

RECORD



Adventists in the South Pacific now have two documents to help guide them in their musical choices.

Music guidelines voted

Wahroonga, New South Wales

Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific now have two documents to help guide them in their musical choices.

Delegates attending the year-end executive committee of the South Pacific Division (SPD) voted to accept a document giving guidelines about an Adventist philosophy of music and one suggesting how to implement that philosophy in local churches across the South Pacific.

The first document comes from the General Conference (GC), the second from the SPD. "We believe the gospel impacts all areas of life," the GC document reads. "We therefore hold that, given the vast potential of music for good or ill, we cannot be indifferent to it."

The church has not had a music statement, or guideline, since the early 1970s, explained Pastor Ted Wilson, a general vice-president of the GC and member of the music committee, during the GC's Annual Council in October. "This document, I'm sure, has some items that may not be agreeable to everyone," he said.

The committee aimed at a "very balanced approach to this subject based on Scripture" and the counsel of one of the church's founders, Ellen White, who wrote on the subject.

Pastor Jan Paulsen, GC president, emphasised the nature of the document. "A document such as this is presented as guideline, not policy," he told delegates.

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Stewardship of little things

In his victory speech on the night of the Australian Federal election, Prime Minister John Howard made reference to the re-election of his coalition government as a vote for good stewardship in knowing how to manage the resources of the country.

As an Adventist Christian, I was encouraged to discover that the concept of stewardship, then, was not an outdated concept but a dynamic and meaningful word, even in government circles of a secular society, such as Australia.

Acknowledging the lordship of Jesus Christ

But what is *stewardship*? Is it merely a high-sounding word a politician might use for a political purpose? Is it a biblical anachronism, a term that's lost its meaning in the complexity of living in today's world?

I think not! Rather, stewardship is a spiritual response that calls us to surrender our will and total being to the rulership of God in Jesus Christ. In this sense, stewardship is the overarching theme that ties in everything we are as Christians in terms of living as disciples of Jesus today.

Let me share some simple examples of how stewardship ought to encompass everything we think and do in society.

Living on the Central Coast of New South Wales, I am reminded constantly of the value of water. The water restrictions in many parts of Australia remind us water is a resource that can run out (at least from the reservoirs), if not used judiciously and managed properly. But beyond the responsible use of water and fines for misuse, as a Christian, I am forced to think of this government-

imposed regulation as an expression of my stewardship responsibility toward the needs of the community and conserving one of God's natural gifts to humankind. Water conservation is good stewardship, and a spiritual reminder that water, like all of life's gifts, comes from God (see James 1:17).

Shopping at supermarkets, I'm also confronted with a creative and simple way to control the excessive use of plastic, and care for the environment at the same time. I'm talking about the green bags (an environment-friendly option) sold to shoppers at checkouts. These bags can be recycled indefinitely.

So what is the point of these two examples? We, as Adventist Christians, can make a big difference through little things we do often in everyday life to show we care not only for biblical truth, but for living out the principles of stewardship in society.

A personal witness

But stewardship is more than using less water around your home and using green bags when shopping. It is more than returning to God the tithe that is His, and the giving of free-will offerings.

It also includes the commitment and involvement of all of Jesus' followers in the Great Commission to make disciples of all people groups. In this Year of Evangelism, I have been privileged to be involved in a number of reaping programs around the South Pacific, and in training church members to become personal witnesses for Christ.

What I've found empowering in these situations is the willingness of individuals to build relationship with others—neighbours, work mates, school friends, relatives, even strangers—and

share their story of what God has done in their lives.

I think of a pastor's wife in Brisbane, who befriended a young person on a train and invited her to church. Today this young person is baptised and a member of the Adventist family. I think of a meter-reader for a power company in an island mission, who takes *Signs* magazines with him when he does his run, and gives them to the people in the homes he visits.

In stories such as these, we see discipleship—the building of friendships and the sharing of the good news of Jesus—taking place as a personal expression of one's faithfulness to God. Discipleship is a *lifestyle* of the believer.

The sum of little things

Stewardship is not a program. Stewardship is a matter of living the life of a disciple in whatever situation we find ourselves. It is faithfulness to God in the little things, recognising who He is as Creator, Redeemer, Saviour and Lord of our lives, and responding to Him with all we are and have.

And when He comes to usher us into His eternal kingdom, you and I can expect to hear these words from Him: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21, NIV).

Erika Puni
Stewardship, Personal
Ministries and Sabbath
School Director
South Pacific Division





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know
experience
and
share
our hope in Jesus Christ!

- *Small groups go big in PNG* • *Assembly of God joins Dubbo church for Sabbath worship*
- *Adventist churches spread worldwide* • *The Passion shows Muslims the gospel* • *and more*

—Compiled by Scott Wegener—

The General Conference's Office of Global Mission is hosting an **interfaith symposium** at Fox Valley Community church in Wahroonga, NSW, on December 11 and 12, which will help Adventist church members and pastors build bridges to the growing segment of Western society that subscribes to belief systems other than Christianity. The Sabbath afternoon program will feature short **presentations from a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Jew, a Muslim and a Christian.** Each will explain why they find their respective religion attractive. Pastor James Coffin, director of the Center for Secular/Postmodern Mission (CSPM) based in Longwood, Florida, USA (and former editor of RECORD), says, "Adherents to the various faith systems will describe their own faith, giving an insider's view. On Sunday, CSPM directors will look at the same belief systems through the lens of Adventism, showing where we have common ground on which to build as we seek to establish a relationship in which we can, by both word and deed, share the gospel." (See Noticeboard for details.)

Small-group evangelism has been introduced into all 20 districts of the **Western Highlands Mission**, PNG, and as a result some churches are now full at 2.00 pm. It is during this time that all the small groups **present their inreach and outreach activities** of the week, blessings and problems encountered, and sing a song of praise and thanksgiving. Churches of other denominations are emptying as members make the shift to the Adventist Church because of small-group evangelism. Reports from the Porgera District alone show 142 people have been baptised

\$A6000 in the can for charity

More than 2.5 tonnes of canned food was collected by Avondale College students for the Salvation Army in Newcastle to stock their shelves for Christmas. At the end of October, 70 collectors descended on the streets of Wallsend, Cooranbong and other suburbs, asking residents to dig deep into their pantries. Doing so enabled them to collect cans of food to the approximate shelf value of \$A6000. Howard Mole, Salvation Army liaison for the event, was impressed



and expressed thanks on behalf of the organisation. The Salvation Army workers now have hours of work ahead of them with the sorting and stocking of shelves. The Avondale College has been collecting cans for Christmas over the past few years.

in the past few months.—*Alex Kiluwe Palie*

In October, the **Northpine Christian College**, Qld, worship band and singers (pictured) had their inaugural tour, which included visits to Ipswich Adventist School and Darling Downs Christian School. Some 21 people took the two-day, **400-kilometre tour** that allowed them to use their talents to share in worship with students from other schools. "Our students loved having the Northpine band and singers at our school and were inspired to learn new songs and improve their own



musical ability," says Ms Sharon Littlewood, principal of Ipswich Adventist Primary School. "They want to know when they are coming back!"—*Katy Bidmead*

Yarra Music, with the vision of giving musicians and songwriters the chance to have their music published for **Adventists to use and sing** in their churches, has released two brand **new worship albums.** The "Show me the way" album is all about praise, **worship**, reflection and inspiration. The album "For you" has been inspired by the notion that



everything we have is a gift to give back to God. For more information see: <www.nnswyouth.com>.—*Bevan Craig*

The **Dubbo Adventist church**, NSW, has been renting their church to the Dubbo City Church (AOG) for their worship services. Recently, renovations to the rostrum provided the situation where the **two congregations met and worshipped** together on a Sabbath morning in their hall. The pastor of the Dubbo City Church requested to join the Sabbath service as some of their members wanted to help with the Sunday renovations. Comments such as "It seems just like Sunday today. **Why do we worship on Sunday anyway?**" were heard, and some who believed Adventists were a cult who excluded other Christians enjoyed the worship experience.—*Laurie Landers*

Many **new Adventist churches** are being planted around the world and include: **Britain:** more than 25 new churches in two to three years, with 20 planned in the next five years in London alone. **Hungary:** 16 new churches in five years; another 20 church plants in early stages; plans for 15 more in the next five years. **Finland:** four new churches in the past five years and five church plants launched; plans for 13 churches in the next five years. **Israel:** 24 new churches and companies in the past six years; plans for more than 12 new

churches in the next three years. **South Sudan:** 52 new churches planted and 43 new branch Sabbath schools organised in the past six years; plans for 32 new churches each year in coming years, with 40 new church buildings to be completed in 2005-06. **Netherlands:** nine new churches and three projects moving toward a plant; plans for 15 new church plants in the next three to five years. **Poland:** six new churches and five new groups established since 1999; plans for 10 new churches in the next three to five years. **Norway:** three new churches and plans for another five to seven planting projects in the next four to five years.—*Peter Roemfeldt*

Don't panic

A first-time youth crusade with a difference, "Don't panic," kicked off in Christchurch, NZ, on October 23. Stepping outside the traditional church building location and onto the 14th floor of Christchurch's Grand Chancellor Hotel, each night attracted between five and eight new people. The presenters ranged in age from 19 to 27, speaking on topics such as, "Is God real?" and "The truth about death."

Advertising for this event featured full-colour brochures, created by local design student Blair McLean, which were distributed around the three main educational campuses in Christchurch—Teachers College, Canterbury University and Polytech (TAFE).

The purpose for this youth event was to foster the speaking talent of Seventh-

day Adventist young adults in South New Zealand and to share Jesus with those who don't yet know who He is. Galina Senkovich, one of the speakers, summed the event up by saying, "It was good to have a variety of speaker styles

because we could reach more people this way."—*Zara Hardy*

Muslims have been seeing Mel Gibson's *The Passion of The Christ* film because they heard that it's anti-Jewish. This movie has **broken records** in all Middle Eastern countries and in Kuwait the film has been so popular that theatres have cancelled other films to show it. Muslim audiences have been shocked by the message: "Love your enemies! Forgive them!" In Qatar, a missionary says, "In two short hours, more Qataries **heard the gospel** than I have been able to reach in nearly five years." Even in Saudi Arabia, which has no movie theatres, vendors report they **can't keep up** with demand for the pirated DVDs.—*ACC*

An elderly Christian couple has embarked on a **year-long prayer journey** that will take them to **every state capital** in the USA. **Phillip Epperson**, who recently turned 65, and his wife of 38 years, **Vicki**, began their Prayer Across America campaign <www.prayeracrossamerica.org> on September 11 in Springfield, Illinois. The two will conclude their odyssey on September 11, 2005, at the US Capitol in Washington, DC. In between, they will be praying from 1.00 to 2.00 pm every Thursday afternoon, while **travelling the 27,000-kilometre expedition** in a recreational vehicle.—*Charisma News Service*

Days and offerings

December 18—Pacific Islands
Advancement Offering

Off the record

Danielle Carins of Scottsdale church, Tas, has once again won the Ag Art Wear Competition at Agfest with her "**hessian bride**" outfit. Having to model an outfit made from **materials found on a farm**, Danielle's outfit included materials such as hessian seed bags, milk filters, a bird net veil and an old pair of Blundstones covered in wool. In a previous year's competition Danielle was requested to model her outfit on a Sabbath, which **she declined to do**. Then, given the opportunity to model her outfit on another day, she ended up winning first prize.—*Tasda News*



Warwick church, Qld, held celebrations for their **50th anniversary**, filling the church with members, former members and friends. Eight previous ministers were present for the anniversary celebrations (pictured, with their wives). **Four of the original members** still regularly worship at Warwick church.—*Mary Fedorow*



Six-year-old Nikki Miles (pictured with her teacher, Mrs Hanley) of Papatoetoe church, NZ, won **first place in the poetry category** at the 2004 Young Australian Writers Award with her poem, "When we were Chicks." "It wasn't meant to be a poem," she says. "It was a story." Open to primary school students throughout Australia and NZ, **almost 2000 entries** across eight categories were received this year. Nikki is the daughter of regular *Signs* magazine writer Christine Miles.



Music guidelines voted

(Continued from page 1)

“Guidelines are a point of reference. . . . I would hope and will make specific recommendation that any guideline on music our church adopts does not become an instrument by which we measure spirituality. It is destructive to our community to engage in such.” He added, “We allow it to talk to us in our various cultures. . . . Music must express itself in every culture.”

See “Music principles to guide the Christian” for a list of the document’s nine principles.

The document from the SPD complements these guidelines. Its purpose, according to the preamble, “is not to dictate a list of dos and don’ts, but rather to provide both broad-reaching statements and practical considerations.”

Ten sections make up the document. One contains a list of music principles with reference to specific Bible verses. Others consider the role of lyrics, of music and of the audio and visual team, and the impact of culture. One section addresses worship leaders. Another encourages churches, schools and families to provide music and technical education.

“We should have prepared a document

like this years ago,” says Pastor Andrew Kingston, chair of the committee that produced the document. “Tragically, churches have split over the issue of music. It’s tragic because music is a God-given gift that allows us to offer Him our praise and worship.”

The document, like that from the GC, is not prescriptive. Pastor Kingston: “The church in the South Pacific is multi-cultural and multi-generational. Who are we to say, ‘You must worship this way?’”

Pastor Kingston recommends the worship committees of local churches “thoughtfully study” the document. “First, look at the biblical principles and ask, ‘Do we understand them?’ Then look at the practical considerations.

“This is a helpful document if taken seriously. It’s written in a positive way because it is a genuine attempt to enhance and improve our worship.”—**Brenton Stacey with Wendi Rogers/ANN**

Visit <www.adventist.org.au> or write to the SPD Communication Department (Locked Bag 2014, Wairoa, NSW 2076) to read the documents.

See **RECORD** next week for a full report from the year-end executive committee of the South Pacific Division.

Support for mass distribution of literature

Wairoa, New South Wales

Seventh-day Adventist literature will reach more people in the South Pacific under three plans presented to the church’s year-end executive committee.

Signs of the Times will be distributed to all households in Australia and New Zealand under a plan presented by the magazine’s volunteer ministry coordinator, Pastor Des Hills. Three church members have already pledged \$A100,000. Members of the committee referred the plan to the executive committees of the Australian Union Conference and the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference.

They also endorsed, in principle, a plan to distribute a new edition of *Adventist Review*. *Adventist World* will replace the world edition of the magazine inserted into *RECORD* each month. The worldwide church will cover all printing costs.

The third plan is to distribute 10 of church founder Ellen White’s books to every Adventist family in the South Pacific Division. The cost of the seven-volume set will be only \$US1.00. The plan will cost the South Pacific Division about \$A30,000 and its unions about \$A30,000 over five years.—**Brenton Stacey**

Music principles to guide the Christian

The music that Christians enjoy should be regulated by the following principles:

1. All music the Christian listens to, performs or composes, whether sacred or secular, will glorify God.

2. All music the Christian listens to, performs or composes, whether sacred or secular, should be the noblest and the best.

On these two foundations—glorifying God in all things and choosing the noblest and the best—depend the other principles listed below for the selection of music by Christians.

3. It is characterised by quality, balance, appropriateness and authenticity. Music fosters our spiritual, psychological and social sensitivity, and our intellectual growth.

4. It appeals to both the intellect and the emotions and impacts the body in a positive way. It is holistic.

5. Music reveals creativity in that it draws from quality melodies. If harmonised, it uses harmonies in an interesting and artistic way, and employs rhythm that complements them.

6. Vocal music employs lyrics that positively stimulate intellectual abilities as well as our emotions and our will power. Good lyrics are creative, rich in content, and of good composition. They focus on the positive and reflect moral values; they educate and uplift; and they correspond with sound biblical theology.

7. Musical and lyrical elements should work together harmoniously to influence thinking and behaviour in harmony with biblical values.

8. It maintains a judicious balance of spiritual, intellectual and emotional elements.

9. We should recognise and acknowledge the contribution of different cultures in worshipping God. Musical forms and instruments vary greatly in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist family, and music drawn from one culture may sound strange to someone from a different culture.

Excerpt from “A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music—Guidelines.”

The church in Asia celebrates centennials

Two Asian countries recently celebrated 100 years of Adventist presence. The Sri Lankan Mission (SLM) marked its centennial with three days of meetings from October 22 to 24 and the Korean Union Conference (KUC) capped a year of celebrations with a huge rally on November 6.

Sri Lanka

The first Adventist to visit Sri Lanka was Abraham La Rue, who visited Colombo in 1893 and distributed literature. Then in 1904, Harry Armstrong came to Sri Lanka, settled there and laid the groundwork for



Dignitaries received a Sri Lankan welcome.

the Adventist Church, along with a fellow pioneer.

It took 16 years to establish the first Adventist church in Kollupitiya, along with others in Moratuwa and Kandy. Today the SLM has a membership of almost 3600.

Pastor Jan Paulsen, General Conference president, and a guest dignitary at the celebrations, said, "One of the striking features of the church in Sri Lanka is that it exists in a region where another religion is dominant; a religion that is embraced by two-thirds of the people and is embedded in the culture of the nation. Yet even in this environment, our church—just a tiny minority—is able to give an appealing witness for Christ, last year showing a net growth of some 200 new believers."

He adds, "The church in Sri Lanka has not presented itself in an aggressive manner, speaking negatively about other religions. Sri Lankan Adventists have demonstrated that their purpose is not to discredit others, but rather to do good within the communities where they live—through their education and health-care systems and their commitment to being a productive part of society."



Im Chang-yeol.

Korea

There are more than 171,000 Adventists in Korea, and more than 15,000 of them attended the centennial rally at Olympic Stadium, Seoul.

Seventh-day Adventism in Korea began in 1904 with two pioneers, Son Heung Cho and Lee Eung Hyun, who were baptised at the Kobe Seventh-day Adventist church in Japan. Mr Cho returned to Korea to spread the Adventist message to his neighbours, and was joined by Im Ki Ban, with whom he had shared the message while on board the Korea-bound ship.

National figures also came to honour the KUC's centennial. Reflecting the early missionaries who preached aboard a Korea-bound ship a century ago, one of whom was his own grandfather, Im Chang-yeol, former governor of the Gyeonggi Province, and former minister of Finance and Economy and Deputy Prime Minister, attended the centennial ceremony.

During his congratulatory speech he said, "My heart is full of deep emotion and thankful to be invited to give a congratulatory message as a descendent of an Adventist pioneer."—ANN

Adventists evacuated from Abidjan

Some General Conference (GC) staff members and other regional church leaders were recently evacuated to their home countries from Abidjan, Ivory Coast, when a clash between French troops and Ivory Coast nationals broke out.

In Abidjan to attend annual business meetings for the Cote d'Ivoire Conference, GC staff were evacuated after a five-day confinement in their hotel. Regional leaders were able to complete their meetings because the church compound was located close to the presidential palace, which was heavily guarded.—ANN

Jamaicans march against violence

More than 10,000 Adventist men, women and children recently marched through the streets of Kingston and Saint Catherine, Jamaica, bearing a message of hope and family unity. The march, said to be

the largest ever on the island, kicked off a summit aimed at countering a steep rise in violence in Jamaica over the past year.

The summit, "Men: Agents of change," took place in National Heroes Park in



Adventists marched to an anti-violence summit in Jamaica.

Kingston at the conclusion of the march. Thousands gathered in the park to hear a message from local church leaders.

Percival Patterson, Jamaica's Prime Minister, attended the summit and commended the church for its efforts in promoting moral values. He also asked Adventists to remain united with the government against crime and violence.—ANN

Nunawading nativity turns 10

Nunawading, Victoria

For the past 10 years, for one week in December, the lives of several thousand people in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne have been touched and changed by witnessing the Christmas story in its raw state, seeing the birth of Christ without the Hollywood glossiness or the Christmas-card halos.

Through dust, wind, heat and chilling rain (sometimes all on the one evening), the cast and crew of Road to Bethlehem (RTB) have always delivered a free program to the wider community on the Victorian Conference grounds in Nunawading.



More than 350 men from local churches, schools and Pathfinder clubs have played the role of soldiers in Road to Bethlehem.

From humble beginnings—with no funding, very little advertising and a tiny committee—something unique was born. An event that seems to cross all the barriers—small children stand awestruck at the same manger where tears roll down wrinkled cheeks.

The first year the baby Jesus

was a porcelain doll, but every other year it has been real, newborn babies—over 30 in all—that have played the role of Baby Jesus.

To run the light and sound systems there are three kilometres of heavy cable that must be washed before being returned.

More than 700 people came to experience RTB during the inaugural and rain-soaked sessions a decade ago. Some of those 700 have been back every year and still marvel at the choir of angels, praise the professional acting and soak up the Christmas spirit. The comment book is overflowing with positive affirmations.

Every visitor receives a show bag including items such as Sanitarium products, a *Signs* magazine, craft activities for the children and a listing of local Adventist churches. This free bag further emphasise the “gift” of RTB. For that is what RTB is, “. . . a gift to the community from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Victoria.”

The phone at the Victorian Conference office begins to ring in November with people not wanting to miss out on the RTB experience.



Geoff White

This year some 12,000 people are expected to visit Road to Bethlehem.

For those who know the story, RTB rekindles memories of Christmas, donkeys, soldiers and a babe in a manger.

For those who've never really heard the Christmas story, it opens their hearts to the reason Christmas is so special to Christians across the world.

But it does more than that; it builds a bridge between the Adventist Church in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne and the community that surrounds it.

As one visitor remarked to an RTB greeter, “I did not realise that Seventh-day Adventists believed in the Bible and the story of Jesus’ birth!” A 10-year-old boy summed RTB up by saying, “It isn’t Christmas till we’ve been to Road to Bethlehem.”—**Kate Jones**

Road to Bethlehem will be held December 13 to 16. For more information phone 9259 2311 or log on to <www.roadtobethlehem.org>.

Signs makes new friends in Greece

Athens, Greece

During the Athens Olympic Games, the local English-speaking church distributed *Signs of the Times* magazines. Prior to the Games, the Signs Publishing Company sent a box of *Signs* to the Greek Mission (Newsfront, August 28), where Pastor Victor Kulakov led out in using the magazines for evangelism.

“We distributed the magazines in the streets, squares, everywhere English-speaking people were found,” says Pastor Kulakov, minister of the international groups in the Greek Mission. “Due to these magazines, we were able to establish friendships with new people.

“Each member of the group would carry magazines with them and hand them out to people they met, along with invitations to

programs the group was running, such as Taking Charge of Your Life seminars.”

According to Pastor Kulakov, the English church believes *Signs* magazines played a very important role in their evangelistic efforts, which were part of their special project called Making Friends for Christ. The project emphasises the strategy of winning people to Jesus through establishing friendships with them. This has proved to be successful.

The Greek Mission is hoping to purchase more *Signs* magazines to use for outreach in the future. Lee Dunstan, *Signs* campaign coordinator, is presently seeking donors for additional magazines for Greece among the large ethnic communities in Melbourne and Sydney Adventist churches.—**Adele Nash**

The heart of worship

by Neone Okesene

Worship is an essential part of church life. In fact, as a word it is almost synonymous with the word *church*. Yet the issue is a troublesome one in the Adventist Church.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that whenever we discuss the subject of worship, the emphasis seems to be on two aspects of worship—music and form. The dialogue usually becomes a heated debate on the rightness or wrongness of certain kinds of music, or on the biblical validity or non-validity of certain forms of worship.

The concept of worship is so entrenched in Adventist thinking that any discussion of it becomes inevitably entangled with notions of identity. Phrases such as true worship, false worship, the three angels' messages (the first of which deals with worship), worshipping the image of the beast and so forth are deeply imbedded in the Adventist psyche. So much so that some Adventists believe that the way we worship should be as definitive of the remnant as are the doctrines on the sanctuary and judgment.

And worship is a sensitive subject in the Adventist Church because of the place worship occupies in Adventist understanding of last-day events as depicted in the book of Revelation and the desire to avoid deception. According to prominent theologians, worship is the central issue in the great controversy between good and evil. They believe worship is the medium through which the powers of evil will make a final concerted effort to delude the whole world.

Breaking circular reasoning

While these reasons may be significant



and inevitable, they represent leanings peculiar to Adventists, which hinder attempts to discuss worship for worship's sake. The perspectives they represent are intrinsically connected to and are pre-loaded in favour of Adventism. For instance, the anticipated end-time delusion engineered through worship is linked with a system symbolised by the beasts of Revelation 13. The extension of this interpretation is the identification of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the antithesis of this system, so that in an indirect but convenient way, true worship is defined as that which is associated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Worship thus cannot be rigorously discussed independent of existing Adventist Church culture and teachings.

But let's attempt to discuss worship from a perspective that is relatively neutral. It is

a layperson's approach, which begins and ends with a simple analysis of what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in John 4. Coincidentally, three of the four main points correspond roughly antithetically with the three reasons given above.

Jesus' statement on worship

Jesus made the following statement on worship: "A time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:21-24, NIV). In these few sentences are set out for us the parameters by which we should be able to understand worship fully.

God is spirit

At a glance, the phrase "God is spirit" would suggest Jesus was simply making a casual reference to God the Father. But a closer analysis of its relation to the rest of the passage namely "and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth," reveals that Jesus is making a profound statement about the nature and origin of worship.

The fundamental point expressed here is that as Spirit, God grants to us a connection with Himself, which not only enables us to worship Him, but also validates that worship. Worship does not begin with us but with God. Worship is a

relationship rather than a set of rituals, and Jesus bypassed the *what*, the *when*, the *how* and the *why* of worship to focus on defining the true worshipper.

Worship begins with God

The main point of most articles on worship is what *we* do. It might be singing, playing music, praying or preaching, but it is always an action by us. As a church we recognise that God is our Creator and our Saviour, and it is because of these aspects of who He is that we worship Him.

But too often in the execution of our worship and in the discussion of the subject, the starting point seems to be about us, about what we should do to serve, please or appease the God we worship. This may well be why the debate on worship continues in the Adventist Church; because it is always over what we do, how we should do what we do, and what we should use in what we do.

If we worship on the basis of this premise, we will always struggle to accept forms of worship that are different from ours. We will also find that reality will always contravene our efforts to formalise worship across the board because, except for where absolute morals are the pre-emptive requirements, cultural and social backgrounds tend to dictate what we do and how we do them.

After reading Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman, we should shift the starting point of worship to God. Real worship while it involves us, and what we do, is not about us or about these actions. It is about who God is, and what He did, does, and will continue to do for us and to us. Worship starts with God, not with us.

Worship is a relationship, not a set of rituals

It is interesting that when Jesus talks about worship to the Samaritan woman, He does not use the commonly accepted rituals of His time. These would have included such practices as offering sacrifices and the singing of songs. Traditionally, these were rituals pagans also used in the worship of their gods.

Most ancient Middle Eastern pagan worship systems revolved around appeasing a wrathful god with sacrifices

and with much passionate expression of human emotions. According to this system, the bigger the sacrifice and the louder the worship, the more likely that the god being worshipped would be appeased. Basically it was a "god over there, and the worshipper over here" kind of a system.

But Jesus does not use these symbolic rituals. Instead, He uses a simple statement, "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth." The Christian God is not worshipped through a set of rituals pertaining to actions we perform, or through some so-called true worship system as opposed to a false worship system, but through a relationship where He comes in to be with the worshipper. If we analyse what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in the light of what He said to Nicodemus in the previous chapter, we see that worship is a relationship initiated by God Himself through Jesus Christ, and through the work of the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus Christ, God established justification for everyone. This makes it possible for whosoever will believe to have the confidence that all has been done for his or her salvation in Jesus Christ. Through His Holy Spirit, God gives to us personally the life-changing blessings and merits of this salvation and enables a continuous interaction and relationship with God. Worshipping God thus is a privilege afforded to us by God Himself through a relationship, which He initiates and in which He imparts to us His Holy Spirit.

Jesus intentionally defined true worshippers

The last important aspect of worship in the context of the dialogue between Jesus and the woman is that Jesus was bypassing the *where*, the *how*, the *why* and the *when* of worship to focus instead on defining the true worshipper. In defining the true worshipper Jesus starts with God and motives, not forms or styles.

God is seeking the true worshipper, not a worship system. In other words, God is not looking out for what we bring to Him or perform for Him, nor is He looking out for where or when we may present these to Him. Rather, He is looking out for the

person who sincerely desires to have a close relationship with Him.

The validation of worship is not on the basis of prescribed forms and styles, but on the basis of the worshipper being a true worshipper. The worship of God is acceptable to God not because of the worshipper adhering to some system, but because of the worshipper's sincere desire for a relationship with God through which God subsequently validates His condition as true worshipper by His own Spirit and grace. This genuine and sincere longing for God is the emphasis of the Saviour in the use of the word *truth* in His definition of the true worshipper.

A simpler perspective

The parameters in Jesus' statement have helped me realise I do not have to be bogged down with the never-ending debate on the rightness and wrongness of music, for they transcend music; that I do not have to be hung up on the issue of identity, because my identity is not linked to nor does it come from a system, but is from God and it links me to Him; and that neither do I have to be paranoid about the delusion in the last days as for me, worship is a relationship with God sustained and affirmed by His Holy Spirit as it works in my life through His Word.

In knowing the essence of what Jesus says, I can look beyond the complicated, sometimes disconcerting, and often contrasting milieu of worship rituals and practices, beyond the multitude of rhythms and sounds in the worship of different cultures, beyond the free-flowing style of the contemporaries and the restrained rituals of the ancients, beyond the cacophonous worship of the Corinthians and the pedantic ways of the Jews, and feel free to worship God through a relationship with Him in any Christian setting anywhere in the world.

More importantly, it has helped me to be respectful and accepting of the way other people have chosen to show their gratitude to God for the relationship God has called them into through the sacrifice of His Son and the fellowship of His Holy Spirit. r

Neone Okesene pastors the New Lynn Samoan church, Auckland, New Zealand.

Volunteer: It's as good as it gets

More and more people are discovering that serving others is as good as it gets. Being involved in a service project is the highlight of a year.

In 2003 a record number of volunteers from this division served through Adventist Volunteer Service. This year will see more. A strong and growing culture of service within the church in the South Pacific beckons people of all ages to live extraordinary lives. And a kaleidoscope of opportunities exist both within the church and community—STORM Co, fly'n'builds, the ADRAcare challenge (two hours a week in your local community), the Pinnacle team, youth and children's ministries, teaching ESL, nursing,



caring for kids in orphanages, tentmaker ministry, maintenance and prayer support. The list is comprehensive, and new opportunities are added weekly.

If you haven't yet discovered the miracle of service—you receive more than you give (see Acts 20:35)—make the choice to give it a go in 2005.

Start with a short-term project or local, regular commitment to your community. And when the time is right, move into a longer-term stint as a volunteer. It will change your life.

So why not volunteer for 2005?—*Mel Lemke*



Volunteer service opportunities . . .

Short term

South Pacific Division

- **Karalundi Aboriginal Education Centre.** A number of projects are available for individuals as well as teams through 2005. Contact Glenn Grey on (08) 9981 2933 for details.
- **Fly'n'builds.** For short-term projects within the Pacific, contact your local conference's short-term missions coordinator. A number of projects are available in Fiji this year end.
- **Youth mission trips.** Contact your local conference youth director for mission trips to Fiji this year end.
- **STORM Co trips.** Contact your local conference youth director.
- **ADRAcare.** Contact your ADRA office for hundreds of ideas on how you can get involved in your local community.
- **Family service.** Consider taking on either a local or overseas project as a family, during school or university holidays.

Longer term

New Zealand

- **Youth adventure training team member.** Three positions available; 12-month call, starting January 27, 2005; ages 18-30; high school diploma. The Adventure Plus program works with high school students to teach life skills of communication, confidence building, good risk-taking skills and personal growth. Skills in dealing with young adults and children, public speaking (small groups), outdoor recreation (rock climbing, abseiling, ropes) are useful.
- **Program facilitator.** One position; 12-month call, beginning July 1, 2005; age 20-28; minimum of three years university level; The program requires abilities in public speaking, program delivery, group facilitation, outdoor recreation instructing (training provided), general office administration, program development and evaluation.

Australia

- **Youth leader.** South Brisbane church, Queensland; 12-month call, beginning January 1, 2005; age 23-25; experience in youth leadership, organisational skills; committed Christian; passion for people and witnessing. Duties include involvement in all aspects of youth church life, with particular emphasis on older teen and younger youth age groups. Work with youth leaders in coordinating youth program, including Bible study, music, worship and vesper programs.
 - **Youth-teen minister.** Kellyville church, Sydney; 12-month call, beginning February 1, 2005; age 25-35; minimum two years university or active experience working with high school students; co-leadership of Sabbath school class (13- to 18-year-olds); assist or lead Sabbath school three times each month; conduct weekly after-school, high school Bible-study groups during term; co-organise high school group Sabbath school calendar, including spiritual, social, community and outreach activities; assistant chaplain at Adventist primary school.
 - **Pastor/youth minister.** Westridge church, Toowoomba, Queensland; 12-month call; be involved in a wide range of ministry tasks, with emphasis on junior to young adults; limited chaplaincy at school.
- Pastor/youth minister.** Central church, Toowoomba; 12-month call, similar to Toowoomba, above.

Other divisions

- **ESL teachers.** Thailand, Japan, China, Korea, Poland and Russia.
- **Youth evangelist.** France, Saleve Adventist University; age 18-35, fluent French speaker. Duties include witnessing, worship coordination, public relations and organisation.
- **Science elementary teacher.** Honduras, Maranatha Bilingual School; age 18-30; average Spanish speaker; one year college/university.
- **Teacher aide.** Hong Kong, Hong Kong Adventist College; 19 positions; 12- to 24-month call.
- **Computer teacher/teacher aide.** Puerto Rico, Bella Vista Adventist Academy.
- **Maintenance worker.** Delap, Marshall Islands; two positions; 10-month call; custodial duties, maintain physical plant (plumbing, electrics, carpentry); supervise student labour; teach classes on a casual basis.

For more information

Contact Mel Lemke or Alex Sanchez, South Pacific Division Adventist Volunteer Service Centre

Internet: www.adventistvolunteers.org

Email: volunteers@adventist.org.au

Phone: +61 2 9847 3275

Mail: Adventist Volunteer Service Centre, Locked Bag 2014, Wahroonga NSW 2076, Australia

Like river, snow and moon

by Ross Chadwick

There is a river that abounds with God's resources and from it we can gather the refreshment of support, love, courage, wisdom, experience, knowledge, values and companionship. These are things we need for the spiritual pilgrimage of life. It is meant to be—as God designed it—the community of faith from which we can enrich our own faith.

A true community of faith becomes God's arm on the shoulders of the weary and heavy laden; they become companions for the journey. This is why studies show that unless a new convert makes at least five friends in the church, they are unlikely to remain for more than one or two years.

Churches without friends are like bleak winter landscapes. But friends appear even amid the winter-chill of disappointments. They come when the summer dreams of the forest fades and the winter winds blow. There amid the blazing snowdrifts the evergreens emerge like lovely sentinels. Dotting the snow-clad landscape, the evergreens are like friends who remain after the storm's coldness has travelled through the forest of life. These are friendships born in the cradle of chaos. Friends that come amid the trials and tribulations of life are gifts from God. True friends appear like stars in the night.

I never realised this when times were good, but then the landscape of my life changed and I experienced this miracle of Christian community. I was able to draw on the resource God provided long before my need. There is no sun without shade; even the night is but a shadow and so when the dark nights of our soul come, and we find ourselves under the mountains of our troubles, we can either dig a cave or



reminds us there is a sun and a new day. It is the moon that brings forth the waters to fill the coast once more. It is the moon itself that waxes and wanes and reminds us that all nature has seasons and the heart must too. It is the moon that reminds us that this is what our righteousness is like, waxing and waning, at its best full of holes but brightest when facing the sun.

a tunnel. In the cave we will become lost as we grope friendless in darkness. In the tunnel we can hope for the better side. In every affliction there is the seed of a great blessing or a window of opportunity. It was in one of these dark nights that I experienced the river of grace upon which my vessel had been flowing all this time.

True friends are like angels that lift us to our feet when we have fallen. True friends are like the rising of the moon when the tide of life is at its lowest ebb and the crabs are playing in the mud. It is the moon that

shine brightest? When it is the river of grace, and the arm on the shoulder of the weary. When it is the evergreens amid the snow-covered landscapes in somebody's life.

Then, like the moon, it is fully reflecting the light of the Son, and all its imperfections are lost in the splendour of its glow. ✞

Ross Chadwick writes from Oak Flats, New South Wales.

Just for children

"... Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience."

James 1:2, 3

Peta Taylor

Action worth more than words

Clara Pongrass, NSW

As one of the daughters of the Michnay family, let me tell you about my mother—missing from the short “Adventist pastor: Holocaust hero” Newsfront report (“Gender sensitivity missing,” Letters, November 6).

Our mother was a most devoted Seventh-day Adventist Christian, a wife and a mother who toiled hard for everyone, including the persecuted and the poor of the church. She would spend weeks preparing food for poor members for the winter—a long and difficult process before the blessing of factory processing. Charity was always in her heart.

Indeed, many risks were taken during the Holocaust, but both of our parents, possessing a devotion to and faith in God, knew nothing would ever harm us. She was the epitome of virtue and what a true Christian woman ought to be.

I sincerely hope this fills the gap, for our mother’s life resonates with the words of Proverbs 31:10-31.

Tick for youth leaders

Jan Clarke Pearce, England

I enjoyed reading Muriel Cross’s “Youth leaders and lost dogs” (Feature, November 6), especially as I recalled the influence she and her late husband, Roy, had on the youth of the Albion church in Brisbane, years ago. Their home was often open for

our social activities, even when they were well into retirement. Roy was also willing to lead a youth meeting whenever needed. Thank you, Mr and Mrs Cross, as well as the other youth leaders she mentions.

Christians, the church and politics

Nick Brightman, email

“A victory for greed and fear” (Editorial, October 30) was important as, I suspect, the majority of Seventh-day Adventists in Australia—like the population at large—based their vote on WIFM (What’s in it for me). The editorial and Jeff Crocombe’s “How would Isaiah vote?”

Our fear of addressing political issues inside the church causes us to remain quiet with respect to these moral issues.

(Features, October 30) remind us, as Christians, that we’re not on earth simply to enjoy it but have a responsibility to our neighbour. We Australians, while only a minute fraction of the world’s population, need to be reminded that we enjoy a greater fraction of the planet’s wealth and have a responsibility to those who have less.

Next time around, give space to these important issues as well as the implications of voting for a particular party. Our membership might be able to approach election date a little better informed about their pros and cons. Our fear of addressing political issues inside the church causes us

to remain quiet with respect to these moral issues.

Ray Dabrowski, USA

Thank you for zeroing in on the centre of Christian responsibility. We are often so preoccupied with what is right that we miss what is real. The Gospel is talking about our “realness” and a need to simply say to God, “I am ready.” If the Gospel message is correct, God will open our eyes to see the needy, hear the voiceless and proclaim authenticity of deed, which will always shout louder than the pointed fingers of moralists in the name of rightness.

J Reid, NSW

“A victory for greed and fear” was a breath of fresh air. The self-interest in modern politics should make us wary, especially when politicians court Christian power groups. It was Jesus’ compassion for the wounded that gained Him favour with ordinary people, not holding up check lists to secular powers.

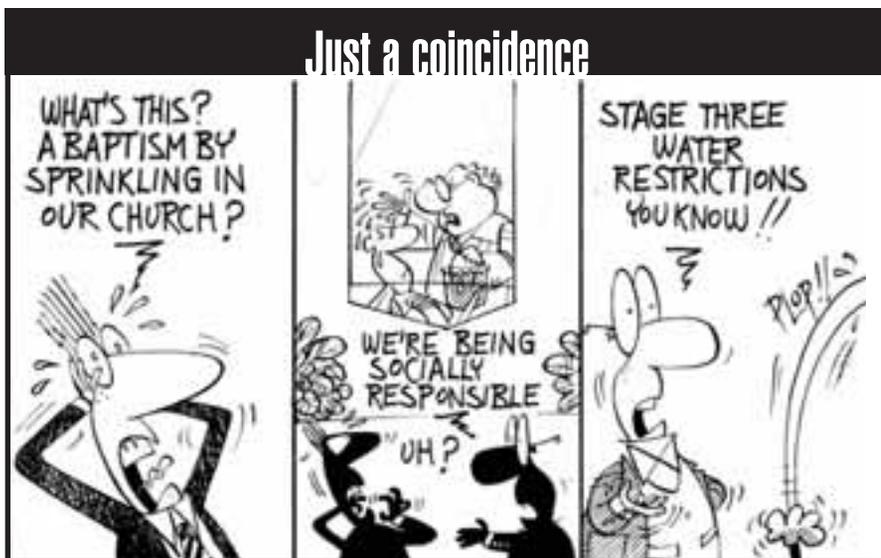
Name supplied

“A victory for greed and fear” missed the mark, as it forgot the main issue: If economic ability isn’t competent and sustained by the top, then no matter what your opinion on social issues, the money won’t be available for them. Behaviour is also important, as a government head is on show, and isn’t that an issue for Christians?

I feel sorry for politicians, as they have to balance justice for all and not just small minorities—Christianity’s bottom line is that your rights end where my nose begins!

Let’s not criticise until we’ve walked in their shoes.

Note: 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. See masthead (page 2) for contact details.



Volunteers

Youth/Teen Minister—Kellyville SDA Church, NSW. Work with young people aged 13-18, be co-leader of high school Sabbath school class etc. 30 hrs/week. Term: 12 months, commencing asap.

Pastor/Youth Ministry—Westridge SDA Church (Toowoomba, Qld). Be involved in a wide range of ministry tasks, with particular emphasis on Junior/Teen/Youth/Young Adult ministry. Term: 12 months, commencing asap. Application deadline December 10, 2004.

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Positions vacant

▲ **Principal/Teachers—Bundaberg Adventist Primary School (Qld)** is seeking expressions of interest for the positions of Principal, Teacher and Lower Grades Teacher. The successful applicants will be committed, baptised and practising Seventh-day Adventists. Ideally suited to a husband-and-wife team. This is a growing, well-resourced two-teacher school that enjoys strong support from local churches. Bundaberg is a beautiful city with an agreeable climate, and has some of the best beaches in Queensland nearby. For further information contact Elwyn Cherry, associate director, on 0414 829 038; or email <echerry@adventist.org.au>.

▲ **Chef—Adventist Residential Care (Rossmoyne, WA)** is seeking an experienced and qualified Chef for their facility. The successful applicant will be working in a well-equipped, modern kitchen, providing meals for 80 residents. A good knowledge of vegetarian cooking is essential, and an understanding of the HACCP principles would be an advantage.

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▲ **Senior Accountant—North New South Wales Conference (Newcastle, NSW)** is seeking a full-time Senior Accountant. The successful applicant will have a degree or other appropriate qualification in business or accounting and be a practising Seventh-day Adventist. For further information contact Russell Halliday on <rhalliday@adventist.org.au> or phone (02) 4951 8088. Applications in writing (including CV and the names of three references) should be forwarded to the General Secretary, North New South Wales Conference, PO Box 7, Wallsend, NSW 2287, no later than January 10, 2005.

▲ **Bus Operations Manager, Brisbane Adventist College—South Queensland Conference** is seeking a full-time Bus Operations Manager to maintain and operate the bus fleet in consultation with the school principal and conference chief financial officer, effective as from January 2005. The successful applicant will be a practising member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; possess appropriate mechanical qualifications and driving certification suitable for heavy vehicles; and have experience in the repair and maintenance of buses. Applications in writing should be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer, South Queensland Conference, 19 Eagle Terrace, Brisbane, Qld 4000, no later than Thursday, December 23, 2004.

Ballarat Seventh-day Adventist Church Primary School commenced in 1974 and, if circumstances had permitted, 2004 would have been its 30th anniversary year. To recognise this "anniversary," Ballarat church is setting aside Sabbath, December 18, to give opportunity for past students, parents and staff to get together to reminisce. The day's program will be: 9.30 am, Community hymn singing. 9.45 am, Bible study hour. 11.15 am, Worship service. Combined luncheon followed by reminiscences of school days. Free time. 7.30 pm, Christmas program. For inquiries, acceptances/inabilities, greetings or messages, please contact Merrilyn Hastings, phone (03) 53 346 472; or email <ballareunion@optusnet.com.au>.

Medical Missionary Course Accredited, Austudy approved. Includes Bible ministry, natural health and Diploma of Community Education. To obtain details contact: Administrator, Medical Missionary Training Institute, 1 Fryers Road, Herveys Range, North Qld 4817; phone (07) 4778 0000; fax (07) 4778 0077; or email <mmti@tpg.com.au>.

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imum). Free pick-up. Phone 0011 64 3 349 8022; fax 0011 64 3 349 8218. Check our web calculator <http://www.arentacar.co.nz>.

Understanding our neighbours from different faith traditions—an interfaith symposium at Fox Valley Community church, 183a Fox Valley Road, Wairoanga, NSW, December 11 and 12. For more details contact Dr Brad Kemp, director of the Institute of World Mission at the South Pacific Division on email <bkemp@adventist.org.au>; or phone (02) 9847 3333.

How secure is your future? Are you sure you have adequate finance or insurance? Phone M & A and Associates, consultants for your finance and insurance requirements, on phone/fax (07) 4634 3995; 0419 789 940; or email <milo512002@yahoo.com.au>.

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Wedding

Smith—Finch. Dr James Patrick Finch, son of Dr and Mrs Ray Finch (Lansing, Michigan, USA), and Victoria Ann Smith, daughter of Kevin and Helen Smith (Wahroonga, NSW), were married on 12.9.04 in a candlelight ceremony at the beautiful seaside chapel at the Grand Wailea Resort, Maui Hawaii.

Craig Young

Obituaries

Samuels, Yvonne June (nee Freyling), born 15.7.1927 at Toowoomba, Qld; died unexpectedly 16.7.04 in St Vincent's Hospital, Toowoomba. In 1946 she married Bill, who predeceased her in 1989. She is survived by her children, Dale, Garry, Russell and Shane; her 11 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Yvonne was a devoted mother and nanna, and she loved her Lord.

Allen Sonter

Slade, Nathan Albert, born 16.12.1983 at Bowral, NSW; died 25.6.04 as a result of a car accident on the Central Coast. He is survived by his father, Paul, and his wife, Teresa; his mother, Pamela; his brothers, Ben and Elton; his sisters Yvonne and Anna; and other members of the wider family circle. Nathan loved life, was a loyal friend, and was not ashamed of his best friend, Jesus. John 5:24.

David McKibben, Lea-Anne Smith

Turvey, Kynan James Turvey, born 16.7.04 in Canberra Hospital, ACT; died 23.9.04 in Canberra Hospital. He is survived by his parents, Andrew and Tania; his sister, Courtney; and his twin brother, Jasper. A life of 69 days was just too short. "Come soon, Jesus, so we can have him back and our family can be together at home with You."

Dale Arthur

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