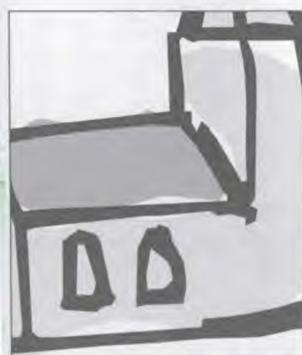


RECORD

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PAC Recognised as a University

Pacific Adventist College (PAC), Papua New Guinea, received government endorsement as a university on November 1. It is the first Adventist tertiary institution in the South Pacific Division to be recognised as a university.

Papua New Guinea's National Executive Council endorsed the college's future role as a private university with its own philosophy and its specific focus on Pacific developing countries. It accepted PAC as a partner university in higher education and agreed to continue to provide scholarships for academic programs approved by the Commissioner for Higher Education.

PAC board chairperson and South Pacific Division president Dr Bryan Ball said, "We are delighted with this recognition and believe it will give significant status to PAC as it serves the constituency of the Pacific islands." He also indicated that the implications of the decision have yet to be explored between the church, the college board and the Papua New Guinea government.

In recognition of this new status, the National Executive Council also approved a 1997 grant of \$A487,000 to support the college in developing facilities needed to upgrade its programs to university level. Pictured above is the university's church.—Ray Coombe

Visited a Hospital . . . Lately?



They must be tired of all of this, I think. It's the third time in my lifetime that we've stood, arms around each other—fending off fear, enclosing faith.

Days are spent sitting by a hospital bed, staring at a loved face either wincing in pain or resting in sleep. Friends come; they bring flowers, food, compassion. The pastor gathers us about the bed and prays. His voice mellows the ward, and as he prays I hope others who are afraid may overhear and also gain the comfort of prayer.

For two weeks I exist in a vacuum of certainty and uncertainty. Certain that He is there, that He is caring—yet almost too numb to pray.

And each day there are phone calls, prayers by others, messages on my answering machine—"Just calling to let you know we understand and we're praying for you."

Then finally the patient regains strength. She laughs, she jokes, she even chastises me for not paying my car registration on time.

And as much as I thank God for her renewed smile, I am awed and grateful at the power of the presence of friends.

For there are some people who, while in hospital, are never visited.

They sit all by themselves with no flowers beside their bed, no colourful sign of their being treasured. And when

they're feeling frail, when they sit for endless hours in a chair staring at the same pale blue walls and squares of lino, there is just no one there for them.

My sisters trained as nurse; I trained as a teacher. Really that should say it all. I'm not too bad with applying a cold flannel to someone's forehead, but the mere sound of another person being sick means I either have to leave the room fast—or have a bed made up for me.

But a strange thing happened to me after watching people in hospital for two weeks.

I saw that there's no such thing as a

Rather than emphasising drawing people in, we should be giving Him out.

"sick person," it's just that they appear different because they're stripped of their identity; their dignity is lost in a shared ward and their independence is shaken through illness.

They don't like being there. The noises of the other patients probably make them feel sick too. They brighten when they are visited. They take on a different colour; they stand out against the sheets.

Many desperately need what my church gives me: a community of support, someone to squeeze their arm in compassion, someone to bring the paper, someone to chat about things outside the hospital. They need eyes that look with interest past their observation chart into their character.

Today nursing care is becoming increasingly clinical. Government cutbacks mean less time and fewer resources for patients. The kind touch,

both emotional and physical, is being removed from the ill.

It's funny how life brings you around, isn't it? This experience is awakening me. It would probably do the same to you should you see someone that could be your mother sitting quietly in a chair, and out of sheer boredom tracing with the tip of her finger the outline of the heads of the little metal screws on their tray table—for an hour.

As I've said before, I'm not much good in hospitals, but when you're there for someone you love—and when you realise that God calls everyone that's in there "family"—well, suddenly hospitals become these huge buildings harbouring some scared and lonely children of His.

I'm beginning to think that rather than looking at the empty pews and wondering how to fill them (and it seems after umpteen dozen surveys, studies and committees, numerically we're stagnating), we should just get out there and love people the way Christ begs us to. Rather than emphasising drawing people in, we should be giving Him out.

Perhaps the health of a church should be gauged by the members' passion for the needs of others.

When my church family visited, not a scripture was quoted, not a religious study was made the entire two traumatic weeks, but there was the constant assurance of their support. Each one, by their *presence* there, was telling me—Karen, Jesus loves you.

So, what are *you* up to this afternoon?

Karen Miller

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South Pacific Division



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Next Week:

What are the implications for the church in the Pacific after the critical ministries debacle?

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We Mustn't Forget

by Nina Koolik

Her dark face stared silently at me as I worked. I looked up at her and smiled. She smiled back.

Tolisi, a Year 8 student, came to watch me scrub and paint the walls of her college dormitory during every lunchbreak. Occasionally, a few broken English words would slip from her lips. She wanted to show her appreciation for the work our group was doing.

Twenty-one Caboolture (Queensland) church members recently completed a two-week Tongan fly'n'repair trip. Our jobs included reroofing the Beulah Adventist College girls dormitory, painting the entire building and repairing the toilets and showers.

Two days before we were leaving, Tolisi came to watch me work again. I had a T-shirt that I wanted to leave with her. She was such a little darling, but I could tell by the way she was dressed that she had very little. I handed her the small present.

She stood still for a moment, and then hesitatingly reached out to take it. She looked into my face and tears began to well in her eyes. She whispered, "Thank you," and left, slowly. She returned a moment later with a Tongan dollar, holding it out in her small hand for me.

I instantly refused—this was so much money for her—and just gave her a tight squeeze. She didn't know what to say, or maybe how to say it, so we stood together for awhile in silence.

As I walked home that afternoon I felt compelled to give her something else—one of my smaller dresses, a blue one with little white flowers. I saw Tolisi again that evening, and asked her to come back with me to the Tongan house where I was staying. As she waited outside, I ran in to get the dress.

In between tears after I gave it to her, she finally asked me, "Please come my house now?" I nodded, Tolisi smiled, and together we walked along the dusty road to her home.

I was shocked and saddened by what I saw next. Her house, a tiny one-room shanty, consisted of only four slanted timber walls and a roof that barely served its purpose. Sunlight streamed through the cracks in the walls. A small rusted bed lay in one corner, a pile of blankets in another. The family owned barely anything.

Stepping into the risen living quarters, my eyes met those of her mother. We smiled at each other, and embraced in greeting. A half-naked little boy clung to her leg. He was one of Tolisi's five brothers.

After hurriedly rolling a woven mat onto the floor for us to sit on, Tolisi showed her mother the dress I'd given her. She was speechless. We sat and talked together for some time. I acted as comfortable as possible, but it was hard. When there was nothing left to say, I thanked them and excused myself. I needed to pack for our departure the next day.

As I walked away, Tolisi's tears

became mine. I thought about my life back in Australia. When I think about all I own, and compare it to all her family had, I feel so ashamed, so selfish. Often members of my family open the fridge and say, "There's nothing to eat," when really the fridge is full of food.

You see pictures of shanty houses in Third World countries, and for a moment you think, "Oh, how terrible!" And then you forget all about them because it isn't real. It doesn't affect the way you live.

But when you actually see poverty first hand, it hits hard.

I'm no different from Tolisi. I was just born in a Western country and in a different family.

Isn't it my responsibility to think about my neighbour as well? Do people who haven't seen Tolisi's reality only have materialism in their heads?

It's not right. I pray that I won't forget.

□

Nina Koolik writes from Queensland.

Global Mission Prayer Corner

When **Divi Sodangi** first arrived in Dhenkanal, India, there were no believers. The villagers, mostly tribal people, were heavy smokers and drinkers, and many had other health problems too. But after working as a health minister for three years, Divi has convinced **88 people to be baptised**.

One day Divi saw two people who had been looking for him. He realised they were drunk. They didn't like him giving out health brochures, and were going to beat him up. They wanted to know what Divi had in his bag, and opened it. They found a Bible, some brochures and some medicine.

"If the villagers take your medicines, they will die," the two said. "Why do you come to our Hindu village and cause problems, anyway?"

"I'm a Christian," said Divi.

"**What will your god do now if we hit you?**" Divi gave them 20 rupees not to hurt him.

"Next time we'll take 100 rupees," they said, taking the money to spend on alcohol.

While they were drunk, the two went back to the village and held up a bank. But the villagers caught them and had them arrested. When Divi returned to the village several months later, he met the two people. They'd been released from prison and were trying to quit drinking. Divi often teases them at his meetings, asking whether they want 20 rupees. They say no.



Goodbye, Gary



Photo: J Gibbs

Former creative director of the Adventist Media Centre (AMC) and one-time associate editor of the *Record* and *Good Health* Gary Krause, and his wife, Bettina, left for the USA on December 1. Gary is the new Global Mission communication director at the General Conference. Bettina is a law student and will complete her degree by correspondence. "Although the appointment is for six years, Bettina and I regard it as a missionary endeavor and not forever," said Gary. The couple are pictured with AMC director Pastor John Banks at the farewell party.

Adventist Life

"As children of missionary parents travelling around the world, my brother and I got tired of the constant, monotonous questioning of the customs officials. One day, after being interrogated as to whether we had cigarettes or alcohol in our possession, my brother added, 'And we don't eat meat, either!'"

—Karen Downing Grob in *Adventist Review*

Did You Hear . . . ?

● To support the growing momentum for an organised men's ministry program in the Adventist Church, a new devotional book, *600 Minutes with God*, was published in the United States recently. The book contains 200 devotionals written by men, for men. Pastor Dick Duerksen, co-editor of the book, says that the publication is like "opening biblical windows into many of the challenges being faced by Christian men."

● How's this for cute? It's an ADRA fundraiser made by Beryl Manning. She makes and sells cards (pictured) for \$A2, with \$A1 going to ADRA.



● She's the best! Elaine Fletcher of Dorrigo (NSW) recently won the Bible Society's NSW Bible Challenge grand final. Of 40 contestants eligible to take part (participants had to win local challenges first), 24, including three Adventists, faced the grand final quiz. After being one of the four highest-scoring contestants to answer the 50-question test, Elaine won the "first-on-the-buzzer" style final round. She says it was worth doing the extra study because it not only helped her win, but was good experience and discipline. The prize: a plaque and two air tickets to see the Bible Society's work in Indonesia.

New Job Child's Play for First Director



Rochelle Butler was appointed as the first director of the new Vineyard Child Care Centre in Sydney recently. "As its first director, she will be largely responsible for setting the course of the centre with regard to operating policies and management systems," says a report in *Adventist Professional*. Rochelle has worked and studied in the early childhood training field for nearly eight years, earning two degrees: a Bachelor of Education and a Diploma of Education in early childhood development. The child-care centre, established by the Association of Business and Professional Members, officially opened in early November.

Quicker Test

A breakthrough in microbiological testing developed recently at Sydney Adventist Hospital (SAH). New South Wales, will reduce the time patients suffering heart-membrane inflammation and ulcers spend in hospital. SAH microbiologist Bruce Tually has designed a new test for *Streptococcus viridans* that simplifies its identification and provides results in half the time. "Hospitals throughout Australia have been very interested in the work we've been doing as they know of the need for accurate, quick results," says Mr Tually.

AdCare Grants

Church grants totalling more than \$A22,000 were approved recently by the South Pacific Division's administrative committee from interest earnings of the AdCare Trust Fund. Following a recommendation by the trust fund com-

mittee, 40 churches from nine conferences received grants of up to \$A1000.

Debt Repaid

The Victorian Adventist Book Centre (ABC) recently repaid what was, for an Australian ABC, an unimaginable debt, reports Victorian ABC manager, Eliot Bolst. In January 1993 the book centre owed the conference \$A110,000 and had overdrawn its bank account by \$A35,000. "The conference executive committee thought the ABC should close," says Mr Bolst. "And they didn't expect to see their money again." The ABC repaid the debt with the help of a \$A50,000 one-off appropriation that provided liquidity and operating capital.

Homes for Needy

Homes providing long-term care for nine intellectually disabled people were

More Baptisms in Kent Family



Three generations of the Kent family came together recently to witness the baptisms of Julian and Zenon Els in the Lismore (NSW) church. They were baptised by their uncle, Pastor Anthony Kent, who is the grandson of Pastor Tom Kent.

Photo: L. Coe

recently established by the Adventist Special Family Association in Perth (WA). The association, made up of parents and friends of people with disabilities, and the Western Australian Conference, which has taken responsibility for operating the homes, secured long-term leases for the same-site duplex unit and four-bedroom house. At an acknowledgement evening, Western Australian Disability Services chief executive officer Haydn Lowe commended the church for its 10-year commitment to setting up the homes.

Discovery channel series called "Beginnings," featuring organisations whose historic origins are in the United States. The producers televised the Battle Creek Tabernacle and its services as a representative location of where the Adventist church officially began in 1863.—*Lake Union Herald*

ADRA Help

Despite a volatile political situation, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is assisting displaced Rwandans caught in the conflict with Zaire. "Access into the camps is difficult and dangerous," says ADRA—Australia associate director Warren Scale. "We've set up a temporary office for this disaster, drawing on staff from ADRA—Rwanda and the Goma project." ADRA is coordinating its relief effort with United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

SPD Transfers

Herbert Eisele, from teacher, Central Coast Adventist School (NSW), to teacher, Fulton College; **Graeme Humble**, from ministerial association secretary, Papua New Guinea Union Mission, to personal ministries, Sabbath school and AdCare director, South Queensland Conference; **Russell Jones**, from treasurer, Fiji Mission, to associate treasurer, Central Pacific Union Mission; **Michael Mihajlovic**, from lecturer, Pacific Adventist College, to teacher, Albury Adventist School; **Bev Norman**, from principal, Warburton Primary School, to head of education, Fulton College; **Malakai Tawake**, from lecturer, Pacific Adventist College, to head of business studies, Fulton College; **Guillermo Troncoso**, from teacher, Sydney Adventist College, to teacher, Aore Adventist Academy.

Avondale Appointments

Jodi Scale, to teacher, Bendigo Adventist Primary School; **Bronwyn Dose**, to teacher, Bowral Adventist School.

WORLD CHURCH SDA History on TV

A television crew from England recently visited historic Adventist sites in Battle Creek, Michigan (USA), to produce a 10-segment series on Seventh-day Adventists. The footage will be used as part of a new

Supportive and Critical Ministries

by Gerhard Pfandl

There is a role for independent ministries in the church. Why have some gone too far?

The apostle Paul, speaking of the church, the mystical body of Christ, in his letter to the Ephesians says: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling . . ." (Ephesians 4:4, NKJV).

All Christians who accept Christ as their personal Saviour belong to God's invisible church. God has worked, and still is working, through many organised Christian churches to make His gospel known. But, in the time of the end, prophecy predicts God would have a special work for the remnant church of Revelation 12:17, the church that keeps the commandments of God and has the testimony of Jesus.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe our church is this remnant church called by God to proclaim the three angels' messages to a dying world.

The General Conference in 1980, at Dallas, voted to accept as a fundamental belief (number 12) that: "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent.

"This proclamation is symbolised by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness" (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, page 152).

The remnant church is *one* body, not many; *one* church, not many.

Until recently, Seventh-day Adventists had no problem with this concept. Yet today many private Seventh-day Adventist organisations around the world present a challenge to this one-body concept.

What has happened?

Supportive Ministries

As Seventh-day Adventists we generally carry out our mission through the organised structure of our church, which consists of conferences/missions, unions, divisions and the General Conference. Within this structure are institutions: hospitals, schools, publishing houses, media centres etc.

In addition, a number of private, independent or special ministries have sprung up from time to time, whose stated purpose is to assist the Seventh-day Adventist Church in fulfilling its mission. They function outside of the regular church structure.

Of the more than 800 private organisations existing today, most are supportive ministries. Most belong to ASI (Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries)—an organisation that began in 1947 with about 25 health-care and educational ministries.

Today, more than 600 private ministries (restaurants, food factories, travel agencies, attorney's offices, printing shops, old people's homes, schools, orphanages etc) in North America alone belong to ASI, which has its head office at the General Conference. A key reason for ASI is to witness more effectively. Their motto is "Sharing Christ in the Marketplace."

Each year ASI organises a convention for its members. In 1996 more than 1000 people attended their convention in Providence, Rhode Island, making this one of the largest conventions in ASI history. Stories of personal witnessing, excellent seminars, Spirit-filled preaching and about 100 exhibits illustrated the commitment that members of ASI have to the church.

The Sabbath offering, a high point of each convention, of more than \$US1,235,000, was dedicated to 18 ministries and soul-winning initiatives.

Overall, the church has been richly blessed by these private, supporting ministries. They accomplish a task that the organised church cannot do because of financial or personnel limitations. Most have worked in harmony with the organised church, and we're grateful to these committed men and women who operate these private, supporting ministries.

Critical or Divisive Ministries

In a small number of cases, however, private organisations work at cross-purposes with the church in the following ways:

1. They are highly critical of the church leadership, tending to encourage an unscriptural congregationalism, in which a church functions independently and at odds with the church body.
2. They undermine the confidence of members in the church, its mission and its doctrines.
3. They drain funds away from the



church.

While these ministries frequently claim to work in support of the church, their activities and publications indicate the opposite. For example: They accuse the Seventh-day Adventist Church of apostasy from the historic faith because the church does not accept their interpretations of certain theological positions.

They claim: "So great is the apostasy, often at high levels of our church, so widespread the abuse of the flock of God who stand for His pure truth, so rapid the spread of error and the acceptance of appalling standards, that a true minister can but tremble for his church."¹

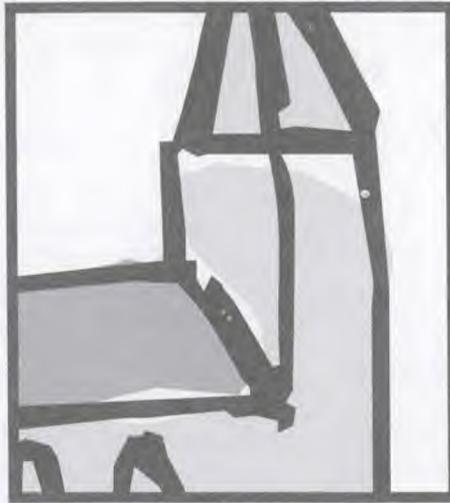
Throughout the book *The Sepulchres Are Whited* are many references to apostate practices, apostate doctrines and the teaching of apostasy in our colleges and churches, particularly in the South Pacific Division.²

They accuse the denominational leadership of collusion in apostasy, because the leaders do not take a stand against teachings that these independent ministries find offensive.

"Today numerous church members have all but lost their faith in church pastors and church leaders, counting their silence as consent to the raging apostasy, lowering of standards, and mistreatment of God's flock rampant among us."³

They accuse the ministry of introducing worldly and even immoral practices into the church. They say that denominational leadership approves of these practices: "Undoubtedly the most telling blow against the value of the ministerial credential is its continued issuance to men who preach open apostasy, men who have been proved to be fiscally dishonest, and men who are known adulterers."⁴

Are mistakes being made in the church? Yes. But it is incorrect to say that nothing has been done about them? After careful and painstaking investigation in harmony with Jesus' counsel in Matthew 18:15-17, employees of the church, as well as church members, where appropriate, have been disciplined. However, no one should be disciplined unless the matter has been established beyond doubt and Paul's counsel in Galatians 6:1 has been heeded, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore



such a person in a spirit of gentleness . . ." (NKJV).

We do not question the fact that there is sin in the church, that worldliness is creeping into the church, and that some may teach things not in harmony with our doctrines or standards. But where does it say in Scripture, or the writings of Ellen White, these facts have to be published for all the world to read?

The leadership from the General Conference president to the church pastor is concerned about sin in the church, about worldliness, about the lowering of standards, but they do not need to be published.

"Remember that he who takes the position of a criticiser greatly weakens his own hands. God has not made it the duty of men or of women to find fault with their fellow workers" (*Evangelism*, page 634).

Now, critical ministries may claim they are following the steps outlined by Jesus in bringing these matters before the church. But where in Scripture or the writings of Ellen White does it say that fornication in America has to be brought before the church in Australia, or aberrant teachings in Australia have to be brought before the church in England?

There are ways and means of dealing with these matters in the church. Publishing them for the world to read is not one of them.

Church Within a Church

They seek to set up a "church within the church" that they perceive to be a more true and purer remnant—one that will

remain when the apostates (those who disagree with them) will be shaken out.

Each year the *Remnant Herald* magazine publishes a list of their camp-meetings in Australia and New Zealand. Why do they hold separate camp-meetings? Why can't they join with all other Adventists at regular camp-meetings? They still believe that God called this church—the remnant church—into existence, but they also see a remnant coming out of the remnant.

In 1890 Ellen White wrote to a church member who misused her writings and misrepresented her viewpoints. This letter could have been written in 1996:

"You will take passages in the Testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy" (Letter 15a, 1890, cited in *Selected Messages*, Book 1, page 179).

In 1915 Ellen White's son, Elder W C White, wrote to E E Andross, president of the Pacific Union Conference: "I told [Lida Scott] how Mother regards the experience of the remnant church, and it was her positive teaching that God would not permit this denomination to so fully apostatise that there would be a coming out of another church" (WCW Letter, May 23, 1915; cited in *Ellen G White: A Biography*, Vol 6, page 428).

Apostasy in the church will increase as time goes on, pluralism in belief and practice will become more pronounced the larger the church becomes, but the church will not apostasise. "The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out" (*Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 380).

The Tithe Issue

Loyal Seventh-day Adventist members are encouraged by some critical ministries to divert their tithe to these private organisations rather than to the church. Here's a typical example: "Because of the widespread apostasy in the church, many faithful Seventh-day Adventists conscientiously believe that they cannot support the ministries of those who are unfaithful to their trust, yet they are committed to returning their tithe faithfully. While many

would not agree with their evaluation, nevertheless one cannot deny their sincerity. In the interest of the church and the finishing of God's work on earth, it is better, far better, that their tithe be placed in the hands of self-supporting ministries than that their tithe be donated to some non-Seventh-day Adventist organisation."

While there is apostasy in the church, the church is not in apostasy. Therefore, with what justification can I withhold my tithe from the church at large, which is not in apostasy? Just because I disagree with something, or disapprove of someone, in the church doesn't mean I am at liberty to withhold my tithe.

Ellen White counsels, "The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel labourers in their work. For a long time the Lord has been robbed because there are those who do not realise that the tithe is God's reserved portion.

"Some have been dissatisfied and have said: 'I will not longer pay my tithe, for I have no confidence in the way things are managed at the heart of the work.' But will you rob God because you think the management of the work is not right? Make your complaint, plainly and openly, in the right spirit, to the proper ones. Send in your petitions for things to be adjusted and set in order; but do not withdraw from the work of God, and prove unfaithful, because others are not doing right" (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol 9, page 249).

When we are faithful and pay tithe, who blesses us? God does—not the church! "Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works. Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied, so that it does not accomplish the object which the donor had in view—the glory of God and the salvation of souls—those who made the sacrifice in sincerity of soul, with an eye single to the glory of God, will not lose their reward.

"Those who have made a wrong use of means dedicated to God will be required to give an account of their stewardship" (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol 2, page 519).

Ellen White taught that:

1. Even if church money is misapplied, the donor still receives the blessings.

2. When there are things wrong in the church, we should point them out in the right spirit and in the right way (Matthew 18).

3. We are still to pay our tithes into the Lord's treasury, which is His church.

In 1890 Mrs White wrote to people who refused to pay their tithe to the conference: "You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God, read the book of Malachi, and see what is spoken there in regard to tithes and offerings. Cannot you see that *it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offerings* because you are not in harmony with everything your brethren do? The tithes and offerings are not the property of



any man, but are to be used in doing a certain work for God. *Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised; but dare any one, because of this, withhold from the treasury and brave the curse of God?* I dare not. I pay my tithes gladly and freely.

"If the Conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring ones. The Lord will not hold you responsible for it, if you do what you can to correct the evil. *But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from God His own property*" (*Special Testimonies, Series A*, no 1, page 27, emphasis added).

Ellen White considered the withholding of tithes and offerings from the confer-

ence treasury a sinful act and not justified on the grounds that an unworthy minister might receive some of the money.

Some may argue that she didn't always pay her tithe to the conference—that she used it in other ways. Yes, she did. But let's remember she was a prophet who worked under God's direct guidance.

In 1905 she wrote: "It has been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and coloured ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient, properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases.

No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way . . .

"I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this; and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best.

"Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. . . .

"I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money" (Letter 267, 1905, cited in *Ellen G White: A Biography*, Vol 5, pages 395, 396).

Please note:

1. Ellen White was directly instructed by God to aid certain poverty-stricken ministers. At that time there was no pension plan in existence. When a minister retired, he lost his income. Not until 1911 did the church have a retirement plan.

2. The money was used for living expenses of poor ministers not for running institutions or publishing literature. It was used for ministers recognised by the church.

What Ellen White did 100 years ago should not be used as an excuse by private ministries today. The situations then and now are completely different. She would

be most upset if she knew what some people do with her writings today. The fact that there is apostasy in the church cannot be used as an excuse to divert the Lord's money from the church.

Why Critical Ministries Flourish

1. Growth of the church

There have always been individuals in the church who were unhappy with the leadership or with some of our doctrines: The Marion Party (Snook and Brinkerhoff); Canright; Kellogg; Ballenger; Conradi; Fletcher; Ford etc. There have been offshoots like Shepherd's Rod and Reform Adventists, but as long as the church had less than 1,000,000 members the number of these dissidents was small and their damage easier to contain.

With the rapid growth in membership (more than 9 million today), however, the number of disaffected people has skyrocketed.

2. Mistakes have multiplied

The larger the church becomes, the greater will be the number of mistakes. Unfortunately, divisive ministries seize on these mistakes and publish them to justify their own existence.

3. Pluralism

The larger the church grows, the greater will be the diversity of opinions, in theological, organisational and policy matters. While there has always been a certain amount of pluralism in the church—where there are people, there are differences—until recently it has not threatened church unity. But individualism, the spirit of the age, has also infiltrated the churches. As William Johnsson points out, "Rampant individualism leads to pluralism, and pluralism to relativism." And relativism in theology can be very destructive.

4. Information flow

With the technological advances of today—computers, copy machines, fax machines etc—the distribution of information has become much easier. Thirty years ago it was fairly difficult to make 100 copies of a particular letter. Today everyone can be his or her own publisher and printer.

5. Worldliness

The church at large has drifted toward an increased worldliness and a decreased spirituality. How many, for example, still attend prayer meetings? Although we have seen a tremendous increase in members, there has been a steady decline in offerings. Do we still have testimony meetings?

The Adventist lifestyle has changed dramatically. Television, music, books and magazines exert a tremendous influence on the Adventist home. Divorce in the church is as frequent as in the society at large. Dress and jewellery standards in the church have changed. Alcohol and drugs no longer stop at the door of the church. And church discipline is frequently no longer exercised.

Critical ministries are usually more strict in these matters, therefore they appeal to many Seventh-day Adventists.

6. Loss of confidence in Ellen White's writings

During the past 15-20 years, many Seventh-day Adventists have begun to either ignore or oppose the Ellen White writings. Fewer members read her books today. A recent survey in the church indicated that a suggested conference on the interpretation of biblical and Ellen White material would receive a very low priority rating in the South Pacific Division.

7. Loss of confidence in our distinctive message

The sanctuary doctrine, a key pillar of our message, is often ignored today, or

reinterpreted in such a way that it is hardly recognisable. The abovementioned survey showed that the Sabbath, another of our key doctrines, received one of the lowest ratings among the 27 Fundamentals in the South Pacific Division. And historicism as the basic method of prophetic interpretation is increasingly being questioned.

8. Fulfillment of Revelation 12:17

Prophecy predicts that Satan would make war on the remnant church, either through persecution from outside or through the introduction of false teachings from within. "Men who pretend to have been taught of God, will adopt fallacious theories, and their teaching will so adorn these fallacies as to bring in satanic delusions" (*Evangelism*, page 360).

Conclusion

Many supportive ministries are doing an excellent work in furthering the mission of the church. A small number of critical ministries, however, focus to a large extent on negative developments in the church, they are highly critical of the church leadership, they undermine the confidence of members in the church, and they drain away funds. They threaten the foundation and the mission of the church.

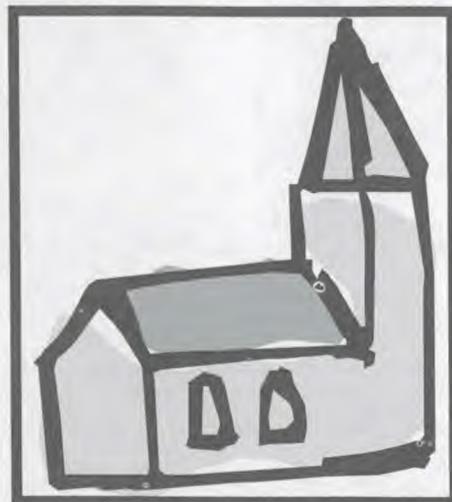
Critical ministries believe that their work is to call the church to a higher standard—and certainly the church needs revival and reformation. But the effect of their ministry is to divide and weaken the church rather than to empower and strengthen it.

The remnant church is *one* church, not many, *one* body, not many. Christ is Lord and Head of the church, and He wants us to work together and with Him in saving souls. □

References

1. Colin Standish and Russell H Standish, *The Sepulchres Are Whited*, Hartland Publications, Rapidan, Virginia, 1992, page 4.
2. *ibid*, pages 5, 10, 11, 88.
3. *ibid*, page 5.
4. *ibid*, page 67.
5. *ibid*.
6. William Johnsson, *The Fragmenting of Adventism*, Pacific Press, Boise, Idaho, 1995, page 24.

Gerhard Pfandl is the field secretary and Spirit of Prophecy coordinator for the South Pacific Division.



Groundbreaking for Media Centre

The South Pacific Division president, and chairperson of the Adventist Media Centre (AMC) board, Dr Bryan Ball, turned the first sod of a \$A2 million building extension at the Adventist Media Centre in Sydney on November 12.

"This marks the realisation of a dream

that began 10 years ago," said media centre manager Pastor John Banks in his opening remarks.

Since the AMC was built in Wahroonga 31 years ago, primarily as a Bible School and studio for the production of radio programs, television and video production have squeezed into the existing facilities.

The new multi-level television recording studios and production offices, to be added to the existing building, will provide greater efficiency and enable programs to be uplinked locally and internationally. The extension will take nine months to build.

Congratulations were received

from a former board chairperson, Pastor Walter Scragg, who initiated plans and concepts for the AMC extensions in 1986.—Ray Coombe

Reluctant Minister Ordained in Victoria

After initially not wanting to become a minister, Craig Gillis was ordained on October 26 at the Berwick (Vic) church, where he is the pastor.

Craig, a field minister in the Victorian Conference, began studying theology at Avondale College in 1988, graduating four years later. He started his ministry as a volunteer at the Geelong church in 1992, and later that year commenced two years internship with the conference.



Pastor Craig Gillis and his wife, Kim, minister in the Berwick (Vic) area.

In 1994 Craig and his wife, Kim, accepted a call to the Wangaratta and Benalla churches.

Others who participated in the ordination program included the Victorian Conference president, Pastor Darrell Croft, the Trans-Australian Union Conference associate ministerial secretary, Pastor Andrew Kingston, and the Victorian Conference ministerial secretary, Pastor Phil Gager.—Nat Devenish



Adventist Media Centre board chairperson Dr Bryan Ball turns the first sod in a groundbreaking ceremony for the new media centre extension.

Sydney Support Centre Opens



Guests at the opening of Relate Enrich included (pictured, left to right): Irma and Karen Butler (mother and wife of the late Pastor Allan Butler); Relate Enrich director, Pastor David Robertson; Relate Enrich counsellor, Cheryl Robertson; and South Pacific Division family life director, Pastor Bryan Craig.

Following through a recommendation made six years ago, Relate Enrich, a new Adventist counselling and family support centre, was opened in Sydney on October 23.

"The momentum for building the centre faltered for a time after the death of Pastor

Allan Butler in 1994," says Greater Sydney Conference (GSC) communication director Pastor Lyndon Schick. "But with encouragement and support from the GSC family ministries advisory, and the dedication of Pastor David Robertson and his wife, Cheryl, Relate Enrich finally opened."

Past GSC counselling developments have included:

- establishing a community services department in 1974
- introducing a family life education program in 1980
- appointing a conference counsellor in 1987
- and setting up a family ministries advisory in 1990.

Brisbane Medical Centre Closes

The Brisbane Adventist Medical Centre closed on November 15, after 13 years of service to the community, on the recommendation of a task force and by the decision of the South Queensland Conference Executive Committee.

"The decision to close the centre was not an easy one to make," commented the conference's president, Pastor Chester Stanley.

"For some years the centre has been running at a loss, the past year the centre lost \$A90,000, and the year before \$A85,000 and the year before that \$A53,000. Obviously, as responsible managers, we could not continue to sustain these losses."

The closure of the centre is not related to the standard of care given by medical staff, or the centre's management. Dr Bill Watts, Dr Palmer and Aleta Cherry and Judy Ernst were thanked by Pastor Stanley for their dedicated service to the centre.

A patient of the medical centre, Dianne Myors, comments, "While I realise there are many other doctors in

the city, it is very difficult to find a doctor who really cares for the patient, and who will in fact go a great deal out of his way to help when needed. Dr Watts is such a doctor, and I would like to publicly thank him.

"I am sure all the patients who have attended the medical centre over the years would agree with me in saying that the benefits gained by them from the centre far outweigh any cost. I would also like to pay tribute to all the doctors who have served at the centre in the previous years."

Since 1983, the year the centre was established, the community in which the centre has operated has changed, as has the government's relationship with solo suburban practices. The centre now competes with numerous large multifaceted practices. The area also has a glut of doctors and has become a strong Asian population centre. It appears that in this area most people choose doctors of similar ethnic origin.

"The current executive has a strong commitment to a continued medical or

health centre here in Brisbane in a new location, a rural health live-in centre where various programs can be operated, or both," says Pastor Stanley. "I believe in medical missionary work, and it must not be thought that with the closure of the medical centre there is no future in the 'right arm of the message' here in southern Queensland. The decision to close the centre was not made hastily, but times and situations change and we would be delinquent in our responsibilities if we do not respond accordingly."

Youth Baptism in Inverell

At a worship service planned by the Youth at Inverell (NSW) church, six young people were baptised by church minister Pastor Frank Gorry on October 19. Those baptised were: Andrew, Karen and Christine Finney, Bannon and Nayden Keft and Tamara Murphy. "The church was filled with family friends and relatives," reports Pastor Gorry.

New Adventist Church Opens in Bowral

Two-year wait for Bowral (NSW) church members ended when they celebrated the opening of their new church on October 12.

Local council mayor, Jim Tuddenham, encouraged the 280 worshippers to build meaningful prayer lives and be effective workers for Christ. He also challenged them to fill the building to the point

where expansion would be required.

The church, designed to make maximum use of natural light and decorated with lime-washed Tasmanian oak panelling, cost \$A420,000 to build.

"One of the main features of the building is that the whole congregation can fit into the foyer-lounge-veranda open space, which encourages conversation and fel-

lowship," reports Bowral building committee chairperson Neal Freeman.

Other speakers included Bowral church minister Pastor Trevor Kingston, South New South Wales (SNSW) Conference president Pastor Neil Lawson, SNSW secretary-treasurer Owen Twist and Trans-Australian Union Conference secretary-treasurer Barbara Reynolds.



The new Bowral church opened on October 12.

Photo: C. Long

Vanuatu Reconciliation Attempt Planned



The baptism of 42 people took place at the conclusion of an evangelistic crusade and Revelation Seminar.

The Vanuatu Mission is planning a reconciliation meeting with Pago church members on December 8, reports Vanuatu Mission president Pastor Errol Wright.

"If the meeting fails, there will be a mini-session next February," says Pastor Wright.

This follows the recent court case between the Pago church and the Vanuatu Mission.

In other news from the mission, four fibreglass tanks to collect rainwater were recently installed at Naoratakara in the

Santo highlands. The new tanks, sponsored by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, mean that the villagers won't have to drink from the polluted river.

"It's a new experience for these people to turn on a tap," says Pastor Wright. "They will still have to carry river water up to their villages for washing and cooking, but now they have good water to drink."

Also, an Afro-American evangelistic team ran a three-week program in a local park, attracting up to 1000 people. So far, 42 people have been baptised.

"It is well understood why Vanuatu Mission gets so much attention from Satan," says Pastor Wright. "He hates to see the work of God progressing in such a dramatic way. Thank you for your prayers, your encouraging letters and phone calls. The storms have been rough, but they haven't slowed us down."



A thanksgiving ceremony was held by the highlander people at the installation of a tap in their village.

CHILDREN

Pharaoh's Army Is in Trouble!

Remember last week's drawing of Daniel in the lion's den? It was done by Judy Rowe. This week her brother, Neil, has drawn one of Pharaoh's soldiers at the Red Sea.

Look up the story in the Bible, at Exodus 13 and 14. Has God ever shown you that He is with you in a special way?

What do you think the soldier might be thinking as he sees the water coming back?

Why did Pharaoh want to chase God's people?



PHARAOH'S ARMY
AT
THE RED SEA!

Let's Do It!

The writer of "Search for Reliability" (Letters, October 26) has raised a very important issue. Lack of reliability and commitment is evident in many families, churches, institutions and businesses today. Those who suffer most because of this are the least powerful, the dependent, frequently the children.

The Valuegenesis study has shown us that there is a very significant correlation between a young person's experiences of church programs, such as Sabbath school, and their Christian commitment and denominational loyalty. It also showed that the quality of relationships affects the transfer of faith. Children respond to leaders they know and trust; those who care enough to be there for Sabbath school for them.

While there are many faithful Sabbath school leaders, teachers and pianists like the writer; their numbers are dwindling. Frequently at the end of the church year there is nobody willing to replace them and so they continue in office, unheralded and unsung.

How can we as fellow church members encourage commitment and reliability in volunteers? We can help them by:

Giving our money so that they have a realistic budget for resources to make the spiritual lessons more meaningful.

Giving our time, to tell a story, to help make resources, to take their place occasionally, to listen to their problems or to just make a quick visit and express appreciation for what is being done; maybe even a little gift.

Giving our support on church board meetings so that they can receive the help they need—facilities, resources, workshops.

Giving of ourselves in talking to the children, remembering their names and their interests, even their birthdays.

Let's do it! They're our kids, and our future.

Janet Rieger, Children's Ministries
Director, South Pacific Division

Signs Helps Appeal

Recently I was reminded of the *Signs*

advertising slogan of last year, "*Signs Builds Bridges,*" while working on the Adventist Appeal. I called on a few homes close to where we live, and mostly on people who regularly receive the *Signs of the Times* from me.

These people live in modest homes and gladly responded with good donations: one \$100, another \$50, two of \$40s, two \$20s—and lots of \$10s and \$5s. My lowest two donations were \$2.50.

I believe that if these neighbours were not *Signs* readers, \$5 or \$10 would have been considered a good donation.

Stan Faull, NSW

Dressed Right?

My grandfather was a pioneer Adventist minister back in the 1890s. My father was a strict member of the church who raised his six children in the "straight and narrow" way.

When it came to church attendance, we were dressed in a manner representative of the God we were taught to love and respect—shoes brightly polished, clean socks, shirt and trousers, ties etc.

The church minister, of course, set the example: suit, shirt and tie, socks and shoes etc. He was God's representative and dressed appropriately.

I remember the 1940s. It was a very

hot summer's day. Most of the male congregation took off their coats—a sensible thing to do. But the minister? No! He figured that he had to be representative. He preached the sermon in his suit with perspiration trickling down his face.

In the 1990s, I'm certainly not suggesting that our ministers in the pulpit should not at least remove their coats when the weather is appropriate, but times have changed. It isn't unusual to see ministers, elders and deacons participating in church responsibilities appropriately dressed, but without a coat—only an open-neck shirt. Is this acceptable? Church members wear open-neck shirts and blue jeans.

The question of what constitutes appropriate dress in *this* day and age can be argued *and* argued. Does the church have guidelines? I don't like what I see.

Maybe it is time for ministers, elders and deacons to give this matter some serious thought.

C Alan Bernoth, NSW

Views expressed in Letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Letters should not exceed 250 words and should be mailed to *Record* Editor, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton Victoria 3799 (CompuServe 74617.726; Internet 74617.726@compuserve.com). Writers must include their name, address and telephone number. Letters received more than three weeks after the date of the issue carrying the article to which they respond will normally not be printed. All letters will be edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's original meaning will not be changed. Not all letters received will be published.



Anniversaries

Gilmore. Laurence and June were married 39.46 by Pastor Stuart Uttley at the Remuera Adventist church, Auckland, New Zealand. As the groom and best man were just back from the war, they wore their full Australian army service uniforms. Their 50th anniversary was held at the Cooranong Community Centre on 8.9.96 and was attended by family members and friends. It was a joyous occasion, interspersed with anecdotes and musical treats, while partaking of a delectable repast. Laurence has faithfully served the denomination in many capacities and excelled in the area of communications where he served with distinction. June has valiantly supported him with her musical talent and hospitality. All wished their extended years as they continue to serve their Master. Len Barnard

Weddings

Gillett—Greenham. Ben Roy Gillett, son of Len and Julie Gillett (Wamboin, NSW), and Cheryl Louise Greenham, daughter of Stephen Greenham (Albury) and Heather Greenham (Goulburn), were married on 3.11.96 at Albury Adventist church. R N Lawson

Hovan—Rudiger. Peter Hovan and Linda Patricia Rudiger were married on 10.11.96 at the Waitara Adventist church. E Bruce Price

Kranz—Dawson. Russell Kranz and Gloria Dawson were married on 27.10.96 at Pasadena, Church Point, NSW. Ken R Low

McLean—Driver. Paul Millar McLean, son of Robert and Wilma McLean (Wauchope, NSW), and Natalie Louise Driver, daughter of John and Janice Driver (Mt Beauty, Vic), were married on 3.11.96 in the Waitara Adventist Church. Tom Turner

Roberts—Hawkins. Tony Ian Roberts, son of Barry Roberts (Narromine, NSW) and Pam Cramp (Gympie, Qld), and Karen Denise Hawkins, daughter of Len and Beatrice Hawkins (Walcha, NSW), were married on 3.11.96 at Byng. Desmond Potts

Obituaries

Buttsworth, Allan Reginald, born 2.10.38 at Taree, NSW; died 20.10.96 at Seaham, He and his wife, Winsome, were baptised in 1969 at Taree. He is survived by his wife; children, Ross, Robyn (Cooranong), Jodie (Seaham); and three grandchildren. Owen R D'Costa

Campbell, Matilda Mary Grace, died 21.10.96 at the Pioneer Village Nursing Home, Port Lincoln, SA, aged 96 years. She was a pioneer of the Port Lincoln Adventist church. She was predeceased by her first husband, Ern Golley, her second husband, George, and her daughter, Betty. She is survived by her son, Doug; ten grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren. Lee Bowditch

Subhani, Lydia Emelda (Lea), born 15.4.16 in Mahritius; died 8.10.96 at Noble Park, Vic. She married Stephen on 4.5.45. She is survived by her children, Ghislaine and Gilbert Dholah, and Lysiane and Denis Lecocq, and five grandchildren. M Savage, S Seenyen

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Contact Pastor Eric White, Coordinator Volunteer Services, South Pacific Division, 148 Fox Valley Road, Wairoa NSW 2076. Phone (02) 9847 3333 or fax (02) 9489 0943 or (02) 9847 3369.

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The Brown Nursing Class, 1977-80, SAH, are planning a reunion January 11, 12, 1997. Would anyone knowing the whereabouts of: Karen Godfrey, Kay Huggins, Trineette Judd, Karen Oddie, Joanne Ortell and Lesley Robertson please contact Julie Tierney (03) 5354 2624 or Geoff White, 5 Nokona Court, Greensborough Vic 3088, phone (03) 9432 3299.

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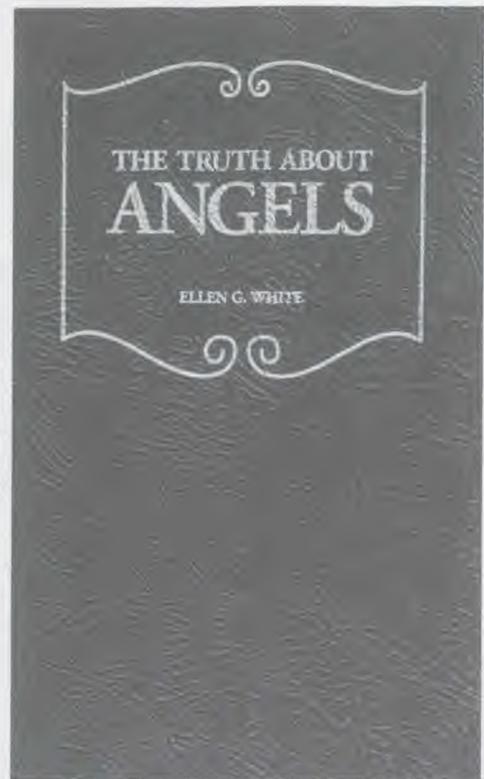
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