

RECORD

May 31, 2008

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Local residents working to cut up and remove a tree that fell on their house during Cyclone Nargis in Burma.

ADRA responds to Burma's cyclone crisis

RANGOON, BURMA

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) officials have reported that aid efforts are progressing in Burma (Myanmar) following the Cyclone Nargis crisis, due in part to the humanitarian agency's longstanding presence in the country.

From the ADRA Myanmar headquarters in Rangoon, which has been operating since 1994 and currently employs 170 staff members, ADRA is collaborating with the World Food Program and other aid organisations to distribute food and supplies to the 2.5 million people affected by the cyclone.

Burmese government and United Nations

officials indicated at the time of writing that between 62,000 and 100,000 people are dead or missing. On May 4, a state of emergency was declared across five regions, including Yangon, Irrawaddy, Pegu, Karen and Mon, in which 24 million people live.

ADRA Myanmar's associate country director, Teddy Din, was in the Labutta area during the storm and reported the severity of the devastation. "The houses are all gone, as well as the hospital," he says. "The tidal surge from the sea was so strong it took less than an hour to sweep people, whether alive or dead, up the river to a point it would normally

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I had to shorten my stride to make it possible for us to walk together.

Your kingdom come

LAST YEAR, A COUPLE OF WEEKS before a weekend speaking appointment, I was asked to present a workshop on the subject of prayer, in addition to the other meetings of the weekend program. As a fan of prayer but not necessarily an expert, being assigned the topic stretched me to think about the nature of prayer and how to explore the topic with a group of young people.

It seemed that prayer as a spiritual practice was best practised, rather than merely talked about. And so a one-hour workshop grew around actually taking the time to pray in a variety of ways, interspersed with a few personal reflections on what prayer is and why it is important in the life of the Christian.

It was a good experience. A couple of hundred young people praying together in complete silence is an incredible sound and was a highlight. But the aspect of prayer that has had the most continuing influence was the rediscovery of one of Christianity's oldest practices—reading prayers. In the workshop setting, we simply read together the Lord's Prayer of Matthew 6:9-13, slowly, thoughtfully and prayerfully letting Someone Else's words speak through us and into our lives.

It's a practise I have continued over the months since. Regularly in the mornings on my way to work, I have let the words of the Lord's Prayer point me toward "our Father," repeating the familiar lines carefully, tasting the reverence and relevance

of the requests, and allowing the words of Jesus to echo in my mind. And I have got into the habit of repeating this at other times of the day and in other settings.

But there are a couple of lines I often get stuck on, that my mind pauses on as I take in the context in which I might be praying the prayer: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven" (see Matthew 6:10). As the sun rises on a new morning on my way to work, it seems almost poetic. But in other situations, these words are more jarring.

And so it was I found myself praying this prayer from time to time during a recent visit to Cambodia. But what does it mean to pray "Your kingdom come" amid the chaos of rush-hour traffic in downtown Phnom Penh, where the Hummers and Mercedes mix with cyclos, street vendors and beggars? What would change if the prayer, "Your will be done," was answered amid the dust, the smells and the people of a small-town marketplace? How is "Your kingdom come" evident in an out-of-the-way village where knowledge of the God, whose kingdom it is, is all but absent? How does "Your will be done" have any significant reality when just 70 children out of the tens of thousands of orphans in Cambodia can be cared for in the small orphanage we visited?

Somewhere like Cambodia is a daunting context in which to pray "Your kingdom come. Your will be done."

But Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is

like a mustard seed (see Matthew 13:31). And perhaps the greatest benefit for us in praying a prayer such as this is to begin to see the small things that just might be glimpses of that reality.

One morning, we were visiting a nearby landmark with a group from the orphanage. We had explored some ancient temple ruins and a little of the surrounding jungle, and were heading back for lunch when we caught up with a group of the smaller children, who had been playing together. As we fell in with this group, one of the little girls—perhaps four years old—reached up and took my hand. Immediately, I had to shorten my stride to make it possible for us to walk together. And so we did, until we arrived back at the rest of the group.

Sometime ago I came across a definition of Christian living: "a little faith and two outstretched hands . . . reaching up to take the steady hand of Jesus and reaching out to steady someone else" (Russell Rathbun). And perhaps this is part of what it means to participate in the kingdom of God in so many of the tragic contexts of our world—a little faith, two outstretched hands and a willingness to break our stride, our busyness, our hurry, our agenda, so as to be able to walk with another person for a time in our respective lives.

And perhaps together to pray, "Your kingdom come."

Nathan Brown



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

“Project Hope” to produce Australian shows

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

In what has been described as a “daring faith venture,” the Australian Union Conference (AUC) will be producing more than 100 Australian television programs in a four-week period during July and August this year, to air on Hope Channel as part of “Project Hope.”

“Project Hope” is an outreach program designed to produce a vast number of television shows in a variety of languages, aimed at creating material that is culturally relevant to people in different countries around the world.

In a 2007 survey of Hope Channel supporters, one of the most consistent messages was the need for more local content in Australia.

“Project Hope” is responding to this need,” says Pastor Ken Vogel, general secretary of the AUC. “These programs will share our hope in Jesus through the Hope Channel, thus contributing to the vision of the Adventist Church in Australia, which is ‘to know, experience and share our hope in Jesus Christ.’”

Pastor Vogel encourages Adventists in Australia to get involved with the project.

“We need the support of visionary Adventists who are committed to Australian material being produced and aired,” he says.

Pastor Chester Stanley, president of the AUC, is acting as the co-executive producer of “Project Hope” in Australia with Kandus Thorp. Ms Thorp, vice-president of the Adventist Television Network and Hope Channel for the General Conference, is mentoring the AUC leadership as they work through this project.

She says of “Project Hope,” “Our church is commissioned to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. To do this effectively, we must communicate in the languages and with the cultural stories of the people we seek to reach. This is why we are taking ‘Project Hope’ to different countries to produce hundreds of television shows with local hosts who know how best to reach their people.”

In Australia, some of the planned features will include a “Playschool”-style series for children under eight years of age, Chris-

tian apologetics, outback missionary journeys with an Indigenous focus, conversion stories, programs for youth workers and parents, and an Indigenous evangelistic series.

“The world church is making a huge effort to make this work, providing a director and all the required production equipment for this mammoth effort,” says Pastor Vogel. “The Adventist Church is charged with the mission of reaching all manner of people—the secular and the spiritually sensitive. ‘Project Hope’ will produce Australian programs to that end.”

He adds, “While the 100-plus local programs will be an exciting addition to the Hope Channel mix, ‘Project Hope’ will do more than this. It will inspire and train future volunteer producers, camera operators and technicians. This will ensure the ongoing production of local content into the future.”—*Adele Nash/Ken Vogel/Leann Erikson/Hope TV*



Kandus Thorp.



Pastor Chester Stanley.



◆ The young people of **Nerang church (Gold Coast, Qld)** organised an annual outreach program, “**Revolution**,” running for four nights and concluding on Sabbath. This year, **Pastor Ian Sweeney**, from the UK, was the featured speaker and told Bible stories on the theme “**The Chaser**.” The **Central Coast Adventist School senior worship band**

travelled up to the Gold Coast in their school holidays to lead in worship. **Brad Clarke**, Nerang’s youth volunteer, says “an event owned and run by our youth gives them confidence to invite their friends along.” On Friday evening, more than **150 people** wrote their names around the cross, making a stand to choose God.—*Wes Tolhurst*

◆ More than **100 students** have requested Bible studies at **Kempsey Adventist School, NSW**, after the recent “Week of Worship.” The school has **230**

students, from K to 10, with only eight per cent Adventists. The week ran from March 31 to April 4 and was conducted by **Pastor Justin Lawman**. The studies will be conducted by school chaplain **David Fletcher** and the school hopes to extend their academic program to Year 12 in the next two years.—*Rohan Deanshaw*

◆ **Heritage College’s (Vic)** dramatic growth during the past four years continues with the construction of four more classrooms and a new road into its



Narre Warren South campus. Tenders have been received and a builder selected for the construction of Stage 1 of its secondary campus at Officer, 10 kilometres from its present site, with the current campus eventually becoming a double-stream primary feeder. It is envisaged that both sites will have a combined total of **850 students**.—*Stuart Barons*

ADRA responds to Burma's cyclone crisis

(Continued from page 1)

take three hours to get to by boat.”

ADRA Myanmar has also begun the distribution of 25 tons of rice and power biscuits to an estimated 20,000 internally displaced persons in Laputta, a rice-trading town in the Irrawaddy Delta, where 95 per cent of homes were destroyed.

The town has become a refuge for people who escaped the storm surge that inundated low-lying villages. The initial distribution of food will provide food for 30 days and ADRA Myanmar's food distribution activities are expected to increase as more supplies become available.

ADRA International, through a partnership with World Emergency Response, has shipped 20 medicine packs containing medical supplies, valued around \$US129,000, to be used by a medical team already providing first aid assistance to residents in the delta. Each pack provides around 1500 treatments from mixed medicines, antiseptics and antibiotics.

In a separate shipment donated by Heart To Heart International, ADRA has sent 68 kilograms of medical supplies, including broad-spectrum antibiotics, analgesics, vita-



People made homeless by the cyclone have erected temporary shelters to protect their families from the elements.

mins, topical creams, oral rehydration salts, anti-amoebic drugs, bandages and disposable vinyl gloves.

Experienced ADRA emergency response personnel are working with ADRA Myanmar team members and ADRA Myanmar will continue to assess critical needs in the country and implement responses. Once the urgent needs have been met, there are plans for the agency to help address the long-term effects of the cyclone on families and their livelihoods.—*ADRA International/ADRA New Zealand/ADRA Australia/RECORD staff*

More @ www.adra.org.au

PNGUM leaders meet with members in Goroka

GOROKA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

On May 3 and 4, several hundred church members from the Eastern Highlands and Simbu missions in the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) gathered in Goroka to hear mission reports from church leaders, as well as presentations from guest speakers and news briefs from around the PNGUM.

Nelson Kasa, the coordinator for the 100th anniversary celebration for the church in Papua New Guinea, which will take place in July and August this year, spoke to those gathered about the importance of the local mission to the church. He also provided information about the upcoming anniversary celebrations.

Mission president Pastor Jessley Faraguso promoted the Year of Evangelism drive to the local mission and gave a report of the progress outreach programs have been making.

Priscilla Elwin, PNGUM's administrative assistant, promoted a special offering, which was collected on May 24 and will be used to help build a radio and TV station in PNG.—*RECORD staff/Priscilla Elwin*



◆ More than 96 students and staff members gathered for the annual Adventist schools “**Band Camp**” at Crosslands Convention Centre, Sydney, NSW, from May 5 to 8. Adventist school students from **Wahroonga, Illawarra, Castle Hill, Kempsey, Central Coast** and **Newcastle** from Years 3 to 9 were present, with a wide range of musical experience. Band mas-

ter **Nathan Sciberas**, from Music Corp, was impressed with the skill and ability of the students. The camp was an opportunity for students to play in the band and also interact with one another through special worships, taken by **Pastor John Wells**, a talent pool slug and other fun outdoor activities. On the last night, a special concert was performed for parents and families with the songs the students had been learning. More than 150 people filled the main hall.—*Claudia Martin*



◆ Several hundred people recently attended an **agricultural fair** at **Carmel Adventist College, WA**, to learn about a range of environmentally friendly activities, including aquaponics, permaculture, recycling and composting. There were a number of displays, featuring the keeping of bees and caring for chickens. Lectures were held on several significant issues, ranging

from climate change to the marketing of local produce. According to college principal **Gavin Williams**, it is “important for people to develop and practice a lifestyle that nurtures rather than destroys the local environment. This will be a growing focus of our college, as we have a unique location in the Perth hills in which to educate our students on these matters.” The fair was organised by the Friends of the Environment group as part of the Bickley Harvest Festival celebrations, and organisers hope to make it an annual event.—*RECORD staff/Gavin Williams*

DAYS AND OFFERINGS: ◆ JUNE 7—AVONDALE COLLEGE OFFERING ◆ WOMEN'S MINISTRIES EMPHASIS DAY

Sanitarium celebrates 110 years of operations

BERKELEY VALE, NEW SOUTH WALES

Sanitarium celebrated its 110th anniversary on April 27 with a “birthday lunch” at the company’s head office, with other branches in Australia and New Zealand also organising celebrations to mark the event. A special DVD was produced exclusively for staff members.

In 1898, a baker named Edward Halsey began producing the first Sanitarium products out of a rented bakery in Melbourne. Sanitarium Health Food Company was officially registered on April 27, 1898.

With an increase in demand, the work expanded to new areas and markets—including overseas. Records from 1905 show Sanitarium was shipping products to Singapore, South Africa, India, China, Malaysia, Burma and the Pacific islands followed in later years.

From its humble beginnings, Sanitarium has grown to become Australia’s leading health food company, and now has manufacturing and distribution sites throughout



A Sanitarium horse and cart delivery service from around 1910 in Sydney.

Australia and New Zealand, employing around 1700 people.

This year, Sanitarium has launched a new project—“Kitchen”—a health food café located at Eagle Street, Brisbane, which offers customers gourmet vegetarian dishes. The company also enjoyed success with their TRY-athlon series (“NZ TRY-athlon series sets world record,” News, May 24).

Sanitarium is the 14th most recognised brand in Australia and for the past 30 years, Weet-Bix has remained Australia’s most popular breakfast cereal.—*Sharyn Brady/Julie Praaestin/AMN*

More @ www.sanitarium.com.au

Evangelistic efforts increase in Cook Islands

RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS

At least four evangelistic series will be held on the islands of Rarotonga, Mauke, Arorangi and Atiu before the end of the year. There has been an increase in evangelistic activities in the Cook Islands, thanks to the efforts of the Cook Islands Mission (CIM).

Each evangelistic series will run at least 15 different programs for about three weeks, with church members inviting people from their small groups.

Pastor Hosea Hosea, evangelist as well as Sabbath school, personal ministries and church development director for the CIM, reports that nine people were baptised on the island of Atiu after evangelistic efforts last year. There are about 600 people living on the island of Atiu.

“There was a great stir on the island and they have requested another evangelistic series be held on Atiu at the end of this year,” he says. “We are encouraging church members to be more involved and trained in disciple making. We want every church member to be actively involved in soul winning.”—*Melody Tan*

More @ www.adventist.org.au



◆ Around 150 players and 200 spectators recently congregated at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, for the inaugural Australian Adventist volleyball tournament, run by the Newcastle Samoan-Multicultural church (SMC), with the assistance of Morisset Community Group. The theme of the weekend was “Unity In Christ.” It began with an uplifting message

by Pastor AJ Grant and vocalists Iron and Clay led out a challenging message for young people, including many non-Adventists in attendance. On Sabbath afternoon, “Meet the Players,” saw teams from all over Australia give testimonies and items about their churches and ministries. There were national representative players from Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Samoa and Tonga. The games began Saturday evening and went all day Sunday, culminating with the prize giving after a five-set men’s final. Warriors won the men’s division, while the Mira-

cle Dreams from Sydney won the women’s competition. The mixed division was taken out by SMC.—*Jerry Puni*

◆ A vegetarian cooking program, aired on the Seventh-day Adventist-owned Hope Channel, was among the finalists to win a bronze award during the 29th annual Telly Awards. “Cooking Vegetarian,” won in the “Education” category for its production value and quality of programming. The award marks the first Telly for Hope. Well-known Adventist chef Sualua Tupolo hosts the program. Mr Tupolo, former

executive chef for Atlantic Union College, USA, recently returned to his native American Samoa, having spent 25 years cooking for government officials and other dignitaries across the United States and the South Pacific, including members of the US Congress and the king of Tonga. The Telly Awards are judged by top advertising and production professionals, and past winners. Each year, some 14,000 advertising agencies, production companies, television stations, cable companies and corporations from around the world enter their work for consideration.—*ANN Staff*

Churches helping communities in NZ

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Seven Seventh-day Adventist churches in Auckland and Palmerston North in New Zealand are reaching out to the community in a unique way, in conjunction with the Adventist Health department in New Zealand.

Spearheaded by Auckland's Glen Innes Adventist church, these churches are embarking on the "Choose life community health programs," aimed at meeting the needs of their community.

"I believe the local church is the delivery agent for the Adventist health message," says Doug McLeod, pastor of the Glen Innes church. "We don't want to only be a 'worshipping' church, we also want to be a service church and be active in our local community."

Church members surveyed the Glen Innes neighbourhood a few months ago to determine the specific needs of the community and what they felt the church should be doing. The survey revealed the community was struggling with obesity and type 2 diabetes problems.

A survey was also conducted among church members to discover specific skills

and how much time they were prepared to give to the church and the community. The church will soon be conducting fitness classes for church and community members.

"We now have six Auckland churches on board and one in Palmerston North, with another four indicating their interest," says Pastor McLeod. "Over the next year, I would like to see every church in New Zealand participating in the 'Choose life community health program.'"

Pastor McLeod also indicated that experts can be brought in to run certain programs if church members did not possess the skills needed by the community. "This should be about the church meeting the needs of the community," he says.

New signboards have been made to be placed prominently in front of churches to inform the local community of the services and activities offered by their local church.

Local churches in the Auckland city area are also conducting youth services in direct response to the youth gangs, alcohol and drug problems in the area. "We want to create a real community," Pastor McLeod says.—*Melody Tan*

More @ www.adventisthealth.org.nz

Church promotes tobacco-free youth

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, USA

Saving the next generation from tobacco addiction is the focus of the World No Tobacco Day, which takes place today.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its humanitarian agency, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), are offering resources in promoting awareness of the dangers of tobacco to churches, schools and community members.

With this year's theme of "Tobacco-free Youth," the World Health Organisation's World No Tobacco Day calls attention to how tobacco use impacts public health and aims to reduce individual tobacco dependence worldwide. Tobacco kills nearly 15,000 people every day, with a majority of smokers taking up the habit long before turning 21.

"Their [the tobacco companies'] very survival hinges on turning millions of children into lifelong tobacco users," says Charles Sandefur, president of ADRA International. "It's essential that we not only raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco use around the world but that we also protect our children from the attack the tobacco industry is leading against them."—*Taashi Rowe/ANN*

More @ <http://news.adventist.org>

◆ **Unchurched adults** interested in finding a congregation are not nearly as likely to visit one in person as a church member who is shopping for a new congregation, according to several recent LifeWay Research studies. Effective evangelism, the researchers say, must begin in relationships between Christians and unbelievers. A survey of 1684 adults who had not "attended a religious service in a church, synagogue or mosque, other than for a religious holiday or for a special event, such as a wedding or funeral, at any time in the past six months" found that

only 49 per cent would visit in person if they were looking for a church. By contrast, 83 per cent of church switchers in an earlier survey said they made an in-person visit when they "actively searched for a new church." More than half of unchurched people would follow a recommendation from family, friends, neighbours or colleagues if they were looking for a church but 24 per cent said they didn't really see themselves using any of the usual ways of finding a church.—*Australian Christian Channel*

◆ Each Bible placed in a hotel

room has the potential to reach up to 2300 people in its estimated six-year life span, and about 25 per cent of travellers read the Bibles in their hotel rooms, according to The **Gideons International**, a group that has been placing Bibles in hotel rooms since 1908. The Gideons say they receive testimonies almost daily of lives changed because of the Bibles they've placed. But a growing number of hotels are opting not to allow the placement of Gideon Bibles, according to an article in *Newsweek* magazine. Such hotels say society is evolving

and a younger, hipper generation has no interest in the Bible. They also say they would have to cater to a variety of belief systems and could not single out Christianity.—*Baptist Press*

◆ **Assisi**, home of **Francis**, 13th-century patron of the poor, has banned begging. Mayor **Claudio Ricci** has stopped people seeking hand-outs, lying down or sitting on the ground within 500 metres of town churches, squares and public buildings, newspaper *La Repubblica* said.—*The Age*

IS YOUR CHURCH DOING SOMETHING EXCITING, INNOVATIVE OR INSPIRING? EMAIL RECORD@SIGNSPUBLISHING.COM.AU

Trinity congress affirms Adventist belief

WAHROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

Church leaders and Bible scholars from across the South Pacific Division (SPD) affirmed the Adventist belief in the nature of God and the Trinity in a statement endorsed at the conclusion of a congress held from May 1 to 4. About 70 theologians, administrators and pastors gathered to examine questions raised among some church members surrounding these beliefs.

“How are we able to learn more about God? And what is the nature of the God we worship?” reflects congress organiser Dr Paul Petersen, field secretary for the SPD. “One way to answer such questions is to study the topic of the Trinity as revealed through the Bible.”

To this end, the program included the presentation of academic papers from SPD and international scholars, as well as times of group Bible study and worship.

Dr Ray Roennfeldt, dean of theology at Avondale College, pointed out how the Adventist view of the Trinity is meaningful only if based on an understanding of what the Bible teaches about salvation. “It is because of our belief in the full atonement of Jesus Christ that we believe in His eternal divinity and have developed Trinitarian expressions of faith,” says Dr Roennfeldt. “The Trinity doctrine teaches that God was fully in Christ, and we do not have to look



Dr Ray Roennfeldt presenting at the Trinity Congress.

anywhere but the cross for our redemption. As Jesus is, so God is.”

“The doctrine of the Trinity in the early church emerged as a biblical response to attempts to define Jesus in light of Greek and pagan philosophical speculation,” adds Dr Petersen. “We, as Adventists, have rightfully turned away from using and being dependent on the

philosophy of the ancient Hellenistic world and, in line with reformers like Martin Luther, we want to view God in light of His self-revelation in Jesus, as revealed by the Holy Spirit through the Bible.

“The belief of the early church in the Trinity was not just the position of one section of Christianity, but was and is the belief of all Christian churches.”

Visiting scholars included Dr Ekkehardt Mueller, from the General Conference’s Biblical Research Institute, Dr Kai Arasola, from Mission College in Thailand, and Brian Edgar, a non-Adventist scholar from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky (USA), who presented on the wider Christian theological framework of these issues.

Congress presenters contributed to a meeting held in the Fox Valley Community Centre on May 3, inviting ministers and local church leaders of the Greater Sydney Conference to a session, which included question-and-answer time.

The statement from congress participants (see left) was discussed and revised before being endorsed unanimously. “The conclusion is clear,” says Dr Petersen. “Adventist theologians of the South Pacific Division see the Holy Spirit’s guidance in the direction of our church toward a Trinitarian position. Our belief is based on biblical evidence and confirmed by the work of the Spirit.”

Along with articles contributed by Adventist scholars around the world, the papers presented at the congress will be edited for publication later this year.

—Nathan Brown

Consensus statement

TRINITY CONGRESS, SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION, MAY 1–4, 2008

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has expressed its position on the Godhead in its fundamental beliefs. Paragraph 2 speaks about the Godhead, and paragraphs 3-5 describe each of the three persons of the Trinity.

We, a group of Seventh-day Adventist Christians, theologians, pastors, and administrators, convening in Wahroonga, have been invited by the South Pacific Division to study biblical, theological and historical aspects of this doctrine.

- On the basis of our study of Scripture, we affirm our belief in “one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal persons” (Fundamental Belief # 2).
- We understand the eternal pre-existence and full divinity of Jesus and the distinct divine personality of the Holy Spirit to be essential to our belief in the full redemption and atonement in Jesus Christ
- We approach this subject with awe, and we acknowledge that human words cannot fully describe and human minds not fully grasp the mystery of the nature of God. These limitations in understanding and language arise out of God’s greatness and majesty, and the depth of the divine plan of salvation, particularly of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
- As we seek to grow in our understanding of God, we recognise the need to continually base our theology on His self-revelation in Jesus Christ, as conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit through the Bible.
- We are grateful that the Holy Spirit has led us in our past history, as the Adventist community has developed a deeper understanding of God through the study of Holy Scripture.
- We pray that God’s people will reflect the love and unity of the Godhead as they seek to understand Scripture better and share the good news that God has reconciled the world to Himself in Christ.
- May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all (2 Corinthians 13:14).

What is singles ministry?

BY TRAFFORD FISHER

SINGLES IS SUCH A DIVERSE TERM, covering the never-married, separated, divorced and widowed, from ages 18-108! Pick up any book by social commentators or look at the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics to see that the demographics of our population have changed over the past few decades and the single-person household is the fastest growing household type.

So when we see a reference to “singles” in our church’s bulletins or in advertising we may wonder who it is referring to—those in their 20s, those over 40, those who are divorced? The reality is it refers to anyone who is not currently in a relationship.

Cheryl Sonter is president of the Adventist Singles Network and she answers a few questions about singles ministries in Australia and New Zealand.

What’s the history of singles ministries?

Ministry to singles in Australia and New Zealand began in the early 1980s under the name of PHILOSDA and was established in association with the South Pacific Division (SPD) Youth Department. It featured its own constitution that allowed for individual chapters to be established in various regions, and a national board to oversee and coordinate activities.

In 1985, after PHILOSDA had become Adventist Singles Ministry (ASM), it was guided and nurtured by the SPD Family Ministries Department. During the “Year of the Single” in 1994, ASM changed its name to Adventist Singles Network (ASN).

What are some of the challenges for singles in the church?

Singleness is not confined to the church but is found on every level of Australian and New Zealand society—and is increasing. Unfortunately, single is a label that has negative connotations for some. Many singles struggle with being labelled as single as it is often associated with “loser”—and no one likes to be seen this way.

Research indicates that half of those who separate from their partner leave

the church, which means we lose many of our singles from church membership. So many singles say there are no opportunities for them to find fellowship outside their own immediate church and that this is limiting.

Finding capable and willing leaders is also a challenge, both at local church and conference levels. Many singles are happy to take part or help someone else run a program, but finding capable singles willing to take a leadership role is difficult. Many singles are single for a “season” of their lives and then move on into a relationship, so the nature of this ministry means leaders and attendees tend to change.

Some conferences have fantastic programs running and others need good leaders to make these events happen. Making the opportunities happen is just as difficult as having the courage to attend them for the first time!

How can the church minister to singles?

The first thing is to recognise the need for this special ministry. Many church leaders are married and don’t see the importance of addressing the needs of such a significant proportion of their congregations. Church leaders need to actively support their singles and encourage them—they are often talented people with much to contribute to their church but are so often overlooked in a family-oriented congregation.

Church members also need to recognise that singles ministry is not “all about getting married” but is a social and spiritual ministry that allows people to mix with those who have had a similar life experience, share their stories, and provide support and encouragement to each other. The more support and opportunities for involvement the church can provide singles, the greater the chance they will remain within the church and contribute to its mission and growth, now and in the future.

We would also like to encourage conference leaders to assist in sponsoring and supporting organised events and different ministry opportunities for singles.



The current Adventist Singles Network board, including (from left) Pastor Trafford Fisher and Cheryl Sonter.

What’s happening with Adventist Singles Network?

Our current ASN Board is made up of singles representatives and conferences leaders from around Australia. A manual has recently been prepared and published to assist any single’s groups who wish to commence a singles ministry at the local church or the local conference level and is available from the Family Ministries Department at the SPD.

A national convention is held every two years and provides a fantastic opportunity for worship, fellowship, and personal renewal for singles from all over Australia and overseas. At the convention held in Sydney in January, there were people from as far away as Canada and the US who attended, and new life-long friendships were established for so many participants. The next convention is planned for Brisbane, (Qld) in January, 2010.

One new initiative is the establishment of four special focus groups designed to provide more opportunities for singles to enjoy fellowship and ministry. The new groups are “Mission and community,” “Outdoor recreation,” “Music and the arts,” and “Travel.”

We are confident this initiative will provide real opportunities for singles to minister to others, experience personal development and spiritual growth and to mix with others in a supportive atmosphere. **R**

Trafford Fisher is director of Adventist Family Ministries for the South Pacific Division, based in Wahroonga, New South Wales.

Take it on the chin

BY BRAD TOWNEND

MY WIFE HAS BEEN KNOWN TO offer me criticism at times. My areas of weakness can range from toilet-seat habits through to unknowingly making a complete fool of myself through something I've said.

Sometimes her criticism is out of frustration, while other times it's out of a genuine and loving desire to see the best result for me. Her methods and intentions vary widely, as can the response she gets from me.

Nobody likes being criticised. Criticism can point out weaknesses—something few of us like to admit. I'm sure we're all familiar with and have experienced “constructive” or “destructive” types of criticism. We may have even offered it!

Destructive criticism can involve pointing out faults and inadequacies with malicious intention. On the other hand, constructive criticism points out weaknesses with a view to building them into strengths.

Despite the fact that some of my wife's more serious criticisms can be embarrassing and humbling, they are important to me, partly because they're usually right. I respect her wisdom and see that her advice can help my relationships with her and with others around me.

It is important for me to see beyond the injury to my pride and hope these reminders of my inadequacies can mould me into a better person. Ironically, the more painful the reminder, the more likely it is to have a long-standing effect.

In a spiritual sense, I find the Bible challenges me with the constructive kind of criticism. It points out my faults and weaknesses all too often. The more I read of the life of Jesus, the more I realise that while I feel I live a pretty good life, my life is wretched when compared to His. At

base, every motive of mine is selfish. This concept is hard for me to accept.

I know Christians and non-Christians alike who struggle with the idea that the Bible says, “You are a sinner!” It can be a tough pill to swallow. Consider the following examples:

- “All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no-one who does good, not even one” (Psalm 14:3*).
- “Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no-one living is righteous before you” (Psalm 143:2).
- “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Perhaps the Bible could be a little more diplomatic in the way it points the finger.

- “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
- “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

Perhaps the Bible could be a little more diplomatic in the way it points the finger. Perhaps it's being too harsh in its generalisations. Maybe if it was gentler in its rebuke, our ears would be more willing to listen. But I doubt it.

The Bible plainly points out the truth of our fallen condition as humans and our desperate need to be more like Jesus. With something as important as our spiritual wellbeing, there is no room for pleasant mediocrity.

But I describe this biblical criticism as constructive because it doesn't just point

the finger, it extends a hand. While the life of Jesus ruthlessly points out how righteous He was and, in contrast, how terrible my life is; the death of Jesus points out the solution to this weakness when Jesus takes my mistakes upon His shoulders: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Bible does not promise that after we accept Jesus we will never make another mistake or need further correction but it does promise our shortcomings will be forgiven if we ask (see 1 John 1:9).

While the constructive criticism my wife offers can usually make me a better person, the criticism Jesus offers me is infinitely more powerful. If I am willing to humble myself and acknowledge my weaknesses, His grace can work through me to change me into a stronger person.

The Psalmist sums up my response to this well: “I love the Lord, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned his ear to me, I will call on Him as long as I live” (Psalm 116:1, 2). The unmerited love God shows me excites me enough to make me want to be a better person for Him, and to share His grace with others (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

The only way we can grow as people in any domain in our lives is to put aside our pride and take an honest look at ourselves. Sometimes it takes others to help us do this. This person must obviously be somebody we trust, who has our best interests in mind. I have found the perfect critic in Jesus. **R**

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

Brad Townend writes from Sydney, New South Wales.



Why love your enemies?

BY JOHN WATTS

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES—SURELY THIS is impossible! But Jesus said it. So how do we make sense of such statements (see Matthew 5:43-45; Luke 6:27, 28)? How might we be persuaded to find these statements meaningful in our own lives, and not merely in the lives of the perfected saints?

Perhaps it might help if we are aware of the good reasons for doing so, and this is the question I wish to briefly address: what reasons are there to justify the command to love your enemies?

Reflection on these issues, and equally important other open-ended issues, is important for a healthy and vibrant church community in today's fast-paced and changing world. Just as educators reflect on school curriculum and teaching techniques in order to do "a good job," as ministers, doctors, plumbers, cabinet makers, nurses, mothers and fathers, and so forth, reflect on their equivalent curriculum and techniques to do a good job, so church members need to continuously reflect on the why and wherefores of our current everyday situations, as well as the big issues facing our individual lives, families, communities, churches and nations.

What needs to be avoided at all costs is church members acting as mere agents of the status quo, as tools of others, content to carry out instructions coming from superiors in the church hierarchy. This unthinking approach is unfair to church administrators, since these members may become a burden too heavy to carry,

whereas all church members have the capacity to think, support and contribute positively to the church at local, national and global levels.

Initially, one might respond to the question of "why love our enemies" by drawing attention to the historical and social context of Jesus' time on earth. For example, the occupants of Samaria—a country immediately adjacent to Israel—were the sworn enemies of all good Jews. Yet Jesus associated with Samaritans, such as the woman

**We are all part of
the family surnamed
"humanity" and all
humans are duly
bound to one another
by creation.**

at the well (see John 4:1-42), demonstrating that they were also candidates for the kingdom of God. The story in John 4:39-42 records that many believed in Him through the woman's testimony. Defying popular belief, Jesus demonstrates the Samaritans are loved by God. And if God loves them, then surely Jews must also love them—that is, love their enemies.

In His teaching, Jesus was not prone to answering questions directly, and often used parables and stories to challenge His listeners to grapple with their own

responses to their questions. Illustrative of this practice is the story of the "good Samaritan"—remember, the enemy—in Luke 10: 25-37. When asked the question "who is my neighbour?" Jesus responded by telling a story that challenged His listeners to engage with their own beliefs and prejudices. In effect, the story forced them to answer the question for themselves—which of these three seems to have been a neighbour to the bandit's victim?

The story, like that of the woman at the well, depicts the enemy as a neighbour—Jew and Samaritan—and Jesus here elicits the response that, in effect, the enemy acted as neighbour. The Jews were well aware that they were to love their neighbours as themselves and, therefore, the story refers to loving our enemies—as did the Samaritan in the story.

There are, however, more profound reasons for loving our enemies, though these reasons may not necessarily make it any easier to do so in practise. I suggest two reasons: the first deals with creation, the second with reconciliation and redemption.

In the account of the creation, God made Man—male and female—in His own image (see Genesis 1:26, 27): "Male and female he created them. He blessed them and gave them the name Man, when they were created" (Genesis 5:2, New Jerusalem Bible). Consequently, what we now refer to as "humanity" has been constituted by and through our first parents. We are all part of the family surnamed "humanity" and all

humans are duly bound to one another by creation—all made in God's image.

So when I consider another human to be an enemy, it is with the proviso that that person is a product of God's creation and, as part of my human family, has been made in the image of God. In fact, that other person is part of my own humanity, and therefore part of my own being. Conversely, I am part of that other person, and therefore, in some sense, when I wish or do harm to that other person, I am also wishing or doing harm to myself. This is not to argue the point that there are never occasions when an "enemy" has to be dealt with, just as a disease within the body has to be dealt with, even when the proposed cure may be as bad as, or worse than, the disease.

Nevertheless, if the argument is even partially credible, there are profound implications for how Christians see and treat others. For example, in some incredible way, in loving others, we simultaneously *are* loving ourselves also, not only loving others *as* ourselves. Furthermore, in loving others—even our enemies—we are loving that which is in the image of God, bringing us back to the two great foundational commandments of loving God and neighbour (see Mark 12:29-31). To love God is to love His image—in self, neighbour and enemy—no matter how pale that image may have become.

The second reason relates to reconciliation and redemption in Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, Paul argues if Christ died for all humanity, then in a sense, all humanity died, and this humanity should now live for Christ, rather than for itself. In a similar manner to in the garden of Eden, individuals have the obvious freedom to accept or decline the eternal benefits of this reconciliation. Just as all humans are made in the image of God, so too, all humans are reconciled to God by Christ and may become agents of reconciliation to a world that has given up on God—in other words, a world that may be considered to be the "enemy" of God.

In this context, the essential meaning of John 3:16 comes to the fore: *For God loved the enemy (the world) so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him should not be lost, but should have eternal life.* The following verse (John 3:17) is now even more meaningful in the context of our discussion: *You must understand that*

God has not sent his Son into the world (of the enemy) to pass sentence upon it, but to save it—through Him.

Similarly, we, as Christians, are told to love our enemy (at the very least in a salvation sense), as demonstrated by God, because Christians become new persons (see 2 Corinthians 5:17) reconciled into the image of Christ. As Christ has exemplified God's love for the enemy, so Christians are to love their enemies.

Christians are asked no more than to follow the thoughts and actions—the character—of God, most aptly demonstrated by Christ's mission to this world. The mission of Christ in coming to this world, and His dealings with people such as the Samaritans (enemies), some of the Jewish leaders (enemies) and the Roman occupiers (enemies) of Israel, and our understanding of creation and redemption as they relate to loving our enemies, among other justifications, provide rational and biblical reasons to love our enemies.

But the next questions are more challenging and enormously relevant to our present-world conditions, namely: (a) What does *love* mean in the context of this command? (b) What does *enemy* mean in this context? and (c), How, then, do we actually love our enemies? What do you and your church family think?

Each of these questions will need multi-layered responses, since there may be different kinds of enemies. It might be a self-centred colleague, a violent intruder, a fanatical terrorist, or a sexist or racist person. And there are perhaps different aspects of love: strong and soft, direct and indirect. But perhaps the greatest variable is the many, clearly different situations and circumstances in which Christians will love their enemies—perhaps in the workplace with other professing Christians, with aggressive atheists, soldiers in war and countless more.

Of course, in answering these questions honestly, we need to address the big issues we currently encounter, rather than resorting to the comfort of past issues that may not necessarily be of significant influence in our present daily lives. **R**

John Watts is senior lecturer in education at Avondale College, based in Cooranbong, New South Wales.

Sitting in church one day . . .

BY LISA HAYDEN

DIANE WAS SOMEONE LISA HAD known all her life—and had never thought she would witness her sitting in a church pew. But God never gives up knocking on our door and when we allow him to enter, we witness an amazing transformation.

Lisa remembered when she was teenager, knocking on Diane's door, as she arrived to spend the weekend with her daughter Krissy, a close friend since kindergarten.

That weekend, Diane asked, "Girls, would you both like to help me paint the living room?"

"What colour do you want to paint it?" Lisa asked.

"The same colour," Diane replied.

Looking around the room, Lisa was confused: "Why do you want to paint a room the same colour—and one that doesn't look like it needs painting?"

Diane said, "Follow me." She walked into one of the bedrooms and explained, "This room was painted at the same time and colour as the living room"—but the living room was a coffee coloured brown and the bedroom was pure white.

What the girls didn't understand was Diane was giving up smoking and was having trouble explaining that her chain-smoking had stained walls. At the realisation dawned, Lisa was shocked but kept her thoughts to herself, *What does it do to your insides if it stains a room so badly?*

After church that day, Lisa spoke with Diane outside and commented on how her life had blossomed since becoming a Christian. Then she remembered back to painting her living room all those years ago—the same colour. If we were that wall and God was looking at us, He wouldn't see stains, He'd see pure white. When we accept Him, we are clothed in His robe of righteousness with ability to see and think more clearly. It is only our human eyes that are more likely to see the stains than the wall. **R**

Lisa Hayden writes from Wamberal, New South Wales.

Record Roo



Hi kids!
Abram's wife, Sarai, had not had any children, so Sarai's servant, Hagar, had a son for Abram. Sarai became upset and sent Hagar away. An angel visited Hagar in the wilderness...

Bible Text

Now an _____ of the _____ found her by a _____ of water in the _____ ... And he said "Hagar, Sarai's _____, where have you come from and where are you _____?" She said "I am _____ from the _____ of my mistress Sarai."
Genesis 16:7,8 NKJV

Secret Code

Read the story of Hagar and Ishmael in Genesis chapter 16. What special message did God's angel have for Hagar? Using the secret code below fill in the letters to find the answer.



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Prayer room question

LYNETTE ROWLAND, ACT

Thank you for the articles on prayer in RECORD. It is good that so many people are becoming increasingly aware of the power and need of prayer in their lives.

However, "Prayer spaces, places and rooms" (Features, March 29) did make me a little uneasy. It is good to have a place to be quiet but the prayer rooms set up with altars really make me think of other churches where people go and pray at their altars. This is not just in Christian churches but also in the places of worship of Hindus and Buddhists.

Are we not making a place more important than the Person we can pray to anywhere and anytime? Maybe we are following a little of the "other side"?

RESPONSE: PAUL PETERSEN AND JOY BUTLER, COORDINATORS, PRAYER MINISTRIES, SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION

We have received a few letters about "prayer rooms" and wish to thank you, because they provide an opportunity to underline an important theological perspective with huge implications for our personal and corporate worship, and thereby clarify not only the intention of prayer houses or rooms and the way they should be used but also our attitude toward our regular houses of prayer—namely, our church buildings.

Let us make it clear that we, as Seventh-day Adventists, do not believe any object or place on earth is holy in itself. This is a fundamental element of our belief in the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus, as our high priest, administers our prayers. Therefore, our ministers are not priests in the same sense as Old Testament priests, carrying sacrifices and bringing atonement. Such a view historically belongs to the Roman Catholic Church and, along with the Protestant reformers, we have, as Adventists, rejected that particular concept of holy places, objects and the ordained priesthood.

Neither prayer houses, churches or any other place are, therefore, to be understood as if they contain any inherent power or as though any special benefit comes from praying only there. They are not "places of power" in that sense. Divine power rests with and comes from God alone—not from the place we pray, not from any human representative like a priest, and not from the prayer itself.

This means every believer has the same access to God through faith in Jesus, wherever he or she is located, and sends up supplications and thanksgiving to God.

So, why do we then build churches for worship, raise prayer houses or furnish prayer rooms? Besides practical reasons for gathering, we also do so because we know that certain environments are conducive to creating an atmosphere of peace and spiritual relaxation. Sometimes we feel the need to set time aside in order to experience that peace in God and turn our eyes to Jesus in Heaven—not to the objects of the world, and not to the objects in any church or prayer house.

While such prayer houses or rooms, therefore, may serve proper and good purposes, it is true that if we misunderstand the intention and attach a special holiness or power to the buildings or object

themselves, we are heading in a wrong and potentially dangerous direction.

Again, thank you for your letter, giving us the opportunity to highlight this aspect, helping our people throughout the South Pacific to enter their churches and their prayer houses/rooms with the right understanding and their eyes focused on Jesus Christ as our priest in heaven, rather than on objects or persons on earth. Those who come from another background and have experienced other forms of worship or behaviour might misunderstand our intentions when establishing prayer places. We should be sensitive to their concerns.

Let's be honest

TREVOR KERR, VIC

The May 3 issue of RECORD included an insert from Adventist Book Centres. Top bill for the Mother's Day "Double Doorbuster" is given to the *Clear Word Paraphrase*. I presume this is the same book as the *Clear Word Bible* but with a different cover. If this is the case, it may help if the dustcover of the "paraphrase" includes something like "originally marketed as a Bible" and the flyleaf relates the journey of the book from its conception to now.

On the same day, the preacher at church claimed the title "people of the Book" for us Adventists. He then went on to describe how Adam was "clothed with divine light in the garden" and gave a graphic description of how God gave Adam instructions on how to slaughter and skin a lamb to provide the clothes of skins in Genesis 3:21. The Bible says nothing about Adam's clothing before the Fall and is quite explicit that God provided the clothing afterward. So how did our preacher come to say things that are not biblical?

A good mother teaches her children to be truthful, even if the consequences could be painful. It is time the Seventh-day Adventist organisation evaluated its sponsorship of a peculiar paraphrase of Scripture.

We would ask any observer of our faith and practice to be carefully, not to say prayerfully, objective. We, ourselves, should be careful with our embellishments of Scripture, for whatever purposes. If we are not, observers may find it difficult to decide whether we are simply poor teachers of the Word or deliberately deceptive.

Where to seek?

NAME SUPPLIED

I have been reading with great interest and much sorrow the letters regarding "30, single and seeking" (Editorial, February 16) over the past few months. I, too, have daughters who have non-Adventist boyfriends. Both have met wonderful young men who are so respectful and caring.

I have had many "deep and meaningful"

A good mother teaches her children to be truthful, even if the consequences could be painful.

talks with them and with God. It is a dilemma! Where are all the decent, respectful, God-centred Adventist young men?

I sent my girls to youth camp, hoping they would meet some nice friends there. But when they talk to me about who they met, they say the same thing: there is no difference between the boys at youth camp and the boys on the street. "So Mum," they say, "we have met nice Christian guys from another faith who know the boundaries, respect them and aren't trying to have sex with us."

My husband and I met at a youth camp in the early 1980s. Affectionately known as the "matrimonial camp," 90 per cent of our peers met their future partners there. There was little marrying outside of the faith back then. Most guys were old-fashioned gentlemen, who didn't have one foot in the world and one foot with God. They knew the rules and respected them.

NAME SUPPLIED

I married outside the church and found myself teetering on the edge with my Christian walk. My advice to others contemplating marrying outside the church: don't do it. It's too hard. They may be supportive at the start when things are new and rosy but over time, people become less and less tolerant.

It is very difficult for the kids. You end up going to church with them by yourself, then facing opposition from home with them being told it's a fairytale and God doesn't exist. It affects you and your children's walk in the church.

I would advise more people to join websites and go to youth and singles programs, camps and the like.

Fresh and practical

JOY HALLAM, QLD

Thank you for "The good news" (Editorial, April 5) and "Let my church breathe" (Perspective, April 5). These fresh articles—and other similar ones—help us stay mindful of the church's need to be relevant in its presentation of truth, which must ultimately represent the Truth—Jesus Himself (see John 14:6).

I am comforted that many in the Adventist church want this fellowship to be freed of stultifying traditions and our tendency to engage the intellect at the expense of connecting with the whole person, including the heart.

Intellectualising about the goodness of God is no longer enough to help people correct their distorted beliefs about God, when they come from broken homes in a depersonalising culture. People's greater need is to have their hearts warmed by loving relationships of genuine friendship, so they *experience* what a loving God is like. I like how our General Conference president stated it recently: "Our faith finds its most compelling expression in the everyday words and actions of Christians in their communities" ("Let the community be the pulpit, church president says," News, April 19).

It is a real challenge to each of us, especially those of us in church office, to have an authentic relationship with God so we can move from an approach of just talking about God to a "heart" approach, relating through loving action. It is good to see the church offering programs like "Celebrate recovery" for hurting people, which reaches out in love because we care, without the primary agenda of winning new members.

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.

Positions vacant

▲ **Lecturer in Mathematics—Avondale College (Lake Macquarie campus, NSW)** is looking to appoint a full-time lecturer in Mathematics (applied Mathematics speciality). The successful applicant should have at least a Masters degree (or equivalent qualification in Mathematics). For a full job description and selection criteria, visit our website <www.avondale.edu.au>. Applications should include a CV, applicant's contact details, the names of three referees, and be sent to Gabrielle Spalding, Human Resource Office <employment@avondale.edu.au>. Applications close **June 4, 2008**.

▲ **Internship positions—Adventist Media Network (Wahroonga, NSW)**, is offering two six-month internships in the area of video production and public relations. Applicants should demonstrate that they identify with the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church in using media to share messages of hope. The successful applicants will most likely be university students about to complete their courses who would like to take a six months leave to gain some professional experience in the workplace. Adventist Media will provide \$A700 per month living and travel allowance, and will provide a bursary to assist with university fees and expenses to the value of \$A6000. The internship period is negotiable but will typically run from July to December, 2008. For further information, write to David Gibbons at <davidgibbons@adventistmedia.org.au>. Applications close **June 20, 2008**.

For more employment options go to
hr.adventistconnect.org



Appreciation

Ellison, Lee and Dr Roderick Ellison. Nita Ellison, daughter Dr Denise Kent and families extend sincere appreciation to our dear friends across Australia for your wonderful support at the loss of our two beloved family members. Our son, Lee, a previous medical research officer (WA University), passed away on February 18 after a six-year battle with melanoma. Husband, father and grandpa, Dr Roderick Ellison, retired family counsellor, died March 6. Your kindness through prayers, loving messages, cards, phone calls, emails and visits have comforted us. Thank you, dear friends, and may God bless you all.

Weddings

Adera—Williams. Adolphus Adera, son of Joseph and Mary Adera (Kisumu, Kenya), and Andrea Williams, daughter of Garnet and Lynette Williams (Frankston, Vic), were married in a spiritual ceremony on 7.10.07 in Frankston church, then in a legal ceremony on 2.4.08 at Glenolden, Pennsylvania, USA.

Mark Baines

Andersson—Shelton. Leigh Joel Andersson, son of Jarl and Gabrielle Andersson (Gold Coast, Qld), and Leah Rochelle Shelton, daughter of Russell and Susan Shelton (Port Macquarie, NSW), were married at sunrise on 20.4.08 at the Windmill Hill Reserve, Port Macquarie.

Peter Cousins

Blyde—Rigby. Braden Luke Blyde, son of John and Sue Blyde (Cooranbong, NSW), and Karen Cherie Rigby, daughter of Glynn and Sue Rigby (Morisset), were married on 20.4.08 in the Linton Gardens Reception Centre, Somersby.

Ray Dickson, Leigh Rice

Briggs—Rabina. William Ernest Briggs and Shronne Maree Rabina were married on 5.5.08 in the wedding chapel at Coolibah Downs, with the reception held in a marquee on the property.

Beth McMurry

Coles—Keller. John Grant William Coles, son of John and Margaret Coles (Brisbane, Qld), and Jillianne Lynette Keller, daughter of David Keller (USA) and Lynette Keller (Brisbane, Qld), were married on 27.3.08 in the Chapel, Cedar Creek Estate, Mt Tamborine.

Jorge Munoz

Gerken—Baron. Haydn William Gerken, son of William and Ellen (Dawn) Gerken (Brisbane, Qld), and Cassandra Gay Baron, daughter of Clive and Norma Baron (Brisbane), were married on 27.4.08 in the Logan Reserve church.

Neil Watts, William Gerken

Nofke—Lister. Mark Nofke (Edens Landing, Qld) and Julie Lister (Mullumbimby, NSW) were married on 17.2.08 in an outdoor ceremony at the Natural Bridge, Qld.

Wes Tolhurst

Reed—Redman. Ron Reed (Lacey, Washington, USA) and Sharyn Redman (Nerang, Qld) were married on 22.3.08 in a simple outdoor ceremony on the Gold Coast.

Wes Tolhurst

Smedley—Coyte. Dale Andrew Smedley, son of Reg and Merlene Smedley (Perth, WA), and Emma Jane Coyte, daughter of Tony and Julie (deceased) Coyte (Perth), were married on 4.5.08 in Fremantle church, Fremantle.

Peter Fowler

Turner—Roennfeldt. Shannon Turner, son of Kim (Yarramalong, NSW) and Darlene Turner (Balcolyn), and Claire Roennfeldt, daughter of Ray and Carmel Roennfeldt (Morisset), were married on 11.5.08 in Peppers Manor House at Sutton Forest, in the southern highlands of NSW. The couple will be living in Canberra, ACT.

Ray Roennfeldt

Obituaries

Cobb, John Arthur Reginald, born 28.6.1916 at Palmerston North, NZ; died 23.10.07 at Manukau City. On 17.3.1942,

he married Jean. He was predeceased by his son, Brian (2005), and his son-in-law, Larry Roberts, and Larry Kaitaia. He is survived by his wife; his children, Gaylene and Kyrrill Bland (Whakatane), Robert and Ellen (Auckland), and Diane Roberts. One of the founding members of Papakura church and long-serving member there, Jack worked in the Sanitarium factory for a while during the late 1930s.

Peter Howard, Hilary Batjjes

Dunkley, Leslie Aubrey, born 24.3.1923 in Sydney, NSW; died 29.3.08 in Perth, WA. On 28.11.1989, he married Doreen Bower. He is survived by his wife. Aubrey lived an adventurous life as a missionary in Northern Australia and power house worker on mine sites. He embraced Adventism late in life and was baptised on 5.9.1981. He shared his faith with many. We look forward to hearing more of Aub's laughter and legendary stories when Jesus returns.

Andrew Skeggs, Phillip Rhodes

Gardiner, Jennifer Christine (nee Logan), born 15.8.1950 at Bowral, NSW; died 25.4.08. On 20.8.1972, she married Terry John Gardiner. She is survived by her husband (Doncaster East, Vic); and her sons, Brian (Mildura), Michael (Brisbane, Qld) and Peter (Melbourne, Vic). Chris's enthusiasm for life, concern for people and love for God, even when she was at her sickest, will always be remembered.

Rod Anderson, Tony Campbell
Walton Pitt, Trevor Rowe

Hearse, Kellie Maree, born 15.11.06 in the Women and Children's Hospital, Adelaide, SA; died 24.2.08 at Murray Bridge. She is survived by her parents, Samuel Henry Hearse and Leah Maree Golby. She was tragically taken at 15 months. So grievously missed, the great accuser strikes again. The sweetest little lamb.

Lee Bouditch-Walsh

Hockey, Kevin Stanley, born 27.6.1923 at Goulburn, NSW; died 16.4.08 at home at Port Macquarie. On 4.3.1944, he married Elaine. He is survived by his wife (Port Macquarie); his children and their spouses, Rex and Bev Hockey (Goulburn), Marilyn and Bob Trim (Parkes), Noel (Sandgate), Wendy and Glen Reynolds (Forrestfield, WA), and Lyndon (Bligh Park, NSW). Kevin was a faithful member who loved the Lord and now awaits the Resurrection.

Joseph Maticic

Hunt, Audrey Madge (nee Cram), born 21.1.1918 at Bankstown, NSW; died 2.5.08 in the Avondale Aged Care Facility. On 1.3.1943, she married Thomas Hunt, who predeceased her on 16.6.1988. She is survived by her daughter, Jennifer (Stockton). Audrey loved her church and lived a fruitful life of kindness. She now awaits the Resurrection.

Alwyn Gersbach, Owen D'Costa

Ing, Raymond Man Yuk, born 16.3.1940 in Toishan Village, China; died 27.4.08 in the Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide, SA. In 1970, he married Hilda. He was

predeceased by his son, Gabriel. He is survived by his wife (Adelaide); his sons and their families, Allan (Canberra, ACT), Russell (Adelaide, SA) and Warwick (Adelaide). An internationally respected and sought after scientist, Raymond was a humble Christian gentleman. He passed away peacefully in his sleep.

Nigel Ackland

Jones, Ruby (nee Sudweeks), born 2.2.1921 at Brighton, Sussex, England; died 1.5.08 at Caboolture, Qld. On 5.5.1945, she married John Hugh Jones (Jack), who predeceased her on 8.8.05. She is survived by her daughters, Judith Walker (Campbelltown, NSW), Susan MacDonald (Morayfield, Qld) and Jillian Larkin (Innisfail); and her son, Len (Bli Bli). Ruby was a very gracious and gentle lady, quiet in manner but strong in mind. Her great strength was her faith, believing everything could be resolved by prayer. She lived her life by that belief.

Neil Tyler, Selwyn Bartlett

Kennedy, Morris, died 2.5.08 in the Morisset Nursing Home, NSW. He is survived by his wife, Daphne; and his children, Victor and Sharon. Morrie was a brilliant artist who taught for years at Avondale College and exhibited in famous galleries all over Australia. He was a faithful Adventist and firm believer in the second coming of Jesus, and will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Ross Goldstone, Russell Kranz

Phillips, Oliver (Snow), born 2.6.1927 at Taree, NSW; died 29.4.08 in the Manning District Referral Hospital, Taree, after a prolonged illness. On 18.12.1954, he married Yvonne Green. He is survived by his wife; his children and their spouses, Christopher and Penny, Sharon and Athol McRae; and his five granddaughters. He was a timber worker with wide interests, particularly gardening. His faith was strong to the end and now, he calmly rests.

Lyndon Thrift, David Kosmeier
Jack Weekes

Thompson, John Charles, born 2.2.1941 at Coventry, England; died 11.4.08 of a heart attack in the Dubbo Base Hospital (while on holiday). On 27.3.1992, he married Jean. He is survived by his wife; his daughters, Kay, Elaine and Shona; his step-daughters, Catherine (all of SA) and Laura (NSW). A toolmaker by trade, John was a keen Bible student and a faithful and active member of the Morphett Vale church.

Nigel Ackland

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Nowra Cottage dedication. All past and present members and friends of the Nowra church, NSW, are invited to our cottage dedication on June 21, 2008. This will be a fun day of fellowship, food (lunch provided) and a great time to catch up with old friends. Program starts 9.15 am. Enquiries and RSVP Rosalie Cook by June 7, at <robjcook@internode.on.net>.

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