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Youth initiative in dire need of more Bibles

Wahroonga, New South Wales

A program that has changed the lives of thousands of young people across the South Pacific is in dire need of more Bibles.

Launched in 2013, the World Changers program has been a major success, with 225,700 Bibles handed out to youth in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific islands, leading to thousands of baptisms.

The Bibles are still in strong demand, however stock has now run out, according to South Pacific Division (SPD) Youth Ministries leader Dr Nick Kross.

"We are getting continual requests for more Bibles," he said. "We are begging church members to really get behind this project again."

Dr Kross hopes the same spirit of generosity, which saw \$1 million raised through offerings and donations for production of the Bibles last time, will rise again.

"The campaign really took off last time with thousands of dollars coming in each week," he said. "It was incredible to see how God was leading the project and getting people to donate."

"And the results have been extraordinary—I would put the baptisms in the thousands. The SPD has seen the largest youth baptismal count in its history. There are dozens of stories of miracles that have happened right across the Division as a result of the World Changers program."

The program has a clear soul-winning strategy: youth who take a Bible commit to saving a soul. The Bibles include discipleship-training material and come with a set of 29 Bible-study bookmarks, which provide outlines for shar-

ing the Adventist Church's fundamental beliefs. The next print run of Bibles will also include sections on "How to start a small group" and "How to plant a church".

"Since the previous campaign we now need to reach a whole new generation of young people who need the Bibles," Dr Kross said. "Many of them will be given out to non-Adventist students in our schools."

"The World Changer Bible has proven to be an effective tool for young people who are eager to serve and share their faith. By doing so, they become excited about being disciples of Christ." —Tracey Bridcutt

* Church members will have an opportunity to support the program through the Discipleship in Youth Offering, which will be collected in churches on January 28, 2017. Dr Kross is hoping to raise \$A500,000, which will enable 100,000 Bibles to be printed.



Top and above: some of the young people who have received the World Changers Bibles.

Beloved leader dies suddenly in Fiji

Nadi, Fiji

Fulton College men's residence director, Pastor Aseri Sukanabulisau, died suddenly on November 20, aged 55.

He had spent an enjoyable day at the college's end-of-year staff picnic at Beachcomber Island, west of Viti Levu, but collapsed as he boarded the boat back to Nadi. He received CPR as he was transferred to a faster boat that transported him to the closest hospital at Lautoka where he died soon afterwards.

Although Pastor Sukanabulisau has had some health difficulties he said he was well enough to attend the picnic where he reportedly enjoyed the camaraderie and food, and even took a turn on a hired jetski.

"As we have listened to many stories, we are aware of the great influence Aseri has had," said Fulton principal Dr Steve Currow in an email to the college's board members.

"As the faculty and staff have laughed and cried recounting these many memories, all at the picnic affirm that he thoroughly enjoyed himself that day and have vivid

mental pictures of the beaming smile."

Pastor Sukanabulisau is survived by his wife Kelera, who lectures in education at Fulton, and their three children Mitieli, Aseri Jnr and Eta.

"Fulton continues to express their condolences and support in their time of grief," Dr Currow said. "We are so thankful that Eta, Kelera's sister, chose to work at Fulton and is able to be here to support her younger sister. I am sure you will also join us in upholding the family in your prayers at this difficult time and eagerly await the soon return of Jesus Christ."

Pastor Sukanabulisau previously served as a local pastor and mission president in Fiji, as well as Fulton's director of student services. —Kent Kingston



Pastor Aseri Sukanabulisau and his wife, Kelera.



Holiday humbug

Jarrod Stackelroth

I don't want to be the Grinch but . . . I did tell someone the other day that I hate Christmas. I know, hate is a strong word. I like the end-of-year "holiday season"—time for family and friends, great food, long trips, beautiful weather and most importantly cricket on TV. Public holidays are better though—free days with no strings attached. But I digress. Things get crazy during this time and often it's a letdown.

I was once on the losing end of a vote with my family to watch the New Year's Eve fireworks on Sydney Harbour. Now I've seen fireworks before—it's great to have a picnic, throw a ball, stretch out and relax until the show starts.

Sydney was something else. By the time we arrived, it seemed every square inch of grass, wall and ground was filled with people, tents (some had camped the night before) and mats. There was no space—even walking from one spot to another to stretch your legs was hard. The seven of us eventually found space for our mat on a small patch of uneven dirt.

But this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, right? Something we had to do . . .

For the next eight hours or so we waited for midnight to arrive. I thought when the clock struck 12, I'd definitely turn into a pumpkin.

The fireworks were spectacular but were over in a matter of minutes. Then it was fighting through the crowds, all leaving at the same time. Not my idea of fun.

We expend so much time and energy on end-of-year and Christmas celebrations. Did I mention the expense? News.com.au reports NYE 2014 cost City of Sydney Council \$A6.8 million. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Australians will spend up to \$A48 billion over the holiday season, including \$19 billion on food and \$8 billion on presents (up to half on credit). Those are exorbitant amounts. Last year, New Zealanders spent a record \$NZ6 billion shopping in December, the highest monthly amount recorded in NZ.

A well-known Christmas ballad claims this is "the most wonderful time of the year". But I find it can also be the most selfish. Although we spend money on and for others,

we tend to reward ourselves. We tell ourselves that we've had a hard year and we deserve a break . . . and an extra piece of cake.

For me the fireworks experience is a metaphor for the holidays. There are expectations, everything gets crammed in, and it's a little bit disappointing and ends with a bang and a rush. We should use the holidays as a time to re-establish and strengthen good habits; disciplines that have slipped during the year.

I know I look forward to the chance to break my usual routine. I tell myself I have more time to get healthy, go to the gym, spend time in devotion and prayer. But it never happens. Instead, my inner voice tells me what a hard year I've survived, now I deserve a break. I end up eating too much dessert, binge watching TV shows and test cricket, and generally not achieving anything. Sure, I spend more quality time with loved ones or might go on a holiday, but I don't get the rest and recreation I require. I give myself a pass; make excuses for my decisions.

Look around your church. Is it empty today? What about the next few weeks? Sometimes we use the holidays to take a holiday from God. Tired and rundown from our busy lives, when we check out of work and school and routine, we also check out of church and put our relationship with God on hold. It can be hard to find anyone to help with the church service or Sabbath school from December to February—two or three months when everything rests on the shoulders of a few.

I know, I know, we work so hard all year. I get that. But maybe that's part of the problem. We say the reason for the season is Jesus but then we use the season as the reason to take a holiday from His presence.

The end of the year is a time of reflection and renewal—a time to plan ahead and to celebrate the wins of the previous year. I love attending church with my islander family on New Year's Eve, to give thanks for the year and remember what God has done.

So this year-end, I'll praise God for carrying me through another year and I'll try not to be too much of a Grinch.

Jarrod Stackelroth is editor of Adventist Record.

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Joy to the world

Lee Dunstan

The malls are alive with the sound of muzak: Christmas carols, as you well know, and with today being the last shopping day before Christmas, it's about to change rhythm. You may well have wearied of *Silent Night*, *Mary's Boy Child*, *O Little Town of Bethlehem* et al. Me? I never do. I love Christmas, both what it is and what it was. (As testament to this, I was assigned this Christmas editorial in recognition.) And while we don't do carolling, with muffs and gloves, scarves and coats, through quaint village streets and beneath the spires of stone churches in town squares, I enjoy the annual Carols by Candlelight, be they in the community green of Sydney Adventist Hospital, or best of all, Melbourne's Myer Music Bowl.

And although the modern foot-tapping carols aren't always about the Babe of Bethlehem, the traditional ones faithfully narrate the story of His birth and the events surrounding it. Over the years, with all that mall elevator music, *Road to Bethlehem*, school plays and church Christmas programs, you've possibly become a little jaded with the "whole Christmas thing", perhaps even doubting its worth, if not its cost.

But think of it this way: Christmas is, in all probability, the only consistent Christian message that the mass population will ever be open to. For example, and contrary to the opinion of many, even our Hindu and Muslim neighbours enjoy Christmas with its decked halls, suburban streets filled with families enjoying the spectacle of over-the-top lit-up homes, nativity displays and fabulous fare. And supplementing all that, inconspicuously and sublimely in the background are the carols. And they listen. And they wonder.

A young girl, the daughter of a privileged Muslim family, travelled the world with her father, a high diplomat representing a southern Asian country where Christianity was suppressed. As such, from an early age, she attended the best schools available, which in most capital cities are faith-based and Christian. Each year as December approached, and the Christmas decorations came out, the girls rehearsed carols. She listened to the incredible story of the Baby born in Bethlehem, and wondered. In one school where she was a boarder, the girls would carol in the traditional way, going through the streets singing songs of the Emmanuel, God with us.

But who was this God, a baby at that, who her school friends so loved to sing about? she wondered. *How could a baby ever be God?* This was such a strange story, so different to anything she'd ever heard, her interest grew into fascination. She had to find out more. And as the years unfolded, and she grew into a teenager, she began to search for real answers, always intrigued by that Baby of the carols. Eventually, as a young adult, she felt compelled to become a Christian—a decision that placed her life in peril—then married one, after which her family shunned her.

And it all began with a Christmas carol, a seed planted in the mind of a child completely lacking in biblical understanding and knowledge of the gospel. Her journey to a full faith wasn't a simple one, but today as you worship she does likewise.

So be encouraged by Christmas, as its simple yet so profound message echoes around your town. And if you are weary in your well-doing, dead-beat from your week of late nights at *Road to Bethlehem*, from practising with the orchestra at last week's Carols by Candlelight, from preparing today's Christmas program or food hampers for the friendless, know what the result just might be.

Lee Dunstan, is editor of Signs of the Times.

This is my first Christmas as a grandfather. Twins Nate and Jai have brought immense joy to our family since their arrival—and what an emotional arrival! The boys were born 12 weeks premature, at just 28 weeks. They spent their first few days fighting for life. I'll never forget visiting the neonatal ICU and seeing them lying there, so tiny and fragile. I remember reaching into the humidicrib and having one of the boys wrap his whole hand around the end of my little finger. My heart skipped a beat. I felt helpless. I prayed for their precious lives.

Even their conception was unexplainable. Six months earlier doctors had told Amy, my eldest daughter, that her ovaries were not functioning—she was infertile. It was devastating news. How then did she conceive two boys? Our family believe it was an answered prayer and fulfilment of a promise. A miracle.

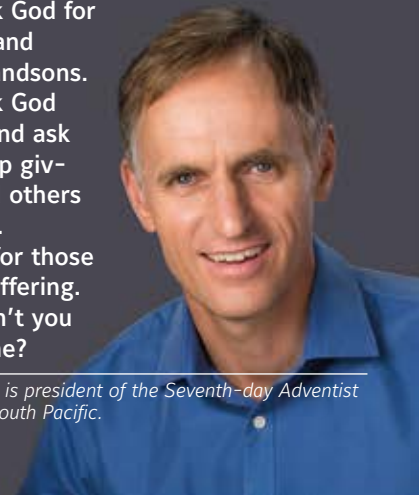
So this Christmas we're celebrating the incredible gift of life—thanking God for Nate and Jai.

This experience makes the story of the first Christmas more special. A celebration of a miracle life—the quintessential life: Jesus, the Christ, was born to the Virgin Mary; the divine Child, born human, to rescue humans from the suffering caused by evil and the complete abandonment caused by death. Angels heralded His birth, saying ". . . we bring good news of great joy for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10,11). Jesus' miracle birth was to bring ongoing, high quality life for all. A gift of promise, of life—a miracle. Life changes for those who choose to accept this Gift—Jesus.

So this Christmas, I'm going to do three things:

1. Thank God for my family and miracle grandsons.
 2. Thank God for Jesus and ask Him to keep giving me and others eternal life.
 3. Pray for those who are suffering.
- Why don't you do the same?

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





Spiritual battles

Wycliffe Associates, which supports hundreds of Bible translation projects worldwide, has seen an increase in the persecution of translators and what appear to be spiritual attacks. The difficulties have accompanied Wycliffe's success in rolling out new, faster Bible translation strategies. They are asking supporters to pray. —*Wycliffe Associates*



Health training facility

A Church college in Bangladesh has expanded to include the nation's first Adventist school of nursing. A new three-storey building includes 10 classrooms, four laboratories, a conference room and other facilities. It will enable Adventist nursing students to study in Bangladesh without pressure to attend classes on Sabbath. —*ANN*



Fair go

A 97-year old resident of a retirement village in Perth (WA) has spent 16 years battling the complex contracts that govern accommodation for the aged. Keith Parsons, a former farmer, says the arrangements favour developers rather than residents. The number of commercial providers of aged care is growing, and so are the profits. —*ABC/SMH*



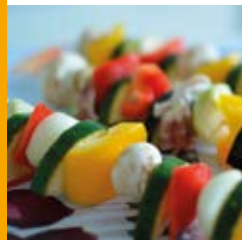
Horrendous

Prince Charles has responded to a new report that suggests Christians in 41 per cent of the world's countries are now suffering because of their faith. "It is an indescribable tragedy that Christianity is now under such threat in the Middle East; an area where Christians have lived for 2000 years," he said. —*Premier*



Tribute

Sydney's picturesque harbour has a new sight for both tourists and locals to enjoy: six new passenger ferries. The first ferry launched is named in honour of Dr Catherine Hamlin, a 92-year-old Australian Christian doctor who has been working in Ethiopia since 1959, specialising in the treatment of obstetric fistulas. —*ABC News*



Aaargh

An illness that you might have thought is confined to peg-legged pirates and salty seadogs has been found by Sydney doctor Jenny Gunton. Noticing how slowly her diabetes patients' wounds were healing, she tested and found scurvy, the result of extremely low vitamin C levels. Overcooking vegetables was one reason their nutrition was inadequate. —*ABC News*

FULLY FUNDED PHD SCHOLARSHIPS IN THE AREA OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The South Pacific Division has developed a Comprehensive Health strategy that aims to further strengthen the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a leader in lifestyle and health.

To complement this strategy, two Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) scholarships are being made available through the Lifestyle Research Centre at Avondale College of Higher Education. The two areas of interest are:

1. Strengthening the "health-identity" of the Seventh-day Adventist church within the South Pacific Division through a comprehensive health strategy.
2. The effectiveness of a multimodal Lifestyle Medicine intervention targeting emotional wellbeing.

The successful recipients will receive a full fee-waiver scholarship as well as a \$25,000 p.a. living allowance scholarship for three years of full-time candidature.

The successful applicants will:

- Possess the requisite academic qualifications for entry into a PhD (AQF Level 10) level degree, which typically involves a Masters (AQF Level 9) degree.
- Have demonstrated experience in conducting health and lifestyle programs and initiatives within and/or through the Adventist church.
- Be passionate about health and wellbeing and this work of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Interested applicants are invited to apply by Thursday, January 19, 2017 by sending a cover letter, Curriculum Vitae and academic transcript to:

Professor Tony Williams
Vice President (Academic and Research)
Avondale College of Higher Education
PO Box 19, Cooranbong NSW 2265

For further information, contact:

Dr Darren Morton, darren.morton@avondale.edu.au

New president for South New Zealand

Christchurch, New Zealand

Pastor Michael Sikuri was appointed president of the South New Zealand Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at its constituency meeting, held in Christchurch on October 29–30.

The recommendation from the nominating committee came as something of a surprise to many at the meeting, including Pastor Sikuri himself.

"Like many in Scripture, I felt inadequate as things seemed to happen so quickly," he said in an email to *Adventist Record*. "Following much prayer and consultation our response was to let the Lord speak through the process. Having accepted the Lord's will, my family and I now walk by faith, holding onto God's promise to be with us always."

Pastor Sikuri has been serving the Conference as Ministerial Association secretary and pastor of the Bishopdale

congregation. Prior to that he worked for the Adventist Church in Fiji in a variety of roles for the Trans Pacific Union Mission and Fiji Mission. His experience incorporates administration, media and chaplaincy as well as pastoral roles. Hailing from the Fijian island of Rotuma, Pastor Sikuri is believed to be the first Pasifika president for the South New Zealand Conference.

His predecessor, Pastor Damien Rice, served two terms as Conference president, beginning in 2012, and will be the lead pastor for Garden City and also care for communications and special projects. —*Kent Kingston*



Pastor Sikuri with his wife Sara and children Daniel, Rejeli, Samalia and Tamara.

Vanuatu President attends Sabbath service

Port Vila, Vanuatu

Vanuatu President Baldwin Lonsdale and a delegation from his office attended the Sabbath worship service on November 26 at Portoroki Seventh-day Adventist Church in Port Vila.

The church program began with a welcome by the Pathfinders followed by Sabbath School, singing and the divine service led by Vanuatu Mission secretary Pastor Charlie Jimmy. In his closing remarks at the end of the service, Mr Lonsdale commended the Adventist Church for its education system. He said the schools run by the Church have produced many good quality leaders who are serving the country in different areas.

Mr Lonsdale said he was touched by the "children's

corner" segment, where the children went up to the front and listened to a story before the sermon. He said attending the worship service was all part of what he has been doing: meeting with people where they are.

Mission president Pastor Nos Terry Mailalong was unable to attend the special Sabbath as he was in Fiji at the Trans Pacific Union executive year-end meetings. —*Vanuatu Mission*



SPD executive addresses equality questions

Wahroonga, New South Wales

The executive committee of the South Pacific Division (SPD) is requesting the General Conference consider changing its policy to allow commissioned ministers to have the same entitlements as ordained ministers.

The action was voted unanimously following the annual meeting of the SPD executive committee held at the Sydney office last month.

The request states: "In harmony with our statement of fundamental beliefs #7, #14 and #17, and recognising that the General Conference has affirmed the call of God to both men and women in ministry through the conferring of both ordination and commissioned credentials, the members of the executive committee of the South Pacific Division respectfully request the General Conference that consideration be given to changing policy to allow com-

missioned ministers to fulfil all duties, privileges and responsibilities as those entitled to ordained ministers."

The equality of genders in ministry was raised a number of times at these meetings, showing that this matter is still an issue in the lives of people within the SPD. Other issues raised included the leadership's role in youth retention, teen and youth Sabbath School lessons, the Church logo, signage and branding.

"It is a good day when the people of the Church have a voice and are able to share their perspectives," SPD president Pastor Glenn Townend said. "The policies at the General Conference or any level of the Church are not like the laws of the Medes and Persians and set in concrete. This is an appropriate way to be heard and ask for change." —*Record staff*



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NEWS

Deaf community now have their own Hope Channel

Wahroonga, New South Wales

The Deaf community around the world now have their own Hope Channel.

Launched on December 1, the dedicated online channel contains a variety of Adventist video productions, including Adventist pioneer feature film *Tell the World*, the Sabbath School Mission Spotlight, episodes of *It Is Written Oceania* and Adventist Church events such as the 2015 General Conference session presentations.



The video-on-demand programs are signed or captioned in ASL, English, Portuguese, Spanish, French and German, across four categories: nature, family, Bible and health.

"It is an historical milestone in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's ministry to have a channel with, for and by the Deaf," said Pastor Larry Evans, who cares for the Deaf and Special Needs Ministries at the General Conference. "It is almost unbelievable that this moment has come."

Notably, the channel is operated by Deaf church members, ensuring that its content is especially geared towards the interests and needs of this community.

"Of the some 300 million Deaf worldwide, a mere 2 to 4 per cent are Christian, firmly placing that demographic at the top of the list of 'tongues and people' yet to be reached with the gospel," said Lee Dunstan, manager of Christian Services for the Blind and Hearing Impaired, the Church's service to the Deaf in the South Pacific Division.

Hope Channel-Deaf can be accessed at: <www.hopechanneldeaf.org>. -Record staff





Discipleship focus at NZPUC meetings

by Jarrod Stackelroth

“We hope that during these meetings you are challenged by your responsibility to make disciples,” said New Zealand Pacific Union Conference president Dr Brad Kemp to open the year-end executive meetings, held November 23-24 at Union headquarters in Auckland.

His statement set the tone for the meetings as business was passed and reports were presented—all through the lens of how to be better disciples.

In fact, NZPUC Family Relationships Ministries director Victor Kulakov spent 20 minutes of his session giving committee members time to break into small groups and discuss what discipleship strategies were working, not working, what had changed and what the priorities needed to be; and outlining a plan to change the Union’s focus from being resource and program intensive to a dynamic and engaged membership. The Union hopes that 80 per cent of its efforts can be directed into encouraging iPace: pastors and members being ignited, passionate, active, connected and engaged, with only 20 per cent spent on RIP: resources, information and programs.

Delegates heard about some of the success stories the Union has witnessed, including ADRA’s Church Partnership Program (CPP), which has seen local churches get on board to run activities such as Welcome Baby, youth mentorship and budgeting programs. In fact one church in Auckland has seen 20 baptisms this year from running these types of programs. The Union’s media presence is increasing with Hope Channel NZ now being watched by 4-5 per cent of the population and Voice of Hope Radio in French Polynesia being the most listened to radio station, including commercial radio.

The committee also voted to support a statement passed at the South Pacific Division year-end meetings about the role of commissioned ministers (see story, page 7).

It was not all good news, however, as NZPUC secretary treasurer Graeme Drinkall brought some challenging membership and monetary statistics to the attention of delegates. For every 100 members the Union adds, 45 are removed. Only 30 per cent of those have died, which means

the remainder, according to Mr Drinkall, “we can do something about”.

The potential for growth is there. In 2015, according to the secretary’s report, there was one baptism for every 21 members, and 11 baptisms for every one pastor. “Imagine if there was a baptism for every member,” Mr Drinkall said.

The tithing report was similarly challenging. Mr Drinkall reported that during the past five years, only South New Zealand had seen significant tithe increase. While he acknowledged that the devaluation of the Pacific franc and other currency and economic factors were causing some challenges, he said tithe was not keeping pace with inflation and economic growth. According to research, tithe engagement is only 43 per cent in NNZ and 59 per cent in SNZ.

This information led to robust discussion on how the messaging around tithe needs to be updated to reach new generations and possible strategies to change stewardship models. Suggestions included more engaging offering presentations, greater emphasis on the message that giving is an act of worship and increasing membership awareness of eGiving possibilities.

A vote was also passed to set up a committee to look at the viability of merging the two New Zealand conferences into one, after a submission from South New Zealand some time ago. The executive voted to set up a committee but the chair took pains to assure everyone that there was no preconceived outcome in mind and that this would be an open and transparent conversation. The committee will include lay representatives from both conferences as well as church officers.

When asked to reflect on the meetings, Dr Kemp stated: “I would love to see the Church be really adventurous and to harness the platforms of ADRA, Sanitarium, the media and the local church to do something significant in the community. By doing that we could create a real presence and make a meaningful contribution to the lives of people.”

Jarrod Stackelroth attended the meetings at NZPUC’s invitation.

Imagine if there was a baptism for every member.



Cyber-bullying presentation

The Fiji Mission recently conducted a family life conference in Suva, attended by 134 people. Presentations covered topics such as cyber-bullying and loneliness. "The success of this conference was due to the support of family life experts, media promotion, participants and others behind the scenes," said Pastor Talemoko Cakobau, director of Family Ministries for the Fiji Mission. — *Talemoko Cakobau*

Gold rush for Wendy

Western Australian teacher Wendy Seegers recently won three gold medals at the World Masters Athletics Championships in Perth. A maths and science teacher at Landsdale Christian School, Wendy won gold in the 100m, 200m and 4x400m relay, and was given exemption from running on Sabbath because of her faith. — *Terry Johnson*

Making a difference in Tuvalu

The Women's Ministries team from Funafuti Seventh-day Adventist Church visited the only prison complex in Funafuti, Tuvalu, on November 6. Despite the walk and the heat, this faithful and energetic group of women spent time visiting the 12 inmates. As part of the visitation they gave out food, sang songs and shared about God's unconditional love. — *Anasa Tabua*



Church service behind bars

Relatives of prisoners recently joined with Operation Food for Life (OFFL) volunteers to take a church service at Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Bomana Prison Minimum Security Unit. Ex-convict turned church elder and PNG OFFL director Philip Vaki urged all prisoners to unite through Jesus Christ for God's calling. After the service fresh fruit, juice and ice-cream were served. Prison ministry in PNG continues to make a major impact, with recent data showing that 218 prisoners have been baptised over the past 10 years into the Adventist Church. — *Steven Matainaho*

Clubs a highlight for Bishopdale

Seventeen Adventurers and 19 Pathfinders were recently invested at Bishopdale church in Christchurch (NZ). A large group of helpers also form part of this club, including a Master Guide group of young people who have learnt valuable leadership skills. Both the Pathfinder and Adventurer groups had a full year of highlights, including camping, marching, life skills and spiritual development. "Our church is proud of our young people, especially the Adventurer club, which was awarded an excellence award from the Conference office," said Bishopdale communications leader Vicky Bell. — *Vicky Bell*



SONSHIP cruise to Pacific Islands

More than 73 Adventists from Australia and New Zealand recently took part in a SONSHIP Cruise, visiting Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Church institutions in both countries were visited, with Dr Barry Oliver baptising three young men in the Solomons. SONSHIP stands for "Serving Overseas Nations by Ship" and currently provides free medical aid via four boats. — *Carol Parbs/Felicity Johnson*

Students take to the streets

Students at Epauto Adventist Senior Secondary School in Port Vila ended their "Praise and Joy Week" by cleaning the streets and visiting homes in their community. Such activities, which were greatly appreciated by the community, are part of the school's program of community partnership and soil preparation under the Farming Cycle for Discipleship program adopted by the Vanuatu Mission. — *Talemaot*

First baptism

Bay Islands church (Qld) started as a small house church that met twice a month. Now, it meets weekly with 50 to 70 people attending from at least 10 different cultures. On October 22 the church had its first baptism, with seven people committing their lives to Christ. "We can be small but believe that God has bigger plans for us," said church pastor Pat Tualii. — *SQ FOCUS*

LAFAI MICHAEL KEY
2016
Donated by Class of 2016

Gift by graduands of Avondale to honour deceased classmates

Part of a gift by graduates of Avondale has this year honoured classmates who died before completing their studies at the college of higher education.

The gift is a donation of eight stainless steel plaques, each bearing the name of a student who died over the past four years, the year they began their course and the year of their death. The plaques adorn the rear face of the memorial in the Alumni Memorial Prayer Garden on the Lake Macquarie campus.

The students—Dr Graeme Bradford, Lafai Michael Key, Wilhelmina van der Aa, Danielle Bradshaw, James Owens, Candice Bailey, Darren Bull and Nancie Galvin—represent every level of higher education and all but two of the disciplines at Avondale.

Fostering a sense of community among such diversity is part of Avondale's mission. "We need each other," says Laura Mitchell, the graduation class representative for the Discipline of Arts and the graduate who initiated the giving of this part of the gift. She describes the campus-wide pain of Mr Key's death as "crippling". "I never met Michael but I shared the burden of his loss with hundreds of grieving students."

The plaques "honour and celebrate the lives of each of the students who've died, welcoming the memory of them to the heart of our campus".

Class co-president Dayna Petrie presented certificates to representatives of the Bradford and Key families during the valedictory service on the Saturday of graduation weekend (December 10). Then Avondale president Professor Ray Roennfeldt prayed for families of all deceased students.

The gift is a practical interpretation of the class theme, "For such a time as this". Members of the class "have chosen to live the theme out through care to those who have experienced great loss," says Professor Roennfeldt. "That's

what these graduands are like!"

The presentation of awards during the graduation ceremony on December 11 began with the robing of three Doctor of Philosophy graduands. Cornelis Bootsman, Elena Butova and Carole Ferch-Johnson are Avondale's fifth, sixth and seventh Doctor of Philosophy graduands. The first graduated in 2011. Some 34 others are enrolled in the degree and 11 in the Master of Philosophy.

Mr Bootsman examined the engagement of geological and Seventh-day Adventist thought in the 19th century and its bearing on the 20th century flood geology movement.

Ms Butova compared the four prohibitions of Acts 15 with their common background in Genesis 1-3. And Ms Ferch-Johnson studied human hands and feet and their functions as media of non-verbal communication in the narratives of Acts 3:1-11 and 9:1-19a.

The graduation class this year also included the first graduates from the Graduate Certificate in Lifestyle Medicine. The course is delivered by staff members in the Lifestyle Research Centre.

Swelling the size of the class again this year were 50 graduates who completed a Certificate IV in Presenting Community Health Education Programs. However, the Bachelor of Nursing provided the largest number of graduates—88—from any one course.

Some 317 graduates were eligible to march during the ceremony. "While I don't know them all," says Professor Roennfeldt, who presented their testamurs, "I do know many of them and I'm continually impressed by their abilities and by their commitment to Avondale's service ethos. I'm proud Avondale has played a part in preparing them for their place in the world."



Professor Ray Roennfeldt and graduation class co-president Dayna Petrie pray for the families of all students who died before completing their studies. Photo by Colin Chuang.

Brenton Stacey is public relations officer for Avondale College of Higher Education.

Glory in the lowest

by Nathan Brown

IT SEEMS ALMOST INEVITABLE AT THIS TIME OF YEAR that an earnest friend, family member or perhaps someone at your church will announce—with all the breathless enthusiasm and urgency of one who has just discovered a dark secret—the pagan origins of what we have come to know as Christmas. After some years of being only mildly troubled by such “warnings”, this year I have a better response: “Thanks be to God.”

Perhaps the “pagan origins” of Christmas are kind of the point. That, because of the incarnation of Jesus, everything can be redeemed. That we can begin practising today the promise of Revelation that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15, NIV). And that this was enacted not in the hermetically sealed purity of a distant heaven but amid the mess and the ugliness, the dirt and blood, the profane and the pagan of our world.

That’s what incarnation is.

It’s not like we need to protect the purity of God. While the angels sang “Glory in the highest” (Luke 2:14), the embodied truth of Christmas is that Glory was now found among the lowest: “In our world too, a Stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world.”¹

Consider Paul’s description of what was happening in the Christmas story: “Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being” (Philippians 2:6, 7, NLT). The risk is that we keep this story too clean. The truth of Christmas is a jarring revolution in our understanding of the nature and reputation of God. It is far more disturbing for God to become human than for a formerly pagan celebration to become a time to remember and

celebrate this remarkable story of God and His love.

Such adaptations by the people of God are not without biblical precedent. In *Who’s Afraid of the Old Testament God?* Adventist scholar Alden Thompson points out a number of sanctified appropriations made by the people of Israel from their surrounding pagan nations. He cites archaeological discoveries that point to parallels between the layout of the Israelite temples and those of surrounding nations. God used imagery and practices familiar to that time and place, and any foreign visitor to the sanctuary God designed would have recognised its purpose for sacrifice and worship.

Thompson also notes a number of Psalms—particularly Psalms 18, 29 and 93—that were largely adapted from hymns to Baal, with the name of Yahweh inserted in place of the pagan gods. In doing so, the people of God emphasised the superiority of their God, that He was able to displace the lesser gods of the surrounding nations, that He was truly the One who is “my rock, my fortress and my saviour” (Psalms 18:2, NLT), for example.

Significant among this survey are the Old Testament festivals and their borrowings from the pagan festivals that pre-figured them at the spring (Passover) and autumn (Feast of Tabernacles) equinoxes. “God did not command abstinence from all festivals just because the Canaanites had evil ones,” Dr Thompson observes. But “the primary thrust of these two great festivals pointed to those very deeds that separated Israel so completely from her neighbours, namely God’s great saving acts in Israel’s history.”²

1. As Lucy explains it in C S Lewis’s *The Last Battle*.

2. Alden Thompson, *Who’s Afraid of the Old Testament God?* Pacesetters Bible School, 1989, page 79.

Nathan Brown is book editor for Signs Publishing Company.



A time to be grateful for our health

In our modern world, Christmas is a time of year many associate with giving and receiving gifts. And while it's the jarring commercial aspect often attached to this that dominates headlines in the lead-up to the holidays, giving and receiving are actually key parts of building healthy relationships and can have a profound impact on our health and wellbeing.

When it comes to giving, research has shown that acts of kindness—giving of ourselves—are associated with a significant increase in the wellbeing of the person committing the acts. Those who committed acts of kindness spread out over a week also saw a greater increase in wellbeing than those who committed a whole lot of kind acts in one day and then no more for the week.

When it comes to receiving, it's not what we receive that can impact our wellbeing; it's how we receive it that really matters. A number of studies have found a link between gratitude and mental health as well as overall wellbeing.

So especially at this time of year, we should take time to reflect on our opportunities to give and also to be grateful for all we value in our lives. Remember, a gift doesn't have to be big—it could be as simple as baking something special for a loved one or simply giving your time and focus to those in need. The real value isn't in the size of the gift but in the spirit in which it is given and received.



Macadamia Christmas cake

Preparation time: 30 minutes Cooking time: 40 minutes Serves: 12

- ¾ cup (125g) margarine
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp orange rind, grated
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup wholemeal flour
- ½ cup plain flour
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp mixed spice
- 1 cup sultanas
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup currants
- ½ cup macadamia nut halves
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup macadamia nut halves, extra
- 3 tbsp strained, heated apricot jam, to serve

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

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVE: Kilojoules 1330kJ (318 cal). Protein 5g. Total fat 10g. Carbohydrate 51g. Sodium 75mg. Potassium 485mg. Calcium 50mg. Iron 1.6mg. Fibre 4g.



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Missing the point

by Maritza Brunt

T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, AND ALL through the house . . . there was complete and utter chaos.

My two eldest cousins had decided that we would put on a nativity play. It had seemed like a good idea at the time, but think about the logistics: 21 people, including 11 cousins ranging from ages two to 12, crammed into a tiny house in the south of Chile. Add in the fact that it had already been a long day, it was almost bedtime and you've got yourself a winning combination for disaster.

My eldest cousin appointed herself the narrator, reading from the gospels of Luke and Matthew. The other was the "stage manager", organising the remaining cousins into parts and costumes.

I was given the grand task of playing the angel Gabriel. At five years old, all I knew was that angels were beautiful and majestic, and that Gabriel had to be the most important person in the story because he was the first one to announce Mary's pregnancy. Even at five, I loved being the first to break any sort of news so I was over the moon about my casting.

The feeling didn't last long.

After all the parts had been doled out, we had several cousins left over, so the cousin closest in age to me was also given the part of the angel Gabriel. "You can share it," said my eldest cousin. I was horrified. There was only one angel Gabriel! To make matters worse we were informed that we weren't required to speak because our eldest

cousin would read directly from the Bible. All we needed to do was flap our "wings" and look angelic. Our costumes consisted of a large sheet draped around our shoulders and fastened securely with a clothes peg. Majestic indeed.

Things only went downhill from there. My 10-year-old male cousins both thought they were too cool for the parts of Joseph and lead shepherd. The cousin playing Mary was in an uproar because the doll we'd chosen to play Baby Jesus was a girl doll. My brother, three at the time, was

. . . my brother's wails as he dramatically crumpled to the floor shredded any bit of dignity we had left.

appointed one of the magi, but when the time came to give gifts to Baby Jesus, he didn't want to surrender his treasures. And when my turn came to enter as the angel Gabriel, I moved my arms gracefully for about 20 seconds before tiring out.

We concluded the whole fiasco with a hearty rendition of *Silent Night*—ironic, considering the whole evening had been anything but. My eldest girl cousins were singing off-key at the top of their lungs. I didn't know the words to this particular song in Spanish so was happily screeching out the English words, joined by my cousin from the US. The elder boys were bored. My brother had finally surrendered his magi gifts, only to become fascinated with the clothes peg holding his make-shift turban together. And in the pièce de résistance, our four-year-old troublemaker cousin—with whom my brother had been in a fierce war since the moment we landed on Chilean soil—stomped up and snatched my brother's clothes peg out of his hand.



Maritza (far left) and brother Roberto (middle) with cousins.



Above: Ready to sing to conclude the nativity play.
Below: All the cousins outside church on Sabbath morning, lined up according to age.



As the adults struggled to contain their laughter, and my cousins belted out the last few lines of the song, my brother's wails as he dramatically crumpled to the floor shredded any bit of dignity we had left.

Re-watching the home video of this performance almost 20 years later usually brings tears of laughter from the whole family. But as I reflect on it this December, I can't help but think about the fact that I'd completely missed the point of the story we were acting out. We'd all missed it. Sure, we were just kids. But how many of us—even today—still miss the point?

Quite some time ago, there was a scene that was very similar to our family night. A small space was also noisy and crowded and chaotic as Mary prepared to give birth. Animals clucked and brayed and bleated as Joseph stood watch nearby. And finally, Baby Jesus made His entrance into the world. His parents stood in awe as shepherds and magi came to worship. All heaven rejoiced with a glorious host of angels proclaiming the good news. They understood the significance of what had just happened.

But not too far away, there was one guy who had completely missed the point. King Herod was more focused on keeping his crown rather than celebrating the birth of the Saviour of the world. As a result, he missed the fact that Jesus hadn't come to take, but rather, to give. He overlooked the whole point of the story: God loved us so much that He gave us His only child—Jesus—to give eternal life to anyone who simply believes.

Often we're like King Herod. We may not have a crown, but if we're focused on ourselves, then we completely miss the point. I was so wrapped up in my task as the angel Gabriel that I didn't even hear the rest of the story being read. And it's the same every year, for me, and for all of us. We have selfish desires; moments where we think we deserve to be the star. The shepherds and the magi understood. They realised the event of Jesus' birth wasn't about them; they'd come to worship Jesus and give Him all their attention.

So this is my challenge: I'd like to encourage all of us to not miss the point. To look outside of ourselves, surrender to Christ, focus on others and meet their needs. Jesus Himself commanded us to free the oppressed and stand up against injustice (Isaiah 58:6), to share with people in need and practice hospitality (Romans 12:13), and most importantly, to not look to our own interests but to the interests of others (Philippians 2:4). There are plenty of people, regardless of the season, who need help—whether that be financial or through the giving of food, clothes or even our time. Sometimes it's not easy. It requires energy and effort, patience, kindness and humility. But if I could re-enact our nativity play, my point would be a simple one: God gave selflessly, Jesus served and all those around worshipped unreservedly.

This Christmas, New Year, and in the months and years that follow, I'd like to do the same. ↩

Maritza Brunt is assistant editor for Adventist Record.



Holly Christmas

by James Standish

IF YOU WANT TO GET TO PIEVILLE YOU'LL NEED A good GPS. That, or a bloodhound. I recommend the latter because if you arrive with your trusty bloodhound, you'll find you're in good company. Pieville is not just America, it's real America. It's where little black tins of chewing tobacco line store shelves, where NASCAR racing is front page news and where the calendar is divided, not by holidays but by hunting seasons.

And then there are the trailer homes. Plonked here and there on the landscape like they were dropped randomly from a plane flying high overhead without a care in the world. Often surrounded by a universe of broken toys, rusted cars and frayed lawn furniture.

They used to say, "There's gold in them there hills." Today, there's only meth labs mixed with grinding desperation.

"Now, I wanna welcome our new teachah," the pastor said on Rose's first week in Pieville. "She comes all the way from the land of boom-ahhh-rangs and kang-gah-roooos!" As Rose listened, she thought to herself, *and the land of all my family, all my friends and everything I love. Why on earth did God bring me to this place?*

A few months into the school year as Rose arrived at the tiny single room schoolhouse, Holly came running up to her.

"Miss, Miss?" Holly's earnest young face looked at Rose.

"Yes, Holly . . ."

"Miss, I gotta be off school on Monday."

"Monday? But you have your spelling test on Monday, Holly."

"Yeah, but my daadee needs me Miss."

"Needs you for what?"

"Needs me for huntin'—you know, Monday's the start of the raccoon huntin' season."

"You cannot be serious Holly! God made the little raccoons; you can't go out and hunt them."

"Oh, yes, Miss, but daadee always thanks the Lord for the raccoons. Every single one that he bags. I bet he's even more thankful for 'em than you are, Miss!" Holly said with an impish smile.

Rose turned her attention back to the class. "For worship this morning, we're going to read about heaven. In heaven, there'll be no death. Which means no hunting."

Rose looked meaningfully over at Holly who was grinning widely. "And the streets will be paved with gold. The mansions will be beautiful. We'll be able to have pet lions. At least if we agree to treat them kindly." Rose looked pointedly again at Holly, who beamed back and raised her hand.

"Miss, is there somewhere else people like my pop and me can go, to do the things we like?" An answer flashed into Rose's mind but, for once, she left it unsaid.

Holly was a beautiful kid. Big blue eyes. Dirty blond hair that always seemed to stick out at all angles. A cute little nose that turned up ever so slightly. And then there was her big goofy smile, which was, in its own way, endearing. No-one had told Holly to stop sucking her thumb. And maybe growing up in chaos gave her more reason than most to

seek the little comfort found there. But with every passing year, her obsessive thumb-sucking had pushed her front teeth forward—to the point that, by fourth grade, they stuck almost horizontally out of her mouth like a cartoon character.

Things had been rough for Holly, even by Pieville standards. When her mum walked out on the family, Holly and her four siblings were left to raise themselves in their dilapidated trailer. Her clothes were often stained. More often than not she arrived at school without having breakfast and with nothing for lunch. And yet, she had an irrepressibility. Like life had given her an extra shot of gumption to take on anything in any way.

Teachers aren't supposed to have favourites. But Holly? It was pretty hard for Rose not to just love that kid in a special way.

"In heaven," Rose continued, "there'll be no killing. And no sickness. No death. And we will be recreated perfect in every way . . ."

As Rose spoke, Holly stopped smiling. Her big blue eyes looked plaintively towards Rose as she slowly reached up and touched her front bucked teeth.

Rose's eyes met Holly's, and at that moment, Rose understood. Holly, for all her irrepressible veneer, was as embarrassed as any kid would be with teeth jutting out at such an odd angle.

It was cold that Friday. Christmas wasn't far away. As the kids ran out to play in their big jackets, Rose had a thought: *What if Holly didn't have to wait for heaven to have her teeth restored? After all, Jesus didn't just promise us heaven, He brought a little taste of it to earth with Him. What if, Rose thought, I follow Jesus' example?*

She called the first Christian orthodontist who came to mind and described the situation.

"OK, what kind of insurance does she have?" he asked.

"Well, she doesn't have insurance. I mean, she's from a very disadvantaged background . . ."

"OK, that's no problem."

For a second, Rose felt elated. What a lovely Christian gentleman! He'd help Holly even without insurance.

But then he continued in his crisp voice, "If she doesn't have insurance, we'll just need cash up front. Sounds like a pretty big job so you'll need \$10,000 or so."

"But . . ."

"Bring the cash, we'll do the work, it's that simple," the orthodontist said with an edge to his voice. Then he hung up.

Merry Christmas to you, you old Scrooge, Rose thought. And then she called her mum in tears. "How on earth am I going to get 10 grand before Christmas?"

After weeks of searching for a more compassionate orthodontist, Rose returned home one day to find a solitary letter in her mailbox. It read simply:

More often than not she arrived at school without having breakfast and with nothing for lunch.

"Thank you for your note. I'm a Christian and I would be honoured to help. But I always feel it's important for everyone to do their part. So I will meet you half-way. I'll charge you half the cost. And you will need to raise the other half."

Raise five grand before Christmas? Well that's twice as easy as raising 10, thought Rose.

Rose called her mum and they talked through the options. Of course, she'd ask for contributions from Pieville. And come up with fundraising projects. She'd ask friends and family too. Then her mum said, "Tell you what, we'll start raising money for your little Holly here in Australia."

"You'd do that Mum?"

"Of course I will!" her mother replied laughing. "It's almost Christmas, and isn't that what Christmas is all about?"

A few weeks later, Rose asked Holly to stay a few minutes after school.

"Holly, I've got some good news for you."

"For me, Miss?"

"Yes. Good people from all over Pieville and all the way over in Australia have raised some money, a very good dentist has agreed and together we're going to get those teeth of yours fixed!"


Holly leapt in the air, screamed and then lunged forward and hugged Rose so tightly she could hardly breathe. As Rose stood there looking down at the mop of dirty

blond hair, she heard a noise. Softly at first. Like a squeak. And then louder. And louder. And louder as the squeak turned into big sobs. "Thank you, Miss, thank you," was all that Holly could muster between her sobs of happiness.

The school's Christmas program at the Pieville church was a bit of a mess that year. The trumpet playing boy got nervous and inflicted three minutes of atonal blaring that sounded more like a dying bullfrog than *Joy to the World*. Kids stumbled over their lines and somehow the shepherds arrived with gold, frankincense and myrrh. And at the apex of *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, Holly's cardboard angel wings fell off. Rose winced in silent desperation as the school's slow train-wreck unfolded.

And then, at the very end, Holly stood up to the microphone, her wings conspicuously reattached with silver duct tape. She smiled, and in the spotlight her braces glittered like all the stars in the night sky. And in a soft but clear voice she read the final reading of the day:

"Jesus said, 'I am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly.' This Christmas, may Christ bring abundance into your life, just like He has into mine."

That's it, thought Rose, *that's why I'm here... that's why we're all here.* 

James Standish has just finished his first book, Disneyland's Back Door, a collection of humorous, poignant, faith-affirming stories for kids aged 7-12 and their parents. It's available at <www.amazon.com>.



DIGGING INTO THE WORD

Gary Webster

The Herodion and the wise men

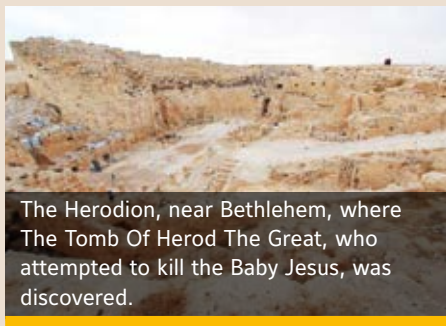
On a recent visit to Herod the Great's fortress of Herodion, near Bethlehem, I wondered, "Could this be the place from which his soldiers were dispatched to kill Baby Jesus?" Herod, ever on the lookout for those he perceived as a threat to his throne, was deeply disturbed when he discovered that some wise men from the East had come to worship a baby born "King of the Jews". **Read Matthew 2:1-3.**

According to Isaiah, Jehovah (the LORD) is the only God, and only He should be worshipped. So why then did the wise men fall down and worship the Baby Jesus? There's only one answer—Jesus is Jehovah, God in human flesh, which is why they called Him the King of the Jews, for Israel's King is Jehovah, the Almighty, the First and the Last. Jesus Himself claimed this!

Read Matthew 2:11; 4:10; Exodus 34:14; John 1:49,50; Mark 15:2; Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 1:8,17; 22:12,13.

But the King of Israel is also our "Redeemer!" Amazing grace in the story of Christmas: the King of Kings—Jehovah, God Almighty—loved us each so much that He not only took on our flesh and blood, but redeemed us by that same blood. How tragic that some say there was a time when Jesus was not, that at a point in time before creation the Father brought Him forth. They thereby rob the cross of its glory and power! No! Bethlehem's Babe was God from eternity. At Calvary, God loved us so much that He, in human flesh, hung on the cross. This Christmas not only join the wise men in worshipping Jesus as God Almighty, but share His self-giving grace with as many as possible.

Read Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 17:14; 19:16; 22:4; John 1:1,14; Micah 5:2.



The Herodion, near Bethlehem, where The Tomb Of Herod The Great, who attempted to kill the Baby Jesus, was discovered.

MYSTERY HISTORY

The Inspector

The elder daughter of one of the first Seventh-day Adventists in South New Zealand, Miss Maud Smart, followed her mother's spiritual example and commenced her teaching ministry for the Church in 1912 and served 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, South New Zealand.

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.

Information provided by Pastor L Gilmore.



The secretary

Edith Graham was a leader in the early work of the Church in Australia. She was secretary of the Australasian Union Conference for at least the first decade of the 20th century. In 1911 she became secretary-treasurer of the New Zealand Conference and in 1913 she was called to the General Conference as head of the Home Missions Department of the world Church.

She died suddenly on July 15, 1918, just after being unanimously re-elected to her position at the General Conference.

Synopsis source: *Australasian Record*, July 29, 1918.



MYSTERY HISTORY



Do you know?

- The people in the photo.
- The date the photo was taken.

Send to heritage@avondale.edu.au

LETTERS

JOB'S WIFE

Winston McHarg, via email

The author of "Misunderstanding Job's wife" (Feature, November 19) is puzzled that not a single translation renders the Hebrew word *barak* in Job 2:9 as "bless" and suggests that Job's wife really said "bless God and die" not "curse God and die".

He suggests reasons why he thinks the translators are mistaken. These include ignorance, gender bias, naively following precedent and "failure to take their task seriously enough".

He briefly refers to a contextual reason but somehow totally overlooks the immediate context, which is probably the main reason translators favour the less common, euphemistic rendition of *barak*—Job's prompt response to his wife's words: "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak."

If Job's wife were calling on him to "bless God" why does Job thus rebuke his wife? The answer is obvious. It seems clear the translators have got it right after all.

Bill Douglas C, via email

Space fails to adequately answer the article regarding Job's wife (November 19).

The word *barak* has been explored in depth, however, when communicating through speech, intonation, volume and emotion interpret how it is intended!

Mrs Job's question about her husband's integrity and the following suggestion were, it would seem, spoken with sarcasm and vitriol from a heart overwhelmed with trauma, bewilderment and the depths of grief and pain!

Neither her nor Job were considering their cultural op-

tions for Mrs Job if Job were to die. Their acute situation excluded everything, except the "now" and the ability to remain sane!

Why was she not swept away like her children? Scripture says Satan was permitted to remove all who supported Job. Was she to be Job's nemesis?

The author's research has overlooked the human response to the profound effect of crushing grief and loss and the need for answers and someone to blame (often ourselves or those closest to us). His defence of women is noble but let us look at the context and interpret accordingly.

HERO OF THE STORY

Don Dickins, via email

Patriarchal misogyny is "alive and well" today, in the Church and the wider world.

"Misunderstanding Job's wife" helped me to understand that Scripture has not come from heaven through some golden conduit, but via "holy men of God" who spoke God's thoughts in their language and often with their prejudices.

Thanks for lifting the cloud from the reputation of Job's wife and for mining new treasures from old truths. As a life partner to this great upright man and having borne 20 of their children, surely she is Job's true comforter and the hero in this story.

CHECK THE TERMS

Casey Wolverton, Qld

Nicholas Miller offers wise counsel in "Why Listen to the Reformers?" (Feature, November 19). Biblical truth mined over the centuries by these Christian pioneers is invaluable to the theological bedrock Seventh-day Adventists adhere to.

In the same vein, I'd suggest there is value in the biblical insights and testimony from the myriad of Christian writers, scholars, pastors and teachers found in the wider body of Christ today. Miller quite rightly asserts that the Holy Spirit will be our Guide as to what is true, helpful and worthy of application.

Going further, let me suggest that Adventists gain credibility (and influence) when they are willing to affirm biblical truth whenever they hear or see it, irrespective of who articulated it. Conversely, their credibility is diminished when they're unwilling to affirm obvious biblical truth or observable spiritual fruit—simply because the author or leader is not Adventist. Why should we care? Because God has given us something important to share with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and their willingness to listen hinges on our credibility.

WORDS OF HOPE

Joan Thomson, NSW

Thank you for a great production, especially the November 5 issue—so many interesting news snippets and articles. I loved "Following God to Greece". The article spoke for itself and helped provide answers for the writer of "In the shadow of the back door"—a situation that certainly can occur.

I thank God we have access to Hope Channel, *It is Written* and more. These are lifesavers for anyone who feels alone. The answers to our problems are surely speaking to us if we listen to these God-blessed programs and put into practice the wonderful words of Jesus. I shared this *Record* with my neighbour, who appreciates our books and magazines.

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.

THIS MONTH IN



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When Jesus comes back, the angels will sing a happy song. The first time they sang it was when Jesus was born. This time they will be singing about God's people going up to heaven to be with Jesus forever - that will be a very, very happy song!

CODE BREAKER

Use the code to solve the puzzle.

GRACE MESSAGE

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 J A J O O O C C C J O T U U O J U O N
 J R F O U J U J U F R C C R

MEMORY VERSE

T U S O F F N J O O C U C J A U O N
 J A J O O C C O L J O T U C A F C O L C A
 J O C T F J J O T C U O O
 T U S N U L C F U F F O C C C
 J O T U S T O J J O S F U T U S O F F N

Isaiah 38:20, NIV

CODE



W	H	J	M	A	G	P	F	Y
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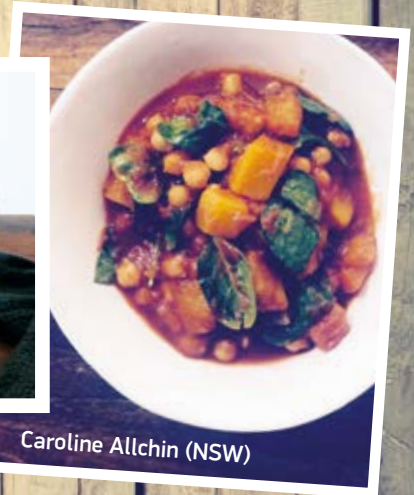
WINNERS!



A big thank you to everyone who entered our Food As Medicine giveaway (November 18 issue). The *Adventist Record* team had such a hard time selecting just one winner, we had to pick two! Congratulations to Nicole Sandy (Qld) and Caroline Allchin (NSW) who inspired us with their creations and creative ways on how they personally use food as medicine.



Nicole Sandy (Qld)



Caroline Allchin (NSW)

FINALISTS

Congratulations to our finalists! These dishes made everybody in the office hungry. Unfortunately, some entries did not fit the criteria of 25 words or less, or did not answer the question in full, but we were impressed by everyone's creativity!



Tuan (Irene) Haw (NSW)



Laughlan Orr (Tas)



Bernice Wilton (NZ)



Brenna Chapman (NSW)

APPRECIATION

Gredig. The family of the late Peggy Gredig wish to express their sincere thanks for the incredible support, prayers, love and messages of comfort following the passing of a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and aunty. Hers was a life well lived and she rests awaiting the resurrection morning.

VOLUNTEER

Are you a pioneering, cheerful, committed, enthusiastic and patient person? Do you have a year to offer in service? We currently have a few positions available in some pretty challenging and exciting areas. Are you game?

Contact SPD Volunteers <volunteers@adventist.org.au> for more information.

POSITIONS VACANT

■ **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.**

■ **Communications and marketing officer, Faith FM—Australian Union Conference (Ringwood, Victoria).** The position is on a full-time, 12-month contract basis, based in Melbourne, Victoria. The role includes: raising awareness regarding the impact of Faith FM within the Seventh-day Adventist Church at all levels, including conference, local church and members; supporting the Faith FM coordinator in developing and managing strategic partnerships and relationships; developing and implementing sponsorship, fundraising and advertising strategies. Please direct all inquiries to: Pastor Tony Knight (Human Resources Coordinator), 289 Maroondah Hwy, Ringwood, Vic, 3134; (03) 9871 7591 or email <tonyknight@adventist.org.au>. Applicants must be legally entitled to work in Australia. The Australian Union Conference reserves the right to fill the role prior to the close of applications date. Applications close **January 16, 2017.**

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



ANNIVERSARY

Mitchell. A family reunion celebrating the 60th wedding anniversary of Kenyon and Felicia (nee Osborne) was held in Bonnell's Bay, NSW. After meeting at Carmel College in 1954, Felicia moved to join Kenyon in Mount Gambier, SA, and they married on 20.8.1956. Travelling from SA, Qld and NSW were their children and families, Carol, Phillip, Lynette, Stephen and spouses, seven of their grandchildren and four great-grandchildren with a fifth arriving for the occasion. Congratulations were received from the Queen, Governor-General, Prime Minister, NSW Governor, NSW Premier and other local dignitaries.

WEDDINGS

Brown-Bowers. Marvin Brown and Nerida Bowers were married 23.10.16 at Dairy Museum Chapel, Murgon, Qld. They celebrated their marriage with family and a

few close friends, and will live at Murgon where Marvin operates a mechanical and tyre business.

Victor Torrens



Martin-Wilson.

Raymond Martin and Lynnette Wilson were married 19.9.15 at Lilydale church, Vic. It was a beautiful spring day and Lilydale church members, along with family and friends from across Australia, shared in Ray and Lynnette's happiness.

Jeff Parker

OBITUARIES



Arnold, Bessie May, born 5.5.1920; died 31.10.16. She was predeceased by her

husband. She is survived by her children Carolyn (Wellington, NZ), Elizabeth and Garth (Raumati Beach), John and Samantha (Auckland), Fay (Blenheim) and Josephine (Tuamarina); 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Tributes at her service honoured a mother and grandmother who was diligent, patient, wise, loving and giving. Her faithful support of the church in Blenheim included some 20 years as treasurer.

Paul Gredig



Boko, Trevor, born 1.4.1971 in Titjikala, NT; died 3.9.16 as a result of a car accident on

28.8.16 near Finke. His wife Sandra Churchill died at the scene of the accident. He is survived by his daughter Delvina Boko; and three sisters Patricia, Marlene and Doreen. Sandra introduced Trevor to the Adventist message. He was baptised along with Sandra in the first baptism held in Finke on the day of the opening of the church in 2012. Trevor enjoyed attending Mamarapha College, WA, and was a model student. Trevor and Sandra were buried side-by-side at the Finke cemetery.

Don Fehlberg, David Gilmore, John Beck, Mancel Dougherty

Chandler, Suzanne, born 29.12.1956 in Maclean, NSW; died 15.9.16 in Hervey Bay, Qld. She is survived by her parents Alwyn and Fay Chandler (Farmers Channel, NSW); children Michelle, Melissa, Josh, Jamie, Rebecca (Hervey Bay, Qld), Tracy

Lea (Katoomba, NSW) and their spouses; 14 grandchildren; and her sisters Jennifer (Lawrence), Debbie (Goonellabah), Catherine (Hornsby) and their spouses. Suzanne was an unselfish person and although she went through some difficult times in her life she would always say "don't worry—be happy".

Eric Greenwell

Chapman, Ian Stanley, born 21.11.1954 in Red Cliffs, Vic; died 8.12.15 at home in Auchenflower (Brisbane, Qld). He is survived by his wife Patricia; children Keryn (Brisbane), Scott and Tina (Toowoomba), and Ryan (Brisbane); and three grandchildren. Ian graduated as a nurse at the Sydney Adventist Hospital in 1982. He enjoyed spending time in nature camping and bush walking.



Churchill, Sandra "Sonya", born 1.1.1972 in Finke, NT; died 28.8.16 as a result of a

car accident near Finke. Her husband Trevor Boko survived the accident but died a week later. She is survived by her two children Ashwyn and Cleon; and four sisters Noreen, Eva, Sarah and Evelyn. Sandra was the first person in Finke to accept the Sabbath as the result of her lifelong friend Lorraine Ferguson sharing with her the good news. She was one of the first two students from Finke to attend Mamarapha College (WA). She attended the first Sabbath meeting in Finke and was among those who requested a church be built in the area. She was baptised on the opening day of the church. On behalf of the community Sandra welcomed General Conference president Pastor Ted Wilson and his wife Nancy to her church in May 2016.

Don Fehlberg, David Gilmore, John Beck, Mancel Dougherty

Craig, Freida (nee Rabe), born 16.8.1917 in Tasmania; died 7.10.16 at Avondale House, Cooranbong, NSW. She was predeceased by her husband Frank in 1983. She is survived by her children Alan (Cooranbong), Jeanette (Lawson) and Ron (Rozelle); grandchildren Lisa, Michael, Melissa and Kristin; and great-grandchildren Sienna, Keira, Byron, Eva and Piper. Freida left her incredible mark on us all.

Fauatea, Toese, born 18.1.1930 in Falelima, Samoa; died 8.11.16 in Melbourne, Vic. He is survived by his wife and pele, Valasi; children Neru, Lepeta, Teli and Nesa; grandchildren Krystal, Rachel, Tamyra, Carlos, Calvin, Jaeban, Atalasi and Noah. He has left family and friends with a lifetime of precious memories. "Even a man with a limp, can finish the race", so we too will continue running the race till the end.

Togamau Tuaoi



Grace, Geoffrey Lawrence, born 24.1.1959 in Brisbane, Qld; died 25.2.16 in Brisbane. He was predeceased by his mother Frances in 1980 and daughter Esther in 2005. He is survived by his wife Erika (Lawnton); children Amanda (Redland Bay) and Ned (Lawnton), father Laurie (Woodford), brothers Wesley (Stanmore) and Anthony (Narangba); grandchildren Nazeka and Laiken Brown (Redland Bay), and stepson Matthew Warner. Geoff was a warm and friendly man who loved helping people and never missed an opportunity to share his new-found Saviour with his fellow workers in the building trade and associates from his early years.

Mike Brownhill, David Edgar, Darrin Parker, David Stojic



Gredig, Peggy, born 3.9.1923; died 12.10.16 in Brisbane, Qld. She is survived by her husband of 72 years, Frank (Brisbane); children Barry and Wendy (Nelson, NZ), Paul and Betty (Blenheim), Kevin and Val (Longburn), Wayne and Marilyn (Brisbane, Qld), Phil and Petra (Sydney, NSW), Brett and Julie (Toowoomba, Qld), and Bronwyn and John (Hawera, NZ); 16 grandchildren; and 20 great-grandchildren. Peg spent most of her life in New Plymouth, NZ, and the last seven years at Victoria Point Retirement Village, Brisbane, Qld. Her patient, loving and benevolent life touched many lives.

Bob Possingham, Steven Ellis



Greentree, Edna Therese, born 3.7.1921 in Brunswick, Vic; died 16.10.16 in Waverley Aged Care, Melbourne. She is

survived by her sons Gary and his spouse Val, and Jeffery; grandchildren Stewart, Warren and Joanne; and great-grandchildren Matthew, Chelsea, Bradley, Lilley and Thomas. Edna had a sense of humour and was a happy, faithful church member.

Dean Giles, David Pearce

Jacobson, Betty May, born 1.5.1941 in Mt Morgan, Qld; died 28.10.16 in Caloundra. She is survived by her husband Colin (Caloundra); children Peter, Leonie Bourke and Stephen (Brisbane); grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Betty loved her Lord and will be greatly missed.

Stephen Ward

Reibelt, Laurence Edward Patrick, born 13.5.1916; died 11.10.16, aged 100 years and six months. He was predeceased by his wife Mavis. He is survived by his children Mercia, Laurence and Patricia; grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Laurence was known as Uncle Laurie to his church family and friends. He was a founding member of Warwick church. Laurie was a dedicated literature evangelist and tireless servant of the Lord.

Trevor Mawer

Richardson, Lewis Graham, born 24.4.1938; died 10.11.16. He was predeceased by his son Jason. He is survived by his wife Hilary; children Debbie, Graham and Justin; grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Graham was well known for his ability to fix all things mechanical and served the Church in New Zealand and Australia. He was a published poet and saw God's hand in all things.

Trevor Mawer

Schofield, Norman Jack Callan, born 6.1.1923 in Parramatta, NSW; died 29.9.16 at his home in Wingham. Jack is survived by his wife June; sons Allan and Geoffrey, daughter Jennifer and son-in-law Peter Ivey; grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Jack and his family were original members of the Parramatta and Windsor churches. For the past 33 years he attended Taree church. Jack was a man of many talents and had a passion for learning.

Graham Stewart

Sperring, Ruth Agnes born 21.3.1924 in Laidley, Qld; died 13.10.16 in Cooranbong, NSW. She was predeceased by her husband Harold in 1989. She is survived by her daughter Bev Robinson (Morisset Park); three grandchildren Andrew Robinson, Christie Rea and Mark Robinson; eight great-grandchildren; and three sisters Alma Robe, Yvonne Nethercott, and Hazel Doebelin (all of Victoria Point, Qld). Ruth was one of 10 children born to Carl and Annie Heise. She loved the gospel message, and was an accomplished nurse and midwife. She loved art and craft, and was an adored matriarch of her family.

Lyell Heise

Steen, Mary Pauline Norma, born 2.5.1921 in Bathurst, NSW; died 13.10.16 in Molong. Pauline was predeceased by her husband Thomas. She is survived by her children and their spouses, Pam Brady, Frank and Leona Steen, Geoff and Laura Steen, Jenny and Don Morehouse; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and her youngest sister Lola Frecklington. Pauline was a member of the Cowra church. She lived in Cowra until her final three years when she moved into an aged care home in Molong.

Colin Richardson

Steicke, Valerie (nee Franklin), born 14.2.1944 in Lancashire, England; died 27.9.16 in Hollywood Private Hospital, Nedlands, WA. She is survived by her husband Keith (Southern River); daughters Priscilla, Lynda, Denise and their husbands (Perth) and son Scott Kemp; stepchildren Mark Steicke and his wife, and Erin Steicke; 12 grandchildren; and her sister Joan and Geoff Smith. Val's love of God, her family, church and breeding Tenterfield terriers are lovingly remembered. She faced adversity with humour, courage and loving support from her family.

Paul Goltz

ADVERTISING

Orewa church jubilee NZ—April 21-22, 2017. An invitation to all involved or associated with our church to celebrate together. Invited speakers for Friday vespers, Sabbath School and church. North Shore Welsh Choir at 3pm. If you have memories, etc to

share now or on the day please contact <erichanna82@gmail.com> or phone 02102485805; 094245379 or <tgrey@clear.net.nz>. We look forward to confirmation of attendance! Luncheon provided.

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Finally . . .
Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.
—Winston Churchill
Next RECORD Jan 28

'SPEAK CONFIDENTLY' WAS ONE OF THE BIGGEST LESSONS BEN HAD TAKEN FROM SCHOOL THAT YEAR.



Our Sydney Adventist schools wish you a Happy Christmas as we celebrate this holiday season. We are proud to be a school system that aims to encourage our students to love learning and nurture them so they have the confidence to always have a go.

Happy Holidays from our school family to yours.



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