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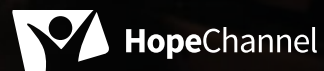


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Melburnians march for Jesus at Easter

Melbourne, Victoria

The Orchard Melbourne Central City church hosted a multid denominational rally and walk through Melbourne's CBD on March 20 to remind Melburnians that the reason for Easter is what Jesus did on the cross.

The march began at Federation Square, finishing opposite the State Library where Pastor Rod Anderson delivered a short Easter message. During the march, participants sang hymns and spiritual songs and held banners proclaiming Jesus is still alive in the hearts of Melbourne Christians.

"Our singing and banner was to draw attention to us, so people would read the placards from John 3:16 and Romans 1:16," Pastor Anderson said. "Many people stopped and took photos of us; others smiled and gave us the

thumbs up. We handed out 120 [copies of] *Steps to Christ* with the Orchard's contact details inside." The group did a walk last Christmas and are planning another one on

December 18. "We find the CBD an incredible challenge to grow a church, however this is just one way in which we are letting our light shine." —Rod Anderson/Record staff



Participants proclaimed Jesus with a banner.

Administrators graduate together

Madang, Papua New Guinea

The Papua New Guinea Union Mission's policy of equipping and training administrators bore fruit for Madang Manus Mission (MM) as two of its leaders graduated together.

Pastor Gamu Digara, the MM Personal Ministry, Sabbath School and Stewardship director, graduated with a diploma in human resources while MM president Pastor Garry Laukei

graduated with a bachelor's degree in management.

The two joined 936 others who graduated from the Divine Word University in Madang on March 13.

"A very big thank you to the Papua New Guinea Union Mission Advanced Study Committee who have supported me in financing my tuition fees to do my bachelor's degree since 2014," Pastor Laukei said. "The PNGUM has invested in human resources and I believe this is the way forward as we prepare leaders for tomorrow's leadership. I am also pleased to see one of my directors graduating with the diploma in human resources." —Garry Laukei/Record staff



L-R, Anton Wampia with pastors Garry Laukei and Gamu Digara.

Avondale study: Adventist teachers avoiding advancement

Cooranbong, New South Wales

Fewer teachers are willing to accept or even apply for leadership positions in Seventh-day Adventist schools, new research by Avondale Business School shows.

The "Future Leadership of Schools in Australia: Employee Perceptions of Taking on the Challenge" study explores the views of more than 400 individuals employed by Adventist Schools Australia. Responses to the study, conducted by Peter Williams and Dr Peter Morey, reveal that 64.5 per cent of Adventist Schools Australia employees have never applied for a leadership position and cannot see themselves applying in the future. Only one in four teachers would consider applying for a leadership position. Only 1.8 per cent are seeking a leadership position.

The most strongly identified factors influencing employees in their decisions not to apply for leadership positions: the perceived negative impact on personal and family life, and, female teachers highlighted, the gender bias of current leadership. This factor was largely dismissed by male teachers who were twice as likely (31.9 per cent) as their female colleagues (14.9 per cent) to apply for leader-

ship positions. The results are consistent with those of similar studies within Australia and other industrialised nations. However, in contrast, this study showed Adventist Schools Australia employees become less likely to apply for leadership positions with age.

The majority of respondents indicated that internal rewards—creating positive change for students and staff—were the most influential incentives to apply for leadership positions.

"We're encouraged that many seeking leadership are not doing so for personal gain but rather to use their God-given talents to serve," said Dr Daryl Murdoch, national director for Adventist Schools Australia.

Adventist Schools Australia conducts an Aspiring Leaders Program for teachers with three to eight years of experience. —Sara Bolst





Knowledge

James Standish

Richard Dawkins calls the story of Abraham's attempt to sacrifice Isaac "disgraceful". He has a point. The God of the Bible repeatedly calls human sacrifice "detestable".¹ And yet here is the "father of the faith" attempting to sacrifice his son—and at the behest of that same God!

And this story is just one of thousands of examples of incoherence in the Bible. At least that's what I'm hearing from some of my friends. Kenny, a long-time close friend, puts it this way: "I don't care about the Bible . . . anybody can make anything out of that confusing, self-contradictory text. It's a big nothing." Is the story of Abraham and Isaac the perfect example of what Dawkins, Kenny and millions of others sharing their views, are talking about?

No. Rather it's a perfect example of oversimplification resulting in misreading the Bible, leading to shallow conclusions that then feed strident pronouncements—generally transferred to a meme at the first opportunity and shared enthusiastically by those whose understanding is even more trite than the meme's creator.

Yes, in isolation, the story of Abraham and Isaac is a perplexing paradox. But in context, it's a most astonishing confirmation of the Bible's authenticity. Even the most cynical of scholars acknowledges that it was written centuries before Jesus, by people who had no connection to Him. So, no collusion. And yet the story is the most intricate and elegant literary foreshadowing found in any writing at any time.

Both Isaac and Jesus arrive via impossible births announced by angels. Like Jesus, Isaac is the long-awaited promised son who—just when all hope is lost—makes his entrance. Both are only sons. When Abraham is stopped from his action, a sheep is substituted; thereby making clear that the spotless sacrificial sheep is a symbol for the life of the long promised only Son. Thus the story connects not just Isaac to Christ but every spotless sheep sacrificed—from Abel to the end of the Jewish sacrificial system soon after Christ's death—to the death of the spotless Son of God.

With the 20/20 vision of hindsight, the story of Abraham and Isaac is the perfect metaphor for God's only Son com-

ing to earth and dying for our sins. In literature, it would be a narrative of enormous sophistication. But when one-half of the story was written centuries before the second half by unconnected authors? It transcends sophistication and enters the realm of inspiration.

The story of Abraham and Isaac is just one example of the compelling evidence that Christ is who He says He is. Everything from the precise time of His public ministry (Daniel 9), through to the exact amount for which He would be betrayed (Zechariah 11:12,13), to where He'd be born (Micah 5:2), that he'd be a Baby but simultaneously He'd be the "mighty God, the Everlasting Father" (Isaiah 9:6), and that He'd be rejected (Isaiah 53), was foretold by strangers hundreds of years before He arrived. Indeed, every aspect of the Old Testament's sanctuary service foreshadows precisely Christ's ministry—from His baptism and death to His priestly ministry. And the end of the Jewish sacrificial system soon after Christ's death? That, too, was foretold by Daniel.

It's common to flippantly dismiss the story of Christ as a fairytale for simpletons. Critics imagine they've found flaws missed by intellectual Christian giants such as Sir Isaac Newton, Martin Luther King Jr, C S Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. They haven't. Their superficial reading and lack of spiritual depth blinds them to the incredibly intricate interweaving of the biblical narrative formed over centuries by scores of unrelated authors.

My friend Jennifer, a distinguished lawyer, put it this way recently: "We've spent our lives honing our skills analysing facts and compiling evidence. Maybe that's why Jesus is so compellingly obvious to us." Maybe. I certainly know a lot of lawyers who find the evidence for Christ overwhelming. But then again, I also know doctors and gardeners, plumbers and scientists, teachers and architects who do too. And I know people from all walks of life who reject Him. But then again, it has never been about the evidence; it's about the willingness. It's easy to see. But you have to be willing to search seriously. For everyone else, there are always internet memes and simplistic polemics.

1. See, e.g., Deuteronomy 12:31 and Psalms 106:38.

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"Bal Kama with his Commonwealth Pacific Young Person of the Year award."

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Our vision is to be a church that...
knows
experiences
and shares
our hope in Jesus Christ

Growing in prayer

Within 24 hours of being on the market my parents' house sold, following their decision to move into retirement living. After many doctors' appointments, procedures and opinions my daughter and son-in-law were coming to terms with never being parents but in July will deliver my first two grandchildren (all being well). A few years ago my son was unsure of his purpose in life—now he is energised by his first job as an Adventist school chaplain. These are some personal incredible answers to prayer and blessings for which I thank God.

My other daughter is immobilised because of a torn disc in her back. She is off work and unable to go on an Open Heart International medical trip to Nepal while facing weeks of painful recovery. Friends of mine are still suffering (after months and years) from debilitating diseases. Relatives do not seem to be responding to calls from the Holy Spirit to come back to God and church. These I also pray about and wonder what God is doing.

I'm discovering that prayer does not manipulate God, nor does it reveal anything to Him, but I still pray. Why? Because prayer is my connection with the greatest Being in the Universe who is my Father and Friend. What an opportunity. In all good relationships there is continual and honest communication. I do ask for things, I do get frustrated when I don't understand why things don't work out, I am overwhelmed and ecstatic when miracles happen . . . and I get to talk to God about anything at any time. Wow! A growing prayer life is foundational for me in being a disciple-making follower of Jesus. Prayer reminds me that God is active and always with me.

"Don't worry about anything: instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7 NLT).

Glenn Townend is president of the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



A time for war

Kent Kingston

In case you haven't noticed, "discipleship" has become something of a focus. And if I'm not mistaken, this renewed focus is going to influence many thoughtful Adventists to engage with classic texts on the topic, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* in which he warned that the way of the cross is not easy: "The cross is not random suffering, but necessary suffering . . . it is the suffering that comes from being Christian . . . Every call of Christ leads into death."¹

It was this vision of total discipleship that led Bonhoeffer to reluctantly accept the necessity of violence. He is one of the few church leaders from Germany's Nazi era who stands innocent of collusion with Hitler. While other Christian leaders (including Adventists) were cooperating with the Nazis and participating in the exclusion of Jews, the breakaway Lutheran pastor was speaking out and acting against injustice. As a double agent he participated in a failed conspiracy to assassinate Hitler and was executed just days before the end of World War II.

"You Christians are glad when someone else does what you know must be done," Bonhoeffer's unbelieving sister-in-law had chided him, "but it seems that somehow you are unwilling to get your own hands dirty and do it."

Clearly Bonhoeffer rose to this challenge. And paid the cost. His willingness to be a conscientious conspirator is also a challenge for us. "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil," he's believed to have said. "Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."²

So let's talk action. If you were to happen upon a violent mugging would you be morally compelled to physically intervene using the level of force needed to prevent further harm? Does your level of ethical responsibility change depending on whether the victim is a stranger or a family member? What about when the victim is on the other side of the world?

Anzac Day brings up these dilemmas for me. One of my early forays into *Record* questioned how Adventists could describe soldiers as "heroes" in the light of our traditional commitment to non-combatancy. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's example is hard to ignore. Do we need to re-examine Solomon's words: "There is a time for everything . . . a time to kill and a time to heal . . . a time for war and a time for peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:1,3,8)?

Don't get me wrong: I'm not setting up a false dichotomy between passive pew-warming and military combat. There are many ways for Christians to actively but non-violently participate in conflict zones: consider Palestine's Christian Peacemaker Teams, the work of NGOs such as Red Cross, Medecins Sans Frontieres or ADRA, or even the example of Adventist non-combatants such as World War II medic Desmond Doss (look out for *Hacksaw Ridge*, Mel Gibson's biopic, which will be released later this year).

But I'm finding it increasingly hard to criticise an Adventist who chooses to join the police force, knowing that he or she may be required to inflict fatal harm in the name of community safety. I can't bring myself to condemn American Sam Childers, the "machine gun preacher" who leads armed raids against militant groups in Africa in order to rescue captive children. And while I remain dubious about most military ventures, I'm beginning to think that perhaps there may be times when the most Christian thing to do is to, sorrowfully and prayerfully, pull the trigger.

1. Bonhoeffer, D (2001). *Discipleship*, edited Kelly & Godsey, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, pp 86-87.

2. Metaxas, E (2010). *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, martyr, prophet, spy*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tn, p359.

Kent Kingston is assistant editor for *Adventist Record*.



Deliberate attack

The suicide bombing of an Easter family event in a park in Lahore, Pakistan, killed at least 70 people, most of them Christians. A Pakistani Taliban offshoot claimed responsibility. The previous day another extremist group had released a statement saying that only Islamic rituals should be celebrated in an Islamic country. —*Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin*



No football on Sunday

Canterbury Bulldogs NRL star Will Hopoate provoked media debate when it was revealed he will not attend Sunday training or matches during the 2016 season due to his Mormon faith. Hopoate says he's thankful Bulldogs management respects his decision. He hasn't made a firm statement on whether he'd play a Sunday grand final. —*Sydney Morning Herald*



No cover-ups

Adventist leaders in Jamaica have stated publicly that the era of concealing child abuse is over. President of the Jamaica Union Conference, Pastor Everett Brown, says pastors and congregants have been instructed to report criminal allegations to police. Jamaica Children's Advocate Diahann Gordon Harrison commended the Church for its proactive approach. —*Jamaica Gleaner*



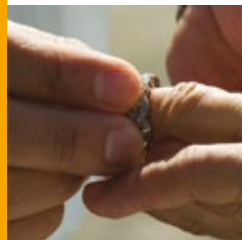
What next?

New National League for Democracy president Htin Kyaw took office in Burma/Myanmar on April 1. His first vice-president represents the powerful military faction and his second is from the largely Christian Chin minority group. Concerns remain that Burma's new democracy will fail to protect religious and ethnic minorities against human rights abuses. —*Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin*



Historic

The first visit of a sitting US president to Cuba since the 1959 Communist revolution has raised hopes among Cuban Adventists that gradual improvements in religious freedom will continue. Adventist youth recently participated in public Global Youth Day events and the Church's request to book a prestigious theatre for evangelistic meetings was approved. —*Adventist Review*



Civil debate

Queensland plans to re-introduce civil unions for same-sex couples have reignited the debate on whether such a change would result in churches facing legal action for refusing to host ceremonies. The Australian Christian Lobby has asked the Queensland government to state its ongoing commitment to religious freedom. —*ACL*

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Adventist student wins award; meets Queen

Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

An Adventist law student has been named Commonwealth Pacific Young Person of the Year for 2016 during an awards ceremony where he met Queen Elizabeth II.

Bal Kama is an Australian National University College of Law PhD candidate and a member of the Canberra National church. Out of the four nominees from the Pacific region, he collected the award for his work in setting up the Kama Scholars Foundation in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The Queen attended the awards ceremony, held in London on March 17.

"I am very happy that I was able to get [the award]," Mr Kama said. "It helps provide recognition that what we are doing is worth it."

The foundation focuses on two main areas: health and education. In the past three years it has provided 57 scholarships to disadvantaged children from remote villages in PNG's Simbu Province to enable them to attend provincial

high schools. Many of the families struggle with money for school fees and uniforms.

"We ourselves, myself and the foundation members, faced similar challenges grow-

ing up in remote areas," Mr Kama said. "These scholarships enable and empower the recipients and make them feel they are valued."

The scholarships go to children who perform well in three categories: leadership, academic and discipline.

Some of the scholarships are especially for girls and disabled children, and are designed to change the mindset in the villages and ensure that marginalised groups are given recognition.

Mr Kama reports that 75-80 per cent of scholarships are awarded to females. "There is a change in motivation and values, as families are now pushing girls as well as sons."

The foundation provides resources and has helped some of PNG's remote schools to teach computing for the first time.

Canberra's two Adventist churches—National and South—have been instrumental in providing funding and support to build a children's Sabbath School hall in the Gumine District of Simbu Province. The hall's opening was attended by Yoba Dame, associate education director for Papua New Guinea Union Mission, and there are hopes that it can be used to set up an elementary school.

Australian medical students have paid their own way to travel to remote villages for the foundation and to partner with local village medical workers in providing medical aid and advice, especially in the area of women's health, which is still a taboo topic in some areas of PNG.

A long-term goal of the foundation is to build a disability learning centre in the region. —Jarrod Stackelroth



Bal Kama talks to the Queen.

ADRA staff rescued by "Braveheart"

Vanua Balavu, Fiji

Hollywood actor Mel Gibson played an unlikely role in rescuing three female staff from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) after they became stranded in Vanua Balavu, Fiji's eastern-most island and one of the hardest hit by Cyclone Winston.

The women became stuck when their return flight to Suva was cancelled, leaving them on the devastated island with severe water and food shortages and where an estimated 70 per cent of houses were destroyed.

But an unlikely rescue plan was hatched: the three staff were taken to nearby Mago Island, owned by Mr Gibson, where they stayed the night in his house and took his private plane back to Suva the next morning.

Getting to Vanua Balavu required a 30-hour boat trip on an overcrowded vessel. One of the relief workers, Anna Krikun from ADRA Germany, said she feared for her life. "The boat was so overcrowded and unsafe," she said. "I was just afraid we were going to sink."

In March, ADRA delivered almost 6000 packs of Weet-

Bix and So Good, donated by Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing, to remote communities in Ra Province who missed out on earlier food assistance.

In total, more than 10,000 people across Viti Levu and Vanua Levu have now received food and hygiene packs from ADRA, thanks to generous donations totalling more than \$A200,000.

Further responses are continuing, with ADRA securing funding through the United Nations Flash Appeal (\$US110,000) and the European Union (€300,000) to provide shelter and hygiene assistance.

ADRA and the Fiji Mission have been working closely together, with many church volunteers assisting ADRA's distributions to remote communities. —Josh Dye



The three ADRA workers with two of the people who helped them.



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MY CHURCH

WARRNAMBOOL, Victoria

Barry Ladlow

If you love the coast or have always wanted to see The Twelve Apostles—one of the world's most picturesque natural attractions—then a holiday along the Great Ocean Road in Victoria might just be for you. If you are in the area for Sabbath, then you must pay a visit to Warrnambool church. According to long-time member Barry Ladlow, it's an active and multicultural church with about 45 regular members and up to 80 attendees on some Sabbaths.



Street view of Warrnambool.

If you arrive on the first Sabbath of the month, you'll be treated to a themed prayer breakfast. Church members hold prayer meetings in their homes each Wednesday night.

Pastor Luis Bermudez is also pastor of Camperdown and Portland churches. With Warrnambool being the biggest church in the region, its elders help by preaching and supporting the other churches.

The church has put together a calendar of all of its events and services for the year, so people can know what's coming up. Regular events include a social every month, where church members can invite community members and neighbours, closing Sabbaths, Adventurers (Warrnambool has around 12) and a weekly craft group that has been running for about 20 years. The youth, who take the service once or twice a year, are going on a snow trip to NZ this year.

Special highlights on the calendar include the Gilson College school mission trip. The college's Year 9 students run the Sabbath service as well as helping out around the community while staying at the local Scout camp. Wantirna church members also visit every year as a STORMCo (Service To Others Really Matters) trip, where they run a kids' club for the community.

Being from a regional church does have its challenges however, according to Barry. With an ageing church membership, they are hoping to equip more of the young people to become elders and deacons. Another challenge is the turnover of pastors, but Barry says Pastor Luis has been at Warrnambool for a few years and this has been beneficial. As the community becomes familiar with him and he has time to follow up contacts, the continuity of pastoral ministry is helping.

The church hopes to continue developing relationships with their community so that more disciples of Jesus are made. And if you're ever driving down the Great Ocean Road, they'd love you to drop by too. —with Jarrod Stackelroth

MOTHER'S DAY

To download a touching video tribute to mothers for your church's Mother's Day program, visit www.record.net.au.





R HEALTH FEATURE

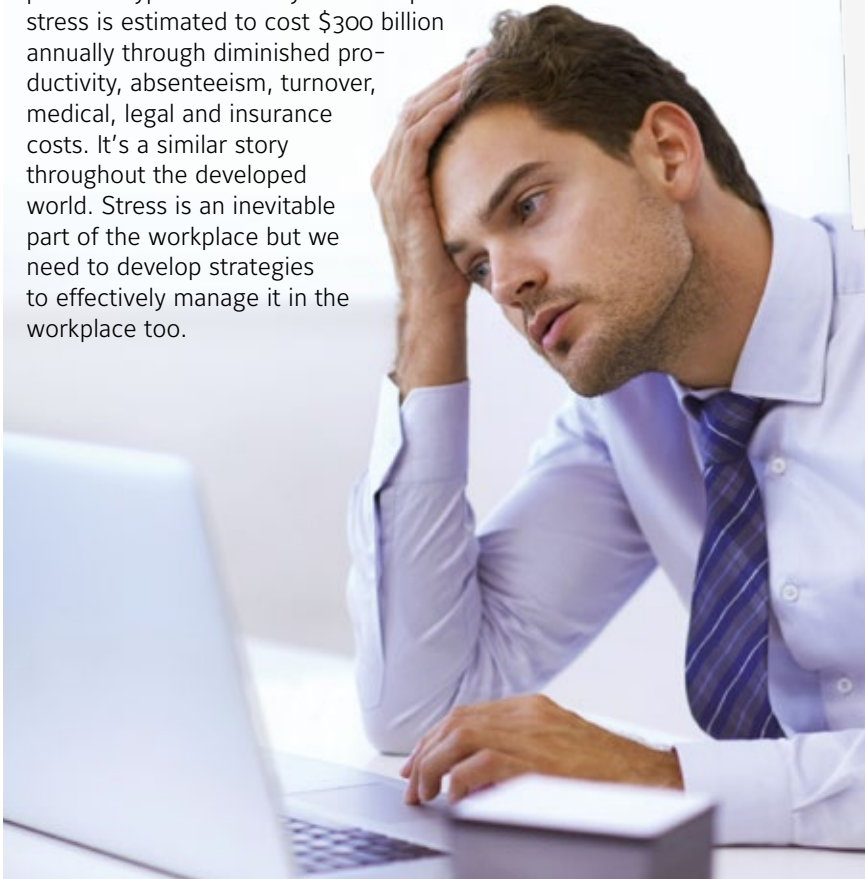
with Cathy McDonald

Stressed out

Our bodies are amazingly equipped to deal with short-term, life-threatening situations. When we perceive a threat, a rush of hormones kicks our bodies into action, sharpening our physical and mental responses to help get us out of danger.

But the problem is that this system is only meant for short-term use; science shows us that being chronically in this state is linked to poor health outcomes. Another problem is that our mind has a hard time determining the difference between a real threat to our safety and an imaginary one. Our body has the same basic physical response to finding out about a last-minute work deadline as it does to being confronted by a bear.

In the US, 69 per cent of employees report work is a significant source of stress, 41 per cent say they feel stressed or tense daily as part of a typical work day and workplace stress is estimated to cost \$300 billion annually through diminished productivity, absenteeism, turnover, medical, legal and insurance costs. It's a similar story throughout the developed world. Stress is an inevitable part of the workplace but we need to develop strategies to effectively manage it in the workplace too.



For some great resources on managing stress visit www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/stress or visit www.vitalityworks.com.au to find out more about workplace health services that can lead to a thriving business.

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Berry tarts

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 12 minutes Serves: 4

- 1 sheet reduced-fat canola puff pastry
- ¼ cup almond meal
- 1 punnet strawberries, halved (or 200g blueberries or 200g mixed frozen berries)
- 1 tbs raw sugar

1. Cut pastry sheet in half. Score a 1cm border around the edge of each piece of pastry.
2. Sprinkle almond meal in the centre of each piece of pastry. Top with strawberries and sprinkle with sugar.
3. Bake in a moderate oven, 180°C, for 10-12 minutes or until edges are puffed and golden. Serve with soy ice-cream.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVE:
950kJ (230cal). Protein 5g. Fat 13g. Carbohydrate 21g. Sodium 5mg. Potassium 150mg. Calcium 30mg. Iron 0.7mg. Fibre 3g.



Light on the track

by Kepsie Elodo

I GREW UP IN EFOGI, A VILLAGE ALONG THE KOKODA Track (Papua New Guinea). I'm from the mountain Koiari people. Pastor Lock set up a mission in our village prior to World War II. Our other contact with

Adventists was in the 1920s when they built an airstrip in the village that provided our first real connection to the outside world aside from trekking. The airstrip became a very strategic asset when the battle between the Anzacs

and the Japanese reached Kokoda. My father witnessed the fighting along the track but was too young to be involved in any substantial way. However, many of my other family members were involved in assisting the Australians and Kiwis during the Kokoda campaign.

Our family viewed Australians positively. There were a few reasons for this. Of course, there was our experience with the Lock family. Our first contact with Australians was with this godly family. We also felt an affinity with Australia because we're neighbouring nations. And, of course, most of us were Christians.

Sadly, when the Japanese invaded PNG they burnt down Christian churches. People mourned when their churches were destroyed. The Japanese also destroyed many homes. So, although they claimed to be liberators, the way they acted told a different story. The way that my people remember World War II is that the Japanese lost the war because they destroyed our churches. That was a huge mistake. If any of us had any sympathy for the Japanese cause, the burning of our churches took that away. In contrast, the Australian missionaries had brought us the gospel, and their military didn't destroy homes or churches.

In 2014, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Adventist work at Efogi. During the celebration we talked about the concept of international evangelism. We told our people that they didn't need to leave home to be missionaries. Today, God is bringing people from around the world to hike the Kokoda Track. These people are our mission field. We told our people, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, give the trekkers food and shelter for free as a spiritual service. And do not accept money on Sabbath—everything you do will be missionary service.

Pastor Tony Kemo, former president of the Central Papua Conference (CPC), took the divine service at our anniversary celebration and preached on international evangelism. He challenged the people living along the track to view their territory as an international evangelism field. I perceived that Pastor Kemo's sermon was inspired by the Spirit of God, and so for the closing event, I endorsed his theme and also focused on the vision of spreading the love of God to the men and women from around the world coming to hike our track.

To be a witness for Christ, I told them, we need to make sure our villages and bodies are clean. Cleanliness is next to godliness. Many of the trekkers don't know God. Presenting a clean, tidy, happy, organised village is witness for what God can do in our homes and in our hearts. I also encouraged our churches to organise choirs because the trekkers love to hear our local singing. Why not use the opportunity to share the love of God?

Conference CFO Max Lassah recently told me that three non-Adventist trekkers had heard our people singing songs

from our church hymnals. They liked the music so much they wanted to buy our hymnals. Our people told the trekkers that they could get as many copies as they wanted at the Adventist Book Centre (ABC) in Port Moresby. So the international trekkers visited the ABC to get the hymnals when they got back to town! They said how much they loved the singing from the locals and the porters. Some of the porters were backslidden Adventists who have come back to church as a result of the witness of their brethren along the track.

Pastor Samuel, from Goroka, ministers in Manari Village. When I visited him last Christmas he told me that so far he had prayed with more than 1000 trekkers. Most of them were Australians and New Zealanders. But some were from further afield. One couple was from the Middle East! After he talks with them, he asks, "You have a long way to walk, do you mind if I pray for you?" Every trekker has responded positively to his request. So far he has met 10 former Adventists—he encouraged them to "come home to your church". Six have since let him know that they have


The gospel has come full circle—a most beautiful gift that keeps on giving.

gone back to church. One was a former Adventist minister—an Avondale College graduate. Pastor Samuel challenged the minister: "You've left your pulpit." The man asked, "What's my pulpit?" Pastor Samuel replied, "You are called to be preaching the gospel from the pulpit." The man began to weep. And through tears said, "Yes, I've left my calling." The former minister recently wrote to Pastor

Samuel, saying: "Thank you for helping me find my God again. I'm back in my church again—back where I belong. Thank you for helping me to come home."

Prior to 2014, our people were witnessing in their own little ways. But after our 100th anniversary they are witnessing in big ways and lives are being changed. The people of the Kokoda Track have embraced the role of international evangelists. We once were blessed when people from overseas brought the gospel to us. Today, we're passing that blessing back to overseas visitors. The gospel has come full circle—a most beautiful gift that keeps on giving.

Today, our major challenge is that our companies organise trekking on Sabbath—and they are pushing our people to work. And some of our people are compromising their faith in return for the money. We are working with the four companies to urge them not to coerce our people to work on Sabbath. And we're encouraging everyone to stand strong like Daniel.

Please pray for our church family along the Kokoda Track. And please keep our international evangelism efforts in your prayers as well. God can do great things through us when we are faithful to Him. 

Pastor Kepsie Elodo is president of the Bougainville Mission, Papua New Guinea.



Tongan pastor attends Big Camp

Pastor Fanueli Mataele from Tonga Mission attended South New South Wales (SNSW) Big Camp earlier this year as a result of a partnership between the Mission and the Conference. "I thank God for the opportunity to witness such a wonderful event," Pastor Mataele said. He was particularly appreciative of the messages, food and chance to share about Tonga with church members. "I wish we had this kind of resource to help our members in Tonga," he commented. "I am looking forward to a time when we will have a group of Tongans come to this camp and a group of Australians flying in to help our work in Tonga."—*Imprint*

Church in the Park

Members from the Adventist churches around Cairns (Qld) combined one Sabbath afternoon to run a "Church in the Park" service for the Yarrabah Aboriginal community. Lilly Gill organised singing and prayer before Pastor Johnny Murison shared a message from Scripture. Michael and Denise Hansell coordinated with local leaders to ensure the event was successful. They even had a visit from the Mayor! The churches have made a commitment to run open-air services for the people in Yarrabah every month.—*Top News*



Asian Aid turns 50

At the 2016 Easter Camp (Vic), Asian Aid celebrated turning 50 by handing out cake. Chairman John Hammond was the morning devotional speaker, entertaining the children with his foreign and exotic stories. Kerry Patrick (pictured), Asian Aid's longest-serving employee, also presented at camp. She has worked for the organisation for 28 years.—*Jarrod and Lyna Stackelroth*

Free lunch for Fiji students

An Adventist primary school in Fiji provided free lunch to its students for two weeks after Cyclone Winston hit the island nation. Ateca Lanyon, president of the mothers' club at Nagigi Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, said this was only possible because of a grant provided by Australia through its Access to Quality Education program. The communities of Nagigi, Vatudamu and Nacavanadi took turns cooking for the students. "We know that a healthy diet is important for learning children . . . I am deeply grateful to Australia for helping us through this program, which has helped us take care of our children while trying to rebuild our lives after the cyclone," Ms Lanyon said.—*Fiji Times*



Journey into the psalms

Five-piece folk band Sons of Korah wowed the audience at Avondale College church (NSW) last month, presenting their signature musical interpretations of the psalms. A mandolin, a resonator guitar and the Armenian duduk oboe were among the more unusual instruments used to create everything from hushed anticipation to handclapping praise to a pounding clamour for divine justice to be unleashed on the oppressor. "The psalms are lyrics," said frontman Matthew Jacoby. "They're meant to be sung." Songs of Korah have adapted more than 50 psalms since 1994.—*Record staff*

Fundraising for Kakabona

Kakabona church (Solomon Islands) members have begun working on projects they have been planning to implement since purchasing the church land in 2015. On March 6, they worked together on placing the posts and foundation for a three-room children's lamb shelter for worship. Currently the children are worshipping with the adults. They are also raising funds to purchase an urgently needed PA system. Through selling food along the main road, they have raised \$3370 of their \$10,000 goal. They will be collecting a freewill offering at the end of the quarter.—*Solomon Star*

RECORD REWIND

Lester Devine



OPENING HIS WORD

Gary Webster



The inspector

The eldest daughter of one of the first Seventh-day Adventists on the South Island of New Zealand, Maud Smart followed her mother's spiritual example and commenced her teaching ministry for the Church in 1912, serving a total of 46 years.

Her first two years of teaching were spent in Australia and the remainder in New Zealand, where she rounded out her career as supervisor and inspector for Adventist schools before retiring in 1958. Unfortunately, her health deteriorated soon after her retirement and she died on March 3, 1963 and was laid to rest in Christchurch.

Those who knew her well were always impressed with her good humour and ability to make an epic adventure out of the most mundane and routine of journeys. For a generation of young children in the church schools of the time, she was "the inspector", a formidable presence who proceeded with great dignity across the campus like a galleon under full sail.



Maud Smart.

Information provided by Pastor L Gilmore. Photo: Gwen Smart

Re-digging the wells for renewal I: the Ephesus factor

During the time of Christ's resurrection and Pentecost the disciples gained a far deeper love for Him; this was especially evident in a greater unity among them. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. As Isaac re-dug Abraham's wells at Gerar, so we need to remove more rubble to allow an outpouring of God's Spirit for mission.

Read Genesis 26:1,18,19; John 21:7,15-17; Acts 1:14; 2:2.

Another obstruction to revival and mission is when Christ is not everything to us. We cannot honestly say with the apostle Paul, "for to me to live is Christ". Paul considered all things worthless compared to knowing Christ, His power and His righteousness. He was even willing to go before an angry hysterical mob at Ephesus out of love for Christ. We may be extremely active in doing many good things, be rightly opposed to heresy and those who pedal it, and may have been loyal members for many years, yet have actually lost that deep first love for Christ, which includes love for His children.

Read Philippians 1:21; Revelation 2:1-4; Matthew 25:40.

If so, let's reclaim our love for Jesus today by means of the three "Rs": 1. Remember that as disciples we are Christ's bride, loved deeply by Him and we have therefore fallen in losing our love for Him; 2. Repent of this fall by honestly acknowledging it and turning from it; 3. Re-do what we did to get it in the first place—the love of God was shed abroad in our hearts through the Spirit when we came just as we were (hopeless and helpless) and cast ourselves on Christ and Him crucified.

Read Revelation 2:5; Ephesians 5:25-32; Romans 5:8; John 3:3,9,14-16.



View from the top seats of the Ephesus theatre. It was in this very theatre that Paul, out of deep love for Jesus, wanted to address an angry mob, who for two hours cried out, "Great is Diana," referring to the Ephesian goddess.

MYSTERY HISTORY

Do you know?

■ The people in the photo. ■ The date the photo was taken.
Send to heritage@avondale.edu.au



Jesus and the North Korean dictators



by Stephen Ferguson

NORTH KOREA IS THE WORLD'S LAST TRULY communist nation, and if you want a regime that actually lives up to George Orwell's dystopian nightmare described in his book *1984*, then this is it. However, the most amazing thing about North Korea is its continued survival against all predictions. With the ascension of Kim Jong-un in 2011, the nation has now had its third leader from the Kim family.

North Korea has achieved this amazing longevity largely through the introduction of a highly effective cult of personality. The supreme leader is not merely a dictator but in effect a de facto god.

For example, Kim Il-sung, who died in 1994, is still officially "Eternal President", meaning North Korea is the only country with a deceased head of state.¹ Similarly, according to North Korean propaganda about Kim Jong-il:

- His birth in 1941 was heralded by a swallow and caused winter to change to spring, a star to illuminate the sky and rainbows to spontaneously appear.
- He shot an amazing 11 holes-in-one to achieve an un-

precedented 38-under-par game on a regulation 18-hole golf course—on his first attempt at golf.

- His suits became a worldwide fashion phenomenon, according to *Rodong Sinmun*, a communist party newspaper in North Korea.

- According to the official biography on the North Korean state website, he didn't even defecate!²

Christian "cult" of personality

Where did the North Koreans get the idea of turning the Kims into living gods? It might astonish you to learn North Korea deliberately co-opted Christianity:³

Broadcasters would speak of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il breathlessly, in the manner of Pentecostal preachers. North Korean newspapers carried talks of supernatural phenomena. Stormy seas were said to be calmed when sailors clinging to a sinking ship sang songs in praise of Kim Il-sung. When Kim Jong-il went to the DMZ⁴, a mysterious fog descended to protect him from lurking South Korean snipers. He causes

*trees to bloom and snow to melt. If Kim Il-sung was God, then Kim Jong-il was the son of God.*⁵

As Oxford Professor of Christian History Diarmaid MacCulloch explains, Christianity is a personality cult.⁶ Of course saying so is deliberately shocking but Jesus deliberately shocked people on occasion (John 6:54,55,60,61).

Now before you start composing an angry letter to the editor, consider the term "cult" originally meant "worship", from the French *culte* and Latin *cultus*. Moreover, totalitarian states only succeed in using personality cults precisely because they are counterfeits, and a counterfeit is always similar to the real thing—just with a few very insidious twists or errors.

Ultimate revelation in a person

A less pejorative way of saying all this is that Christianity is fundamentally relational in nature. This is opposed to other religions, which put maximum emphasis on orthodoxy (knowing the right dogmas), orthopraxy (correct conduct) or ritualism (practising rites and rituals). Some religions, such as Buddhism, don't even require a belief in God!

In contrast, Christians believe the ultimate revelation about God is found in a Person, Jesus Christ, who is God. The Bible is our only standard for doctrine precisely because it tells us the most about Jesus, who alone is the Word (John 1:1-5,14-16) and the Truth (John 14:6; 18:37,38). However, even when reading the Bible, Adventist pioneer Ellen White taught:

*The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes.*⁷

Divine nepotism

Another common feature is Divine nepotism, again a concept with a bad reputation. By "nepotism" I mean the literal dictionary definition: "favouring shown to relatives or friends".⁸ This is largely how the ancient world worked (and arguably still does in practice), from the relationship between father and son, to master and freedman.⁹

Many of Jesus' parables seemed aimed at explaining this undeserving and relational nature of His kingdom, whether it be: the prodigal son, who thought he'd be treated like a hired servant but was greeted with love and grace by his father (Luke 15:11-32); the vineyard workers, who all earned the same wage no matter how long they worked (Matthew 20:1-16); or the wedding feast, where everyone on the street, both good and bad, was eventually invited to attend (Matthew 22:1-14).

Elected Israel

We also see this Divine nepotism through the example of ancient Israel. It didn't deserve election based on merit but rather because of God's love and fidelity:

It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples. It was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deuteronomy 7:7,8).

Beneficiaries of Divine nepotism

We are extremely fortunate to have a nepotistic God, who through Christ now considers us His friends (Romans 5:11) and children (1 John 3:2). If salvation were based on merit none of us would make it because our own works are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

What this all means is that Christ has to remain at the centre of our faith. Everything, and I mean everything, has to be centred on Jesus. As Ellen White observed:

*Christ is the centre to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the centre the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, [and] in love.*¹⁰

Good deeds, amazing Bible knowledge or strict adherence to the Adventist health message all mean nothing if Jesus is not our focus and motivation (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Jesus, our all in all! ☞

As Diarmaid MacCulloch explains . . . Christianity is a personality cult.

1. Barbara Demick, Nothing to Envy: Love, Life and Death in North Korea, 100.
2. "Mind-boggling 'facts' about Kim Jong-il", Herald Sun, <<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/archive/news/from-fashion-icon-to-golf-pro-mind-boggling-facts-about-kim-jong-il/story-e6frf7lf-1226226100974?nk=2925a4f02383c86d1e83f40d822614666>>, retrieved 19 July 14.
3. "North Korea: The Korean War and the Cult of Kim", Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/north-korea-the-korean-war-and-the-cult-of-kim>>, retrieved 19 July 14.
4. DMZ is the De-Militarised Zone, the most heavily fortified strip of land in the world, separating North and South Korea at the 38th parallel.
5. Barbara Demick, Nothing to Envy: Love, Life and Death in North Korea, 45.
6. Diarmaid MacCulloch, A History of Christianity (London: Penguin, 2009), 1.
7. Selected Messages, book 1, 19-22.
8. Oxford Dictionary (Oxford Uni Press: 2008), 442.
9. Known as a "patron-client relationship" model for social organisation: Dennis C. Duling, The New Testament: History, Literature and Social Context, 4th Ed. (Belmont CA: Wadsworth, 2003), 17.
10. Ellen G White, Selected Messages, Book 1 (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 259.

Stephen Ferguson is a lawyer from Perth, Western Australia, and a member of Livingston church.



Hope, opportunities and challenges

by Michelle Abel

JOHAN HAD HEARD CYCLONE WARNINGS OVER THE local radio earlier in the day. By afternoon all the broadcasts had fallen silent. As the winds started to build he gathered his family close and they discussed options for shelter. What they didn't know was that the strongest cyclone to ever hit Vanuatu was about to arrive.

The radio broadcasts had advised that every village should identify a place for evacuation. Many villages chose their church or school. But John's village didn't have any strong, permanent buildings. He decided that their kitchen would have to do. It's built low to the ground, with natural woven walls and a thick thatched roof.

He gathered his family inside and shut the door. However, as the winds intensified, John became concerned for other families in his community. He went outside and ran from house to house to see how everyone was coping.

Many families were terrified so John suggested they join his family.

In every village there are strong cultural obligations about not being too close to certain relatives, or even looking them in the eye. As more and more people came into his kitchen, John told them that there was a time for *tambu kastom* but during a cyclone respecting traditions was not possible. They all had to shelter together.

Eventually, John had 72 people inside his kitchen! Huddled in so close they could barely move, they clung to each other as the 350 kilometre per hour winds howled around their village, blowing their homes apart, stripping the trees of leaves and branches, and destroying their gardens.

They stayed inside until morning by which time the winds had eased. John led the group in a prayer of thanks that they had survived the night; then he decided to go

outside and see if he could find some food. He had been thinking about his cow all night. He knew that the cow would be something to eat until help arrived (hopefully) but he would hate to have to kill the animal himself. As he made his way through the debris he saw that his cow had been killed by a falling coconut palm so he breathed a prayer of thanks. "God killed the cow for me!" he joked later. The group made a fire and cooked the beef and some scavenged vegetables that had been ready to harvest when the cyclone hit.

I asked John how long it had taken for help to arrive. He thought about it for a few moments, revisiting the frightening memories of the cyclone. "ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) was the first organisation that came to help us," he said. For two weeks after the cyclone many communities had no contact with the outside world after Vanuatu's mobile communications infrastructure was destroyed. They didn't know the extent of the damage; they didn't even know if the capital Port Vila had survived. They didn't know if any help was coming at all.

ADRA was able to reach Southeast Ambrym with a shipment of food, water filtration kits, hygiene kits and tools for reconstruction three weeks after the cyclone. Over the next two months ADRA helped with a further two distributions of food aid while communities like John's were waiting for the first harvest from their restored gardens. The food aid was just enough—a mother in the community tells me that when their first crops were ready they still had a little rice left from the ADRA packages.

John's kitchen has become legendary. They still use it as a kitchen, and when I stick my head inside and squint through the dusty gloom I try to imagine 72 people shivering together in that small space. Today the kitchen is as it should be: with pots and pans sitting quietly in their place in a dirt yard swept spotless. The village has been replanted with flowering plants that are now in bloom and many of the smaller trees have leaves again. It will take longer for the bigger trees to grow back.



John's kitchen.

Eventually, John had 72 people inside his kitchen! Huddled in so close they could barely move . . .

Almost 12 months after the devastating cyclone, many homes still have tarpaulins—distributed by ADRA—spread over the damaged roofs because the trees used for thatch were mostly destroyed. It will take another year or two before they can harvest the leaves to

repair the thatch on most buildings in the village.

After we take photos of John in the doorway of his kitchen, I wander over to watch a mother and daughter prepare *sepsep*—a meal comprising a huge pile of finely sliced sweet potato mixed with coconut cream and grated coconut, wrapped in green banana leaves and cooked on hot stones. The villagers say they have adequate food for now but nature has handed them another challenge—the current El Nino weather system—which has seen their gardens struggle with increased heat and lack of rain. With the destruction of the upper-storey of vegetation by the cyclone, the gardens now receive more direct sunshine.

Soon ADRA will be working with the communities on a permanent water system and the construction of toilets.



If funding can be found there is an opportunity to work with these communities to help them change their gardening practices to better cope with hotter and drier conditions.

There's also the challenge of income generation, as almost every family I speak with made their cash income from harvesting kopro from

coconuts. Since the cyclone the coconuts have been dry shells. They think it will take a few more years before they are able to generate sufficient income from kopro again. In the meantime children are missing out on health care or dropping out of high school because there is no money to cover the fees.

As I travel in the region I'm told over and over again how thankful families are for the help that ADRA was able to provide; help that came because of the donations from many people in Australia and New Zealand. The families have hope and are working hard to secure their future but they face many challenges. As I leave, the leaders of the community disaster committees are gathering to attend a hazard mapping exercise being run by the National Disaster Management Office. The latest hazard? The rumbling volcano in the centre of Ambrym Island, the source of the island's dark fertile soil and a magnet for tourists who want to photograph the lava lakes in the craters.

Hope, opportunities and challenges. As we leave, children dance alongside the car, calling out goodbye. ↻

Michelle Abel is an international community development consultant who assessed ADRA Australia's and ADRA Vanuatu's response to Cyclone Pam.



Entitled

by Vania Chew

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO," CONFESSES 27-YEAR-old Chloe*, a mum from Sydney's Inner West. "Yesterday, my four-year-old threw a tantrum because I wouldn't buy her an iPad. She threatened to tell the police that I was a bad mummy." Chloe buries her face in her hands. "That's not normal, is it? What did I do wrong?"

Chloe is far from being the only parent in this sticky situation.

"'She terrorises us': How entitled children are making their parents' lives hell," screamed a recent headline in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The article painted a ghastly picture of children who smash windows, threaten to kill themselves and even hold knives to their mothers' throats when they don't get their own way. And the cause of this phenomenon?

"It's the end result of giving kids everything they want,"

psychologist Judith Locke explained to the *Herald*.

But there's an issue out there that I believe is far more insidious than that of "entitled children". The movement is called prosperity theology, also known as the "prosperity gospel" or the "wealth and health gospel". It's based on the premise that God will give you everything you want if you are faithful enough: a sizeable bank account, a prestigious job or even physical healing.

To clarify, it's not that I think there's anything wrong with big houses or nice cars. And I'm sure most of us wouldn't mind bigger bank accounts! But subscribing to prosperity theology has created a group of "entitled Christians" whose blessings depend entirely on their willingness to "Name it; Claim it!"

"I do not put my eyes on men but on God," says Robert Tilton, a strong advocate of the prosperity gospel. It sounds like an admirably pious statement until he finishes his sentence: "On God, who gives me the power to get wealth."

"Jesus bled and died for us so that we can lay claim to the promise of financial prosperity," agrees a popular megachurch pastor. Aptly named Creflo Dollar, he recently asked his followers to help him purchase a luxury jet worth \$US65 million, which he claimed was "necessary" for ministry.

Prosperity theology suggests that we can bargain with God—that we are entitled to material blessings as a reward for our faith. Our relationship with God becomes little more than a legal agreement between two parties, each bound to fulfilling their own part of the contract. If God blesses us, we will pray. If we pray, God will bless us. The focus is put on God's gifts rather than the One who gives them.

Is it possible to love God and still prosper? Absolutely! I'm led to think of Job, a man in the Bible who was faithful to God and certainly received his share of God's material blessings. Yet Satan cast aspersions on Job's faithfulness, arguing that Job was only obedient because of God's blessings. When Job's circumstances changed dramatically, he was advised by all, including his wife, to curse God and die. Yet he refused to do so; showing that his love for the Giver was of more worth than any material gift.

In Ruth 1:21 we read of Naomi's reaction when her husband and sons die, changing her circumstances. "I went out full and the Lord has brought me home again empty," she says bitterly.

But in Job 1:21 we see a very different type of response. Job acknowledged that nothing he possessed was truly his and that it was God's right to give and take away.

Prosperity theology is an exclusive gospel. At its core it suggests that Christians should be . . . well, prosperous. It teaches that God's will is always for everyone to be healed,

to be wealthy and to be successful. While this sounds good in theory, it excludes a wide proportion of the population—namely those who are broken and hurting, vulnerable and poor.

What happens when people "Name it; Claim it!" on behalf of a dying loved one and they are not healed? If God rewards Christians with health, wealth and success for being faithful, how can this be explained? Prosperity theology implies it's the petitioner's fault. That they didn't pray hard enough. That they didn't have enough faith.

There are many instances of people who have been miraculously healed and use their healing to glorify God. But there are many more instances of people who are not healed, yet still glorify God through their courage, bravery and strength. They have nothing else but Him to cling to, yet still consider Him enough.

The prosperity gospel is exclusive. It promises health and wealth in this lifetime. Christ's gospel is inclusive. It promises blessings that will last throughout eternity.

Televangelist John Avanzini has attempted to justify the movement's emphasis on material wealth by arguing that Jesus had a big house, lots of money and designer clothes. Conveniently,

prosperity preachers often shy away from Matthew 8:20, which tells us that the Son of Man had no place to lay His head.

One verse that is often cited is John 10:10 where Jesus promises us a more abundant life. But what does it mean to have an abundant life? Does it mean owning a mansion in a posh suburb or driving a Ferrari? Does it mean wearing ragged garments and raising orphans in Africa?

Consider the apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul knew what it was like to live on both sides of the coin. He knew what it was like to be wealthy; he knew what it was like to be poor. He knew what it was like to be full but also what it was like to be hungry. But most importantly, he knew that his relationship with God had nothing to do with circumstance and everything to do with contentment. In all situations, in whatever state he was in, Paul had learned to be content. Even in imprisonment, persecution and exile.

In 1 Timothy 6:6 Paul notes that it is contentment combined with godliness that leads to great gain.

To be content, regardless of circumstance. To stand strong and hold firm to your faith, no matter what the situation. To remember that this earth is temporary and to set your eyes upon eternity. Forget the mansion. This is the abundant life we should aspire to.

* Name has been changed.

Prosperity theology suggests that we can bargain with God—that we are entitled to material blessings as a reward for our faith.

Vania Chew is PR/editorial assistant for Adventist Record.

THIS MONTH IN



Communion vs food porn



Raising girls to see real beauty



Chaplains of the Great War



Imagining heaven

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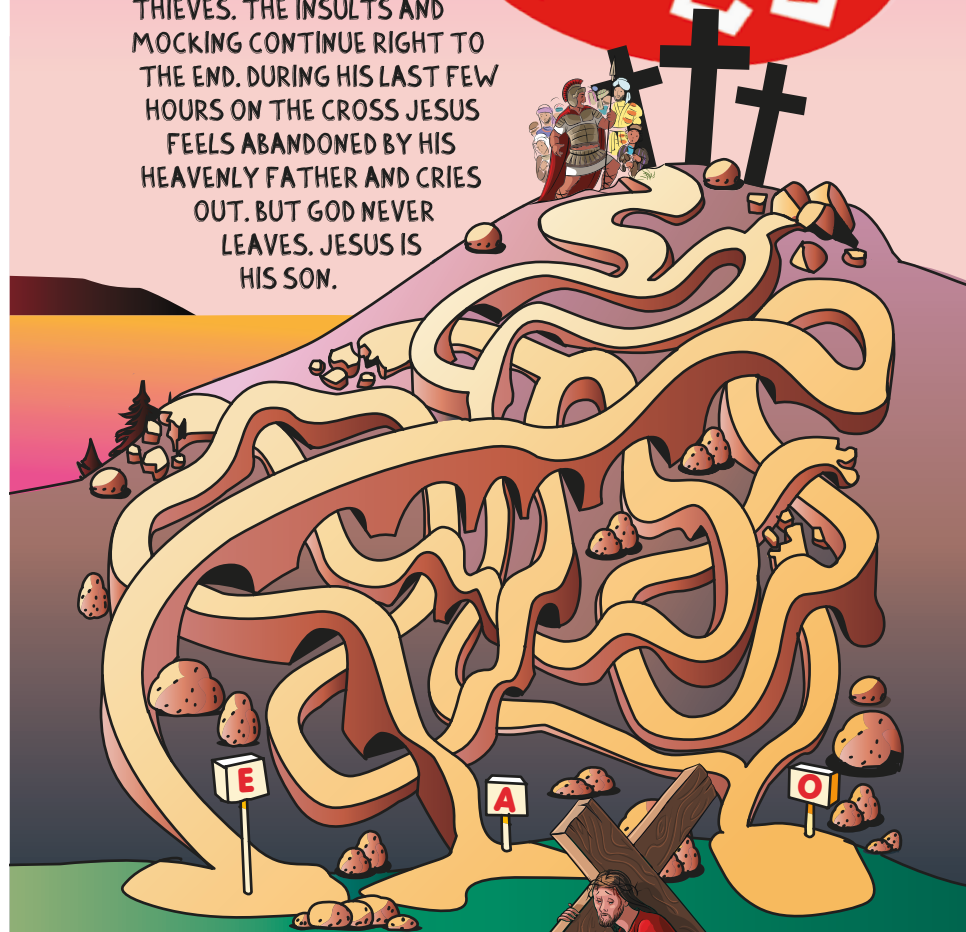


HELLO KIDS!



skids' space

JESUS IS LED OUT OF THE CITY TO THE PLACE OF EXECUTION WHERE HE IS CRUCIFIED WITH TWO THIEVES. THE INSULTS AND MOCKING CONTINUE RIGHT TO THE END. DURING HIS LAST FEW HOURS ON THE CROSS JESUS FEELS ABANDONED BY HIS HEAVENLY FATHER AND CRIES OUT. BUT GOD NEVER LEAVES. JESUS IS HIS SON.



WHICH ROAD DID JESUS TAKE TO CALVARY?



WE SERVE GOD WHEN WE SHARE HIS LOVE WITH OTHERS.

MEMORY VERSE

WHEN YOU FIND THE RIGHT ROAD THAT LEADS JESUS UP THE HILL USE THE CORRECT VOWEL TO FILL IN THE WORDS BELOW.

"F ___ R G ___ D S ___ L ___ VED THE W ___ RLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ___ NLY S ___ N THAT WH ___ EVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL N ___ T PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE." J ___ HN 3:16. NIV

LETTERS

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.

FOLLOW UP?

Merolyn Coombs, via email

I really appreciated the editorial "Three testimony clangers" (February 6).

I have been brought up with the idea of giving testimony publicly but as a child and teenager I couldn't do it. I could probably do it now as a Baby Boomer with more confidence and some public speaking experience. There are many people who feel strongly but don't have the technique to express feelings publicly.

Please follow on from the editorial and give some pointers as to how [people can] pass useful messages on and testify to their belief and experience. A great first step.

THE SIN PROBLEM

Jim Ballantyne, SA

What a fantastic article "Naked and unashamed" is (Editorial, February 20). Most denominations would agree sin is a huge problem. Dealing with sin in a way that brings a sinner back to their Saviour seems to be an even bigger problem for churches, ours included.

I recently asked the members of one of our churches to consider their worst sin. I then asked, what would happen if they were to confess their sins to the leaders of the church? Most said they wouldn't confess as they would probably be humiliated or punished. They made it clear that church wasn't a safe place to be honest about ourselves. Many believe that churches are more concerned about preserving their "good name" than they are about leading people who have sinned to confession and repentance, even long-time church members.

To remove a person from

a church if they confess their sin doesn't deal with the sin. Sin will exist until it's confessed and there's repentance. The fact that churches are not considered safe for the confession of sin simply perpetuates the practice of it. This in turn relates directly to the awful abuses carried out in many churches.

Theologically, there can never be such a thing as a safe church until churches make confession of sin a safe thing to do. When we get that right, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ might begin to make much more sense.

BIG BANG

Sven Ostring, NSW

Thank you, Stephen, for sharing your reflections on Dawkins' book *The God Delusion* (Feature, March 19). Wouldn't it be amazing if most people who read this book had their faith in God confirmed like you did? I appreciate the particular reasons for the existence of God you outlined.

While you are technically correct about the definition of supernatural, most atheistic scientists would hold to a more specific definition: that the supernatural refers to events and processes that are directly caused by conscious personal supernatural agents. Naturalistic scientists would extend the definition of natural laws to describe any impersonal unconscious processes that naturally occur beyond this universe or may have caused this universe to come into existence. In this more specific sense, atheistic scientists would not believe in the supernatural.

I believe it is unwise for individual Adventists or the entire Adventist Church to make

a wholehearted, unreserved commitment to the standard Big Bang theory. Cosmologists themselves are not necessarily committed to this theory. For example, there is the Hartle-Hawking cosmological model, which is an attempt to remove the initial cosmological singularity using quantum cosmology [among others].

As William Lane Craig has observed, "Cosmological models come cheap. . . You can develop any kind of model that you want." Since the probability that the standard Big Bang model will be replaced is very real . . . committing ourselves to the Big Bang theory is ill-advised.

Keep up the great work—I appreciate the articles you write for *Record*.

A QUESTION OF WHY

Harwood Lockton, NSW

Why? Why? Why was this letter, "A question of why" (March 19), published in this form? Its judgemental and near defamatory language does not represent the Adventist Church nor does its assertion about the basis of our faith.

The centre of our faith is Jesus Christ—His death and resurrection, not prophecy. I recall a painting that appeared in the Church's *Ministry* magazine sometime after the 9/11 catastrophe. It depicted the world's major political leaders sitting together. Next to George W Bush was Osama Bin Laden. Washing the feet of these leaders was Jesus—Bin Laden was next in line.

Christ does not reject anyone, however "evil" they might be in the eyes of some. Thank God for His graciousness. May we—in our language and judgement of others—reflect that graciousness.

WEDDING



Palasin–Ongcal.
Ctace Palasin and
Mercy Ongcal
were married

20.12.15 in Granville church, NSW. Many friends from the Sydney Adventist Filipino church (Filoship) and the Fountain in the City church made a special effort to make Ctace and Mercy's wedding a special day.

Andrew Skeggs

OBITUARIES

Boongarts, Rebecca, born 7.7.1948 in Ongoy, Goroka, PNG; died 4.2.16 in Redland Bay Hospital, Qld. She was buried at Pinaroo Lawn Cemetery on 12.2.16. She is survived by her children: Robyn and Norma (Townsville); grandchildren Lotoya (Bribie Island) and Shekaan (Nudgee). Rebecca will be sadly missed by her family and friends.

Humberto Rivera

Clark, Margaret Florence (nee Johnson), born 15.10.1930 in Yarra Junction, Vic; died 15.10.15 in Mildura, on her 85th birthday. In 1955 she married Lionel Clark. She was predeceased by her husband and siblings Alan, Teddy, David and Lesley Wright. She is survived by sons Dale (Mt Isa, Qld), and Gavin and Stephanie (Armidale, NSW); two granddaughters Sophie and Monique; great-grandson Bentley; and her brother Ken (Wesburn). A quiet Christian lady, Margaret was loved by all who knew her. She was a much-loved aunt, great-aunt and great-great aunt. A graveside service was officiated by one of her many nephews, Pastor Daron Pratt. He counted it an honour to repay Margaret for the role she had played in his life.

Daron Pratt

Cockayne, Dulcie Joan (nee Cartledge), born 22.5.1922 in Sydney, NSW; died 16.2.16 in Advent-Care Nunawading, Vic. She was

predeceased by her son Peter in 2006 and grandchild Karlee in 2013. She is survived by her children and their spouses: Rosemarie and Ron, Sandra and John; grandchildren Naomi, Sharnee, Neisha and Joel; and great-grandchildren Odessa and Alfie (all of Melbourne).

Lindy Sperring



Cowley, Edward Phillip, born 14.1.1921 in Mackay, Qld; died 20.2.16 in Victoria

Point. On 28.12.1942 he married Edna Lillian Smyth in Townsville, Qld. He was predeceased by his son Philip in 2001 and his wife in 2012. He is survived by his sons Owen and Denise (Hervey Bay), Dale and Suzanne (Glass House Mountains) and daughters Diane and Bert Burrows (Toowoomba) and Janell and Gerard Metz (Palmerston North, NZ); 12 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. Ted's family were foundation members of the Adventist church in Mackay in 1908. Ted generously provided audiovisual control systems in various churches where he was a member.

David Edgar



Dittmer, John Richard, born in Fremantle, WA; died in Adventist Residential Care,

Rossmoyne. He married Aidene Rita Bryan. He was predeceased by his wife and his grandson Darian. He is survived by children Marie Byfield (Perth), John and Elizabeth (Cooranbong, NSW), Margaret and David Tressler (Perth, WA), and Tricia and Martin Cabalt (Perth); 12 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren. John was a practical Christian gentleman who loved God and his family dearly. He worked as a plumber most of his life to provide a Christian education for his children. John loved speedway motorbike racing, land yacht building and racing, steam

engines, inventing, singing, comedy and golf. His quiet, cheerful nature, wry smile, witty sayings and keen sense of humour will be greatly missed.

Roger Millist



Dunn, Edna Lucille, born 10.3.1920 in Perth, WA; died 5.2.16 in Adventist Residen-

tial Care, Perth. She was predeceased by her mother Clara Dunn in 1974. She is survived by her sisters Mavis McDowell (Perth) and Rowena Phillips (Lilydale, Vic); and 23 nieces and nephews. Edna's life was lived in service to others. At 14 she began work in the Sanitarium factory in Carmel, WA, to support her mother and five siblings following the death of her father. She trained as a nurse at Sydney Adventist Hospital and worked in rural towns and communities throughout WA before settling back in Perth. Edna cared for her mother and was a second mother to many of her nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. Edna loved nature and gardening, and she eagerly anticipated meeting Jesus in the garden of the New Earth.

Roger Millist

Ericoli, Gunter William, born 12.4.1944 in Augsburg, Germany; died 18.2.16 in Neringah Hospital, Wahroonga, NSW. He is survived by his sister Rosie (Augsburg, Germany); wife Jenny (Sydney, NSW); sons and their spouses Michael and Kylie, and Christopher and Michelle (Sydney); and two grandchildren Eva and Charlie. Gunter grew up in Germany where he joined the Vienna Boys' Choir as a soloist in 1953-54 and later sang with the Regensburg Boys' Choir from 1954-1958. He arrived in Australia in 1962 and commenced working at the ABC as a film trainer and later a sound recordist. He worked on local

productions across Australia. Gunter received a Best Achievement in Sound Award in 2001 and the Australian Centenary Medal in the Queen's New Year's Honours List.

Barry Wright

Godber, Elaine Varley (nee Potter), born 25.4.1929 in Binnaway, NSW; died 17.2.16 in Cooranbong. In 1953 she married Ian Godber. She is survived by her husband (Cooranbong); and children: Peter (Guyra), Des (Perth, WA), Maree Hawken (Cooranbong, NSW) and Malcolm (Brisbane, Qld). Elaine was a godly woman who served her husband, family, church and community with the strength she gained from her Saviour. She will be remembered for her devotion to her Lord and her family.

Kenn Duke

Harding, Kathleen Ruth (nee Reid), born 27.3.1936; died 18.1.16 in her sleep at home in Oxford, NZ. She grew up as a member of the Church and the Reid family in Oxford, and was a faithful, praying member all her life. She married Noel Harding, who predeceased her, and they raised five children: Carol, Annette, Sharon, Ronald and Paul. Kath was loved by her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She never stopped smiling or praying for her offspring.

Gordon Gosset



Keane, Sidney James, born 12.6.1926 in Balmain, NSW; died 21.11.15 in Hervey Bay,

Qld. On 13.12.1949 he married Marjorie Olive Keane, who predeceased him. He is survived by his children and their spouses: Russell and Lorraine, Wendy and Dave Richardson, and Phillip; grandchildren: Shannon, Melinda, Cassandra, Gabriel, Chloe and Sarah; and great-grandchildren: Lilly, Tom, Daniel, Joseph and Odette. Sid grabbed life with

SUPPORTING MINISTRY POSITION

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The above ministry is independent of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organisation but is supportive of the Church.

both hands. He loved his God, his family, music and art. He and Marjorie sang for many church missions and he directed choral performances. They retired to Hervey Bay and enjoyed fishing. For 22 years Sid ran an art studio with up to 55 students every week.

France Williams, Gary Roberts

McDougall, Lois (nee Harper), born 8.9.1955 in Brisbane, Qld; died 17.10.15 in Murgon. On 4.12.1977 she married Fran Joseph Pokorny. She married James McDougall on 28.6.1998. She is survived by her husband (Proston); children Daniel (Dalby) and Keren (Cleveland); and two grandchildren Paul Joseph and Latisha. Lois loved sitting at the feet of Jesus feasting on His Word and developing a working relationship with Him, and then sharing with those in need the words of life that she discovered. Her cheery smile is sadly missed.

Gideon Okesene

Partridge, Maureen (nee Lily), died 17.12.15, aged 90 years, at the St Albans Retirement Vil-

lage, Canterbury, NZ, where she had been in care for 10 years. Maureen was the dearly loved wife of Keith for 64 years. She was the much-loved mother and mother-in-law of Lynda and Kevin, Sharon and Colin, Gwenda and Graham, David and Marilyn, and Leanne (Canada); and loved and cherished Nana of all her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Maureen loved the Lord, her family and flowers.

Gordon Gosset

Reynolds, Ivy Mary (nee Wells), born 3.11.1914 in Durrington, UK; died 3.2.16 in Adventist Residential Care, Rossmoyne, WA. On 5.11.1935 she married Charles Lawrence (Lon) Reynolds, who predeceased her. She is survived by her children: Lynton and Barbara (Capel), Thelma Payne (Fremantle), Lawreen and Garry McIver (Bunbury), Glenn (Sno) and Wendy (Perth), Elaine and David Johanson (Bunbury); 10 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and six great-great-grandchildren. Ivy lived a very full and rewarding 101 years. Her bright, cheerful smile and warm,

caring nature endeared her to everyone. Ivy held many roles for in the Capel church. Jesus was always the centre of her life and her constant Companion through her joys and sorrows. She joyfully told everyone that her greatest desire was to see the face of Jesus.

Roger Millist

ADVERTISEMENTS

Grey Nomads camp—Adventist Alpine Village, October 3-8, 2016. Plan now to attend the South New South Wales Conference Grey Nomads camp for a spiritual feast and social fellowship at Adventist Alpine Village, Jindabyne, NSW. Set in the beauty of the Australian Southern Alps, numbers are limited to 150 attendees. To receive an application form and details of accommodation options please contact Robyn Howie. Phone: (02) 6249 6822 or email <robynhowie@adventist.org.au>.

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Finally . . .

One generation plants trees; another sits in their shade.
—Chinese proverb

Next RECORD May 7

POSITIONS VACANT

■ **Specialists/managers/leaders—ADRA (South Pacific Division) (Wahroonga, NSW)** is seeking expressions of interest from suitable candidates who are specialists in the area of leadership and strategic management within the NGO context. The ideal candidates will provide visionary and strategic leadership to local ADRA offices in the South Pacific to fulfil its mission as the humanitarian development and relief agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The role ensures that the quality of ADRA's humanitarian aid and community development programming is participatory, innovative and results in positive impacts in the lives of beneficiaries. The role would also make certain that ADRA's administrative operation is professional, efficient, financially accountable and sustainable, provides a positive and challenging work environment for personnel, and is an exemplary model of Seventh-day Adventist values. For more information visit <www.adventistemployment.org.au>. Please send a letter of interest, your latest CV and three references, including one from your church pastor, to: Human Resources, Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Limited, Locked Bag 2014, Wahroonga, NSW 2076 Australia; email: <hr@adventist.org.au>; fax: (02) 9489 0943.

■ **Supporter relations officer—ADRA Australia (Wahroonga, NSW).** The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Australia is seeking a supporter relations officer with exceptional interpersonal, customer service and administration skills to take on the responsibility of nurturing and building relationships and engaging supporters. The position will oversee and respond to inbound inquiries, coordinate and resource fundraising events and activities, manage ADRA's fundraising database and fundraising platforms as well as other reception and fundraising duties. All enquiries to Aleksandra Ewing, ADRA Australia, phone (02) 9489 5488 or <aleksandraewing@adra.org.au>. Further information including a job description is available on both the Adventist Employment and ADRA websites. Please submit your latest CV, along with a letter of

application addressing the selection criteria, to <alisonyoung@adra.org.au>. Applications close **April 25, 2016.**

■ **Director, perioperative and critical care—Adventist Health-Care Ltd (Wahroonga, NSW).** Please see <www.sah.org.au> for full position details. The successful candidate will have operational responsibility for the perioperative and critical care service within the nursing structure, ensuring provision of the highest level of patient care, development and monitoring of budgets, business plans and human resources. For a position description, please contact Moran Wasson, nursing executive via <moran.wasson@sah.org.au> or (02) 9487 9431. Applications should include a cover letter addressing the selection criteria and curriculum vitae, together with the names, addresses and contact numbers of three referees. Applications close **April 22, 2016.**

■ **Regional humanitarian advisor (ADRA South Pacific)—South Pacific Division (Wahroonga, NSW).** The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited is seeking an experienced individual to be responsible for facilitating the development and management of the humanitarian aid program for ADRA and the Church in the South Pacific region. This two-year contract role will report to the director of ADRA South Pacific. The successful candidate must be eligible to work in Australia and be available to commence in July 2016. For the full selection criteria please visit the South Pacific Division's Human Resources website on <www.adventistemployment.org.au>. All applications, including a cover letter, CV, three work related referees and the contact details of your Adventist church pastor, must be forwarded to: Human Resources, Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Ltd, Locked Bag 2014, Wahroonga, NSW 2076, Australia; email <hr@adventist.org.au>; or fax (02) 9489 0943. Applications close **May 29, 2016.**

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