



## LITTLE STAR

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# Season's Greetings

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A star led the wise men from the East to Jerusalem until it hovered over the place of the child.  
"Overcome, they knelt and worshipped him" (Matthew 2:11, *The Message*).

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A life of learning and discovery and a star compelled the scholars in the Nativity narrative to go. Their journey ended joyfully. As a private, self-accrediting higher education provider, Avondale College of Higher Education also accepts the challenge of learning and discovery. Our undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational courses are founded in a framework of Christian wholism that leads to an informed understanding of humanitarian needs and responses.

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## Weet-Bix kids need helpers

Warriewood, New South Wales

Organisers of the Sanitarium Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon Series are calling for Adventist volunteers to help run 11 events around Australia in 2016.

The Aussie leg of the world's largest children's triathlon series is only made possible through the efforts of its army of more than 1600 volunteers.

So why Adventist volunteers in particular? "We've had really great volunteers from the Adventist community in the past—people who are active, involved, willing to give it their all and just make it the best day for the kids," said Skye Cannon, Kids TRYathlon volunteer coordinator. "We want to get as many churches involved as possible."

The Kids TRYathlon program ticks a lot of boxes for Seventh-day Adventists. The not-for-profit events are run by Sanitarium to involve children in healthy outdoor physical activity, emphasising participation rather than competition, and they are held exclusively on Sunday mornings.

Clearly the focus of Kids TRYathlon is to encourage children to be more active and healthy in a fun and rewarding environment, but there are sweeteners for the volunteers too. Apart from the usual free T-shirt, hat and bag, Sanitarium makes a donation of \$26 per volunteer when they're registering as part of a church or community group—the larger the group, the better the fundraiser. And thanks to a corporate sponsor, there's even a chance to win a fridge.

The Australian Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon series kicks off in Sydney on January 31, with 10 more events being held around the country through to May 29. The even larger New Zealand TRYathlon series—16 events—began on December 9 and runs until April 10. Volunteers need to be at least 16 years old. —Kent Kingston

For more information on volunteering in Australia visit <[try.weetbix.com.au/preparation/volunteer](http://try.weetbix.com.au/preparation/volunteer)>. For more information on volunteering in New Zealand, contact volunteer coordinator Julia Tilley <[julia@smcevents.co.nz](mailto:julia@smcevents.co.nz)>



## Research centre honours honest scholar

Cooranbong, New South Wales

The naming of a scholars' centre at Avondale honours an alumnus whose honest understanding of the issues confronting his faith often came at his own detriment.

Family and colleagues of the late Dr Arthur Patrick described the Avondale College of Higher Education academic as a consummate pastor, a humble but tireless scholar committed to well-considered change and a caring student mentor, during a ceremony in Avondale Libraries (Lake Macquarie campus) on October 27.

"Arthur reached out to people who were sometimes in great disagreement with him and befriended them, or at

least he tried to be their friend," said president Professor Ray Roennfeldt in his welcome.

Called to work at Avondale, Dr Patrick's contribution over more than 17 years included serving as the first cura-

tor of the Ellen G White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre, as lecturer in what is now Avondale Seminary, as registrar, as the first president of the Avondale Alumni Association and, in retirement, as an honorary senior research fellow. He published extensively, even on his adventiststudies.com blog just days before his death in 2013.

Offering "penetrating insight" into the academic issues confronting the Church, Dr Patrick contextualised the theological positions of the Church's past and explored the interface between Christianity and science, receiving an award from the prestigious Charles E Weniger Society for his contribution to Adventist scholarship.

The Arthur Patrick Scholars' Centre is on level one of the library. It features three spaces for higher degree research students—a study room with lockable desks, filing cabinets and wi-fi, a seminar room and a foyer with lounge chairs and a display of Avondale's peer-reviewed journals and journals from other higher education providers.

The ceremony ended with the unveiling of a plaque by Dr Patrick's wife, Joan, honouring his "life of careful and productive scholarship as theologian and historian".

—Brenton Stacey



The Patrick family at the Arthur Patrick Scholars' Centre.



## Cool

James Standish

It wouldn't be Christmas without a good old-fashioned social media storm over the "War on Christmas". I say "old-fashioned" because, although we've only been living in the social media age for a decade, this new holiday tradition has become awfully familiar. It's like we've transported our annual Christmas family frictions into society in general. The "happiest time of the year" is now also the grumpiest.

This year, Facebook lit up with reports of outrage over Starbucks coffee cups. Starbucks, a coffeehouse that is ubiquitous in the US and other nations that don't have appreciation for quality coffee, generally puts a Christmas-related design on its disposable coffee cups this time of year. In the past, the cups have featured pictures of such seasonal fare as carollers, Christmas trees and snowmen. But this year? The cup is simply red with the green Starbucks logo. The lack of Christmassy imagery on the cups, it was widely reported, outraged Christians.

The news reports of stupid Christians getting bent all out of shape spread through social media like the foam atop a cappuccino. As did the responses. And weren't they sharp. There was the ironic. The sardonic. The snarky. Many of the posts mocking stupid Christians were by cool Christians keen to put distance between themselves and all those Christian buffoons out there.

But there was something odd about the controversy. Where were the outraged Christians? It turns out that they were nowhere. Well, not entirely nowhere. There are 2.2 billion Christians, so there is a Christian somewhere angry about just about anything imaginable at any given time. But as for anything close to large-scale collective Christian outrage about Starbucks cups that might resemble a newsworthy controversy? It never existed. At least not according to an analysis of social media during the period.

The non-controversy controversy worked out so well for Starbucks, some industry insiders questioned whether the entire thing had been a hoax from the start. One food industry insider stated "it could be 2015's greatest marketing stunt".

Whether or not it was a stunt, the controversy said more about us than it did about anyone silly enough to care

one way or another about someone else's coffee cups. It illustrates perfectly a new phenomenon I'll call "Cool Christians Culture Cringe". We are increasingly seeing negative Christian stereotypes portrayed in the media and the far fringes of our faith community portrayed as the norm. And we are internalising these caricatures as accurate representations. As a result, we're very quick to heap derision on other Christians. After all, we all think of ourselves as cool, clever Christians, don't we? Or is it just me?

University of Connecticut sociologist Bradley Wright has written a provocative book, *Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites ... and Other Lies You've Been Told* on this phenomenon. Granted, it's a long title. But the book is well worth the read. It turns out that many of the negative caricatures Christians have internalised about each other are based on nonsense. But nonsense, if believed broadly enough, can have profound negative impacts.

According to a Pew Forum study, Christians were harassed over a recent six-year period in more nations on earth than any other religious community—a staggering 151 countries. And it's impossible not to notice that in Western media Christians are increasingly derided. This Christmas, let's remember that the derision, discrimination and persecution Christians face isn't because those who follow Christ are the ignorant rabble of bumpkins conjured in the negative caricatures. Christians face hostility primarily because of Who we serve. As Christ Himself put it:

"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you . . . Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you" (John 15:18-20).

This Christmas as we see Christians suffer derision, discrimination and, in many parts of the world, persecution, we may be tempted, like those infected with "Cool Christian Culture Cringe," to prove how different we are from those suffering. I for one want to be a lot less cool and a lot more like the Christians who have the courage to stand strong for Christ, even when they are hated for it.

Glenn Townsend Senior consulting editor  
James Standish Communication director  
Jarrod Stackelroth Associate editor  
Kent Kingston Assistant editor  
Vania Chew PR/editorial assistant  
Dora Amuimuia Sales & marketing  
Tracey Bridcutt Copyeditor  
Linden Chuang Assistant editor—digital  
Lulu Lim Graphic designer

Letters [editor@record.net.au](mailto:editor@record.net.au)  
News & Photos [news@record.net.au](mailto:news@record.net.au)  
Noticeboard [ads@record.net.au](mailto:ads@record.net.au)  
<http://record.net.au>  
Mail: Adventist Media Network  
Locked bag 1115  
Wahroonga, NSW 2076  
Australia  
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Fax (02) 9847 2200

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Cover Credit: Heather Gardiner  
"Original artwork for Little Star."

Official news magazine of the South Pacific  
Division Seventh-day Adventist Church  
ABN 59 093 117 689  
Vol 120 No 25



## A slug in my nachos

Jarrod Stackelroth

I stopped mid-chew and stared at my plate. There it was again . . . movement. Eyes on stalks, emerging from my spring onion without a care in the world, searching for a tasty morsel . . . a slug. It was Tuesday night and I was meeting the guys from cell group for a bite to eat and some spiritual sustenance. This was more than I had bargained for and I was feeling a little queasy.

"Excuse me," I said, getting the waiter's attention. "I ordered the vegetarian nachos." I held a knife towards him, on which the slug was now comfortably sitting, his tail end still snugly ensconced in the spring onion pieces.

"I . . . umm . . . wow," he said, leaning forward to have a look.

"At least we know it's fresh," I joked, "but I don't really feel like finishing it."

"Would you like something else?" the waiter asked, as he picked up the plate and took its offending contents away.

"Give me a minute."

It can be awkward finding things where they don't belong. And yet sometimes it's just right, like finding money down the back of a couch or in the car, or running into friends overseas.

As we approach the holiday season, we remember the Christmas story: of finding God where He doesn't belong: in a stable at the back of a cheap motel, lying in a feed trough.

And yet it was the perfect time and place. It shouldn't have been unexpected. Did you know that there are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that Jesus fulfilled in the New Testament.

According to the Christian Booksellers Association, the new best selling Bible is the Jesus-Centered Bible. It has risen to the top of the charts in North America, in part due to a unique blue-letter feature. Red-letter Bibles, where Jesus' spoken words are highlighted in red in the New Testament, have been around for awhile. But these blue-letter Bibles have passages referring to Jesus in the Old Testament highlighted in blue. More than 600 passages are highlighted, showing just how much of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus.

The probability that one Man could fulfil all those prophecies is impossible. It's a real confidence boost to know that the weight of evidence supports our faith.

It's comforting to know that Jesus inhabits the unexpected places and circumstances of life.

The morning after my slug experience, I was filling up with petrol when I realised my wife had "borrowed" my credit card. Thankfully, because of the slug situation, I had some cash left, as I hadn't had to pay for my meal the night before. But I was short. I went sheepishly and explained my situation. The attendant said, "No worries", and pulled out his own wallet to make up the rest. I drove away counting my blessings.

God makes a habit of showing up in unexpected places. He has been and is working through history and our lives for the good of those who love Him. Christmas is a good time to look back and see how "God has been with you" this year.

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Jarrod Stackelroth is associate editor of Adventist Record.

## Holidays

Holidays. Ahhh . . . that's a big sigh of relief.

Most families have Christmas holiday traditions. As many of my extended family, family of origin and all my children work for the Church, we have lived many kilometres and sometimes countries away from each other. Since moving to Sydney on August 3, I have stayed at home for 61 days and had 79 days away. I'm not wanting sympathy. I knew the South Pacific Division president travelled a lot. However, all this time away does make time with family on holidays extra special.

One of my family's holiday traditions is to meet at Stuarts Point (the NNSW campground) every second year for a couple of weeks from just before Christmas to just after the new year. We walk on the beach and in the bush, ride bikes, surf, swim, eat, play games, tell stories, show pictures and relax. I relax so much my kids wonder whether I'm actually there with the rest of the family, but I wouldn't miss this time for anything. Nor would they.

Jesus did not want to miss the human family gathering for eternity. Although the first humans placed planet earth in rebellion and separated us from God, God had a plan. Jesus the Creator would become a human Creature and be born like the rest of us who come into this world. He would join the human family for eternity, to be God's love and rescue plan (Philippians 2:5-11). Jesus giving up His divinity allowed us to be with God and the rest of the celestial family in an eternal holy day. Jesus values the human family that much!

So whatever happens on your holidays and whatever your family situation I wish you the "peace and goodwill" that Jesus can bring to your Christmas and New Year and ETERNITY!

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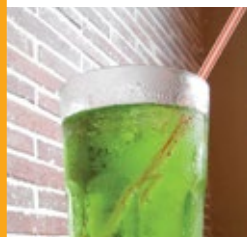
*Pastor Glenn Townsend  
is president of the South  
Pacific Division.*





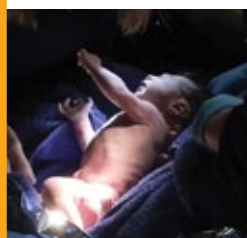
**Gagged**

Christian organisations are concerned about a new Victorian law that bans any communication likely to distress a person accessing abortion services within 150 metres of premises that provide abortions. Victoria's 10,000 GP clinics may also be included, which could render some conversations about abortion illegal even in nearby churches or universities. —*Australian Christian Lobby*



**Sweet tooth?**

Many consumers are seeking alternatives to sugary food and drinks, but Melbourne's Oral Health CRC is warning there are still health risks associated with sugar-free soft drinks and confectionery. Common flavour enhancers such as citric and phosphoric acid erode tooth enamel and can prevent calcium from rebuilding the tooth's structure. —*Oral Health CRC*



**Gift of life**

A church in New York has received an early Christmas surprise—a baby in a manger. The healthy newborn baby boy was discovered in the church's nativity display with his umbilical cord still attached. The mother has been identified. She's protected under laws that allow babies to be left at safe haven locations. —*Religion News Service*



**Industrial sludge**

ADRA is among the organisations responding after two iron ore tailings dams in Brazil burst, releasing a toxic mudslide that left several people dead and more than 250,000 without drinkable water. ADRA has distributed hygiene kits to 600 displaced families and supplied bottled water to 2470 households. —*ANW*



**Reaching out**

Pope Francis's chaplain, Father Raniero Cantalamessa, has preached at Westminster Abbey, saying it's vital for Christians not to remain prisoners of the past by arguing about who was right or wrong during the Protestant Reformation. He said all Christians should emphasise justification by faith in Jesus, not by self-focused and self-reliant religion. —*Christian Today*



**Membership audit**

An ongoing examination of Adventist Church records in the Inter-American Division (IAD) has resulted in 690,000 names being removed from church rolls. Despite the correction, the IAD remains the Church's largest division, with more than 3.6 million members. Over the past five years more than one million people became Adventists in the IAD. —*Adventist Review*

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Christian Services for the

**BLIND and HEARING IMPAIRED**

## ADRA aids bushfire victims across Australia

*Pinery, South Australia*

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (Australia) has been kept busy in the recent spate of bushfires that have burned out of control and taken several lives.

Bushfires in South Australia's mid-north killed two people and destroyed or severely damaged more than 80 homes.

ADRA South Australia is one of two agencies supplying fresh food, groceries and other household items to survivors. After the tragedy, volunteers at ADRA's Community Centre in Parafield packed and delivered approximately 20 parcels to individuals and families affected by the fires.

ADRA South Australia director Pastor David Hamilton said bushfire survivors can visit their local ADRA Op Shop to "come and get what they need for no cost".

ADRA also supplied emergency accommodation for those impacted by the Esperance bushfire in WA (more

information on page 9).

"The Adventist Development and Relief Agency is taking care of accommodation for all those who have been evacuated in the Esperance area," reported Western Australia's ADRA director Suzanna Cuplovic, when the bushfires struck.

ADRA provided accommodation for about 30 families during the week of evacuations. It also assisted the Fire Department and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support with accommodation. —*Record staff*



Volunteer David Bloodworth with toys for families affected by the SA fires.

## Sanctuary Sanitarium to close in 2016

*Sydney, New South Wales*

After five years of providing wholistic health and wellbeing services to Sydney's CBD, a decision has been made

to conclude the pilot program and close the Sanctuary Sanitarium operations in January 2016.

"Whilst Sanctuary has achieved many of its objectives over the past five years in terms of supporting people on their health journey, we have not been able to demon-

strate a long-term sustainable and replicable model," said Sanitarium CEO Kevin Jackson. "This is in large part due to the level of local competition, which has increased significantly in recent years subsequent to our establishment and put pressure on our growth and financial position.

"The Sanctuary team's primary focus will continue to be caring for their clients, with patients able to continue attending appointments with their Sanctuary practitioner until the end of January 2016."

Launched in 2010 as a pilot program, Sanctuary's team of medical professionals has worked to provide advice and support for more than 8000 clients within Sydney's Pyrmont community. —*Sanitarium/Linden Chuang*



Sanctuary has served more than 8000 clients since 2010.

## Church opens after almost 30 years

*Tennant Creek, Northern Territory*

The long-awaited Tennant Creek church was officially opened by South Pacific Division president Pastor Glenn Townend on October 24.

About 150 church members came from Alice Springs, Mt Isa and Darwin to join the Tennant Creek members for the opening. Pastor Townend preached the Sabbath message, reminding those present about what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

A team of committed volunteers, led by Athol Grosse from WA, worked tirelessly to prepare the building for the special day. Rod Fulwood coordinated the volunteer involvement from the Northern Australian Conference (NAC).

Australian Union Conference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries directors Steve Piez and Don Fehlberg led out in the program along with then NAC president Pastor Brett Townend and local minister David Gilmore, as the large

congregation spilled out onto the veranda.

It was in 1979 that Steve and Ros Peters moved to Tennant Creek with their children and began Sabbath meetings in their home with other Adventist families contracted for employment in the area. Nita Garret and Masie Smith joined the group; they are the longest-standing Tennant Creek Adventists to this day.

An afternoon of celebration and an evening concert concluded the activities, with musical contributions from David Aitken (WA), the Mt Isa Fijian group (Qld), Pastor Siggy and family (Darwin), Charlie Bobongie (Tasmania), Pastor John Beck (SA) and others. —*David Gilmore/NAC Conference*



SPD president cuts ribbon to open Tennant Creek church.

# NSW hosts first Christian schools roundtable

Sydney, New South Wales

Leaders of Christian schools in New South Wales met with Premier Mike Baird and other government officials in late October for a roundtable discussion about issues affecting independent Christian schools.

The historic meeting is the first time a combined group of Christian education leaders has met directly with the state government.

Among those taking part were senior representatives of Christian Schools Australia (CSA), Christian Education National, the Australian Association of Christian Schools, the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, Lutheran Education Australia and Adventist Schools Australia (ASA).

"Christian schools in NSW make up 4 per cent of total state-wide enrolment, 12 per cent of the non-government enrolment and a significant 33 per cent of the independent non-Catholic enrolment," said Seventh-day Adventist Schools (NNSW) CEO Dean Bennetts. "Therefore, being able to sit at 'the big table' and talk over issues that impact upon our kids and schools—and therefore on our mission—is a huge opportunity."

CSA CEO Stephen O'Doherty said the Christian Schools Roundtable was a "very welcome first", and paid tribute to Premier Baird and his government for their "support and willingness to engage with our movement on those issues that are of particular importance to Christian schools".

Among the issues discussed were "sector-blind" funding, the needs of students with disabilities, new school development, and human rights and religious freedom issues. A key outcome of the meeting was the assurance of continuing, regular dialogue between the government and Christian schools.

"This will strengthen relationships both ways," said Mr O'Doherty, "and ensure we can continue to help make a positive contribution to the NSW Government's educational and social policy objectives."

The Adventist presence at the meeting was significant as its education program is the third biggest system of schools in the NSW Christian sector (after CSA and the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation). More than 6000 students currently attend the Church's 16 NSW schools.

"We have substance and merit in this group and can hold our heads high as representing our faith," Mr Bennetts said.—*Linden Chuang*



NSW government officials with members of the Christian Schools Roundtable.

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## Archaeological Diggings

### TOURS 2016











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\*Tours subject to sufficient numbers and prevailing security conditions.





## Lives and property lost in WA bushfires

Three of the four people killed in bushfires near Esperance (WA) last month were workers on an Adventist-owned farm who had left the property during the blaze in an attempt to save a horse.

ABC News identified the victims as three foreign nationals—a 19-year-old German woman, a 29-year-old Norwegian woman and a 31-year-old British man—who were serving at the Karranga farm, located between Grass Patch and Salmon Gums.

Farm owner Linda Campbell, who is a member of the Esperance church, said the trio decided to leave the farm after the man got nervous about the fires and wanted to save his horse.

Their escape, however, turned deadly when they went the wrong way out of the farm gate and into the blaze. Their vehicle and the attached horse float were found 4km down the road the next day.

"It's absolutely devastating," Mrs Campbell said. "I never planned for them to leave. I never thought leaving was an option. But they said they wanted to go."

Mrs Campbell said she advised the trio to head the other way down the road. "They probably got mixed up with everything that was going on and because the way they went is the way we normally go when leaving the farm."

Adding to the tragedy, the fourth person killed was Mrs Campbell's neighbour, Kym "Freddy" Curnow, who left the safety of his farm to help the trio when he saw they were in danger.

The death toll could easily have been five, as Mrs Campbell's daughter almost left as well.

"When the girls were going, I asked my daughter if she wanted to go. She said, 'No, I'm staying with you.' That decision saved her life."

The bushfires were some of the worst the country has ever seen. The Fire Danger Index (FDI) classes a catastrophic fire with a minimum score of 100. Victoria's Black Saturday bushfires, which claimed the lives of 120 people, registered at 189 on the scale.

The FDI score for the Esperance fires was 260—the highest score ever recorded in Australia.

"It was dark, it was red, the embers were raining down on us," Mrs Campbell recalled. "It was so windy and noisy, like a steam train coming through."

Mrs Campbell had developed a bushfire survival plan

a decade ago but had never needed to use it. Ten years later, she credits the plan for saving her family and her home.

"I knew I had a plan," she said, "and so I managed to stay clear, calm and focused through the whole thing."

Mrs Campbell quickly deflected any sort of credit, however, acknowledging instead the efforts of her family and staff—as well as the local fire chief—who "worked so hard and went above and beyond".

Members of the Esperance community gathered together to remember the victims. Mrs Campbell said the support has been "absolutely amazing". "We've had huge amounts of best wishes and prayers. All of us who have been affected are looking out for each other."

Mrs Campbell is reaching out to Mr Curnow's wife in particular. While looking through her car following the tragedy, the Adventist farmer found a copy of a *Signs of the Times* magazine with an article entitled, "Where is God when I'm hurting?"

Mrs Campbell said she had planned to give it to Mrs Curnow some time ago but had not got around to it.

"She was going through some stuff a little while ago so I thought it might help but it kind of slipped my mind to give it to her," she said. "I've now given it to [Freddy's] sister to give to her."

Esperance church pastor Brad Thomas said Mrs Campbell's church family are "looking at ways to support her and her family any way we can".

The Campbells also lost a shearing shed and some animals in the blaze.

Other Adventists affected include farmer Rhonda Morcombe, who lost a number of shearing sheds, her garden and an old tractor, along with some crops. "Some have lost so much more," she said in a post on Facebook. "Please pray for my fellow farmers as they consider and count their losses. Thanking my God over and over for His blessings!!!"

Adventist Church leaders have echoed the calls for prayer. "Keep up the prayers, brothers and sisters, for all the folk in that beautiful region of our state and country," said Western Australian Conference president Pastor Terry Johnson.

Adventists are working with other faith communities and Hope FM in Esperance to raise money for the victims. —Linden Chuang



ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A BRIGHT little star. It sparkled. People would stop, look up at the little star and say, "Wow, what a beautiful little star. It shines so brightly." But the little star felt lonely. So one day it decided it would come down and walk on the earth.

The first person Little Star met was a farmer. He was helping a cow in labour but his lantern kept blowing out. Little Star drew near and lit up the scene. "That's better," the farmer said as he helped the anxious cow until her wobbly baby calf came out.

"Thank you Little Star! Your light is so bright," said the farmer. And then he went inside to finish dinner with his wife. Little Star was glad it could help and knew that it was useful but as it kept walking it began to feel lonely again.

Soon it came upon a homeless person. As Little Star got nearer the homeless man exclaimed, "Ah, nice and warm! It's been so cold these nights. Please stay and warm me up." So Little Star sat down.

"I'm Little Star," the little star said.

"Hmmmh I'm Peter," said the homeless man and then he rolled over and started snoring. Little Star sat there through the night while Peter slept contentedly. As the sun started to rise so did the temperature. But Peter kept snoring. Little Star was still lonely and needed to find a friend. So Little Star left Peter there and kept walking.

In the sunlight, Little Star was neither bright nor warm.

Yet stars make the most wonderful music. If you are really very quiet on a starry night you'll hear the tinkling of the stars and their beautiful music. So Little Star started to sing as it walked. It soon reached a nearby town where a small crowd gathered. Little Star stopped singing and looked around.

"Oh, please keep singing Little Star. One more song for us," a townswoman cried. So Little Star sang one more song, a favourite of the stars. The people clapped and whistled but as Little Star sang it still felt lonely. As the last song notes faded away, the crowd clapped and cheered and then off they wandered on their way. Little Star was alone again and a small tear rolled down its cheek. Now you may not know this but when stars cry, their tears are diamonds. And as Little Star walked, tiny diamonds fell to the ground. One of the townsfolk saw the diamonds and scurried to pick them up. More and more people came out and started fighting over Little Star's tears. Little Star felt guilty.

"Stop," shouted Little Star. "Out of sadness came beauty but you people are ruining it with your ugly selfishness. Just stop." And Little Star gathered up all the diamond tears and ran out of the town.

When Little Star was far enough away from the town it stopped and started crying again. It decided to hide the diamonds by burying them deep into the earth so they wouldn't cause any more trouble.

Little Star sat still for a long time. As the sun touched



# Little Star

by Jarrod Stackelroth

the earth, there came a warm voice. "What is wrong, Little Star?"

It was the most interesting voice Little Star had ever heard. It had deep notes and high notes. It sounded ancient yet young and full of life. It sounded soothing and comforting yet had a dangerous edge. Little Star looked around. It was the sun himself who had spoken.

"I'm so lonely," said Little Star. "I've been trying to be my brightest and use all the things I'm good at to make people appreciate me but they seem so caught up in what they're doing."

"Ah yes," said the sun. "I know what you mean."

"You do?" asked Little Star.

"Yes," said the sun. "These people hardly notice me either!" "But," said Little Star, "you're so big and warm and bright and nothing would grow without you."

"You're right Little Star," said the sun. "But people only notice me when I'm not there. When there is a storm or their crops won't grow, that is when they miss me. Most of the time they're too busy. But I still shine on them and provide for their needs. I still sing songs, both fierce and soft, and I still light the moon lantern for them most nights so they won't be afraid. And you my Little Star, they need you to shine and take some of the darkness out of their long nights."

"But," said Little Star. "What can I do? The night is so dark and I'm just a tiny dot." Little Star's face sank and its light dimmed.

"Look at me, Little Star" thundered the sun. Little Star looked up. "What do you see?"

Little Star looked at the sun. The sun was sitting on the edge of the earth, just about to slip over. It was hard to look at the sun because of his brightness but Little Star squinted and in the bright halo of the sun, it could make out a very distinct figure. "Why I think, at least, yes I'm sure you look just like me, or at least I look like you."

"Right you are, Little Star," laughed the sun. "You look just like me; you are a little smaller perhaps and not quite so grand but we are family!"

"Really?" asked Little Star.

"Yes, really," said the sun. "And every night I retire so you and your brethren can shine."

At this, Little Star stood a little taller. If Little Star was just like the sun, then life couldn't be so bad after all.

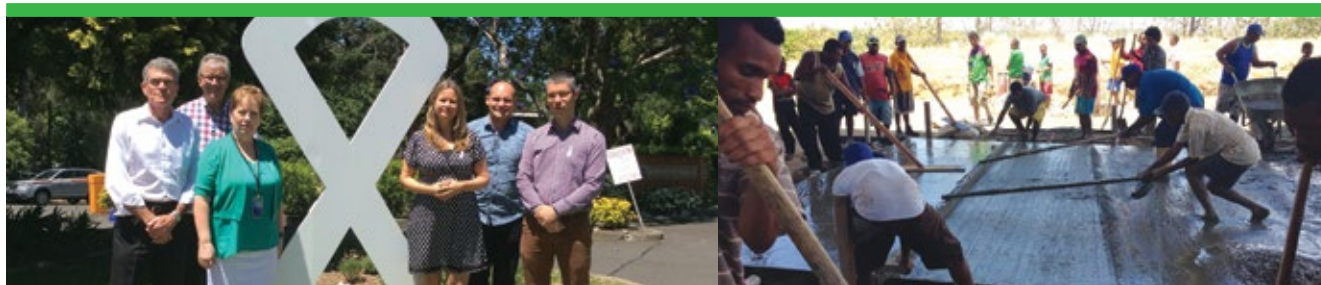
"Shine on Little Star," said the sun, slipping down below the horizon. "I'll see you again tomorrow and I expect you to keep shining."

"OK. I will," called Little Star, but the sun was gone. Little Star leapt into the air and shone with every fibre. Little Star twinkled and sang all night long. And hardly anyone noticed.

But a few people, looking up into the night sky, saw that little star and how bright it shone, and some even made a wish.



Jarrod Stackelroth is associate editor of Adventist Record.

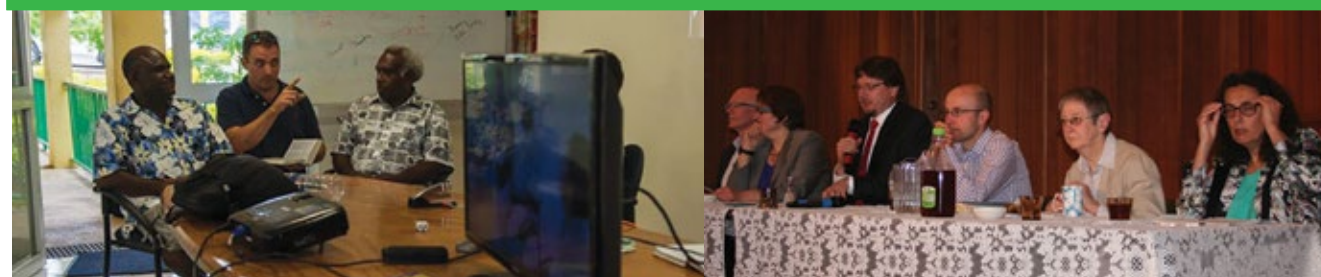


### White Ribbon Day

South Pacific Division (SPD) leaders placed a large White Ribbon logo on the front lawn of Division headquarters in Wairoa on November 25 as part of an annual campaign to end domestic violence. White Ribbon Day is Australia's only national, male-led campaign to end men's violence against women. Its tagline is "making women's safety a man's issue too". Domestic violence statistics in Australia have reached epidemic proportions, with the latest statistics showing nearly two women are killed every week by an intimate partner. White Ribbon pins were also handed out to office workers at SPD headquarters, ADRA and Adventist Media. —*Linden Chuang*

### Mission station makeover

Korela Mission Station in Papua New Guinea (PNG) was upgraded last month, with community and church members from the local district coming together for the concreting project. The station, located approximately 189km from Port Moresby, is a special place for the Adventist Church in PNG. Korela was originally surveyed by Pastor William Lock in 1927, and for many years served as a beacon of hope to other villages in the area. The improved building will help the Church to continue educating people in the district with the Word of God. —*Cameron Wari*

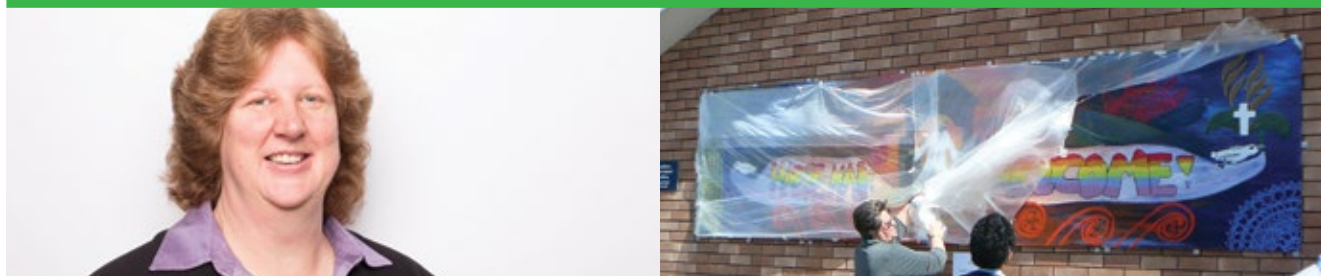


### Let the training begin

A training session was held for Vanuatu Mission's new HopeChannel team in Port Vila last month, with Pastor Wayne Boehm (HopeChannel South Pacific director) and Dr Ronald Stone (Trans Pacific Union Mission Project Hope coordinator) leading the 18-member team of local Adventists through some pre-production workshops. Pastor Boehm and Dr Stone also travelled to Honiara to conduct training with the Solomon Islands media team. The workshops served as groundwork for month-long HopeChannel training in Suva, Fiji, next year to help each mission in the TPUM produce local content for HopeChannel. —*Adventist Media: Vanuatu*

### Worth talking about

Wantirna church (Vic) hosted about 120 people for a discussion on how Australians could best support and assist asylum seekers. The meeting was organised by church member Ruth Bungay and moderated by Pastor Darren Croft, ministerial secretary for the Victorian Conference. "I feel that it's important to have these discussions in our church," Ms Bungay said. The meeting featured a variety of speakers, including barrister Matthew Albert, Adventist psychiatrist Dr Helen Driscoll and Sister Brigid Arthur from the Brigidene Asylum Seekers Project. —*Vania Chew*



### PhD reveals keys to church unity

Church unity is not about uniformity but union with Christ and not about knowing but practising truth as found in Jesus, an Avondale lecturer's doctorate shows. Dr Wendy Jackson compared the views and practice of Restoration Movement leader Alexander Campbell and Adventist Church pioneer Ellen White to make the conclusion. While both Campbell and White used different models to explain how to maintain unity, both believed unity begins in Christ and that authority should be bottom-up rather than top-down. "White is very clear about decentralising power," Dr Jackson said. —*Brenton Stacey*

### Mighty mural

Wellington Seventh-day Adventist School (NZ) recently unveiled a new mural that serves as both a welcome sign and a display of the school's mission and values. "Jesus is at the centre," said principal Elmer Breedt. "His love, His words, His way of dealing with people needs to be our way of living. If we can achieve that at our school, we will have achieved our central objective." New Zealand Pacific Union Conference Education director Rosalie McFarlane unveiled and dedicated the mural in October. Students helped to design and paint the mural, under the guidance of teacher and project leader Margaret Ogilvie. —*Record staff*



## Indulgence angst

Christmas is a special time of year—a time when friends and family come together to enjoy all we're thankful for. And more often than not, we do this over food. Food plays such a central role in how cultures socialise. We enjoy preparing it for those we care about, seeing their enjoyment at the result of our efforts. And we enjoy the sights, smells and tastes that come with it. A whiff of a certain spice can take us right back to a childhood Christmas and while our memory of events might become less reliable over time, we never forget how a special family meal is meant to taste.

But for some of us, this can be a real source of angst. Our families and friends may not share the same eating habits as us and food at celebrations has a reputation for not being the healthiest of options. At times like these it's important to take stock of why we eat and one of the reasons is enjoyment. We get into problems when we make enjoyment the primary reason for eating, but that doesn't mean we should feel guilty for getting enjoyment out of food.

It's a good time of year to remind ourselves that, when it comes to food, we get to make choices every day and the choices we make today are just that—the ones we made today. There will be a chance to make choices tomorrow as well. We shouldn't beat ourselves up for a little indulgence; we should give ourselves credit that we can recognise the small space it occupies in a healthy diet.



### Macadamia Christmas Cake

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 40 minutes Serves: 16 slices

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>125g margarine</b>           | <b>1 cup raisins</b>                                 |
| <b>½ cup brown sugar</b>        | <b>1 cup currants</b>                                |
| <b>2 tsp grated orange rind</b> | <b>½ cup macadamia nut halves</b>                    |
| <b>2 eggs</b>                   | <b>¼ cup water</b>                                   |
| <b>¾ cup wholemeal flour</b>    | <b>½ cup macadamia nut halves, extra</b>             |
| <b>½ cup plain flour</b>        | <b>3 tbsp strained, heated apricot jam, to serve</b> |
| <b>½ tsp baking soda</b>        |  |
| <b>½ tsp mixed spice</b>        |  |
| <b>1 cup sultanas</b>           |  |

1. Lightly grease and line a 20cm square cake tin. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Cream margarine, sugar and rind. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing until well combined.
3. Add sifted flours, baking soda and mixed spice, stirring to combine. Stir through fruit, nuts and water.
4. Pour mixture into cake tin and bake for 20 minutes. Arrange remaining nuts on top. Cover cake with foil and bake for a further 20 minutes or until cooked.
5. Allow cake to cool in tin before turning onto a cooling rack. Glaze with apricot jam before serving.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVE:** Kilojoules

1100kJ, Calories 265 Cal, Protein 3g, Total fat 13g, Carbohydrate 31g, Sodium 30mg, Potassium 350mg, Calcium 30mg, Iron 1.4mg, Fibre 3g

Call and arrange to speak to one of our qualified nutritionists at Sanitarium Lifestyle Medicine Services on 1800 673 392 (in Australia) or 0800 100 257 (in New Zealand). Alternatively, email us at [nutrition@sanitarium.com.au](mailto:nutrition@sanitarium.com.au) (Australia) or [nutrition@sanitarium.co.nz](mailto:nutrition@sanitarium.co.nz) (New Zealand). For more great recipes and health articles visit our website [www.sanitarium.com.au](http://www.sanitarium.com.au) or [www.sanitarium.co.nz](http://www.sanitarium.co.nz)

Sanitarium

LIFESTYLE  
MEDICINE  
SERVICES

# White Christmas\*

by James Standish



**W**HAT ARE THE TWO HAPPIEST WORDS IN THE English language? Dinner's ready? Pay day? Kiss me? Well, those are all happy enough if the context is right. But in my mind the two happiest words are "snow camp". I know this because when I was in my last year of high school I was invited to a snow camp and I can't ever remember being quite as excited.

You see, I grew up on a tropical island. And if there's one thing you don't get much of on tropical islands, it's snow. But for my last year of high school I travelled all the way to Michigan, USA. I have to admit, if I had understood a little better what Michigan was like, I probably wouldn't have made the trip. But fortunately for me, I didn't!

I say fortunately because sometimes we do things we never would have if we knew more about what we were doing in advance. But once we are doing them we find out that if we hadn't, we would have missed out on something that is totally awesome.

In the case of Michigan, I never would have gone there if I'd realised just how cold it is. Sure, people said it snows a lot in Michigan but when you've hardly spent any time in snow you really don't know what that means. I sure found out fast that year!

Snow is fun when it first falls. And it's fun when you're sledding or skiing. But when it just sits on the ground for absolutely ever, doing nothing but being freezing cold, its charm wears off pretty quickly.

Unless, of course, it's sitting on the ground at snow camp!

Now to get invited to snow camp at my high school you had to be a "campus leader". Since I'd only arrived that year I could hardly call myself a leader of anything. No problem. Someone else did. And I was in!

When we arrived at camp it wasn't initially obvious what to do. During summer they waterski on the lake. They hike in the woods. They sit around campfires under the stars and tell stories. But when it's winter? Wow. I didn't want to sit around outside! And I sure wasn't jumping in the lake.

After all, it was frozen over!

But that's when the camp counsellor said, "Why not canoe down the river?"

I have to say, I thought he was completely mad. Who goes canoeing in the middle of winter? But before I could say anything, Jenny piped up, "Yes, let's go. And James and Bert, you can come in my canoe."

Now Jenny was the most beautiful girl in the entire high school. At least that's what I thought at the time. So I would have gone pretty much anywhere with her. "James, I'm jumping into the middle of this skunk nest, do you want to come?" "Wow, Jenny, you bet, anywhere with you!"

And there was one more thing: I suspected that Bert liked Jenny too. I wasn't about to watch Jenny paddle off with Bert, leaving me looking wimpy!

But still, I did think it odd, and so I said to the counsellor, "How can you canoe during winter?" "Oh, just like any other time of year, except you wear more clothes!" he replied chuckling. "But what about the ice?" "Don't worry, the river here never ices over—not even in the coldest winters. You see, when water is running this fast, ice can't form on the top."

It all sounded a bit odd to me but he was the counsellor, so he should know, right? And besides, while I was yammering away at the counsellor, Jenny and Bert had dragged a canoe out of the shed and were sliding it along the snow towards the banks of the river. Jenny looked back at me over her shoulder, laughed and said, "Hey James, how about a little bit of help here, big guy?"

I ran over, grabbed the side of the canoe and began to help push.

Of course, you have to be careful getting into a canoe from a snowy riverbank. Bert graciously said, "James, you get in up front." So I did. He pushed the front of the canoe into the water, then Jenny jumped in the middle. Finally, Bert got in the back and used his paddle to push the canoe off the bank and into the river.

Although it was cold, the sun was shining brightly. And I have to say, at that moment I thought there was nothing

better in all the world than canoeing in winter. Why would anyone canoe at any other time? The pure white snow almost glowed in the sunshine. The beautiful trees had icicles on them where the snow had melted and refrozen. In the sunshine they looked like forests of the most beautiful Christmas trees. And once we were around the river bend from our launching site, we were completely alone. Just three kids, surrounded by the most serene scenery you could ever imagine. We paddled smoothly and slowly. The water made a lovely lapping sound. And the canoe just glided along with the current.

We must have gone a couple of kilometres before the river took a sharp snaking turn to the left. No problem. We paddled on. Everything was going just to plan, until . . .

Until we came to the part of the river that was deeply shaded on both sides by high trees that hung over the bend. We came around the bend about the time the sun was beginning to fade in the short winter afternoon. I blinked as I looked ahead. Was it possible? No. Maybe it was just a reflection? I peered intently ahead. And then the words just tumbled out of my lips: "Ice ahead."

Jenny looked up. And Bert strained to see past her. "What? I don't believe it! The counsellor said this river never freezes," cried Jenny. Bert, who knew a lot about the outdoors, remained silent for a minute. And then, in a very low voice, said slowly, "We're in trouble."

"Let's paddle back," I said optimistically.

"We can't," replied Bert "The current's too strong for us to fight and the light is fading. We'd never get back before the temperature drops to the point where we couldn't survive out here."

"What if we hike back?" I suggested. "The forest is thick and we have no idea where the tracks are. The only way we could navigate is via the sun and look . . ." Bert pointed to the sun slowly fading.

I'm not given to panicking but just then the bow of our canoe collided with the ice shelf and the screech of the hollow metal against the shattering ice sent a very literal chill down my spine.

The current pulled the canoe side on against the ice shelf and for a second I wondered if it would flip us over. Just at that moment Jenny said something that seemed insane. "OK, we've got no choice, guys. Let's jump out and drag the canoe over the ice."

"No way," I said emphatically. "Everyone knows you don't walk on river ice in winter!"

Bert agreed: "Jenny, we've got to think of a better idea. Let's try to smash the ice with our paddles."

All three of us began whacking the ice and, as we did, our canoe began lurching dangerously from side to side. Despite our best efforts, we couldn't crack the ice.

"See, I told you," said Jenny, "we've got to chance it on the ice. James, you're at the front, you get out and pull us."

I looked back at Jenny. She was smiling and my heart melted just a little. I thought to myself, "If I'm going to freeze to death, I may as well freeze to death happy."

I prayed as hard as I could and then I slowly pulled myself out onto the ice. First one foot. Then the next. And then I began pulling the canoe up. Soon Jenny and Bert were out and the three of us slid the canoe across the ice like a gigantic ice ski.

It's strange how quickly something so totally odd becomes entirely normal. The ice creaked under us. But, so far, none of it cracked open. The river not only froze—it froze thick! So much for the camp counsellor's counsel . . .

The problem with pushing canoes across ice is that progress is slow. And bit by bit the light was fading. "Study the ice in front of us," instructed Bert, "and be alert—it may break up and we want to be back in the canoe before that happens!"

We lugged that old canoe for what seemed like forever. Night fell as we were still sliding it. I wanted to give up. But what choice did I have? And by this time I was getting cold. Really cold. The kind of cold I don't think I'd ever felt in my entire life.

We came around another bend in the river and, in the blue darkness, I could just make out some broken ice up ahead. "Look, the ice, it's breaking up," I called.

Jenny looked carefully for a minute: "Let's keep as close to the canoe as we can and get ready to jump in if the ice cracks on us."

I did my best to follow her instructions. Suddenly, the ice beneath me cracked with an awful sound. "Get back in the canoe, big guy," she yelled. I didn't need to be told twice. I leapt in, and with it, the ice under the bow gave way. Jenny was quick to follow. But Bert kept pushing us from the back. "Get in Bert," Jenny called. "If I do, we won't get off the ice. I'll push just a little bit more." "Get in!" Jenny commanded, but Bert wasn't listening. The ice was cracking all around us. "Bert!!!"

And just at that moment, Bert leapt in. The canoe listed side to side for a minute, and then he dug his paddle deep into the water and we were on our way.

Canoeing down the river in the darkness was, if anything, more beautiful than in the light. The stars above us sparkled in the inky black sky, the river seemed to flow even more gently and the woods were beautifully still with just the occasional tinkling sound when a breeze moved the icicles.

It was well after dark when we arrived at the point where the counsellor was waiting. We would have paddled right by but he'd pulled his 4x4 up a little track and kept the light on, peering out into the blackness.

"Where on earth have you guys been?" the counsellor demanded. "You've broken the world record for the slowest  
(continued on page 17)

**. . . the screech  
of the hollow  
metal against the  
shattering ice sent  
a very literal chill  
down my spine.**

# Helping the blind and deaf

by Lee Dunstan

**I**MAGINE SHUFFLING DOWN A DARK PATHWAY, A canopy of trees blocking out the moonlight. A handrail to your left prevents you from falling into the adjacent abyss, and you continue to shuffle along in pitch blackness.

In those few minutes I experienced blindness. I felt insecure, anxious and then, in an instant, agonising pain. The bush path, which had previously trailed downward to a glow-worm cave—my destination—unexpectedly took a few steps upward. I tripped and fell flat on my face. “Ouch,” I yelled, as I tried to fingerprint-activate my iPhone torch with my index finger. It wouldn’t work: my finger was missing! When I eventually found it, it was sitting across my middle finger, pretty much at right angles, completely dislocated.

There are at least half-a-dozen lessons to be learned from my painful experience but I’ll draw attention to only one: it is really hard being blind, living in constant darkness day and night, and when you are, sometimes you need help.

I’m not a naturally empathetic person but a month later, as I daily massage my finger back into action, I am reminded to be mindful of those with a disability.

As caretaker of the Church’s designated agency for the blind and deaf, Christian Services for the Blind and Hearing Impaired (CSFBHI), it’s my job to be so. But there are much better reasons: When Christ came to this world, our salvation might have been His primary goal but He also came with a very specific mission of restoration:

“Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped” (Isaiah 35:5, NIV).

It’s my great privilege to share in this mission.

The role of CSFBHI is not to be another social welfare provider. Rather, it’s a provider of specific services that will enhance the spiritual life of those with disabilities. Historically it has focused primarily on the blind, providing a mail-order audio library of some 1000 mostly denominational books. These were provided as cassette tapes until recently when the tapes were digitised and transferred to the Vision Australia Library, which cares for their distribution via its on-demand library of some 25,000 titles.

In addition to the library, CSFBHI provides a monthly audio “magazine” on CD, which consists of extracted articles from *Signs of the Times* and *Adventist Record*, as well as news, episodes of *It Is Written* and the month’s lessons from the Sabbath School quarterly. Membership eligibility isn’t confined to the legally blind. For example, a person who is unable to read, perhaps having suffered a stroke and can no longer hold a book, is eligible. In 2014, we funded sight-restoring operations for young people via the “Eyes for India” project.

Beginning next year, we’ll be providing greater accessibility for the blind and deaf to a range of the Church’s media products. This means more of our Adventist Media print content will be available in audio format (for the blind) and video will be closed-captioned (for the deaf).

The deaf are a “people group” who Christianity—let alone Adventism—has failed to reach. In fact, less than 1 per cent of the world’s 300 million deaf attend any Christian church. And thinking about your church, why would they? There’s simply no point; we don’t cater for them—this can be seen in the lack of signing translators.

However, CSFBHI is doing something about this on your behalf. We began earlier this year with significant sponsorship for subtitling the feature episodes of the *Beyond* video series. And in October, CSFBHI funded professional signing translators for the Church’s first deaf camp, an initiative of the Logan Reserve church (Qld), which has an active ministry to the Deaf. The camp featured Dr Larry Evans, special assistant to the General Conference president, who is tasked with establishing and nurturing special needs ministries in all divisions—building awareness, acceptance and action—and advising congregations as to how better to create more accessible and accepting worship environments and resources for this most neglected group. This ministry focuses on not only the deaf and blind but anyone with special needs: intellectual and physical, individuals or families, as well as orphans. (View Dr Evans’ *Record InFocus* interview at <[vimeo.com/145458193](http://vimeo.com/145458193)>.)

As such, and I’m being blunt, an equitable, representative service will take a lot more money than CSFBHI has right now. It will take huge generosity on your part. An





## Christmas cheer for human fear

Reflecting on Herod's murder of his own family members, Caesar Augustus commented that it was better to be Herod's pig than his son, because as a Jew Herod would not eat a pig! Such a statement supports the biblical claim of Herod's cruelty in the Christmas story of the wise men and the slaughter of the innocents.

**Read** Matthew 2:12-18.

But evidence for the historical reliability of the Christmas story also supports the central claim of that story: that Jesus is Jehovah, the Lord, God Almighty. Firstly, the wise men worshipped the baby Jesus, yet according to Scripture we should only worship the Lord our God. Secondly, the wise men not only worshipped Jesus but worshipped Him as King of the Jews, a title of Jehovah, the Lord God.

**Read** Matthew 2:2,11; Exodus 34:14; Isaiah 43:15:44:6.

In the Bible the Lord—Jehovah—is our righteousness, strength, and salvation; an ever present Shepherd who guides, provides and restores; and is gracious, merciful, forgiving and just. Little wonder David confidently exclaimed, "When I am afraid, I will trust in you." Since the story of the wise men reveals Jesus is this same Jehovah, it thereby lays down the basis for absolute confidence in times of despair.

**Read** Jeremiah 23:6; Isaiah 33:2; Psalms 18:2; 145:8; Exodus 34:6,7; 56:3.

Are you paralysed with fear? Afraid of the unknown? Filled with doubts as to God's acceptance of you. Then banish your fears by calling on Jesus, your all powerful Friend and Helper—Jehovah God Almighty.



Herodium from above.

Auslan signing translator, for example, costs \$A110 an hour on weekends in NSW (minimum two hours).

CSFBHI is funded by a bi-annual offering—the next is on January 9—so please prepare for that. It is also the recipient of tax-deductible donations and legacies from thankful members and their families, which is something that you might likewise consider.

Finally, if you or someone you know could use the services of CSFBHI, contact us and we'll do whatever we can to help (see the advertisement on page 6 for details). Or if you wish to contribute to its ministry, we have constructive, computer-based volunteer opportunities recording books for the blind and subtitling videos for the deaf. Over to you! ➤

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*Lee Dunstan is manager of Christian Services for the Blind and Hearing Impaired, which is located at the Adventist Media Centre, Wahroonga, NSW. For details on CSFBHI services go to <<http://www.adventist.org.au/csfbhi-vision-impaired-services>>.*

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## White Christmas

(from page 15)

canoists on earth!" His face was red and he was angry.

"No, we haven't," said Jenny in her deadpan way.

"Well, you're certainly the slowest canoists this camp has ever seen," the counsellor said with a mix of relief and reproof.

"No, we're not," said Jenny with a wry smile.

"Well, no-one has ever taken longer than you!"

"That may just be true but that's because we only canoed half the river."

"Half? Well then you should have made it in half the time!"

"Except that we canoe-skied the other half. And we are the fastest canoe skiers this camp has ever seen!"

"What, I've never heard of such a thing!"

Bert began laughing and explained the entire saga. The counsellor's mouth gaped open. "You kids were dragging a canoe over virgin ice? Are you crazy? What if one of you had fallen in? You would have died in a matter of minutes!"

"We didn't have much choice," Jenny explained.

The counsellor just shook his head. "That's the wildest story I have ever heard. But this river never ices over. Never!"

"Not quite never," I said. "We'd be happy to take you back and show you where it certainly has iced over this year. But . . .", and at this point we were all shivering—half out of relief and half due to the bone-chilling cold of the winter night—"but, we're a little cold."

"Yes, yes, of course, into the truck, let's get you back to the cabin."

That night, sitting in the cabin with Jenny on one side and Bert on the other, I was awfully thankful. Thankful for the crackling open fire with its rich pine smoke wafting up and out of the chimney. Thankful for Bert's strong muscles. Thankful for Jenny's clever leadership. Thankful for our great friendship. And thankful that somewhere, way up there beyond the stars, there's a God who looked down on us three kids and somehow kept the ice from shattering underneath us.

When Christmas rolls around I often think back to that snow camp adventure. And I wonder what would have happened had that ice cracked beneath us. This Christmas I'm thankful God preserved me all those years ago. And I'm thankful we'll be having a white family Christmas this year—on the beautifully warm, white sandy beach with white billowing foam on the waves all around. That's the kind of white Christmas I'm dreaming of! ➤

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*James Standish is editor of Adventist Record.*

*\* This is a true story, but the some of the details lost in time have, by necessity, been recreated to provide a feel for the events.*

LETTERS

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Sue Radd, NSW

Three cheers for "Is wine fine?" (Feature, November 21) for putting some historical context around the use of "wine" in biblical times.

As a current researcher on the effect of the traditional Mediterranean diet on cognitive function and brain morphology, I can attest to the importance of more clearly understanding definitions and the traditional use of various foods and drinks before translating recommendations into modern practice.

I suspect fewer Adventists might use the Bible as justification to drink wine if they really understood what "wine" usually comprised of in ancient times—non-alcoholic vinegar, boiled down wine or highly diluted wine!

**MORE POTENT?**

Sandy Schofield, NSW

Re: "Is wine fine?" Yeast has been selected over time that produces a higher percentage of alcohol. Some yeast today can produce alcohol content in excess of 16 per cent, which was not the case just a couple of decades ago.

**REBUILD VANUATU**

Andrew Jurello, Qld

Thanks for the news on Vanuatu: "First service held in rebuilt Vanuatu church" (News, November 7). Recently I was blessed to use four weeks of my time building the first four churches in the Vanuatu rebuild project.

I went as a skilled labourer not knowing exactly what to expect. My experience was amazing. The people have [very little] but they are so happy to give of what they

have and were so sincerely grateful that I would take time to come and help.

Their gratitude and simple faith have inspired me personally to become a better man. Their joy in their simplicity is humbling. I now realise the true value of what we here in Australia have to give. What they need most are individuals skilled in construction with a willing heart and willing to teach, to give of their time.

Many people can donate money, and what a blessing that is, but fewer still can give the gift of the skills it requires to assemble all these churches. The communities are willing to help; many have valuable skills and only need direction.

You may think you've got too much on, or you have a family to care for. I did too, but God is good and He provides and will bless those who make the sacrifice. I know, because He did it for me and my family.

**UNIQUELY NAMED**

A E Hobbs, via website

Our very name, Seventh-day Adventist, shows that we do not conform to the worlds beliefs. The name points to a supernatural beginning and a supernatural end—creation in seven literal days and the second coming of Jesus. The three angels' messages have the same beginning and end point. Ellen White was correct when she wrote: "No name which we can take will be appropriate but that which accords with our profession and expresses our faith and marks us a peculiar (unique, non-conforming) people." (1T, 223/4) There is no other church in the world that claims that their mission is to reach the world with the three angel's message. If we downplay

or neglect our mission, or if we cease to use our name in full, are we conforming to the mainstream? It would appear that way.

**CONFORMED**

Micah, via website

Thanks James! I've appreciated your editorials where you haven't swum in formation with the ecclesiastical fishes and currents of mainstream Adventism. It is refreshing. Yes, I enjoy, like you, connecting with nature—one of those is having certain kinds of fish cooked and becoming part of me through a sumptuous meal! Just like Jesus. The encouragement not to fit in the crowd and to be different where it counts is appreciated.

One point I would add is that for my formative and church work years I was ingrained in fitting in and conforming. Not with the "outsiders" and "the world"—which was roundly condemned and exhorted against—but with the dominant church culture, traditions, prejudices, mind-sets and status quo. It has left a lot of damage. Loyalty and obedience has taken a heavy toll. Increasingly I have seen that in a number of ways Jesus wouldn't fit in well with mainstream Adventism and the corporate and conformist ecclesiology of our day. No more conforming for me!

**KEEP IT UP**

Shelley, via website

Re: "Saving Bathsheba" (Editorial, November 21). I genuinely appreciate your boldness and frankness in discussing issues the Church too easily sweeps under the rug. You are doing a very good thing here. Please don't stop!

Your voice is a blessing.

*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 Page 4 for contact details.*



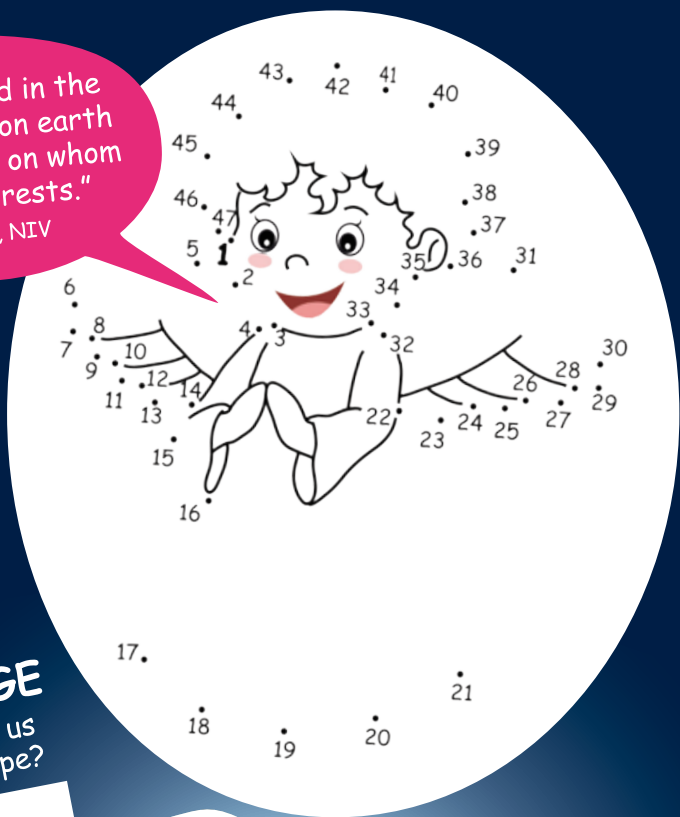
# Kids' Space

Shepherds are on a hillside taking care of their sheep. An angel suddenly appears and tells them that the Promised One of Israel has been born. They will find Him lying in a manger. Then the sky is filled with angels who sing glory to God in the highest.

## DOT-TO-DOT

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests."

Luke 2:14, NIV



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# The with-ness of God; the them-ness of “us”

by Nathan Brown

**W**E ARE CALLED TO PRAISE GOD FOR SO MANY of His attributes—His love, power, holiness, justice, goodness, transcendence—but among this list we should not forget the with-ness of God. Of course, in a sense, His with-ness is an expression of His love and goodness but it demonstrates other characteristics of God, particularly His humility and immanence.

But this isn't just a nice idea or a pleasant Christmas sentiment. In the society and political culture in which we live, it is remarkable—and it should be jarring—to realise the degree to which Jesus identified with so much of human experience, particularly with those on the margins of our societies.

From asylum seeker (see Matthew 2:13–15) to atheist (see Matthew 27:46), from homeless guy and target of religious intolerance to member of an oppressed people group and victim of torture and monstrous injustice, the story of Jesus finds echoes in the worst and most challenging of both history and headlines. As “God with us” Jesus identified with us in so many ways—many of them surprising and unexpected.

Jesus' favourite description of Himself was the somewhat curious expression “Son of Man”. It's used about 80 times through the four gospels but only ever by Jesus—and only ever about Himself. Of course, there is a reference here to the expression used in the book of Daniel (see Daniel 7:13) but I think He was trying to make a point: Jesus so identifies with us—and not only with us but also with “those” other people—that His story has so many echoes with the experiences of oppressed and marginalised people. The miracle of His incarnation catalyses all our relationships and our call to love others, even—perhaps especially—amid the headlines, politics and injustices of our time and place.

“God with us” is a wonderful and comforting truth but the risk comes with how we define—and limit—that “us”. Our temptation is that “us” is about the people like us or even only the people we like. But it must also include those we

don't like, who make us uncomfortable or even afraid. To a degree—perhaps as an interim step—it might be useful to re-frame this beautiful truth as “God with them”. For those of us who need reminding, this offers us glimpses of what it can mean to be marginalised and allows us to admire the with-ness of God from a fresh perspective.

From this vantage point, caring for and serving the world and those around us is one way to experience the reality of “God with us” (see Matthew 25:31–46). Musician and activist Bono put it like this: “God is in the slums, in the cardboard boxes where the poor play house. God is in the silence of a mother who has infected her child with a virus that will end both their lives. God is in the cries heard under the rubble of war. God is in the debris of wasted opportunities and lives, and God is with us if we are with them.”\*

Somehow in working with and for those most in need, many people have found themselves working with God—always remembering that He was there first.

Then we can recall that God is also always and still with us, and our understanding of “us” suddenly expands in dramatic

and transformative ways. This really changes the world and how we look at it and respond to it. The political issues, headline tragedies and humanitarian causes in our world are about people—whom God is with. Because of Jesus and our following of this “Son of Man”, these God-witned people demand our compassionate response.

We cannot praise God for His with-ness without being drawn into with-ness with other people. Perhaps this is another way of phrasing Jesus' summary of the twinned commands to “love God” and “love our neighbours as ourselves” (see Matthew 22:36–40). As those who recognise and celebrate the with-ness of God, we are people whose world is transformed and who change the world for and with others.

\*Bono, *On the Move*, W Publishing, 2006, page 18.

Nathan Brown is book editor for *Adventist Media*.

**Somehow in working with and for those most in need, many people have found themselves working with God . . .**

## ANNIVERSARY



**Coveney.** Richard and Jean met during World War II. Richard was in Auckland on the warship *HMS Gambia*, which had been loaned to the NZ Navy to assist with the war activities in the Pacific. The couple was eventually married after the war on 12.11.1945 at St Matthew's church in Auckland. Richard and Jean moved to England but returned to Auckland in 1953. They celebrated their 70th anniversary at Beachlands with family and friends. Congratulations and God's blessings for the coming years.

## WEDDINGS



**Amos—Campbell.** Brett Amos, son of Roger and Barbara Amos (Perth, WA), and Heather Campbell, daughter of Patrick and Edith McCourt (Perth), were married 27.9.15 at Harold Boas Gardens, West Perth.

*Andrew Skeggs*



**Harrison—Eigi.** Matthew Joel Harrison, son of Joy Alexander (Chermside, Qld), and Rhianna Marie Eigi, daughter of Paul Eigi (Darwin, NT) and Linda Brown (Burrpengary, Qld), were married 7.11.15 at Newstead Park on the banks of the Brisbane River.

*Mike Brownhill*



**Nzuki—Manners.** Nzech Nzuki, son of Michael and Susan Nzuki (Nairobi, Kenya), and Kristy Manners, daughter of Don and Robyn Manners (Perth, WA) and Barry Watts (Melbourne, Vic), were married 31.5.15 at Beyond Resort, Krabi, Thailand.

*Andrew Skeggs*



**Overell—Peake.** Troy James Overell, son of Kerry Ann and Mark Overell (Mandurah, WA), and Karl Leanne Peake, daughter of Leanne and Darren Peake (Mandurah), were married 27.9.15 at Yindana Lake, Lakelands.

*Robert Stankovic*

**Smith—Lane.** Norman Smith, son of Norman Smith and Nellie Ballinger, and Adelle Lane, daughter of Hilary Lane and Valerie Turnbull, were married 1.11.15 at Ian Smith's home in Horsham, Vic. Norman and Adelle have shared a close friendship for more than 43 years, and were excited to confirm their love and commitment to each other, witnessed by their close friends Ian Smith and Gregory Pitman. They are living in Portland by the beautiful coast and look forward to continuing to let God guide them through the wonderful adventures of life.

*Luis Bermudez*

## OBITUARIES

**Brooks,** Diane Betty (nee Stewart), born 26.9.1930 in Sydney, NSW; died 16.9.15 in the Adventist Retirement Village hostel, Victoria Point, Qld. On 18.12.1956 she married Cecil Brooks, who predeceased her on 11.8.1997. She is survived by Diane and Peter Browning, Cameron and Michelle, Leisa and Michael Smith; grandchildren Kirby, April, Gabriel and Annaleis; and great-granddaughter Elsie Rose. In her younger years Diane always opened her home hospitably each Sabbath to visitors and members alike. She spent the last 18 years in the retirement village where she cared for many of the residents until she herself went into the hostel. Diane's faith was strong.

*Neil Peatey, Barrie Medland*

**Cleverly,** Maxwell Mervyn, born 14.7.1929 in Shepparton, Vic; died 16.9.15 in Cambridge, NZ. He was the much-loved son of the late Lilian and Roy. Max married Mavis, who predeceased him. He was also predeceased by his second wife Heather. He was the loved brother of Una Waddington (deceased), Stanley (deceased) and Janene Tomlinson (Cooranbong, NSW); and much-loved uncle, stepfather and half-brother of Norma Tuatara and Bryan (both of NZ). Max was both an accountant and company secretary who served as treasurer of both the Hamilton and Eastside churches for several years. He loved the Lord and readily shared his faith with others. He was a humble man who was quick to support many charities.

*Ian Sutton, Denis Crow*



**Harding,** Mary (nee Shewring), born 22.2.1918 in Boulder, WA; died 28.5.15 in Rossmoyne. On 13.2.1942 she married John Harding. On 25.10.1952 she was baptised by S M Uttley. She was predeceased by her husband in 1973 and her sons John in 2014 and Josiah in 1999. She is survived by her children Fred (Christchurch, NZ) and Keith (Perth, WA); and 12 grandchildren. Mary was a busy housewife and mother. She was a member of the Fremantle church for many decades and active in welfare work. She will be remembered for her cheeky comments, penetrating Bible questions, wry smile and for the sparkle in her eyes.

*Fred Harding, Andrew Skeggs*

**Fiegert,** William Robert, born 19.11.1931 in Mt Pleasant, SA; died 17.4.15 in Carisbrook, Vic. He was predeceased by his wife Betty in 2013. He is survived by his siblings Clem, Nita Clark, Fred, Don and their families. Bill was baptised in 1952 by Pastor J W Kent. He was a caring, patient and generous man who will be sadly missed.

*Mike Collum*



**Ivers,** Trevor Owen, born 15.5.1941 in South Perth, WA; died 29.9.15 in Armadale. He is survived by his brothers Colin (Perth), Dennis (Thailand) and Stephen (Perth, WA). Trevor was a cheerful and active church member in the churches of Woollahra, NSW, and Carmel, WA. He also blessed his community through volunteer work. He was an ardent reader

and a keen Bible student.  
*Andrew Skeggs, Stephen Ivers*

**Hansen,** Wallace Norval, born 22.8.1925 in Digby, Vic; died 30.10.15 in Nunawading. On 21.5.1951 he married Eileen. He is survived by his wife (Nunawading); Ashley and his wife Wendy (Melbourne), and Marcia and her husband Vernon (Melbourne); four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Wal lived a life of complete honesty and integrity with a deep love for God and family.

*Brian Lawty*

**Johnston,** Mervan Stewart, born 6.4.1926 in Ashburton, NZ; died 5.10.15 in Ashburton. On 27.10.1947 he married Hazel Margurite Ward, who predeceased him in 1995. On 24.4.00 he married Betty Sills. Mervan is survived by Betty (Ashburton); his brother Allan (Whanganui); four children and their partners: Maicel and Peter Howard (Tweed Heads, NSW), Helen and Wayne Steel (Wellington, NZ), Murray and Sandra (Christchurch), and Paul and Anna (Ashburton); 10 grandchildren; and 20 great-grandchildren. Mervan was a stalwart of the Ashburton church and served in many ministry roles but most significantly as head elder. Mervan's life was totally devoted to his family, church and a great desire to travel.

*Peter Howard*

**Kotz Brethouwer,** Ethel, born 5.5.1914 in Canada; died 20.7.15 in Cooranbong, NSW. Ethel was well and walking up until four days before she died. She is survived by her three children Arlagene, Darlene and Siegfried; six grand-

## POSITION VACANT

### Chief executive officer—ADRA New Zealand (Auckland, NZ).

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children; and five great-grandchildren. Ethel studied nursing at Glendale Sanitarium and Hospital before marrying Sigi Kotz. With two small children and one on the way, she accompanied her husband to Africa in 1947. She loved her life as a missionary's wife. She was a good homemaker, keen gardener, happy adventurer and hospitable woman. After the death of Sigi in Australia, Ethel married Dr Norman Brethouwer of Montrose, Colorado. They went to Angola, Africa, for a year followed by a year of relief work in Guam. Ethel loved her church and was a generous contributor to many church causes.

*Darlene Douglass*

**Lloyd, Dorothy "Joy"** (nee Toepfer), born 14.7.24 in Wye, NSW; died 12.10.15 in Coorabong. She was predeceased by her husband Les in 2010. Joy is survived by her children Mark and Tine Lloyd (Port Macquarie), and Jenni Lloyd-Ward and David Ward (Glen Innes); four grandchildren: Ramon, Jess, Tomas, Jaimes and partners; and a great-grandchild. Joy lived in Warburton for 44 years and was employed by Signs Publishing Company until her retirement. She was gifted with many practical skills, was an avid reader and devoted much of her time to helping those less fortunate. Joy was strong of faith, committed to her church and known for putting others before herself.

*Roger Nixon, Trevor Lloyd*



**Martin, Noel Desmond**, born 21.9.1927 in Wellington, NZ; died 18.9.15 in Whangarei. He is survived by his three nieces Jennifer, Karen and Lynette and their families. Noel was deeply committed to his God, family and Porirua church. He loved the outdoors and spent many years teaching and sharing the wonders of God's creation to generations of young people as a Pathfinder

director. Having kept the faith with love and loyalty, he awaits the call of the great Creator.

*Jake Ormsby*

**Schofield, Samuel Arthur**, born 30.7.1914 in "Wandsworth", Parramatta, NSW; died 5.10.15 in the Adventist Retirement Village, Kings Langley. On 25.8.1940 he married Val Hick. He is survived by his wife (Richmond); two children Denis and Daryl; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren. Arthur was a foundation member of the Windsor church when it opened in 1956. His passion throughout his life was his relationship with Jesus and his dedication to his church and family.

*Chris Manthey*



**Skeggs, Raymond Henry**, born 4.3.1931 in Broken Hill, NSW; died 5.7.15 in Canberra, ACT. On 29.1.1952 he married Celia Austic. On 15.4.1967 he married Janice Ayliffe. In 1948 he was baptised in Broken Hill, NSW, and then re-baptised in 1982 in Canberra, ACT. He was predeceased by his son Rohan in 2012. He is survived by his wife (Canberra); his children Andrew and Donica Skeggs (Perth, WA), Christine Skeggs (Armidale, NSW), Pauline Skeggs (Lord Howe Island) and Adrian Skeggs (Sydney); and grandchildren Liam and Ethan (Perth). Ray was chief electrician during the construction of a number of Canberra landmarks, including Woden Valley Hospital, Belconnen Mall and the Telstra Tower. He enjoyed helping build and refurbish churches in Goulburn (NSW), Fremantle (WA), PNG and American Samoa. Ray was a cheerful and energetic person who liked to help and encourage others. He had a deep appreciation of God's grace and a firm hope in the resurrection.

*Andrew Skeggs, James Toogood*



**Staples, Claris Winifred** (nee Gooding), born in Tahiti; died in Adventist Residential Care, Rossmoyne, WA. She married Reginald John Staples, who predeceased her. She is survived by her children and their spouses: Maureen and Ivan Curnuck (Bundaberg, Qld), Ian and Ronda (Harvey, WA), Faye and Peter Videan (Perth), and Dianne and Graham Storey (Perth); her brother Lawrence Gooding (Bunbury); 17 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren. Claris was born in Tahiti to missionary parents who themselves were the children of the first Adventists in the south-west of WA. A hard working, talented and gracious lady, Claris had a strong, resilient faith in Christ in spite of difficulties and hardships.

*Roger Millist*

**Tkalec, Zorka** (nee Blazic), born 14.10.1921 in Sveta Jelena, Yugoslavia; died 9.8.15 in Apollo Bay, Vic. She married Franjo Tkalec, who predeceased her. She is survived by Miroslav (Frank) Tkalec (Apollo Bay) and Tihomir (Ronnie) Tkalec (Los Angeles, USA). Zorka emigrated to Australia in 1958, settling in Melbourne where she and Franjo were founding members of Seddon church. They moved to Brisbane, Qld, in 1970 where they helped in the building of Garden City church. Her life revolved around her family, the church and church music. After Franjo's death she lived with her son Frank and his family for 11 years.

*David Erickson*



**Warren, Kean Dunson**, born 7.9.1938 on Pitcairn Island; died 22.10.15 in Wellington, NZ. On 22.7.1963 he married Daphne Christian in Wellington. He is survived by his wife; his

children Maureen, Paul, Richard and Leanne; nine grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. For 40 years Kean and Daphne lived in Wellington, returning to Pitcairn nine years ago, where he enjoyed carving, carpentry, fishing, gardening and church eldership. We look forward to sharing a cuppa with Kean in the "sweet by and by".

*Jake Ormsby*

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## Finally . . .

Nobody can go back and start a new beginning but anyone can start today and make a new ending.  
—Maria Robinson


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*doing*  
FOR THOSE I  
*love*

who *don't* attend  
church anymore?

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