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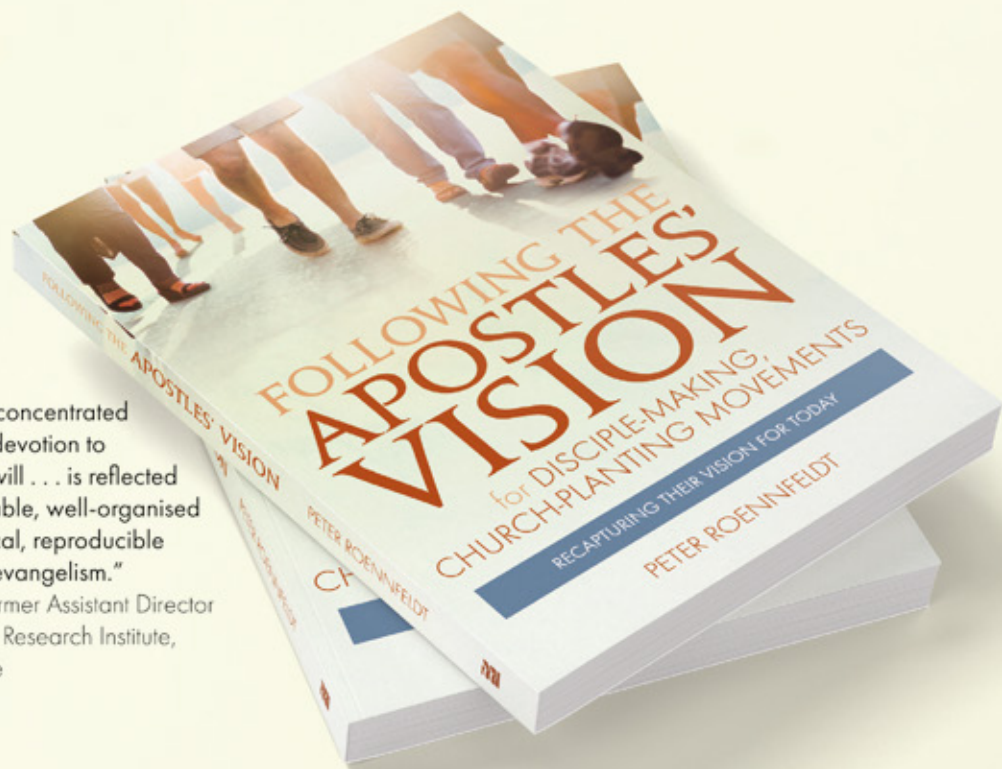
IS CHRISTMAS PAGAN?

DEBUNKING SOME COMMON
CHRISTMAS CONFUSION 16

NEWS

ADRA SAMOA RESPONDS TO
DEADLY MEASLES OUTBREAK 5

ADVENTIST RECORD | DECEMBER 21, 2019
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“Peter Roennfeldt’s concentrated study and singular devotion to discovering God’s will . . . is reflected in this quite remarkable, well-organised analysis and practical, reproducible strategy of Pauline evangelism.”
—Rex D Edwards, former Assistant Director of Research, Biblical Research Institute, General Conference

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—PAUL (ROMANS 15:23)

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HOLIDAYS AND SACRIFICE

The Christmas holidays are very important for me and my family. We do not live near each other so face-to-face contact during the year is limited. But we make up for this during the Christmas holidays.

The only time I have not spent Christmas with extended family was as a boy, as part of a missionary family, in Papua New Guinea. In those days the overseas missionaries only received a trip to their home country once every three years. This was one of the small sacrifices we made as a family to see Jesus' messages spread among the people of Papua New Guinea.

This year I walked the Kokoda Track in PNG with an ADRA group raising funds for The 10,000 Toes Campaign to stop Type 2 diabetes in the South Pacific. Most people know the Kokoda as an iconic walk made famous by the Australian soldiers who eventually defeated the Japanese along this track in the latter part of 1942. However, the first foreigner to walk the track was Fijian Seventh-day Adventist missionary, Peni Tavodi.

When Seventh-day Adventists came to PNG in 1908, the country's governing body had already assigned land areas and people groups to the other churches—no territory was available to Seventh-day Adventists. After further insistence, Seventh-day Adventists were given the Koiari people, based on the Sogeri plain and living in the mountains behind.

What is now known as the Kokoda Track was the Koiari highway through the jungle. At the time these people were cannibals, they practiced sorcery and were very hostile to others. As I climbed the steep mountains over roots and rocks, slid down the muddy drops and crossed the treacherous fast mountain rivers I thought of Tavodi and the Australian missionaries with him, such as Septimus Carr (and his wife) and G F Jones (and wife).

As a small group, these missionaries conquered the treacherous terrain and entered hostile villages with Jesus' message of peace. They worked in healing—prayer, health teaching and basic medicines to eradicate disease—and teaching the children to count and

read and understand the loving Creator God. It took eight years before anyone accepted the message of Jesus.

I think of their sacrifice and courage and the many Christmases they spent away from family and friends, for the sake of Jesus and His good news.

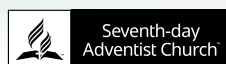
However, even these sacrifices pale into insignificance compared to the sacrifice of the One who inspired them—Jesus. The biblical Christmas story reveals that Jesus was God in every way—eternal, all powerful, all knowing, ever present, just, but most of all, loving.

Humans on earth had rebelled and needed someone to overcome the tragic disease of sin that led to eternal death. Someone needed to live above sin and conquer death. So Jesus came, just as everybody else comes into the world, as a baby—but a baby who would save the world from sin and death. He gave up all of heaven and the close association with the Godhead to be one of us. He was born like us, but as our Saviour—that is why Jesus brings "joy to the world".

Luke 2:10,11 (ESV) records, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

I spent those Christmases in PNG with my dad, mum, brother and sister, in visiting areas of the country where we had not been before and where God had brought new people groups to Jesus. And I climbed the Kokoda Track this year with my son and daughter-in-law. I have never been abandoned by my family, nor been lonely at Christmas, but, best of all, I have a hope and a future beyond sin and death because Jesus became a human and conquered these issues on my behalf. I thank God for the Christ of Christmas who enables us to be adopted back into God's family forever.

GLENN TOWNEND
SPD PRESIDENT
@SPDpresident



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ADVENTIST FIRE

"Orange is a fresh, youthful and creative colour," according to graphic design specialists Canva.

"It has the warmth of red and the optimism of yellow, and it communicates activity and energy and encourages socialisation. Orange looks and feels fresh and healthy and can even stimulate appetite. And because it is very easy to see, it is used to catch attention and signal safety."

Orange is the colour of one of my favourite animals—the tiger. It's a colour that fills me with joy when I see a beautiful sunset or trees in autumn. And now orange—specifically a shade of orange known as "Adventist Fire"—has become a significant part of my job. You see, one of my tasks is to roll out the South Pacific Division's identity project, which includes the distinctive orange signs that many of you would have seen outside our local churches and conferences. The signs are helping to catch people's attention and raise awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

While we previously had a myriad of logos, colours and designs, we now have consistent branding. The aim is to present a strong and clear identity so that the Church can be more easily recognised by members of the public.

We are excited at the many ways the new branding is being embraced around the South Pacific. Along with the signage, it is being used on stationery, websites, social media, t-shirts, banners and flags (see identity.adventistchurch.com for resources).

To me it seems fitting that our colour is "Adventist Fire". It reflects our calling to be disciples for Jesus, to be "on fire" for Him. As we head into the new year, let it be our burning desire to grow our identity in Christ as we look forward to His soon return.

TRACEY BRDICUTT
SPD COMMUNICATION
DIRECTOR



SOLOMONS SCHOOL NEEDS WATER

BRETT PARTRIDGE/JARROD STACKELROTH

Jones Adventist Academy (Solomon Islands) is facing a severe water shortage after loggers destroyed a dam on a neighbouring property.

Brett and Christine Partridge, members of Kellyville Adventist Church (Sydney, NSW), discovered this dire need while visiting the isolated Adventist secondary school with Hills Adventist College students in October.

The school, located on the north end of Vella Lavella Island, relied on the dam to supply all the school's drinking and washing water for 450 young people. After the first dam was destroyed, teachers built a makeshift dam, but recent heavy rains created a landslide that destroyed the new dam.

"We have taken first action to install a diesel pump to pump grey water from a spring for all ablutions and washing," said Mr Partridge. "Because there is plenty of rain we need to install tanks ASAP. We are unable to transport

materials to the Solomons until after Christmas so the best solution is to raise funds to purchase tanks and guttering from Gizo or Honiara."

They are hoping to provide 20 3000L tanks, and guttering. The tanks cost \$A750 each and the guttering will be around \$A5000.

Although there is no budget available, ADRA has opened an account to help with this project.

"If you can provide an early Christmas present to a school with a great basic need it will mean so much," said Mr Partridge, who is supporting the school through the Solomons Education fund.

ADRA will provide tax-deductible receipts. To support the project, contact Kylie Humble at ADRA Australia.



JONES ADVENTIST ACADEMY IN SOLOMON ISLANDS.

SAN EQUAL FIRST FOR CANCER CARE

LEISA O'CONNOR

Cancer services at Sydney Adventist Hospital have been rated significantly above the NSW average across eight key performance measures, a result equalled only by Campbelltown Hospital in south-western Sydney.

More than 11,000 cancer patients receiving services at over 44 facilities across NSW were surveyed for the Bureau of Health Information and the Cancer Institute of NSW Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2018. Patients rated their experience of access to

service, care planning and coordination, complications, follow-up and support. Hospital CEO Brett Goods said the results confirmed the remarkable care provided by the San Integrated Cancer Centre team.



THE POON DAY INFUSION CENTRE AT THE SAN.

ADRA SAMOA RESPONDS TO DEADLY MEASLES OUTBREAK

TRACEY BRIDCUTT

ADRA Samoa staff are working tirelessly in response to the deadly measles outbreak in the country.

More than 60 people have died as a result of the outbreak—most of them children. In response to the crisis, the Samoan government declared a state of emergency and launched a compulsory mass vaccination campaign. The government also closed all schools and banned children from public gatherings.

ADRA South Pacific director Greg Young said ADRA Samoa, with its extensive experience in emergency responses, has been providing support to the medical teams and the many thousands attending vaccination centres by providing food at the centres.

Instead of heading to church on Sabbath, November 23, ADRA Samoa staff delivered packed lunches to medical staff at the Tupua Tamasese Meaole (TTM) Hospital in Apia. They were also asked to extend the meals assistance to the hospitals at Leulu-

moega and Faleolo, all possible with funding from ADRA Australia, ADRA New Zealand, ADRA International and the New Zealand High Commission.

“We are blessed to serve, especially when we enter the wards and see the suffering,” said ADRA Samoa director Su’a Julia Wallwork. “The nurses and doctors are doing their very best and putting in long hours. We are only playing a minor role in comparison.”

In light of the closure of local schools, Samoa Adventist College cancelled all end-of-year functions except for the school’s prize-giving ceremony, which has been postponed until January 16.

Measles outbreaks have also recently been reported in Fiji and Tonga.

“Please keep the people of Samoa, Tonga and Fiji affected by this outbreak in your prayers,” Mr Young said.



ADRA SAMOA STAFF DELIVERING PACKED LUNCHES TO MEDICAL STAFF AT THE TUPUA TAMASESE MEAOLE HOSPITAL.

WOMEN’S MINISTRY PIONEER HONOURED FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

TRACEY BRIDCUTT

A pioneer of women’s ministries in the South Pacific Division has received a special honour.

Dr Carole Ferch-Johnson was awarded the Woman of the Year for Outstanding Achievement by the US-based Association of Adventist Women. She was presented with the award at a special ceremony in Loma Linda, California, on November 16.

“I feel honoured for having been selected to receive this award,” Dr Ferch-Johnson said. “There is, in my nomination, a validation for the work I have done, especially for its more challenging aspects.”

Dr Ferch-Johnson was the first director of the Women’s Ministries department for the South Pacific Division (SPD) in 1995 and has played a significant role in mentoring young women in ministry. She is a former lecturer at

Avondale University College, where she set up the first counselling service on the campus. She also served as a chaplain and pastoral counsellor at Sydney Adventist Hospital for 10 years.

Despite retiring at the end of 2000, Dr Ferch-Johnson has continued to support young women in ministry. Six years ago she was appointed by the Australian Union Conference to the Ministerial Association with a special focus on nurturing female pastors. This then grew to include other unions in the Division.

“I have been thrilled to see ordinary women grow in confidence and es-



DR CAROLE FERCH-JOHNSON (FAR RIGHT) WITH OTHER AWARDEES.

tablish belief in themselves to achieve their goals,” said Dr Ferch-Johnson, who now lives on the NSW Central Coast. “After a rough beginning, it gives me a great sense of hope to see the Church more fully accept the ministry of our female pastors and to see them do an incredibly good job in ministry.”

HIGH COURT RULING HANDS VATUVONU ADVENTIST HIGH SCHOOL BACK TO THE CHURCH

TRACEY BRIDCUTT

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fiji is giving praise to God following a decision by the High Court of Fiji that returns management and control of Vatuvonu Adventist High School to the Church.

High Court Judge A L B Brito-Mutunayagam handed down his judgement on November 22 in the civil proceedings initiated by the Fiji government's Ministry of Education against Vatuvonu Adventist High School and five trustees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fiji.

The judge declined the Ministry of Education's application to take over management and control of the school, thereby handing the school back to the Church. Further, the judgement held that the Ministry of Education must appoint a principal that is "acceptable to the Church". The

government currently appoints all teachers and administrators for schools in Fiji.

Fiji Mission general secretary Pastor Joe Talemaitoga welcomed the judgement.

"It's a good victory," he said. "We praise God for the court's decision and declaration."

The Mission Executive Committee will now consider the next steps for Vatuvonu, which has closed for the holidays. Classes resume on January 13, 2020.

He thanked the many people who had supported and prayed for Vatuvonu (on Vanua Levu, Fiji's second largest island) since the government commenced legal proceedings against the school and the Church on April 15. The orders blocked the Church's ability to run the school, including having any



VATUVONU ADVENTIST HIGH SCHOOL.

say on the appointment of staff.

Meanwhile, Pastor Talemaitoga is also giving thanks to God after Fiji National University (FNU) approved three Adventist final-year medicine students—Etuete Logaivau, Matelita Waqatabu and Brandon Talota—the right to sit their final exam after sunset on Sabbath, November 23.

Fiji Mission worked with FNU to provide logistics support, including the provision of meals and transport for supervising university staff.

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identity.revival.mission.

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AVONDALE GOES GREEN AND LEAN

BRENTON STACEY/GABRIELLE NAPPI

Initiatives to improve electricity consumption and waste management—some of which students suggested—are saving Avondale money on energy bills and reducing its environmental impact by decreasing total food waste and increasing recycling.

"I'm chuffed," said the university college's vice-president (finance) Kelvin Peuser. "It's great to see an outcome that's good for the environment and for our bottom line."

The New South Wales Government's Energy Savings Scheme provided a financial incentive to upgrade lighting in selected buildings such as the Chan Shun Auditorium and the residence halls on the Lake Macquarie campus. The upgrade is a switch from inefficient fluo-

rescent fixtures to energy efficient LEDs.

The first three of a four-stage process to upgrade the air conditioning in the library is complete, resulting in a more efficient system that cools the air more consistently. Timers now control other air conditioners on campus.

The installation of 840 solar panels on the roofs of the library, the cafeteria and the Ellen G White Memorial Building is generating the electricity Avondale uses during the day. And a renegotiation of Avondale's contract has reduced electricity rates by an estimated 12 per cent (from \$A315,000 to \$275,000) this year.

Students enrolled in the Environmental Issues unit this past year are partly to thank for the replacement of single 240-litre general waste bins with dual 240-litre general waste and commingled recycling bins on campus. The bins are housed in new metal-framed shelters, for which the students suggested locations.

Mr Peuser welcomes recommendations from staff and students about how to reduce the environmental impact. "Joint ownership of the issue is important," he said.



ZOEY-ELISE WATSON (LEFT) AND HER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES LECTURER DR JASON MORTON (RIGHT) WITH THE NEW BINS.

FULTON GRADUATES DESTINED FOR EXCELLENCE

TRACEY BRIDCUTT

"Destined for Excellence" was the theme of this year's Fulton College graduation, held on November 24 at the Nadi, Fiji, campus.

Celebrations ensued as 139 students graduated, including the first 16 graduates of the new National Certificate in the Teaching of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET—Level 4) course. The Fiji government requested Fulton College offer this course, aimed at strengthening TVET teaching in Fiji.

Three special awards were presented: Kalesi Kalele (Fiji) received the award for most outstanding student in Education; Lui Yaraeki (Vanuatu) was named the most outstanding student overall in Theology; and Herehia Hanere (Tahiti)

received the Paul Cavanagh Award for most outstanding academic achievement in Theology.

The graduation was an opportunity to farewell Fulton principal Dr Glynn Galo, who is retiring at the end of the year, and to introduce his successor, Dr Malcolm Coulson, currently the principal at Hills Adventist College in Sydney.



DR GLYNN GALO (LEFT) WITH DR MALCOLM COULSON.

NEWS GRABS



ALBANIA HIT BY EARTHQUAKE

At least 26 people have died after a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Albania on November 26. More than 650 people were injured. President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albania, Leo Espana, has called for prayers. Church members are reported to be safe, however there has been extensive damage to buildings and houses, especially in the city of Durres.—*Adventist Review*



WOMEN UPLIFTED IN MINISTRY

The Trans European Division recently held a "Women in Ministry" retreat for female pastors, Bible workers and administrators in the region. The weekend (November 15-18) was intended to create "breathing space" to rejuvenate, authentically share struggles and support other women in ministerial roles across the Division.—*TED News*



BOOKS ON BEACHES

Between June and August, literature evangelists sold more than 11,000 books to people visiting the Adriatic coast in Montenegro from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The success is due to Adventist publishers in Belgrade, Serbia, translating the books into Serbian, a widely spoken language.—*TED News*

HOT TOPICS



BAPTISED INTO COMMUNITY

A recent study published in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* has found that American teenagers who undergo the rite of baptism are not more or less religious than their non-baptised counterparts by their mid-twenties, but are 30 per cent more likely to remain affiliated with their religious faith community.—*Christianity Today*



CHOOSING PRO-CHOICE

The pro-life organisation “Save the Storks” has released the results of a new study, which found that more than 50 per cent of American Christians are now pro-choice. In contrast, only 25 per cent of American evangelicals said that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances, with only 42 per cent believing that life begins at conception.—*Relevant*



THE MENTAL HEALTH CLIMATE

Mission Australia’s Youth Survey Report 2019 has found that mental health is the greatest concern for Australia’s youth. Surveying more than 25,000 teenagers (15–19), mental health ranked highest (36.2 per cent), closely followed by the environment (34.2 per cent) and equity and discrimination (24.8 per cent). Environmental concerns have tripled since 2018.—*SBS*

NZPUC GRAPPLES WITH RETENTION AND NURTURE

JARROD STACKELROTH

Membership nurture and retention was a major focus at the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference (NZPUC) end-of-year executive meetings held in Auckland.

With five out of every 10 Adventists leaving the Church in the region (higher than the global average of four), this is an issue the NZPUC feels strongly about.

The figure came out of NZPUC secretary Graeme Drinkall’s report and included losses through deaths. “If you don’t replace people who die, the church dies,” said Mr Drinkall.

“Our retention rates are very concerning,” said NZPUC president Pastor Eddie Tupa’i. “As we try to understand this, we are actively encouraging our missions and conferences to model and create healthy, safe environments for church and community.”

This concern was addressed in the conference and mission reports from North New Zealand (NNZC), South New Zealand (SNZC), Cook Islands Mission (CIM), New Caledonia Mission (NCM) and French Polynesia Mission (FPM), as the respective presidents shared examples and strategies on how their region was combatting the issue.

NCM president Pastor Felix Wadrobert reported how the Noumea church is being set up as a model church within their small mission. He described some of the challenges, and how there needed to be reconciliation and healing within church communities before new initiatives could flourish.

SNZC has addressed the challenge by starting a church plant for university students in the city of Dunedin. Many students disengage from church as they move away from where they have grown up, so SNZC president Pastor Mike Sikuri shared how this and other initiatives were tailored to stem the flow. One

successful initiative that is also very simple is Pray for Five, which has seen engagement from local church members as a simple commitment to pray for and encourage five people in their sphere of influence.

Church administrators admit that while the problem is large, they are committed to addressing it head on.

“In a way, high member losses are not the problem, they are a symptom,” said Pastor Victor Kulakov, NZPUC discipleship ministries leader. “Instead of focusing on a bandage approach we are encouraging a holistic process of re-visioning.”

“If we’re going to make disciples and keep them in, the Word of God must be at the centre,” shared Pastor Jean-Noel Adeline, NZPUC’s ministerial secretary for the French territories, in response to the report. “We need to make disciples not converts.” Pastor Adeline requested the report be shared more widely than the executive committee so that all church ministers are aware of the issues and able to begin addressing them in their areas of influence.

NNZC president Pastor Ben Timothy agreed. While not all churches in his Conference are on board, there are still good things happening. Some of the strategies Pastor Timothy talked about being implemented are investment in children’s ministry, monitoring and following up absentee members, showing youth are valued despite imperfections by providing a safe context and giving them responsibility in evangelism.



PASTOR BEN TIMOTHY (LEFT) PRESENTS THE NNZC REPORT.

FLASHPOINT



AVONDALE CHRISTMAS

Avondale School and Watagan Park (NSW) hosted their Community Christmas Carols on December 1. More than 4000 people attended to hear performances by 2016 *X-Factor* winner Isaiah Firebrace, ABC Kids artist Nay Nay, local pop group JANEY and former Avondale students now pursuing performing arts. A community band made up of Avondale School staff and friends led out in carols singing and the event was livestreamed to Facebook, which attracted a further 2000 viewers. Avondale School, alongside Adventist Community Services and Gateway Adventist Church, donated \$A2000 to the Rural Fire Service to go along with a further \$1500 that was collected on the night. —*Avondale School*



GC VISITS SOLOMONS

General Conference general vice president Dr Guillermo Biaggi and associate treasurer Pastor Brent Burdick visited Solomon Islands following their attendance at the South Pacific Division year-end meetings in Sydney (NSW). Arriving on November 15, the pair visited the Solomon Islands Mission office and were greeted by the Honiara church family at Maranatha Hall (Burns Creek). Both men preached to a congregation of more than 5000 people on Sabbath morning and again at an AY meeting on Sabbath afternoon, where 1000 youth pledged their lives to Christ. The guests were also given a tour of the Hope FM radio studios and temporary Hope Channel television studio. —*Silent Tovosia*



WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Seventy people attended a "Country Bonanza" 60s-plus weekend at Tui Ridge Park (North NZ) from November 22-25. Guest speaker Pastor Justin Strauss from Palmerston North Adventist church spoke on John 15:1-11. On Sunday, a mystery trip was arranged, surprising attendees with a "railcruising" experience. The seniors enjoyed riding in self-driven railcars along a 10km track through the Dansey Scenic Reserve. The outing included lunch served on a paddle steamer that runs on the nearby lake. The weekend finished with a Western Country Bonanza banquet complete with a chuckwagon, campfire and cowboy hats. —*Kirsten Oster Lundqvist*



BEACON ON THE HILL

Hillview church (NSW) has installed a new high-tech sign that shines like a "beacon on the hill" in the Morisset area. The six-metre digital sign displays the church's name and the programs running there. The double-sided sign lights up brightly at night. It was constructed by local church members Theo Van Bezouwen, Glynn Rigby and Graeme Taplin. Church signage is part of the South Pacific Division's identity project (resources available at identity.adventistchurch.com). —*Mary Fedorow*



SING NOEL RAISES \$A5300

Wahroonga church (NSW) hosted "Sing Noel", an evening of orchestral carol performances on November 23. Directed by Benjamin Milis and hosted by music director for Channel 7's *Carols in the Domain*, Graeme Press, the event raised \$A5300 for "Eyes for India", a charity that restores sight to the blind. Attendees enjoyed performances by Opera Australia tenor Murray Mayday, and vocalists Jana Lombart, Emily Thomas, Sandra Entermann and David Fuentes. —*Record Staff*



YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD WINNER

Lorraine Ngwenya from Spotswood Adventist Church (Vic) won the Saward Dawson Community Service Award at the Victorian Young Achiever Awards 2019. Lorraine is the founder of "Useful Link", an organisation that addresses youth unemployment and encourages personal development and leadership. She has worked with more than 2000 young people over the past two and-a-half years. —*IntraVic*



FOUR ORDAINED AND NINE BAPTISED

Hundreds of pastors and church members recently attended district camp meetings hosted by Morobe Mission (PNG). Four ministers were ordained by PNGUM ministerial secretary Pastor Cameron Wari during the meetings. The new pastors then baptised nine people. At the meetings, deputy governor of Morobe, Koni Iguan, also pledged K21,000 to support PNG's "Year of Evangelism" in 2020. —*Enock Kitum*



REVIVAL FOR YOUNG ADULTS

More than 60 young adults gathered for "Revive" in the Newcastle (NSW) region to be inspired by God and pray for revival. Held by NNSW Young Adults, the event featured three TED-style talks presented by Morgan Vincent, Camila Skaf and Rome Ulija on faithfulness and spiritual revival. Praise and worship, special items and personal testimonies led the young adults to seek a closer and deeper relationship with God. —*NNSW News*

BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT



The timeless battle. The age-old struggle. And before you think I'm talking about the war in heaven, I'm not. This is something else that knowingly and unknowingly guides our lives and our decision-making; something that can have us split fairly down the middle.

Let me introduce you to our contestants:

In the corner to our left, ladies and gentlemen, we have The Head! To the right is his fierce opponent, and tonight's heavyweight champion, The Heart!

Isn't that how it's always been? Our hearts vs our heads? Fact vs feeling? It's a choice we're daily asked to make.

Choosing to follow Jesus is much the same in many ways. I'm just going to say it: being a Christian who believes in an all-powerful, invisible God doesn't honestly make much sense. There. I've gotten it off my chest.

I choose to follow God because, as a teen, I was convicted in my heart of His presence, power and love in my life. But all around me in high school during my philosophy class I was bombarded with opinions from my peers that what I quietly believed wasn't rational, logical or true. It didn't make "logical" sense to my peers that I believed in a bearded guy in the clouds, I didn't work on Saturday and *gasp*, I didn't eat bacon!

I had no witty responses or memorised facts and stats in my back pocket—I'm no scholar! So I sat tight, trying to make peace with myself, though I couldn't prove anything. That's where the whole faith and belief aspect comes in. Right?

I know I'm not the only one to have felt this small crisis of faith when asked for hard facts to "prove" God, and where I would give anything for something "tangible". In fact this is no new struggle; Christians have been struggling with this very same thing for nearly 2000 years.

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 wrote encouragement to a church in Corinth who were questioning and asking for proof that Jesus had indeed resurrected from the dead. They were seeking real evidence besides blind belief. God never wants us to do anything without first using our brains to reason and think. He is the Creator of intellect, reason and logic, and He cares about our human search and need for proof that He actually exists.

Paul immediately points those questioning to real life witnesses who saw and talked with Jesus after He had been

raised to life. These first-hand witnesses were open to being questioned and cross-examined. Eventually Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would go on to write accounts corroborating the story of Jesus. However, for those in Corinth—and for us sometimes in 2019—perhaps Jesus' best mates were in on the secret to hoodwink everyone with an elaborate made-up story! Or at the very least you may wonder if they are simply too biased to be reliable.

Is there enough evidence to believe and justifiably prove a risen Christ? Renowned American scholar Dr Darrell Bock points us straight to the 5800+ different independent Greek historical writings and 8000+ existing Latin manuscripts all confirming the story of the New Testament. That's cool, but so what? Is that enough evidence to base a whole faith on?

Well, famous thinker Plato can lay claim to just seven historical manuscripts. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle boasts only five manuscripts. The history and account of Julius Caesar, who needs no introduction, comes down to a total of just 10 reliable manuscripts.

But the New Testament alone boasts more than 14,000 historical manuscripts!

Jesus was alive. Jesus *is* alive. What He did then, and what He is doing now is supported by more writings than any other person from antiquity. Jesus is the real deal. God has empowered, encouraged and provided us with historical evidence of Jesus' work and life; evidence that is accepted and supported by Christian and non-Christian scholars and historians alike.

The verdict is in and it's unanimous: the head and heart can finally be unified. This is the point where faith and fact can shake hands. This is the moment when our head and our heart can put down their boxing gloves and hug it out in the ring, raising their hands in "unified" victory.

Be sure to subscribe to Waymaker.TV and watch this month's What Do You Think episode entitled "Unanimous", a short video presentation where you will hear some of the best scholars offer their thoughts and research on the evidence that Jesus Christ did in fact rise from the dead.

NATALIA MELVILLE

FREELANCE ARTIST AND WRITER WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN FILM AND TV PRODUCTION.



YOUNG ADULTS COLLABORATE IN NATION'S CAPITAL

For Adventist youth and young adults in Australia's capital, having a unified vision has transformed and expanded their ministry, and taught them many lessons along the way.

"Nativ Co" is a collaboration between Canberra National Seventh-day Adventist Church (CN) and South Canberra Seventh-day Adventist Church (SC). Initially envisioned by CN youth leaders, husband-and-wife duo Michael and Madison Nolan, seven other youth and young adults from CN and SC united to establish the ministry.

"We joined forces. CN was already running a café every Friday night and SC was coming along, so it felt natural," explained Mr Nolan.

The ministries run by Nativ Co have been intentionally designed to reflect its name.

"'Nativ' means belonging for us," said Mr Nolan. "In God's eyes we all belong here, and we all belong to Him. So this is a group where we want people to feel at home."

Drawing all of the existing ministries run by CN and SC churches under one brand empowered and motivated the leadership team.

Rebranding their Friday night café to "Nativ Café", the team also runs a Nativ Fitness group, socials, community service, a Nativ Creativ program and an annual week-long program

entitled "Sundown Sessions".

"Sundown Sessions"—a culmination of street food, live music, keynote presentations, hot drinks and lawn games—drew around 100-150 people every night to the Mallee Pavillion at the Exhibition Park in Canberra in early October.

"We were able to hire the pavilion [because] there was real buy-in and commitment from the leaders," Mr Nolan said. "We were granted money from the local church via tithe reversion where 10 per cent of tithe from the previous year can be used for evangelism."

More than 40 volunteers from the church community helped out to make the event a success. There were 15 different teams, from welcoming to photography, videography, café staff, stage design, programming, music and entertainment, follow-up and advertising.

"If you're not using the church, you're missing out on a huge bucket of people with a shared vision," said Mr Nolan. "Most of the community that came [to Sundown Sessions] didn't do so because of the radio ad or Facebook event. Ninety per cent came because one of our church members invited them personally. We had one guy come along—my [wife] Madi's best friend's brother—because he was intentionally invited. He was really into fitness and he's now a leader of Nativ

Fitness." For Mr Nolan and the leadership team, the reality of burn-out also impacted their ministry. Moving forward, they've learned that, rather than spreading the team thinly and trying to juggle many different ministries, it's better to reduce the number of ministries and really do them well.

"Overall, we are really stoked at what we've achieved. But although we put a calendar together and tried to space out [six different ministries], it was too much at once. We've stuck with the fitness program, the café and Sundown Sessions, but the others didn't pan out like we wanted."

Heading into 2020, the Nativ Co team are excited for what the future holds for this ministry, and are challenging other churches to collaborate and carve out their own visions, too.

"We'd love to see this happen in more places than Canberra. If Canberra can do it with only two Adventist churches in it, just imagine what could happen if churches in a place like Sydney or elsewhere combined for the purpose of outreach," Mr Nolan encouraged. "You'd have so many resources, huge things could happen!"

To see what Nativ Co is doing, visit their Facebook page.

MARYELLEN FAIRFAX
ASSISTANT EDITOR, ADVENTIST RECORD.



typos

Worst biblical ~~types~~ of all time

1. “THOU SHALT COMMIT ADULTERY . . .” (EXODUS 20:14)

The 1631 edition of the King James Bible, dubbed “The Wicked Bible”, accidentally misprinted “shall” instead of “shalt not”. The printers were severely fined, and most editions were recalled and destroyed.

2. “THEN JUDAS SAID TO THE TWELVE . . .” (JOHN 6:67)

The 1610 Geneva Bible mixed up Judas and Jesus. Instead of Jesus speaking to the disciples, Judas is identified as the speaker. The 1613 King James Bible made the same error in Matthew 26:36, featuring a pasted-in slip correcting the “Judas” to “Jesus”.

3. “CHRIST CONDEMMETH THE POOR WIDOW . . .” (LUKE 21)

Although the parable should have painted Jesus positively with the word “commendeth”, the 1562 version of the Geneva Bible makes Jesus look a little bit mean.

4. “AND REBEKAH AROSE, AND HER CAMELS . . .” (GENESIS 24:11)

In the 1820 KJV Bible, “camels” replaced “damsels” so that it read, “And Rebekah arose, and her camels, and they rode upon the camels . . .”. What a balancing act!

5. “LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE KILLED . . .” (MARK 7:27)

A KJV Bible issued in London in 1795 said children had to be “killed”, rather than “filled”. The latter is definitely more in line with Jesus’ character, we think.

6. “SIN ON MORE . . .” (JEREMIAH 31:34)

The 1716 edition of the King James Bible encouraged readers to keep on sinning rather than urging them to “sin no more”.

7. “IN SUBJECTION TO THEIR OWL HUSBANDS . . .” (1 PETER 3:5)

A broken version of the typeface in the 1944 edition of the King James Bible made the word *own* appear as *owl*. Well, at least they would have been wise husbands?

8. “IF THE LATTER HUSBAND ATE HER . . .” (DEUTERONOMY 24:3)

The 1682 edition of the KJV forgot to add the h to “hate”, making the latter husband look like quite the cannibal indeed.

9. “PAY FOR PEACE . . .” (PSALM 122:6)

The first edition of The Jerusalem Bible contained the phrase “pay for peace” rather than “pray for peace”. Perhaps that’s why indulgences were so popular in the Middle Ages?

10. “THE PARABLE OF THE VINEGAR . . .” (LUKE 20)

Published in 1717 by Clarendon Press, the “Vinegar Bible” is filled with multiple errors, one of which is the “parable of the vinegar”, instead of the “parable of the vineyards”—hence its name. Or perhaps the wine just went off? One copy of this Bible version sold for \$US5000 in 2008, but is estimated to be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars today.



A CHANGED LIFE ON LIFOU

Jean-Marie Hnamano is from the island of Lifou, New Caledonia. He is 42 and was born a Catholic. The island of Lifou has a very strong religious culture: 40 per cent of the population are Catholic and 60 per cent are Protestant.

Jean-Marie became a drunk in his teens. He was in a football team of youths who used to party all the time. He eventually became a drug addict who sold and consumed marijuana with his friends and enjoyed worldly pleasures. He didn't really sleep well at night, suffering lots of nightmares. At one point he started to doubt the existence of God.

In January 2018, my wife and I decided to settle on Lifou island with another church member, Victorine, and we started a group. It was very challenging as we were the first Adventists on the island. We had a mini evangelistic campaign with my brother, Pastor Jean-Noel Adeline, who shared the good news for a whole week.

Jean-Marie was invited to attend the meetings by his cousin Marie-Helen. He was touched by the message and never missed any meetings. After the evangelistic meetings he accepted all the truth he discovered in the Bible, including the seventh-day Sabbath. He has not missed a Sabbath since.

We did deep Bible study and I was blessed to see Jean-Marie accepting the truth. More than that he obeys God's commandments.

Almost at the end of the series of Bible studies, a miracle occurred. Jean-Marie told me that he didn't



want to wait any longer—he had a burning desire in his heart to give his whole life to Jesus through baptism.

He was the first one to ask for baptism in the new territory. We were so happy about his decision and determination to follow Jesus. God was with him all along and transforming him daily. He stopped the alcohol, drugs and other worldly things and is growing to become a true disciple.

He has influenced his friend Theodore who also attended the Bible studies and asked for baptism.

They both were baptised on June 29, the first two baptisms—two pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Lifou island.

Here on this island people are afraid to leave their religion because if they do, they will be rejected by their community and even their families.

Today Jean-Marie and his friend Theodore are true disciples and deacons in our group of 15. They are free from their weaknesses and are growing every day with Jesus.

I invite everyone who reads this testimony to please think of them in your prayers and the island of Lifou.

DANICK ADELINE
PASTOR ON LIFOU ISLAND, NEW CALEDONIA.

DIGGING IN HIS WORD

WITH GARY WEBSTER

THE REMNANT AND 144,000

As there was a faithful remnant who worshipped God in Elijah's time, so there is a faithful remnant in the end-time crisis over worship. But what are the core characteristics of the end-time remnant?

Read Romans 11:2-5; Revelation 12:17.

Satan makes war against the end-time remnant of the woman's seed through the activities of a beast from the sea and another from the land. Sadly, almost everyone worships the beast—and therefore Satan—except the end-time faithful remnant, whom John calls the 144,000 Israelites.

Read Revelation 12:17; 13:3,4,8; 14:1-5; 7:1-4.

The 144,000 Israelites (code for remnant) are inscribed with God's seal or name, which means they are like Him. When God proclaimed His name to Moses, He described His character: merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving and just. The end-time remnant are the same—the most loving people on Earth.

Read Revelation 7:1-4; 14:1; Exodus 34:6,7

The remnant are virgins who follow Jesus everywhere, which means they are in love with Him and therefore faithful to Him. The reason is obvious: Jesus, the Lamb, has redeemed and cleansed them with His blood. What about us? Are we loving to all, like God? Is Jesus number one in our life? Is our love seen in faithful obedience to Him and His prophets? Do we live under the grace that flows from Calvary?



HITTITE SEAL OF KING TARKNAWA. LIKE GOD'S END-TIME SEAL, ANCIENT SEALS CONTAINED THE NAME OF THE KING.



discipleship and family life

As newlyweds, my husband Darius and I met with Pastor Adrian Craig, the president of the conference where my husband was about to begin his first ministerial job. After the initial pleasantries and congratulations, Pastor Craig asked us, “Did you know that God created marriage for the purpose of character growth?”

As a 23 year-old woman, I’d never thought of marriage in those terms—but I soon discovered that he was right.

In the first few years of our marriage, each time Darius and I encountered conflict, my default response was to blame him for what-

ever was going wrong. But, over the next few years, I came to understand that the ugliness that bubbled up out of me each time we bumped up against each other was not because of what he had done or said, but because of what was inside of me.

As I slowly learned to take responsibility for my flaws, my character was formed in new ways. I gradually learned to manage my anger more appropriately, to be less perfectionistic and judgemental, to be more empathetic and to cut my husband some slack when he didn’t do things the way I did. I came to see that marriage was indeed an opportunity for character refinement and, as I slowly

made progress, married life gradually became a lot less bumpy.

But then our children were born. Those character flaws that I thought were gone seemed to return with a vengeance. More than that, I learned I had more flaws than I’d realized! As my children grew from infancy to toddlerhood, I came to see how lacking in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control I really was.

I would have despaired, except that it was at this time that I joined a small group. We’d just moved to a new town, and, in my effort to connect, I reached out to a church in my neighborhood and asked if there

was a women's group I could join. They informed me that, indeed, there was a group within walking distance of my new home. So, on Wednesday mornings, I would bundle my babies into a double stroller and walk the short distance to meet with a group of women from all walks of life and several different denominations.

I remember my first meeting—as the only Adventist in the group, I thought I needed to put my best foot forward, to be a witness to my Adventist faith. However, I soon discovered that the women in this group did not wear masks. Instead, marital woes, parenting woes, in-law and other inter-personal woes were all shared in very raw and very real ways, and then bathed in prayer.

As I attended this group for the next two years, I witnessed Christians carrying each other's burdens and gently restoring those who confessed their weaknesses (Galatians 6:1,2). Although I did not learn to be quite as vulnerable as others in the group, I did learn that I could share some of my flaws and challenges and still be loved; that when I shared a personal or family-life burden and asked for prayer, the burden seemed to lighten; and that my need for character growth was less discouraging in the context of this authentic Christian community.

In retrospect, I now see that my experiences, both in my family and in the many faith-based small groups I've been a part of since that time, have been experiences of discipleship.

Some people I've met consider discipleship to be "just the latest buzz word". Others have told me that the word "discipleship" is not in the Bible, and therefore unbiblical. And yet, as I read the New Testament, I am convinced that the concept of discipleship was central to the life and ministry of Jesus and the apostles. While there are many definitions of the term "discipleship", most of them a helpful depiction of this New Testament construct, the definition that most resonates with me is this one:

"Christian discipleship is the life-long process of learning to follow

Jesus and become more like Him, for the benefit of others."

Let me unpack this a little.

Discipleship is a process of learning. How do we know this? Because the word translated "disciple" in the New Testament is *mathetes*, which is derived from the Greek word "to learn". Thus, a Christian disciple is one who is learning to follow Jesus.

As we learn to follow Jesus, to "abide with" and "remain in" Him (John 15); and as we "gaze on [His] beauty" (Psalm 27:4), we recognise how unlike Him we are and how much we want to become more like Him. Over and over again, the New Testament underscores "formation" or "transformation" as the goal of the Christian life (Romans 6:6; 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17; Galatians 2:20; 4:19).

I love the way Ellen White described this: "To restore in man the image of His Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created . . . this is the object of education [or discipleship], the great object of life."¹

I also love that Ellen White describes this process of formation as a lifelong journey, one that "cannot be completed in this life, but that will be continued in the life to come".²

As we face the changing circumstances of life across the life span, we are given new opportunities to be formed in His image. As this statement reveals so profoundly:

"[Family life] can reveal just how much we need to become like Christ. About the time our children are raised, life surprises many of us with enlarged prostates, diabetes, aching backs and breast cancer. Our married children divorce and move back home. Resentment, disappointment, and many negative emotions that we believe were gone return with a rage. What becomes so powerfully true is that all events and circumstances form us into Christ. And that formation takes place throughout life."³

When I finally understood this truth, that discipleship is a life-long journey, "a long obedience in the same direction"⁴, I understood why the women

in my small group all those years ago wore no masks. And while I wanted to speed up my formation, they understood that it was "not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day, but of a lifetime".⁵ Consequently, they felt no shame about the shortcomings of their lives.

There's one last piece of my definition: Christian discipleship must be for the benefit of others. As I learn to love and follow Jesus, I also learn to love others (Matthew 22:37-39). This begins in my family: when I grow in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23), my family benefits; when I learn to manage my anger without sinning (Ephesians 4:26), my family benefits; when I learn to express my sexuality in God-honouring ways (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5), my family benefits; and so on. But it also extends to my relationships with those beyond my family, particularly with those who need to know and experience the love and grace of Jesus. As I learn to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and as I learn to be changed by Him, I also learn to participate in and be committed to His mission to the world (Matthew 4:19).

I still have a long way to go. I'm still too focused on my own needs and desires too much of the time. But I know the work that God has done in my life. And I know that God's work in my life and in the lives of others—my family and my faith community—is a life-long process. So I can live without pretence and without shame, and I can be patient with myself and with others, because I know His work in us is not finished yet.

1. Ellen White, *Education*, p 15,16.

2. *Ibid*, p 19.

3. Bill Hull, *The Kingdom Life*, (2010), Colorado Springs: NavPress, p 110,11.

4. Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*, (2000), Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

5. Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p 560,61.

DR EDYTA JANKIEWICZ
FAMILY MINISTRIES, DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
TEAM, SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION.



Is Christmas pagan?

Commonly referred to as, “The most wonderful time of the year”, Christmas sees an increase in generosity, families and friends gathering together, and Jesus celebrated. Yet some Christians have difficulty with this day.

In the mid-19th century, a Protestant minister, Alexander Hislop wrote a book called, *The Two Babylons*, in which he compared the Roman Catholic Church to ancient Babylon. In his zeal to prove such a connection, he jumped over a few facts on several occasions.¹

The idea of Christmas being pagan was one such leap. Protestant preachers since have perpetuated several myths that need to be examined.

DECEMBER 25

It is claimed that December 25 was a celebration of Nimrod or Mithra. This claim cannot be supported as ancient calendars do not perfectly align with our modern calendar and the Babylonian one certainly does not. This is because the months in most ancient calendars were determined by a lunar cycle which is, on average, 29.5 days. Twelve such cycles give 354 days in a year, which is around 11 days short of a solar cycle. Our modern calendar year is also short, but only by a few hours. We bring it in line with the solar cycle by adding an extra day every four years. In a similar way, some ancient calendars were adjusted periodically to line them up with the solar cycle. The Jewish calendar does this by adding an extra month every few years. Alignment with the solar cycle is necessary for the Jewish calendar as it is tied to agricultural events. Because there are different methods of bringing calendars in line with the solar cycle, a particular day on an ancient calendar would not be the same day in our calendar every year. If an ancient pagan festival like Mithra’s birthday happened to fall on December 25 one year, it will most certainly fall on a different day in our calendar the following year.

Some say that December 25 is connected with sun worship. The winter solstice—when the daylight is shortest in the Northern Hemisphere—falls on December 21 or 22 in our calendar. It is never on December 25. If one were to celebrate the daylight becoming longer, they would do so on December 22 or 23. Babylonians studied astronomical movements meticulously and predicted solstices. They did not need to wait several days till December 25 to figure out that the daylight was getting longer.

The pagan celebration of the Unconquerable Sun (*Sol Invictus*) on December 25 was instituted by Roman Emperor Aurelian in 274 AD. The Mithra connection to that day was first recorded in 336 AD by Philocalus, who added it to his Codex-Calendar in 354 AD. But the Christians commemoration of the birth of Jesus on December 25 was prior to all this. The earliest record discovered so far is from 202 AD.² This means that Christians were not influenced by pagan dates. Christians chose December 25 based on the Integral Year concept. According to Jewish tradition, a prophet’s lifespan is exact in number of years, meaning that a prophet dies on the anniversary of their conception. Christ was considered to have died on March 25, so it was thought that this was the day of His conception. Adding nine months from conception to birth results in a birth day of December 25. This Jewish tradition does not have biblical support, but it did provide the basis upon which early Christians used to celebrate Christ’s advent on December 25. The Christian celebration predates pagan celebrations on that day by at least 70 years.

“CHRISTMAS”

Some people get hung up on the term “Christmas”. This, of course, is only an issue for English speakers as other languages refer to the celebration in different ways with different meanings, such as “Birthday”, “Holy Night” or “God’s gift”. The name “Christmas” comes from the

Latin words for “Christ” and “sent”³. It reminds us of Jesus’ prayer to the Father, “As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them (the disciples) into the world” (John 17:18). “Christmas” is, therefore, a very fitting term because this is what is celebrated; Christ sent as a human on a mission to save us and His sending of us to spread it to the world.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT

The question arises: is there any biblical support to celebrate Christ becoming a human in His mission to save us at the end of December? There is certainly evidence to point that way. It is unlikely that He was born at the end of December, but it is likely that He was conceived then.

In Luke 1:5, Zechariah, John the Baptist’s father, is mentioned as a priest of the course of Abijah. Priests did not serve continually but took turns serving for one week, twice a year and also during the Pilgrimage Feasts. There were 24 divisions of priests and they rotated from noon on Sabbath until noon the following Sabbath (1 Chronicles 24:10). The course of Abijah was the eighth course with the first service occurring at the beginning of June. It is then that the angel Gabriel told him that when he returned home his wife Elizabeth would become pregnant (Luke 1:11–13).⁴ Zechariah returned to his own house and Elizabeth became pregnant shortly thereafter (v 23,24). That course would have completed duties around June 9. Depending on her cycle, Elizabeth would have conceived somewhere between June 10 and July 10. Elizabeth would have started her miraculous cycle at that time, which would have resulted in John being conceived around the end of June. Six months later, the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and Jesus was conceived (v 26,36). This means that Jesus was conceived around the end of December.

This is a special time of the year. It marked the dedication of the Temple and the miracle of light. In 167 BC the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem, desecrated the Temple, stopped the regular ceremonies, offered swine’s flesh on the altar and sprinkled swine’s blood in the Most Holy Place. Three years later, in 164 BC, Judas Maccabeus, having won a stunning victory over the much larger Seleucid army, came to Jerusalem and re-consecrated the Temple. This occurred during the winter solstice. The darkest day of the year witnessed the beginning of the miracle of the light. When they went to light the Temple menorah, only one bottle of the consecrated lamp oil was found. This oil, which normally lasted only a single day, continued to burn for eight days until more oil could be produced and consecrated. Hence, the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, which means “to dedicate”, also became known as the Festival of Lights.

As Mary was celebrating the rededication of the Temple, which had occurred 160 years earlier, her body was dedicated to the Lord and literally became the temple of God. Jesus, the Light of the world, was conceived. Towards the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus went to

the Temple during Hanukkah (John 8:12) and declared to everyone that He was the Christ—the Messiah, and the Light of the world (John 9:5)!

Celebrating the Advent of Jesus at this time of the year is both accurate and appropriate. It is the time when He was conceived and when the miracle of light occurred.

MANDATE

Since the Bible does not oblige us to celebrate Christ’s birth does that mean we cannot or should not celebrate it? The Bible does not tell us to celebrate Hanukkah and yet we have a record of Jesus going to the Temple then. He certainly did not shun a celebration on the grounds that it was not mandated by the Bible.

In our ever-increasing secular Western society, Christmas is that time of the year when non-believers are relatively open to hearing about the story of Jesus. This is why Christian author Ellen White insisted that Christmas “can serve a very good purpose”.⁵ And in her Christmas address she stated, “Although we do not know the exact day of Christ’s birth, we would honour the sacred event. May the Lord forbid that any one should be so narrow-minded as to overlook the event because there is an uncertainty in regard to the exact time.”⁶

As Christians we should use every opportunity to share the good news of Jesus in words and deeds. Ellen White put it best when she wrote, “God would be well pleased if on Christmas each church would have a Christmas tree on which shall be hung offerings, great and small, for these houses of worship.”⁷

It is good to see churches place food gifts for the poor under a Christmas tree. ADRA makes it easy to decorate trees at church and home with their Christmas gift ornaments. See adra.org.au/thrive for more details.

Jesus calls us to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). As we celebrate the first Advent of Jesus, let us keep it focused on Jesus by sharing His love with others, particularly the neglected. This is the best way to celebrate Jesus.

1. Hislop does not quote original sources, but carefully picked sympathetic secondary sources.
2. Hippolytus of Rome, *Commentary on Daniel*, Book 4, 23.3. Donatist Christians also celebrated on December 25 prior to AD 311.
3. “Missa” comes from the past participle of “mittere” (to send) in Latin. The word “Mass” also derives from “missa” where it is used to dismiss the congregation.
4. This did not occur during the second course of Abijah as it will not line up with the census at the time of the birth of Jesus. According to archaeologist Sir William Ramsay, Roman censuses were held in autumn, meaning Jesus was conceived in December.
5. *The Review & Herald*, December 9, 1884
6. *The Review & Herald*, December 17, 1889
7. *The Review & Herald*, December 11, 1879

EMANUEL MILLEN

PASTOR OF YARRA VALLEY AND ASSISTANT PASTOR OF WARBURTON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES, VICTORIA.

NỈ HẢO KIDS!



Jesus gives us joy and hope.

SONGS OF JOY

Shepherds are on the hillside, taking care of their sheep. They are talking about the coming of the Messiah when suddenly an angel appears and tells them that Jesus has been born. Then the sky fills with singing angels. The shepherds are excited to hear the news and travel to Bethlehem where they find the Baby just as the angel said. They worship the Baby Jesus, then leave and tell everyone they meet what they have heard and seen.



HELP THE SHEPHERD FIND BABY JESUS



CIRCLE THE ANGEL THAT IS DIFFERENT TO THE OTHERS.



Memory Verse

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests."

Luke 2:14



CREATIVE COMBO

Bravo! "The Creative Issue" (November 30) was an excellent reminder that to truly reflect the image of God, we have to polish our creativity.

The combination of words and design reveals a talented team that obviously spent a lot of time assembling this issue.

My congratulations.

Stephen Chavez, USA

SILENT SCRIPTURES?

The question of women's ordination has given rise to much discussion, friction and division.

If one is honest, it must be admitted that there is no definitive statement in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy directly supporting the proposition.

This whole problem would not have arisen had we as a people heeded the definitive instruction of the Spirit of Prophecy as found in *Gospel Workers*. The injunction is:

"When questions arise upon which we are uncertain, let us ask, 'What saith the Scriptures?' and if the Scripture is silent upon the question at issue, let it not be made the subject of discussion" (GW. 314.4).

Bill Miller, Qld

MY OPINION

In my opinion all those people who are supporting women's ordination don't know their Bible well enough.

Throughout the entire

Bible it seems obvious that all leadership in the church scene was meant for men only. Who led the Israelites in the desert? Moses. Only kings (men) ruled after that. Who were instructed to care for the Greek widows' ministrations? Seven men. All disciples, tribe leaders, etc, men; women were given a supporting role.

In God's eyes men and women are equal in acceptance and value, but each have separate roles to play.

Why do women have the babies, not men, yet men provide the wherewithal to produce the child? The roles are different, but equally necessary to life. I believe maintaining God's order for man as head of the home, prime minister of the country, etc, is God's divine plan. Changing this can only lead to disobedience of God's commandments and expectations. If Adventists are meant to be people of the Book, shouldn't pastors and elders be male only?

Joan Kaa, NZ

THE BIBLE ALONE

In response to "Never Intended" (Have your say, November 16) re the use of EG White's writings in sermons. Recently I was using Google to look up some quotes of Ellen White and two that drew my attention were as follows: "The Bible is our rule of faith and doctrine" and "The words of the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit."

Perhaps if those who occupy our pulpits each Sabbath adhered to this counsel, we Adventists may once again be known as "the people of the Book".

Lawrence Lane, Qld

ADVENTIST LIFESTYLE

It was heartening to read "Ministry in Action" (November 30) about the Raymond Terrace Mission and their juice bar, which not only promotes the Adventist health message, but also the spiritual message of the Church.

In my travels I have encountered Adventist-run

restaurants overseas which serve vegan food and stock many EGW books for patrons to read if they so choose, as well as advertising church functions.

We recently found a vegan restaurant in Vietnam run by a Buddhist family, and one of the owners proudly told us that he also didn't smoke or drink alcohol, tea, nor coffee.

If only all Adventist churches and institutions and churches would officially stand for the Adventist lifestyle and ditch the tea and coffee for visitors (and even for members), and the meat at potlucks.

Leo Hamulczyk, Vic

NOTE: Views in "Have your say" do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Comments should be less than 250 words, and writers must include their name, address and phone number. All comments are edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's original meaning will not be changed. Not all comments received are published.



Rustic vegetable tartlets

Banish boring veggies—this plant powered recipe is a delicious combination of roasted vegetables encased in a flaky pastry. The tartlets are great for easy entertaining and will bring the wow and nutrition pow to the dinner table.

Find this recipe and hundreds more at:

Australia: sanitarium.com.au/recipes
New Zealand: sanitarium.co.nz/recipes



A VEGGIE CHRISTMAS: YOUR MENU GUIDE

If you're getting ready for a sumptuous vegetarian Christmas spread but need a little help with the planning, here are some tasty tips to try for a very veggie Christmas:

- **'Tis the season:** Use what's in season to inspire your menu. It will guarantee you have wonderfully fresh produce that is also better for your budget. Some veggies to keep an eye out for are asparagus, capsicum, avocados, sugar snap peas, tomatoes and zucchini. For fruit, of course there are Christmas cherries and berries, summer stonefruits and tropical treats like lychees and mangoes.
- **Be adventurous:** Complement the traditional roast veggies with something more daring. Why not try a new cuisine, unusual ingredients like ancient grains or heirloom veggies like purple carrots? Alternatively, just mix it up when it comes to family favourites. Even the humble cauliflower can be roasted whole, served up as steaks on a bed of creamy puree, or chopped finely as cauliflower rice. An adventurous dish is always a great conversation starter.
- **No need to miss the carve:** Try a meat alternative for a tasty roast with all the trimmings. Another great option for a hero dish that can be carved at the table is a veggie wellington or a savoury strudel.
- **Budget beans:** Grains and legumes are a delicious and budget-friendly way to bulk up dishes and make sure everyone reaches that button-popping level of full reserved for Christmas Day. Grains make a great side to soak up a sauce, beans are ideal for a mash or puree and both can be added to almost any salad.
- **Plant-based stuffing:** A delicious mix of grains, spices, dried fruits and nuts is perfect to stuff into your veggies like capsicum, mushrooms, eggplant and tomatoes.

Most importantly, just breathe and remember no matter what you serve up, it is sharing a meal with family, friends and loved ones that really matters.

HEALTHY HOLIDAY HABITS



PAGE YOURSELF

If it's just the one day of celebration, relax and enjoy—but consider carefully what you eat and drink on the days leading up to it. A special day can sometimes turn into a week of dinners and gatherings, so choose to eat moderately at each party.



GET MOVING

If you find yourself eating far more than normal, consider increasing your exercise and activity levels. Another tip is to include activities at your event (where possible) that don't involve eating or drinking—for example, take your party outdoors to a park, lake or beach where you can be active.



FOCUS ON FRESH

Choose a menu with lots of nutritious fresh foods rather than relying on processed treats. For example, dessert could be a fresh fruit platter featuring fresh seasonal fruits.



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Anniversary



MARTIN. Pastor Ken and Elaine Martin celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on 10.11.19 in the revolving restaurant, Crowne Plaza, Gold Coast, with family and friends. They were married in the Mullumbimby church, 16.11.1949, by Pastor George Parker. Two of the original wedding party were in attendance, Elsa Wyborn (Apostoloff) and Yvonne Chilcott (Were). Ken and Elaine were blessed with three children, Jenelle Dowling, Steve and Dale; seven grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. They served in ministry for 27 years, seven as youth director for the Trans Tasman Union Conference and seven as South Pacific Division youth director. In retirement Ken served for significant periods as volunteer pastor in Singapore, Israel and Lord Howe Island. Ken and Elaine reside on the Gold Coast and faithfully attend Gold Coast Central Church.

served the Lord in NZ, Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga. He was a much-loved father and pastor to all who knew him.

William Arama, William Strickland



AUGUSTE. Yves Desire, born 9.9.1926 in Mauritius; died 3.8.18 in Blacktown Hospital, NSW. On 2.9.1948 he married Rosedange (Rose). He is survived by his wife (Kings Langley); daughters, Lyne Lorens (NSW), Lisbeth Bramwell (Qld) and Myrna Freeman (Bendigo, Vic); and sons, Helio (NSW) and Ted (Qld). Yves was a devoted, affectionate husband and a kind, compassionate father. His bark was worse than his bite, for even though he was very strict, he was a fun and understanding dad with an amazing, infectious laugh. An electrician and a fireman by trade, he also served in the Peace Corps at a very young age. A faithful and dedicated follower of Jesus, he reflected the love of Jesus wherever he went and was well loved and respected.

Eddy Johnson

recognition for his diligence, love and giftedness from his family, church and community. He was a faithful worker for his Lord and now rests under his Creator's watchful eye.

Adrian Craig, Alwin Hilton



HOLMES. Elizabeth (nee Jackson), born 11.11.1922 in Wynyard, Tas; died 26.8.19 in Wynyard. Betty was predeceased by her son, Dale and daughter, Cherie. She is survived by her children and children-in-law, Barry, Harvey, Deris and Maurice, Joanne and Dale, and Michael; grandchildren; and great-grandchildren. Betty was well known for her knowledge of history of the Wynyard area. The Jackson family were the first lighthouse keepers on Table Cape back in 1888. One of her favourite hobbies was gardening. Betty's favourite Bible text was John 14:1-6. Betty learnt about the Adventist message through a tent mission held in Wynyard.

Karl Winchcombe

She is survived by her children, Linda Donovan, Calvin and Peter (all of Rockhampton), and Kerrin Warrener (Brisbane). Hazel was a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist, her grandparents and great-grandmother being charter members of the Rockhampton church, formed in 1894. In her younger days Hazel was involved in children's Sabbath school, in the church choir and as a deaconess.

Ray Hobbs

THOMSEN, Dr Clayton Frederick, born 25.5.1936 in Davenport, Iowa, USA; died 18.11.19 in Maleny, Qld. He was predeceased by his first wife, Pat. On 15.4.18 he married Marlene. Clayton is survived by his wife (Maleny); son, Timothy (Narrabeen, NSW); and daughter, Tracy (Dapto). Clayton was a loving and greatly loved Christian gentleman who loved his Lord, in whom he had complete confidence. He also loved his family and many friends and will live on in our hearts and memories till Jesus returns.

Scott Wareham, John Rabbas

Wedding



LAMBERT-KALINOWSKI. Bevan Lambert, son of David and Ruth Lambert (Cooranbong, NSW), and Delys Kalinowski, daughter of George and Dawn Knapp (both deceased), were married on 25.10.19 at the Japanese Gardens, East Gosford. Bevan and Del, friends for over 20 years, bumped into each other again at the Adventist Alpine Village, Jindabyne, NSW, where their friendship renewed. The couple plan on continuing to live on the Central Coast among their families and friends. They enjoy spending time with their friends and family, walking, movies, chatting, travelling and just being together. Their faith in God helps them to "get each other" and they enjoy each other's sense of humour, which they believe is a good start for a happy life together.

Terry Lambert

HAILEY, Ian Donald William, born 10.3.1937 in Trundle, NSW; died 22.11.19 in Maroondah Hospital, Ringwood East, Vic. On 2.10.1961 he married Barbara, who predeceased him on 28.6.16. He is survived by his son, Warwick and Tracey (Melbourne); daughter, Nadine and Lynton Millett (Melbourne); and grandchildren; Brianna, Jordan, Hayley and Caitlyn. Ian was a much-loved and long-serving member of the Ringwood church. His practical examples of giving and service bore witness to the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. He looked with assurance to the second coming of Jesus when he would be reunited with the love of his life, his deceased wife Barbara.

Brian Lawty

HILTON, Charles Thomas, born 21.3.1919; died 8.8.19 at Avondale House, Cooranbong, NSW. He was predeceased by his first wife, Evelyn (Evie) in 1978. Charles is survived by his second wife, Elizabeth (Cooranbong); children, Gwen Granger (Brisbane, Qld), Glenda Lee (Trangie, NSW), Cyril (Dubbo), John (Willowbank, Qld) and daughter Julie Fowler (Arizona, USA) and their families; 13 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; and six great-great-grandchildren. Tom learnt from an early age that life was what one made of it. He was a hard worker and achieved



KRANZ, Pastor Russell Maurice, born 3.8.1925 in Palmerston North, New Zealand; died 24.10.19 in Cooranbong, NSW. On 30.1.1946 he married Jessie King, who predeceased him. He was also predeceased by his brother, Lynden; sister, Valerie Duncan; and daughter, Kay Irvine. Russell is survived by his wife, Gloria (Dawson); son, Peter and Rose; son-in-law, Ian Irvine; daughters-in-law, Robyn Martin and Carmen Keller-Ashcroft; five grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. Russell was an outstanding public evangelist and music director who served the Church in Australia and the UK for more than 40 years. He served as director of the New Gallery in London for 10 years; lectured at Avondale College for four years; and served as the communication director for the South Pacific Division, and radio speaker for Advent radio and television productions for five years. He was a kind and compassionate man, a great Christian apologist and a faithful servant of God.

Bryan Craig, Lyell Heise



MARSH, Hazel Elizabeth (nee Plahn), born 22.1.1934 in Rockhampton, Qld; died 8.11.19 in Rockhampton. Hazel was predeceased by her husband, Keith, on 19.2.1999.

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