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Table of Nations

People of Reconciliation³

Adventists equipped to be digital disciples⁷

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Table of nations

Jesse Herford
Signs of the Times associate editor

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If we believe that we are all descendants of Noah, then we must also believe that each person, regardless of race or culture, is a long-lost brother or sister.

In Genesis 10, there's a strange list of names and peoples. Following the flood narrative, Noah's sons take seriously the command to "be fruitful and increase in numbers" (Genesis 9:7). Shem, Ham and Japheth have children. Then their children have children and over a series of generations, couples become families, families become tribes and tribes become nations. Among this "Table of Nations" are colourful characters like Egypt, Ashur (Assyria), Elam (Persia) and Canaan, among others. If you've read much of the Bible, you'll recognise these names—they're the villains of the story. These are the pagan-worshipping, tribalistic aggressors that bring drama and conflict to the people of God. However, a closer reading reveals a shocking truth: that our heroes are actually related by blood to these people.

Throughout history we've seen an effective tactic used by warmongers and empire builders—dehumanising the enemy. The Allies during WWI called the Germans "The Hun" as a pejorative. Several decades later and the propaganda campaign was in full use against both Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Fuelled by real fear, these campaigns often capitalised on the worst stereotypes.

To see an enemy as "other", "not like us" or at worst, "barely human" is pragmatic—it helps mobilise entire nations in times of war. However, the effects of these propaganda campaigns are often felt long after the war is over. My grandfather who fought on Bougainville Island in PNG during WWII had an uneasy attitude toward Japanese people even decades after the war was over, as did many of his generation.

When we see the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Moabites and others in the biblical text, it's easy to view them as my grandfather viewed the Japanese: corrupt, evil and less human than our noble Israelite heroes.

The Nation of Tables in Genesis 10 reveals that these "monsters" are actually descended from the same line (Noah's line, to be specific), which means they're all brothers, sisters and cousins. When I realised this, it reframed the story for me. Instead of seeing it as a black-and-white tale of heroes vs villains, it helped me to see the biblical conflict for what it really is: a tragic family drama. The failure of Abraham's family is compounded when we consider their purpose: to be a nation through whom all the nations on earth will be blessed. Of course, Jesus comes along several thousand years later to fulfil that Messianic promise, but one has to wonder about the geopolitical opportunities that were missed along the way.

Reconciliation can be messy. Sociologists estimate that around 930 current ethnic groups exist today. In such diversity, it's easy to see those who don't look like you, speak like you or share your worldview as "other" or "alien". However, if we believe (as I do) that we are all descendants of Noah, then we must also believe that each person, regardless of race or culture, is a long-lost brother or sister. If that's the case, then anything we can do to bring more dignity, autonomy or justice to disenfranchised people groups is not an act of me vs you; it is in fact an act of family reconciliation. I'm encouraged that at the end of time, our differences are not erased, but celebrated. Of the New Jerusalem and the Lamb, John the Revelator says, "the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it" (Revelation 21:24). He then later brings to our attention the Tree of Life, whose leaves are "for the healing of the nations" (22:2). How beautiful to consider that all the ugliness of human civilisation will find its redemption in the New Heaven and New Earth. Until that day, let's be people of reconciliation.



INSIGHT:

The Sabbath gift

Glenn Townend
South Pacific Division president

The Sabbath was the day Jesus healed two people in Jerusalem, as recorded in John's gospel. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath? In the first miracle, Jesus chose a man crippled for 38 years from among other people with disabilities. He told him to pick up his mat and walk, which the man did with joy! However, the Jewish leaders were unimpressed because the miracle occurred on the Sabbath, so they sought to shut Jesus down (John 5:1-17). In the second miracle, Jesus puts mud on a blind man's eyes near the temple, the highest point of Jerusalem. He tells the man to wash off the mud, requiring him to walk to the pool of Siloam, the lowest part of the city. When the man washed off the mud, he regained his sight. This miracle further angered the Jewish leaders, who plotted to trap and kill Jesus (John 9:1-43).

Both miracles provoked the Jewish religious leadership and required action from the participants. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath? Neither case was critical. Another day for a man who was crippled for 38 years and another day of darkness for a blind man is an inconvenience—but if Jesus had told them He would heal them the next day—the Sabbath would still have been one of joy while the Jewish leaders would have not been so upset.

Historically, the Jewish Sabbath was restrictive because of the many laws to keep the day holy from a human perspective. Jesus created the Sabbath and knew that holiness was more about making people whole and giving joy. His presence, power and point aimed to remind people of the gift of the Sabbath, revealing the character of God, and was worth challenging the leaders.

The Sabbath is God's gift to all humanity, not just Adventists. If we are serious about our end-time message, we should share the joy of the Sabbath. That is why I will be creating video clips discussing the meaning of the Sabbath and share them on my social media pages throughout June. In fact, I might do it until the end of the year. Will you join me in creating a digital movement to spread the Sabbath gift, showing that the "Seventh-day" in our name really means something to us? And a tip—please reflect Jesus more than the Jewish leaders!

See <sabbathgift.info/share/> for more information.



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SPD communication and media leaders and international guests.

Media experts convene for strategy summit

📍 **Wahroonga, NSW** | Tracey Bridcutt

Communication and media leaders from the South Pacific Division (SPD) recently convened in Wahroonga (NSW) to exchange ideas and explore new strategies to advance the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through media.

Hosted by Adventist Media, the SPD Media and Communications Advisory took place on May 7–9 after the Digital Discipleship Conference. The event brought together local leaders as well as international guests: General Conference (GC) associate director of communication Pastor Sam Neves, Hope Channel International vice president of programming Pastor Vyacheslav Demyan and Trans-European Division associate communications director Vanesa Pizzuto.

Under the theme “Sharing our story”, the discussions centred around opportunities and challenges of engaging not only the broader community, but also effectively communicating with church members.

SPD president Pastor Glenn Townend joined the group on May 8, and emphasised the significance of communication and media as a key strategic focus for the Division.

“We want to have media saturation in television, radio, digital as much as we can because it will have an impact,” he said.

During the advisory, Pastor Neves delivered an update from the GC, along with a presentation on leveraging artificial

intelligence to help with content creation. Sanitarium Health Food Company head of corporate communications Julie Praestiin provided valuable insights into the organisation’s successful digital strategy. Additionally, the program featured inspiring case studies by Ole Pedersen from Hope Channel New Zealand, Pastor Robbie Berghan from Faith FM and John Tausere from the Trans Pacific Union Mission.

Beyond the informative sessions, the summit provided an opportunity for networking, idea sharing and finding avenues for mutual support and collaboration.

Reflecting on the meetings, Pastor Neves said he was inspired. “Unity is a byproduct of God’s presence. I felt the Holy Spirit as every media entity represented humbly surrendered their own agenda to follow where God was leading us,” he said.

“God has called very competent and humble professionals across the SPD and I can’t wait to see the results of their ministry as lives are transformed across the territory.”

Adventist Media CEO Dr Brad Kemp said, “We have an incredible team of communicators and media leaders across our Division who often work with very little to achieve incredible results.

“As I look at what is happening I am convinced that God is at work and using the tools of media to share the good news of Jesus.”



The summit emphasised the power of praise and the importance of promoting mission-oriented leadership in their school communities.

[Photo credit: Charmaine Patel]

Leadership summit empowers educators

📍 **Brisbane, Qld** | Jarrod Stackelroth

For the first time in six years, Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) hosted a leadership summit in Brisbane (Qld) from May 15 to 17, drawing school principals, deputies and education directors from across Australia and New Zealand.

Themed “Every Praise”, the summit encouraged leaders to remember and praise God amid difficult times, reflecting on the importance of their role in leading children to Jesus.

Keynote speakers included Stephen Scott from EthicLead, Pastor Adam Ramdin, founder of Lineage Journey, and Dr Kevin Petrie, who shared valuable insights on leadership, history and school climates.

Attendees also had the opportunity to engage in worship led by Sandra Entermann and her team, explore the work of the Adventist Leadership Institute and discuss religious freedom issues. A special moment included the launch and dedication of the Abide Bible—a Bible with reading guides designed for educators—and the honouring of chaplain Pastor Murray Hunter for his dedicated service.

The summit concluded with five guiding principles for leaders: to remain mission-true, treat people right, lead with purpose, be strategic and take time to listen to God.



Leaders at the opening of the new radio station.

Fiji Mission now broadcasting in Hindi

📍 Suva, Fiji | Joni Vatuvatu

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fiji launched its second radio station, Aasha FM, on April 28.

The 24/7 radio station is exclusively dedicated to broadcasting in Hindi. The new station was officially opened by Trans Pacific Union Mission (TPUM) president Pastor Maveni Kaufononga and Adventist Media marketing manager Tim McTernan.

Radio ministry has been an integral part of the Adventist Church's outreach efforts in Fiji since 1965, through the late pastor Aisake Kabu (snr). The launch of Aasha FM marks a significant milestone in its growth.

According to Pastor Kaufononga, "Fiji Mission leads media ministry in the Union—both TV and radio. It is also vital that Fiji not only influences other missions but provides support and empowerment to help its growth in the region."

Richard Lucas from Coms Ltd was

also present at the event. The company is responsible for the technical side of broadcast transmission and has been working closely with Fiji Mission to expand the radio ministry throughout the country. Fiji Mission's media ministry has been expanding rapidly in recent years, and the addition of Aasha FM is a testament to its commitment to reaching out to diverse communities.

Former Fiji Mission secretary and voice of Hope FM, Joe Talemaitoga, was also present at the launch event, commending radio director Wyse Bete and his team for a job well done.

Fiji Mission CFO Apisalome Seru acknowledged the support of the South Pacific Division and TPUM for being part of the launch. He expressed gratitude for God's blessings on Fiji Mission and its media ministry.



Linta Qalopui, lecturer in the School of Science and Technology, with biodiesel equipment.

PAU students working towards a greener future

📍 Port Moresby, PNG | Tracey Bridcutt

Pacific Adventist University is at the forefront of groundbreaking research that could bring significant environmental benefits to Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Several studies are underway at the Port Moresby campus. One is aimed at finding innovative pathways for the recycling of agricultural waste products such as banana fibre. The university farm—with its extensive plantation of more than 40,000 bananas—is ideally suited for the study.

The study is looking at how banana fibre can be used for sustainable natural products that could replace plastics and agricultural chemical fertilisers. With banana farming widespread across PNG, the ability to operate activities with zero environmental impact would be significant—and a first for the Pacific.

A second study is investigating the most suitable recipe for converting used vegetable oil into a quality biodiesel that is anticipated to be equivalent to the international standard.

"This is a research and development project—the findings of this study will be used to contribute to biofuel policies development in Papua New Guinea, as well as promoting the reduction of

environmental pollution in terms of used cooking oil, which is currently an environmental hazard in PNG," said Linta Qalopui, lecturer in the School of Science and Technology.

By recycling and converting the cooking oil into biodiesel, it can be used in diesel engines—cutting CO₂ emissions by about 41 per cent compared to fossil diesel fuel.

"This also provides an alternative and environmentally friendly fuel for Papua New Guinea going forward," said Mrs Qalopui. The research is now attracting global attention—Mrs Qalopui has been invited to present at the fourth International Conference on Biofuel and Bioenergy in London in October.

PAU head of Research and Post Graduate Studies Dr Carol Tasker said students and their supervisors are involved in around 20 research studies relating to environmental, health, education, family and other current issues.

"We are excited about our research vision—'Exploring Resources, Expanding Horizons, Inspiring Hope'—reminding us of infinite possibilities for learning more that can positively impact churches, families and communities across the Pacific."



Pastor Colby Maier sharing expertise on sharing Jesus via short video across multiple platforms.

Adventists equipped to be digital disciples

📍 Parramatta, NSW | Juliana Muniz

More than 180 aspiring digital evangelists from across the South Pacific Division (SPD) were equipped to share their faith more effectively on digital platforms at the Digital Discipleship Conference from May 5 to 7.

Participants from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand gathered in Parramatta (NSW) to hear featured keynote speakers experienced in digital evangelism across various mediums such as TikTok, YouTube, podcasts, gaming, Instagram and film.

The conference aimed to equip, inspire and motivate church members to share their faith using digital tools. Tim McTernan, the event organiser and Adventist Media marketing manager, highlighted the importance of using digital tools to promote spiritual growth, particularly among younger generations.

He shared the statistic that 46 per cent of Gen Z use TikTok on a weekly basis to make spiritual decisions. "If young people are going to social media for spiritual growth, what will they find? We need to be there to guide these young people and equip them with what the Bible says," Mr McTernan added.

Speakers such as Justin Khoe, Pastor Colby Maier, Pastor Tim Gillespie, Dave Adamson and American film producer Terry Benedict shared their expertise in using media and digital platforms to spread the gospel and make disciples. The conference also offered workshop sessions on various topics.

Mr Benedict, who co-produced the Oscar-winning movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, highlighted the power of storytelling in conveying biblical principles and inspiring people to be better versions of themselves. He emphasised the need for creative people and storytellers "to create and tell stories based on biblical principles that people can relate to and apply in their own lives".

A survey conducted after the event revealed positive feedback with many expressing they felt inspired and equipped to share their faith using digital tools.

Pastor Josh Stothers from Castle Hill Adventist Church expressed his excitement in applying the insights and tools learned from the conference to his local church's digital ministries. "I plan to apply what I've learnt in a couple of ways: Firstly, I would love to continue to build up the digital ministries of the local church that I pastor and continue to work on our strategies as a team. I also really enjoy making short-form content for my personal social media and I got lots of awesome new tools and ideas from the event to test out," he said.

The Digital Discipleship team plan to upload the conference presentations to <digitaldiscipleship.au> and their social media pages, making the content accessible to church members worldwide.

making headlines

Lighting up camporee

Sprint sensation and world record holder Usain Bolt was the main attraction on day two at the Inter-American Division (IAD) Pathfinder Camporee in Jamaica. "Usain Bolt is a role model for both young people and adults globally," said Pastor Balvin Braham, vice president of the IAD. "We wanted him at our camporee to demonstrate to the youth that it is possible to achieve according to your God-given potential." —ANN



The solidarity truck

The mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro received a visit from "The Solidarity Truck", a mobile service unit maintained by ADRA Brazil. 240 volunteers joined the initiative, helping to distribute approximately 3000 meals and more than 1600 pieces of clothing. They also offered about 400 free haircuts, legal advice and medical care. The free services benefited more than 4400 people. —IAD

Evangelism kids

The Adventist Church in Chile has launched a discipleship project for children aged 6–12 years. The project seeks to permanently support the work of parents in the formation of children with a missionary and evangelistic vision towards their peers. —SAD

Happy Christians

The 2022 Australian Community Survey found that Australians who identify as "Christian" or "Religious and Spiritual" or those who attend religious services have higher levels of life satisfaction on average than other Australians. They are also more satisfied with their communities. —NCLS Research



Digital discipleship in Fiji

Fiji's first-ever Digital Discipleship workshop was held in Suva from April 28 to 30, attracting almost 100 participants. Spearheaded by the Fiji Mission, the event featured international guest speakers Justin Khoe, founder of the US-based Digital Missionary Academy, and Adventist Media marketing manager Tim McTernan from Adventist Media at the South Pacific Division. The workshop explored the impact of social media and how to use influence in the digital space positively. Participants were encouraged to utilise online resources for effective digital discipleship, marking a significant milestone in the Adventist Church's adaptation to the digital age. —**John Tausere**



Digital disciple honoured

Sandra Entermann, initiator of Sabbath Singalong, a global digital worship gathering, received this year's Gabe Reynaud Award for her outstanding contribution to digital discipleship. Ms Entermann started the initiative during the pandemic to share Sabbath opening experiences with others. It has since evolved into a significant online congregation, raising more than \$A120,000 for ADRA in response to various crises. The award, presented at the Digital Discipleship Conference on May 6, recognises Ms Entermann's faithful creativity and her approach to sharing her passion for music in response to disruptive change. Despite the wide reach of Sabbath Singalong, Ms Entermann maintains a personal touch, emphasising that each session is a blessing to her. "I get to preach a sermon every four minutes for two hours. It's a big responsibility," she said. —**Brenton Stacey**



Growing mission field

Rolleston, a rapidly expanding town in the Selwyn District (New Zealand), welcomed its first Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath worship service on April 15. The service, attended by more than 20 people, marked the consolidation of two small Adventist groups that have been meeting for regular Bible studies. Now hosting a regular church service on the last Sabbath of each month, the growing Adventist community said they are committed to embracing Rolleston as their mission field. —**John Garcia**



New opportunities

The Busselton Seventh-day Adventist Church in WA was recently sold to another Christian denomination, marking a new chapter in its history. The sale, following years of prayers, is seen as an opportunity for evangelism within the Busselton community. While the church continues to own the adjacent old school property and explores options for nearby aged care units, Sabbath services continue in the rented building as the congregation seeks God's guidance for a new home. —**Dale Bolst**



Picnic at the San

After a three-year hiatus due to COVID-19, Sydney Adventist Hospital (the San), hosted its annual Teddy Bears' picnic on May 10. Teddy bears of all shapes and sizes and their human companions—more than 700 mums, dads, babies, toddlers and grandparents—gathered on the hospital's front lawn for the event.

The picnic provided the opportunity for returning San families to mingle with new families and to reunite with the hospital's obstetricians, midwives, paediatricians and women's health staff. For the San's maternity team, the event is a yearly highlight, allowing them to witness the growth and development of the babies they've helped bring into the world. The hospital, which has a history of delivering babies for more than a century, delivers an average of 2000 new babies annually.

The event featured a variety of food options, games, face painting, play equipment, a photobooth and gift bags full of goodies. A performance by children's entertainers, The Beanies, added to the festive atmosphere. The San Bear mascot was on hand to distribute bear hugs and pose for photos.

Adventist Media's Mums At The Table also participated in the event, promoting their mission of creating a supportive community for parents. "The mums were really interested to hear about our in-person parenting groups in their local area," said project leader Melody Tan. —**Maddi Glover/Record staff**

have news to share?

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Banker to pastor: Skaf's ordination

Pastor Joseph Skaf was ordained at the Wallsend Seventh-day Adventist Church (NSW) on May 13. Transitioning from a diverse background in investment banking and military service in the Brazilian Army, Pastor Skaf—a 2020 theology graduate from Avondale University—has embraced ministry, pastoring churches in the North New South Wales Conference and recently serving as stewardship and church planting director. The ordination service included testimonies, special items and an ordination charge by NNSW president Pastor Adrian Raethel. Along with his wife Camila and their two children, Pastor Skaf is eager to "progress in their spiritual journey, with a firm commitment to making disciples and investing in people, the only 'asset' with eternal potential", he said. —**Henrique Felix**



A centenary Fish

Avondale Memorial Church recently celebrated Vivian Fish's 100th birthday. Mr Fish, who holds a full driving licence, still manages routine tasks such as driving, shopping and volunteering at the Cooranbong Community Centre. As the church deacon, Mr Fish is the general custodian of keys, responsible for opening Memorial each Sabbath morning and turning on the heaters or opening the windows. "Early on Sunday, he comes back to empty out the rubbish bins and give the church a quick tidy-up," said Memorial communications leader Dr John Hammond. Mr Fish's lifetime of service includes active duty as a medic in Darwin (NT) and PNG during World War II and work for Sanitarium Health Food Company. His contributions have been recognised by King Charles and the Governor-General of Australia. "It is not often a 'fish' can live for 100 years out of water and we are rather proud of Harold Vivian Fish," said Dr Hammond. —**John Hammond/Record staff**



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A settling down period 1945–1950

The immediate post-war years continued to see stories and experiences of the war shared in the pages of *Record*. Missionaries continued to return to their homes in the Pacific Islands, with both joyful reunions and sorrow as they learnt the fate of many of their local friends during the war. Adventists in Europe were struggling with a lack of food, so many Australians and New Zealanders were sending food parcels to families who were very grateful to receive a variety of food (as their rations were basic and minimal).

In the first publication for 1947 (vol 51 no 1) of the *Australasian Record*, Gordon Turner, the Australasian Union Conference president, described the post-war years:

"The year 1946 has been a period of adjustment for many, and now after six years of war more normal conditions prevail. . . The new year, 1947, will be a somewhat settling-down period. To those who recognise the imminence of our Lord's return, it must be another and a greater opportunity for service for God. Time is fleeting."

In the next issue (vol 51 no 2), Pastor Kata Ragoso, who was left in charge of the Seventh-day Adventist work in the Solomon Islands when all expatriate personnel returned to their homelands at the beginning of the war, shared his war-time experiences. Titled "How 214 Soldiers and Airmen were Saved from Death in the Solomons", the dedication of this Adventist leader is inspirational.

"After the missionaries were evacuated from the Solomons, I called a hundred of my people together to build store-houses in the bush, to hide the missionaries' goods and the equipment from the Batuna hospital and school. We carried timber and iron three miles out and built two houses, and then packed all the goods and marked the boxes with the initials of the owners, and carried them into the bush. The furniture we

placed in the house with the leaf roof, and the other things we placed in the store with the iron roof. Next we took the two boats, 'Vinaritoke' and the 'Portal', and with a big canoe towed them up a river. We took down the masts and laid them on the decks. Then we built a leaf house over the boats so the aeroplanes could not see them.

"After that we put watchmen every five miles from Gatokai to Vella Lavelle, to watch for planes and warships. When any plane was shot down the watchmen reported it to me and I sent some men out to find it. When we found any airmen we took them to our villages and mission stations and looked after them until we could take them to the wireless men (commandos). We had no white people's food, but we gave them the native food. Sometimes we took them to the wireless men at night, through the Japanese lines. Sometimes we took them in the day; and when the aeroplanes came over we made the white people lie down in the canoe and we covered them with leaves. When we reached the wireless men they would send a message to Guadalcanal or [Vanuatu]; then an aeroplane would come and take the airmen away.

Altogether we rescued twenty-seven American pilots and one hundred and eighty-seven Australian and New Zealand soldiers. The 187 men were on a warship which was torpedoed by the enemy. When it sank these men started to swim, but they would never have reached shore. Our men went out in their canoes and brought the soldiers to land. It took a lot of food to feed them, but we did not keep them very long. The wireless men sent a message and a big warship came and took the soldiers aboard.

Each Afraid of the Other

One Sabbath when we came out from the service two planes were fighting overhead. After a while the Japanese shot the American plane and it fell down into the water. I sent some of my men out in a canoe to find the pilot. Late in the

afternoon all except one returned and said they could not find the pilot. When the plane sank the airman got into his rubber dinghy and went ashore on one of the islands and stayed there that night. One of my men, Tiri stayed there searching for the airman.

Early next morning he saw the American come out from the island in his dinghy, so he paddled after the man in his canoe. When the pilot saw Tiri he was very frightened. He thought the black man would kill him. Tiri was frightened too; he thought the airman might be a Japanese. But when he came close the airman smiled, and Tiri spoke to him in pidgin English: 'Are you American or Japanese?' The answer came, 'I am not a Jap; I am an American. Where do you come from?' 'I belong to the mission station', Tiri called to him. When the airman heard this he was very happy. He beckoned with his hand and shouted, "Come close to me!" So Tiri went and put the injured man into his canoe and towed the dinghy behind. He paddled hard and came to Batuna.

I went down to the wharf and said to Tiri, 'Why have you brought this Japanese here? We will attend to them at some other place'. Tiri replied, 'He is not a Japanese; he is an American'. So I went down and looked carefully into his eyes and asked him if he was a real American. Then I asked him, 'Which part of the United States are you from?' He said, 'I come from Hollywood, California'. So I told him I had been to Hollywood and was very pleased to see him. I asked him to come up to Pastor Barrett's house. We gave him oranges, papaws, and coconut juice and cooked some sweet potatoes. We gave him a shower, then I asked the dresser who looked after the hospital to give him some medicine and bandage the man's arm and leg. Twenty-one men in a canoe took him to the wireless station, and later an American plane came and took him away. After he went back to America he wrote a letter of thanks to me and my people."

In this same issue, a letter from Alma Wiles who was working as a nurse in Papua New Guinea, was published. Titled "Snake-bite Victim Saved by Missionaries' Strenuous Efforts and Prayer", she makes a humorous comment in the retelling of how a young PNG boy was saved from a snake bite:

"The boy was blind, could not speak, could not swallow, and was choking with mucus which the paralysed muscles of the throat could not cough up. My first thought was for something eliminative and something stimulating. We gave him an enema and then poured strong coffee down his throat—I had heard that tea and coffee are a partial antidote for snake-bite, so begged some from Mr. Miller on our way back. But the joke came when out of the six of us white folk no-one knew how to make coffee!"

In 1950, the Australasian Inter-Union Conference held a session, which was the first since the unions were reformed in 1949. Andrew Dawson, the manager of the Australasian Conference Association (which held the real and intellectual property of the Church), summarised the Church's financial status as follows (vol 54 no 49):

"The immediate post-war years covered by this report have not been without their problems. We have witnessed a change from a seller's to a buyer's market, a spiralling of costs, an acute shortage of labour, stringent price controls for many years, and other items too numerous to mention. But through them all we have witnessed the kindly, guiding hand of a heavenly Father whose help and counsel have been constantly sought. For His help we want to express our grateful thanks, and in the light of His past blessings we look forward to the future with confidence, knowing that with Him there is no crisis, and all things are possible."



A Sailing Sabbath School

R. ANDERSON

On walking into a lounge room on the liner "Aorangi," bound for New Zealand, Mr. Whitworth was surprised to find a man reading the "Record."

"Are you a Seventh-day Adventist?" he asked, and so the conversation began. After inquiring further, it was found that there were fourteen Adventists on board.

Mr. Whitworth and his wife were visiting New Zealand, Miss Joy Coltheart was returning from Youth Congress to teach at Hamilton. Mr. and Mrs. Rice were on their way from India to Washington. Mr. R. Craig, with his wife and three boys, was going to take up a new position with the Sanitarium Health Food Company at Auckland. Sister Eileen Felsch and Sister Madeline Pages were on their way to Canada, travelling from the Sydney Sanitarium. And to complete the happy band were two students from the A.M. College, Mr. Trood and myself. We intend to make a short tour through New Zealand.

All these smiling faces were seen at Sabbath school, which was held in the lounge. Brother Whitworth conducted the lesson and Brother Rice gave us an original missionary report.

We were thankful for God's presence with our little group as the liner cut her way through the Tasman.

This excerpt from February 1950 (vol 54 no 9) tells of how a group of Adventists found each other on a boat from Australia to New Zealand—all because of *Record*!

Join with us in sharing God's gift of the Sabbath

As the golden sun sets, painting the sky with a warm glow, a sense of anticipation fills the air. It's Friday afternoon—the gateway to the sacred hours of the Sabbath—and my family is gathered around a crackling fire pit. With flickering flames casting gentle shadows on our faces, we weave a tapestry of stories, sharing adventures and gratitude for the week behind us. The outside world fades into oblivion and the worries melt away. As we savour a relaxed meal under the starlit sky, we are reminded of the profound simplicity and joy of being present with our loved ones.

This is how my family likes to welcome in the Sabbath hours. Cherished family time by the fire is one of the things I love most about the Sabbath. I also appreciate receiving a spiritual recharge and giving my mental health a lift by exploring nature.

What about you? What do you love about the Sabbath?

Throughout June, Adventist Media is encouraging Adventists all around the South Pacific to join in and share their unique perspectives on the Sabbath. We believe the Sabbath is a truly amazing gift from a loving God—a gift that needs to be shared with others.

Taking part in the Sabbath Gift promotion is easy. All you need to do is take out your phone and record a short video (no more than 60 seconds) expressing what the Sabbath means to you. Then share it on your social media platforms. Simple!

For those who possess a flair for visual storytelling, you might like to create a video capturing the joy and beauty of the Sabbath using the power of imagery rather than words. Or, if you like to create light-hearted videos, you may choose to share the delights of the Sabbath in a fun way. It's up to you.

But that's not all—there are other ways to get involved. By liking and sharing the videos created by others, you can amplify their messages and reach a wider audience. Or you can download the videos available at sabbathgift.info/share/ and share them on your own social media channels. You can also contribute through prayer, uplifting the promotion and all those involved in creating and sharing content, as well as those who engage with it.

We are aiming high with this promotion—we are hoping for 10 million views in June! For those who view the videos, we hope it will be the start of a journey of discovering the transformative power of the Sabbath. Beyond views, we are keen to engage with people. We will be running some live events and challenging people to give the Sabbath a try. We will also be encouraging people to join a small group or visit a local Adventist church.

The Sabbath Gift is an opportunity to create a ripple effect, carrying the positive and relevant messages of the Sabbath throughout the South Pacific. By sharing our experiences of the Sabbath, we can touch the lives of those who crave connection, seek meaning or yearn for respite from the chaos of life.

To learn more about the Sabbath Gift and how to participate, visit sabbathgift.info/share/.

Tracey Bridcutt

Communication director, South Pacific Division.



my
story



Jim's testimony

I'd lost my health, job, wife, kids, house and freedom."

In the space of a year, Jim's life was turned upside down. He worked in the liquor industry for more than 20 years, but after choosing to give up his drinking and recreational drug habits, cracks in his marriage started to appear. The pair started free counselling sessions at the ADRA Community Centre in Blacktown to try to save their marriage. Through individual and group counselling, food parcels, crisis relief, emergency housing and other tailored programs, the centre not only provides a safety net, but helps build stronger individuals and families for more resilient communities. These services are provided free of charge thanks to the numerous volunteers who give their time and energy.

"We were looking for someone to help us recommunicate and reconnect," Jim says. "I was very much in love with my wife and loved my two little girls. I wanted my family to succeed."

Unfortunately, the marriage didn't survive. Jim found himself on a downward spiral, struggling for the right to spend time with his children and restart his life. After an altercation with his former father-in-law about seeing his young daughters, Jim spent seven months in jail.

But rather than spiralling further, his time in jail gave him a new perspective. "I'd never been in trouble with the law before," he shares. Pastor Eddy Johnson, the qualified counsellor he'd seen at the ADRA Community Centre in Blacktown, kept in touch with Jim and encouraged him throughout his time behind bars.

"Pastor Eddy wrote me letters constantly while I was in jail, and the letters he wrote changed my life," says Jim. "He gave me verses in the Bible to read, especially Job. I felt I was unjustly in there, but it was good for me. It straightened me out completely and humbled me."

While in jail, Jim started attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings and decided to study counselling himself. Now, he's two years away from becoming a drug and alcohol counsellor.

"I've been involved in the AA and Narcotics Anonymous fellowship for more than 10 years now because of my recovery," Jim shares. "I always had an interest in helping others, but my life used to be about getting excited when a big deal came across. Now I get excited when I get a call from a mother saying that I've helped her son overcome addiction. That high is better than any drug I've ever had. I want my life to be more about service than getting served."

Although his path was tough, Jim is thankful for the experiences. "I found myself through the process," he says.

When he was released, the judge strongly recommended that Jim continue counselling, so Jim returned to the ADRA Community Centre to continue his counselling with Eddy.

"[This is] ongoing sponsoring in the sense of having someone reliable to turn to," Eddy shares. "The benefit of being a sponsor is the joy of seeing concrete, positive change occurring over time."

Jim also attends the Sabbath afternoon Bible study group that meets at the ADRA Blacktown offices. Eddy hosts the gathering, which begins with a Bible study and ends with a potluck supper and socialising. The group has become a second family to Jim and other participants.

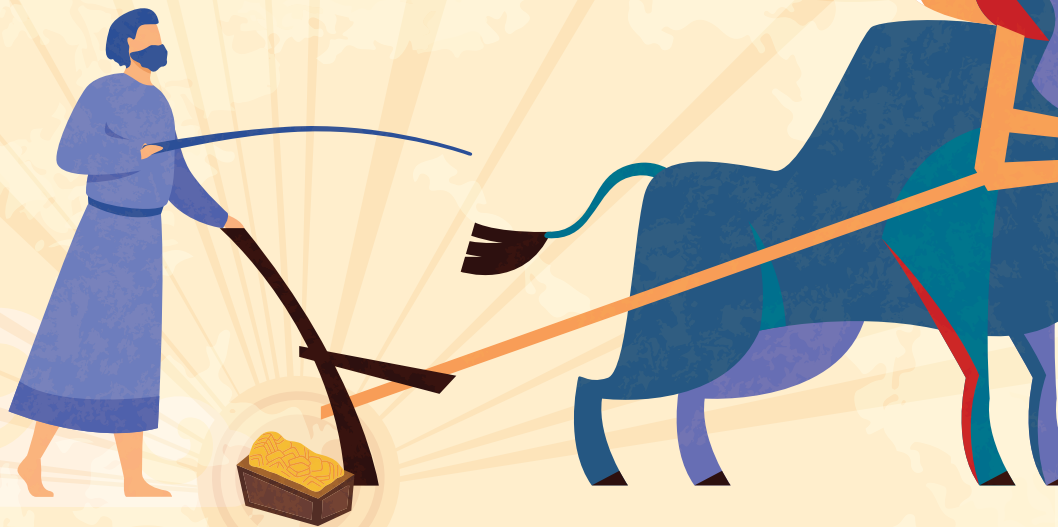
"Before, I was an angry man," Jim recalls. "I would hit challenges head on with an angry attitude. But now, I hit them with the understanding that God gives you certain challenges so you can grow as a human being. If you embrace that and work through it, you can become a better person."

ADRA operates over 100 community projects around Australia. From counselling to food pantries and emergency relief, these services help people who are facing hardship. This end of financial year, your donation can help people like Jim get back on their feet. Donate now at <adra.org.au/donate>.

Lauren Bongard Schwarz

THE *TREASURE* THAT FOUND A MAN

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.'
Matthew 13:44



Many of Jesus' parables portray the kingdom of heaven as a treasure hunter, not willing to give up on anything lost. Yet, in this parable, the tables seem turned with the kingdom of heaven likened to treasure. Even more surprising is that the treasure is hidden.

When a man found it . . .

Let's call this man Amir. Amir finds the treasure in a field he does not own. The truth is, Amir does not own any field. He is a proud man who works hard to care for his wife Abigail and daughter Amira. His wife's elderly parents also live with them. Amir has a strong back, but it would be an oversight to think he does not feel the weight of responsibility to provide for his family. Concern for his family brings Amir out to work for the landowners six days each week.

Amir woke early as usual. He kissed his wife on her forehead, then kissed his daughter gently on her cheek before tip-toeing out so as not to wake them. After dressing and grabbing his lunch, Amir began walking to the fields. The morning was cold but clear; birdsong cheered his steps. It would not be long before the sun would break over the horizon, warming the earth and nurturing his inner self.

Ploughing season meant long working days for farmhands. There was so much to be done around the village to prepare for next year's harvest. Amir's skill with oxen and the plough guaranteed he had plenty of work. Thoughts of his family warmed his heart and brought energy to his morning foot-slog. If there had been anyone else on the path that morning, they would have noticed a warm smile across Amir's face. He mused on the name his father had given to him—*Amir*, prince

At this thought, his smile broke into an audible laugh! Amir certainly did not feel princely, guiding the plough behind the steady gait of the oxen. He did, however, feel a certain

measure of pride at day's end when he looked over the furrowed patterns he had created.

Amir opened the gate and headed across the yard to the open barn to untie the oxen. The pair were yoked and hitched to the plough. His workday had begun.

Amir knew this field. He had worked it many times over the years. "Giddyup," he called to the pair of oxen. Back and forth, the team trudged, back and forth. The soil was damp, and the turned earth smelled fresh and musky.

All through the morning, Amir and his team laboured without a break. He marvelled at the strength of these animals. Amir knew about being strong. This quality was vital because his family depended on it to eat. Just the same, there were times he felt frustrated with the struggle of life. As he worked, he wondered *Do these animals ever get frustrated, too?*


Amir enjoyed the opportunity to daydream as he walked and wrestled the plough behind the steady plod of the oxen. Oh, how he wanted to shower blessings on his family. The truth is, he did—he poured out the very best of benefits that come from living a life of commitment, diligence and integrity. But it did not always feel that way to Amir. He wanted to gift them even more. He was eager to provide something special for his loved ones. Yet this was the stuff of daydreams for a man of his lowly status.

Amir didn't know it yet, but this day was to become a milestone that separated his life into two epochs—before and after.

Crack! The plough blade caught. No time to think of what it had caught on! Amir's firm grip on the plough sent him tumbling to the earth as the plough kicked sideways. "Whoa!" cried Amir. The oxen stopped, no doubt glad of a rest.

"What was that?"

Amir had helped to clear this field years before. "How could



they have missed these tree roots?" he thought as he picked himself up and dusted himself off.

He made his way back along the furrow, noticing splinters of decaying wood as he went. His only thought at this point was to remove the offending object so that there would be no risk of being thrown in the future. Dropping to the ground, Amir pulled the earth back with his hands and found the remains of a lock that had almost rusted away. As he pulled out more soil, Amir discovered what seemed to be a container. Further digging and clearing allowed him to lift away a partially rotted lid.

"Oh my!" he cried out in disbelief.

Amir sat back on the ground, placing his head in his hands. There was a gentle rocking in Amir's upper body along with repeated whispers of "Wow!" Amir looked around. He was by himself. Others were working in neighbouring fields, but they were far distant. He could hardly believe what had just happened. He had uncovered a treasure chest that contained great riches!

Upon replacing the lid, Amir gathered up the timber fragments and carefully reburied the chest. Before returning to the plough, he took careful note of his position. He must not forget this place.

The rest of the day was a blur for Amir as he ploughed the field before hurrying home. Thoughts of the secret treasure seemed to fill his very being, and he excitedly shared his tale of discovery on his arrival home. How could he make this treasure his own? After all, there was a reason Amir was a labourer. His lowly status meant that he never had the means to become a landowner, but now he must!

"That's it!" he exclaimed to his wife, Abigail; "we must buy that field whatever the price!"

It took some time, but Amir did make the purchase. He sold everything he had and bought that field.

Amir's story might sound like a "winning lotto" account, but it's not. A person participates in a lottery hoping that their ticket, purchased with little, is the lucky one that wins much. In this parable, the treasure is the kingdom of heaven. Jesus admonishes that we should "seek first his kingdom". Sadly, we don't. Remember that Amir was not looking for the treasure. He found it. He stumbled on it. It's as if the treasure was placed in Amir's path that day so that it would be found. Could it be that the kingdom of heaven is willing to play divine hide-and-seek with us? Now that's an idea that is worth pondering!

Young children love to play hide-and-seek, and they love to play with their parents or grandparents. When the adult hides, is he or she trying never to be found? Of course not! The adults are not hiding "from" their child; they are hiding "for" their child—so too with God. Like a divine Grandpa, God said to the exiles in Babylon: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." The meaning is clear; engage in seeking God, and the outcome of finding God is guaranteed. This raises an important issue. How do I engage in seeking in the first place? It sounds like the decisive first move is up to me. However, God said to these same exiles: "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord." This affirms that God indeed is the One who acts first, even to

giving us the heart to want to seek Him. John Piper asserts that this is one of the most basic things people need to understand about the Bible. It is full of conditions we must meet for God's blessings. God, however, does not leave us to meet them on our own. The first and decisive work before and in our willing is God's prior grace.

Let's go back to the grandpa hide-and-seek game. Imagine if I wore a badge that read: "The Grandpa Award—Best Hide-and-Seek Player—Never Found by his Grandchildren—Always Wins!" That would be absurd. You would think this guy had lost the plot, and you would be right. No, I am not hiding with the purpose of never being found by my grandchildren. Instead, I am hiding so that I will be found! And I play when the grandchildren are ready to engage. There is something extraordinary about the moment when a child is curious, ready, willing and able to seek. I am watching out for their readiness. I am encouraging their willingness. Then, at just the right moment, I hide so that they find me in their path. The result is delight and celebration. Of course, the game replays. I hide, and I am found, once again. As the child grows, I choose more challenging hiding spots, and if it is too hard for the child to find me, I give clues—a little owl call or a slight squeak—to catch their attention and keep them in the game. And with each game, our relationship deepens, and we get to know each other better.

So too with the kingdom of heaven! God is like a divine Grandpa eager to play hide-and-seek with His human family, growing in their hearts a longing to engage in seeking; and guaranteeing that the seeking will be successful. All of this leads to great celebration and joy.

Remember that the treasure hidden in the field was not found by intent. At least, not the intent of the man who found it. However, when the man did find it, he recognised it as treasure. Somehow he knew that he must make it his own.

This thought takes me back to when I was walking with a good friend. He remarked, "I'm tired of the pretence, the charades, and the absence of realness in my church experience and my relationship with God. I am going to give God one year. If I cannot have a real and personal relationship with the living Creator God by then, I'm outta here!"

While my friend was frustrated, doing the daily plod, and surviving, the kingdom of heaven saw the readiness in his heart to engage. Divine hide-and-seek was "game on"! The kingdom of heaven, hid in my friend's path and was found. Upon discovering the treasure, my friend chose to "sell all he had to buy that field"—to make the treasure his own rather than leave it "hidden in a field" to remain someone else's exciting story. My friend now has a relationship with the Creator God—a real relationship. That is the treasure. This treasure, like an immense fortune, blesses him. This treasure overflows to bless me and many others around him. Now that is amazing grace!

So, why not call out, "Here I come. Ready or not!"

Oh, the kingdom of heaven is hiding, ready to be found. Guaranteed!

Craig Mattner

teacher of mathematics and photography at Prescott College Southern in Adelaide, SA.

Thank you Australia, Thank you God



My name is Kim, and this is my story. The year was 1977 and I was four years old—a refugee from Vietnam. I was standing next to my brother Albert, who was holding a THANK YOU AUSTRALIA sign. A newspaper photographer snapped a photo and it appeared in various newspapers throughout the country. The photo was taken just after our family had been released from quarantine in Darwin and we were about to board a plane for our final destination in Sydney.

The Vietnam War had ended in 1975 and communism had taken root within our country. My father was angry at the loss of freedom we were experiencing and decided he would find a

way to get his family out of Vietnam.

We boarded a boat in the middle of the night in April 1977—73 scared men, women and children in search of a new life away from post-war communism, crammed into a small fishing vessel.

We were a Buddhist family of eight; Mum and Dad and six children between the ages of 12 years and four weeks.

A problem occurred as we boarded the boat. The captain wanted my mother to leave her baby behind. We needed complete silence as we left the harbour. My mother refused. She managed to smuggle him on board and he did not make a sound until we were out in the open sea.

Leaving Vietnam, we stopped at five countries along the way, including Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. We were unsuccessful in seeking refuge in any of these countries. Not every country helped us; some drove us back out to sea and so food became a problem.

After four months, as we neared the coastline of Australia, we noticed smoke wafting up somewhere inland. A party was sent ashore to investigate. It was an uninhabited area, but they came across a cattle station and made contact with the people. The people welcomed us. We were so thankful to be on dry land after 16 weeks at sea.

The place was Wyndham, on the border of Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

I've been told we were among the first refugees to enter Australia. The authorities were informed of our arrival and a government official arrived soon after. Within three hours we were on our way from Wyndham to Darwin.

We had no documents upon arrival, not even passports. In Darwin we were placed in quarantine for a few weeks, while our documentation was put in order, and we were granted entry visas.

On arrival in Sydney, we were placed in the Villawood Migrant Centre where we stayed for the next 12 months.

I'm reminded of the verse found in Jeremiah 29:11 where it says, "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (NIV).

This is how God's plan unfolded for me.

When I was in Grade 3 at the local primary school, a note was sent home to ask into which Scripture class I should be placed. The three choices were Christian, Muslim or Other. I asked my mother if I could go to the Christian class. Being Buddhist I should have been in the Other class. Mum agreed, because she'd had a very positive experience with Christian charities.

I loved these classes. This was my introduction to Jesus and His love. I wanted to learn about this Friend called Jesus. I was also given a Bible to keep.

During the school holidays, when I was 13-years-old, a leaflet was placed in our letterbox, called, "Taking Charge of Your Life". You could send in for lessons on Bible topics. I decided I would like to do this and posted it off. Lessons eventually arrived and I loved filling in the answers from the Bible that had been given to me in Scripture class.

After leaving school I began working in the tourism industry where I eventually met Andrew, and we began dating.

Before we married, we both decided that we needed to reconnect with church after a long absence during our teenage years. Andrew had been brought up in the Catholic faith and so we began attending the local church. We both had many questions to which we could not find the answers and we decided to try some other churches.

It is amazing how God gently leads. His "plans for us" were coming to fruition.

We had been married for a couple of years and one day another leaflet arrived in the letterbox advertising a prophecy seminar on Armageddon. Some of the topics to be presented intrigued me. For example, "Which day is the Sabbath?"; "The

state of the dead"; "Is 666 the number of the beast?". The program was to be held locally over several nights.

I asked Andrew if he would like to go, but he had a lot of work commitments and didn't think he could find the time, so I threw the leaflet out.

A few days later, while clearing out the garage, I noticed a leaflet on the floor. It was the same one I'd recently thrown away (I have no idea how it got there). I looked at the dates and found that the last day of the seminar was to be that very day. I rang Andrew and said, "Today is the last day of that seminar, do you think we could go?" He agreed and so we went on the last night of a 10-day program.

The speaker spoke of many things that we had been seeking the answers to, including the Sabbath. We were amazed.

The speaker then said that he was from the Seventh-day Adventist church, and he referred to books written by Ellen White.

On hearing this name Andrew realised it was the author of the book he was reading. A few months earlier he had picked up a book called *Desire of Ages* at a second-hand book store. Andrew loved it so much, he read it twice.

From this time forward we were excited to learn increasingly more of the wonderful biblical doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Especially seeing all the answers proved from Scripture.

In 2009 Andrew felt the call to become a minister and went to Avondale College (now Avondale University) where he graduated with a double degree in theology and ministry.

Andrew now has three churches in which he serves as head pastor. We have three beautiful children, and God has blessed us abundantly.

But that is not all.

Recently, my daughter came home from high school and said a friend had shown her a picture of a wall mural of Vietnamese refugees. The painting was the same picture of us holding up the sign saying THANK YOU AUSTRALIA, all those years ago. After doing some research I discovered that the wall mural had been painted by a street artist called Heesco Khosnaran, in the town of Yarram in South Gippsland, Victoria. It was one of 25 murals throughout the town. Through social media, I made contact with a TV producer and filmmaker who invited me to come and meet both him and the artist. While there, he filmed my story and I was also introduced to Dr John Schooneveldt, who told me that he had been the minister in 1977 who had come to Wyndham and had given us permission to enter this country. Isn't it incredible how God's plans come full circle.

My heart is full of thanksgiving. Not only to Australia for taking us in and becoming our home, but thanks to God for His amazing grace and His leading both Andrew and I on this wonderful journey together.

June 18 is World Refugee Sabbath for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Resources are available at <adra.org/worldrefugeesabbath>.

Kim Russell

as told to Sandra Lehn, Communications,
Hoxton Park church, Sydney, NSW.



Peanut butter and raspberry scones

Serves 12 Prep 10 Cook 15

Peanut butter in the dough and a tangy berry glaze on top give the humble scone an extra special touch. Perfect as an on-the-go snack or with afternoon tea.

Ingredients

½ cup Sanitarium™ No Added Salt or Sugar Smooth Peanut Butter
1 cup low fat Greek yoghurt
½ cup So Good™ Lite Soy Milk, plus extra to brush
2 cups white self-raising flour, plus extra for bench
1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour
1 tbsp brown sugar
pinch salt
¼ cup margarine or dairy-free spread, very cold

For the glaze:

1 cup raspberries, fresh or frozen-thawed, mashed
¼ – ½ cup icing sugar, to taste
1–2 tsp hot water, if necessary

Nutritional Information (per serving)

ENERGY	CALORIES	PROTEIN	FAT	SATURATES	CARBOHYDRATE
1080kJ	257	9g	10g	2g	31g
SUGARS	FIBRE	CALCIUM	SODIUM	IRON	POTASSIUM
8g	3.5g	73mg	324mg	0.6mg	263mg

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C and line an oven tray with baking paper.
2. Combine peanut butter, yoghurt and soy milk in a jug and stir until smooth.
3. Place flours, sugar and salt into a large bowl and whisk to combine. Add margarine and use fingertips to quickly rub the spread into the flour until crumbly. Make a well in the centre of the flour mixture.
4. Spoon peanut butter mixture into the well and stir, using a flat-bladed knife and a cutting motion, until a soft dough forms.
5. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured bench top, gently knead to just bring together, and pat into a rectangle, approx. 24 x 10 cm. Use a sharp knife to cut dough into 12 squares.
6. Transfer scones to prepared tray and brush tops with extra milk. Bake 15 minutes or until golden and cooked through. Cool on tray.
7. To make the glaze, place berries in a small bowl and stir through icing sugar—start with ¼ cup and add an extra tablespoon, if desired. Add hot water to thin, if necessary. Drizzle glaze over scones to serve.



Recipe of the Week

Subscribe to receive delicious plant-based recipes straight to your inbox.

Dietitian approved!

Find out more





THE SLOW PROCESS *of growth*

I am eating feijoas from my feijoa tree! Not long ago I was surprised to see some good-sized fruit on the tree. They were unripe, but I picked some. We have fruit fly in our area and, sadly, fruit flies seem to like feijoas as much as I do! I figure if I'm quick, I may be able to beat them.

Let me backtrack a bit.

I first tasted feijoa in my Year 8 English class at Benalla High School. It was a fruit I'd never seen before. My task was to experience the fruit and write creatively about it. I remember my delight at the taste and smell of this beautiful fruit. I told my family all about it, and looked out for it. I learned it is also called "pineapple guava".

My next experience of feijoa was in New Zealand. Feijoas do very well in Auckland. I didn't have a tree, but I had friends with feijoa trees. Feijoas can have a lot of fruit. They are not ready for harvest until they are ripe and ready to fall. Typically, you would gather the fallen fruit each day. My kind friends would give me bags of feijoas. If I were lucky enough to have feijoas on hand, I would easily enjoy 15 or more at a time—scooping out the tasty flesh with a teaspoon.

Moving back to Australia, I wanted to grow my own feijoa bush. I purchased a small plant from a garden centre. Knowing you should have two or more for optimal fertility, I added to my collection. We rented for a bit and eventually settled. Now and then we got to see and taste a feijoa or two, or to lament the fruit flies which seem to be more industrious than us.

But this year . . .

This year we have a bumper crop. This year is our 20th anniversary for moving into our home in Albury. The last couple of weeks have been cold, maybe reducing fruit fly. We see a few stings, not as many as previous years. And this year we are seeing more fruit than we have ever seen before. The fruit

I picked too early was okay, but the fruit that falls into my hand when I touch it, is delicious.

The last two Sabbaths have featured fruit in our local church—the fruit of the Spirit in the children's story time both Sabbaths¹, and today the mandarin as a metaphor of the potential Jesus sees in us as disciple-making disciples.² My thoughts in between these Sabbaths as I gathered feijoas from my tree have been about patience and growth. For many years, I longed for feijoas and was sad my tree didn't really have anything to offer. But my tree has been growing and developing and when the time was right, there was a bountiful harvest. Twenty years is a long time to wait to enjoy a bucket load of feijoas!

Sometimes I am expecting a harvest too soon in other areas too—young people I know are still growing, putting down roots, experimenting with life choices. And I, myself, notice that my personal tree is not loaded down with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Years pass (drought, adversity, garden pests), but we are still growing, still developing, still putting down roots and putting out branches . . .

There is a beautiful metaphor about a grapevine in John 15:5. If we remain connected to Jesus, there is a guarantee of growth and new life and a bountiful harvest for God's kingdom.

1. Thank you, Geoff and Kerelyn, for your children's stories.

2. Thank you, Pastor Glenn Townend, for your sermon.

April Wood

church librarian and on the Junior Sabbath school team at Albury church, NSW, where she also works at the local public library.



Conversations

Freedom to think

Re: "The church is not a building" (April 15). This is my understanding of it. Mind you, I gained an uplift from the article and it is a good model to set in motion.

The church is a functioning organism, like a beehive. What motivates a hive of say 30,000 bees? They have no committee of leadership; the workers control everything. Even to the performance of the queen in her capacity to lay sufficient eggs. Some go out early to scout for nectar-bearing blooms, return and relay that information to the bees who are engaged in that section of the common interest. Others fan the hive when necessary to keep the hive cool; certain of them attend to the young bees. They all have a task to perform or else they don't exist. There is something mysterious here but it works. These busy creatures produce thousands of tons of honey and have a life expectancy of perhaps six weeks or less.

The church is a blood-washed

throng—members of the body of Christ. They have left the old life and have changed to a new life. I can't imagine bees eyeing each other off either authoritatively or culturally. They were or are rigged in an enterprise for the common good of all now and for the next generation. Members of the body of Christ see fellow members as inheritors of the same hope—they look for the same deliverance, their mind is focused on an earth made new. We are all looking for a building that won't fall down.

The ministry and fellowship you experienced on that blessed Sabbath day with your friend is the core of the church's activity. That is where earth meets heaven; the spirit that pervades the body of Christ is not an excited feeling that vanishes like the dew before the early sun. But is deep rooted, unconscious and unaware. Ministry is right in front of us at all times. Your love is needed in the place of suffering as much as anywhere else.

And they were all of one purpose and of one accord. They ate their

bread with gladness of heart. And counted the things of this life of small value, knowing that they had better and everlasting possessions in the kingdom of God. That experience is or can be ours now.

Lawrence Cullen, Vic

Unclean ingredients?

I enjoy the *Adventist Record*. The recipe on P18 of April 15 contains black pepper.

This ingredient is at variance with the advice given in ministry of healing p325.

"Mustard, pepper . . . irritate the stomach and make the blood feverish and impure."

It is noted that other "unclean" ingredients slip or slosh (vinegar in various forms) their way into these recipes occasionally. [!] Suggest that items for publication align with long-established health principles, particularly those highlighted by the Spirit of Prophecy.

Dean Way, Tas

Kids Space

HELLO KIDS!

We worship God with our lives.

How to be a Winner

John has a vision of Jesus. Jesus looks different. He is bright and shining like gold. Jesus gives John a message for seven churches. When John wakes from the vision he writes down what he remembers. Even though the churches had problems, God wanted them to know that He loved them.

Jesus knows what you do, the good bits and the bad stuff. But He still loves us and always will—He may just need to help us out a bit so we don't do the bad stuff we are ashamed of.

Find the Church to go with the Messages

FOLLOW THE MAZE AND PICK UP ALL THE LETTERS THAT CORRESPOND WITH THE SAME COLOURED SHAPES FOR THE ANSWER

You are loving and faithful. You are hard working and generous. But you need to stop listening to that prophet who is confusing your people.

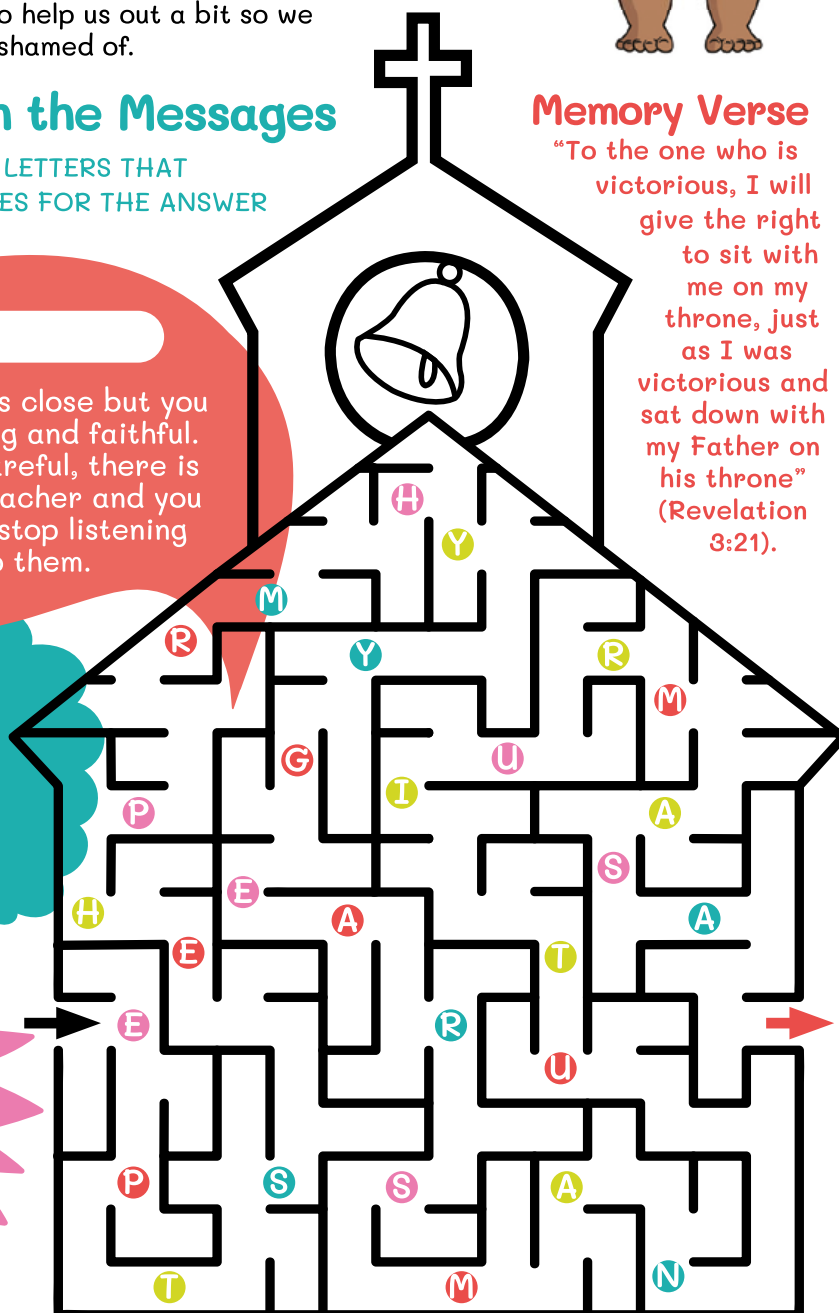
Satan lives close but you are strong and faithful. But be careful, there is a false teacher and you need to stop listening to them.

I know how you suffer and how poor you are. But you are rich where it counts. We have a great relationship. I will be there for you when things get tough.

You are so hard-working and generous. You don't give up even when the going gets tough. But you need to spend more time with Me. Let's get to know each other again.

Memory Verse

"To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Revelation 3:21).



"Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth." Deuteronomy 8:18

No cash? No problem.

Never miss an opportunity to praise God by giving.



eGiving



Australia: www.egiving.org.au
New Zealand: www.egiving.org.nz



Obituaries



BRIANT, Laurel Eva (nee Hawken), born 11.8.1931 in Dunedoo, NSW; died 19.4.23 in Whiddon Nursing

Home, Moree. On 1.5.1951 she married Keith. She was predeceased by her husband in 1986. She is survived by her daughters, Sheryl (Townsville, Qld), Karen (Dargo, Vic) and Robyn aka "Bobbie" (Narromine, NSW); and sons, David (Moree) and Errol (Toowoomba, Qld); and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Laurel gained her teaching degree at James Cook University in her late 40s and taught in Ayr until retiring. Laurel was active in the Ayr church.

Peau Afoa



FRANCKE, Josh William, born 27.12.1991 in Kalgoorlie, WA; died 12.4.23 in Kalgoorlie.

He is survived by his parents, Bill and Mandy; sisters, Tara and Megan; and brother, Caleb (all of Kalgoorlie). Josh suffered from cerebral palsy for his whole life.

Each day he needed help to do normal things and wasn't able to talk but in non verbal ways he was able to show love and appreciation. He was greatly loved by his family and Kalgoorlie church who look forward to the day when Jesus returns and Josh will be raised whole.

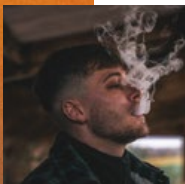
Robert Kingston



GILLESPIE, Lesley Isabel (nee Harrington), born 19.2.1934 in Riverton, NZ; died 18.1.23 in Nelson. She

was predeceased by her husband, Bob in 1980 and her brother, Geoff Harrington. She is survived by her daughters, Joy Iti, Andrea Sutton and Rosalee Ensor (all of Nelson, NZ); grandchildren, Melissa, Ollie, Tamara, Rochelle and Brydee; seven great-grandchildren and sister, Shirley Devine. Les's kind, gentle spirit endeared her to many. She was always positive, seeing the best in everyone and bore her own troubles with quiet strength. Over the years she served in Pathfinders, Sabbath school, as deaconess, ABC secretary, and in treasury and became one of the first women elders in the Nelson church.

THIS MONTH IN *signs* of the times



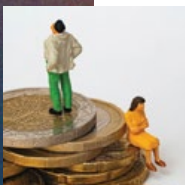
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TAYLOR, Kathleen Michelle, born 24.6.1966 in Mullumbimby, NSW; died 11.1.23 in Brisbane, Qld. Kathleen is survived by her parents, Jeff and Nola Taylor; brother, Greg; and sister, Kellie Burgoyne. She attended Tyalgum Public School, Murwillumbah Adventist School, Mullumbimby Adventist School and Murwillumbah Tweed Valley Adventist College. After working as a cleaner, she graduated as a registered nurse in 1994 and later obtained her midwifery certificate. She briefly worked as a nanny in England and served as a nurse at Barnet General Hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital in the UK. Kate returned to Australia in 2001 and began working at Mater Mother Hospital, Brisbane in the NICU. She travelled extensively and fulfilled a bucket list dream by visiting Ayers Rock/Uluru. Special thanks to her close friends, Sian and Leah-Amethyst, for their unwavering support and huge thank you to the staff at Mater Mother intensive care unit. Kate's generosity, warmth, and love for others will be greatly missed.

Warren Price

WALKER, Bill, born 3.6.1935 in Wonthaggi, Vic; died 17.4.23 in Croydon. He is survived by his wife, Pamela; and son, Jason. Bill lived a long and active life, working for the most part at the Tramways Board in Victoria. Bill was a national serviceman who fulfilled his duty to his country with honour. He was deeply valued by his home church, Yarra Valley in Wandin. His beloved wife cared for him until the very end. He was very proud of his son. Bill went to sleep confident of the hope of the resurrection and clinging to the Old Rugged Cross.

Daniel Matteo

Advertisements

Shred It | Young Adult Snow Camp.

Join young adults (18–35) from across Australia this July 28–31 at the Adventist Alpine Village in Jindabyne. Worship together, chill out by the fireside, and hit the slopes. More details <events.adventist.org.au/event/info/10880>.

South New Zealand 68th Constituency Meetings

Notice is hereby given that the 68th Constituency Meetings of the South New Zealand

Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the period 2019 to 2022 will be held at Ilam church, 26 Ilam Road, Upper Riccarton, Christchurch, on October 27–29, 2023. Registration for appointed delegates will open on Friday, October 27 and the meetings will conclude on Sunday, October 29.

ABSOLUTE CARE FUNERALS

The Adventist family owned and operated business, caring for you from Sydney to Newcastle and Wollongong. Contact Arne Neirinckx, who understands our Adventist philosophy. Contact us on 1300 982 803 or 0408 458 452 or <arne@absolutecarefunerals.com.au>, even if you have already paid for your funeral.

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON ON AUDIO CD

Christian Services for the Blind produces an audio CD of the Sabbath school lesson quarterly for those with vision impairment. If you or someone you know could benefit from this free service please contact us. Phone: +61 (0)2 9847 2296. Email <csfbhi@adventistmedia.org.au>. Post to Christian Services for the Blind, Locked Bag 1115, Wahroonga NSW 2076.

Positions Vacant

RESOURCE CENTRE ASSISTANT—AUC (Part-Time 0.66FTE) RINGWOOD, VIC

Join our team as a resource centre assistant and help us make a positive difference! As the creative hub of the Australian Union Conference, the Resource Centre creates and distributes books and resources to help our community learn and grow. As a friendly and enthusiastic team player with experience in bookkeeping, dispatch, and receiving procedures, you'll have the opportunity to distribute resources, handle enquiries, and support all areas of our operation alongside our dedicated team. Don't miss this chance to work in a supportive team environment and make a real impact in our community. If you have a legal right to work in Australia, please submit your interest to <AUCHR@adventist.org.au> to be considered or for more information, please visit our website <adventistemployment.org.au>. **Applications close June 7, 2023.**

CATERING SUPERVISOR/COOK—CAMP HOWQUA HOWQUA, VIC

Camp Howqua is seeking a full-time catering supervisor/cook to be part of our team, working in a spacious, modern commercial kitchen. Camp Howqua is a busy 200 bed facility catering mainly for school groups during the week and seminar, family and youth groups on weekends. We are seeking someone with appropriate trade qualifications and/or extensive experience in fresh, high volume quality cooking, proven ability to plan menus with experience and skill in catering for vegetarian and diverse special dietary requirements while working within a budget, staff supervisory experience, strong customer focus with good intrapersonal and communication skills, strong work ethic with the ability to work unsupervised as well as within a close team and the right to work in Australia. We pay very competitive rates commensurate with skills, qualifications and experience. For more information visit the South Pacific Division's employment website <adventistemployment.org.au>. **Applications close June 30, 2023.**



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Consulting editor
Glenn Townend

Editor
Jarrod Stackelroth

Assistant editors
Juliana Muniz
Danelle Stothers

Copyeditor
Tracey Bridcutt

Graphic designer
Nerise McQuillan

Noticeboard
Julie Laws

Letters
editor@record.net.au

News & photos
news@record.net.au

Noticeboard
ads@record.net.au

Subscriptions
subscriptions@record.net.au
+ 61 (0)3 5965 6300
Mailed within Australia and
New Zealand
\$A60.00; \$NZ90.00
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Website
record.adventistchurch.com

Mailing address
Adventist Media
Locked Bag 1115
Wahroonga NSW 2076
Australia
+ 61 (0)2 9847 2222

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