

A large, dense crowd of people, primarily of African descent, is shown from a high-angle perspective. Many individuals have their hands raised in the air, palms facing forward, in a gesture of prayer or worship. The crowd is diverse in age and clothing, with some wearing traditional headwraps and others in modern casual attire. The background is filled with more people, creating a sense of a massive gathering.

R

PNG For Christ

Thousands commit
their lives to Jesus ^{3,10,11}

OUR IMPACT

Over **97,000**
Lives touched¹



NOURISHED BY A PLANT-BASED LIFESTYLE



"I truly believe my brother and the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) saved my life. I can't thank them enough for what they've done for me."

Determined to make changes, within three weeks Diane noted that "she had had shed 18kg and reduced her tumour by 50%". Following her surgery she continued her plant-based eating plan with the help of Gordon and her sister-in-law Kerry, the local CHIP coordinator.

The Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) is an evidence-based lifestyle intervention designed to prevent and facilitate the reversal of common lifestyle diseases.

As a graduate of CHIP and regular attendee of NOURISH plant-based food and health education evenings, cancer survivor Diane credits her good health with the adoption of a plant-based diet and supportive people in her life.

Diagnosed with rectal cancer in November 2019, Diane was approached by her brother Gordon, then Pastor at Ilam Seventh-day Adventist Church near Christchurch. He asked Diane if she was open to a plant-based diet, which she adopted the very next day, clearing out her pantry of processed foods, meat and dairy.

¹ CHIP has positively impacted over 97,000 lives globally since the program's inception.

Scan the QR code to read the full story in IMPACT Magazine.





EDITOR'S NOTE:

What greater reward?

Jesse Herford
Associate Editor
Signs of the Times

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Most of the imagery we associate with heaven comes from our own imaginations.

As I'm married to a wonderful Mauritian woman, I attend my fair share of Mauritian get-togethers. If you know anything about Mauritians, you'll know to expect two things: a lot of food and a lot of singing. Curry, rougaille, lentils, potato dauphinoise, stew, fresh bread, fried noodles—such is the exciting mix of a cuisine that is part French, part African, part Asian, part who-knows-what-else. All I know is that it's all delicious.

The second obligatory part of the Mauritian gathering is singing. Whether they are the traditional songs of yesteryear, favourites from the '70s or beloved hymns, somehow there is always a guitar with a small choir accompanying it. Recently, one of the old hymns got me thinking. It's a familiar refrain with a familiar message: "When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!" It captures the hope of many Christians—of the "prize before us"—that is to say, the reward of heaven. Whether it be a jewel-laden crown, a mansion "just over the hilltop" or streets of solid gold, these are what we hope for. Oh yeah, and Jesus.

Funnily enough, most of the imagery we associate with heaven comes from our own imaginations. When we do get glimpses of the heavenly realm, as in Ezekiel or Job, they're often strange and incomprehensible. When Jesus speaks of the "kingdom of heaven", He bewilders and angers the most devout religious experts of His day. So, what is heaven—and what should we hope for?

Is heaven just "Florida in the sky"? You know, a retirement home by a golf course with a bar next door that serves never-ending mocktails. Probably not. Probably no alligators, either. It makes sense why this belief arose, though. The experience of millions of Christians throughout history has been that of suffering. It's comforting to believe eternal reward awaits those who endure hardship. It's also simply not the end of the story—at least if you read the whole Bible. According to Revelation, while we will spend an entire millennium there, ultimately God will make His home among us (Revelation 21:1–6). All things will be made new and our ultimate home is, well, our current home. Albeit a renewed version of it.

Perhaps this is why I find many of the songs on this topic disquieting. Too often our solution for present troubles is to long to be raptured into the clouds, away from this mess. How awkward then to face the reality that in the end, we'll all end up where we started: here, on terra firma. This realisation made many songs and sayings take on a new reality. Take, for instance, CS Lewis's famous quotation from *Mere Christianity*: "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."

Most would take this to mean that we were made for the heavenly realm, not our current one. But what if we interpreted this line differently? What if we were to instead say, "I was made for this world, but this world made new"? If I were to sign up as a team member for the "new creation project" that God is currently working on, how might it change the way I live? Instead of hoping to escape this mortal coil, what if I were to see it as something I can help, through the power of Jesus, to renew and redeem, that God's will may be done here—as in heaven?

And what if, instead of longing for jewels, gold or a penthouse mansion, our hope is that of Revelation 21:3: "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." What greater reward is there, than to be with God Himself?



INSIGHT:

Soldiers in arms

Glenn Townend
South Pacific Division president

I felt like a soldier going into battle as I boarded the flight to Port Moresby with many other Seventh-day Adventist pastors and lay people. This feeling became stronger as I mixed with other recent arrivals in the Port Moresby airport from Fiji, NZ, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It seemed that the airport was filled with Seventh-day Adventists on a mission—and we were. We were all there to be speakers or supporters in health and other activities for the PNG for Christ program. There was a sense of pride that we could work together although scattered across a vast country. There was a sense of anticipation—what would happen in the country? What would happen where I was preaching? What would happen to the other 209 preachers from the rest of the South Pacific?

The apostle Paul liked the image of a soldier—it illustrated well the spiritual battle we are all in (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3-5; Ephesians 6:13-18).

I felt isolated on the stage when preaching in the dark with lights in my eyes to a large open park—only seeing the few in front and not knowing whether there were dozens or hundreds there. I felt alone when calling people to the front, as requested by the lay leaders, to accept Jesus—and no-one was coming. I felt overwhelmed when I stopped appealing and started praying and more than 50 people came forward. I felt comforted by the continual prayers and encouragement from the prayer team and local leaders. I felt energised when the leaders said more and more people were coming every night. I felt motivated by the local pastoral and lay leaders who had done incredible work in meeting, caring for and visiting people. I felt inspired as I saw God work with all of us to see people genuinely respond to the love of Jesus. We were part of the army of God in the great battle for human souls.

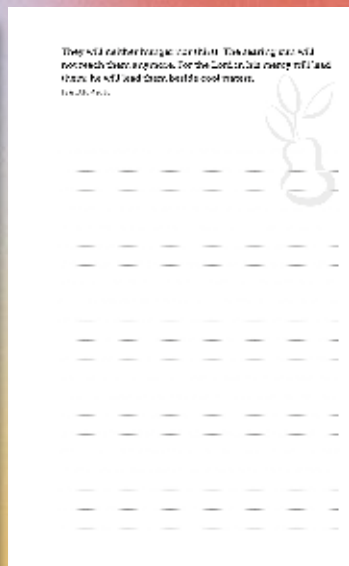
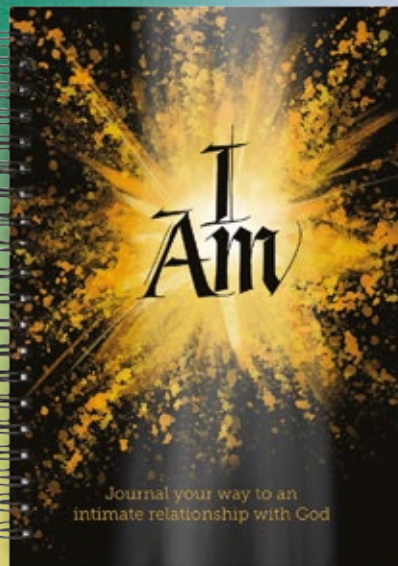
When soldiers return from battle it is mainly those who were on the front-line who understand, but I thank all those who supported PNG for Christ in their prayers—they were answered. There is much more disciple-making to come, so keep praying—the war is won but the fight for each person continues. And there's a renewed battlefield in all of the countries of the South Pacific. This is a call to arms for discipling the nations with God!

Anywhere, Anytime, Anyone.

To learn more,
scan the QR code
for more resources



**THE
WARSHIP
PROJECT**



I AM Journal



Young and old committing their lives to Jesus.

PNG for Christ makes a huge impact

📍 Jiwaka, PNG | Jarrod Stackelroth

PNG for Christ has made a huge impact on Papua New Guinea, drawing thousands to hear the gospel message.

Featuring more than 200 international speakers from the South Pacific Division and beyond, the evangelistic event has attracted global attention. The middle weekend of the reaping campaign reportedly saw close to 98,000 people baptised. They were people who had been studying before the programs started, while new contacts attending the programs will not be baptised until after PNG for Christ.

Held from April 26 to May 11, the program ran simultaneously across more than 2000 sites. Makeshift camps sprung up near many sites, with people constructing grass and tarp huts for shelter during the program. Families journeyed great distances to participate in the meetings and the mega health clinic (see story below).

It was reportedly the first time that three division presidents, Pastor Glenn Townend (South Pacific), Pastor Robert Osei-Bonsu (West Central Africa) and Pastor Alexander Bryant (North America); the president and a vice president of the General Conference, Pastors Ted Wilson and Guillermo Biaggi; president of Adventist World Radio, Dr Duane McKey; GC associate ministerial director, Ramon Canals, and many SPD mission and conference presidents have been involved in the same campaign. Other speakers included the

former Philippines ambassador to PNG, Bienvenido Tejano, an Adventist who spent more than 15 years in the role.

Pastor Wilson, accompanied by his wife Nancy, received a warm welcome upon their arrival. Pastor Wilson met with Prime Minister James Marape and other government officials before heading to Minj, Jiwaka province, where he was stationed for the campaign. He also travelled to other regions meeting large crowds and dedicating new churches and facilities.

A program of this scale always comes with challenges. While a majority of the programs started on Friday or Sabbath, some of the international speakers were forced to start a day or two later due to flight delays and cancellations, while some programs were impacted by weather-related issues such as heavy rain.

According to Papua New Guinea Union Mission president, Pastor Malachi Yani, while there were 2000 sites running, if the number of campaigns were added up, including those run in preparation, the total would reach 15,000.

"We hope that the international speakers have been inspired by what God is doing in PNG," said Pastor Yani. "We are hearing so many stories of God's leading."

For a photo collage capturing some of the highlights, turn to pages 10-11. For comprehensive coverage, visit <record.adventistchurch.com>.



1500 cataracts were removed at the Togaba clinic

Thousands line up for medical checks

📍 Mt Hagen, PNG | Tracey Bridcutt

In extraordinary scenes, thousands of people lined up to visit a mega health clinic held in the lead-up to PNG for Christ.

Situated in Togaba, Western Highlands Province, the clinic was a joint effort of the 10,000 Toes Campaign and Adventist World Radio. More than 175 international volunteers, backed by 400-plus 10,000 Toes ambassadors, manned the clinic.

10,000 Toes Campaign coordinator Pamela Townend said 10,400 people were seen by the clinic team. Services ranged from diabetes screenings to dental work, cataract surgeries,

women's health and paediatrics checks.

Mrs Townend said the cataract surgeries were particularly memorable as people's lives were transformed by having their sight restored.

From a 10,000 Toes perspective, she said, "We continue to meet people who do not know they have diabetes. Amputations are starting to take off in PNG which is catching up to other South Pacific countries which have battled with this problem for a lot longer."

She said the volunteers formed a close bond, and they continue to connect and reflect on their time in PNG.



Dr Malcolm Coulson.

Malcolm Coulson appointed interim VC of Avondale University

📍 Cooranbong, NSW | Tracey Bridcutt

Highly-regarded Adventist educator Dr Malcolm Coulson has been appointed as the interim vice-chancellor (VC) and president of Avondale University.

His appointment follows a decision by current president and VC, Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, to conclude her tenure in July.

Dr Coulson brings a wealth of experience to Avondale. He has served as a teacher, principal, education director, university lecturer and university administrator. In 2022 he was appointed education director for the South Pacific Division.

Over the years he has maintained close ties with Avondale, having previously served as its vice president (learning and teaching). His recent involvement has seen him working closely on Avondale's renewal plan and the preparations for the university's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) re-registration submission.

Reflecting on his new role, Dr

Coulson said, "I am honoured to work with the administration, staff and students as we ensure continuity in the period leading up to the appointment of a new VC.

"We will miss the leadership and clarity of direction provided by Professor Krause in the time she has been at Avondale and in the role of VC," he added.

Avondale University chancellor Pastor Glenn Townend said Dr Coulson's vast experience in educational leadership will be an asset for the university.

"Malcolm is a strong Adventist education leader who has the knowledge and experience that Avondale needs," Pastor Townend said.

"Having an interim president allows a longer period to find the right person to lead Avondale into its desired future."

Dr Coulson's tenure at Avondale is planned to commence on June 24 and he will work closely with Professor Krause until her departure in July.



The pastors held their meetings over three days at Lake Lyndon Lodge. (Credit: South News).

Connection, training and prayer for pastors

📍 Castle Hill, NZ | Ben Martin/Record staff

Pastoral teams from across South New Zealand gathered recently at Lake Lyndon Lodge for connection, training and prayer.

The team was joined by associate ministerial secretary, Dr Edyta Jankiewicz, and field and ministerial secretary, Dr Darius Jankiewicz, from the South Pacific Division.

During the three days, the pastoral team heard presentations on relational intelligence, with specific emphasis on emotional intelligence. The life of Jesus was used as a model, and many stories from Scripture where Jesus displayed His masterful ability to connect and minister to people, were studied and discussed.

The pastors celebrated the Lord's Supper together during the evening meal—first by washing each other's feet, then breaking the bread and drinking from the cup.

"Pastors rarely if ever get to partic-

ipate in a communion service that they are not running. We wanted our pastors to be participants in a communion during these meetings," secretary-treasurer for South New Zealand, Michael Jones, said.

A break in the windy weather also allowed time to explore the nearby Castle Hill—the first time for many in the team.

"The number of new pastors in our team since we last gathered in this way was a special aspect of these meetings," said South New Zealand Conference president Pastor Ben Martin. "It was wonderful to get a chance to connect with each new minister and get to know them better.

"This time together highlighted just how well our pastoral team works together. Though we are ministering in different churches across the South Island, we all have the same mission—to see the kingdom of God advance in South New Zealand."



Pastor Wilson at the school library.

New prayer room to serve Kabiufa

📍 Goroka, PNG | Jarrod Stackelroth

Kabiufa Adventist Secondary School (KASS) in Goroka, Eastern Highlands, has dedicated a room for prayer at the back of the library building.

A simple prayer of dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony were performed by General Conference (GC) president Pastor Ted Wilson after he addressed the students in the campus church.

"May this wonderful prayer room be a source of tremendous spiritual inspiration for the students and faculty of this precious secondary school," said Pastor Wilson, just before cutting the ribbon.

According to KASS principal Lawrence Suto, the new room offers students a personal space. "Students can see that that is a place where they can come and share what is bottling up in them, bothering them—in any other situations they're going through, it's at their convenience," said Mr Suto.

Earlier, the church was full and overflowing, with the roughly 600-seat venue not able to accommodate the more than 1000 students and special guests in attendance.

"Kabiufa is one of those special places," said Pastor Wilson. "I'm looking at the future leaders of God's church in Papua New Guinea."

Mr Suto said having the General Conference president visit his school was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. "I was a student here when [Pastor Wilson's] father came around," he said. "It's about 35 years since then and in my faintest dreams, it didn't occur to me that I would be the principal and the GC president would come around during my time."

During the service, Mr Suto gave a brief history of the school at Kabiufa and shared some of the needs that the school is experiencing.

"Welcome to Kabiufa, the school of the prophets," he said. "Since I started as principal in 2021, we have baptised 218 students and this year during the PNG for Christ program we will baptise 163 students."

The principal also gave attendees a snapshot of the school. "Our students are actively involved in outreach programs," he said.

"This school has 35 teachers with fair representation from different provinces of Papua New Guinea. We have 13 support staff. The student population is at 1127, giving an additional strain on the already existing structures."

North American Division president Pastor Alexander Bryant and his wife Desiree, and Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) president Pastor Malachi Yani, were also in attendance along with other PNGUM and Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission staff.

making headlines

Generational impact

Three generations of one family were baptised following a two-week, island-wide evangelical campaign in the US Virgin Islands. The Rodríguez family, consisting of a grandmother, daughter and 11 grandchildren, were among the 105 baptisms that occurred during the "Journey to Joy" series. The event brought hundreds of people together and included four guest speakers at four venues, a free health clinic as well as community initiatives.—**IAD**



Women's health gathering

One hundred and fifty women across Myanmar attended a health convention organised by the Adventist Church which aimed to educate women on essential health practices. The two-day convention featured talks on emotional resilience, gender-sensitive healthcare and cancer awareness to empower women with vital health knowledge amidst difficult circumstances.—**SSD**

Community care

An Adventist health initiative in Ecuador provided free medical services in kinesiology, dentistry, radiology, ophthalmology, general medicine, family medicine and pediatrics to 245 residents of a community near the Middle of the World Monument, recruiting 50 people to study the Bible.—**ANN**

Century old story

Christian athlete Eric Liddell is remembered 100 years after winning gold at the 1924 Paris Olympics, with a million booklets to be distributed at the 2024 Paris Games to inspire conversations about God. Known for his refusal to compromise his beliefs, Eric withdrew from competitions on the Sabbath. His story was made famous in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*.—**Vision Media**



Visitor-friendly

Churches on the Wahroonga Estate (Sydney, NSW) focused on building community as they celebrated Easter this year, by hosting a variety of visitor-friendly programs and activities across the long weekend (March 29-31). On both Friday and Sabbath mornings, the churches held worship services featuring music and uplifting messages, as well as a special children's service at Fox Valley on Sabbath. On Friday night, an agape feast was held in the church carpark, which attracted several community members walking past. The weekend concluded on Sunday with a family fun day, complete with a sausage sizzle and kids' activities. The estate hopes to host a similar program at Easter next year.—**Maryellen Hacko**



600 kitchen kits

Displaced community members in Vanuatu are receiving essential resources as restoration efforts continue after Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lola. Six-hundred kitchen kits and shelter tools have been provided by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Vanuatu in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), delivering much-needed support to internally displaced and vulnerable households. Communities in Southwest Malekula, South Malekula, Southeast Malekula, Central Malekula, West Ambrym and North Ambrym Area Councils were impacted by the category 5 cyclone in October last year and are still recovering.—**Nancy Lagdom/Kiera Bridcutt**



Joy in the south

Five people in the South NZ Conference recently committed their lives to Jesus. Three people were baptised at Wicklow Street Adventist Church, Clifton, and two joined Harvest Adventist Fellowship Church, Georgetown, through profession of faith. "This was an especially joyful time for myself as a pastor, because this high day for the church was not due to my efforts but rather the efforts of others," local church pastor Gordon Gosset said.—**Gordon Gosset/Record Staff**



Hope to Wauchope

Asian Aid staff, Board directors, volunteers and local group leaders gathered in Wauchope to officially open the Give Hope Today op shop on February 4. Asian Aid, which supports disadvantaged children in south-east Asia, has been operating from Wauchope for more than 50 years. According to Supporter Services manager Ineka Martin, "in the first weeks of operating they have already been able to give back to some very worthy local organisations".—**Ineka Martin/Juliana Muniz**



Sanitation boost

Communities in the Solomon Islands are being transformed after gaining access to essential sanitation facilities for the first time. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Solomon Islands has implemented a sanitation awareness program, which has included the provision of SaTo pan toilets across the three islands of Rannogah, Vela and Kolobangara in the Western Province.

The SaTo pan, equipped with mechanical and water seals, closes off pit latrines from open air. This reduces disease transmission from flying insects and mitigates unsanitary conditions associated with open-air facilities. It not only addresses sanitation challenges but also conserves water resources by reducing the volume required for flushing.

The sanitation program is part of the Solomon Islands National Sanitation Sustainability Plan (NSSP) Phase Two program, funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and implemented by ADRA. The NSSP program aims to enhance sustainable sanitation services at both provincial and national levels while promoting improved hygiene practices within communities. As part of the initiative, 39 pan toilets and five bags of cement were provided to Kolokolo community on March 25, to kickstart their sanitation program.

—Denver Newter/Kiera Bridcutt

have news to share?

Send info and photos to <news@record.net.au>



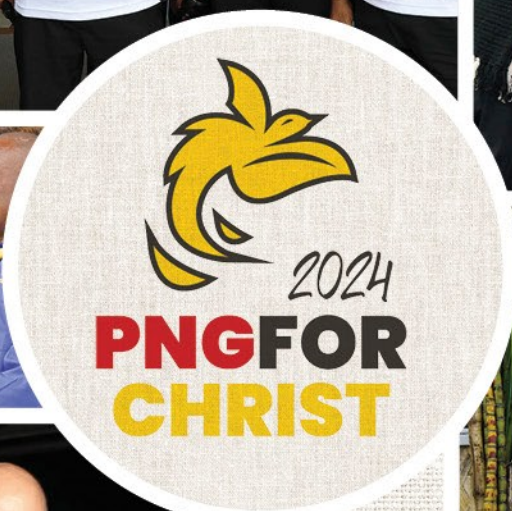
Books and more

Members of Landsborough Adventist Church (Qld) distributed 1500 copies of Ellen White's *The Great Controversy* on April 13. To celebrate Missionary Book Distribution Day, church members went into their local community, distributing the books through door knocking and letterboxing. Bookmarks were also handed out, inviting people to attend Bible studies at Landsborough church. The bookmarks also contained the contact details of young adult church members and Bible workers D'Arty and Emily, who are working in and around the community.—Charles Russell/Record Staff



International recognition

A Pacific Adventist University (PAU) manager has received a prestigious award including an opportunity to gain invaluable experience in the United States. Quality assurance manager Daphne Oevi-Artango has been awarded the Hubert H Humphrey Fellowship, which is funded by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and overseen by the Institute of International Education. Ms Oevi-Artango is one of the few chosen for the prestigious program for the 2024-2025 academic year. Her fellowship placement will be at Pennsylvania State University for a period of 10 months starting in August. During this time, she will focus on the field of educational administration, planning and policy. "We are thrilled for Daphne and this incredible opportunity," said Professor Lalen Simeon, deputy vice chancellor academic and provost at PAU. "We have no doubt she will gain invaluable knowledge and experience that will benefit both her and PAU upon her return."—Kym Piez



From east to west, north to south, Papua New Guinea has come alive with the gospel message. Thousands attended the nightly meetings and many have committed their lives to Jesus. Here's a visual snapshot of some of the highlights of the evangelistic campaign.





Fighting fire with fire



Fire!" The startling cry rang out into the quiet stillness of the night, echoing down corridors and hallways of the Sydney Sanitarium (now known as Sydney Adventist Hospital). Nurses keeping their watch by candlelight looked at one another alarmed and confused, as patients opened their bleary eyes with confusion at the unexpected wake-up call.

"Fire! Get everyone out, there's a fire!"

Immediately the nurses rose and got to work moving the patients to safety, taking but a few moments to remove each one without injury from the building. They had trained for emergencies like this and wasted no time in diligently performing their responsibilities. After preserving the lives of all those inside the building, the nurses and helpers began fighting the blaze with great "courage, calmness and determination" (*Australasian Record*, January 20, 1919).

It was 3am on the morning of Friday, January 10, 1919 when the fire alarm sounded at Wahroonga's Sanitarium Hospital. Within just a few minutes, individuals dwelling in the Union Conference homes surrounding the hospital were on the scene and volunteering their assistance. Observing the blazing inferno before them, their hearts sank—it appeared the entire building would be lost to the flames.

Could it be that the Church's effort to minister to others through healthcare had come to an end as a pile of ashes? Was their dedication to mission going out in a blaze of glory—literally? Inflamed with dedication and zeal for God's mission, the faithful volunteers refused to accept defeat and chose to fight the fire with their own inner fire and prayer.

Instead of watching the building burn down, the dedicated and faithful volunteers drew near to fight the flames and do whatever was in their power to save the Sanitarium. It seemed the fire had started in the central tower and was working its way into the main building. The volunteers stood their ground and battled the flames valiantly, successfully delaying the spread of the flames to some degree until the firefighters arrived.

Fire engines arrived from Waitara, Gordon, Crows Nest and Sydney, with the firemen expecting a "big job" (*Record*, January 20, 1919). But upon arriving at the scene, the firefighters were surprised to find that the flames had apparently been mastered by the volunteers and nurses. Within an hour of the fire brigades arriving, the blaze was completely under control and those watching were filled with relief.

Providence had protected everyone in the Sanitarium that night, keeping all the patients safe from the flames, and the nurses and volunteers remarkably calm and confident in the face of the towering inferno. All who fought against the flames worked "heroically, willingly and cheerfully" (*Record*, January 20, 1919). How the hospital was saved could not be explained except to say that it was by the hand of God.

As a result of the fire, the central tower was demolished, the operating room gutted and two adjoining rooms considerably damaged. The flames had travelled along the roof of the northern wing to the gable, but vital parts of the institution remained intact so that work could be carried on within the hospital without interruption. Thankfully the hospital was fully covered by insurance.

Writing about these events, Cecil Pretyman reflected that "Truly God had heard and wonderfully answered the earnest prayers that were ascending from hundreds of lips and hearts, to whom the institution never seemed so dear as now in what appeared to be its death agonies" (*Record*, January 20, 1919).

How readily do we take advantage of the institutions and facilities at our disposal until they are at risk of being lost to us once and for all. How quickly can we lose passion for God's mission, until we are reminded of its value. While we can be grateful the hospital's flames were put out, may our passion for mission never go out! May our hearts continue to burn for God like the devoted volunteers who fought against the flames, fighting fire with inner fire for God.

Olivia Fairfax

editorial assistant, Adventist Media.

Not a minute less— not a second more

My minister son and I visited Israel in November 2015. One Friday while we were there, we found ourselves in the square in Jerusalem, facing the western wall along with some other members of the tour group. We were seated on a bench that provided a good view of all that happened in the square.

There were many people there that late afternoon, from tourists to orthodox Jewish men when, suddenly, a group of young and not-so-young Jewish people, close to the western wall, joined hands and in joyful anticipation of the Sabbath, danced and sang in a circle of happiness. They were happy that, once again, the Sabbath was about to bless them. They had waited six days since the previous Sabbath and now they anticipated another and their joy knew no bounds. It was inspiring. It was uplifting. Not for them an attitude of isolating the Sabbath joy to a strict to-the-minute 24 hours. Oh no!

They wanted to experience the Sabbath blessing sooner rather than later.

I have often pondered on that experience. Of the fact, too, that believing Jews open the Sabbath in their home with a special meal, candles lit, the menorah if they have one, and the Sabbath celebration continues. And what do we Seventh-day Adventists do? Often Friday duties press right up to the Sabbath and we mumble a brief opening Sabbath prayer and hope that God understands how busy we are.

Does it happen with you, with me, that often the Sabbath experience does not commence with us a minute earlier than the time that is announced in our church bulletin?

And when the sun sets as the Sabbath passes into eternity, is there in your home a frantic rush to some entertainment of dubious quality. Perhaps a business call in anticipation of the working week, or maybe a joke to share with a friend that wasn't appropriate on God's holy day? Or perhaps the mother of the home, at work during the week as mothers now often are, is seen piling the washing in the trusty washing machine. As she brushes her hair from her face, she now has to face preparing another meal for her hungry brood. Where does it all end, she wonders.

The Sabbath was made to be anticipated, to be enjoyed and to be remembered. For this to genuinely happen, a re-priority of family activities may need to be made. It can happen where there is the will to do that. When we put God first. If we do that, we will find that there is still time to do what is necessary (perhaps not all that we want to do). Putting God first will see a calm settling on our homes and in our family. And wasn't God unselfish when He required only one day in seven to be devoted to His worship? Six days for us and one day for God and we still come up to the last minute before Sabbath to cram in as much of our own agenda before we need to drop it and acknowledge the Sabbath.

There are many appropriate passages in the Bible that are ideal for Sabbath opening and closing worship. I am not going to feed these to you here; you can find them. If you are not sure where to look, get yourself a quality concordance. Now, that would be a good Sabbath activity, wouldn't it? And plan your Sabbaths so that secular events will not run right up to the Sabbath. Play or turn on some quality gospel music a half-hour before Sabbath. That will put our minds in a good place, ready to welcome God's holy day.

And then, as the Sabbath is about to end, plan for a quiet easing into the secular week again. Our world will not come crashing down on us if we don't commence our activities for another 15 or 30 minutes after the Sabbath.

God wants us to enjoy the Sabbath, to experience the blessing of worship, of enjoying His creation and to forget for a day the things that press in on us during the week. We can do it if we try. And then we shall find that we will have time to introduce the Sabbath without encroaching on the sacred hours. And at the end of the day, we won't have a mind to rush away from the Sabbath, like a scared hyrax, and commence our own agenda. Now that would be selfish, wouldn't it?

William Ackland

is retired in Cooranbong (NSW) and has written eight books. For more Sabbath inspiration, head to <sabbathgift.info>.



DESIRE of Ages:



If I were to ask you what your greatest desire is, how would you answer? For many of us, the response would be “love”. Each of us has a deep and abiding desire for perfect love, but in our pursuit of this love, we can often be hurt, rejected, betrayed and let down; leading us to put up emotional barriers to stop ourselves from getting hurt.

One woman in the Bible understood, perhaps more than most, this struggle: the Samaritan woman. In this story, we find a broken woman who had spent her entire life pursuing love, only to be disappointed at every turn. While inwardly she longs for something better, she refuses to entertain this hope, instead putting up barrier after barrier, made clear in her interactions with Jesus.

She meets Jesus in the heat of the day at the well, avoiding the other women from the village and their scorn. Typically, she would perform this ritual alone; except this day a man—a Jew—was waiting for her.

Barrier 1 – Cultural Divide:

Upon being asked for a drink, the woman is startled. This man should not be speaking to her because Jews did not associate with Samaritans (John 4:9). The Jews had rejected the Samaritans as fellow Israelites, resulting in a great rift between these people groups. And yet here was Jesus (a Jew) side-stepping this major issue of identity and culture, to ask her (a Samaritan) for a drink.

Naturally, she is wary of Jesus’ intentions and puts up the first barrier of self-preservation. She has never encountered a kind Jew before . . . let alone many kind men. Understanding her concern, Jesus tactfully overlooks the cultural divide and addresses who He is and why He is there at the well: to offer her living water.

Barrier 2 – Challenge to Jesus’ authority and claiming her right to the well:

In verses 11 and 12 we see the woman’s second barrier arise as she challenges Jesus’ authority to offer her living water. Sensing that Jesus is talking about spiritual things, she redirects the conversation back to the literal well of water, revealing her fear to address the deeper pains her heart has suffered. And in doing so, this woman challenges Jesus’ authority to provide any kind of “spiritual” water. After all, who is this random stranger in comparison to Jacob, the forefather of Israel, who first provided the well?

Not only does the Samaritan woman redirect the conversation away from spiritual things, but she also raises another major point of contention between Jews and Samaritans by bringing up her right to draw from the well as a descendant of Israel. You see, the Jews from Samaria had intermarried with Gentile colonists during the Babylonian exile and were not considered true Israelites by the Jews. But here the woman is clinging to her Israelite heritage and claiming her right to the

spiritual inheritance of their forefathers. But Jesus ignores her attempt to redirect the conversation and simply tells her about the spiritual water He is offering. He can see her thirst for love and offers her a gift to satisfy her thirst.

Barrier 3 – Immediacy of her issues:

While the Samaritan woman indicates genuine interest in the gift Jesus is offering, she is only interested insofar as it can solve her immediate problem of collecting water. Here we see her putting up the third barrier. She makes it clear that the gift Jesus is offering sounds nice, but how could it possibly solve her immediate problems? After all, religion has only ever made her problems worse in the past.

So, how does Jesus reply? Verse 16 says, “He told her, ‘Go, call your husband and come back.’” Jesus brings up a contextual norm as a conduit to address the woman’s problem with seeking love in relationships. You see, it was customary back then that women were not to be educated or taught in spiritual matters, except if their husband or father were present. Women needed a male relative’s approval for education in matters of public life.

Barrier 4 – Contextual Perceptions of Gendered Rights to Education:

When the woman responds that she has no husband, she raises a fourth barrier, using the contextual perceptions of gendered rights to education to put distance between herself and Jesus. She has no man whom she can call to approve further education from Jesus. But Jesus continues to talk with this woman about spiritual matters without a husband or father present. He goes on to reveal—without any judgement—the truth about the woman’s past. He highlights the issue that has brought her to this moment; the issue which has driven her from God, from religion and from society, bringing her to this very well. Jesus points out her issue is that of desperately desiring perfect love.

Jesus has hit home, and the Samaritan woman is caught off-guard. Afraid of vulnerability and getting hurt from where this conversation might go, the woman quickly changes the topic yet again.

Barrier 5 – Theological Disagreement over Place of Worship:

In verses 19 to 24, the woman admits that Jesus must be a prophet since He clearly knows her life story. But this was getting far too personal for her liking, so she brings up a fifth barrier—the biggest theological issue between Samaritans and Jews since the time of King Jeroboam—their place of worship.

Back when Israel was divided under the reign of King Rehoboam into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, King Jeroboam established high places in the northern kingdom of Israel to avoid the Israelites travelling to Jerusalem in Judah to worship God (1 Kings 12). Because of this, Israelites throughout history would worship God at these high places rather than in Jerusalem. This theological dispute had endured centuries, with religious leaders judging Israelites’ religiosity based on where they worshipped, the high places or Jerusalem.

The Samaritans worshipped in a temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. However, in the year 129 BC, the Jews destroyed this temple, adding to the hostility between the two groups.

All the Samaritans believed Mount Gerizim was the place of true worship, being built according to the laws of Moses. So, when the Samaritan woman brings it up to Jesus, a Jew, she is drawing attention away from herself and yet again revealing her problems with how religious bodies have judged her and her people.

But Jesus’ response is incredible. He does not deny the truth about history or discredit the important spiritual undertones of the debate the woman has raised. Instead of arguing theology, Jesus instead addresses the heart of the issue—that of worship. Jesus teaches her that the place of worship is not so important, but what matters is the worship itself—that it is genuine, true and earnest. This is what God desires from His people: their hearts, not their presence in a building.

Barrier 6 – The Messiah is the only One with answers:

By this point, the Samaritan woman recognises that Jesus is overcoming every barrier she puts up, and she is afraid. Jesus has been offering her hope in everything He has said, but she is afraid to indulge this hope and open herself up to accept His gift of living water.

So, in a last-ditch attempt to prevent being disappointed once again, she tries to put an end to the conversation with a sixth and final barrier: the Messiah. While Jesus can say all these wonderful things, her heart will remain shut-up until the Messiah comes. Everything in this woman’s life was too messy to be fixed by just one man with a few nice things to say. She knew she needed a Saviour and was determined to keep everything—her pain, her disappointments, her yearning for love—buried deep inside until that time came. She was waiting for true restoration and the true living water to satisfy her soul.

John 4:25,26 reads, “The woman said, ‘I know that Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.’ Then Jesus declared, ‘I who speak to you am he.’”

Jesus reveals that He IS the fulfilment of her hope. He IS the perfect love she has been seeking and the restoration that she longs for. She doesn’t have to keep her hurt and disappointment and mess hidden anymore, because He is the Messiah. . . and He was here for her. Literally, right there—at the well—just for her.

Everything she had ever been looking for in life had come to find her. Jesus had side-stepped every barrier that stood between her and God to reach her heart. That which had driven her away from God, her desire for perfect love, was the very thing which came to the well that day to bring her back to God. Except this time, her desire for perfect love was made complete in Him.

Each of us sets up mental and emotional barriers inside our hearts to avoid getting hurt. But God’s love will never let us down and has overcome every barrier, even death, to offer us hope. His love is the answer we have all been searching for—the fulfilment of our heart’s greatest desire.

Olivia Fairfax

editorial assistant, Adventist Media.

WELCOMED BY *fighter jets*



I will never forget what happened in 2018. Just the thought of it sends shivers through my body. Something good and exciting.

You may recall an important sporting event that happened in 2018: the FIFA World Cup.

From June 14 to July 15, 64 football (soccer) matches were played in 12 venues across 11 cities between 32 teams—of which 31 came through qualifying competitions before the big event, while the host nation Russia was automatically in.

Only 31 out of 209 countries who applied to enter the qualifying process that started three years prior made it to this event. In the soccer world, this is a BIG DEAL.

For Croatia, to play in the World Cup was already a big achievement. Together with Wales, Uruguay and Qatar (and especially Iceland who qualified for the first time), Croatia was one of the smallest countries represented in the World Cup.

I have been a soccer fan since my youth, enjoying this beloved sport in my home country of Croatia and playing a game or two myself. But I had never experienced anything like this before.

My wife and I were holidaying on the island of Rab in Croatia, escaping the Australian winter the week the finals were being played. The whole place was alive and animated. Anybody you talked to only had one topic to discuss. When the final was being played, Croatia met France and everybody was

glued to the TV screens in great anticipation. Although Croatia lost to France in that game, it was our great joy that Croatia won second place and played for the first time ever in the FIFA World Cup finals. We also heard the announcement that there would be a special welcome event when the Croatian team returned to their homeland.

Everyone who was in Croatia at that time felt the excitement in the air. It is indescribable. Even the little children were enthusiastic. The euphoria was palpable.

On Monday, July 16, more than a quarter of a million people flooded Zagreb, the Croatian capital city, wearing red and white chequered colours and waving Croatian flags. Over a hundred thousand were crammed in its main square, Trg Bana Jelačića, and 300,000 lined the streets between the airport and the square to welcome the winners, making their 20 kilometre journey five hours long.

I was observing all of the fanfare from the hotel lobby, together with others. What made the biggest impression on me was the following.

The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia decided to make it extra special for the winners as they returned to Croatia from the World Cup. The “Wings of Storm”, the aerial display team of the Croatian Air Force, performed a fly-over of five Pilatus PC-9M aircraft. But the two MiG-21 fighters were even more spectacular.



While I was sitting in a hotel, I could see the two MiGs taking off together, not one after the other, but together. The jets of fire blasted as they took off, burning the fuel as pilots revved up their machines and thrust upward. Their destination: the edge of Croatian air space. The moment the Croatia Airlines, carrying the winners, "The Fiery", as they were dubbed at home, entered Croatian airspace, the MiGs made their approach to the incoming plane and positioned themselves on each side of the Croatia Airlines plane.

I was watching this event, trembling in excitement.

The MiGs were aligned with the plane, and the voice was heard from the MiGs.

"The victorious Croatian army salutes The Fiery. Welcome to Croatia, the land of the victors!

"The Croatian Air Force is grateful for the honour of being the first to welcome The Victors on their return to their homeland!"

I was shaking from excitement. My eyes teared up.

Other people in the hotel around me were watching. One woman, seeing my tears, came over and gently touched my shoulder to comfort me.

"It is not that I'm crying because of what we are seeing," I managed to explain. "I'm crying because I remember another very special event. I'm thinking, how will it be when Jesus comes? Will I be one of those MiGs excitedly welcoming to

greet Jesus first?" Those people who were waiting at the city square were asking the question: "Where are they?" They had been waiting for a while.

Then the loudspeakers announced, "Here they are! They have arrived!" They looked up to the sky and saw the Croatia Airlines plane, escorted by two MiGs on each side, flying over the main square. The crowd erupted in cheers.

For me, and for the whole of Croatia, this was a fantastic moment, an unforgettable experience.

More importantly, what kind of moment will it be when we see Jesus coming in the air?

Matthew 24:27,30 reminds us, "For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

These verses tell us that Jesus is coming. Amen! Amen! Amen!

Have you ever wondered what it will be like when Jesus comes in the clouds of glory? Will you welcome Him?

Nikola Rogulic

member of St Albans Croatian church in Melbourne, Vic.



Tropical overnight Weet-Bix

Serves 1

Prep 5

Cook 0

No matter the weather, this make-ahead bowl of sunshine is packed with tropical flavours and the goodness of wholegrains. It's delicious, quick and easy and can be prepared the night before to help with busy mornings.

Ingredients

- 2 Weet-Bix™, roughly crushed
- 1/3 cup So Good™ Almond Coconut Milk Unsweetened
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat natural yoghurt
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup, optional
- 1/3 cup crushed pineapple in juice, drained (90g)
- 1 tbs flaked coconut, toasted
- 1 tbs chopped macadamia nuts, toasted

Tip:

- Tinned pineapple can be replaced with fresh-chop finely before layering over yoghurt.
- You can use other So Good milks, but we love almond coconut for this one.

Method

1. Combine Weet-Bix and So Good milk in a small serving bowl. Smooth surface.
2. Spoon yoghurt over Weet-Bix mixture, and drizzle with honey or syrup if using.
3. Top with crushed pineapple, cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or overnight.
4. Top with toasted coconut and macadamia nuts before serving.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

ENERGY	CALORIES	PROTEIN	FAT	SATURATES	CARBOHYDRATE
1609kJ	384	13g	14g	4g	46g
SUGARS	FIBRE	CALCIUM	SODIUM	IRON	POTASSIUM
26g	6.6g	377mg	221mg	3.7mg	641mg



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Conversations

Back door exit

Re: "Adventist Church in Australia responds to decline in family worship" (News online). So sad, then we wonder why we are losing our young people.

Parents and grandparents please teach your children to know and love Jesus. It's ALL about Jesus. Teach them about Jesus and NOT some nature story etc. Although they are good, use devotion time with them to get to know and trust and obey Jesus, otherwise they will exit the back door of the church in search of meaning in life.

Anna Gigliotti, via Facebook

Expanding ministry

Just letting you know how your article "Food and faith: a recipe for church planting" (My ministry, March 30) has blessed my ministry in an instant.

Here is the story. Thirty-two years ago my wife worked with an exceptionally thoughtful head nurse who, later, she found out was an Adventist while attending church. This same lady rang me last Thursday and informed me that she read the *Adventist Record* article and would

like to help me in my ministry. She added that she is getting weak and "I can't take my money to the grave!"

I went to visit her and the husband this weekend and they were delighted with the visit and very happy to be able to continue serving the Lord. Talking about unintended consequence!

Thank you so much for your ministry.

Abby Aviles, WA

Seek God first

We must be so careful when responding to children. One of the reasons I returned to church after 10 years out in the world (other than for a sincerely Christian and praying mum) was a short talk given to my primary Sabbath school class about the difference between what used to be called micro- and macro-evolution. That talk remains with me almost six decades later.

It sealed within me the Creator God who crafted this world in six days and rested on the seventh-day Sabbath; the same Creator God who took all my sin on His powerful shoulders and became my amazing Saviour. If instead, I had been led to believe in purposeless, indifferent

and futureless evolution, or in a God who used millions of years of pain, disease and slaughter of the weak to create, I doubt I would have bothered to return to faith. After all, if the Bible and what it contains is just a beautiful but ridiculous fairy story, then "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die".

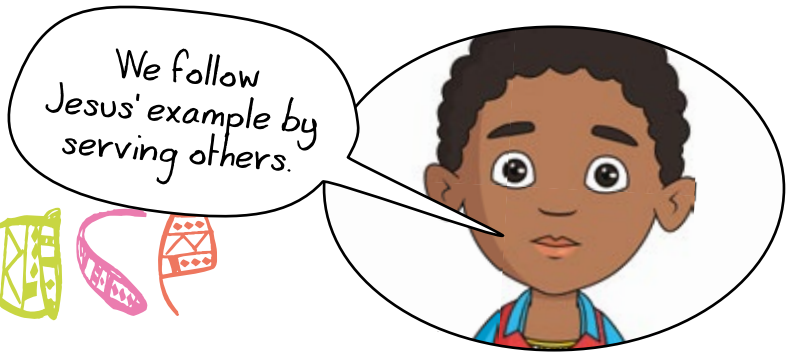
When we tell children that chickens (who were created on the fifth day) are descended from dinosaurs (who were created on the sixth day), we malign God and imply that His plain words cannot be trusted. While I appreciate and applaud the intent of the March 16 edition of the *Record* regarding "Ask Pastor Jesse Kids' Edition", maybe a second pair of godly eyes can assist with any future efforts.

Pam Driver, NZ

Editor's note

The author didn't intend for any reader to interpret his response as a claim that "birds evolved from dinosaurs". It's well known that humans and apes have shared DNA, but that doesn't mean we evolved from them. In the same way, lizards, birds and dinosaurs also all share DNA. That makes dinosaurs relatives to birds perhaps, but not ancient ancestors! We apologise to any readers who were confused by this.

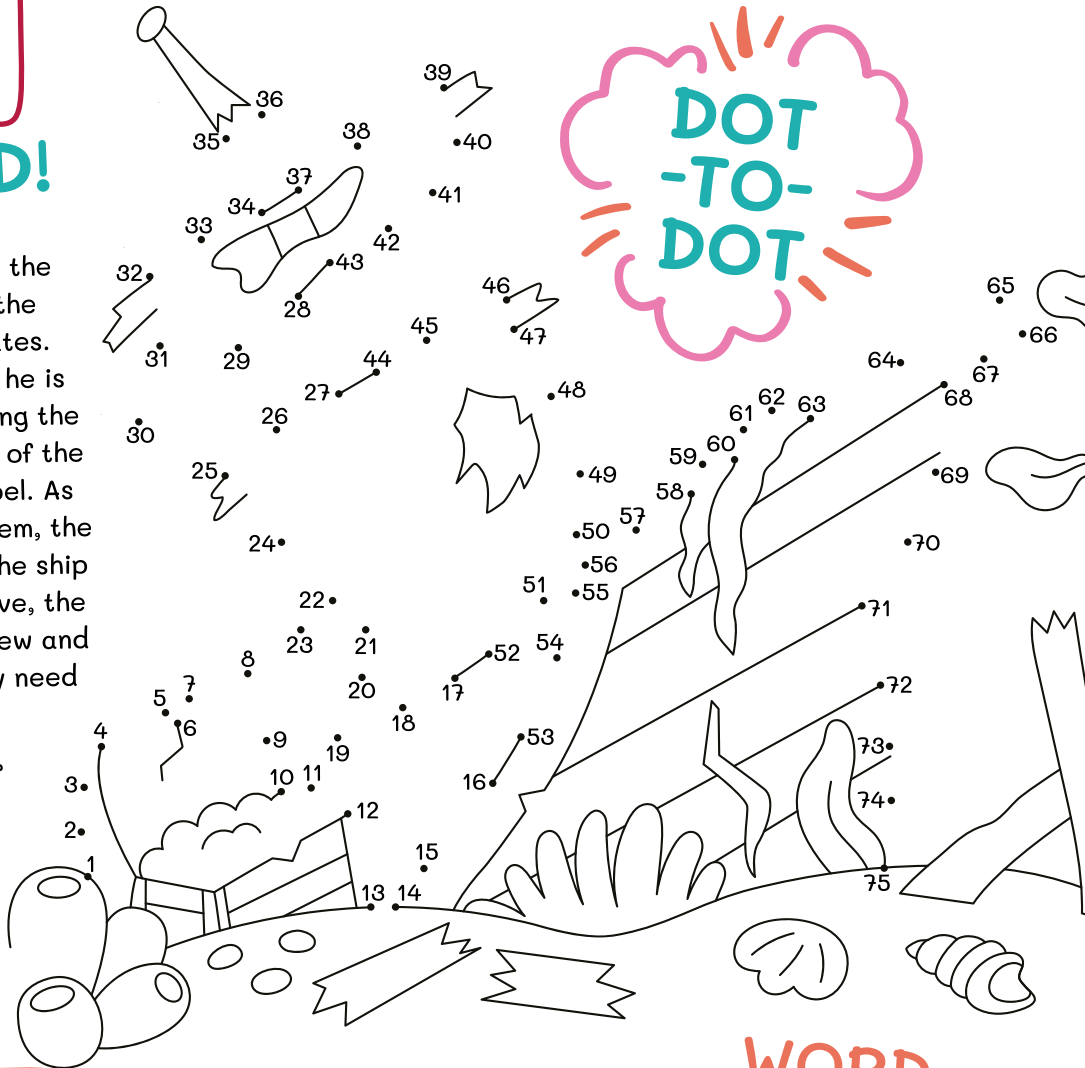
Hello Kids!



MAN OVERBOARD!

Paul and his company are shipwrecked on a island. During the first hours there, Paul meets the immediate needs of his shipmates. In the next three months while he is there, he heals the sick (including the father of Publius, the governor of the island) and preaches the gospel. As a result of Paul's service to them, the people treat everyone from the ship with kindness. When they leave, the islanders provide the ship's crew and passengers with everything they need for their journey.

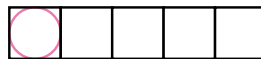
God wants us today to look for ways we can meet the needs of people around us, even when we are in unpleasant circumstances. By our service we are obeying Jesus and adopting His way of life as our own.



MEMORY VERSE

"Sitting down, Jesus called the twelve and said, 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all'"
(Mark 9:35).

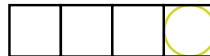
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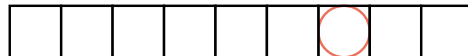
ECPRAH



PULA



HIMASPTES



SNIDLA



Answer:



WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the words from the story and place them in the squares. Take the letters from the circles to find the answer to the question.



QUESTION: PAUL WAS SHIPWRECKED ON AN ISLAND. WHAT WAS THE ISLAND'S NAME?

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Role Overview:

As a Chaplain at Sanitarium, you will play a crucial role in providing spiritual guidance, emotional support, and pastoral care to employees and their families. You will create a nurturing environment where individuals feel supported in their spiritual journey, regardless of their religious beliefs or background.

Key Responsibilities:

- With the support of the Pastoral Services Leader, develop a strategy to provide opportunities to foster the Spiritual wellbeing of Sanitarium & Vitality Works employees.
- Through networks, arrange special guest speakers and special events for employees.
- Provide a proactive model of care and early intervention for employees with regular, friendly, informal and face to face contact with employees.
- Take a leading role in the development and implementation of the four pillars of Chaplaincy: Life Matters, Care Matters, Family Matters & Prayer Matters.
- Be on call for crisis care and support outside of work hours.
- Facilitate relationship between Sanitarium and broader SDA church entities.
- Ability to travel both locally and overseas as and when required.

About you:

The ideal candidate for this role possesses tertiary qualifications in chaplaincy or a related field, coupled with practical experience. They should demonstrate proficiency in pastoral care, counselling, or chaplaincy, underpinned by excellent communication, interpersonal, and emotional intelligence skills. Their capacity to offer spiritual support with sensitivity, empathy, and respect is paramount. Moreover, they should exhibit adept time management skills, ensuring tasks are completed efficiently and within established timelines.

Join us in our mission to provide compassionate care and support to those in need and become a valued member of the Sanitarium family! Together, we can make a difference in the lives of others.

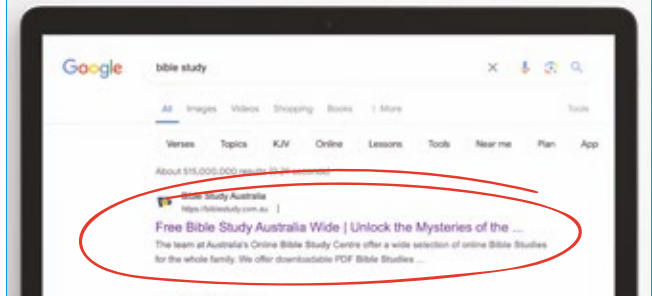
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Obituaries

FERRIS, Ervin Alfred, born 2.10.1932 in Tulagi, Solomon Islands; died 18.3.24 in Victoria Point, Qld. He is survived by his first wife, Leila Davey and their children, Rayden and partner, Jane Linton, and Lyndal and Rob Moller. He was predeceased by his second wife, Nadine Pullen in 1986. Ervin is also survived by Val Mitchell, who he married on 1.9.1990; Val's sons, Gary and Shona, and Daryl and Catherine; nine grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. While Ervin served as a church pastor in various places, his greatest joy was youth leadership throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific regions. In retirement, Ervin led 60 fly'n'build trips to the Solomons. A representative group from the Solomons attended his memorial service and movingly acknowledged Ervin's years of mission service.



FOAEVA, Sherrie (nee Vickery), born 15.4.1961 in Innisfail, Qld; died 30.3.24 in Wynnum. She was married to Easter. She is survived by her spouse (Brisbane); children, Bronson, Thomas, Azariah (all of Moranbah) and Jemima (Brisbane). Sherrie was a loving wife, mother, sister and aunty. She loved her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ most of all. She has left behind a legacy of love. She was a gentle, kind and thoughtful person.

Matagi Vilitama, Bob Possingham



JOHNSON, Donald John, born 28.12.1935 in Mullumbimby, NSW; died 27.3.24 in Boonah, Qld. On 5.4.1957 he married Gracie Dell Willersdorf in Coolangatta. He is survived by his spouse (Warrill View); children, Jennifer Evans (Springfield), Wayne (Warrill View), Marlene Dearden (Hervey Bay), Robyn MalaxEtxebarria (Warrill View), Donna Johnson-Byrne (Warrill

View) and Andrew (Snorky) (Warrill View). Don was an avid collector of tractors and old farming gear and machinery. He was featured for his hobby on a television program entitled *Aussie Pickers*. Fittingly, the program was re-aired on Foxtel the night before his funeral and was also aired on Channel 7. Don was a hospitable man and a genuine Aussie character. He was a good bloke, well known and liked by many.

Sandor Laszlo Gazsik



PINCHIN, Colleen Margaret (nee Simms), born 14.3.1951 in Young, NSW; died 6.3.24 in Avondale House, Cooranbong. On 6.5.1973 she married Wilfred. She is survived by her husband; sons, Mark and Bradley; and grandchildren, Jada and Tyler. Colleen graduated from secretarial and primary teaching at Avondale and worked with Wilf as a staff member for many years in several capacities. She was beset by several serious illnesses and was gradually worn down by Parkinson's over a period of about 30 years, the last five of which were spent substantially bedridden. Nevertheless, she contributed across the campus including serving in several positions in church activities. As a secretary, mother and teacher she faced her adversities with skill, faith, humour (and chocolate).

Wilf Pinchin, Eric Kingdon



PITT, Maureen Joy (nee Crowhurst), born 1.4.1943 in Dimboola, Vic; died 28.2.24 in Rainbow Nursing Home. She was married to Eric Pitt, who predeceased her on 29.10.20. Maureen is survived by sons, Gregory (Smythesdale), and Rodney and Karen (Copeville, SA); and grandchildren, Benjamin and Kayla (Copeville). Maureen accepted the Adventist truths in 1967, devoting many hours to her local Nhill church until recent years, when age and health constraints forced her to

stop. Second to her love for the Lord and His church was her love for her family and friends. She now peacefully rests with Eric, awaiting the trumpet sound at the Lord's soon return.

Rodney Pitt

REYE, Dennis William, born 18.11.1945 in Kingaroy, Qld; died 28.3.24 in Canberra, ACT. He was predeceased by his brother, Derek. In 1969 he married Dianne Whittaker. He is survived by his wife (Canberra); children, Rebecca and Dean (Canberra), Simon and Katrina (Newcastle, NSW) and Richard and Rebecca (Vientiane, Laos); seven grandchildren; and sisters, Beverly and Winsome. Dennis contributed significantly to Adventist education as a teacher and principal in Auckland (NZ), Hawthorn (Vic), Carmel College (WA), Avondale (NNSW), and Macarthur (GSyd). He also served as education director (TAUC) and associate education director (AUC). His love of sport and music never overshadowed his passion for family and God. Now free of illness, he awaits the final call of his Saviour.

Ian Howie, Trafford Fischer

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Noticeboard
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Letters
editor@record.net.au

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Website
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Mailing address
Adventist Media
Locked Bag 1115
Wahroonga NSW 2076
Australia
+ 61 (02) 9847 2222

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Next issue
Adventist Record
June 1

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