

RECORD

March 13

1999



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LESSONS FOR THE OLD AND THE YOUNG

For me, the last two Sabbaths of 1998 became unforgettable.

Granddaughters Kelly and Lisa Driscoll invited me to speak at their baptism. Congregational details have blurred, but not so the memory of two fresh, eager young faces looking steadily into mine as I challenged them to total commitment to their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The following week we waited sadly for word that my cousin's husband, Pastor Robert Trood, rested from his pain and suffering. A faithful church pastor, spouse, father, grandfather and friend, I could picture Pastor Bob smiling indulgently at the thought of the two strong, young persons replacing him in the pew. He would find some encouragement for the church of the new millennium.

The world's population is ageing. By 2021 some 25 per cent will be over 60 years of age. In view of this trend, The United Nations has designated 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons.

Bronwyn Bishop, Minister for Aged Care, is encouraging our involvement with the theme "Australia: towards a society for all ages." In my lifetime, our church has made every effort to provide a spiritual society for all ages. However, it now appears that old and young experience increasing difficulty finding spiritual food at the same table.

Once we operated Sabbath school divisions according to chronological age, with everyone attending church. Now we offer a smorgasbord of programs catering for both age and taste. So long as the menu is scriptural and the serving motivated by love, all can

be spiritually fed.

Biblically, the fifth commandment defines intergenerational attitudes and behaviour (Exodus 20). This is underlined by the account of Elisha, the boys and the bears (2 Kings 2), and admonitions to respect the "hoary head" (for example Leviticus 19:32 and Proverbs 16:31). Yet, we do find some enigmas.

King David's disappointment over the building of the Temple may well have turned to doubt and even disgust had he foreseen Solomon's chosen lifestyle. What if he could have known how the youths' influence on Rehoboam (1 Kings 12) doomed the Temple to certain destruction? Yet the Bible plainly says, "The situation was from the Lord" (verses 15, 24, *Amplified Bible*).

We could be further bemused by recalling God's appointment of the very young. Think of Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Queen Esther, John the Baptist, John the apostle, Timothy and many more. However, in ripe old age Daniel and John the revelator penned the Bible's most comprehensive global prophecies.

We can safely conclude that God can use people of any age. He commissions the young, foreseeing their mistakes, while counselling respect and acceptance of the old as spiritual mentors—even with their apparent weaknesses.

The International Year of Older Persons is calling for involvement of the whole nation. It would be wonderful if we all took this opportunity to deliberately foster communication and cooperation between generations in our church community.

Whether young or old we may say,

"Oh, yes, but . . ." yet even in the saying we need to remember two certainties. The older generation will exit the stage of life, and the now-young will become the old. For "youth is a disease from which we all recover."

Maybe the new-young will want to be even more contemporary. What then?

In her 1998 Christmas message, Queen Elizabeth stated that "we must learn to trust our children and grandchildren." I would like to suggest that as we learn to trust them, they will learn to give the respect admonished in the Scriptures.

For sure, age has priceless, inestimable experience in life and relationships that will continue to hold validity. But the older generation has not known the challenges of the secular society, environmental concerns, multiculturalism and technological changes that face the young. It is they who must reinvent methods of sharing the message of God's love for a lost world.

The missionary lantern lecture of my childhood could hardly replace NET '98. There is even more to come, more than we can ever dream.

In this International Year of Older Persons, while attracting some notice and benefits, we—the older—must keep the future in mind. Let us be careful and considerate to pass on to the young this priceless gift of trust while we are able.

Linda Driscoll
Chaplain
Sydney Adventist
Hospital



Next week

Adventist congregationalism: A wake-up call or death knell?

Official Paper
South Pacific Division
ACN 000 003 930

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Vol 104 No 9
Cover photo:

Manuscripts Should be sent to The Editor, Record, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria 3799. Manuscripts or computer disks will only be returned if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
Phone: (03) 5966 9111
Fax: (03) 5966 9019
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Subscriptions South Pacific Division, \$A40.00 \$NZ73.00. All other regions, \$A70.00. Air mail rates on application. Order from Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria 3799, Australia. Printed weekly by Signs Publishing Company.

ALL POLISHED; ALL RENEWED

by Josephine Ogrin

On the footpath in front of the stately home stood an old wooden chair. Through the top colour of white could be seen layers of blue, grey, yellow and black. The chair had been painted many times before. Yet, standing there on the grass, it still looked kind of elegant and proud, reminiscent of the mistress of the house who had lived there many years ago.

At that moment a caretaker came through the gate carrying a console table which, like the chair, showed a rainbow of colours through the cracks.

"Here, join your mate!" said the caretaker and threw the table against the chair.

Both pieces rolled off the path onto the road. Angrily he picked them up again and threw them on the grass.

A smiling passerby greeted the caretaker with a comment: "Amazing! All that force and they're still in one piece."

"Yes," he answered, "you'd think they were made of cast iron instead of wood. I swear this old furniture never dies!"

"Would you mind if I took these two with me?"

"Please, Lady, be my guest! I'm sick of looking at them."

The weeks that followed were filled with hard work, stripping away the many layers of paint, sanding and polishing.

"You must be mad to take on such a big task," said one friend.

Another laughed and said, "You must be a glutton for punishment."

The woman merely smiled and wiped her hands.

"I wonder what kind of wood it is?"

"Cedar," said a man inspecting the chair. "As for the table, I don't know. It's very smooth."

"Coachwood," said an expert, "It's very rare, very valuable. They're beautiful pieces. Do you want to

sell them?"

"No. I want to present them to my children."

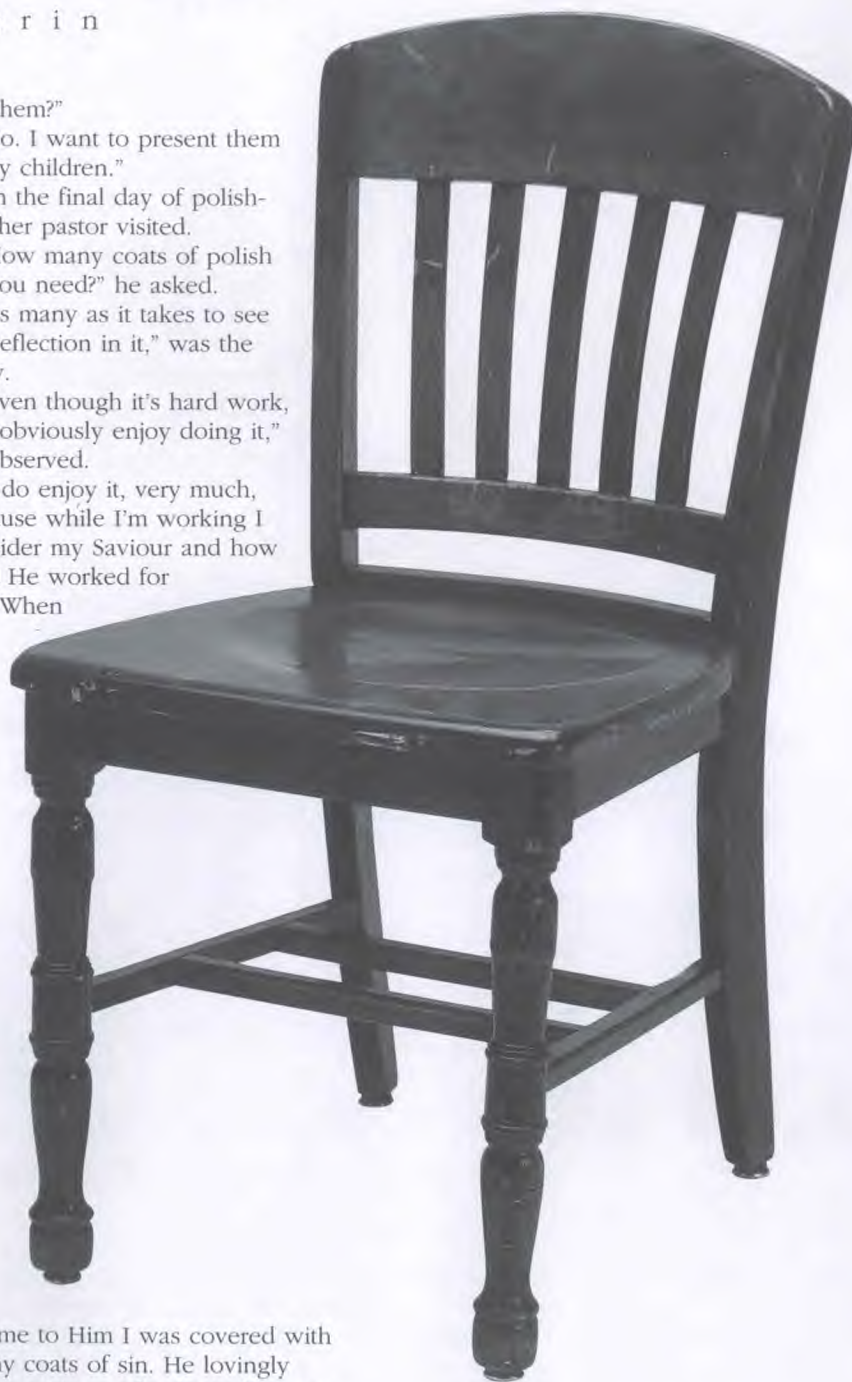
On the final day of polishing, her pastor visited.

"How many coats of polish do you need?" he asked.

"As many as it takes to see my reflection in it," was the reply.

"Even though it's hard work, you obviously enjoy doing it," he observed.

"I do enjoy it, very much, because while I'm working I consider my Saviour and how hard He worked for me. When



I came to Him I was covered with many coats of sin. He lovingly removed layer after layer from me.

"He worked so hard for me that His hands bled, and every precious drop that fell on my soul blotted the stains of sin away and made me white as snow. You see, Pastor, I am priceless to Him. Very rare. Very valuable.

"I know the time is coming when He will be able to look into my soul

and see His complete reflection. On that blessed day He'll take me home to His kingdom and present me to His Father—all polished and renewed."

Josephine Ogrin writes from Kings Langley, a suburb of Sydney, NSW.

Did you hear . . . ?

■ . . . What is being planned for the first Adventist camp-meeting of the new millennium?

The camp-meeting, to be held near Christchurch, New Zealand, will begin with the opening of Sabbath on Friday evening, December 31, 1999. The program will continue through to midnight.

Referring to problems the millennial bug may cause, South New Zealand Conference president **Pastor Garry Hodgkin** quipped, "At midnight we're expecting the lights to go out, the sound system to cease and the tent to fall down. But we have no fears; if the tent falls down we'll repitch it!"

■ . . . About the first known Maldivian to be baptised into the Adventist Church?

Formally known by a Muslim name—it is a criminal offence for a Maldivian to change their religion from Islam—**Mark Russell** was baptised by **Pastor Bob Manners** on December 19 last year (pictured).



Mark arrived in Australia in September last year as a religious refugee, and was introduced to members of the **Dandenong** (Vic) church "after a series of miraculous leadings of the Lord," says Pastor Manners, the former church minister. He decided to be baptised after studying the Bible and attending NET '98.

Church calendar

- March 20-27 Youth Week of Prayer
- March 27 Youth Offering

AMC produces video for ministers



The Adventist Media Centre (AMC) is producing a series of teaching videos for ministers

The series, called *Seminar in a box*, is directed by Pastor Russell Gibbs (who, with his wife, Jann, leaves for "It Is Written" in Simi Valley, California, USA, at the end of the month).

Each video features teachers and preachers passing on their skills in presentation and visitation. Pastors Geoffrey Youlden and Graeme Bradford are the first Australians to be featured.

Pastor Gibbs is pictured, second from right, with AMC administrative secretary Miriam Stokes, instructor Coralie Schofield and Pastor Youlden.

Prison sentence

Former South Australian Conference secretary-treasurer Rob van Buuren has been sentenced to seven years gaol for 36 charges of fraudulent conversion and 17 further "considerations." The sentence, handed down in the Adelaide Supreme Court, carries a non-parole period of three years. The 36 charges involved a loss from the church of \$A648,250 over a seven-year period (1989-96) in matters involving trust funds. The church did not take the case to court—the Department of Public Prosecutions pursued the matter. The judge reduced the sentence by three years because of Mr van Buuren's cooperative nature in confessing the charges that resulted in his ex-officio indictment. Of the \$648,250, \$A121,700 has been returned to the church.

Minister thanks mentors

Two ministers acting as mentors played an important part in the ordination of Neil Tyler, in the Maroochydore (Qld) church



on February 6. Pastor Ray Dickson baptised Pastor Tyler and his wife, Lucy, in Adelaide in the early 1980s. Pastor Ray Fraser (who preached the ordination sermon) acted as a mentor and counsellor soon after Pastor Tyler graduated from Avondale College in 1991. Pastor Tyler and his wife ministered at the Roma, Yepoon and Rockhampton churches before moving to the Caloundra and Maroochydore churches.

South Queensland Conference president Pastor Chester Stanley prayed the ordination prayer.

SDA heads political party

Narromine (NSW) church member Ewan Tolhurst (pictured) has been nominated by the New South Wales Ratepayers Party as their first candidate for the upper house in the March 27 state election.



Mr Tolhurst, son of former Avondale College theology lecturer Pastor Len Tolhurst, has been involved in politics since 1990. He has served as president of the Nyngan Ratepayers Association, councillor for the local government, member of the local power distribution board, chair of several inter-shire committees and deputy mayor.

Photo: K Townend

Adventist communicators!

The General Conference Communication Department is compiling a database of Adventists who have had experience in communications, public relations, broadcasting, journalism or media. Want to be included? Contact South Pacific Division communication director Pastor Ray Coombe (Ray_Coombe@SDASPD.adventist.org.au)

(second from left), honour the volunteers who stayed



in Australia during the war to provide services for those fighting overseas.

Civilian service medal winners

Three Adventists, Ian Todd (pictured, left), Olive Martin (second from right) and Marie Aspinall (right), were awarded Civilian Service Medals in a ceremony at the Townsville (Qld) church on February 6. Mr Todd received the medal on behalf of his late father, Norman. Mrs Aspinall received the medal on behalf of her late mother, Bridie Wildsmith. The medals, presented by Federal MP Peter Lindsay

SPD donates to Bible Society

The South Pacific Division donated more than \$21,000 to the Bible Society in Australia last year. The donation, part of the division's annual budget, is supplemented by individual donations. "It's encouraging to know the churches in your denomination have such belief in the Word of God that they're willing to give so generously to make it available to others," says the society's donor support director Judy Bellamy.

World news

22 baptised in Ukraine

Twenty-two people were baptised at the end of an evangelistic series presented by Southport (Qld) church minister Pastor Peter Stojanovic in Chernivtsy, Ukraine, recently. During his two-month trip, Pastor Stojanovic was also able to buy 1000 Bibles in the Ukrainian language.

Splinter group not Adventist

The Adventist Church in Trinidad has dissociated itself from the actions of a

Foundation helps Irish



The Adventist-owned and -operated Emerald Foundation is searching for Irish Adventists in the South Pacific Division. The foundation assists with educational, medical and religious programs in Ireland.

Formed in 1984, the Loma Linda (California, USA)-based foundation is currently funding five projects in Ireland. With an annual budget of more than \$A500,000, it has already financed the building of six churches and three primary schools.

The presidents of the Irish and Scottish Missions administer the work of the foundation in Ireland.

For more information about the foundation, write to PO Box 8877, Redlands, California 92375, USA.

splinter group who have attacked Hindu beliefs and provoked a combative response. A group calling themselves the Thusian Seventh-day Adventist Church distributed literature hostile to Hindu beliefs that prompted a declaration of a "holy war" from a prominent Hindu leader. Adventist leaders met with the Hindu group Maha Sabha on February 10 and, as a result, agreed to fight crime and drugs in the community together, as well as develop projects focusing on health, family life and education.—ANV

AWR Offering today

The key word at Adventist World Radio's correspondence school in

Cyprus is follow-up. "Without it, our broadcasts would not reach their full potential," says the centre's



manager. Follow-up includes letter answering, translation and publication of leaflets and booklets, and preparation of small incentive gifts. The school has also created a Web page (awr.org/cyprus) and started a listener's club that now has 2200 members.

Briefly

■ **Wahroonga** church will mark Law Week in New South Wales (May 17-23) with a worship service featuring former South Pacific Division president Dr Bryan Ball. "All lawyers and law students are welcome," says coorganiser **John Bagnall**, a judge in the state's Compensation Court.

■ A new Adventist company, the **Orana Adventist Fellowship**, has been formed in Dubbo (NSW). Minister **Pastor Ken Lawson** reports up to 60 people are attending each week.

COSMIC SIGNS AND ADVENTISTS

by Hans K. Larondelle

Seventh-day Adventists saw in the historic earthquake of Lisbon, Portugal, on November 1, 1755, a fulfilment of the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17. They further accepted the "inexplicable" darkening of sunlight on May 19, 1780, for a few hours in some eastern states along the American seacoast as fulfilling the prediction: "The sun turned black" (Revelation 6:12).

The meteor shower on the morning of November 13, 1833, seen

Some conservative Adventist expositors are now convinced that the traditional Adventist interpretation . . . has lost its convincing power.

across North America, was thought to be a spectacular sign from heaven to warn of the imminent coming of Christ. Ellen White considered this event the last of the cosmic signs predicted in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6, and the forerunner of the coming judgment day.¹ She declared that all three upheavals in nature—the Lisbon quake, the "dark day" and the meteor shower—were fulfilments of Christ's predictions in Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6:12, 13.² It seemed to her a "surety" that she was living in the last generation on earth.³

In retrospect, can we maintain the same understanding of these phenomena, especially since they are no longer inexplicable supernatural happenings, but known to be the results

of specific laws and predictable movements in nature?

Signs in the heavens

Adventist expositors persistently ascribed the darkening of the sun and moon in 1780 to a supernatural cosmic end-time sign. Later evidence indicated the darkening may have come from forest fires—with the smoke eclipsing the sun and covering 40,000 square kilometres. Such a regional event lasting only a few hours hardly qualifies as the cosmic happening prophesied in the New Testament. Mervyn Maxwell and others acknowledge that the "dark day" of May 19, 1780, was not a direct act of omnipotent intervention, but from natural causes.⁴

The apocalyptic earthquake

The Lisbon quake in 1755 was also regional, even if the shock covered two million square kilometres, more than one-third of Europe. The loss of life is estimated to have been between 15,000 and 30,000. But it had a lasting effect on 18th century philosophy, culture and science.

"No dramatist could have established the moment of time for this catastrophe with greater effect."⁵ This natural disaster "changed the world,"⁶ in the light of the prevailing philosophy of Leibnitz. "The self-assured stride of the Age of Reason acquired a permanent limp after the Lisbon earthquake"⁷

Yet scientists report that earthquakes have killed "on average some 15,000 people every year." Before 1755, three earthquakes were greater. Then the Tokyo quake took 200,000 lives (1803); the quake of Kansu, China, left 180,000 dead (1920); the quake of Kwanto, Japan, killed

140,000 (1923). In 1976 earthquakes caused 650,000 deaths in China.

On both sides of the Atlantic, however, the Lisbon quake was explained by Protestants as a sign of the approaching advent of Christ.

The apocalyptic meteor shower

On the night of November 13, 1833, an observer stated, "The stars were falling as thick snowflakes." Estimates for the fall range from 10,000 to more than 60,000 meteors per hour. The year 1833 is now regarded as the birth of meteor astronomy. Gerald Hawkins, astronomer at Boston University, says that: "If the scientists were bewildered by the Leonid storm, we can easily imagine how the nonscientists felt. . . . Many people in the southern states were panic-stricken, thinking that the Day of Judgment had surely arrived."⁸

Many Adventist expositors do not deny the natural cause of the celestial phenomena, but stress the intensity of the Leonid storm of 1833.⁹ However, the 1992 *Guinness Book of Records* notes: "The greatest shower on record occurred on the night of 16-17 November 1966, when the Leonid meteors (which recur every 33 years) were visible between North America and the eastern USSR."¹⁰

Many who experienced the sudden impact of those historic phenomena were deeply impressed, seeing them as the hand of God in judgment or in preparation for final judgment. These signs brought some to repentance and to a sense of accountability to God. We must honour them for that and acknowledge that the signs they observed some 200 years ago were not only helpful to them, but were preparatory to the final worldwide cosmic signs yet to arrive under the

seven last plagues.

Further, the signs they saw as indicative of the nearness of Christ's coming played a role in calling attention to the final signs yet to come. It is only the eschatological cosmic signs, however, that will play the role of actually ushering in the second coming of Christ.

New trend in evangelism

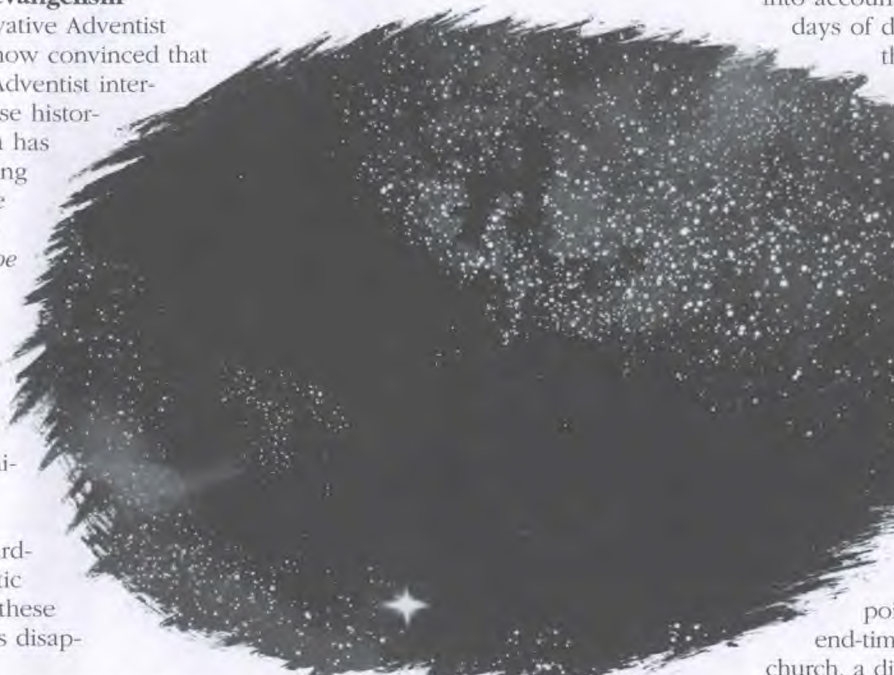
Some conservative Adventist expositors are now convinced that the traditional Adventist interpretation of these historical phenomena has lost its convincing power. Samuele Bacchiocchi, in *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness*, omits the traditional view about 1755, 1780 and 1833. The unanimous voice of conviction in Adventism regarding the prophetic significance of these phenomena has disappeared.

The appeal today is to the timing and the sequence of such occurrences: "Their appearance in connection with the closing years of the 1260 years of papal suppression both before and after 1798."¹¹ Maxwell explains: "As a series they came in the right order and at the proper time."¹² "The series of signs [Matthew 24:29] that were to take place 'immediately after the tribulation of those days' has evidently been fulfilled."¹³

This conclusion is based on an exegesis of two passages: Mark 13:24 (rather than Matthew 24:29) and Revelation 12:6. "But in those days, following that distress, 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky . . .'" (Mark 13:24).* "The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1260 days" (Revelation 12:6).

Though it's assumed to be self-evi-

dent that both passages deal with the 1260 year-days (from AD 538 to 1798), that fact is not so self-evident. The context of Mark 13:18-25 connects the "days of distress" for Christ's followers from AD 70 until cosmic signs introduce the Second Advent. Nothing in the Olivet forecast restricts the times of distress to 1260 years.



Jesus also includes the end-time distress under the antichrist because He referred specifically to Daniel 12:1 when He announced that the coming great distress would be "unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equalled again" (Matthew 24:21; see also Mark 13:19). At the end of the unprecedented "time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then," Michael would arise and the resurrection of the dead would take place (Daniel 12:1, 2).

Jesus referred to that end-time distress of Daniel 12 in His prophetic discourse and therefore did not restrict "those days" of Mark 13:24 to the Middle Ages (see also Matthew 24:22). Rather, Jesus indicated that the sun and the moon would be darkened after the end-time distress of Daniel 12:1. This fits the description of the supernatural, worldwide

darkening during the last plagues in Revelation 16 (verses 10, 11). There is therefore no justification for the assumption that the "days" of distress spoken of in Mark 13:24 are identical with the 1260 days of Revelation 12:6.

The exegesis of Jesus' reference to "those days, following that distress . . ." (Mark 13:24) must take into account the total picture of the days of distress, as presented in the fifth seal of

Revelation 6:9-11 and in 12:17; 13:15-17; 17:12-14. "White robes" are given to all who "have come out of the great tribulation" (Revelation 7:14; 6:11). This distress cannot be restricted to the Middle Ages or to the 1260 years (ending in 1798).

Further, Revelation 12:17 points specifically to the end-time distress of the remnant church, a distress further enlarged in Revelation 13:15-17 and 17:12-14. This distress will be cut short by Christ's divine intervention during the seven last plagues, with the sudden darkening of the entire earth (Revelation 16:10) and the cosmic-universal earthquake (Revelation 16:18-21)—impressively described by Ellen White in *The great controversy* (pages 636, 637). The future cosmic signs during the last plagues fulfil precisely the timing and function of "cutting short" the universal distress of God's people.

Conclusion

A number of contemporary Adventist expositors admit the exegetical problems with the old interpretation of the cosmic signs. They point to the increasing global influence of the papacy and of America; to the intensification of destructive disasters in the world and to the stage-setting for the final crisis

and last distress for God's people (see Marvin Moore, *The crisis of the end time*, and S Bacchiocchi, *The advent hope for human hopelessness*.)

In his recent book *What the Bible says about the end-time*, Jon Paulien urges: "We need a sane approach to current events."¹⁴ He understands our inclination to date-setting and doom-saying: "Natural disasters are so gripping that it is almost instinctive for human beings to invest them with cosmic significance."¹⁵

It has become traditional to interpret the signs of disaster in Matthew 24 as signs of the coming end. Paulien offers this exegesis: "The famines, pestilences, earthquakes, wars, and rumours of wars are not listed as signs of the end in Matthew 24. Instead they are 'signs of the age,' events that would occur throughout the interim between Jesus' earthly ministry and the end. Jesus did not want those who observe such events to calculate their significance for the time of the end. Instead, He wanted those who observe wars, earthquakes, and famines to keep watch."¹⁶

George Knight explains that the role of the signs in Matthew 24 is to reassure us "that the faithful, covenant-keeping God has not yet finished the plan of salvation. . . . They are signs that the end is coming, but they are not the real signs of the end. . . . The pattern of Matthew 24 appears to be that the real signs are not signs of nearness but signs of coming."¹⁷

These results of a serious and responsible exegesis of the prophetic Word do not warrant hasty condemnation; instead they're a call to reflection on the clarity of Scripture and its power to explain itself through immediate and wider contexts.

Traditional applications of the prophetic "signs of the age" are not part of any pillar or landmark of Seventh-day Adventism.¹⁸ Truth progresses; so should we. **R**

*All Bible quotations are from the *New International Version*.

1. See Ellen G White, *The Great Controversy*, Pacific Press Publishing Association,

Nampa, Idaho, 1911, page 334.

2. *ibid.*, pages 304, 306, 333, 334.

3. Ellen G White, *The Desire of Ages*, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho, 1898), page 632.

4. C Mervyn Maxwell, *God cares*, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho, 1985, 2:197. Also M E Sprengel, in *Adventist review*, May 22, 29; June 5, 1980.

5. W Breidert, *Die Erschuetterung der vollkommenen Welt*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1994, page 6, own translation.

6. *ibid.*, page 1.

7. B Walker, *Earthquake*, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, Virginia, 1982, pages 46, 48.

8. Gerald S Hawkins, *Splendour in the sky*, Harper & Row, New York, 1969, page 220.

9. LeRoy E Froom, *The prophetic faith of our fathers*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1954, 4:1218, 1219; C M Maxwell, *op cit.*, 2:201.

10. D McFarlan, ed, *Facts on file*, New York, 1991, page 12.

11. Jon Paulien in *Symposium on Revelation*, Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1:237.

12. C M Maxwell, *op cit.*, 1:214.

13. *ibid.*, 1:202.

14. Jon Paulien, *What the Bible says about the end-time*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1994, page 157.

15. *loc cit.*

16. *loc cit.*

17. George R Knight, *Matthew*, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho, 1994, page 236, 237.

18. See Ellen G White, *Manuscript 13, 1889*; quoted in *Counsels to writers and editors*, Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee, 1946, pages 30, 31.

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Viewpoint allows readers to express opinions. Their views are not necessarily those of the editor or of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *Record* welcomes reader response.

Good luck; bad luck?

Luck is such a common term. Even we who acknowledge the omniscience and purpose of God still loosely refer to various experiences as "lucky" and "unlucky"—perhaps out of habit.

What is luck? I'm not really sure. Good luck; bad luck? Sin has brought with it chaos—in our societies, our languages and the natural order of things. And sin has brought about a reversal and upheaval of God's initial plan.

This is not to start a theological or philosophical debate, but to ask the question, What is luck to you? To me?

Luck, for a refugee, is being found in your dead mother's arms, the only survivor in your village.

Luck, for a refugee, is being sent to hide in a cabin in the hills with all the village children, while you listen to your parents—to their screams.

Luck, for a refugee, is being the only child alive in that cabin after one child made a noise and attracted the soldiers' attention.

Luck, for a refugee, is being kidnapped by your own country's army for a porter—to walk and carry until you drop. And then be shot.

Luck, for a refugee, is to somehow miraculously escape and be smuggled to the other side of the country to your home. By "enemy" soldiers.

Luck, for a refugee, is being told you were born into a race whose country says to them, "It doesn't matter where you're from; if you're Karen, you will be shot."

Luck, for a refugee, is actually hitting your mark with one of the home-made guns, which is all your nation has to fight with.

This kind of luck, for a refugee, is not life or death, nor is it leisure or hardship. It is simply their reality.

These are my students. What can I possibly offer them? Only my service. God must do the rest. Nothing and no-one else can heal their lives and their nation. Even then they must still live with the past—without family and friends, who now belong to the past.—Stephanie Robinson, *Eden Valley Academy, Thailand*.

MY SEARCH FOR PEACE

by Kerri Stephensen

I'd have scoffed if anyone had said to me, as I witnessed my mum and dad's baptism, that I, too, would one day be baptised. They were baptised in 1989. I was baptised last week (March 6).

Almost a year after their baptism, my parents rejoiced with me at the birth of David Andrew—my son, their first grandson. Three weeks later, tragedy. My brother, their only son, Brendan, was killed.

Brendan was my closest confidant. While Mum and Dad had to cope with the loss of their son, it became complicated as they had to also contend with a wayward, guilty daughter.

I began to have no concept of right or wrong. I became self-absorbed in my own guilt and mourning, and I couldn't see the pain I caused my parents, friends and relatives. I turned to drugs and alcohol to help make me feel good.

Then it got worse. I used to be a devil worshipper. I felt he understood me. At times I tried to leave him, but he kept pulling me back.

Pastor Ed Totenhofer [then the pastor of the Lilydale church, Vic] tried to help, but I eventually told him not to worry—I was a lost cause. There was so much confusion in my life.

I used to speak with the devil, and he told me that if I ever tried to leave him something precious would be taken away from me. I "knew" Brendan had died because of me. I was the bad one and, when I sought help, my brother died.

I understand now what was happening, but back then I was too scared to seek help. If Satan could take away my brother, he could take my little baby just as easily. I thought I was saving everyone by not continuing my studies with Pastor Ed.

That's what Satan wanted me to think. He wanted me to believe that's just the way life goes for some people. He wanted me to believe that it

wasn't worth living anymore, that there was no future and, worse, that Jesus would never forgive me.

When my father died in 1994, after a short illness, I thought I'd do the right thing by Mum and accompany her to church. It would be just until I felt she was OK to go by herself. I had no intention of going for myself, or the Lord, or, I'm ashamed to say, for the salvation of my son.

One Sabbath something happened. Listening to the hymns, I felt something stirring inside. I tried desperately to hide the tears falling freely. I tried to dismiss what was happening and tried to think of the last time I felt the same stirring—when I held my son for the first time.

Then I remembered: three weeks later my brother died. I couldn't risk losing my baby to Satan, so I fought the feelings tooth and nail.

I lost. I had to find out more about Jesus. If Satan had so much power over me, and Jesus was the stronger, why not pray? That is so obvious now, but back then I felt Jesus had left me to fend for myself. After what I'd put everyone through, He wouldn't, couldn't love me. Could He?

Eventually, I started lessons with Neil and Joseph [Pastor Neil Marks and Joseph Maticic, the current Lilydale pastor and his assistant at the time]. I was confused. They kept telling me Jesus doesn't keep records.

Did I want to repent? Yes. Did I love Jesus? Yes. But I still couldn't comprehend forgiveness. How could anyone forgive me?

Mum was nice to me, but why? Because I went to church with her? Because the grandson I gave her looked so much like her own son? Surely it couldn't be because she loved me, not after the living hell I'd put her and Dad through?

Slowly the realisation hit me. Mum loves me for me, not for anything I



did or didn't do. Because of her love she could forgive me. If Mum loves me and can forgive me, why couldn't I believe Jesus can do the same. It took soul searching and prayer, but now I know. I know Jesus loves me.

I know Jesus died for me. I know He forgives me. I know every day, when I wake up, He's there. When I'm in trouble, tempted or confused, I know He's only a prayer away. I know Jesus' love will never leave me, and if I stumble and fall, He's waiting to help me up.

Knowing this, I turned my back on my old way of life. I can't believe I'm the same person. I am, yet I'm not. It's still me, but my mind is at peace and my soul is no longer tortured.

My only regret is that my dad died before he could see the daughter he always wanted. Will he get a surprise when Jesus returns! I'm probably the last person he expected to see in God's great kingdom. **R**

Kerri Stephensen is now a member of the Lilydale church in outer-eastern Melbourne.

WPUM CAMPOREE CHANGES LIVES



Some 145 Pathfinders were baptised on the final Sabbath of the camporee.

Some 145 young people were baptised and 2000 marched against drugs during the recent Western Pacific Union Mission Pathfinder camporee, held in Betikama, Solomon Islands, December 8-13 last year.

A further 179 Pathfinders responded to an appeal for baptism on the final Sabbath. Another 705 indicated on decision cards their desire for baptism.

On the Friday, the Pathfinders took their drug-free message to the streets of the Solomon Islands capital, Honiara.

At the end of the march, and before a crowd of 6000, Minister for Education Ronidy Mani congratulated the Pathfinders on their decision to live a drug-free lifestyle. He also praised the Adventist Church for organising programs that helped in the development of youth in the Western Pacific.

Honiara mayor John Maetia described the march as "eye catching" and "successful."

Speakers at the camporee, including the then South Pacific

Division (SPD) youth director Dr Barry Gane, SPD volunteer services coordinator Pastor Eric White and Northern Australian Conference youth director Pastor John Wells, spoke on the theme "Faith on fire." Other guests included the WPUM president Pastor Neil Watts.



Camporee activities, including water volleyball, a water tube relay, tug-of-war, a tyre crawl and

Women's Weekly carries SHF booklet

This month's *Australian Women's Weekly* carries a health booklet produced by the Sanitarium Health Food Company glued to its front cover.

The aim of the booklet, called *10 tips on healthy eating for the family*, is to "raise the awareness of the Australian and New Zealand community that Sanitarium is a leading provider of credible nutrition information," says Sanitarium nutrition education coordinator Christina Hawkins.



orientering, emphasised acceptance, cooperation and participation.

"The lowering of the camporee flag on the last day was very emotional," says Pastor Tommy Toata, the camporee director.

Pastor Toata presented the flag



Above: The Pathfinders marched through the Solomon Islands capital, Honiara, proclaiming a drug-free lifestyle.

Left: The excitement is too much for this group of Pathfinders as they try to fill up a punctured drum with water during one of the afternoon activities.

to the deputy leader of the opposition party in the parliament, Manasseh Sogavare, who then declared the camporee closed.

CONFLICT AT WCC MEETINGS

Some 965 delegates representing 338 churches in 100 countries met in Harare, Zimbabwe, recently for the eighth assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Adventist Review associate editor Dr Roy Adams was there.

For a Seventh-day Adventist, the early debates of the WCC presented an irony that was both sweet and painful. Sweet because a fundamental aspect of our beliefs had accidentally taken centre stage, and painful because of the reason for it.

The issue in question? Poverty and national debt. It was the concern of Zimbabwe's

acting president Simon Vengesayi Muzenda when he addressed the assembly's opening session on December 3. And when president Robert Mugabe

showed up five days later, that was his burden as well.

"The WCC should use its moral authority," he said, "to appeal to the powerful nations of the West to agree to write off debts of Third World nations." Accepting the call, speaker after speaker unashamedly reverted to the Old Testament for the idea's rationale.

"The proclamation of the jubilee year," said WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser, "is part of the holiness code in the book of Leviticus [Leviticus 25]. After seven cycles of Sabbath years, the 50th year was to be observed as a jubilee year."

Mr Raiser suggested the WCC, drawing inspiration from its own 50th year, should call for the cancellation of debt by 2000.

"The jubilee is meant to break the vicious cycle of domination and dependence," he said, "by proclaiming reconciliation and liberation and by ordering a self-limitation in the exercise of power."

How much stronger would the WCC's appeal have been had its

member churches not turned their backs on the weekly seventh-day Sabbath? And Adventists should ask why we did not think of the idea of debt cancellation first?

Hot-button issues

Business sessions at the WCC are generally times of celebration and back-slapping, times when delegates compliment each other for the accomplishments of the seven years between assemblies. But they are also times when hot-button issues could suddenly boil to the surface. I will mention two such issues.

1. Representation

The Eighth Assembly marked the end of the "Ecumenical decade of the churches in solidarity with women," launched by the WCC in 1988.

In their reports, both the moderator and general secretary drew attention to the significance of the decade, each pointing out, however, that there was still a long road ahead. The moderator spoke of the "continuing barriers to women's participation in all aspects of the life of the churches."

"Too often, when women speak up," he said, "their voices are viewed as being confrontational or as a demand for token representation in power positions."

Youth were also mentioned in the moderator's report. They must be integrated, he said, into the life and work of the council.

Then, during a brief business session just before President Mugabe arrived, the nominating committee presented its first interim report on the list of members for the WCC Central Committee. And all hell broke loose. Youth delegates took to the floor clamouring for greater representation. And indigenous peoples. And other minorities. And under-represented geographical regions. And women.

A comment by Dr Marion Best of the United Church of Canada, a retiring member of the Central

Committee, said it all.

"I feel a deep disappointment, fast rising to a high level of anger. When the 'Ecumenical decade of churches in solidarity with women' was launched, I tried to support it. . . . And now the percentage of women on the committee is less than it was [seven years ago] in Canberra. I don't know if I want to continue in [this body] if it doesn't change."

It was arguably one of the most bitter moments of the assembly. For a few seconds afterward, you could hear a pin drop.

2. The CUV document

In September 1997 the WCC's Central Committee adopted a statement that generated considerable debate in Harare. The statement, *Towards a common understanding and vision of the WCC* (CUV),



A young woman bringing water during one of the morning worships at the WCC symbolises welcome and hospitality.

Photo: Adventist Review

attempts to articulate a new perception of the nature and purpose of the ecumenical movement, and the relationship of the WCC to it. World Council leaders saw it as "a significant milestone in an ongoing journey of self-reflection."

But as the document reached the floor, it ran into a wall of opposition. The most controversial element, an ecumenical forum, designed to foster wider relationships beyond membership, bringing together Christian churches and ecu-



Dr Roy Adams.

menical organisations not currently part of the WCC, was not at all spelled out, but rather implied.

The term forum had been "deliberately chosen," the general secretary said, "to suggest participation is more important than membership."

"I do not think [the Catholic Church] intends to join the [WCC] and take its place as one member among equals. It will 'join' on its own terms."

It will be "open to all bodies and organisations that share in the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the Scriptures and that seek to be obedient to God's call."

After considerable debate, the document was "received," rather than adopted, by the assembly.

My sense, however, is that the idea will eventually become reality, as the WCC seeks to broaden the ecumenical dialogue with those Christian organisations not now under its umbrella: The Roman Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Pentecostal movement, the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Adventist Church.

With its broad, open parameters, the forum will present the most tricky ecumenical situation yet for the Adventists. As Mr Raiser put it, there would be nothing to subscribe to, nothing to sign. It will, he said, "provide room both for a wide variety of forms, and for differences and even conflicts," leaving "ample space for diversity and for open mutual confrontation of differing interests and convictions."

With such broad parameters, Adventists would come under increasing pressure to participate. And we will need to come up with clear, logical and convincing

answers—not only for inquirers from outside, but also from those from within.

The future of the WCC

The WCC is struggling for survival. Delegates heard details about what the moderator earlier referred to as "serious financial upheavals" in the WCC during the past seven years.

They heard about radical restructurings and cutbacks; about the financial support of the WCC depending almost completely on just 10 (of the 338) member churches; and about 48 per cent of current member churches making no financial contribution to the organisation. The breakdown of the total support for 1997 was disturbing: Western Europe—81.76 per cent; United States and Canada—15.83 per cent; the rest of the world—2.41 per cent.

The present financial situation within the WCC, and a growing

malaise over a variety of difficult issues and questions, might destabilise the organisation and present an opportunity for the Catholic Church to step in.

I've always been intrigued that the Catholic Church, notwithstanding all its expressions of goodwill and support over the years, and in spite of every kind of wooing on the part of the WCC, still remains organisationally aloof. Why?

We're talking here about an entity with centuries of experience in negotiation, diplomacy and cunning. I have a hunch it knows exactly what it wants out of the WCC. I do not think it intends to join the organisation and take its place as one member among equals. But at a time that is right for it, it will "join"—on its own terms, or on terms tailor-made for it. My sense is the future of the WCC lies with the Catholic Church.—*Adapted, with permission, from Adventist Review*

c h i l d r e n

MATCH THE WORDS

The Exodus

There are 6 sets of words mixed up on the stone tablets. Can you match them up?

Illustration: P. Taylor

“ *Not always being able to go to church, I thank God for helping the church come to me.* ”

Misnomer

GRENVILLE KENT, NSW

Thanks for publishing the “Pickles and Cucumbers” (Flashpoint, February 13). I was credited as the writer, but the story was actually related to Kendall Down, the son of Pastor David and Goldie Down, who lives in the UK.

Tithing challenge

LYNN GRAY, ACT

Following on from “Tithing: A test of faithfulness” (February 13), many younger committed Christians feel uneasy about paying tithe to an organisation that tells them very little on how their money is spent in specific detail. The lack of confidence in this area results in members withdrawing their financial support from the church organisation. However, they will support specific appeals where they see the need and an immediate result.

Can church administrators at all levels give understandable annual financial overview reports in a consistent style, published in RECORD? This type of communication would strengthen the partnership of administration and laity.

A follow-up article will appear shortly in the RECORD detailing the use of tithe.

Church comes to me

ROBYN BOWLING, NSW

The RECORD helps to make my Sabbath. First I open it to Berto, which gives me a laugh. I suffer chronic pain, and I need to be able to laugh.

In reading Berto, and appreciating his messages, I quickly learned about the church. If I didn't understand, I asked someone! Over the years others and I have enjoyed “Just a Coincidence” and his book of the same name. Today we enjoy

“Clogden's World.”

Yes, God is good; He knows what we need, supplying “every good gift and perfect gift . . . from above” (James 1:17, NIV). For anyone who needs light reading, I'd like to recommend *Even the angels must laugh . . . again*, by Jan S Doward and *Cowboys make better preachers*, by Leo Schreven.

I also enjoy the Letters page. I appreciate the many writers and photographers as well, who together make up the magazine. I enjoy seeing and hearing about what God and His people are doing in life.

Each week the postman delivers my RECORD. Not always being able to go to church, I thank God for helping the church come to me.

Compilation?

VELMA ROCHE, NSW

I am wondering if anyone has compiled a worship series based on the book, *The coming of the great*

calamity, by Marvin Moore. If so, I would be grateful for a copy of it.

Avondale memories

G R SMITH, NSW

I attended the 1998 graduation of 173 Avondale students. My mind went back to 1941 when I graduated with 40 of my classmates. I couldn't help but note the differences. Men wore black and women white (no gowns), and marched down a grass-covered aisle into a large, camp-meeting-style tent situated about where Avondale church now stands.

What a privilege we now have to all be a part of a very active alumni association. I appeal to former Avondale students who do not receive *Reflections*, the association's magazine, to pass their name and address to the Avondale PR office so that they soon do. It provides up-to-date information about plans, past students and current activities of our beloved Avondale.

The Christians



Mail: RECORD Editor, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton Victoria 3799 **Fax:** (03) 5966 9019 **E-mail:** editor@a1.com.au Views in Letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Letters should be less than 250 words, and writers must include their name, address and phone number. All letters are edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's original meaning will not be changed. Not all letters received are published.

Volunteers needed

Position	Place	Job description/duties	Term
Experienced builder—couple	Bougainville, PNG	Work with local people to build new classrooms for school, Kepesia, Bougainville. Basic living conditions.	2-3mths ASAP
ESL teacher	Adventist University, Moscow, Russia	Preferably person with a degree and experience in teaching ESL to adults to teach theology students.	1 yr, commencing March 1999

For further information contact Pastor Eric White, Coordinator, Volunteer Services, South Pacific Division, Locked Bag 2014, Wabroonga NSW 2076.
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Schur—Strahley. Richard Schur, son of Edward and Florence Schur (Gooranbong, NSW), and Anjanette Strahley, daughter of Robert and Valma Strahley (Gooranbong), were married on 31.1.99 in Morisset Chapel, Morisset, NSW.

Wayne Krause

Smith—Manners. Brian Christopher Smith, son of Russell and Val Smith (Murwillumbah, NSW), and Kelly Robyn Manners, daughter of Hec and Robyn Manners (Murwillumbah), were married on 25.1.99 at Worongary, Qld.

Bob Manners

Trevor—Puna. Justin Paul Trevor, son of Annette Tapealava (Launceston, Tas), and Vivienne Tutai Puna, daughter of Ka and Vivienne Puna (Hobart, Tas), were married on 24.1.99 in the home of the bride's parents, Cambridge.

Leigh Rice

Vause—Andric. Jason Vause, son of Tro and Pam Vause (Buderim, Qld), and Carmen Andric, daughter of John and Lubila Andric (Brisbane), were married on 31.1.99 in Springwood Seventh-day Adventist church, Qld.

John Andric, Bob Possingham

Obituaries

Allemand, Gaynor (nee Hunt), born 14.2.44 at Armadale, Vic; died 21.1.99 at Dandenong, after a prolonged illness. She is survived by her husband, Daryl; and her four sons, Bradly, Justin, Troy and Ryan. Gaynor served on the committees of every school, preschool or high school her children attended, and on many local organisations, including two terms as mayoress of the city of Dandenong, also as head deaconess in the Dandenong church. Her Christian witness in the community was attested to by many testimonies from former colleagues, friends and civic leaders.

Noel Bolst

Anderson, Ruby May; born 13.7.12 at Clermont, Qld; died 23.1.99 in Manly Nursing Home, NSW. She is survived by her daughters, Genevieve Blumer and Frances Jamison; her sons, Stephen and Louis; her 11 granddaughters; and 11 great-granddaughters. Ruby was known as a very faithful member and gracious friend.

G C Best, H C Barritt

Atkins, Daisy, born 27.6.03 at Kalgoolie, WA; died 25.1.99 at Nunawading, Vic. She was predeceased by her first husband, William Beecroft, in 1923;

Positions vacant

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also her second husband, Edward, in 1938. She is survived by her children, Joan Johansen (Horsham), Arthur Beecroft (Brisbane, Qld), Marion Barley and Donald Atkins (both of Melbourne). Daisy's family greatly appreciated the loving attention given to their mother by the dedicated Christian staff at Coronella, Nunawading.

Merv Sparrowhawk

Bibby, Hector John, born 14.11.08 at Crows Nest, NSW; died 25.1.99 in Noreen Gardens Hostel, Batemans Bay. He is survived by his wife, Helen; sons, Ron and Carl; and his foster-daughter, Christine. Hector had a simple faith, a plain lifestyle, and a smile for everyone.

D Jenkins, G Lee, D Boehm

Hasluck, Doreen Joan, born 28.4.20 in England; died 23.1.99 in Shenton Park Cottage Hospice, Perth, WA. She was predeceased by her first husband, Robert. She is survived by her husband, William (Belmont); her eight children; her 21 grandchildren; her great-grandchildren; her three sisters; and her two brothers (all of WA). Doreen was a sincere, caring Christian with a great heart of love for needy children.

Cyrus Adams, Carlos Hernandez

Langley, Benjamin Patrick, born 25.11.79 in Wabroonga, NSW; died 21.1.99 in a car accident at Moonie Moonie, Gosford. He is survived by his mother, Cheryl Gardiner-Gibbs; his stepfather, Bill Gibbs; his father, Peter Langley; his brother, Matthew; his sister, Elizabeth; and his grandmother, Thelma Williams. Ben was president of the Wollongbar TAFE Students Association, and was held in high esteem by his fellow students.

Grant Burton

McDonald, Elizabeth May, born 6.11.08 at Wanganui, NNZ; died 18.1.99 at Wanganui. She was predeceased by her husband, James, on 16.5.78. She is survived by her children, Gloria, Duncan, Roger (all of Wanganui), Robin (Palmerston North) and Mervyn (Auckland).

Ben Timothy

Mayhew, Allan, born 11.3.20; died 19.1.99 in Napier, NNZ. He is survived by his wife, Carine; his children, Pam, Julie and Gary; and his six grandchildren. Allan had the gift to love and care for people and he was honoured with a community services award in Napier. He will be sadly missed.

Reye, Dorothy Emily (nee O'Hara), born 12.7.10 at Newport, Vic; died 20.1.99 in Charles Harrison Nursing Home, Cooranbong, NSW. She was predeceased by her husband, Bert, in 1994. She is survived by her daughters, Valerie Paoli and Cheryl Owen; and her six grandchildren.

B C Grosser

Rowland, David Leslie (Dick), born 28.5.11 at Quirindi, NSW; died 26.1.99 at Singleton. He was predeceased by his wife, Vivien, in 1985; and three children, Pamela, David and William. He is survived by his daughters, Patricia and Shirley (both of Muswellbrook), Leslie (Singleton); his granddaughter, Sarah Gutter; and her sons, Jake and Jesse. Dick was a deacon for most of his 28 years as a member at Singleton church.

Sid Griffith

Toepfer, Hilda Doreen, born 7.10.09 in Gunnedah, NSW; died 19.1.99 in Sydney. She is survived by her daughter, Jean Williams; her son, Barrie; her brother, Allen Kellett; her sisters, Irene Kellett

Weddings

Dean—Simpson (nee Etwell). Rodney James Dean and Joyce Christine Simpson were married on 25.1.99 on showboat "Avoca," Murray River, Mildura, Vic.

Linwood Burns

Howard—Morton. Malcolm Royce Howard, son of Royce Howard (Warburton, Vic), and Nicole Louise Morton, daughter of Barry and Ros Morton (Ballarat), were married on 31.1.99 at the Ballarat Christian Fellowship, Ballarat, Vic.

Chris Foote

Maevsky—Atkin. Kevin Boris Maevsky, son of Wladyslav and Maria Maevsky (Cooranbong, NSW), and Jennifer Anne Atkin, daughter of Robert and Elaine Atkin (Killara), were married on 31.1.99 in the Wabroonga Seventh-day Adventist church.

Walter Scragg

Pozzobon—Kavur. Andrew Pozzobon, son of Carol Johns (Dunedin, SNZ), and Jermy Kavur, daughter of Michael and Betty Kavur (Brisbane, Qld), were married on 18.1.99 in the Wesley Uniting church, Melbourne, Vic.

Morie Krieg, Helen Feeney

Preston—Moody. Greg Shane Preston, son of Malcolm and Jeanette Preston (Belgrave, Vic), and Carolyn Ruth Moody, daughter of Bruce and Wanda Harrison (Murwillumbah, NSW), were married on 21.1.99 at Purlingbrook Falls, Springbrook, Qld.

David Jack, Brett Townend

and Doris Hayes, her grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Her memory continues to inspire and encourage family and friends. Peter Cousins

Advertisements

Please note: Neither the editor, Signs Publishing Company, nor the Seventh-day Adventist Church is responsible for the quality of goods or services advertised. Publication does not indicate endorsement of a product or service.

Feilding church invites ex-members and all who are interested in joining them for a special day to celebrate their 75th anniversary, on Sabbath, March 27. Sabbath school at 9.15 am sharp! Divine service 11.00 am with special guest speaker; also afternoon program and old-fashioned social in the evening. Combined lunch for all. Phone the minister, Anthony Manu (06) 356 9156, if you plan to attend. Church address: Cnr South and Ferguson Streets, Feilding, NNZ.

Cruise the Coral Seas—August 2–16. SPD Travel and Norwegian Capricorn Line are pleased to offer this 14-night Pacific cruise, departing Sydney on August 2—visiting Noumea, Vila, Champaign Beach, Honiara, Port Moresby, Darwin and some of our local missions. Your host will be Ervin Ferris. Prices start from \$2500 per person based on special group discount. Embark on a unique cruise experience. For a brochure please contact SPD Travel Service, Locked Bag 2014, Wahroonga NSW 2076; phone (02) 9847 3202; fax (02) 9847 3300; e-mail <jhaynes@adventist.org.au>

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Special session: Notice is hereby given that a special session of the Greater Sydney Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be held in the auditorium of the Sydney Adventist College, 159 Albert Road, Strathfield, on Sunday, April 18, 1999, commencing at 9 am with registration and seating of delegates. The business of the session will be to determine a relocation proposal of the Greater Sydney Conference headquarters office situated at 84 The Boulevard, Strathfield. R G Manners, secretary

Advertisers please note: All advertisements should be sent to RECORD Editor, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton Vic 3799. Advertisements approved by the editor will be inserted at the following rates: first 30 words or less, \$A30; each additional word, \$A1.50. For your advertisement to appear, payment must be enclosed. Classified advertisements in the RECORD are available to Seventh-day Adventist members, churches and institutions only.

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