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# Adventist Record

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# OPEN HOME

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ADVENTIST CHURCH *in Australia*

## Adventist doctor named NSW Senior of the Year

*Sydney, New South Wales*

Adventist doctor John Knight has been awarded NSW Senior Australian of the Year.

Dr Knight, 89, said he was surprised to receive the award, which was presented to him by the Premier Mike Baird at a special function on November 7.

"You don't look for it, you don't expect it and all of a sudden you are shaking hands with the Premier who is saying nice things to you," Dr Knight said.

In 1973, he and his late wife Noreen established Medi-Aid Centre Foundation, a charity that provides accommodation for the elderly, particularly those who are frail, have no family support and no home.

Dr Knight has battled through heartbreak, personal and financial loss and cancer, but he has kept buying property for Medi-Aid and now has almost 1000 investments that are rented out for a small fee.

"My dad used to be the chaplain at the San [Sydney Adventist Hospital] at Wahroonga," he said. "He used to say the person who gives really gets more out of it than the person who is receiving it.

"Some of [those I have helped] are the nicest people who have just had bad luck or something goes wrong.

"We enjoy [helping them] and I have a good team."

Dr Knight, also known as Dr James Wright, answered

the nation's medical queries in print, radio and as a regular guest on daytime variety show *Midday with Ray Martin* for 30 years. He was also a regular guest on Adventist Media's *Record InFocus* program and has had a short daily health segment on Sydney radio station 2GB since 1980. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1998.



Dr John Knight.

A regular attendee at Fox Valley church, Dr Knight is described as a "very encouraging man" with a "generous and caring heart" by the church's pastor Mark Baines.

"Charisma, humour and warmth exude from Doc Wright every time he greets me on Sabbath," Pastor Baines said.

"He's always asking about the welfare of my little boys and tells me to enjoy them while they're young." — Tracey Bridcutt

## New leader appointed for Pacific Adventist University

*Koiari Park, Papua New Guinea*

The president of an Adventist university in Mexico, Dr Raul Lozano, has accepted the call to head up Pacific Adventist University (PAU) on the outskirts of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

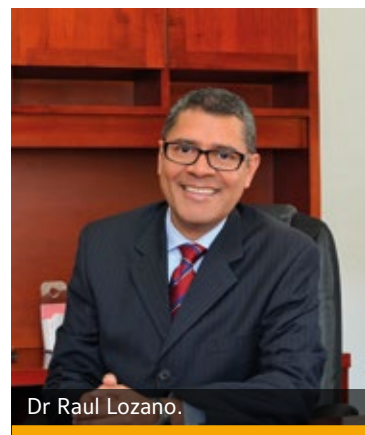
In his acceptance letter to the General Conference, Dr Lozano said he and his family had carefully considered and prayed about the appointment, which he described as a great honour. "It is my desire to collaborate with all my strength, influence and speech in the finishing of the preaching of the gospel so that Jesus our Lord may return soon," he said in his letter.

Dr Lozano currently heads up Linda Vista University in Chiapas state, Mexico, an Adventist institution that graduates bachelor and masters students in education, business, science, theology and information technology. Mexico is part of the Church's largest world region by membership, the Inter-American Division, where 3.7 million people are officially listed as Adventists. A move to the South Pacific Division has necessitated the involvement of the General Conference world headquarters.

Dr Lozano will have big shoes to fill. Outgoing vice-chancellor Professor Ben Thomas has served at PAU for

nine years, six of those in his current position. In that time student numbers have more than doubled, with 2017 enrolments expected to exceed 1200. Professor Thomas has overseen multiple building projects—classrooms and accommodation—as well as formalising links with Atoifi School of Nursing in Solomon Islands and strengthening PAU's research and pastoral programs.

"It has been a tremendous and rewarding journey that we have undertaken together," said Professor Thomas. "I am honoured to have been able to work with the people of the Pacific in such close collaboration. Dr Lozano is expected to arrive in early February, and I look forward to introducing him to key players in PNG and ensuring a smooth transition." — Kent Kingston



Dr Raul Lozano.

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## The twin towers

Jarrod Stackelroth

It was our first visit to New York. We were only there for 24 hours—but my wife and I were determined to make the most of it. Naturally, we ended up at the World Trade Centre site, where, on September 11, 2001, two titans of the NYC skyline came crashing down, changing the world forever. We weren't sure how we would feel about visiting the monument.

In the ground, where the buildings once stood, are two dark squares. If you approach the edge and look over, you see a pool of water, which flows into an inner square, forming a waterfall in the middle. It has the appearance of flowing into nothing. Around the square, the names of the fallen are written. As you read the names some have flowers stuck into them, but most are alike, too many to comprehend, engraved on the face of the monument. Yet one especially stood out to me. It said: "Renee and her unborn child." We found two or three like this. For some reason those names moved me more than the others.

Most of us can remember where we were on that day. Two towers, two monuments to man's endeavour and enterprise, came down. However, it was not just lives that were ended and bricks and mortar destroyed that day. Since then attitudes have adapted, morals have moved and there is a new normal. Society, especially Western society, seems to have changed in a fundamental way.

Two words: conceit and contempt. These twin towers have become natural reactions to anything we disagree with or oppose. They have been incubated by the internet, fed by the media and fostered by our own innate sense of insecurity and comparison. From the height of these towers it's easy to sling stones and mud.

This was brought home to me by another 9/11—this time, this year—the day Donald Trump won the presidential election.<sup>1</sup> I am not going to comment on the outcome. But I need to comment on the reactions surrounding the presidential campaign.

Conceit is a feeling that I am better than you and contempt follows: a feeling of disgust and dismissal. Why are they such a problem?

They shut down discussion, debate and disagreement.

They create an "us versus them" paradigm. They cause us to treat people as less than human.

Conceit is wrapped up in the sin of pride. The media didn't take Trump seriously. He was a walking, talking meme. A joke. It meant that they underestimated him. It gave his campaign energy as those disillusioned with the status quo silently supported his strategy of disruption.

Contempt is poisonous because it represents loss of respect. Marriage expert John Gottman lists contempt as one of the greatest dangers to a marriage. It's the very mindset that is now commonly displayed against Christians. Karl Faase, pastor and social commentator, says that as Christians we have lost our social licence. In other words the influence we used to have on society is gone.

Worse, if we speak up or have an opinion on anything, we are treated with contempt. And so faith in a Creator God, support of traditional marriage or opposition to abortion are not taken on their merits or able to be rationally discussed. Conversation is shut down. We are labelled.

And yet Christians too are playing the conceit and contempt game. My news feed was filled with the voices of Christians who had fallen into the contempt trap, blaming white men for the US election result and falling into the hatred and prejudice that they are supposed to stand against. Proverbs 18:3 says, "when wickedness comes, so does contempt . . ."

As Christians, we must put thought into how we respond to situations (especially those we don't like), what we share online and our attitudes, because of Who we represent.

We should: 1) question everything 2) take our time before jumping to conclusions or judgements 3) try to see the image of God in every human being, and 4) disagree with ideas and policies, not people.

Jesus showed us how to deal with conceit and contempt. He called out conceit and He prayed for His enemies who showed Him contempt. May we do the same.

1. Yes, I am aware Americans do dates backwards. Bear with me.

Jarrod Stackelroth is editor of Adventist Record.

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You see adults behaving worse than tantrum-throwing children in parliaments around the world. You see it on the news—fist fights, hair-pulling and chair throwing. You hear it—verbal abuse, sarcasm and inappropriate language. “Question Time” is often when such antics occur.

At the recent South Pacific Division year-end meetings we had an open “Question Time” when executive committee members asked questions about work and issues in the Church. This was the most dynamic time of the entire two days of meetings. Most of the time is spent reviewing reports and voting policies. Accountability is vital but it can become somewhat routine. But not Question Time.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is structured as a people’s movement. Executive committee members are the representatives of the people. They hold the leaders accountable and should have the opportunity to raise the issues that concern the people they represent. Thus Question Time.

Involving and retaining young adults in the Church, children’s, youth and teen Sabbath School resources, equality of women in church leadership, church signage and branding were the issues raised. Because the grassroots do not often have the opportunity to talk directly to General Conference personnel many of these items were addressed to Dr GT Ing, secretary, Dr Ella Simmons, vice-president and Tim Aka, associate GC treasurer. There were differences of opinion expressed but the GC leaders were open to hearing from SPD constituents. Motions on equality of women and Sabbath School resources for children to youth were voted to pass onto the GC. And all this occurred without anyone raising their voice or any physical violence!

I’m proud of the SPD executive—we do desire to be a disciple-making movement.

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



## Is this the end?

Kent Kingston

Organisations decline and there’s no human reason to expect that the Adventist Church is exempt.

In 1965 psychologist Bruce Tucker came up with five memorable labels for the stages of organisational development: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning.

“Forming” is exciting—it’s when a group has its first enthusiasm and begins to work spontaneously towards a goal. But you’ll never see a sequel to *Tell the World*. Because the next chapters of our Church’s history deal with the difficult “storming” phase: 1888, the Kelloggs, Ellen White’s removal to far-off Australia. Not particularly inspirational.

Since the Adventist Church’s establishment in 1863, there has certainly been a lot of “norming”—establishing leadership, institutions, official statements—and “performing”—membership growth to nearly 20 million and an incredible global impact in health and education.

So far our denomination has followed the inexorable trajectory of organisational development—from a grassroots movement to an established institution. “Adjourning” is next. The organisation is approaching the end of its natural life cycle.

The plateauing of membership numbers in parts of the world where Adventism is the oldest could be seen as an early sign of organisational decline, along with ageing demographics and an increasing willingness to minimise our peculiarities. Is this the end? Here are three strategies that may help us avoid the inevitable:

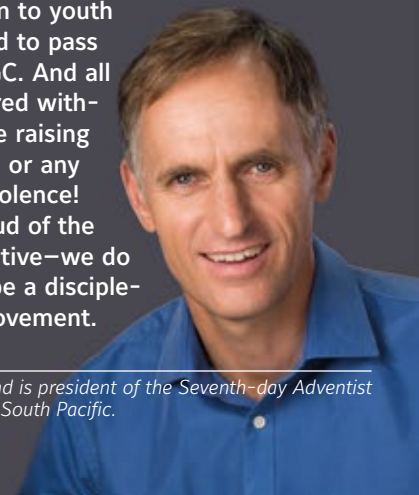
**1. Empower the margins.** To find the authentic spirit of movement Adventism look to new converts, church plants, student outreach groups, pioneer missionaries and emerging ministries. That’s where the action is. Lines are increasingly blurred as you approach the borders. Budgets are hazy, plans are fluid. But if Adventism is to recover its movement mentality it needs to nurture the innovation at its margins—to offer effective support without strangling fresh initiatives in red tape.

**2. Revitalise the centre.** Adventism is institutionalised. It has to be. Legally, financially and in terms of human resources, church leaders are accountable for their decisions. But it’s so easy to get bogged down in the bureaucracy and forget the reasons these institutions exist. To reverse this “mission drift” we need to find ways to increase the exposure of institutional personnel to the frontlines as well as improving the representation of innovators at key decision-making forums. Meaningful shifts in organisational culture will only be achieved by structural change—streamlining, transparency, responsiveness, democratisation.

**3. First things first.** It’s a pity Dr Ted Wilson’s “Revival and Reformation” is now yesterday’s catchcry, because it encapsulates a message we need to keep hearing. Whether we’re on the cutting edge of mission efforts or deep in the bowels of the denomination, we need Jesus. All the clever strategies in the world will flounder unless there is genuine spiritual power infusing us and driving us forward.

Interestingly, theorists stress that organisational decline is not necessarily a bad thing. A legitimate reason—surely the best reason—for an organisation to end its existence is that it has achieved its goals. I’m looking forward to that final committee meeting, adjourned due to an unexpected shout and trumpet blast from the skies.

Kent Kingston is assistant editor for Adventist Media.





### Blasphemy!

At least 50,000 protesters in Jakarta, Indonesia, called for the province's Christian governor, Basuki Purnama, to be prosecuted for criticising Islamists who misinterpret the Qur'an. An elderly man died after police used tear gas and a number of others were hurt in the melee, with some protesters calling for the governor's death. —*Al Jazeera*



### Demon slayer

Tom Cruise is set to star in a Methuselah movie of dubious biblical accuracy. Rather than relying on the scant Scriptural references to the oldest human who ever lived, the script draws from the apocryphal book of Enoch, which contains tales of Methuselah defeating demons with a magical sword. —*World Religion News*



### No option

Three families from Fiji's rural Ra district have been told they cannot continue to home-school their children as the nation's education policies do not allow it. The families are organic farmers and members of an independent Adventist group who want to protect their children from negative influences at school. —*Fiji Times*



### Watch your mouth

An Adventist lay preacher from Georgia, USA, has taken his religious discrimination suit to the federal court. In 2014, an offer to work for the state public health department was rescinded after human resources personnel reviewed Dr Eric Walsh's YouTube sermons, which included statements on homosexuality, Islam, Catholicism and evolution. —*Daily Caller*



### They're out there

Israeli archaeologists will spend three years carefully searching caves near the Dead Sea, believing that more ancient manuscripts await discovery. There are fears that looters are selling the priceless artefacts on the black market. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948 electrified Bible scholars and historians. —*ABC News*



### Getting involved

An Adventist church in north London, UK, has partnered with emergency services and politicians to fight gang and knife crime. The congregation is largely Afro-Caribbean and well-placed to provide positive links for alienated local youth. Local MP David Lammy said Adventists should do good works every day of the week. —*BUC News*

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## Creating vibrant youth for Christ in Fiji

Suva, Fiji

"Vibrant Youth for Christ" was the theme of an inaugural leadership summit held recently in Suva, Fiji.

More than 130 participants from around the country attended the three-and-a-half-day event at the Fiji Mission Conference Centre.

"This is the first time we have ever run a leadership training session specifically for youth," said Pastor Fifita Vatulesi, youth director for the Fiji Mission. "Our objective is to empower and strengthen youth leaders and make sure they are aligned with the Church's focus—discipleship, media, health and mission to the cities."

The summit was opened by Pastor Luke Narabe, president of the Fiji Mission, who talked about the importance of encouraging youth to be leaders by giving them greater responsibility, praying for them and encouraging them to be creative in ministry based on biblical principles.

Participants also had the opportunity to serve during the summit, taking donations and gifts to a nursing home, juvenile rehabilitation centre and women's crisis refuge.

"It was an inspiring event—we plan to hold events like this twice every five years," Pastor Vatulesi said. "We want to make sure our youth leaders in Fiji are equipped with the right resources and skills to do effective ministry and help make disciples for Jesus." —Vania Chew



People of all ages took part in the training.

## Former Australian PM joins San fun run

Wahroonga, New South Wales

Former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott was among more than 600 entrants who participated in the Sydney Adventist Hospital's Run For Life on November 13.

Mr Abbott officially started the first race and competed with San Foundation managing director Barbara Ward and hospital CEO Phil Currie. Federal MP Paul Fletcher and State MP Jonathan O'Dea also took part in the event, which

included a 10km run, 5km run and 5km walk.

The annual fun run, organised by the San Foundation, raised almost \$A80,000 for the hospital's Integrated Cancer Centre and services for cancer patients.

The 5km walk was especially enjoyed by families, many of whom participated for loved ones affected by cancer.

Several San doctors and nurses also took part in the event. —Tracey Bridcutt



Phil Currie with Tony Abbott.

## Adventists feature at lifestyle medicine conference

Melbourne, Victoria

"It's time for a change" was the theme of the recent Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine (ASLM) Conference held in Melbourne (November 4-6).

For Adventists, lifestyle health is in our DNA—and has been for more than 150 years. It is no wonder then that of the 400 people attending from around the world, 50 were Adventists.

Adventists also featured prominently as speakers in the program. Dr George Guthrie, from Florida, president of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM), made

the opening remarks, which featured aspects of Adventist health history and the pioneering work of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

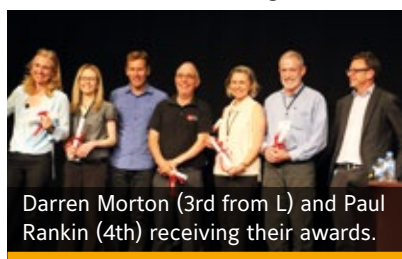
Dr Wayne Designer, from Loma Linda, Cali-

fornia, a previous ACLM president, was also a key speaker. Dr Kate Marsh, a dietitian, educator and author, spoke on managing diabetes with a plant-based diet and referenced the Adventist Health Studies conducted by Loma Linda University researchers.

Dr Paul Rankin, from the Lifestyle Medicine Institute (Sanitarium Health & Wellbeing), reported on published and about-to-be-published Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) studies. Dr Darren Morton, from Avondale College of Higher Education, featured research conducted by the Lifestyle Research Centre and also reported on a new emotional health program that he has recently trialled.

Drs Rankin and Morton were among six recipients of ASLM fellowships awarded during the closing session of the conference.

Avondale was also acknowledged as one of the two tertiary institutions in Australia providing accredited post graduate lifestyle education. —Kevin Price



Darren Morton (3rd from L) and Paul Rankin (4th) receiving their awards.





## DIGGING INTO THE WORD

Gary Webster

### Footsteps of Jesus 2017

The first century steps leading to Jerusalem's Temple Mount are one of the few places where one can confidently say, "I am walking where Jesus walked—in His footsteps." We are each called to declare Him who called us out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. As individuals and churches we can be more effective this coming new year if we follow Christ's footsteps in how He drew people to God.

**Read** 1 Peter 2:9.

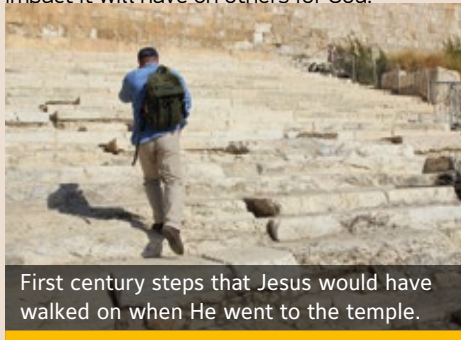
Firstly, like Jesus, we must walk with God by being filled with the Spirit. Only then can the life of God flow from us to others. To walk with God is not just to read His Word and pray, but to love Him and walk in obedience to His Word. Such loving faithfulness, like Daniel and his friends, and Desmond Doss, leads to a tremendous impact on others for God.

**Read** Mark 1:35; Luke 3:21,22; 4:1,14; 5:16; John 14:31; 15:9,10; Daniel 3:16-18,28.

Second, Jesus belonged to an evangelistic small group who cared for and encouraged each person in God's mission to the lost. Thirdly, Jesus went about doing good to others, especially through health and healing ministry.

**Read** Mark 3:14; Hebrews 10:24,25; Acts 10:38.

Finally, Jesus shared the gospel by words, both one-on-one and publicly, doing it prophetically with an urgency. Sadly some churches and individuals do not proclaim the gospel publicly or privately in the context of the three angels' messages. It is part of Christ's method to reach end-time people. This coming new year determine to walk in all Christ's footsteps and see the tremendous impact it will have on others for God.



First century steps that Jesus would have walked on when He went to the temple.

## Year-end meetings go paperless

Wahroonga, New South Wales



Kelvin Peuser, longest-serving associate CFO.

For the first time, the end-of-year South Pacific Division (SPD) executive meetings, held November 14-17, were paperless.

While there were a few teething problems, everyone was able to access the agenda, reports and background information on their laptop, tablet or smart phone, saving reams of paper in the process.

"We wanted to save the forests and be better stewards of God's creation,"

said SPD president Pastor Glenn Townend.

The experiment was successful, with only one delegate unable to access the software program Convene. The program also allowed secret voting and document security.

Another new initiative applied to the meetings was an open question forum—an hour set aside where delegates could raise issues of concern with General Conference and SPD leaders that were not on the agenda. Questions raised included youth retention rates, the Gracelink children's Sabbath School resource and SPD branding.

"The meetings moved quickly," said Pastor Townend. "Even on points of disagreement, there was a clear focus that we wanted to get on with God's business of making more and better disciples. And the reports reflected that. They were very focused on how God is changing people's lives."

Reports were presented by the secretary and CFO, along with all the Division entities, including Avondale College, Pacific Adventist University, Adventist Health Food, Adventist HealthCare and Adventist Media.

The secretary's report, presented by Pastor Lionel Smith, highlighted that the SPD's rate of apostasy is higher than the world average. (*Adventist Record* will publish a full report online). The highlight of the CFO's report, presented by Rodney Brady, was that tithe has risen by almost 8 per cent across the Division.

The executive voted to make American Samoa an attached field of the Trans Pacific Union Mission (TPUM). It had been part of the Samoas-Tokelau Mission. It was also decided to rename the North-East Papua Mission (PNG), the Northern and Milne Bay Mission.

Final amendments were made to the South Pacific edition of the Church Manual, which includes regional and cultural specific issues. It will be available in early 2017.

The other main changes were regarding personnel. Kelvin Peuser, the longest-serving associate CFO in SPD history, is leaving after 16 years to become vice-president of finance and infrastructure at Avondale College of Higher Education. A prayer and vote of thanks were given to recognise Mr Peuser's service.

"I have really admired the thoroughness he has applied to the things he is responsible for to make sure he makes the right decisions," Mr Brady said.

Taking Mr Peuser's place is current Australian Union Conference CFO Francois Keet. Mr Keet spent five years in TPUM prior to his role at the AUC. Before that he was at Avondale College filling the role Mr Peuser is moving to. He has worked for GCAST as an auditor and in South Africa as a banker.

"Francois has a very wide background in the Church and outside the Church in financial matters, seeing things from a number of different angles," Pastor Townend said. "I am looking forward to working with him again."

—Jarrod Stackelroth





### Pint-sized visitors bring joy

Victoria Point Adventist Aged Care (Qld) recently had children from a nearby early learning centre join them for a day. The children sang with the residents, shared their favourite books, and gave plenty of affection through hugs and kisses. "It was a beautiful morning for both the children and the residents, and has created opportunities for an ongoing friendship," said lifestyle coordinator Patty Gillespie. — *Patty Gillespie*



### Aore graduation blessings

Aore Adventist Academy in Vanuatu recently held its 2016 graduation weekend. A special church service was held on the Sabbath, with 30 students baptised that same afternoon. The celebrations concluded on Sunday, with the graduations of more than 50 students in a colourfully decorated hall. — *Maritza Brunt*



### Avondale advocacy takes root

Staff members and students from Avondale College (NSW) collected 100kg of rubbish and planted 140 trees in a practical demonstration of advocacy during Green Week at Avondale. Other activities included a bicycle riding challenge and rubbish awareness campaign. Green Week is "an expression of Avondale's commitment to caring for God's creation," said senior lecturer Dr Brad Watson. — *Bethany Morrow*



### Workshop a blooming success

Beautiful blooms became stunning headwear in a recent fundraising initiative organised by Fox Valley church (NSW) member Hannah McDonald. Twenty-five participants attended the flower crowns workshop, which was a fundraiser for juveniles in crisis. A group from Ms McDonald's church has been supporting a number of teenagers who are facing significant challenges in their lives. "The idea is that we are going to work with them, build relationships and help them get on a better path," she said. — *Tracey Bridcutt*



### Inaugural prayer conference

North New South Wales (NNSW) Conference recently held its first prayer conference. More than 200 people attended the event, held at Stuarts Point Convention Centre, where Pastor Roy Rugless (USA) spoke on the theme, "If my people pray for the latter rain". "Since the conference, many people have gone back to their churches to encourage them to meet and pray for revival early in the morning," said Colin Hone, director of Prayer Ministries for the Conference. — *NorthPoint*



### Archaeological roadshow

An archaeological display housed in a semi-trailer is set to become a reality, with Avondale College chaplain Dr Wayne French and the North NSW Conference developing and launching this unique evangelistic resource. "Archaeology remains one of the best ways to bring to people's minds that the Bible is a trustworthy book," said NNSW president Pastor Justin Lawman. — *Adele Nash*



### Karalundi celebrates

More than 200 people gathered at Karalundi Aboriginal Education Centre (WA) to celebrate 30 years since the re-opening of the centre. The weekend was filled with music, baptisms, baby dedications and a birthday cake. A special candle-lighting ceremony also honoured the original Karalundi founding elders, and gave a charge to the new generation. — *Keith Godfrey*



### Crafty way to help others

Members of a craft group who meet weekly at Dora Creek church (NSW) have been busy making baby wraps to send to Solomon Islands. The group of women and girls, aged eight to 80, aim to supply more than 50 wraps to needy mothers in the outlying islands. They will be delivered by *Medisonship*, an Adventist ministry's medical support vessel, and will be the second delivery of wraps this year after 55 were dispatched in June. — *Steve Boughton*



# CYBER-CHURCH:

## online evangelism for the digital age

by Maritza Brunt

IMAGINE YOUR TYPICAL CHURCH SERVICE. THERE'S A welcome, prayer and a few songs. A children's story precludes a sermon and everything concludes with a benediction. Now, imagine experiencing all of this without leaving your bedroom. No—it's not Hope Channel or FaithFM. It's church, but unlike anything you've experienced before.

It's called *Second Life*, an online world where players can create virtual representations of themselves. It differs from other online virtual simulations, such as the popular video game *The Sims*, in that each virtual character on the site is actually controlled by a real person. Freely accessible to anyone with a computer and internet access, activities include exploring the world, building, shopping, trading virtual property and services with other virtual residents, and participating in individual and group activities. And one of these individual and group activities includes participating in a church service.

"The development of online virtual worlds created a new space that allowed people from all over the globe to meet and connect," says Bob Curtice, project coordinator for *Second Life* from the USA. "But it wasn't long before a few Seventh-day Adventists entered this particular virtual world and had the idea of a mission outreach effort."

In September 2010, the "Bible Prophecy Island" project began, with three members of the "Adventists of Second Life" group starting the first Seventh-day Adventist Church in *Second Life*. Regular weekly church services have been

continuing ever since for online members from Australia, Brazil and the US. In 2011, the group successfully applied for Global Mission Project funding, using the money to expand the church.

"This church is unique because it can support up to eight services conducted in different time zones each Sabbath," Mr Curtice explains. "In one of the US services, we're currently showing a live broadcast from Granite Bay Adventist Church (California) every Sabbath morning."

However, the *Second Life* Adventist Church is more than just a different way of doing church; it's an evangelism effort that has the potential to reach thousands of online players.

"Of the regular participants in our weekly Bible studies and church services, more than half aren't members and are searching for Jesus," Mr Curtice says. "Use of translator tools allows people of different languages to communicate in real time text chat. People who are homebound found that they could have a home church, be active members and participate in a real way. The church members conduct prayer groups, Bible studies and story hours."

And this technology hasn't just impacted non-Adventists. Zilkron Ahren, an Adventist lay preacher in Brazil, was in a car accident that left him mostly paralysed, with only one hand partially useable. But when he was shown the Church project on *Second Life*, he was able to preach again for the church service held in Portuguese.

The virtual world has also made a difference in the

**I SEE EVANGELISM THERE AS  
A TOOL, ONE MORE IN OUR  
HANDS TO REACH PEOPLE  
WHEREVER THEY ARE.**





lives of theology students at Avondale College of Higher Education (NSW). In 2011, Northern Australia pastor Daniel Matteo, then a theology student at Avondale, joined the *Second Life* site and became actively involved

with the virtual Adventist Church project.

"Someone emailed me about *Second Life* and said that they wanted to put together an Adventist church," Pastor Matteo says. "They'd constructed a building and were having regular services but were struggling to get pastors to preach, so I organised a roster."

After preaching regularly, including running evangelistic seminars on topics such as spiritualism and Revelation, Pastor Matteo had an idea—could he use his sermons in *Second Life* as an addition to his studies?

"I still had to work in a local church but the preaching and Bible studies I did in *Second Life* contributed to my studies," he says.

Senior lecturer at the time, Dr Murray House, says it provided the students with extra opportunities.

"Students could practise their preaching on this and it gave them an opportunity to attempt real preaching scenarios," he says.

Despite the evangelistic efforts, however, all Adventist participants are acutely aware of the dangers of the online world.

"It is a 'second life', and in some cases replaces people's real lives," explains Pastor Matteo, adding that he wouldn't be joining the site again. "It's addictive, and can be potentially destructive."

Mr Curtice agrees, saying that addictions to gaming and "role play" games should be taken seriously.

"*Second Life* is a virtual world and, as such, it allows people in it to have full expression of what is on their mind, for good or bad," he says. "That is what makes its strongest points and its weakest one."

But although *Second Life* is not ultimately a wholesome environment to spend a lot of time in, the blessings coming from this unique ministry are too good to give up. In May, the first baptism resulting from the project took place at Georgetown Adventist Church in California. A man had been attending the virtual church for the past three years, and felt impressed to go back to his hometown and study for baptism.

"We would never encourage people to join the site for the sake of it," says Pastor Matteo. "The point was to make connections that then transitioned into real life connections through other forms of social media. There were people playing for 12–18 hours a day, and the fact that we could take a moment to minister to them was great."

Mr Curtice also adds that online evangelism should never replace evangelism in the "real" world.

"*Second Life* is only a place where people in significant numbers are found," he explains. "Consider it a 'world' city in which you will find people from all countries of the real world interacting with each other 24/7. Many of those people would never go to a real world church. However, they might consider checking out a presentation in which their real identity is hidden, to see what it is."

"I see evangelism there as a tool, one more in our hands to reach people wherever they are. Most of the people currently attending the USA church group services are non-Adventist or estranged Adventists who want to return to the Church. Often they don't feel they can go to a local church but the gospel works on their hearts with what is presented, linked with the online Bible study courses in the island website."

Pastor Jeff Parker, director of Youth Ministries for the Australian Union Conference (AUC), was involved with *Second Life* from 2010, and gave his testimony in the 2011 report.

"I have one unchurched person who has come to our service every week for six months now, and is starting to really understand who Jesus is and also what we teach as Seventh-day Adventists," he wrote. "Another lady has cerebral palsy and cannot get out of bed so she would never have had an opportunity to come to church in real life. I'm so excited about this outreach method, which has already impacted so many lives. Would we have reached as many with traditional methods of evangelism?"

As those involved speak about their experiences, it's easy to see how this simple idea was transformed into an evangelistic purpose. That, say the members, is the beauty of media: anything can be used in order to connect others with God.

"Our key Bible text is Mark 16:15: 'And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,'" says Mr Curtice. "Jesus' commission means that wherever people are found—even in a virtual world—we are to make every effort to reach them with the gospel message." ✉

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Maritza Brunt is assistant editor for Adventist Record.

NOTE: *Second Life*, like most of the internet, is a secular environment, with some content rated 18+. Adventist Record recommends exercising a degree of caution and common sense if participating in forms of online evangelism.

For more information on the Church's involvement with *Second Life*, contact Greater Sydney Conference president Pastor Michael Worker: <MichaelWorker@adventist.org.au>

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.*

**BELONGING**

James Radley, NSW

What an inspirational article on belonging to a wonderful church family of God that we have at Fox Valley [church] (Editorial, October 15).

Being a member for many years, I've seen a lot of changes take place. I've seen folk come and go and yet always found it a place to call home, where you can feel loved, nourished and cared for by all who attend.

It's so nice to feel that we belong to the large family of God and as a senior deacon at Fox Valley, it's nice to feel that I personally find it a place to call home.

It's always nice to be able to go away on holidays and come back to a lovely place to belong [and find] a warm embrace and [people saying] "hi, how are you, we've missed you", or if you've been sick they send you a get well card, flowers or make visits or phone calls.

I really feel that an article such as this shouldn't be swept under the mat, totally forgotten about. A place to belong is a very important subject that applies to us all.

The cross of Calvary reminds us that we all have a place to belong in life. What a wonderful and glorious day when at last we can go home to that wonderful, splendid heavenly place! I'm looking forward eagerly to that day. May it come soon. Until then we have to try to

call our little piece of earth a place to belong.

**ALL ABOUT JESUS**  
Harold, via website

My heart breaks as I read this heartfelt cry for something more ("Shadow of the back door", Feature, November 19).

Could that something more be a genuine friendship with Jesus? I couldn't help but notice that His name was not mentioned in the article.

For far too many of us, the Bible is seen as a list of dos and don'ts rather than a love letter from our best Friend.

Going to church, studying God's Word, fellowship with believers, witnessing and worship should be all about Jesus.

For example, the Sabbath is meaningless apart from the "Lord of the Sabbath"; tithing is meaningless apart from the knowledge that Jesus is our business Partner who entrusts us with an abundance of resources and offers us 90 per cent of the profits; the sanctuary doctrine is meaningless if we don't recognise that Jesus loves us so much that He wants to dwell with us and in us; and the second coming only has meaning as we see Jesus as the Friend who wants to rescue us from this sinful planet and give us an eternity of joy.

Truly, it's all about Jesus!

**STEPPING BACK**

Name supplied, via email  
When I read the article

"In the shadow of the back door" it is a story startlingly similar to my own. So I want to share what happened to me after stepping out the "back door" in the hope that my experience will help the author of that article and others.

When I was younger, I also genuinely sought God and had no answer. I felt as if my prayers went no further than the ceiling and God was silent. Eventually I gave up and simply said to God, "If You are there and are real then come and find me when You're ready." I occupied the next 15 years with the "cheap thrills" your author mentions.

However, while sin can be fun it is also empty and unsatisfying and despite my life being successful by worldly standards, one day my wife and I realised there had to be more to life than worldly success. I believe God came and found us.

We turned to God and enjoyed some wonderful years where God felt close and we experienced large and small miracles in our lives. Right now, 20 years later, God feels distant again. However, this time it's different because I know God is real and I understand that sometimes He wants to see if we will continue to trust Him without the miracles and the feelings.

The times when God seems silent are tough but don't give up as He is definitely still there and loves you.





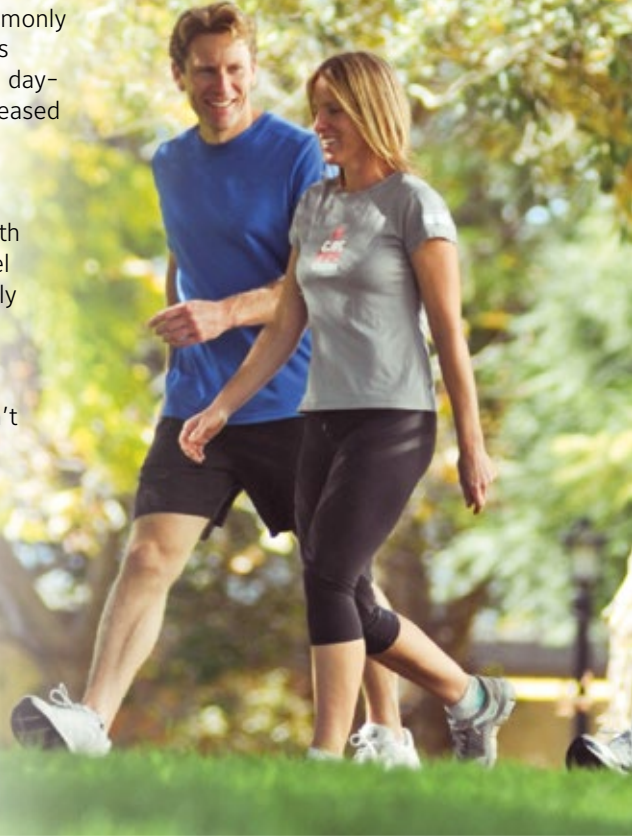
## Small choices, big rewards

When we think of weight gain, a few different things most commonly come to mind. For many, it's the obvious physical changes such as whether your clothes still fit or that you are finding it harder to do day-to-day activities. Thinking long-term, you might consider the increased risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes that comes from being overweight or obese. But we often overlook the risk of cancer.

British scientists have recently looked at data from 300,000 Americans, monitored for more than 15 years. They found that both men and women whose body mass index rose from a healthy level to an overweight or obese level over those years had a significantly increased risk of various cancers, including breast and bowel, compared to those who remained at a healthy weight.

This kind of finding is not surprising: there's a lot of research linking excess body weight to an increased risk of cancer. It doesn't show that simply being overweight causes cancer—it may well be that certain lifestyle choices that lead to a gradual 15-year weight gain are the cause. What it does indicate though is that, for most of us, losing and gaining health is a gradual process.

While "six-week body transformations" and "five-day juice fasts" make for great headlines, they don't address the true basis of health: small, simple choices made daily add up to lifelong healthy habits. So begin looking for simple ways you can pack more plant foods into each meal, as well as ideas to incorporate activity and adequate sleep into your daily life, to start your sustainable journey to health.



### *Tofu and bean thread vermicelli*

Preparation time: 12 minutes Cooking time: 10 minutes Serves: 6

**150g bean thread vermicelli**

**1 tablespoon peanut oil**

**2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced**

**300g firm tofu, diced**

**1 bunch Chinese broccoli, trimmed and chopped**

**1 red capsicum, deseeded, thinly sliced**

**2 carrots, halved, sliced diagonally**

**¼ cup kecap manis**

**¼ cup vegetarian stir-fry sauce**

1. Place the vermicelli in a large heatproof bowl. Pour in boiling water and leave for 5 minutes or until soft. Drain and set aside.

2. Heat the oil in a wok, add the garlic and tofu and stir-fry for a few minutes. Remove the tofu and place on a paper towel.

3. Add Chinese broccoli, capsicum and carrot to the wok and stir-fry for 3-4 minutes.

4. Add the vermicelli, kecap manis and vegetarian stir-fry sauce. Add tofu. Toss over the heat to combine.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVE:** Kilojoules 1160kJ ( 275 cal). Protein 11g. Total fat 10g. Carbohydrate 32g. Sodium 740mg. Potassium 620mg. Calcium 440mg. Iron 6.3mg. Fibre 7g.

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WORDS,**

**DIFFERENT  
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## IS THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AN APOSTATE CULT?

by Stephen Ferguson

**R**ECENTLY I HAD A LONG DISCUSSION WITH members of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement (SDARM). SDARM is a small ex-Adventist offshoot<sup>1</sup> that makes the claim, among many others, that the mainstream Adventist Church is apostate and numbered in "Babylon".<sup>2</sup>

### Trinity

As proof of our supposed apostasy, it was pointed out that the Adventist Church endorses as an official belief the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>3</sup> According to SDARM publication, *Principles of Faith* (1925),<sup>4</sup> this is supposedly a Catholic doctrine<sup>5</sup> not found in the Bible.<sup>6</sup> In response, I simply asked how they viewed the Godhead then, if not according to the doctrine of the Trinity?

Did they instead accept Tritheism<sup>7</sup> like the Hindus;<sup>8</sup> the worship of Father, Son and Spirit as three separate gods? No, they didn't. Did they adopt Arianism<sup>9</sup> like Jehovah's Witnesses;<sup>10</sup> the belief Jesus was a demi-god, created by the Father? No, they didn't. Did they accept Modalism<sup>11</sup> like Oneness Pentecostals;<sup>12</sup> that Father, Son and Spirit were not really separate persons but illusory transitory modes? No, they didn't.

So what do they believe? It turns out, after hours of torturous debate, they essentially accepted the Trinity as we understand it; they just didn't like the term!<sup>13</sup>

Were they going out of their way to be misunderstood? I did point out that there are Christian terms not strictly found in the Bible, the name "Seventh-day Adventist" among them. Compare the attitude I encountered in trying to genuinely understand SDARM with the attitude of the

apostle Paul in Acts 17, where he refers to a pagan altar and even quotes pagan poetry to speak in a way his Athenian audience can understand.

### Are we embarrassed to be Adventists?

It certainly made me wonder what other hotly contested disputes are more misunderstandings of terminology rather than actual differences over doctrine. Even worse, it seems many Adventists are now embarrassed by many of our "distinctive" beliefs. Many of us seem to assume, quite wrongly I might add, that these distinctives are at odds with "mainstream" Christianity. In fact, this is best illustrated by three well-known "historic" Adventist beliefs, often raised by critics against us as supposed proof of our cult-like status.<sup>14</sup>

### Pre-advent investigative judgement

The first distinctive is the Adventist doctrine of the pre-advent investigative judgement. A lot of our theology attaches to this teaching, and it has been the subject of much controversy within Adventism itself. Suffice to say, its core message, as the name implies, is that individuals will be judged in an investigative manner before the second advent of Jesus.

It might surprise many, including some embarrassed Adventists, to learn that mainstream Christian denominations, including Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox traditions, also believe in the pre-advent investigative judgement! They just happen to call it the "particular judgement" of the individual, to be distinguished from the later "general judgement" at the second coming.<sup>15</sup>



## Atonement

The second "proof" of our alleged cult-like status is the idea that Jesus' atonement was not completed at the cross. However, the English word "atonement" is actually a compound of "at-one-ment", so it is used by different Christian groups at different times to mean different things.<sup>16</sup>

Of course Adventists affirm the Bible's teaching in Hebrews 10:10 that Jesus' sacrifice was for once and for all. It's just that when we use the term "atonement" we traditionally mean it in its broadest sense to cover the entire plan of salvation, including the eventual destruction of sin and death itself after the second resurrection.

The idea that Christ still has something "to do" in heaven, by serving as our High Priest and Intercessor, is a wholly biblical concept found in Hebrews 4:14. Similarly, the idea that Christ does not merely save us by His death but also by His life is a key concept supported by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:14.

Again, these concepts have long been supported in mainstream Christian thought. In fact, these exact points were put forward by Theodore of Mopsuestia during the 5th Century Council of Chalcedon about the nature of Christ.<sup>17</sup>

## Gift of prophecy

The final frequently used "proof" of our alleged cult-like status is the Adventist acceptance of a contemporary gift of prophecy, which we recognise in the ministry of Ellen White. The problem is, the sort of prophet our critics say Ellen White was, is not the sort of prophet Adventists understand her to be. Our critics speak a different language.

First, some critics simply assume prophecy can no longer exist after the apostolic age.<sup>18</sup> However, prophecy is simply one spiritual gift listed in Romans 12:6 and Ephesians 4:11, and there is no biblical suggestion the gift would stop. The Assemblies of God, a large and influential denomination, accepts contemporary prophetic ministry.<sup>19</sup>

As a matter of history, the gift only ceased to have widespread recognition when the bishops of the Proto-Catholic Church crushed the Montanist Revival in the late 2nd Century. At that time, "church father" Tertullian backed the Montanist prophets, being executed by the ruling bishops for doing so.<sup>20</sup>

Even early Christian histories recorded in the Didache (c.50-150 AD) and the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (c.215 AD) mention spiritual gifts, including apostleship, prophecy, healing and teaching. There is clear historical evidence for the continuation of spiritual gifts, including prophecy, well after the Apostolic Age and into at least the 3rd Century AD.

Secondly, our critics speak a different language because they sometimes adopt an extreme "verbal-inspiration" view of the gift, which is an unbiblical concept that sees the prophet as a mere secretary scribing God's dictation.<sup>21</sup>

Adventists, by contrast, accept the "thought-inspiration" model, which Ellen White best explained: "The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen . . . It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired."<sup>22</sup>

## Jew to the Jew and Gentile to the Gentile

On the one hand it's certainly true that we shouldn't overly care what other groups think of us or call us. We don't pander to them. Nonetheless, the worldwide mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to take the three angels' messages to the whole world. This includes a message for our fellow Christians.

If we take this role seriously, we will avoid misunderstandings based on terminology or jargon. We will uphold our "historic" beliefs but try to go beyond clichés that often just confuse others—if not ourselves. We will follow Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 9:20: "To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews." R

1. Technically two offshoots, the "German IMS" and "American Nicolici" branches, mutually disfellowshipping and calling each other apostate, despite having virtually identical beliefs: Vance Ferrell, *The Adventist Reform Church* (Beersheba Springs: Pilgrim Books, 1988), 6.
2. Gerhard Pfandl, "History of the Adventist Reform Movement," *Biblical Research Institute* (Washington: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 7/03).
3. SDA Fundamental Belief #2.
4. Quoted in A Balbach, *Consideration about the Godhead* (Sacramento CA: Northwestern Pub. Ass., date unknown), <<http://www.sdarm.net/issues/issues.html>>.
5. It isn't. To be accurate, it is a doctrine of the Eastern Orthodox Church formulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, which barely involved Rome or the Latin Church in the West.
6. Not true, but beyond the scope of this article to explore in detail. Simply read John chapter 1.
7. EA Livingstone, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford Uni. Pres., 2006), 599.
8. Hindus have their own Trinity called the Trimurti, however, they typically worship Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as three separate gods. Most Hindus favour one of the three gods over the other two: A Basham, "Trimurti", *Wikipedia*, retrieved 30 June 2014.
9. *Ibid.*, 36,37.
10. "Is Jesus Almighty God", *JW.ORG*, <<http://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/is-jesus-almighty/>>, retrieved 27 June 2014.
11. *Supra* n7, 390.
12. "Oneness Pentecostalism", *Wikipedia*, retrieved 30 June 2014.
13. There continues to be long-standing confusion within the SDARM about the God-head, with many denying the Holy Spirit as a personal being or rejecting the divinity of Christ: Helmut H. Kramer, "The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement (German Reform)", *Biblical Research Institute*, (Washington: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 55.
14. "Criticism of the Seventh-day Adventist Church", *Wikipedia*, retrieved 27 June 2014.
15. Angel Rodriguez, "The Judgement and the Second Coming", *Biblical Research Institute* (Washington: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 11/01).
16. Niels-erik A. Andreassen, "Atonement/Expiation in the Old Testament" in W. E. Mills (ed.), *Mercer dictionary of the Bible* (Mercer University Press, 1990).
17. Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church* (translated by Matthias Westerhoff; edited by Andrew Louth; Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1993), 202.
18. Sometimes described as "Cessationism". A good summary is found in "Cessationism versus Continuationism", *Wikipedia*, retrieved 27 June 2014.
19. "Prophets and Personal Prophecies", AG <[http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/topics/sptl-sues\\_prophets\\_prophecies.cfm](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/topics/sptl-sues_prophets_prophecies.cfm)>, retrieved 27 June 2014.
20. Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 52.
21. Angel Rodriguez, "Issues on Revelation and Inspiration", *Biblical Research Institute* (Washington: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 4/05).
22. *Selected Messages*, 1, 19-22; *Manuscript 24*, 1886.

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

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## The Navosa wars and the year of increase

Navosa is a large province in Fiji, extending from the mouth of the Sigatoka River to its source, but our story lies in the upper part of the Sigatoka Valley, which has lately been dragged into a drug war, prompting negativity, lawlessness and national condemnation.

This disturbing episode is nothing new to Navosa. In 1867, an Australian Wesleyan missionary, originally from Britain, Reverend Thomas Baker, was brutally killed in cold blood, with seven native Fijians from his entourage.

The missionary was eaten and even his shoes were boiled and tasted, so the story goes. The then Fijian government's constabulary force were rebuffed in an all out reprisal campaign to punish the killers.

In 1876 a brutal war named the "Little War" broke out because the upper part of the Sigatoka Valley not only refused to accept Christianity but started killing and burning villagers in the coastal area who had accepted Christianity. With about 1400 volunteer armed native police and British soldiers, they were finally overcome. This was the end of all the wars against Christianity in Fiji.

Even after such a gloomy history, the Lord stepped in, transforming the hearts of our church members from a warring mindset to soul winning. Thirsty to participate in evangelistic outreach, they entered bordering villages that had long been very suspicious of Adventism.

Three months ago, church members from Nelson Palmer Adventist Primary School formed the first "brigade" under their "captain", Pastor Apisai Matea, to run an evangelistic campaign at Edrau (Keiyasi) for one month, concluding in 22 baptisms.

The second brigade, from Draiba church, took over under the same captain and went to the next village, Wauosi. After a month at Wauosi, 40 people were baptised. Immediately after the baptism, the third brigade—Vatubalavu church—took over, still under the same captain, and moved to the next village, Nawairabe, for yet another month, culminating in the baptism of 15 souls on November 5, ending a three-month evangelistic campaign.

It is not the number that counts but the unprecedented desire by the church members to fulfil the gospel commission. There were 25 souls baptised in Balenabelo Village thanks to brother Simi, a minibus driver from Lautoka. Three villages up the river, at the village of Nasauvarua, more than 20 women were baptised as men left the village rather than go against a directive of the chief, who happens to be an Adventist and great-grandson of the notorious Nawawabalavu, who was responsible for the death of the missionary Thomas Baker in 1867.

We hope that this resurgence and the optimism observed in this part of the country will continue to illuminate this island so that Jesus will come to take his faithful people home.

Nanoko church has made a breakthrough by starting a church company at the approximately 500 household village of Navala. There are no Adventists in the village.

We praise God for the opportunity, like Private Desmond Doss from the recent *Hacksaw Ridge* movie—let's pray for one more person, one more home and one more village as we focus on Total Membership Involvement (TMI).

*Peni Dakua is president of the Adventist Association For Retired Church Workers.*





# Finding friends in a foreign land

by Brenton Stacey



**C**HILDREN IN NEPAL ARE JUST LIKE MY CHILDREN: active, fun-loving, inquisitive and, well, a little bit naughty. What a relief! Searching for a sense of normalcy when travelling to a new country is part of the process of acclimatisation.

Nepal is new for me.

I travelled to this multi-ethnic, landlocked South Asian country with my wife, Kylie, and a mutual friend, Michelle Willis. With the support of Asian Aid, Kylie and Michelle presented creative therapy and playful music sessions for students from two schools. Asian Aid supports the two schools through working with local partners Community Service Academy Nepal and 3 Angels Nepal.

Observing the students from the schools reminded me of the universality of music as a language, and of our innate need to create. For a country with such a diverse musical history and with such creative use of colour, the rhythm of the songs and the blending of pigments are familiar. Beauty, in whatever form and in whatever culture, draws us to it.

So, normalcy check: tick.

My search for a sense of normalcy is challenged, though, by the evolution in our understanding of international development and of its best practice. Balancing the sometimes competing needs of charities, their donors and partners and their beneficiaries seems difficult. From what I've seen on this visit, Asian Aid and its partners are managing the tension. Not perfectly but effectively.

Here's one example, simplified I'm sure, of that tension. The reasons—necessity, opportunity, safety—for taking a child out of the family home and placing them in a children's home or hostel seem legitimate. But what happens when that child doesn't want to return to their parents because they've become accustomed to the privileges of living in the home or hostel? In practical terms, it can

become an issue for the partner organisation managing care of the child. When does the staff member in the home or hostel get time off?

Every choice has a consequence. That's normal. But the available choices aren't always right or wrong—and the possible consequences aren't always immediately evident.

So do I have an example of how Asian Aid and its partners are managing the tension? No—I'm not associated in any formal way with them. Wait. Yes.

The Asian Aid staff members with whom I travelled understand the culture of Nepal and of the partner organisations. They visit often. Face-to-face contact with partner staff members seems the best way to strengthen relationships and solve problems. What might take weeks to manage via email may take only minutes in person.

And the partner staff members with whom I spoke seem to appreciate the visits. Discussion in a professional development session I observed flowed freely. Questions were pointed; answers honest. The tone: respectful.

Here were people from different backgrounds and with different personalities but with the same passion, doing their best to comply, empower, improve and integrate.

So, normalcy check: tick.

Yes, Nepal is a new country for me. Yes, it took me time to acclimatise. And yes, I got sick. But no, Nepal is not a foreign country. My new Nepali contacts are, at their core, just like my Australian contacts: dedicated; good natured; hardworking; intelligent. And the Nepali partner organisations? I understand why Asian Aid works alongside them. They share the same values.

Fancy having like-minded friends.

Normalcy check: tick.



*Brenton Stacey visited Nepal with wife, Kylie, and friend Michelle Willis, in September and October.*



# Discipleship: CUTTING THROUGH THE BUZZ

*Adventist Record's* Kent Kingston sat down with Dr Leigh Rice, who leads discipleship ministries at the South Pacific Division, to find out what discipleship really means and how you can get involved.

**Kent Kingston:** *This idea of "discipleship" seems to be going viral among Adventists around the South Pacific region. Why?*

**Leigh Rice:** The Church in the South Pacific Division (SPD) has been rediscovering her roots as the disciple-making church-planting movement of the 1800s. It's an exciting time as the SPD reflects on the New Testament church where disciple-making also went viral and "turned the world upside down" for Christ.

How has this happened? During 2014-15, Dr Barry Oliver, who was then Division president, led the SPD Boards and Executive Committee through a process to focus the Church strategically on accomplishing her God-given mission: to "make disciples of all people" (Matthew 28:19). These leaders agreed on a strategic focus of discipleship utilising Comprehensive Health Ministry and Comprehensive Media Ministry with a specific focus

on Mission to the Cities where there are large numbers of people without faith in Jesus.

Our current Division president, Pastor Glenn Townend, is passionate about re-creating the early Advent movement and under his leadership the Division is financing and structuring to fulfil this mission to "make disciples". This was also the focus of the recent Discipleship Ministry Team advisory meeting with the ministry leaders from the four SPD unions.

**KK:** *Sorry to harp on about this but I get the sense that a lot of people are still confused about exactly what "discipleship" means. Is it evangelism? Mentoring? Something else?*

**LR:** A disciple is a person who in every way is becoming more like Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:15). So discipleship is the process of making better and more disciples. In the narrow sense we could say that mentoring is

making better disciples and evangelism is making more disciples. But Jesus' model of making disciples was very relational and this is perhaps the defining focus of discipleship. Disciples who make disciples, who make disciples—a disciple-making movement. Or as the parable in Mark 4 says, multiplying "30, 60 and even 100 times".

**KK:** *Is it possible that Adventist individuals and congregations have already been putting discipleship principles into practice but are not aware of it?*

**LR:** Yes, some individuals and congregations are making disciples. But on the whole the focus of the Church has been on making members and keeping them safe in the church. Re-badging what the churches are already doing will not change them into a disciple-making movement like the first century church or the early Advent movement.

The five activities framework from Mark 4 will enable individuals and congregations to evaluate the process they are following as they allow Jesus to be Lord of the multiplying harvest. Leaders who follow Jesus' model will

make disciples and mentor these disciples to make disciples who mentor those to make disciples. One of our catchphrases is “we become disciples as we make disciples”.

**KK:** *So do you mean that congregations who are serious about being disciples and making disciples might need to actually re-examine their weekly activities, their yearly calendar and even their church offices and structure?*

**LR:** If what we are doing and how we are doing it today was as effective in growing the kingdom as the early days of the Advent movement, then it could be business as usual. But alas it is not. Little in nature grows without following the process of preparing the soil, sowing the seed, cultivating the plant, harvesting the crop and multiplying the harvest. You cannot skip a step.

Churches need to reflect on their ministries and see if they really are taking people through the process and have ministries in all five of the disciple-making activity areas. Also our members need to know how they can be involved in the process personally. Some will be good at preparing the soil, others better at cultivating and the like.

**KK:** *But what does it look like in practice? Can you give some examples of individuals or churches who are successfully implementing the full discipleship cycle?*

**LR:** I see it happening in places across the South Pacific Division, both with individuals and in congregations. New disciples and church leaders are taking seriously the mission to make disciples. A young pastor from Vanuatu who went on the Discipleship Study Tour last year has grasped the role of leadership in “preparing the saints for ministry” and is seeing his churches begin to multiply. He is multiplying the harvest.

I hear of church members and young pastors planting churches in Sydney and the North NSW Confer-

ence. I am inspired by churches meeting at 5:30 every morning to pray and are seeing miracles happen as they make disciples. They are preparing the soil as are people in Tasmania who are feeding the homeless and sharing Jesus. I know of church members in Adelaide who are visiting their community and offering people *Beyond* DVDs. The number of people who will take a second and a third DVD on subsequent visits is amazing. They are sowing the seed.

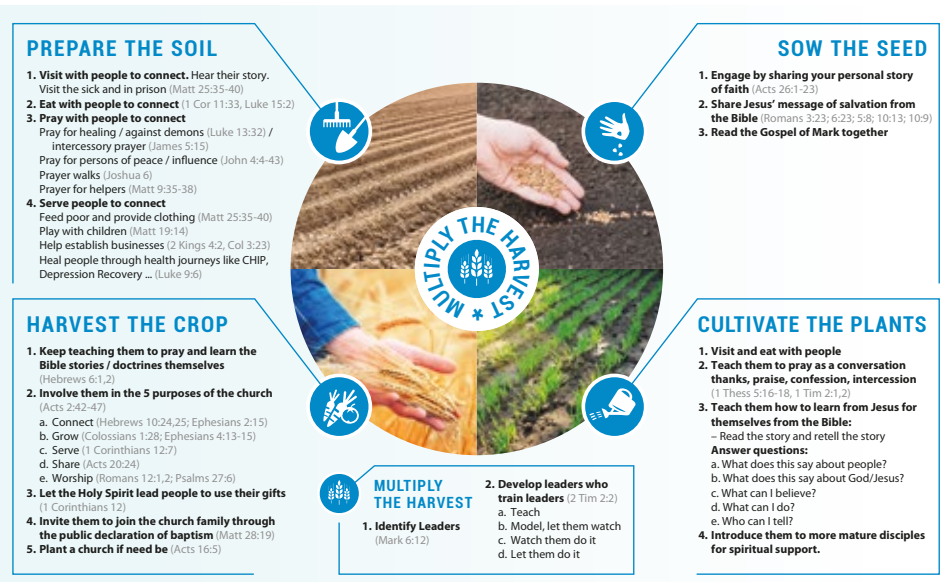
I see it happening with Pastor Nick Kross here at the SPD office who, as he launched the World Changers Bible and trained youth across the Pacific to become disciple-makers, was convicted that he needed to be making disciples himself. His simple prayer was, “Lord, You know how busy my life is; You will have to bring interested people to me.” And God did. Nick has seen people baptised each year as the Spirit has created these divine appointments. He is harvesting the crop.

Many of the young people trained across the Pacific could tell more stories of how the five activities process is working for them. The Church will become a movement as more and more members, leaders and conferences/missions grasp the mission of making better and more disciples of Jesus Christ.

**KK:** *So if there's someone reading this article who's fired up by what you're saying and wants to be a disciple, to make disciples and to help their church understand and embrace this mission, where should they start?*

**LR:** Disciple-making is best done in community. This is true both for making better disciples and more disciples. This was Jesus' method. So the starting point for me is studying Jesus' method. Pray for God's guidance and the power of the Spirit as you begin this journey. Seek out like-minded members who want to be part of a disciple-making movement. As a group commit to exploring the Gospel of Mark with one or more non-believers that God has led to you. Follow the relational Bible reading approach of reading the story in three different translations, re-telling the story and then asking the questions, What is new to me? What surprises me? What will I apply to my life? What will I share with a non-believing friend?

Certainly seek support from the pastor and leadership team in your congregation and the conference/mission, union and Division offices are also here to help and resource. Together let's pray to the Lord of the harvest and live with optimistic hope that this is the final generation—a disciple-making movement. ➤





THIS MONTH IN

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORLD

## CHRISTMAS: TIME OF DESPAIR OR SYMBOL OF HOPE?

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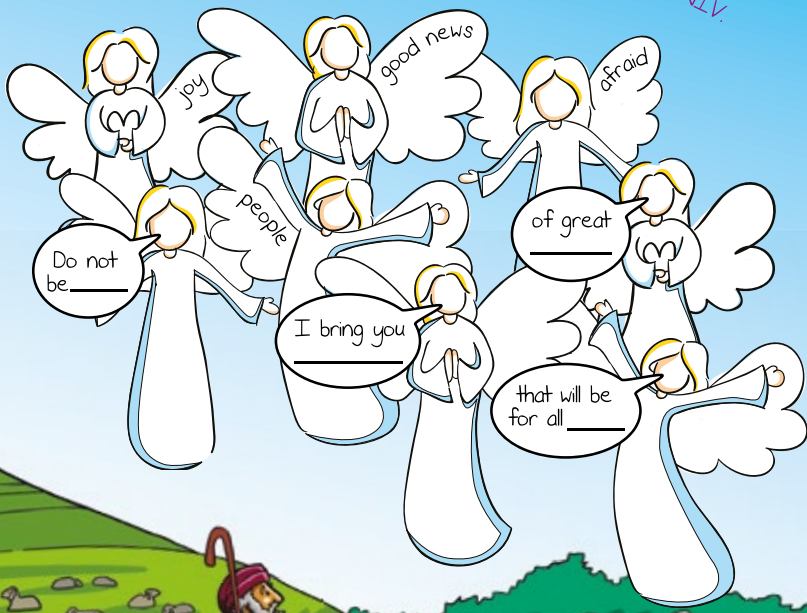
# HI KIDS

# Kids' Space

The shepherds are guarding their sheep when the angel Gabriel appears. The shepherds are frightened. Gabriel calms their fears and tells of the exciting birth of Jesus and where they can find Him. Angels cover the sky singing, "Glory to God in the highest."

## Colour & pair the Angels

Clue: use the position of the angels' hands to match them up. Then find the pair and finish the sentences. Luke 2:10, NIV.



Worship Message: We worship God when we sing joyful songs of praise.

## APPRECIATION

**Knight.** Julie, Carolyn, Greg, Janeen and the extended family of the late Patricia Knight, offer a heartfelt thank you to all who have expressed condolences at their mother's recent passing. Each card, email, phone call, SMS and floral arrangement encouraged and strengthened the family in their resolve to "be like Jesus" so they will be reunited at His second coming. Come Lord Jesus, Come.

**Livingston.** The family of the late Pastor Eric Livingston wish to convey their thanks to all who have supported them with flowers, messages, cards and comfort, as well as in practical ways. Maranatha.

## WEDDINGS

**Menegi-Dau.** Rodney Menegi, son of Joseph and Tebu Menegi (Darua Island, PNG), and Margaret Dau, daughter of Elma and Aba Dau (Saibai Island, Torres Strait, Qld), were married 25.9.16 at Kubin Community Centre, Moa Island, Torres Strait, by Pastor Siggý Paleso'o.

*Siggý Paleso'o*

## OBITUARIES

**Adams,** Ruth Marian (nee Woods), born 17.3.1958; died 21.8.16 in Toowoomba, Qld. She is survived by her parents Maurice and Marjorie Woods (Gympie); siblings Kay Heaton (Toowoomba), Susan Johnson (Melbourne, Vic) and Rodney Woods (Bonnells Bay, NSW); children Brendan, Brian, Kurt, Katika and Keirralee; and granddaughter Eloise. Ruth was a wonderful mother and caring grandmother. For five years she continued her work as a foster carer while bravely battling cancer.

*Rodney Woods*



**Baines,** William Arthur, born 12.4.1912 in Herefordshire, UK; died 17.10.16 in Brisbane, Qld. He was predeceased by his first wife Elwin, second wife Edna and daughter Judy. He is survived by his children Joy, Ross and Kerry; 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren (two deceased) and six

great-great-grandchildren. In 1928 Bill migrated to Australia where he joined the Adventist Church. He attended Avondale College and in his third year of ministerial studies was sent to Mussau Island (PNG) then Manus Island with his new wife Elwin. After contracting Blackwater fever Bill was sent back to Australia where, sadly, Elwin died giving birth to their second child. He had two children with his second wife Edna Revell. His love for the mission fields was so great that in retirement he began a ministry of collecting and sending thousands of items of goods and clothing to PNG and the Solomons. His amazing life spanned more than a century and in his own words Bill loved every minute of his life "working for God, and with God".

*Judy Fua*

**Collins,** Edward Claude, born 1.11.1922 in Eye, Suffolk, UK; died 29.9.16 in Victor Harbor, SA. On 11.8.1971 he married Janice Edge. He is survived by his wife; step-daughter Leanne and husband Phil; granddaughters Tamara and Allison. Claude was a man of great faith, a life-long student of the Bible and a true gentleman.

*George Hirst*

**Ehlers,** Manfred, born 5.3.1935 in Germany; died 12.9.16 in Valley View Nursing Home, Adelaide, SA. He was predeceased by his wife Annamaria, whom he married in Othfresen, Germany, in 1958. He is survived by Daniele and her son Ian, Helen and Rick. The family mourn his passing and look forward to Jesus' second coming.

*Stephen Bews*

**Ferris,** Merele Maioma (nee Johanson), born 13.3.1915 in Warburton, Vic; died 11.10.16 in Nunawading. She was predeceased by her husband Oliver in 2003. She is survived by her children Roderick Ferris (Benalla), Carole Platt, (Mullumbimby, NSW) and Christine Small (Wantirna Vic); grandchildren Michael, Jonathon, Angela, James, Stephen, David, Karyn and Ben; and great-grandchildren Aynton, Jensen and Kyron. Merele attended Nunawading church for 61 years, serving as an organist and church clerk.

*Josh Wood, Tony Campbell*

**Gilbert,** Etma Hope (nee Codling), born 5.7.1923 in South Australia; died 13.8.16 in Bendigo, Vic. She was predeceased by her husband Rodger. She is survived by four children, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

*Chrissie Cooper*

**Irvine,** Annette Jean (nee Sharp), born 26.10.1935; died 21.6.16 in Gympie, Qld. She married Richard Irvine on 14.2.1963. She is survived by her husband (Gympie); her sons and their spouses Bradley and Kaylene, Kenny and Kara (all from Cooroy); and her grandsons Nathan and Joshua.

*Frank J Williams*



**Knight,** Lucille Patricia Marien (nee Twartz), born 7.7.1920 in Sydney, NSW; died 31.8.16 in Brisbane, Qld. On 18.4.1946 she married Ronald Victor Knight, who predeceased her in 1987. Patricia is survived by her children and their spouses: Julie Catton-Knight (Babinda), Carolyn and Geoffrey Catton (Brisbane), Gregory and Simona Knight (Banora Point, NSW) and Janeen Knight (Brisbane, Qld); seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Patricia studied medicine in Sydney during World War II, worked in private medical practice in Brisbane for more than 50 years and in retirement became a qualified hospital chaplain, working as a volunteer until she turned 88. She served her community as a member of Quota International.

*Bob Possingham, Barry Oliver, Ted White*



**Livingston,** Dr Eric Murray, born 11.7.1946 in Sydney, NSW; died 1.10.16 in Cooranbong. He is survived by his wife Carolyn; children Paul, Daniel and Renee; and grandchildren Tahlia and Ethan. Eric served the Church as pastor in four states of Australia, theology lecturer in Australia and overseas, and senior elder. He was a dedicated scholar and mentor, with a high view of Scripture, a deep and practical faith, and an insatiable desire to more completely understand God's revelation. Eric was heard to shout "Hooray!" at the promise of the resurrection.

*Barry Harker*

**Long,** June Glennie, born 21.6.1922 in Glen Innes, NSW; died 11.9.16 in Kings Langley Retirement Village, NSW. She was predeceased by her husband Norm in 2013. June is survived by her family Ken and Wendy (Sydney), Jenny and Wayne (Brisbane, Qld) and Carolyn and Wayne (Sydney, NSW); grandchildren Deni-Ka, Jay-min, Nathan and Emily; and great-grandchildren Jonathan and Lucille. June's family were her great joy. She believed in contagious generosity to her church, Asian Aid and people.

*Stephen Bews*



**Madden,** John Sinclair, born 27.4.1920 in Geelong, Vic; died 14.8.16 in Stawell. He was predeceased by his wife Marie (nee Beuhne). He is survived by his daughter Sharon and son John; nine grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. Jack enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in 1941, served in the Middle East and was discharged in 1944. He was an active member of Stawell church and well known for his love for his Lord, wisdom, knowledge and sense of humour.

*Justin Bone*

**Maywald,** Ruth Irene (nee Lomman), born 2.9.1923 in St Morris, Adelaide, SA; died 19.9.16 in North Adelaide. On 3.11.1947 she married David Maywald. She was predeceased by her husband in 2015. She is survived by her children and their spouses Noel and Sylvia (Athelstone), Cheryl and Lester Raethal (Sydney, NSW); and granddaughters Clarissa and Anita. Ruth was a member of Trinity Gardens church, serving in many areas, including children's ministries and as a deaconess. She also set a record for being the fastest Weet-Bix packer at the Adelaide Sanitarium Health Food factory in the years following World War II.

*Wolfgang Stefani*

**McHarg,** Peter (Pops), born 8.6.1919 in Prome, Burma; died 19.9.16 in Avondale Retirement Nursing Home, Cooranbong, NSW. He was predeceased by his wife Chickoo and son Ken. He is survived by his children Peter, Winston, Winsome, Thelma and Merrilyn; 11 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren. Peter



and his young family moved from Burma to India, and then to Victoria, Australia, where they raised their family. He was an avid health enthusiast and a talented boxer and had a daily workout regimen well into his 90s. He was a quite reflective man and learned much from his questioning spirit.

*Bob Bolst, Roger Nixon*

**Plewa, Ema**, born 16.8.1928; died 27.8.16 in Allambi Nursing Home,

Adelaide, SA. On 2.9.1949 she married Szymon Plewa. She is survived by her husband (Adelaide); sons and their spouses Henry and Moira (Adelaide), and Andrew and Joanna (Melbourne Vic); and grandchildren William, Jeremy, Jessica and Jonathan. Ema used her God-given talents to befriend people and share her love for God. She was a loving Christian lady, unassuming and always eager to help others.

*Jan Pollok*

## ADVERTISING

**Absolute Care Funerals** is an Adventist family-owned and operated business, caring for you in Sydney to Newcastle and Wollongong. Contact Arne Neirinckx, who understands our Adventist philosophy, on 1300 982 803 or mobile 0408 458 452. Call us even if you have already prepaid your funeral. Email <arne@absolutecarefunerals.com.au

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Everyone thinks of  
changing the world,  
but no-one thinks of  
changing himself.  
—Leo Tolstoy

**Next RECORD Dec 24**

## POSITIONS VACANT

■ **Financial accountant—Sanitarium (Auckland, NZ).** Our finance team is looking for a detail conscious, accurate and highly organised person to join their team. This is a varied role that will require you to be involved in all aspects of the company, responsible for month end reporting and distribution of financial reports and overseeing accounts payable function. To be considered for this role, you will need to have proven experience in a financial accounting related role, along with a practical understanding of compliance requirements. Attention to detail and a high level of accuracy are essential for the position, as is an accounting qualification and membership of a relevant professional association. It is important that you have a strong focus on customer service and delivery, as well as good planning and organisational skills and the ability to meet deadlines. Excellent interpersonal communication and problem solving skills are essential. Enquiries to <human.resources@sanitarium.co.nz>. To apply, visit <www.sanitarium.co.nz/about/join-our-team>. Applications close **December 16, 2016.**

■ **Director, Student Life Services—Avondale College of Higher Education (Lake Macquarie Campus, NSW).** A fantastic opportunity exists for a suitably qualified and experienced person to manage and administer the student life support services of the college. The primary objective of the position is to foster the spiritual, academic, social and physical wellbeing of students so as to enable each student to maximise their potential for personal development. For a full job description please visit <www.avondale.edu.au/information/employment>. Applications, with a statement addressing the selection criteria and contact details of at least three referees, should be emailed to <employment@avondale.edu.au>. Applications close **December 9, 2016.**

■ **Centre director/nominated supervisor—Early Learning Centre, Hills Adventist College (Sydney, NSW).** The successful applicant will be a practising and involved member of the Adventist Church and ideally have a minimum of five years' experience in early learning centres, together with qualifications allowing you to be a nominated supervisor. A current Working with Children Check clearance is essential. The core competencies of this role are day-to-day management and organisation of the Early Learning Centre; provision of a high quality program of care and education for the children attending the centre; daily supervision and development of the centre staff; effective communication with parents and relevant stakeholders in regards to centre activities, including forward planning; networking and linking of the centre with Hills Adventist College; ensuring work health and safety compliance and reporting. Applicants need to have a current work visa for Australia and the position may be filled prior to closing date. For more information and a detailed position profile, please contact Ian Low (Human Resources Officer) on (02) 8876 5240 or email <ianlow@adventist.org.au>. Applications close **December 9, 2016.**

■ **Office personal assistant, Education Department—South Queensland Conference (Spring Hill, Qld).** Expressions of interest for this position are now being received. The applicant should be a practising Seventh-day Adventist who is committed to serving the mission of the Church, is energetic and possesses good personal skills. Competence in computer software packages, office management and core office-based skills are essential for this role. Send applications with CV to the General Secretary, South Queensland Conference, 400 Boundary Street, Spring Hill, Qld 4000, (07) 3218 7777 or <colinrenfrew@adventist.org.au>. A position profile is available from the Conference general secretary. The Conference reserves the right to make an appointment. Applications close **January 13, 2017.**

■ **Public relations coordinator—Adventist Church Australia.** The successful applicant will hold a public relations/communications degree, have 3 to 5 years' experience and ideally be based in Sydney. You will coordinate and implement a communications program on behalf of the Adventist Church (Australia). Responsibilities include: liaising with key stakeholders; coordinating and developing communication materials; coordinating feedback and sign-off on communications materials with key stakeholders; assisting in the formation of supportive plans and activation related to the overall strategy; coordinating planning meetings of the sub-committee; and assisting with other related meeting arrangements. You will need a strong working knowledge of the Adventist Church in Australia and its institutions. This is a six-month contract, 30 hours per week, with an immediate start. The Australian Union Conference reserves the right to fill the role prior to the close of applications date. Applications, together with CVs, resumes and references, should be submitted in writing to Pastor Tony Knight (Australian Union Conference Human Resources Coordinator), 289 Maroondah Hwy, Ringwood, Vic, 3134; or by email to <tonyknight@adventist.org.au>. Applications close **December 7, 2016.**

■ **AdSAFE vacancies (Stage 2)—South Pacific Division.** AdSAFE Ltd is a new service that is owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited. It is superseding the current Safe Place Services (SPS), commencing operations in early 2017 and providing protective services for children and vulnerable adults across the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia, New Zealand and in time the wider South Pacific region. AdSAFE Ltd is seeking expressions of interest for the following roles:

- **Safeguarding manager**
- **Case officer (survivor support)**
- **Case officer (offender and investigations management)**
- **Redress officer (contract)**

For more information on each of the above roles and to apply, please visit <www.adventistemployment.org.au>. Applications for the above vacancies close **January 29, 2017.**

Sign up for job updates and find more vacant positions at <adventistemployment.org.au>







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