

# RECORD

July 30, 2005

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Church issues statement on terror bombing

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*SignsTalk* insert and *Signs* order form

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New fundamental "belief" voted



## Church at Sydney expo



*Pastor Eddie Hastie, an associate director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries for the Australian Union Conference, and Dr Simone Kooke, a delegate from South Australia, on stage in the "Parade of nations," which marked the close of the 2005 General Conference session.*

## GC ends with circumstance, pomp—and a challenge

ST LOUIS, MISSOURI, USA

Capping 10 days of meetings and celebration in which, as public affairs director Dr John Graz commented, "St Louis was the centre of the world," delegates were challenged by the General Conference president Dr Jan Paulsen to continue to carry the message of Christ's soon coming to the world.

"We have been entrusted with a message of hope, God's forgiveness and hope of the future He wants to give us," he said. "We have been given the responsibility to bring this to the world.

"Now is not the time for anyone to be a spectator, to grow too comfortable with the church pew in which they are sitting," Dr Paulsen said. *(Continued on page 5)*



When tens of thousands of *Signs* magazines are distributed across . . . Australia, New Zealand and beyond, they are noticed.

# Connecting with kingdom

WHEN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF Adventists decide to visit the same city at the same time, they are noticed. That was the experience of wandering around St Louis during the recent General Conference session.

During the one free afternoon, I was sharing a taxi with three other Australians. The driver commented that he had learned a lot about Seventh-day Adventists during the previous week. With just a little prompting from one of the passengers, our driver began to expand upon his views on God, Christianity and religion. While he repeatedly apologised for “climbing onto his soapbox,” he continued to hold forth for most of the 15-minute drive.

But he was encouraged by us, as we continued to contribute questions and comments. Wrapping up, nearing our destination, he assured us he was open to a variety of ideas and read a lot, especially on the Internet.

Connecting his interest in God, ideas and reading, one of our group introduced me to the driver as the editor of our church magazines in Australia. As we pulled up in front of our accommodation, it occurred to me that I could give him the address of the *Signs of the Times* web site—[www.signsofthetimes.org.au](http://www.signsofthetimes.org.au)

He thanked me profusely, assured me he would visit the site, then we went our separate ways.

Along with many other people using *Signs* magazine in creative ways, this is another example of *connecting* people with

*Signs* as a first step toward their potential discovery of God. It’s a 21st-century way of doing something that’s been happening across the more than 120-year history of *Signs* evangelism in the South Pacific region.

Later this year, *Signs* will mark 120 years of continuous publication. The first issue of the *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, as it was then known, was dated November 1885. But I was interested to read in Pastor Reg Brown’s forthcoming book *Beginnings Down Under* that the history of *Signs of the Times* in Australia actually predates the arrival of the first Adventist missionaries. The North American version of *Signs* had been mailed to libraries and other public institutions to prepare the way for planting the church in Australia.

Since 1885, *Signs* has continued to connect with people. Countless people have been introduced to the love of God and the beliefs of our church through a magazine given to them by a friend, dropped in their letterbox or picked up from a rack on a train station or shopping mall.

Sometimes the magazines have continued to challenge readers well beyond their publication date, in places and circumstances we can only imagine but that God knows and works through.

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul wrote of his evangelistic strategy: “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22, KJV). Had the printing press (or Internet) been invented in his day, it seems quite possible Paul would

have been involved in spreading the knowledge of God’s love and plan for our world by means of something like *Signs*, especially considering that he was an avid writer. He believed in the power of the written word to connect his readers with what God wanted them to be—and his writings are still around today.

No, I’m not claiming for *Signs* a position of equivalency with Paul’s biblical letters, but I am sure you can see the comparison. God loves us. God is at work in our world to reconnect with people. He uses “things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise” (1 Corinthians 1:27, NLT). He uses *us*—and He even uses a little magazine we produce and many of us share. The whole story is another demonstration of God’s amazing grace.

When tens of thousands of *Signs* magazines are distributed across the communities of Australia, New Zealand and beyond, they are noticed. Most often we can’t send thousands of Adventists to your community to attract attention, make an impact and educate taxidriviers about our church and our God, such as in St Louis. But month by month, the successive issues of *Signs* are—or can be—a presence in your community, “like yeast used by a woman making bread” (Matthew 13:33, NLT). And that’s how the kingdom of God works. Take your courage in your hands and connect with it.

Nathan Brown



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Our vision is to...  
**know**  
**experience**  
and  
**share**  
our hope in Jesus Christ!

# Five million added to church

ST LOUIS, MISSOURI, USA

For the first time in the history of the church, more than five million new members were added in a quinquennium. Church membership grew from 10,939,182 at the beginning of 2000, to 13,936,932 at the end of 2004. Worldwide, there is now one Adventist for every 459 people.

Some 5,049,157 people joined the church in the 2000–05 quinquennium. And while delegates applauded the high accession rate, their enthusiasm was tempered by the almost 1.5 million who left.

Said Bert Haloviak, director of archives and statistics for the General Conference, “The bottom line for this quinquennium is that for every 100 accessions, more than 35 others decided to leave.”

This proportion is growing, and “considerably” more than the 24 per 100 reported at the 2000 session. Giving further cause for concern is that despite recent rapid growth, when considering the number leaving the church compared to how many joined, it is the lowest rate of overall growth since the early 1960s.

Haloviak said an average annual growth rate of 4.97 per cent during the quinquennium suggests a church in anticipation of



Gerry Chudleigh

*Delegates from Brazil, the country with the highest Adventist population in the world, with 1,329,662 members, strike a pose in St Louis.*

major growth in the near future.

At the end of 2004, six divisions had surpassed the one-million member mark, of which three have more than two million members. The North American Division is the latest to pass the one-million milestone.

Matthew A Bediako, executive secretary of the General Conference, said he saw the church’s focus on growth, unity and quality of life as attracting people to it. Pastor Bediako said growth has led to the estab-

lishment of a third division in Africa, along with new unions and conferences in the Inter-American, South American, Southern Asia and Euro-Asia divisions.

The two million members within the Inter-America Division make it the largest of the 13, with an annual growth target of 10 per cent. Reflecting a universal trend in all Christian denominations, one-third of the church lives in Africa.—**Victor Hulbert/ANN**

◆ The **Karratha church**, in northern Western Australia, has conducted its second health outreach program at their shopping centre. With assistance of the Adventist Health Association, they set up a **free health assessments stand**, directly outside Kmart. Though centre management was hesitant toward the idea in 2004, before they had finished their stint they were invited back for 2005 and offered a central position. In the first three days 333 people took part in the health-age assessment program and for the remainder of the week 401 people had their coronary risk assessed. Some **82**



**enrolments** were taken for either Taking Charge of Your Health or Try Jesus correspondence courses. (Stats show that 44 per cent of those who complete the Health course continue on to take a Bible course.) Also, an official from the Royal Perth Hospital was impressed with what the church was doing, requesting a meeting when he returned to Perth. The Chief Medical Officer of the Karratha Hospital visited the stand

and has asked for a talk to be presented to his staff.—**To Your Health**

◆ Students at the **Wahroonga Adventist School**, NSW, have folded **750 paper cranes**, which were then sent to Japan to be included in a **display in Peace Park, Hiroshima**. The park has a collection of glass cabinets featuring millions of paper cranes folded by children worldwide in a bid for peace. The locally made cranes were hung in the park by students from the **San Iku Seventh-day Adventist School**, in Hiroshima (pictured). “We sent them a message of greet-



ing, of our desire for peace and of thanks to them for delivering our cranes,” says Wahroonga teacher **Ann Henley**. The Peace Park includes a monument to 11-year-old **Sadako Sasaki**, who made hundreds of paper cranes while dying from leukemia, the result of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima during World War II.—**Tracey Bridcutt**

# Church responds to London terror blasts

ST LOUIS, MISSOURI, USA

Responding to the news of the July 7 terror attacks on London's transport system, the General Conference issued a statement on behalf of members expressing "shock and horror at the mindless acts of terror, brutality and extremism."

"We are living in an increasingly unstable and dangerous world," the statement of condolence and condemnation said.

"We recognise that there are those who mistakenly see violence as the way to promote their cause claiming that their cause is absolute and taking lives is fully justified.

"Seventh-day Adventists are people of peace and compassion. Our Lord is the Lord of peace. As a people we unequivocally condemn violence as a solution."

Such atrocities are "a sign of the times in which we live," the statement concluded. . . . We look forward to a time when sin, death and suffering are no more—when Jesus returns."

British delegates to the session were canvassed by St Louis media for their reactions. These included Susanne Kirlew, who lives in central London; Alan Hodges, whose son, David, missed an explosion by minutes; and Pastor Don McFarlane, who

heads the South England Conference. The three expressed shock and also concern for those affected.

Said Ms Kirlew to TV viewers: "If you don't believe in God, now is a good time to start."

Pastor McFarlane, pressed by an interviewer as to how the church felt about those committing the atrocities, and whether governments physically strike back at terrorists, said that while it was only right that there should be outrage and shock, "We should do all we can to protect society, but I don't believe in retaliation.

"The sad thing is that when we retaliate we often hit the wrong people. We should be going after terrorists, but not retaliating.

"How do we [Adventists] feel about terrorists? Seventh-day Adventists believe that terrorists can be saved by Jesus Christ. We should work for their salvation as we would for anyone else."

Pastor McFarlane also offered his personal thoughts on the tragedy. "Although I am here in St Louis, my heart is back in England with those who have been affected by this sad tragedy, especially those who have lost loved ones."

Pastor McFarlane said he had written to pastors and church elders asking them to invite the Adventist community to unite in

praying for those who have been affected by the bombings and to offer whatever help they can. "Perhaps the most important help that can be provided is to offer a sense of hope in this time of seeming hopelessness," he said.

Pastor Ted N C Wilson, a General Conference vice-president, extended the church's condolences to those affected by the act of terror. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured and bereaved," he said, reading from the statement at the opening of the business session on the day of the bombings.

"We are living in an increasingly unstable and dangerous world," the statement said. "We recognise that there are those who mistakenly see violence as the way to promote their cause, claiming that their cause is absolute and taking lives is fully justified."

Adventist churches in South England Conference were opened for special prayers. The Advent Centre, which is close to one of the explosions in central London, remained open to care for the needs of those in the area. The church made contact with hospital chaplains in the area, providing support as needed.

Praying for the victims and their families, Pastor Cecil Perry, president of the

◆ **Longburn Adventist College**, NZ, senior choir was a finalist at the Youth for Christ nationwide youth talent scan, **Capital Teen Convention (CTC)**, held in Wellington on the Queen's Birthday long weekend. The 35-strong choir performed "Rain Down," from the movie *Fighting Temptations*, incorporating a **multimedia backdrop**, to some 2000 young people. Four youth from the Palmerston North church, **Fiona Sio, Fiti Fata, Juliana Henry and Siva Lennie**, performing as **Acts 2**, took first place in the **Open Vocal Group** section at CTC. More than 500 items were auditioned over the weekend, includ-

ing vocal, band, gospel preaching, dance and drama. A small number are selected to perform at five concerts/rallies. The keynote speaker for the weekend was **Tony Campolo**.—*Tracie Mafle'o*

◆ In NSW, two events have allowed youth to participate in **extended worship sessions**. The first, the third annual 24 Hour Worship Marathon at the **Central Coast Adventist School**, was attended by 220 youth. They joined together to sing, pray and **worship for 24 hours straight**—from 6 pm Friday to 6 pm Saturday, June 3, 4. At 1 am Sabbath



there were still around 110 people singing. The event seeks to deepen the worship experience through the personal **sacrifice of sleep**. While physically demanding, denying sleep serves to focus the individual on the real reasons behind why they worship. This year teams from Avondale College, Charlestown church and Avondale High School, as well as the locally based worship groups

Zealos and The Pure Addiction, led out. An open prayer room ran for the entire 24 hours, with **prayer warriors rostered on around the clock**. At any given time there were people on their knees, actively seeking God's presence. The second event was at the **Wallsend church**, with their annual **Big Day In** attracting some 400 youth from across the Newcastle and Hunter region. The first meeting was on Friday night, July 1, with the main meeting following on Sabbath, July 2. The day's major focus was to raise money for Asian Aid—sponsored children. Although it already sponsors three children, Wallsend

British Union Conference, said, “We pray today for the people who are suffering violence around the world, and today especially in London.”

There are almost 24,000 Seventh-day Adventists in Britain, of whom approximately 13,000 live in the Greater London area, where there are 60 congregations.

Speaking on behalf of the members of the church in the South Pacific, Pastor Laurie Evans, president, condemned “the inhumane acts” while offering comfort to the bereaved, injured and their families.

“Our hearts go out to the families, relatives and friends of those who died in this tragedy. We also pray for those who still wait for final word on their loved ones,” he said via a Wahrenoga, NSW, media release on July 13, which echoed the sentiments of that of the General Conference session.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church promotes peace, encourages compassion and unequivocally condemns violence as a solution to disagreements,” said the release.

Pastor Evans also called on the community to embrace and support the victims, rather than condemn minority groups.

Members in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific are called to pray for those affected by the events.—*Melody Tan/Mark A Kellner/ANN*

# GC ends with circumstance, pomp—and a challenge

(Continued from page 1)

Earlier, Charles Bryson, representing St Louis Mayor Frances G Slay, had thanked the church for holding its General Conference session in his “Gateway City.”

“We know you have done much to improve the quality of the city of St Louis since you have been here,” Bryson said.

“Your youth have canvassed our streets, providing St Louisans with information on your beliefs.” But, Bryson added, “We also hope that we have given you something as well.

“We are sorry to see you go, but we are glad to have met you, glad to have hosted you and certainly we welcome your return.”

The evening—and session—concluded with the traditional “Parade of nations,” representing Adventist activity in more than 200 countries around the world.

The 2010 General Conference session is to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Atlanta, according to Mark Finley, GC vice-president for evangelism, meets three



Members of the South Pacific Division delegation salute the delegates at the General Conference session.

criteria, having a good international airport, convention centre facilities with meeting space and exhibition facilities in a convenient location, and sufficient hotel beds.

Atlanta has a large Adventist base, with more than 220,000 church members in the surrounding union.

A city of 425,000 people, Atlanta is famous as home to CNN, world headquarters of Coca-Cola, and as the city that nurtured the young Martin Luther King, Jr.—*Mark Kellner/Victor Hulbert/ANN*



church raised approximately \$A3000 toward further sponsorships, and another 15 children gained sponsorship from individuals who attended.—*Andrew Robertson/Ray Boyce*

◆ Inspired by the life of golf great **Arnold Palmer**, Pacific Union College, California, USA, professor of communication **James Chase** embarked on a project that took 14 years to complete. Writing

**22,719 minuscule words**—up to **2.5 mm high**—he created a facial portrait of Mr Palmer in which **every strand of hair**, every forehead wrinkle and feature was composed entirely of words that were drawn from Palmer’s life of achievement, kindness and generosity. The resulting three-dimensional embossed portrait has been recognised as a **groundbreaking**



**work**, receiving numerous printing awards. It, and an accompanying book, are both entitled “Gratitude.”—*Pacific Union Recorder*

◆ About 300 people gathered for a **day of prayer**, testimonies and fellowship in the Ramses Square Centre, **Cairo, Egypt**, to focus upon the **promises of the Holy Spirit**—for growth and miracles. The theme for the day, “Looking upward, outward and forward,” summed up the focus of the day. President of the Egypt Field **Kjell Aune** says, “The idea of an ‘upper room’ meeting can be recommended.”—*Peter Roennfeldt*

◆ When Pastor **Bruce Wilkinson** visited the home of **Doris Lewis**, a widow and member of the Onondaga Nation church, New York, who lives alone in a country setting, he noticed her mailbox was open. He tried to close the lid, but it was so bent he couldn’t. When he asked about her mailbox, she said it had been like that for a long time and when it rained, her mail got wet. As an **act of kindness**, the next Sunday, Pastor Wilkinson’s two sons and two of their friends joined in **replacing the old mailbox** with a new one, bringing joy to its owner.—*Atlantic Union Gleaner*

# GC delegates approve new church fundamental “belief” —finally

ST LOUIS, MISSOURI, USA

In answer to concerns of some who wanted clearer language in the new belief statement, delegates approved two revisions to “Growing in Christ,” the Fundamental Beliefs statement they had approved two days earlier.

The revisions were to the first and last sentences of the document, which people involved with outreach to Muslims and Jews thought might introduce negative imagery and feelings toward the gospel message.

The altered statement made reference to the cross of Jesus Christ, which is viewed by Muslims as a historic symbol of the Crusades, and by Jews as symbolic of their persecution.

The final statement reads as follows:

*By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom.*

*Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us*

*and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds.*

*No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the church.*

*As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience.*

“Growing in Christ” will be the 11th



Richard Dover

*Delegates vote on a motion at the St Louis session. Due to disquiet, amendments to the additional fundamental belief were proposed and voted some 48 hours after an initial vote had passed it.*

statement of fundamental beliefs, inserted in between the present 10th, “The Experience of Salvation,” and 11th, “The Church.”

The session also approved changes to the *Church Manual*, which outlines church governance of local churches. Those areas affected include: the place of music in worship; baptismal vows rebaptism; transfer of membership; courtship and marriage; and, women’s ministries, among others.—ANN

◆ **Steve Webb**, the Liberal Democrats’ Shadow Health secretary and member for Northavon, UK, has challenged his fellow Christians and churches to **pray persistently for their local MPs** and to actively work to befriend them. The challenge comes after Mr Webb spoke to members of the Evangelical Alliance at their headquarters in Kennington, UK, in June. “I feel that as Christians we **aren’t praying enough**, both in and out of Parliament,” says Mr Webb, the 2005 chair of the National Prayer Breakfast in Westminster. “The Bible urges us to pray for those in authority, and this is a fantastic

opportunity to do just that at the start of a brand new [British] Parliamentary term.—**Australian Prayer Network**

◆ North Carolina, USA, minister Pastor **Jeff Smith** has set up what he calls “cowboy churches.” As he has interacted with modern cowboys, he realised the mainstream churches were not reaching them. So the riding reverend started his weekly **cowboy church**, which meets in a rodeo arena on a week-night. He says the services attracted many people who tend to **feel out of place at most other churches**. Pastor Smith has planted 11

cowboy churches so far and plans to open at least 10 such churches a year.—**Allie Martin**

◆ Squeeze the heart of a talking Bible doll and a computer microchip emits **paraphrased passages from the Bible**. The 30-centimetre-high **plush Jesus and Moses dolls** have been created in the hope of fostering faith in children. Other biblical characters, such as David, Esther and Joshua are in the design phase. “There’s dolls that wet the bed, there’s dolls that cry,” says creator of the dolls **Cliff Rockwood**. “There’s every kind of doll except one that speaks hope and



tells you I have a plan for your life. We’d like to have these placed in children’s hands all across the world,” says Mr Rockwood, “so they have messages of hope and love. It may be the only toy they have.”—**Joyce Pellino Crane**

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# Adventist ministry on parade at Sydney expo

SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was well represented at the fifth Australian Christian Resource Exhibition (CRE) held in the Dome at the Sydney Showground, Olympic Park, from July 6 to 8. The exhibition coincides with the annual Hillsong Conference, held in an adjacent venue, and is attended by almost 30,000 people from around the world. The resource expo allows church and private organisations and ministries to showcase their services and wares.

There were 11 church-related organisations represented, including Signs Publishing Company and *Signs* and *Archaeological Diggings* magazines, the Australian Union Conference, ADRA, Adventist Book Centres, and the South Pacific Division's health and children's ministries, among others.

"We took part in the CRE to give the Seventh-day Adventist Church a presence at a mainstream Christian event. It was a great opportunity to connect with the wider Christian community and to address misconceptions they have about our church," says Melody Tan, organiser of the South Pacific Division's booth at the CRE.

The expo was opened by Rev Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision, speaking in the wake of the Live8 poverty-awareness concerts, who challenged listeners to take up the dream of William Wilberforce, and challenge the status quo, and promote the cause of God's kingdom, which espouses justice, peace and equity, and gives opportunity to all those created in God's image.

This was the cause of Christ, he said, and one that ultimately led to His demise at the hands of the establishment. "You don't get crucified for walking around saying, 'Love one another . . . '—you get Rotary awards for that. Rather, He questioned those with power who were acting in the name of God, and pointed out those who were actually hungry and homeless . . . and those outside God's love.

"I wish you the opportunity of inspiring people," he told exhibitors, "of giving them resources and setting them on the journey of discipleship, a journey that is, ultimately, good news for the world."

According to CRE organiser Denise Potter-Coates, attendance was up, and more exhibitors in attendance. A total of 200 exhibitors offering anything from office equipment, travel and holidays, conference venues to resources such as music, books and DVDs were present at the CRE.

Information resources about the church were distributed, health checks given by literature evangelists representing the Home Health Education Service, and ADRA distributed bottled water.

The CRE offered several free seminars each day, including presentations by David Coltheart, editor of *Archaeological Diggings*. Adventist children's group maxiPraise, led by Janine Max, featured on stage.—**Bonnie Dean/ Lee Dunstan**



*Bruna Tawake, from the SPD Communication Department, helps a young Expo visitor dip from a well of chocolates at the ADRA/SPD booth in the Homebush Bay, NSW, Christian Resources Expo.*

# Atoifi Hospital to get Enzed help



Lee Dunstan

NEW PLYMOUTH, NEW ZEALAND

A businessman from New Zealand has organised for donated medical equipment worth thousands of dollars be shipped to Atoifi Adventist Hospital (above), Solomon Islands.

The 80-bed hospital is the area's only medical facility, serving 150,000 villagers. The hospital has languished since Lance Gersbach was murdered there in 2003.

David Nunn of New Plymouth, NZ, visited the hospital while on a business trip. The lack of medical equipment in the facility so concerned him that upon his return home, he lobbied local businesses and hospitals seeking cash and kind.

Equipment donated includes a complete operating theatre, an X-ray machine, a generator, and an ambulance paid for by the New Plymouth Christian City church. "It could be a million dollars worth or more," says Mr Nunn.

Mr Nunn at first stored the equipment in a friend's garage until he ran out of space. It was then he approached the local Adventist church for help. The church is providing shipping containers and packing. Adventist Development and Relief Agency has supplied two containers.

Mr Nunn has now closed his business, devoting his time to the project. He and his wife, Marlene, are selling their house to finance the shipment.

Mr Nunn, who has performed aid work elsewhere, thought the situation in the Solomons was particularly needful. "I thought I could do something—you have to do something with your life," he says.

New Plymouth church member Kevin Stewart says Mr Nunn's selfless nature is an example. "I've been inspired. What he's doing is amazing."—**Adventist News/Kim Schwieters/Scott Wegener**

# Stewardship and your religious freedom

BY RAY COOMBE



**O**UR FREEDOM TO CHOOSE IS ONE OF the most amazing, unique and incomprehensible characteristics of our human nature created by God. Our ability to make our own decisions, to exercise free will and thus determine our destiny stands as a classic challenge to the omnipotence and the omniscience of God.

The two things—God’s omnipotence and human free will—seem to be in direct contrast and even conflict! One school of theological thought doesn’t accept the dilemma and limits human freedom so that our destiny and outcome of life is pre-determined and subservient to the sovereignty of God. However, such a position immediately limits the love and grace of God in creating beings who are not truly free and, therefore, cannot truly love and respond in freedom.

Seventh-day Adventists believe, in creating Adam and Eve as free moral agents, that God provided the greatest evidence of his love. He invites us to *choose* Him (Joshua 24:15) and offers eternal life to “everyone who believes in him” (John 3:16, NRSV). But in giving our first parents that freedom, God also took the greatest risk of eternity, a risk that has cost Him dearly but which will prove His faultless character before the universe (see Revelation 5:13).

R Scott Rodin, in a powerful presentation of the theology of stewardship says, “Freedom and love are the marks of our creator God. . . . He is the God who loves in

freedom and who is free to love. His love is not obligatory, but is given out of his freedom.”

It is this understanding of the nature of man (and the character of God) that undergirds our respect for human freedom and the right of individuals to choose the religion or belief of their choice. Freedom of conscience and the right to believe and practise according to one’s belief are the principles that spawned the Reformation, drive us to defend religious liberty still, and promote the separation of church and state. Against any regime of force or attempt to coerce the human will stands our regard for the dignity of humankind and freedom of the human will.

We applaud the recognition of this principle by governments worldwide and the inclusion in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the statement, “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes

freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance” (Article 18).

Freedom of religion and belief has thus been included in the constitutions of most emerging nations in the past 50 years, and it is recognised by the International Bill of Rights.

As Christians, we have a responsibility to defend and promote freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. One of the principles of the International Religious Liberty Association, first established by Seventh-day Adventists in 1893, states: “We believe in the natural and inalienable right of freedom of conscience—to have or not to have a religion; to adopt the religion or belief of one’s choice; to change religious belief according to conscience; to manifest one’s religion individually or in community with others, in worship, observance, practice, promulgation



and teaching—subject only to respect for the equivalent rights of others.”

The freedom to choose is another aspect of the “dominion” given to our parents at creation that adds to the wonder and responsibility of our stewardship. In the partnership that God invites us into with Himself, there is no element of force. It is always our choice. And love could have it no other way. To be bound by any external compulsion in this partnership with God would destroy the very fabric of the gracious offer. It is a relationship that is based squarely on His love and grace, and our ability to respond positively by free choice. While it is not a partnership of equals, it results in a partnership of equality.

In his recent book expanding on the new paradigm of Christ’s “lordship,” Ben Maxson says, “We really don’t bring anything of our own into this relationship with God; we merely choose to accept the privilege of partnering with Him. And God will not force us into this incredible partnership.”

Partnership with God as stewards and accepting His lordship over all is, therefore, of necessity a response of free choice. It could never be forced and works only when there is a willing and free acknowledgment of His grace. The deal exists only if we choose.

Stewardship, therefore, becomes a witness or evidence of our religious freedom. We demonstrate our free choice by entering into partnership with God. By accepting His Lordship in our lives and responding with accountability in all areas of life in which He calls us to account, we reveal that we have the freedom to respond. It is not a response of compulsion, but a response of love. We choose to care for our bodies, or to honour holy time, or to return His sacred tithe and give freewill offerings because we love Him. It is an act of submission and partnership with God.

Throughout Scripture, the whole notion of giving and returning something to God is linked with freedom. It has always been a response of human choice, not of obligation. When God told Moses to invite Israel to bring gifts for the construction of the tabernacle, He emphasised the aspect of the willing heart that must accompany their gift. “Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for

me from each man whose heart prompts him to give” (Exodus 25:2, NIV). Even though there was an obligation to bring animal sacrifices in the process of atonement for sin, such offerings on the part of Israel were a willing recognition of sin and not in the form of appeasement, as with the heathen.

In spite of the regular invitations to “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse . . .” (Malachi 3:10, NRSV) and to honour the Lord with the first fruit of their labour (Proverbs 3:9), there was never any punishment or sanctions for failing to do so. At worst, the reciprocal blessings of God might be missed. The Old Testament often reports on the generous response of God’s people, in which the abundance of their freewill giving more than provided for the need.

In contrast to the meticulous legalism of the scribes and Pharisees in returning a tenth of even their herb gardens, Jesus drew attention to the generous response of the widow who gave all she had (see Matthew 23:23; Mark 12:42, 43). Here is ample evidence of the nature of true stewardship—a free and loving response to the extravagance of God.

The prerequisite of giving in Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians was a willing mind (see 2 Corinthians 8:12). Freedom and willingness to give in response to God’s grace is the hallmark of true charity. “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV), he reminded them.

The true nature of stewardship is characterised by freedom; there is to be no compulsion in our giving. Returning to God His tenth, or responding with offerings and donations to calls of need, is but a free choice and evidence of our love and appreciation of God’s grace. Liberality and cheerfulness are marks of the Christian’s response to His gifts to us (see Romans 12:8).

The freedom of the gospel goes hand in hand with stewardship. The choice is always ours. God does not force our will. He invites us to be partners with Him. He invites us to lay up treasure in heaven by making different priorities to the people of this world (see Matthew 6:19-21). But it has to be *our* choice. We are free to accept His lordship and also free to reject it.

Being a faithful steward is not a condition of church membership. The church does not compel or prescribe in matters of giving. Our membership is not determined by how many hours we report for service, or how much we place in the offering plate. We are not counted as Christians by subscription. Our inclusion on the register of heaven is by personal free choice. Stewardship is a heart response. However the obligation of love is rather compelling! How could we not respond to His abundance of grace?

“Freely you have received, [so] freely give” (Matthew 10:8, NIV), is His only command.

The truth of Christ’s lordship and of our stewardship comes as part of the gospel package. The good news is a message of liberation, an

announcement of freedom from the bondage of sin. It is recognition of our redemption in Christ that truly sets us free. “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32, NIV), said Jesus. He, of course, is the embodiment of truth. “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36, NIV).

The only compulsion in stewardship is the constraint of love (see 2 Corinthians 5:14). Love can never be forced. But it opens our hearts and hands freely to the One who first loved us. **R**

*“Stewardship—It’s a lifestyle.” This is the 13th in a series of articles highlighting the importance of stewardship as it impacts on many aspects of our lives.*

**Raymond Coombe is director of public affairs and religious liberty for the South Pacific Division.**

**We are not counted as Christians by subscription. Our inclusion on the register of heaven is by personal free choice.**

# The other woman

BY DANIEL NYARIRANGWE

**A**FTER 21 YEARS OF MARRIAGE, I discovered a new way of keeping alive the spark of love. A little while ago I had started to go out with another woman. It was my wife's idea.

"I know that you love her," she said, taking me by surprise.

"But I love you," I protested.

"I know, but you also love her."

The other woman that my wife wanted me to visit was my mother, who has been a widow for 19 years, but the demands of my work and my three children had made it possible to visit her only occasionally.

That night I called to invite her to go out for dinner and a movie. "What's wrong, are you well?" she asked. My mother is the type of woman who suspects that a late-night call or a surprise invitation is a sign of bad news.

"I thought that it would be pleasant to pass some time with you," I responded.

"Just the two of us." She thought about it for a moment, then said, "I would like that very much."

That Thursday after work, as I drove over to pick her up, I was a bit nervous.

When I arrived at her house, I noticed that she, too, seemed to be nervous about our date. She waited in the door with her coat on. She had curled her hair and was wearing the dress she had worn to celebrate her last wedding anniversary. She smiled from a face that was as radiant as an angel's.



"I told my friends that I was going to go out with my son, and they were impressed," she said, as she got into the car. "They can't wait to hear about our meeting."

We went to a restaurant that, although not elegant, was very nice and cozy. My mother took my arm as if she were the First Lady. After we sat down, I had to read the menu. Her eyes could only read large print. Halfway through the entree, I lifted my eyes and saw Mum sitting there staring at me. A nostalgic smile was on her lips. "It was I who used to have to read the menu when you were small," she said.

"Then it's time that you relax and let me return the favour," I responded. During the dinner we had an agreeable conversation, nothing extraordinary—but catching up on recent events of each other's lives.

We talked so much that we missed the movie. As we arrived at her house later, she said, "I'll go out with you again, but only if you let me invite you."

"Agreed!"

"How was your dinner date?" asked

my wife when I got home. "Very nice. Much more so than I could have imagined," I answered.

A few days later my mother died of a massive heart attack. It happened so suddenly that I didn't have a chance to do anything for her.

It was sometime later that I received an envelope with a copy of a restaurant receipt from the same place mother and I had dined. An attached note said: "I paid this bill in advance. I was almost sure that I couldn't be there but, nevertheless, I paid for two plates—one for you and the other for your wife. You will never know what that night meant for me. I love you."

At that moment I understood the importance of saying, in time, "I love you," and to give our loved ones the time that they deserve. Nothing in life is more important than God and your family. Give them the time they deserve, because these things cannot be put off to "some other time." **R**

*Daniel Nyarirangwe writes in the South African Signs of the Times.*

# 10 excellent reasons to go on the ADRA Appeal

BY GARY CHRISTIAN

WITH THE ADRA APPEAL ROLLING out from August to October, there are plenty of good reasons to go out on the door-knock. While ADRA is promoting alternative methods of fundraising for those who simply cannot get to doors, the door-knock is still one of the best methods of raising ADRA funds from the public. Here's why:

## 1. ADRA does great things

The ADRA Appeal is the major source of more than 150 programs run by ADRA in Australia. It funds women's refugees, community centres, at-risk youth programs and the like, giving an excellent name to the church in the community for the good work each does. And overseas the money goes into ADRA's excellent programs.

## 2. Advertising in 2005

For the first time ADRA is profiling itself with an advertising campaign using television, radio and print media, spending substantially more than before. The Lend a Hand® campaign, which began in mid-July, is promoting the spirit of voluntarism and generosity, challenging all Australians to consider how they can volunteer their time and skills to help their local community. Many more people will have heard of ADRA by the time you go to the doors.

## 3. \$40 an hour: where else?

It isn't unusual to collect \$40 an hour on the ADRA Appeal. I don't earn that much an hour, so going to the doors is a very efficient way to go. Last year I collected \$160 in one two-hour stint, so there are good days! The average donation these days is about \$5 per person. Some people will give a \$2 coin, and others some even smaller change, but these are now exceptions.

## 4. Denominational negativity is gone

Thirty years ago, people were more denominationally focused. These days, in a largely non-Christian society, they are interested more in what you are doing than your denominational affiliation, and tend to give more freely.

## 5. Dogs no longer an issue

Bless those councils who live in fear of litigation. In insisting that every dog live a life behind bars, they have made collecting so much safer.

## 6. A time to connect with humankind

I look forward to the ADRA Appeal each year because it's a great opportunity to reacquaint myself with my neighbours. And because most people are happy to give, it continues to elevate my view of all of humanity. For those few who refuse to give, you can simply wipe the dust from your shoes and treat it as character building. A bit of character building never hurt anybody!

## 7. A walk in the sunshine

Even if you collect a little less than you would like, it's all worth it. A great bit of exercise out in the sunshine is as invigorating as it gets.

## 8. A place for your Christianity to shine

The fact that you are volunteering your time to help those in need says something profound to people at the doors. Be proud of your volunteering spirit, and if people ask, let them know that the Christian ethic that drives you is about looking out for those less fortunate.



## 9. The infrastructure is there

How many charities would like to be able to set up the infrastructure for an appeal that earns \$A1.3 million every year? Starting from scratch with no receiving or accountability systems is a daunting task. And where would they find the volunteers? With an already committed volunteer base and accountability systems in place, it would not make sense for ADRA to throw away an excellent fundraiser.

## 10. Beat the \$100 Challenge

And what about that feeling of satisfaction when you beat the \$100 Challenge, and collect beyond it. Where ADRA is collecting between \$A1.1 and \$A1.3 million at present, it could be collecting \$5-6 million if everyone got involved. Think of all the good that could do.

So if you haven't been on the door-knock for a few years, thinking it is all too hard, you might want to reconsider. Just think of the joy you will bring into people's lives, and it all becomes suddenly worthwhile. **R**

---

*Gary Christian is national program manager of ADRA-Australia.*

# Rule of thumb

BY MALCOLM FORD

Caesar watched the games  
 In the crowded arena:  
 The Christians and the lions;  
 The gladiators hand to hand.  
 It was all in the thumbs—  
 The turn of the thumbs:  
 Down for life and up for death.  
 That was the Roman way.

I saw these little caesars  
 In their toy arenas,  
 Hunting down their prey  
 Till they stumbled and fell  
 Bloody under the machine-gun spray.  
 It was kids' fun and games;  
 The up and down of the thumbs:  
 That's the modern way. **R**

Malcolm Ford writes from Whangerei, New Zealand.

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just for children

## Record Roo's

kids corner



Hi Kids,  
 Sometimes things seem too hard for us. God wants us to always do our best then leave it to Him to do the rest. Moses didn't think he was good enough to lead God's people. Find out what happened when you read Exodus 3-4

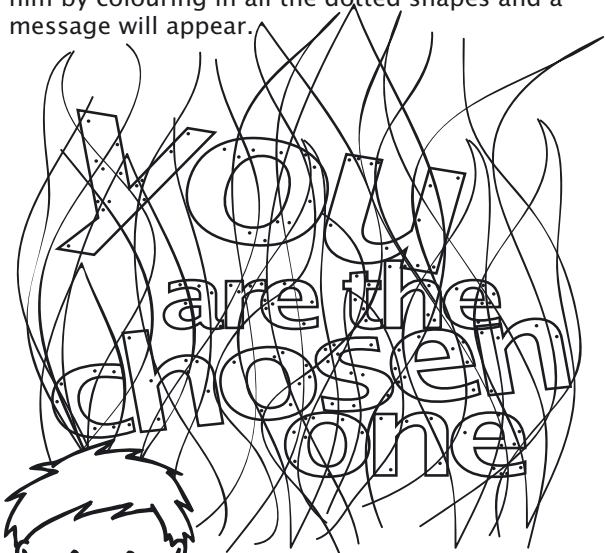
RR

### Fill in the Blanks

"The person who \_\_\_\_\_ God will be ready and will have \_\_\_\_\_ he needs to do every \_\_\_\_\_ work."  
 2 Timothy 3:17 BNCV

### Secret Message...

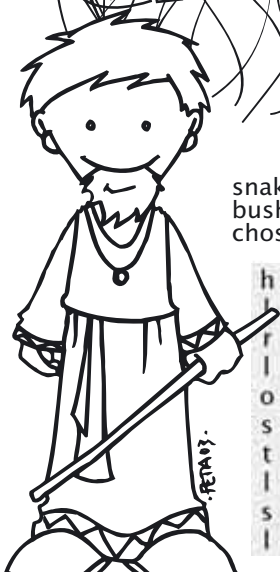
Help Moses find out what message God had for him by colouring in all the dotted shapes and a message will appear.



### Find-a-word...

snake	flame	leaves	sandles
bush	heat	Moses	burning
chosen	holy	Pharaoh	

h a a h l h s e n s r h  
 l g m e s a s s e e b o  
 r f n t h b s n n v c i  
 l l u i s a e e e e a s e  
 o a r e n s y h o e k h  
 s m h d o r s l b l s e  
 t e l h s s u u o t e e  
 l e c n s o s b l h a s  
 s l n o o h a o r a h p  
 l t a e h a s m o s e s



PETA 03

## Misrepresentation

BARB SADLER, NSW

I read the cover story of the June 18 RECORD (“Church gears up for sessions”), and noted with interest the photo of the composition of the current South Pacific Division executive committee. I was disappointed as I looked over the faces to note a lack of women represented there. In a church where the membership is 60-70 per cent female, this majority is represented by just nine females, 17 per cent of the 54-member committee photographed.

As I associate and work with many women in our church, I know there are many who have expertise and the Holy Spirit working in their lives. They would benefit the church if appointed to such a powerful committee, giving vision and ideas for the forward movement and mission of the church. It is a sad indictment on a church whose philosophy and beliefs promote equality for all in Christ.

## Sabbath at church

HAROLD GOTTING, NT

It seems to be becoming the norm in Seventh-day Adventist churches that members think Sabbath school is not important enough to warrant their attendance.

I would encourage those members to investigate the importance of church attendance every Sabbath. We are commanded to keep the Sabbath day holy, and attend church with our brothers and sisters.

Those who take “Sabbaths off”—or “take off” on Sabbaths—should heed

Hebrews 10:25, which tells us to “not give up meeting together” (NIV). In staying away, we’re certainly not following in the footsteps of Jesus, whose custom was to be present in the synagogue every Sabbath.

Let us take advantage of our freedom to worship while we can.

## Grateful thanks

NAME WITHHELD

I cannot begin to express my appreciation for the Perspectives feature, “God *is* a crutch” (May 28). My husband, a Vietnam veteran, is one of thousands diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and, as

such, has had ongoing counselling. I have joined him at some of the group sessions, and am appalled by the promotion of the “I” factor by the Veterans’ Affairs counsellors and group coordinators.

Their view is that we look after number one first, and look within ourselves for answers. I’ve tried to explain that for these traumatised vets who are searching for help, self has already failed them and their partners, and that faith in God—our “present help” in times of trouble—is a better alternative. But such statements are met with such retorts as “Christianity, like alcohol and drugs, is just a crutch.”

Along with other beautiful Christian partners I’ve met at the programs, I am exasperated by this teaching, so it was like oil on troubled waters to have my faith in our

loving heavenly Father confirmed through reading the article and verses it quoted.

## Too many offerings

PHIL WARD, QLD

For the writer who felt there were too many offerings in Adventist churches (July 9), we at Maroochydore try to overcome this problem with a bulletin announcement listing all offerings, stating what each is for. For example, the Sabbath school offering is listed as being for “World missions.” At the top of the list is the statement: “Visitors: Having several offerings lets our members apportion their contributions to the projects

## Some people don’t like change. Others embrace it. I thought I was in the latter group until I saw Berto’s replacement.

and causes they prefer.” It’s an idea other congregations might like to adopt.

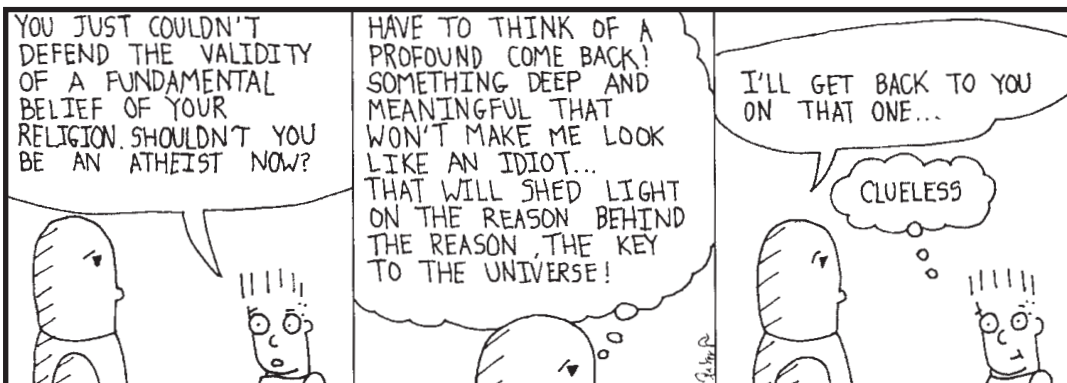
## Where’s Berto?

LEONIE JULL, VIC

Some people don’t like change. Others embrace it. I thought I was in the latter group until I saw Berto’s replacement, Petros. After an initial “bring-back-Berto” reaction, I thought I’d delay judgment until I’d seen a larger sample. After all, it’s the message that’s important, not the drawing. But what a shame to see Petros in the July 23 RECORD was the same as July 16. And as to Berto or Petros, for me, the jury is still out.

*RECORD apologises for the oversight.*

petros



**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.

## Position vacant

▲ **ATSIM Director—Australian Union Conference (Ringwood, Vic)** is seeking expressions of interest from ministry-focused persons to fill the role of Director of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ministries (ATSIM), to commence in 2006. The successful applicant will be committed to the SDA Church, its teachings and heritage; have several years of pastoral experience; possess good organisational, interpersonal and communication skills; and be culturally sensitive and respectful. **Applications in writing** (including résumé) should be forwarded to Kingsley Wood, Chief Financial Officer, Australian Union Conference, PO Box 4368, Ringwood Vic 3134; email <kwood@adventist.org.au>; phone (03) 9871 7555; or 0404 075 640. Applications close August 19, 2005.

For church-related employment opportunities visit the Employment section on the SPD web site <www.adventist.org.au>.

## Retirements

● **Reginald (Grant) Bladin**, South Queensland Conference (26 years). ● **Lester Devine**, Avondale College (40 years). ● **Melvin Hodgson**, Avondale College (21 years). ● **Peter Jack**, Adventist Media Centre (46 years). ● **Wilfred Rieger**, Avondale College (40 years). ● **Raymond (Bruce) Roberts**, Trans-Pacific Union Mission expatriate (38 years). ● **Margaret Rosenberg**, Signs Publishing Company (36 years). ● **Calvyn Townend**, Adventist Media Centre (45 years).

## Anniversary

**Lawtie**, Eddie and Margaret (nee Johanson) of Donnybrook, WA, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sunday, 5.6.05 with a large gathering of 140 family and friends. Some travelled from Qld, NSW, Vic, Perth and other places around WA, to honour this special couple. Before retirement Eddie served in the WA Police Service, being posted to remote country stations where diplomacy and a cool head were among the prerequisites. Margaret always supported his work in numerous ways and her community outreach was a blessing to many in need. Eddie was honoured in 1982 when he was named West Australian Policeman of the Year for his outstanding service. Eddie and Margaret have two sons, Brett and Dean, who along with their spouses, Sharon and Karen, organised the celebrations. They are also have four grandchildren, Kristen, Jason, Brittany and Katie. The high esteem in which this devoted couple is held was evidenced by donations amounting to \$A7400 from guests in lieu of anniversary gifts. This money raised on the day will contribute to the Lawties' ongoing support of an orphanage in Kenya. Their family and friends wish Eddie and Margaret a continuing long, happy and healthy retirement.

## Weddings

**Barber—Richardson**. Matthew Scott Barber, son of Peter and Susan Barber (Taree, NSW), and Amanda Robyn Richardson, daughter of Dale and Robyn Richardson (Port Macquarie), were mar-

ried on 3.7.05 at the Port Macquarie Adventist church.

Danny Milenkov

**Butler—Newton**. Joel Thomas Butler, son of Dr Terry and Dianne Butler (Loma Linda, USA), and Kelsie Marie Newton, daughter of Bruce and Kerry Newton (Manjimup, WA), were married on 18.6.05 at St John's Lutheran church, Perth.

Terry Butler

## Obituaries

**Eastwood**, Billee Jane, born 2.12.1957 at Southport, Qld; died 26.6.05 in Wyong Hospital, NSW, after a brief illness. She is survived by her husband, Brian; her daughter, Kylie (Moe, Vic); her son, Glen (Wyong, NSW); and her five grandchildren. Billee served as a carer in the Southlakes Women's Refuge and as a manager of the Toukley ADRA Op Shop. Her commitment to volunteer service was outstanding. Billee was a newly baptised member and worshipped at the Central Coast Community church. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Roger Nixon, Lea-Anne Smith

**Holdom**, Leslie Kitchener, born 15.6.1916 at Karuah, NSW; died 24.5.05 at Murrurundi. On 5.7.41 he married Gladys, who predeceased him. He is survived by his daughter, Lynne; his sons, Peter and Brian; their spouses, Helen, Sandra and Colin. Much of his working life was spent with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in Sydney. His later years were spent in retirement in Raymond Terrace and with his daughter at Murrurundi. His cheerful outlook on life will be sadly missed by family and friends.

Norm Tyack

**Jeremic**, Peter, born 17.7.1908 in Montenegro, Yugoslavia; died 8.5.05 in Pickford House Nursing Home, Ararat, Vic. He was predeceased by his wife, Natalie, in 1984. He is survived by his children, John (Melbourne) and Nina (Ararat); his grandchildren, John (Jr), Jennifer, Jovanka and Nicolas. Another daughter, Marija, survived him by just under a month. Peter was a deeply spiritual person who gave glory to God and was always helping others. His life was a true witness of his love for Jesus.

Kevin Varrall

**Perac**, Marija (Maria, nee Jeremic), born 13.8.1939 in Nis, Yugoslavia; died 4.6.05 at Pickford House Nursing Home, Ararat, Vic. In 1962 she married Mile. She is survived by her husband; her daughter and son-in-law, Jovanka (Jo) and Sam; her grandchildren, Simon, Jason and Ben (McLaren Flat, SA); her brother, John (Melbourne, Vic); and her sister, Nina (Ararat). Maria was a gifted musician with a dry wit and sense of humour, which was special to those who knew her. Her faith remained strong through declining health. She will be sadly missed.

Kevin Varrall

**Verhey**, Dirk, born 23.12.1919 at Nieuwelekkerland, Holland; died 21.5.05 at Pine Haven Nursing Home, Tully, Qld. On 26.2.48 he married Greta in Singapore, and migrated to Australia in 1951. He is survived by his wife, Dick (as he was known) as a young man joined the Dutch Colonial Army and was stationed in Indonesia. Both he and Greta were interned for more than four years in POW camps when Indonesia was invaded by Japan. It was there Dick found a friendship with God when his life was miraculously saved.

Dana Howard

**Bickley centenary celebration—October 22, 2005**. Bickley church invites past members to our celebration, commencing at 9.30 am for Sabbath school. 11.00 am divine service, light lunch, afternoon program with review of memorabilia, heritage and history to honour pioneers and notable workers who have sat in our pews. Further information: Neil Maxwell (08) 9454 6881; or Yvonne Johnson (08) 0201 6508.

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## Finally

Help me to be cheerful when things go wrong; persevering when things are difficult; and serene when things are irritating.

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**Giant book sale tomorrow**. Nunawading church, Central Road, Nunawading. 11 am–3 pm. New stock. Readers, lay preachers, Sabbath school teachers. 4000+ books, incredible choice from theology, E G White to cooking, and *Uncle Arthur's Best Stories*. **Don't miss out**. See last week's advertisement in RECORD. Proceeds to church building fund.

**Notice is hereby given** that the 80th session of the South New South Wales Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be held at the Auditorium, McKell Place, Goulburn, NSW. The business session will commence at 6.30 pm Saturday, September 17, 2005, and conclude on Sunday, September 18, 2005. Delegates will be appointed in harmony with the constitution. The business of the session will be as provided in the constitution, incorporating the presentation of reports and financial statements for the period. The officers, department directors and executive committee of the conference will be elected.

Norm Hardy, General Secretary

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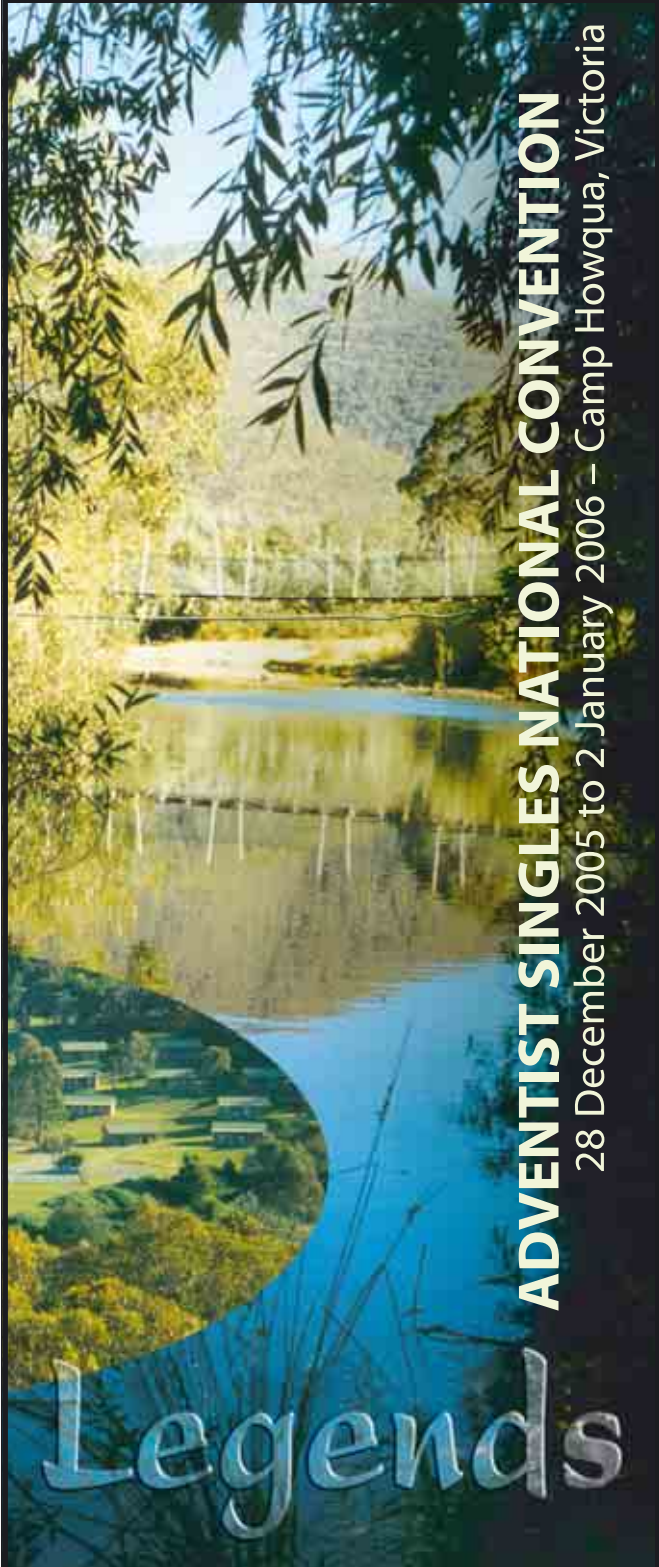
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**courage**, *n.* 1. the quality of mind that enables one to encounter difficulties and danger with firmness or without fear. 2. valiant. 3. true to beliefs. *He had the courage of his convictions.* From Latin *cor* (heart), as in *having heart*.

**connect**, *v.* 1. to establish communication between. 2. to associate mentally. 3. unite. From Latin *con* (together) + *nectre* (to bind).

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courage  
connect



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