist churches flattened by the cyclone. Mr Koolik has designed prefab iron buildings that can be constructed on site within five to seven days. The buildings are rated

to withstand 300km/h winds and, importantly, can be insured.

Since they are standard buildings, a core team of 10 local workers, who have now erected more than 10 buildings, have an efficient method of assembly. The crew travels by 4WD vehicles from site to site, working with local church members, living in small tents with limited water and no electricity. They are inspired by the enthusiasm, passion and support of the locals.

"The resilience and faith of our church family in Vanuatu is inspiring, and shows us that God can turn seemingly un-mendable disaster into great joy," Mr Koolik said.

In some cases, up to 40 local village men have come to help with the construction. At many sites, when the portal frames are raised, the local ladies stand nearby, clapping and cheering with joy.

A number of overseas groups have rolled up their sleeves and taken part in building projects, including ADRA Connections volunteer teams from Avondale College and Fox Valley churches in NSW.

Last year 21 of the prefab buildings were transported from the Watson Park Convention Centre in Brisbane to Vanuatu, with a further 19 being shipped in the first quarter of this year. It is hoped that the rebuild will be completed by September. —Peter Koolik/Jarrold Stackelroth



Teachers and friends dancing in celebration at the Hebron school opening.

Fiji struck by powerful cyclone

Suva, Fiji

Fiji has experienced what is believed to be one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever to hit the southern hemisphere.

As Cyclone Winston approached, Seventh-day Adventist churches around the country cancelled their Sabbath services, urging members to follow the directions of government and emergency services authorities.

Details of how Adventist-owned properties fared have begun to emerge. Staff houses at Vatuvonu Adventist College on Fiji's second island of Vanua Levu were damaged, with teachers taking shelter in classrooms. Photos from Sabeto, on the outskirts of Nadi, showed that the road to Fulton University College was blocked by a fallen tree and floodwaters. Buildings at the recently constructed Fulton

campus, however, were undamaged.

"ADRA has prepositioned supplies in Fiji including 1000 water containers, soap, water purification tablets, first aid kits, and other hygiene and sanitation items," according to a statement from ADRA Australia.

At time of printing, reports were still coming in. Please check <www.record.net.au> for updates. —Kent Kingston



Deuba Adventist campground flooded.



Present

James Standish

My birthday isn't until June; is it too early to be thinking about presents? Hardly! When I was a boy, I spent the first half of the year dreaming about what I'd receive for my birthday. And the second half dreaming about Christmas.

And of what did I dream? Action Man. Action Man was not a doll; he was an "action figure" made for adventure. Don't believe me? Well consider the outfits I eventually collected, thanks to my parents' largesse. There was the deep-sea diver's outfit, with a full helmet and real lead diving belt and shoes. And the astronaut's outfit that matched Neil Armstrong's in precise detail.

The parachutist's outfit came with a very real parachute. I spent a wonderful day rushing up the fire escape stairs at the Sydney Adventist Hospital, launching my Action Man off the top of the building and watching him float gracefully to the ground. Until a killjoy came along and informed me that the San fire escapes were not designed to be a second-grader's play area. Well then, what precisely is their point?

But there came a day I concluded I didn't want Action Man gear from my parents. The reason wasn't that I'd outgrown my favourite toy. It was that I was particular. Very particular. And rather than cede the choosing to my parents, why not just get cold hard cash? And then buy precisely what I wanted.

As I've grown older, however, I've run into a limitation with cash. Take the Australian dollar, for example. When we moved back to Australia, one Aussie dollar was worth almost \$US1.10. Today? Well it's down to 70 cents. In relative terms, my Aussie cash is now worth well over one-third less! Ouch!

So maybe there are other treasures that better hold their value? Precious metals? Bitcoins? Diamonds? But all of these vary widely in value over time. So what should be on my wish list this birthday?

Professor Robert Waldinger, of Harvard University Medical School, states that 50 per cent of millennials want to be famous and more than 80 per cent want to be rich. So should I pine for a little bit of fame and a lot more moola?

Apparently not. In presenting the findings of a 75-year

study on human happiness, Professor Waldinger concludes:

So what have we learned? What are the lessons that come from the tens of thousands of pages of information that we've generated on these [people Harvard studied for 75 years]? Well, the lessons aren't about wealth or fame or working harder and harder. The clearest message that we get from this 75-year study is this: Good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Period.¹

Healthy, loving relationships are more important to our physical and emotional health than any other factor. Indeed, Harvard University found loving relationships are more important to longevity than such physical markers as mid-life cholesterol levels! Instead of prescribing pills, should we be prescribing love? The answer from the data is yes: "all you need is love!"

But is this any surprise to the Christian?

"I am giving you a new commandment," said Jesus, "Love each other . . . Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:34,35). Really? That's the best sign we have got? Wouldn't miracles be a more impressive sign? How about brilliant Bible knowledge? Or maybe freakishly accurate prophecies? Apparently not if you read 1 Corinthians 13.

Why love? Maybe because through love we heal more people than through our medicine; through love we teach more people than through our schools; through love we enrich more people than through our money. Maybe because God is love, love is the only currency with value in His kingdom.

So what to wish for this birthday? To be an authentically more loving person. To be a more loving husband and father. To foster a deeper love in my local church family. For God's love to reign supreme! All that, and a boat . . .

1. I highly recommend watching Professor Waldinger's TED Talk in full.

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"President Glenn Townsend with church leaders at Lautoka Hospital."

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

Challenge your thinking



Dog dung

Linden Chuang

Let me introduce you to my brother's dog, Barkley. He's a white maltese-shih-tzu cross with big black eyes and a cute little underbite. His favourite hobbies include chasing his rope, running laps around the living room and howling at sirens. Don't be fooled by his "so fluffy I'm going to die" appearance, though. Barkley may look cuddly on the outside but he's a carnivore on the inside.

And he poops . . . a lot.

That's not even an overstatement. One time on a short "walkie" his droppings required three rubbish bags. Then there's the backyard, which can quickly turn into a minefield if it's not regularly patrolled. The worst of the worst is when it rains and his poop turns into a soggy mash of . . . ahem . . . anyways, let's just say it's pungent and unpleasant to clean up.

So, poop. Probably not the conversation topic you were expecting to step into today. While it may be disgusting to talk about, I don't think it's inappropriate. References to dung can be found throughout the Bible. One such passage in particular recently caught my attention.

"Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, first-hand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—*dog dung*. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by Him" (see Philippians 3:7–9, *The Message*, italics added. The KJV also uses the dung description).

To translate: that job promotion we might be pursuing, Paul calls it dog dung. The new house, dog dung. Our academic and athletic achievements, dog dung. The same can be said of our physical appearance, intellectual prowess and bank account balances. In the light of the one thing—the one Person—who really matters, everything else really is rubbish. "Filthy rags." Barkley poop.

Augustine once said, "he who has God has everything; he who has everything but God has nothing".

If you're anything like me, part of you really struggles with this idea. We are brought up to want our lives to mean something, and so we spend years accumulating titles, trinkets and trophies to shape our identity and our worth. Who and what would we be without our work promotions and other accomplishments? The fact is our worth is not dependent on the letters after our name, how hard we work or how many children we have. Our worth has already been set by the One who both created and reclaimed us.

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13,14).

"You were bought at a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Nothing we do can affect the worth God has already placed on us. There are no stripes on our sleeves; only the stripes on His back. The blood of Jesus means we are okay when we are not okay. We are worthy even as a work in progress.

If you ever doubt who you are or what you have to offer, look to the cross and know that God deemed you worthy of Jesus. You are valued, loved and accepted . . . as you are . . . right now. And that's no dog poop.

I was given a book recently that challenged my thinking. *The Unchurched Next Door* was based on field research conducted in America where a team of people interviewed hundreds of non-Christians across the country.

One of the questions asked was, "If you were invited to church would you attend?" How would your unchurched neighbour answer this question? Most of us believe they wouldn't really be interested and so usually we never ask. This is what I thought.

In fact, the research from 2003 showed that up to 82 per cent of all people interviewed were likely to respond positively to an invitation to church with 31 per cent being very positive to such a request. Indeed it was found that nearly half of those who were considered resistant to Christianity were "somewhat likely" to attend if invited, and a further 17 per cent were "very likely" to attend if invited. This I found astounding, that 62 per cent of people resistant to Christianity said that they would probably come to church with me if I invited them. Of the other groups assessed it was shown that 97 per cent of the "very friendly", 97 per cent of the "friendly" and 86 per cent of the "neutral" category could be reasonably expected to accept an invitation to church.

While this book may now be a bit dated I'm still left with an uncomfortable thought. Is this still valid today and does it apply to my cultural setting? What if 82 per cent or even half that accepted an invitation I made to them to come with me to church? What if all it takes is for me to get to know my neighbour and give them an invitation? Is my church the place I could invite them to?

Jesus' commission is for all of us to go and make disciples. But sometimes we make excuses. We tell ourselves people aren't really interested and we just need to be friendly. But many of those we meet with do want to be told about salvation and will respond to an invitation if we give it.

How many opportunities do you have to befriend an unchurched person, a neighbour or a co-worker? And I wonder who is waiting for me to just ask?

Brad Kemp is president of the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference.



Memory help

Brazilian Adventist computer engineer Jonas de Oliveira has given his spare time over the past year to develop VerseRemind, a free Android app that helps you remember Bible verses. "I always had difficulty memorising Bible verses," he says, "so I decided I would do something that would help people be closer to Jesus." —*Record staff*



Heritage in ruins

ISIS fighters have destroyed the 1400-year-old St Elijah's monastery in Mosul, northern Iraq, the latest in a series of demolitions undertaken by the Islamist group. During January, nearly 600 apartments and stores belonging to Christians who've fled the city were auctioned to raise money for ISIS. —*Jerusalem Post*



Eradicate Zika, not babies

Catholic leaders in Brazil have reacted strongly against UN suggestions that Latin American governments should soften abortion laws so that pregnancies can be terminated to avoid the chance of Zika-related birth defects. "Therapeutic abortion doesn't exist," said Cardinal Maradiaga. "Therapeutic means curing and abortion cures nothing." —*LifeSite News*



Prayers for Dawkins

After outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins had a stroke on February 5, the Church of England said they would be praying for his full recovery. Although he has cancelled his tour to Australia and New Zealand, Mr Dawkins says he'll find it difficult to take medical advice and stay away from stress and controversies. —*Inquisitr*



Adventist pastor suspended

Jamaican pastor Dr Michael Harvey was placed on administrative leave after publicly pledging his support for the governing party at an election rally. The Jamaica Union president said the pastor had "violated the principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in which we encourage our members not to take partisan political lines". —*Jamaica Gleaner*



Toxic blast

University of Adelaide researchers warn that just two highly caffeinated "energy drinks" per day can cause heart palpitations. This is particularly risky for people with underlying heart problems. The drinks can also lead to nervousness, sleep problems and addiction. Some varieties contain the entire adult recommended daily sugar intake. —*The New Daily*

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New president for Tassie Conference

Moonah, Tasmania

Pastor Gary Webster has accepted a call to become president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tasmania.

His appointment fills the role left by Pastor Darren Slade, who was named Northern Australia Conference president in December.

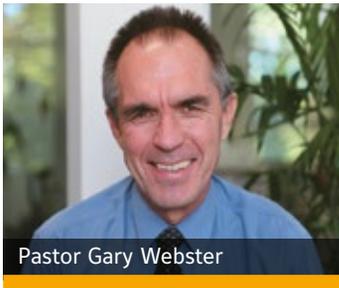
"My wife Marilyn and I count it as a great privilege to be called to team up with our members and pastors in Tasmania in making disciples of Jesus," Pastor Webster said. "However, with only about one Adventist in every 500 people, it is an enormous challenge. Far too big for any of us but definitely not for God. When the Holy Spirit comes on God's people, He can accomplish more in an hour than we could in 50 years."

Pastor Webster has worked for the Church for almost 30 years in various roles, including church administrator, evangelist and theology lecturer. Most recently, he was part of the Adventist Media team as editor of *Archaeological Diggings*. Prior to that, he served as president of the South New South Wales Conference. He will continue in his role as director of the Institute of Public Evangelism.

"As a Church, we have many great plans and programs to reach people for Christ, but since revival is the key to our disciple-making mission, I intend to make seeking this our number one priority in Tasmania," Pastor Webster said.

Australian Union Conference president Pastor Jorge Munoz said Pastor Webster's appointment is exciting news for the Church in Australia.

"Gary comes to the role with a great deal of experience in all areas of ministry, and we will all benefit from his experience and wisdom," Pastor Munoz said. "We welcome Gary to the team, and we pray God may bless him and Marilyn abundantly as he continues to work for Him in Tassie." —*Vania Chew/Record staff*



Pastor Gary Webster

Safe place training coming soon

Wahroonga, New South Wales

Safe Place Services will launch online training resources on April 4 aimed at helping church leaders and anyone in local Adventist churches who works with children and vulnerable persons.



Various training modules, designed for churches in Australia and New Zealand, will be rolled out progressively, beginning with "Safe Church Awareness Training" and including specific topics on the responsibilities of church elders and local church Safe Place coordinators in coming months.

More details will be available soon. In the meantime, visit <http://elearning.safeplaceservices.org.au>. —*Record staff*

Presidents unite around vision

Nadi, Fiji

Presidents and other Church leaders from across the South Pacific Division (SPD) met in Fiji last month to discuss the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in our region.

This can be a tricky business. Why? Because although every level of our Church is interrelated, there aren't direct lines of authority like there are in business. Instead, there are lines of influence. But influence doesn't always get everyone singing off the same songsheet.

And as these meetings were the signature inauguration of the Division's discipleship emphasis, the stakes were high. Would the union presidents sign up? What about the enormous diversity among our conferences and missions? Was it realistic to imagine everyone was going to catch the vision of focusing on making disciples? And if they did, would they embrace the vision with any level of enthusiasm?

There are many things we can say about the meetings at Fulton College, subject to interpretation and maybe even different versions. But one thing is crystal clear: the presidents are united. And not by halves.

"I wish every member could have witnessed the spirit of unity in our meetings," SPD president Pastor Glenn Townend said. "Everyone—every single president—vocally supports the mission of making disciples. And people from across our Division—Melanesians, Polynesians, Micronesians and Caucasians—all spoke up with such a heart-warming level of enthusiasm. We are united in mission.

"Specifically, we've united in the vision that we'll follow Christ's methods. Under His power, we'll prepare the soil, sow the seeds, cultivate the seedlings, harvest the crop and multiply the harvest. Exactly how each of us will do that will vary according to conditions, cultures and the talents of those involved. But we are united in vision and we are all pulling in the same direction under the same desire—to reach our world following the same methods that Christ used." —*James Standish*



Pastors Tiko Kabu and Darren Slade.

THIS MONTH IN



**Blood moons:
a sign of end times?**



**The truth
about Easter**



**The crystal
meth debate**



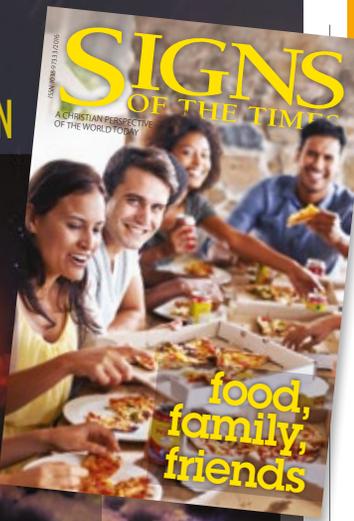
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Learning from coconuts

A summary of Pastor Glenn Townend's keynote address at the South Pacific Division's advisory meetings, Fulton College, Fiji.

During my years as a pastor we've focused a lot of energy on convincing people about a set of beliefs—which are very important—but we haven't focused on living the authentic Christian life of disciples . . . Our goal is to make more and better disciples. We have huge challenges in cities like Sydney and Auckland, where there are areas where we only have one member in 10,000 people . . .



Jesus sees a multiplying movement in making new disciples. As Ellen White said, "Christ doesn't see people as who they were but what they could become if they let Him into their lives." We may be in leadership and have all this responsibility but where is our heart—have we let Christ have His way in us? Because we can't make disciples if we aren't disciples ourselves.

How do we capture the vision of Jesus? Think of the humble coconut. Just one coconut grows a tree. And each tree grows hundreds of coconuts. Look near any coconut tree in the wild and what do you see? Lots of other coconut trees thriving. And each tree is laden with coconuts of its own. Jesus sees the gospel seed like a coconut that can multiply over and over and over again.

The Church does not always follow Jesus' methods. Christ said don't throw pearls to swine. Sometimes we preach at people and if they agree with our message we baptise them. And in a couple of years 40 per cent of them have left the Church. Where is our process of making disciples? Where is the care? The nurture? The teaching people to love, to pray, to read the Bible for themselves, to use their spiritual gifts? Discipleship is not just about preaching.

Christ's model is to prepare the soil, sow the seed, cultivate the crop and then, and only then, harvest the crop and then multiply the crop. How did Christ prepare the soil? Jesus got to know people—He ate with them, He served their needs. I like to get to know people when I'm dressed in lycra, riding bikes. Just being with people. Real relationships—that's preparing the soil of people's hearts.

I want us to begin thinking again as a movement—not just institutions or organisations. Jesus created a movement. In Acts we're told 12 followers of Christ turned the world upside down in just one generation. We need to get back into movement thinking. And that starts with refocusing our attention and energies on following Christ's methods! I'm calling us to be obedient—obedient to Christ's methods alone.

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."

There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonising, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen.¹

That's preparing people's hearts to receive the gospel but once prepared the gospel seed must be sown. Then let's sow seeds under the power of the Holy Spirit. Only then can we harvest the crop He prepares and cultivate it. And like the humble coconut, let's multiply until the South Pacific is full of strong Adventist Christians who are also active disciples following Christ's example of a vibrant Christian life of active discipleship.

1. Ellen G White, *Ministry of Healing* p. 143.



Young author inspired by Adventist school

Nine-year-old Robyn Otokulu, former Mountain View Adventist College (MVAC) student, has published her first book, entitled *Looking for Mother Chicken*. In the blurb, Robyn, who recently moved with her family from NSW to Queensland, thanked MVAC for cultivating her love for literature, reading and writing. She has donated some copies of the book to MVAC's library. Robyn launched the book at her new school in an event attended by the Queensland Premier. She also presented a copy to the Queen of Tonga at the Tongan Palace. Robyn is in the process of writing two new books. —*Intrasyd*

Adventist Church president to visit Vanuatu

Following the devastation of Cyclone Pam, Vanuatu Mission president Pastor Nos Terry Mailalong made a video recording in which he invited General Conference president Ted Wilson to visit Vanuatu and the 21,000 Adventists living there. With further support from South Pacific Division president Glenn Townend, Pastor Wilson accepted the invitation and is scheduled to arrive on April 27, before spending the weekend in Port Vila and Luganville. He plans to help with the church rebuilding program during his visit. —*Adventist News Vanuatu*



Women prisoners taught life skills

For more than 14 years, Operation Food For Life (OFFL) has been ministering to the ladies in Bomana Women's Prison near Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Megan Bayliss recently ran a training program for the ladies, teaching them life skills that will enable them to have a sustainable income when released. OFFL operations director Phillip Vaki then led an inspiring worship service, reminding each person that they are loved by God. The program concluded with fellowship over lunch. —*Dennis Perry*

Honoured for 38 years of ministry

On the last night of Big Camp 2016, South New South Wales (SNSW) Conference honoured Pastor Kenneth John Bird for his 38 years of ministry. He commenced formal service with the Victorian Conference in 1977 where he served as a literature evangelist and then became a pastor. He was called to the North New Zealand Conference in 1982 and was ordained in 1984. Pastor Bird (pictured with SNSW Conference president Mike Faber) returned to Australia in 1990 following a call from SNSW Conference where he has faithfully served through to his retirement. —*Mike Faber*



Adventist develops food recall app

Food Allergy PhD student and Environmental Health officer Michael Sheridan has developed Australia's only dedicated food recall app —*FoodRecallAus*. The food safety app has generated much media attention and has been nationally endorsed by Environmental Health Australia—the peak body representing Environmental Health compliance officers in Australia. In 2015 Michael won the Early Career Environmental Health Officer of the Year Award for the *FoodRecallAus* app. To find out more go to <www.FoodRecallAus.com.au>. —*James Standish*

Biggest winner

2015 saw the Tongans win Greater Sydney Conference Health Department's Biggest Winner competition for the first time, taking first and second place. The Polynesian weight loss competition, now in its seventh year, runs from February to November annually. Uluakimata (Ula) Ofa was the 2015 winner of return plane tickets to Tonga, reducing her BMI by 6.8 and losing approximately 20 kilograms through reducing meal portion sizes, drinking eight glasses of water each day and exercising three days a week. —*Intrasyd*



SPD leaders take Jesus to hospital

South Pacific Division (SPD) leaders took time out from their week-long advisory meetings in Fiji to do a day of community service at Lautoka Hospital.

Here's what some of the leaders had to say about the service day:

Pastor Terry Johnson, Western Australia Conference president: "We can't just sit in meetings all day talking about Jesus without being His healing hands. I met a wonderful couple who were here for a prenatal check and they were beaming. They said they were proud to say they were Adventists because of what they saw their leaders doing in the hospital."

Thomas Ariku, Sepik Mission chief financial officer: "The first stage of discipleship is seed planting. We, as leaders, need to practise it before we teach it. So it was really impressive to see all our leaders taking part in this service. This has given us ideas of what we can do when we get home."

Pastor Enosh Enopa, Morobe Mission secretary: "We've been telling the church members to serve others. But we need to be the ones to do it. We need to lead by example. We need to get out of our offices and be the real gospel in action!"

Pastor Lionel Smith, SPD general secretary: "The service day idea came from the General Conference where they did a service project during their leadership meetings. And we thought, wouldn't it be good for us to do that as well. It's an opportunity to change focus from meeting and strategy to getting out and serving. It creates a completely different dynamic. The emphasis of this week is that we should be making disciples. And for that, we have to serve others. So this is just a taste of where we want to go as leaders and as a Church."





Pastor Benjamin Asa, Solomon Islands Mission secretary: "For me, when I help others and see them being happy, it makes me happy as well. It's the heart of Christianity. Simply following the example of Jesus, for me, that's what this is all about. And you can see the faces of the people in the hospital. They thanked us—it was beautiful."

Pastor Samuel Mollen, Western Solomon Islands Mission secretary: "I'm really impressed. It is good for us to actually interact with the hospital staff and patients. It's just a little thing. But the important thing is for us to share a little of Jesus with those we meet and each other. I have really enjoyed the spirit of working together. Maybe next time we'll collect rubbish or something else practical. It's good that everyone is coming together, staying together, eating together—it's unity, oneness. I feel God's Spirit moving. God is in the midst, we stand together as family in the same service."

Nelson Karis, Madang Manus Mission treasurer: "The service is meaningful—it's giving back something to the community. It's good for us. And it's a witness to the community."

Tony Williams, Avondale College vice president (Academic and Research): "It was great to break up the intellectual side of things and actually do a little bit of practice. The physical aspect was great as well."

Pastor Edward Tupa'i, North New Zealand Conference lead pastor: "We got to work with a lot of people from all over our region. And everyone got on so well—united to get the job done. We were told it was finished. But our team said, 'It's not finished 'til it's totally finished.' We all kept going to get the job done right. And the guys were just so happy!"



School of prayer

by Vania Chew

SUMITHIRAN (SUMI) RAGULAN WAS FOUR YEARS old when his family moved to Auburn and decided it was time he went to school. He came from a Pentecostal Christian background and was one of around 80 non-Adventist students who would be attending Sydney Adventist School Auburn (SASA). Even though Sumi's family were not Adventist, his mother chose to send him there because she thought the school would help discipline her son and build his character.

Sumi still remembers his first encounter with Adventism. On his first day of school, the principal Danyel Efstratiou addressed the students and talked about the seventh-day Sabbath. It might seem like a deep topic for a child to learn about on his first day but Sumi took it in his stride.

"I'm not sure about the other students but I believed it," he says.

Two years later Sumi was experiencing health issues, particularly with his tonsils. He had a painful sore throat and was having difficulty speaking. An operation to remove his tonsils was scheduled. His friends at school began praying for him.

A week before his operation, Sumi had a final check-up with his doctor. On the way to the appointment the pain in his throat began to ease. He told his mother but she didn't believe him and kept driving.

"When we reached the hospital and went into the doctor's room, he said he couldn't see any tonsils but ordered an X-ray in case," Sumi says. The X-ray confirmed the doctor's extraordinary findings, indicating that the tonsils that were scheduled to be removed were no longer there.

"After the appointment we went back to the car and my parents told me I had just witnessed a miracle."

Since that day Sumi has observed many other events

he describes as miracles, but one in particular stands out.

For as long as Sumi can remember, his father has had poor vision. His eyes were damaged in a car accident that occurred just two months after Sumi was born. So together with his classmates and teachers Sumi started praying for his father.

A year after Sumi's healing, his father woke up one morning and realised that he could suddenly see his son from head to toe, which he had previously been unable to do. He was taken to the hospital to have his eyes checked.

"The doctors told me that they couldn't believe it themselves because they could still see a lot of damage

but his vision had increased by a miraculous 50 per cent," Sumi says. "I believe this was thanks to my friends and teachers who had prayed for my father. From that day on, my parents and I decided to be Seventh-day Adventists."

And when the school did a special program at Auburn church, Sumi and his family began attending

"The doctors told me that they couldn't believe it themselves because they could still see a lot of damage but his vision had increased by a miraculous 50 per cent."

Sabbath services.

Following a Week of Spiritual Emphasis at SASA with school chaplain Pastor Brian Leuluai, Sumi asked if he could have Bible studies. After studying with Pastor Brian, he made the decision to be baptised.

"His mum, aunt, uncle and grandma were present at the baptism, along with staff from the school. I went to the baptism too," Mrs Efstratiou says.

"I taught Sumi in kindergarten and first grade. I have seen him blossom into a confident, kind and hard-working young man. And now he has chosen to surrender his life to God. I am very proud of him."

R

Vania Chew is PR/editorial assistant for Adventist Record.



Sugar and the brain

A recent study on sugar consumption has led to headlines proclaiming sugar may be as damaging to the brain as extreme stress or abuse. But what does that mean? Is every granule of sugar we eat damaging? Is the evidence available conclusive?

The study that led to these headlines looked at female rats that were put in a stressful situation. Rats were given either unlimited access to both regular food and water or unlimited access to food, water and a 25 per cent sucrose solution (a drink with about 2.5 times the sugar of soft drink). Rats in both groups were then either left to lead their lives or put in a stressful situation. For those rats consuming the diet that included the sugar solution, but were not put under stress, changes to the brain were seen that were similar to those rats that were exposed to stress.

So what does this mean for humans? It's an interesting study and one that deserves further research but rat studies like this don't provide us with much clinical guidance. Rat studies can be a great starting point but they don't translate perfectly to humans. Also, we don't even know the dose at which sugar in the diet had this effect on the rats; all we know is that those rats who had unlimited access to sugar showed these effects.

We already know that refined sugar is not something we should be looking for ways to add into our diet but studies like this should not scare us off nutritious foods that naturally contain sugar like fruits and vegetables.



Avocado dip

Preparation time: 10 minutes Cooking time: nil Serves: 8

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 avocados | 1 teaspoon sweet chilli sauce |
| 150g silken tofu | 2 tomatoes, diced |
| ½ cup light sour cream | 1 red onion, diced |
| 1 lemon, juice only | 1 clove garlic, crushed |

1. Place avocado, tofu, sour cream, lemon juice and chilli sauce in a blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Add tomatoes, onion and garlic; pulse until combined but not pureed.
3. Serve with fresh vegetables. Serves 8 as a starter.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVE: 476kJ (114cal). Protein 4g. Fat 10g. Carbohydrate 4g. Sodium 33mg. Potassium 389mg. Calcium 46mg. Fibre 2g.



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

Sanitarium

LIFESTYLE
MEDICINE
SERVICES

Holy Spirit:

PERSON OR POWER?



by Anthony MacPherson

HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED THESE QUESTIONS: IS the Holy Spirit a power or a person? Is He simply a divine influence or the Divine Influencer? Is He God's energy or the Energiser of God's people? Is He a profound agent or simply a powerful effect? Is the Spirit the result of the Father or Christ's presence or is He present and acting for and with the Father and Christ? The difference between the two ideas is profound. While one position restricts our reading of Scripture, the other opens up its riches. One position enables us to see God's glory while the other obscures and denigrates it.

Let's re-ask the question this way: Is God's Spirit, like His understanding or power, an attribute without any substantive existence of its own, or is He God's Spirit in the same way as Jesus is God's Word? In the latter case the terms "Spirit" and "Word" express Persons with the closest possible unity with the Father, a shared divine nature and the exclusive ability to reveal Him in ways specific to their own identity. The Father, His Spirit and His Word, mutually and inseparably belong to each other. They cannot be understood apart from each other but neither are any to be depersonalised and collapsed into the others. Understood this way these terms (Spirit and Word) are not redundant synonyms for the power, activity or influence of a individualistic deity but revelations of an inner-related God. In essence, is God like a big powerful singular being (who creates, emanates, begets or generates a "son" and who exudes or produces a "spirit") or is God more like a communion of fellowship and love? Is God triune or not?

Testing the Alternatives

Rather than speculate let us put these different views to the test. Which approach better explains the following Scriptures? Take Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The Greek text is clear that this is a singular Name but Jesus is equally clear that there are three bearers of the Name. The Trinitarian model naturally asserts that all Three share the dignity of divine Personhood. The singular divine Name reveals a divine Person (Father), divine Person (Son) and divine Person (Holy Spirit). The unity plus repetition highlights the perfect symmetry and equality that constitutes God. The non-Trinitarian alternative breaks all of this. The "name" becomes an unequal confusion of God and less than God, a strange medley of persons and non-person. Depending on which version of anti-Trinitarian theology you are dealing with you can end up baptised in the name of a supreme God, a derived god and non-personal power or influence. Sounds slightly pagan! The Trinitarian reading is more coherent, logical, simple and beautiful.

Or take 1 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." This beautiful benediction has a profound pattern highlighting divine Personhood. The personal quality "grace" of a particular divine Person "Jesus" is paralleled to the personal quality "love" of another divine Person "God" (by implication the Father). The clearly established pattern indicates how we should read the next parallel phrase. The obvious personal quality of "fellowship"

requires another divine Person, the "Holy Spirit". Here the Spirit cannot be reduced to a mere stand-in for the Father or Jesus. In parallel fashion He shares the category of individual Personhood with Them and is thus distinguished from Them by His own personal identity. This natural reading of the text yields basic Trinitarian theology.

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Personal Quality | Person |
| Grace | Jesus |
| Love | God |
| Fellowship | Holy Spirit |

Anti-Trinitarian interpretation tears all this apart. The brunt of the attack is directed against the Holy Spirit. The irony of course is that Paul defines the Holy Spirit with the most person-intensive quality possible—fellowship! Any theory that reduces the Spirit to the power or influence of another simply cannot cope with the text. I appreciate the power of gravity but I've never fellowshiped with it. I still feel the influence of my parents but that is not the same as fellowship with them. Fellowship is incomparably more than influence or power. Only mutual "persons" or "fellows" are capable of fellowship. Why affirm a teaching that robs the Spirit of what Paul declares is His defining quality?

Then we have the insightful comment by Paul that "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16). This verse emphasises the Spirit's own individuality and action ("the Spirit Himself"). In context this serves to distinguish Him from the Father and Christ (verses 15, 17) and our own human spirit (verse 16). And of course witnessing is the work of a person. It's no wonder that Ellen White references this verse, in combination with 1 Corinthians 2:11, in her powerful assertion that the Spirit is a divine Person. "The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God."¹

Person or power or . . . both?

At the same time we must acknowledge phrases or expressions that describe the Spirit as a power or influence of God. For example, much like water, you can be baptised by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11), filled by the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) or have Him poured out upon people (Acts 10:45). You can be anointed by the Spirit (Acts 10:38), sealed by the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13) and His regenerative work is likened to the wind (John 3:8). It is verses like these that lead some

to question the Spirit's personality. Is there a contradiction here? What are we to make of this?

At this point we either find a doctrinal model big enough to handle all the evidence or disregard evidence by constructing hopelessly narrow models controlled by earthly reason. This is where the superior explanatory power of the basic doctrine of the Trinity commends itself. If the Holy Spirit is a divine Person then we can affirm all verses that indicate personhood and we can affirm all verses that utilise language describing the Spirit or His work as a force or power or influence. The expansive category of divine person effortlessly and naturally accounts for the narrower category of power or influence. But the reverse is not true. The limited impersonal category of power can never account for the higher level concept of a Person. A personal Holy Spirit is capable of everything Scripture says about Him. A mere power only accounts for some of the biblical texts.

At this point we either find a doctrinal model big enough to handle all the evidence or disregard evidence by constructing hopelessly narrow models controlled by earthly reason.

We must remember that when we say the Holy Spirit is a Person we do not mean that He is in all respects like a created individual person. The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. This Person is omnipresent and infinite and so His Personhood may exist in a manner not possible for a created person. Just as the Father dwells in light inapproachable and is beyond comprehension, likewise, much about the Spirit is beyond human explanation. The

Spirit must not become the victim of our need to force Him into the limited confines of human reason or imagination. It may be easier to reduce the Spirit to a force, energy or influence from God but the Bible demands we affirm more than that. As Trinitarians all we mean by saying the Spirit is a Person is that He has a mind and knows how to intercede for us (Romans 8:27). That through His will (1 Corinthians 12:11) and knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:11) He can talk and direct (Acts 13:2), teach (John 14:26; 16:13) and comfort (John 14:16). We want to be able to affirm that the Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), insulted (Hebrews 10:29), lied to (Acts 5:3,4) and blasphemed (Matthew 12:31). This is only true of persons. None of this excludes describing the humble Spirit or His work with the language of a force or power. Trinitarian teaching is a "both/and" approach on this issue and not an "either/or" position. And this is exactly the approach needed to be able to affirm the profound revelation of an indwelling Spirit who intimately knows the heart of the Father and Son and is able to help us love Them as He loves them. God is personal all the way down and all the way through. Enjoy the fellowship! 

¹. *Evangelism*, pp 616,617.

Pastor Anthony MacPherson is head of Ministry and Theology at Fulton College, Fiji.



Healing the scars of war

by Kepsie Elodo

In 1988 BOUGAINVILLE (PAPUA NEW GUINEA) FELL into a state of civil war, and that conflict raged until 1998. Although statistics for the number of fatalities are hard to find, a key government figure has estimated that more than 20,000 people died in the war. The issue at

the heart of the conflict is easy to understand. Bougainville had a large copper mine, at a time when world copper prices were very high. The problem was that the copper was being mined, refined and sold, and everyone was financially benefitting. Everyone except for one group:

the citizens of Bougainville. As they saw their natural resources being exploited, without reaping any of the gains, resentment grew. And eventually it festered into a full-scale conflict.

When I was called to serve as president of Bougainville Mission in 2014, I realised we weren't going to make progress. Why not? Because some of our members supported the PNG government; others supported the Bougainville Revolutionary Army. And our Church was completely split along those lines—even though it was almost 25 years since the end of the conflict. While we'd like to live in a world where such secular political tensions don't impact our Church, unfortunately this isn't the reality. We've seen in Rwanda, South Africa, Australia and the US that politics and ethnic divisions seep into our Church.

The people of Bougainville are extraordinary. They have tremendous drive. Despite the destruction caused by the war, they have started businesses and are ambitious. If only we could harbour the intelligence, drive and strength of the people for the gospel, I thought. We only had 6500 members in a population of more than 200,000—one of the areas where the Adventist Church had the lowest participation rate. But, being from the PNG mainland, I was an outsider. And after the war, outsiders were considered to be naturally suspect. What could I do to heal the scars that divided our Church?

Recently, however, something has changed. The change has come through reconciliation programs. So far the Church has conducted 22 of these programs on Bougainville.

Let me give you one example of the power of forgiveness. I travelled to a village on the other side of the island to conduct a reconciliation series in November 2015. You might think, why are you still running reconciliation programs more than two decades after the war? Because when you've had a war of that scale—maybe 10 per cent of the population killed and every single person impacted—the emotional, psychological and physical scars don't just disappear—many linger.

In the village I met a beautiful, older, crippled woman. During the war she supported one side of the conflict and young men from her village supported the other. One day they burst into her home and demanded she change sides. She refused, and one of the men took out a gun and shot her in the ankle, absolutely shattering the joint and immediately crippling her. She will never again run, dance, do heavy lifting or work in the fields. In one instant of partisan insanity, the woman was rendered disabled in the most profound way.

After the war, the woman demanded compensation

from the young men. She wanted compensation for her pain, her lost earnings and for everything she went through at the hands of these heartless young men. So she demanded a very high payment—so high the young men and their families had no chance whatsoever to meet her demands. Negotiations went through the village chief but no settlement was obtained. One of the young men became sick and died. Still no settlement. Government officials got involved. No settlement.

When I arrived at the village I preached about the power of forgiveness—what God has done for us. I talked about the heart of the gospel.

The next day we held a reconciliation seminar. And halfway through, I was stunned when the woman hobbled up

to the front. There she stood and in a loud, clear voice surprised us all.

"As you all know, I suffered great pain and humiliation when I was shot," she said. "And every day is impacted by what happened. But what has happened to my soul is far worse than what happened to my leg. I have felt enormous rage since the day I was shot. I woke up angry. I went to bed angry. And if I could have, I would have totally bankrupted the young men who did this

to me, and their entire families. To see them suffer would have brought me great satisfaction. Because I wanted justice—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

She paused as everyone wondered where she was going with this. "But God has touched me. What we've heard about God's grace—it has changed me. Today, before all of you, I want you to know . . ." At this point she pointed to one of the young men, who is now married and has suffered great guilt for what he did. "I want you to know I forgive you. Of everything. You owe me nothing. Because, just as Christ freed me from my debts, I free you!" She then shuffled her broken body forward and looked into the heavens, stating: "I know I won't be whole here—no matter how much money is paid. But I also know that I will be whole. Totally whole—in body, mind and spirit—when Jesus returns!"

We've seen that reconciliation is the way forward. It isn't a footnote to the gospel. It is the gospel in action! In December 2015, Bougainville Mission voted to create a reconciliation department. We hope to establish reconciliation leaders in every district and every church across Bougainville. Because as we reconcile, we draw close to God. And as we draw close to God, the gospel catches fire. Through reconciliation we will see the Adventist message go forward in love. That is my prayer. 

Pastor Kepsie Elodo is president of the Bougainville Mission, Papua New Guinea.

"To see them suffer would have brought me great satisfaction. Because I wanted justice—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

Still

by Jarrod Stackelroth

Mark 14:57–65: "Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.'" Yet even then their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him."

HERE IS JESUS. AMONG THE CHAOS AND WITH accusations flying; among those too ashamed to speak and paid to speak; among the lies and anger and jealousy; here He is . . . still.

He is the One who calmed the storm with a word. He is the One who created and who is well-equipped to bring order from chaos. Here He stands in the eye of the maelstrom and He is quiet and composed. How can He face such uncertainty with such calm; how can He head towards pain?

Listen to what He says: "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

With this certainty, He can embody calm in the face of such hatred and chaos.

Can we?

When we face life's storms and trials, how do we react? It has been said that one's true character is revealed in a crisis. If that's true, I hate to think what that says some days about my true character. But we can learn from Jesus' example. We can find that peace that passes understanding in the middle of life's storms.

First we must know who it is we are sent by. When we accept God's love and enter into His grace, we are covered by Christ's righteousness and we become citizens of His kingdom. Jesus knows He comes from the Mighty One's right hand. He knows that is where His authority comes from. We too can know that if we are representing God,

He has our back. He is our Mighty One; He has sent us out into this world and, therefore, has great interest in what happens to us.

Secondly, Jesus has spent the whole night strengthening Himself in His Father's presence. He is intimate with the Mighty One because He has spent time before the trial with Him. He is filled with the Holy Spirit and can speak with confidence because He has given up His own will to follow His Father.

Also, He is calm because He knows what must be done and He knows God's promises are sure. Here Jesus quotes Daniel who saw these things in a vision (Daniel 7). He knows God has promised and prophesied what is to come. If we know and believe God's promises, we can live in His hand, and trust that

". . . all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Have we been called according to His purpose? I believe if we are to call ourselves Christians or followers of Christ, then we have been—we have been called to follow and to make disciples.

So if we want the peace that passes understanding, we must know the God who sends us, spend time strengthening our bond with Him and know His promises. This will give us strength and encouragement during the toughest of tests and trials. R

Jarrod Stackelroth is associate editor of Adventist Record. This is one of a series of devotionals on Mark available at <www.record.net.au>.



Get your copyright!

It's ironic isn't it? Here we are. At church. Worshipping God. But for some of us, we're not doing the best job we can at worshipping honestly. Dishonest worship? How?

For that let's visit a songwriter's house. In that house lives a beautiful, ageing woman who has dedicated her life to ministering through music. And she wrote a song. One you love. And one you sing with gusto as the words flash onto your church's overhead screen.

But here's the problem. Although a powerful music management company is paid by our Church organisation for the use of a broad range of Christian songs in public worship, including hers, the songwriter never sees a cent of that money. Unless . . .

Unless our local churches report all the songs we've sung to the music management company. How do we do that? The simple steps are available at the new webpage:

<<http://www.spd.adventist.org/music-copyright>>.

There's one exception to this rule: if you sing directly from an officially published songbook like the *Adventist Hymnal*, then your music use is covered by a different agreement. But the second we flash words onto a screen—any screen and any song whatsoever—or sing any song not in an officially published songbook? Then we need to report it to ensure the songwriter gets appropriate credit. We've paid for the right to use the songs on the screen. But the songwriters get nothing unless we report the songs we love.

Reporting the songs is simple, doesn't take long and it's the right thing to do. So let's head over to the new website page, download the form and send it off on a regular basis. Because somewhere is a songwriter who is counting on her brothers and sisters to do the right thing. Let's not let her down. ↻

RECORD REWIND

Lester Devine



A friend to students

Charles Schowe was a "character" on the faculty for many years at Avondale. He taught there from 1910 to 1949, except for 10 years when he was principal of the Adventist high school in Sydney and at Greater New York Academy.

A pianist, he taught music as well as Greek, Latin, history, pedagogics and science. Deeply involved in the total program of the college, he was preceptor (dean of men), head of teacher training and served in what today we would call the academic dean position. He was also a bandmaster and librarian. He married Winifred Trunk, an American, who was the domestic science teacher at Avondale. "Charles and Winifred Schowe were greatly loved by Avondale students; they were their friends," states the book *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985*.



Charles Schowe 1881-1952

Synopsis and photograph obtained from: *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985*, p 156.

OPENING HIS WORD

Gary Webster



Redigging the wells for revival I: the Caesarea factor

On returning to Abraham's wells, Isaac discovered the Philistines had filled them with dirt. On re-digging them he found water. Before the reviving waters of the Spirit can flow into the church for carrying out God's disciple-making mission, we must remove the obstructions.

Read Genesis 26:1, 18, 19.

The first obstacle to revival is a false notion that the outpouring of God's Spirit at Pentecost was a "once for all time and never to be repeated event", so that there is no need, and it is even wrong, to seek further outpourings. Pentecost is called the "baptism", "filling" or outpouring of the Spirit. Yet later the Spirit was "poured out" on Cornelius and his household, "as at the beginning" (Pentecost), and they were "baptised" with the Spirit. Even a few days after Pentecost, in answer to fervent prayer, the disciples were again "filled" with the Spirit. History reveals similar revivals, such as the Reformation, Wesleyan and Welsh revivals.

Read Acts 1:5; 2:4, 17, 18; 10:45; 11:15, 16.

In an outpouring of the Spirit, Christ is preached boldly, people are convicted of sin, leading them to cry out, "what shall we do?" Repenting and turning from sin, believing in and obeying Christ they then also receive the Spirit. Revival thus leads to reformation of life and mission. Could we be quenching the Spirit by opposing or not earnestly seeking revival? Like the early church let us pray together for the outpouring of God's Spirit.

Read Acts 4:31; John 16:8; Acts 2:37, 38; 5:32; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Acts 1:13, 14.



Ancient Caesarea where the Spirit was poured out on Cornelius and his household.



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We help others learn about Jesus when we follow His example



At the beginning of Jesus' ministry He calls Peter, Andrew, James and John to leave their fishing nets and follow Him. They listen to His call, respond immediately, leave everything, including the biggest catch they have ever made, to follow Him.



UNJUMBLE THE WORDS

TO FIND OUT THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE. Clue: Matthew 4:19



MATCH THE SYMBOLS AND COLOUR IN

LETTERS

NEW FOCUS

Helen Amprimo, NSW

I was most impressed with the editorial "Future Media" in the February 6 *Record*, re: the need for changing the focus of Adventist Media, and really impressed with the article by Calvin Dever, CEO of Adventist Media: "New Mission for the Media".

Kudos for the decision that energies and media focus will target young families and I believe that in so doing you will also interest others not in the actual demographic.

As a grandparent I am always on the lookout for things that I can pass on to help my children and young friends for their benefit. Also as a person, I like access to that which enables me to understand the society that young families are navigating and what appeals to them so that I can intelligently be of help to those not of my age and background if necessary.

I look forward to a new era for Adventist Media and if donors drop off, God will give others.

STILL SUPPORTING

Jane Walker, Qld

I'd like to respond to your editorial "Future Media" (February 6).

I am 50-plus but I'm afraid you didn't do a very good job of convincing me not to donate to my favourite evangelistic TV program. Here are my reasons.

1. Yes, it is hard to reach a secular audience but most of the Adventist Media contacts come from that TV program—so it is reaching someone! There are thousands of people out there now, reading our stuff—the seeds are planted;

the Holy Spirit will bring the harvest in His time.

2. I have young adult children who regularly watch the program and they don't think it is old-fashioned, outdated or boring. But so what if it is for middle-aged people? Don't forget there are a lot of people in the 50-plus age bracket who are "unreached" with the gospel. If this program is reaching them . . . what's the problem?

3. I sell plants at markets and have a table with outreach materials. The DVDs from the program I support are taken by all adult age groups. I speak to the people and get comments like—"Oh you have DVDs. That's a good program, I watch it every week"—also proof it is reaching someone!

4. It is teaching God's love through the Word, which is always relevant and fresh, and will always touch hearts that are seeking meaning in life. If we stick to the Bible we can't go wrong.

5. I like to support other programs, especially if they are designed for a young audience—just give us the details and tell us how! I have supported many new ventures over the years. However, many have not had good results so I'm not going to stop supporting one that I trust.

CLOISTERED ORDER

Graham Hood, Qld

I thought your piece "Future Media" was right on target and very honest. The Church is becoming an even more cloistered order that, like a sacred cow, continues to chew its own cud.

Producing glossy HD media for ourselves is not fulfilling the great commission.

We claim our TV networks have a global reach of hundreds of millions of viewers. Sadly I believe that 99 per cent of those viewers are too busy scraping a meal together to care about our satellite TV endeavours, and the other 1 per cent are watching the football.

The stuff we present is largely irrelevant in today's world and at best is only self-serving. It feels good to Adventists but that's about it.

More than that, we need a different way of thinking. I enjoy the raw Christianity found among brothers and sisters who aren't wealthy and putting on a façade. I want a church filled with damaged, broken people.

Because it is only when we are completely broken that we can fully depend on Jesus.

TEARS STILL FLOW

Len Knott, via website

I sit here with tears rolling down my face [after reading "Longevity of love" (Editorial, February 20)]!

[Still] as a 57-year-old man, whose parents divorced when I was 12 years of age, the anguish/heartache/loneliness you feel as a child of a divorced family is real.

The trauma you go through is painful and dramatic—no matter how stable your life is after!

Your thinking and views on life are different!

Thank God Jesus accepts you, if you ask Him!

Sadly, there is an ever increasing number within our Church who do not!

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.

ANNIVERSARY



McPhee. Angus and Annita (nee Larwood) celebrated their

50th wedding anniversary on 2.1.16 at home in Rathmines, NSW, with Conrad, Yulia, Michael and grandchildren Sarah and Rhys. Distance prevented Luther, Rebecca, Lillian, Reuben and Ruth from attending. The couple were married by Pastor Wilfred Rudge in Midland church, WA. They moved to New Zealand's North

Island where Angus was a pastor for nine years. The next 31 years he ministered in the Northern Territory and South Australia where Annita was a social worker. Now retired, they're members of Toronto church, NSW.

WEDDINGS



Tavai-Spero. Sean Tavai, son of Samuel Tavai and Emma

Brown, and Amia Spero,

daughter of George and Tommasina Spero, were married 12.1.16 at Panorama House, Bulli Tops. Sean and Amia met at Avondale College where Sean was studying theology and Amia teaching. In 2015 Sean was assistant pastor at Murwillumbah, while Amia was teaching in Sydney. They have received a call to minister in Darwin, NT, where Sean will begin his second year of ministerial internship.

Mau Tuooi, Johnny Murison

Jones in Waitara church. He is survived by his wife; two sons and their spouses: John and Miriam and Brian and Fiona. Although small of stature, John had a big heart and in his early 20s was featured on the front page of the *Sun Herald* newspaper after rescuing many swimmers at Maroubra beach, Sydney. John had a strong faith and with his ready wit and sense of humour, would share his love for Jesus with strangers. Although admitted to hospital several times in the past year, John continued to show a cheerful spirit to the end. He died peacefully at home listening to "The Lord's Prayer". We thank God for his witness being "faithful to the end".

Neil Watts, Eddie Mackie

Evans, George Moncrieff, born 3.4.1934 in Wairoa, NSW; died 6.9.15 at home in Dora Creek. He was predeceased by his son Peter. He is survived by his wife Loma; children Gregory and Jayne; and grandchildren Alex, Natasha, Angela and Peter. George was a practical man with a love for aeroplanes, motorbikes and cars. He could turn his hand to anything and was generous in helping those with mechanical problems, often answering calls in the middle of the night. George loved music and played the trumpet in an Adventist band in Sydney. He was a patient sufferer and was grateful for the extended months with his family. The love and respect with which this man was held was demonstrated by the large gathering at his funeral service at Avondale Adventist Cemetery.

Ross Goldstone, Colin Winch, George Drinkall



Gillis, Stanley, born 3.7.1923 in Dunedin, NZ; died 6.1.16 in Newcastle, NSW. On 13.1.1944 he married Ivy Masters.

OBITUARIES

Abrahams, Isaac passed away 28.12.15. He was a respected geologist and beloved husband, father, brother and son. A memorial service was held in the Cairns church on January 21. He is sadly missed by his wife Roslyn and five children.

Daniel Matteo, Johnny Murison

Beard, Vanessa Lorraine, born 9.5.1955 in Wairoa, NSW; died 24.12.15 in Tweed Heads. She was predeceased by her father Arthur. She is survived by her mother Lorrie; and her siblings Sharon, Chris and Warren. Vanessa had five great loves: her Lord, family, church, music and horses. She played cornet, sang in the Wairoa church choir—which led to Clive Pascoe writing a special piece for her—and played piano for Galston children's Sabbath School. In 2008 she joined Tumbulgum church where she played the organ. Her impressive Bible knowledge came from attending Wairoa Adventist School and then Strathfield Adventist College. Vanessa is finally at peace after years of pain and suffering.

Errol Wright, Warren Price

Carter, John (Jack) Alfred, born 13.12.1921 in Moore Park, NSW; died 23.12.15 in Niagara Park. On 1.11.1964 he married Margaret

POSITIONS VACANT

■ **Systems administrator (Information Technology)—South Pacific Division—The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited (Wahroonga, NSW)** is seeking a systems administrator to join the busy Information Technology team. This role will be based at the Division head office in Wahroonga and will be responsible for supporting virtual servers, desktops and other hosting services; providing service desk troubleshooting and support; assisting engineering teams with technical issues; and providing support both remotely and travelling to locations within 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 <hr@adventist.org.au> or fax to: (02) 9489 0943. Applications close **March 7, 2016**.

■ **Childcare worker—Hills Adventist College (Castle Hill, NSW).** Seventh-Day Adventist Schools (Greater Sydney) Ltd is seeking to appoint a diploma qualified childcare worker for Hills Adventist College, situated on the Castle Hill campus, Sydney. The successful applicant will have a Diploma in Child Care and experience in leading a room. We are seeking a person with a good Christian ethos, strong interpersonal skills, who works well in a team, communicates effectively and has a sound knowledge of early childhood compliance requirements. For more information and a position profile, please contact the principal Ralph Luchow <principal@hills.adventist.edu.au>. To apply please email your resume and cover letter to the principal Ralph Luchow at <principal@hills.adventist.edu.au>. **Applications close March 15, 2016.**

■ **Chief medical officer—Atoifi Adventist Hospital (Malaita, Solomon Islands).** The Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Ltd is seeking to appoint a qualified and experienced medical practitioner to administer the planning, development and delivery of health care for Atoifi Adventist Hospital in Solomon Islands. For more information please visit the South Pacific Division's Human Resources website at <www.adventistemployment.org.au>. To apply, please send a cover letter, your CV, three work-related referees and the contact details of your Adventist church pastor to: Human Resources, Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Ltd, Locked Bag 2014, Wahroonga NSW, 2076 Australia; email <hr@adventist.org.au>; fax: (02) 9489 0943. Applications close **March 29, 2016.**

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



VOLUNTEERS

■ **Trade/skilled volunteers are needed to help build churches in Vanuatu.** The structure is pre-fabricated steel. The conditions will be rough: tenting, solar showers, local food. We need a team of 8-10 people per church. If you have a team willing to go we'd love to hear from you. We want to build as many churches as possible before July. Maranatha teams will be in Vanuatu co-sharing the building with volunteers from March 31 to April 12 and we need approximately 20 skilled tradies to assist with this. For more details contact: Maryanne Jakovac at <volunteers@adventist.org.au>.

He was predeceased by his wife and his son Graeme. He is survived by his children Carol Roberts (Brisbane, Qld) and Alwyn Gillis (Newcastle, NSW); and grandchildren Vanessa, Malcolm, Jorjia and Jackson. Stan taught for the Church for more than 40 years in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Wayne Krause



Higgins, Roger William, born 13.12.1947; died 18.12.15 in Zion

Nursing Home, Nundah, Qld. He was laid to rest in Pinnaroo Lawn Cemetery. He is survived by his wife Brenda (Brisbane); daughter Philippa and son Jeremy. A passionate musician, Roger achieved a Masters in Pipe Organ Performance from Andrews University, subsequently playing at countless churches, including Notting Hill Methodist Church in London. Sadly, all pipe organs he played in Christchurch, NZ, were lost in the 2010-11 earthquakes. Roger also played in several Adventist churches, including Papanui and Ilam in Christchurch and Pine Rivers in Brisbane, Qld.

Chris Foote

Houliston, Brian Buchanan, born 4.8.1931 in Auckland, NZ; died 16.12.15 in Toronto, NSW. On 14.1.1954 he married Betty Horner in Invercargill, NZ. He is survived by his wife; children Delwyn, Judith, Kenneth and Robert; grandchildren Michael, Dwayne, Shannon, Brock, Trent and Taylor; and great-grandchildren Brianna and Charlotte. Brian attended Longburn Adventist College, NZ, and later worked there as a building supervisor. His role expanded to that of teacher/minister and missionary in Papua New Guinea from 1958 to 1964. In 1965 Brian began a 29-year career lecturing at Avondale College in applied arts. Loved and respected by generations of college students and colleagues throughout the South Pacific, his legacy lives on in his family and students.

Lyell Heise



Keath, Francis Joseph, born in Carlsruhe, Vic; died in Maroondah Hospital, Ringwood.

He is survived by his wife Wilma; sons Colin, Steven, Graham and Andrew and daughter Sandra

Findlay; 10 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. His funeral was attended by approximately 300 people. Frank operated a large earth-moving business in Yarck, contracting major projects throughout northern Victoria. He was a dedicated lay leader and served in several Adventist churches in country Victoria. From humble beginnings Frank became a well-known identity in his community and the Adventist Church in the Victorian Conference. He will be remembered as a man of his word and loyal man of God.

Darrell Croft

Lewis, Ronald James, born in Gisborne, NZ; died in Gisborne. In 1956 he married Dawn Tasker. He was predeceased by his infant son James in 1958 and daughter Margaret in 1959. He is survived by his wife (Gisborne); children Wendy (Gisborne), Chris and Betty (Brisbane, Qld), Mark and Nevie (Otoko, NZ), and Neralie and David (Whakarau); 12 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. Ron has left a legacy of support, kindness and steady wisdom. He rests in the Ormond Cemetery.

John Smolka

Mews, David, born 5.7.1939 in London, UK; died 14.9.15 at home in Wantirna, Vic. After arriving in Australia as a young single man, he met and married Jean Bain on 18.4.1964. Upon meeting they were surprised to learn they had lived just a few streets apart in London. Their home was blessed with six children: Mandy (and Mark) Fidanza, Pam (and Jason) Rowe, Jenny (and Peter) Wilson, Linda (and Greg) Harrington, Nathan, and Kimberley. David was a man who lived for God and his family. Despite difficult days, his faith remained strong. A large group of family and friends gathered at the Ferntree Gully church to farewell David, where the main focus was on the assurance of salvation for believers.

Sue Beament, Trevor Rowe

Pennell, Myee Fay, born 28.12.1925 in Bellingen, NSW; died 26.9.15 in Port Macquarie. She was predeceased by her son Ian and her husband Len. She is survived by four children Denise, Suzanne, Rodney and Leon; seven grandsons; three great-grandchildren; and her

stepchildren and their families. In 1943 Fay enrolled in a one-year domestic studies course at Avondale College. In 1945, while working as the cook at a Lismore camp meeting, she met Len Pennell, a single father of two children, Anita and Kevin. They married in 1947 and established their home on Len's banana farm. They also lived in Armidale and Coffs Harbour before retiring to Wauchope where they were valued and active church members.

Barry Satchell

Ralph, Mary Jill (nee McAlister) (formerly Arthur), born 1.9.1936 in Lismore, NSW; died 28.11.15 in Maranoa aged care facility, Alstonville. She is survived by Ken and Julie Arthur (Ballina), Christine and John Whitehorn (Maitland), Ian Arthur (Ballina), Glenda and Declan Jordan (Sydney); their children and great-grandchildren. Jill loved her garden, was a great cook and enjoyed tapestry. After a long illness she is sleeping, waiting for the resurrection when her Lord returns.

Eric Greenwell



Smith, Geneva Ruth Lavinia (nee Hadfield), born 7.9.1923 in the Vava'u islands, Tonga; died 2.1.16 in Sydney, NSW. She married Ralph Smith on her 19th birthday. She was predeceased by her husband in 2008 and her daughter Maralynn in 1986. She is survived by her children and their spouses: Adrian and Annette, Josephine and Graham Lloyd, and Suzan and Alan Creighton; and grandchildren Anita, Karina, Belinda and Nicola. Geneva taught in a church school and in public high schools in Tasmania. She ran cooking schools in various churches where Ralph ministered. She sewed many wedding dresses for brides and blessed hundreds of people through a card ministry. Geneva served as an elder at Fox

Valley church, NSW, for many years.

Garth Bainbridge, Darren Pratt



Thrift, Karen, born in Perth, WA; died in Wahroonga, NSW. She was predeceased by

her mother Yvonne Thrift. She is survived by her father Alan and her brother Michael (both of Cooranbong). Karen was a musician, a mentor and a skilled English teacher, whose influence reached into the lives of countless numbers of grateful students. Students from Sydney's Northholm Grammar School joined hundreds who farewelled her at Avondale College Church. Tributes came from around the world.

Lyell Heise

ADVERTISEMENT

Grey Nomads camp—Adventist Alpine Village, October 3-8, 2016. Plan now to attend the South New South Wales Conference Grey Nomads camp for a spiritual feast and social fellowship at Adventist Alpine Village, Jindabyne, NSW. Set in the beauty of the Australian Southern Alps, numbers are limited to 150 attendees. To receive an application form and details of accommodation options please contact Robyn Howie. Phone: (02) 6249 6822 or email <robynhowie@adventist.org.au>.

Finally . . .

There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.
—Edith Wharton

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- Stephan, Listener in Ukraine



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MARCH 12, 2016

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