



EXPLORING EQUALITY

WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT
UNIFORMITY OR DIVERSITY? 14

NEWS

AUC LAUNCHES UNPRECEDENTED
CONSULTATION WITH CHURCH
MEMBERS 5

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WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR?

It was Friday night and I was thrilled. Our hectic week was finally finished and we had nothing on. Absolutely nothing.

I had it all planned. Vegetarian hotdogs, the ultimate easy Friday night meal.

Just my wife and me—a quiet night at home together, just the two of us.

So how did we end up eating cold hotdogs when the police finally left? As they say, the best laid plans . . .

Our neighbours were having a domestic. Right next door to our apartment. For the second night in a row, and it sounded like it was escalating to violence. So we called the police.

A few days later it happened again—this time in the apartment building next door, outside our bedroom window as we tried to sleep. She sat on the floor and cried and he called her all manner of names (which I won't repeat here). We saw them scuffle, pushing each other as they argued. The shouting continued for a while but the situation seemed to defuse.

That brings the total to three couples in three different apartment buildings on our street this year who we've witnessed engaging in domestic violence.

It brought home to us the reality that our own "safe, friendly" community is struggling with darkness and is in need of the hope we have.

Here is the question I must ask myself. *What am I doing to heal and reach my own community? Who is my neighbour? And do I care about them?*

Truthfully, we've made good connections in our neighbourhood . . . just not with the couple next door, who always fight.

If we don't step out of our comfort zones to bring healing and the gospel message to the world and our neighbours, then we are complicit.

So what does that look like?

Well, Jesus moved around in local communities and He healed those He met.

Maybe domestic violence is the new paralysis. Marriage breakdown or crippling debt the new leprosy. Alcohol and substance abuse the new possession. And spiritual blindness abounds.

Jesus can heal and cure the issues that are plaguing our communities. If I did not know Jesus I could almost guarantee I'd be trapped by one or many of those curses.

We believe the message of the three angels must "go to all the world". But will the world hear the message if they are broken and in need of healing?

And this is where the problem of how we "do church" instead of "being church" comes in. The church is no longer a hub of society. It's a place you have to go out of your way to get to, and most people won't.

We must be the church where we are: reaching out, building relationships, providing support and counsel to other couples and families (there are lots of young families in my area); to let them know they are not alone. My wife and I are not perfect but we know the Perfect One, the One who created marriage and us.

But how many suburbs do I drive through before I get to my church? How many Adventist churches do I pass?

This is the great dilemma. Our communities need us and we drive six suburbs beyond our own and ignore our neighbour. The reality is, our churches are not always connected to the communities that surround them. We don't have a grasp on the problems and needs around us. More than that, I would say, we don't love our communities or those who live in them. Particularly in cities, we attend commuter churches—we commute in and then away after the service—we don't live and eat and minister among the people. We don't love them.

My dream for the Church is to see that change but at this stage, I'm still part of the problem. I belong to an active Church and am committed to its mission. It is that vision, however, that feeds my dream that one day the Church will meet in our home, and the homes around us, as we meet the needs of the community and invest in and love our neighbours.

So do we take the words of Jesus seriously? Do we "love our neighbour as ourselves"?

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SINGING OUR MESSAGE

James and Ellen White stayed in taverns as they travelled to support the new believers of the early Sabbath-keeping Adventist movement. Taverns in north-eastern USA in the 1850s were like motels today and had a central place where people gathered to eat and drink, play games, socialise and sing. James and Ellen were good singers and often entertained other guests with cultural and spiritual songs. Apparently they were so good that some tavern owners donated meals and accommodation. The Whites were singing evangelists—using whatever talents they had to share God’s last day message.

Early Adventist music was very vibrant. James White wrote in his autobiography, “It is a fact that there was in those days a power in what was called Advent singing, such as was felt in no other” (*Life Incidents*, 1868, p 94). Later William A Spicer, once a General Conference president, wrote, “I remember well, as a boy, in our church waiting for the preacher . . . Then suddenly the silence would be broken by a sweetly musical and strong, sure voice, singing a familiar hymn. I can see the singer now, James White, silver-haired, coming down the aisle, beating time on his Bible, and singing . . .” (*Pioneer Days of the Advent Movement*, 1941, p 146).

The early Adventist hymn music had a number of different styles but most followed the popular upbeat style of the time. The song lyrics highlighted their beliefs and hope, including aspects of the special message. Here is a chorus of one song about tobacco and health reform: *“Chewing! Smoking! Spitting! Choking! Sending clouds whirling in everybody’s face. Chewing in the parlour, spitting on the floor, is there such enslavement? Is there such a bore?”*

The Adventist message should always be sung in ways that reach the intended audience. Let’s recapture our pioneers’ spirit and hope—even in our singing.

“You will see your Lord a coming in a few more days!”

GLENN TOWNEND
SPD PRESIDENT



AUSSIE ABCS UNITING ONLINE

SCOTT WEGENER

Half of Australia’s Adventist Book Centres (ABC) are now pooling their resources into a united Australian web store at <adventistbookcentre.com.au>.

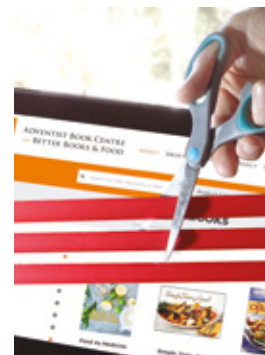
The Victorian Conference accepted the invitation to join North New South Wales (NNSW) and Greater Sydney Conference’s (GSC) joint web store, which had been in collaborative development since late 2016.

“This is a significant achievement,” said GSC CFO Eva Ing. “It’s quite unheard of for two, let alone three, conferences to collaborate on a project like this. There have been some tricky hurdles we needed to clear before the traditionally very separate stores could even think about sharing a web store, but I’m pleased to say it’s now a reality and great things are to come!”

Jo-Anne Boudan, manager of NNSW’s Better Books and Food store, said combining resources is a win for the conferences and a win for customers. “Together we can provide a better online experience at a split cost.”

Victorian Conference CFO Graeme Moffitt said Victoria originally planned to build its own online store. “It made sense on many levels to join the project,” he said.

The web store was launched with its first 1000 products, but there are plenty of improvements still to come over the following months.



200 TERTIARY STUDENTS SHARE THEIR FAITH

TRACEY BRIDCUTT

More than 200 Seventh-day Adventist students from tertiary institutions around Fiji took part in the recent Global Public Campus Ministries (PCM) weekend.

On Sabbath, October 21, students gathered at Lautoka Adventist School for Bible study, group activities and discussion. Trans Pacific Union Mission youth director Pastor Faafetai Matai presented. The aim was to equip the students so that they could share the Bible with other students and start small group ministries.

Following the rally they went to a park in the city and shared testimonies, sang worship songs and gave out GLOW tracts. Some people were so moved they asked the students to pray with them.

Speaking after the event, Pastor Matai said it was important for the students to recognise their responsibility to share the good news about



BIBLE STUDY IN THE PARK. Credit Petero Navosailagi

Jesus. “They need to realise there is a divine reason why God put them in their schools,” he said. “It’s not only to get a degree and a good job. While they are in that institution they are an ambassador for Christ to share their faith and lead someone to Jesus.”

The Global PCM weekend is an annual celebration of campus ministry across the globe, organised by Seventh-day Adventist Public Campus Ministries. The message: follow Jesus, embrace His mission and change the world one life at a time.

AUC LAUNCHES UNPRECEDENTED CONSULTATION WITH CHURCH MEMBERS

MARITZA BRUNT

A new Facebook group designed to give Australian Adventists their say has given a boost to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia's (AUC) review of Church structure.

"In order to create a thriving disciple-making movement across Australia, every member must have an opportunity to 'own' the future mission of the Church," said AUC associate secretary Pastor Ken Vogel. "For this reason, we have begun a journey in reviewing how we 'do church' in Australia—and that journey involves an unprecedented plan to consult across the whole Church."

"This Facebook page will yield a lot of valuable information, which will add to the data already gathered," said professional organisational change management specialist Anthony Mitchell, who is leading the review. "A large team is overseeing the process, which includes the AUC officers, all conference presidents and a number of lay members."

The AUC launched its official review of Church structure in June and has

already completed almost 70 presentations around Australia.

"Some focus groups were held in regional centres and stakeholders included church elders and local church leaders, young adults, pastors, Adventist education leaders, church administrators, departmental personnel and aged care leaders," Pastor Vogel said.

The focus groups, conducted by Mr Mitchell, have been deemed by the AUC as "extremely successful" as the participation and contribution have provided data that have "turned the review on its head".

However, the AUC believes a combination of grassroots focus groups and Facebook contributors is essential to the review and any future work on the review of Church structure into 2018.

AUC president Pastor Jorge Munoz said a focus on mission is driving the



A FOCUS GROUP IN MACKAY, NORTHERN AUSTRALIA.

review. "It is about asking how we can be more effective in every single way as a Church in mission," he said. "All aspects will be considered and evaluated, and if we need to change things so that mission wins, we are all for it."

An initial report from the review will be presented to the AUC executive committee at the end of November. The AUC Structure Review page is open for Australian Adventist members to join, and can be accessed by visiting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia's Facebook page.

NEW SECRETARY/TREASURER FOR NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

RECORD STAFF

The Northern Australian Conference has a new secretary/treasurer, with Natalie Scott accepting the call to join the team in Townsville (Qld) in late January 2018.

Ms Scott, from Darwin (NT), said she is extremely humbled. "The call came as a complete surprise—it was not at all where I thought my life was heading, but that's how God works

sometimes," she said. "I am excited to be stepping out in faith to serve Him and really looking forward to working with the team in Northern Australia."

Ms Scott brings with her a strong background in governance and financial management. She began her accounting career as a graduate from Avondale College of Higher Education (NSW) with an international professional services firm where she trained in audit and assurance. Her experience was diverse, working with a wide range of clients.

She then went on to join the Northern Territory Government, where she has held a number of senior roles. She will be leaving her position as principal auditor at the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office, where she has been working for more than five years.

Ms Scott is a Fellow of CPA Australia and has been deputy president of the Northern Territory Branch Council for the past four years.

Passionate about serving and helping others, Ms Scott has also been involved in a variety of community service activities over the years, including: STORMCOs; doorknock appeals and fundraising; a fly'n'build to Santo, Vanuatu; and recently a "drive and maintain" trip to Katherine (NT).

An active member of her local church, Ms Scott has held various roles and is regularly involved in mentoring and leadership.

Rob Ellison is leaving the role to work at the South Queensland Conference as finance manager for Gold Coast Christian College and special projects officer for the Conference.



NATALIE SCOTT ... STEPPING OUT IN FAITH.

VANUATU STUDENTS YET TO RETURN HOME AFTER VOLCANO ERUPTS

TRACEY BRIDGUTT

Adventist students and teachers relocated in September due to volcanic activity on their home island of Ambae, Vanuatu, are yet to return home.

Gilrick Joshua, Adventist Education director for the Vanuatu Mission, said students from Penama Adventist College (PAC) would remain at Aore Adventist Academy until the end of the school year to avoid disturbing their studies.

The students' parents, who were relocated to the neighbouring islands of Pentecost and Santo, returned to Ambae in late October in a move facilitated by the Vanuatu Government.

Reports from the island provide a picture of the impact on PAC, including volcanic ash on roofs and gardens, contaminated water sources, and cattle grazing in the school and staff gardens.

"Such devastation to gardens may mean a shortage of food for both students and staff for a good portion of

the next academic year with a financial burden for purchasing food until the gardens are ready," Mr Joshua said.

"There is also the issues of airborne disease and water contamination, which may cause respiratory illnesses and skin irritations."

Trans Pacific Union Mission associate education director Mele Vaihola visited Aore Adventist Academy last month, meeting up with the PAC students and staff.

"We thank the Aore administration and staff for accommodating them and have helped them settle in well," she said.

Delma, a Year 9 student, expressed her feelings about the relocation: "I feel

frightened and think about my parents, but I like Aore because it is located near the sea and I have plenty of new friends."

The Vanuatu Government declared a state of emergency on September 26 and subsequently evacuated much of the island's population after the volcano, known as Manaro, showed escalating signs of activity.



PENAMA STUDENTS ARE MISSING HOME BUT HAVE SETTLED IN WELL.



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TRAGEDY LEADS TO CHILDREN'S CHURCH DEDICATION

SOLOMON PAUL

A Seventh-day Adventist church in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea has dedicated a new children's church to a young boy who died in a car accident.

Nambi church, in Mul Baiyer District, recently celebrated the opening and dedication of its lamb shelter, known as the Chris Kimni Memorial Children's Church. The building is much bigger than the adult church in Nambi and contains partitions for five different divisions of the children's Sabbath School. During the divine service the partitions are pushed to the sides for all the children to worship together.

The project is named after Chris Kimni, a young boy who died in a car accident near Minimb. In May 2012 a baptism and evangelistic meeting were held at Minimb church. Chris's "cousin-sister" Wiki Nikas was being baptised and Chris went to witness her baptism. Tragically, while he was walking to the baptismal site, he was hit by a car.

A few months later Jim Wagi, Western Highlands Mission Volunteers in Action



JIM WAGI (VIA) CUTS THE RIBBON TO OPEN THE CHURCH WITH OTHER SPECIAL GUESTS.

(VIA) coordinator, conducted an evangelistic meeting at Nambi. He was told the story of how Chris died and was moved deeply as he had lost his own son in a car accident at Togoba. With that emotion, he drafted documents to seek help from VIA.

VIA provided roofing iron and other building materials for the Chris Kimni church. The Nambi church also partnered with VIA, supplying financial assistance and labour. Pastor Moses Mase performed the official dedicatory prayer while WHM CFO Bray Yomba officiated at the program.

FIRST SPANISH WOMEN'S RETREAT IN AUSTRALIA

VANIA CHEW

Seven non-Adventists answered an appeal at the first retreat for Spanish Adventist women in Australia, held September 22-24 at the Merroo Christian Centre (NSW).

The theme of the retreat was "Guided by His Spirit". Approximately 130 people attended the event and they were greatly blessed with the fellowship they found and the messages from international speaker Liz Enid Polanco. The messages encouraged the attendees to allow the Holy Spirit to lead them at each stage of their lives.

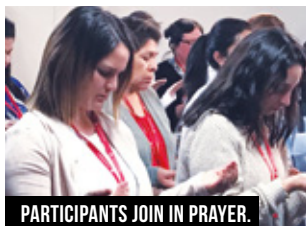
On Sabbath morning, South Pacific Division Women's Ministries director Erna Johnson spoke, exhorting the women to maintain their personal connection with God each day.

"I personally want to say thank you to God and to all those who helped organise this memorable encounter," said

participant Diana Green.

An appeal was held at the end of the event and seven non-Adventist women went to the front, some asking for Bible studies and some expressing their desire to give their heart to Jesus.

"God has been good in giving me the opportunity to participate in the first meeting of Spanish Adventist ladies from Australia," said attendee Miriam Flamenco. "The moments of prayer were comforting; it helped us remember how much power there is in prayer. I want to invite all the ladies who were not able to participate in this meeting to attend the next one. You will be greatly blessed!"



PARTICIPANTS JOIN IN PRAYER.

NEWS GRABS



ADVENTIST DAY

The legislative body in the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo recently passed a bill that officially declares October 22 of each year as "Adventist Day". Church leaders believe the new law is a recognition of the Church's contributions to society through projects in education, health and social development. —SAD



REFORMATION CELEBRATION

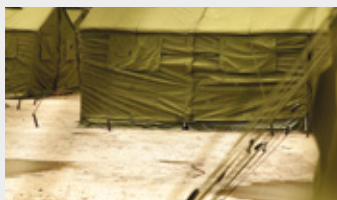
Raafat Kamal, president of the Adventist Church in the Trans-European Division, was recently invited to present at the European Parliament Celebratory event at the Parliament building in Brussels, Belgium. The aim of the day was to explore lessons from the Reformation that can positively shape a future Europe. —TED



FIRST CLASS

Vietnamese Adventists from across the US recently came together for the official opening of the El Monte Vietnamese School of Evangelism. Students will be taught courses on practical theology and health, with a mix of on-campus and virtual classes. The school ultimately hopes to reach the two million Vietnamese living in the US. —Adventist Review

HOT TOPICS



NO MORE MANUS

Australia's detention facility at Manus Island in Papua New Guinea permanently closed on October 31, with 600 men still refusing to leave. Leaders from Amnesty International Pacific and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre opposed the Papua New Guinea Government's decision to re-open the site as a PNG Defence Force base, saying there is no real plan for the men to be able to rebuild their lives. —ABC



THIS IS NUTS

A new study by researchers at Loma Linda University has found eating nuts on a regular basis strengthens brainwave frequencies associated with healing, learning, memory and other key brain functions. The study confirms decades of research showing nuts are a brain health superfood. —Adventist Review



BILLIONS ON THE LINE

The Australian Catholic Church estimates it will be liable for \$1 billion in compensation to child sexual abuse victims as part of the new national redress scheme, but say they won't sign up unless states and territory governments do. Under the bill, only people who were sexually abused while in Commonwealth and territory institutions can be compensated. —ABC

CHURCH AT SCHOOL: DOES IT WORK?

BRENTON STACEY



ELIA CREVAR PRAYS WITH STUDENTS BEFORE CHAPEL AT CENTRAL COAST ADVENTIST SCHOOL. THE CHAPLAIN LINKS THE SCHOOL TO THE HAVEN CAMPUS CHURCH, WHICH MEETS IN THE SAME VENUE ON SATURDAYS.

It sounds like a win-win: strengthen the relationship between education and faith by planting a church on the campus of a Seventh-day Adventist school in Australia. But is it working? To find out, a multidisciplinary team of Avondale academics has received \$50,000 from the Church in the South Pacific to fund a first-of-its-kind study.

The team will study five plants: Church in the Fields at Macarthur Adventist College, south of Sydney; Gateway on the Cooranbong campus of Avondale School; Gilson College Community Church on the Taylors Hill campus, west of Melbourne; The Haven at Central Coast Adventist School, north of Sydney; and, Refresh at Northpine Christian College, north of Brisbane.

It will analyse the status of the plants and the impact they make on surrounding churches. It will also make recommendations about the connectedness, effectiveness and health of the plants. The aims? To bring greater synergy between pastoral ministry and the ministry of teaching and between church plants across Australia to better meet the spiritual needs of students.

"We're all on the same team," said Avondale Seminary head Dr Kayle de Waal, the lead researcher. "We want to see what different members of the team are doing and then share that with others. We're looking to not only provide a clearer vision but also basic guidelines for this ministry because no working strategy exists for launching a church plant on an Adventist school campus."

Dr de Waal and his team—seminary colleagues Dr Rick Ferret, Pastor Mike Parker and Dr Erika Puni, with Dr Jason Hinze from the Faculty of Education—will share their recommendations with each plant to help build capacity for ministry development, discipleship and evangelism.

"Good pastoral leaders are doing great work for the kingdom on these campuses," said Dr de Waal. "We want to come alongside and ask, 'What can we learn from you? What is God doing through you that will help make a bigger impact across the faith of the Church?'"

The team will use qualitative and quantitative research methodology. It will interview the senior ministers and head elders of the plants and of three surrounding churches and the principals and the deputies of the schools. It will also host focus groups to give ministry leaders and members of the plants and teachers at the schools an opportunity to listen to other perspectives. And it will survey members of the plants and of the surrounding churches.

"Investigating the status of five church plants on Seventh-day Adventist school campuses in Australia" is part of the Church in the South Pacific's Mission to the Cities strategy.

The Adventist Church operates a worldwide network of more than 8000 primary and secondary schools enrolling more than 1.7 million students. The Church in Australia operates more than 70 schools enrolling about 13,000 students.

FLASHPOINT



BANANA BREAKTHROUGH

A Sabbath School initiative has helped a couple from the Morata church (Central Papua Conference, Papua New Guinea) to reach others. Manase Lului and Nana Fufu, with the help of Amos Tom, started a branch Sabbath School class in the Catholic-dominated territory of Vanapa, not far from the Morata settlement in Port Moresby. Now, a makeshift church has been set up and there are about 20 members currently attending. A permanent three-bedroom house for missionaries is also under construction and is soon to be completed. As for how the funds were raised? Through baking and selling banana cakes! —Ronny Fiya



VANUATU SAYS THANKS

After Cyclone Pam ravaged Vanuatu in 2015, the Coorabong Community Services Centre (NSW) donated funds to the region to repair buildings and churches. One of the churches to benefit was Freshwind church in Port Vila. Recently, Freshwind church member Jonas Sumu visited Australia to present a plaque thanking the committee for their contribution. John Maxwell, Dot Cottier, Bob Spoor and Graham Chester received the gift from Jonas, which will be displayed in the Coorabong Community Services Centre building. —Nina Hearn



SERVICE WITH A SMILE

"Being game for God" was in the hearts and minds of the Moora Junior/Teen Sabbath School class (WA) when they put on a special service at the local aged residential lodge. A totally Junior/Teen driven program, they provided musical items, read Bible stories and sang songs that the residents joined in with. The morning tea, also baked by the Juniors/Teens, was gratefully received while conversation flowed between young and old. It was hard to tell who enjoyed the experience more, but an invitation to visit again would indicate all enjoyed the service, including the lodge staff, one of whom excitedly shared photos with the Junior/Teen leader afterwards. —Robyn Goods



REFORMERS REACH OUT

Over the past few months, Mt Druitt Samoan church (NSW) has been celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by increasing their efforts to reach out to their community. In June, a "Kingdom Culture" themed youth week of prayer saw nine young people baptised. And in August, the church ran a month-long outreach program celebrating 500 years of the Reformation. Representatives from different denominations attended the series and a further nine people responded to a call for baptism. The church is grateful for the ongoing opportunities to reach out, build and maintain their new-found relationships with their community. —Pou Leuluai



DOUBLE BLESSING

Staff at Adventist Media's Hope Channel Bible School received a surprise recently when a letter was mailed to them from Brisbane (Qld). An issue of *Signs of the Times* was left at a payphone and a passer-by had already torn out the coupon to receive a free special Reformation issue of the magazine. But someone else passing by the same payphone didn't want to miss out—they tore the entire page out and also mailed it back. "Drop off literature! Whether it's at a laundromat, a payphone, it doesn't matter," said Bible School director Pastor Wayne Boehm. "You never know who will have access to it and what it could lead to." —Maritza Brunt



PLANT FLOURISHES

The Myanmar (Burmese) church plant (WA) is flourishing, with around 45 members attending each Sabbath. The group, which started two years ago, meets in the Morley Adventist church on Sabbath afternoons. "Praise God for these former refugees who have found freedom in Australia and in Christ," said church pastor John Horvath. —Record staff



GROUNDBREAKING

Lotofaga, a village situated on the south coast of Upolu, Samoa, recently opened its new church plant. A groundbreaking ceremony was conducted by Pastor Kenneth Fuliase, president of the Samoa Mission. The ceremony marked the place where the new temporary church shelter was to be built, with the church plant officially open for worship this month. —TPUM



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES TRAINING

More than 120 Adventists in Western Australia recently attended a first-of-its-kind Children's Ministries Training Day featuring Adventist Children's Ministries leaders from around Australia as key speakers. The day included presentations and 14 practical workshops, including puppet ministry, how to decorate your Sabbath School room and helping children become disciple makers. —Kym Piez



a little book & THE LAST MAN EXECUTED IN AUSTRALIA

Steps To Christ: Changing Lives For 125 Years

This year our denomination celebrates a couple of milestone birthdays. The first is the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, which began with the publishing of Luther's 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg University Church on October 31. The second: the 125th birthday of that quintessential Adventist icon, *Steps to Christ*, by Ellen White.

Across its hundreds of iterations, covers and languages (160), it has influenced untold numbers around the world to accept the principles of Luther's work.

This booklet, in just 13 short chapters (it started out with 12), covers the basics of Christianity at a personal level. And if you haven't already read it, it's a book everyone can enjoy. It's also a book to share.

IT WAS THE VIEW OF BROSNAN AND JOHANSON THAT RYAN WENT TO THE GALLOWS A SAVED MAN!

On your behalf, as editor of *Signs of the Times*, I've given away thousands of *Steps to Christ* over the past two decades. And it all began this way.

In the 1960s, Keith Johanson operated a timber-felling business in the forests to the east of the town of Warburton, Victoria.

Among his employees was one Ronald Ryan, whom Keith described as hard working and intelligent.

But Ryan also had a problem with gambling.

To fund his hobby, Ryan executed a few dodgy deals and schemes, including insurance fraud. Unsurprisingly, he eventually found himself in Melbourne's infamous Pentridge Prison, serving a relatively short sentence. But chaffing under the confinement, he plotted an escape, which resulted in a person being shot dead, allegedly with a rifle wrested from a prison guard on the way over the wall. Ryan was recaptured, tried for murder and sentenced to hang. But not before Johanson, being his former employer, had made several visits to him.

Although access was limited and difficult to obtain, he was able to give Ryan, an Irish Catholic, a copy of *Steps to Christ*, which Ryan accepted and read, and according to Johanson, reread.

Somewhere in her writings Ellen White says that we should take the words of her publications and make them our own.

According to prison chaplain Father John Brosnan, the words of *Steps to Christ* got through to Ryan when neither his pleas, nor even the tears of Ryan's mother, could. It was his constant companion on death row inside "D" Division of Pentridge Prison until he walked those last few metres to the gallows at 8am, February 3, 1967.

Ryan was infamously the last person subjected to capital punishment in Australia, and the most protested. It was the view of Brosnan and Johanson that Ryan went to the gallows a saved man!

When we published this story in *Signs of the Times* in the '90s (it was published in *Australasian Record*,

April 29, 1968), we were impressed to include a free offer of *Steps to Christ* to readers, beginning a tradition that continues today.

A few months after publication I received a request from a man incarcerated in a Philippines prison, responding to the offer. He was doing two life sentences for murder and had been intrigued by Ryan's story.

Our offers don't usually extend internationally but I was impressed to send him the booklet. A few months later I received another letter from him, signed by the prison chaplain and governor, with accompanying photos, showing his baptism and a chapel he was helping to build in the prison grounds. He had yielded to the appeals of the book and accepted Christ, and now was helping others to faith.

I once "wrote" an article for *Signs*, which was published under the title "Seven Myths About Salvation". I say "wrote" but really all I did was condense a chapter from *Steps to Christ*.

The chapter is called "Repentance". As I undertook the work, I began to contemporise the words, making them "my own" in a literal sense. The chapter gives encouraging insights into how and where salvation begins, one by one dismissing the impediments and excuses for coming to Christ. Here's a sample: "[Sinners] think they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares for the forgiveness of their sins. . . . We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ" (p 26)—I have to repent before I can come to Christ; "If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better . . . There is help for us only in God . . . We can do nothing of ourselves" (p 31)—I need to clean up my act first, before God can accept me; and, "As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save" (p 35)—salvation is too hard.

So be it in a literal or metaphoric sense, I urge you to make the words of this volume yours, taking them to

heart for encouragement, comfort or improvement—and sharing.

In an online review¹ of a commemorative edition celebrating *Steps to Christ's* birthday, *Adventist Today* contributing editor John McLarty describes its origins and the addition of that 13th introductory chapter, which publishers asked Ellen White to add. It gives an insight into its soul-winning appeal.

"While all of the material in the current version of the book came from the writings of Ellen White, the difference in spiritual tone set up by the two different beginnings is significant. The current first chapter, 'God's Love for Man', echoes the optimism of American transcendentalists. The original first chapter, 'The Sinner's Need of Christ', echoes Puritan pessimism. Certainly these two ideas are not mutually exclusive, but the spiritual tone of the book is fundamentally shifted by the addition of the new chapter. This shift in tone in the book mirrors a profound shift in the inner life of Ellen White herself (as expressed in her writings). Beginning in her childhood, White struggled intensely and long with an overwhelming sense of dread and unworthiness before God. The frown of God was far more vivid to her than God's smile."

And it is the smile that we see in the pages of *Steps to Christ*, while it is Christ's eternally nail-scarred hands extended that we see on its cover.

1 <https://atoday.org/steps-to-christ-by-ellen-g-white-review-of-the-125th-anniversary-edition/>

LEE DUNSTAN EDITOR OF SIGNS OF THE TIMES.



SNOW PEAS AND JONAH

The snow pea plants were growing taller each day. My son and I planted them for the Adventurers' gardener award. My son helped me water the plants and he counted them as they sprouted. He was experiencing the excitement of simply watching seeds grow. However, I was determined to harvest snow peas at the end of the season. They seemed to thrive under the conditions until they were well above a foot high.

One morning, while we were having breakfast, I looked out the window. "Something is wrong with those snow peas!" I remarked. "They aren't as tall

as they used to be."

I walked past the garden on the way to my car. To my utter amazement, the plants had been attacked. The shoots were brutally torn off and scattered on the ground. Seven shoots survived the attack out of two dozen! It looked suspiciously like the work of our neighbours' dogs. I was enraged. I yelled out to my husband. Thinking that I was badly hurt, he flew down the stairs to come to my aid. I didn't have time to talk. I had to be at work and I was already running late. "Make sure the gates are shut today," I snapped without looking at him.

My son and I drove to town. All the way I was speeding, doing 90 km/h in an 80 zone and 80 km/h in a 50 zone! I took deep breaths to calm myself down. Then the story of Jonah flashed into my mind. To be exact, I saw Jonah pacing under the withered plant, enraged and screaming at God, "Why? Why?" Only this Jonah was in the form of me. I realised my stupidity and the absurdity of what I was feeling. There were millions of people in the world starving and more were suffering the ugly effects of wars and deadly diseases. And here I was losing my senses because the snow peas were attacked.

I felt ashamed in front of my God, who was sitting right there next to me on the passenger seat. I looked in His direction and muttered a quiet apology. Then, knowing that I was completely forgiven and realising how trivial the problem was, I laughed.

"Why are you laughing, Mum?" my son asked from the back seat. I told him what I had just experienced. He chuckled, then said, "I think Jesus is laughing too, Mum."

Well, what do you know! The snow peas were never attacked again. We made sure the gates were closed at all times so our neighbours' dogs couldn't enter my garden. The snow peas grew chest high, flowered and reproduced. There were so many snow peas that we shared them with our small church family.

I felt Jesus' gentle nudge on my shoulder as I stood watching the snow peas. Then I heard His voice saying, "Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear" (Matthew 13:8,9). With eyes twinkling like a thousand stars, He asked, "So what was the worry about, child?"

I felt childish and ashamed but He gave me a big hug, tilted His head back and shook with a roar of laughter. I joined Him and I was never happier!

PEEMPAHN HENLEY WRITES FROM MOREE, NSW, WHERE SHE LIVES WITH HER HUSBAND, HER SON AND THEIR CAT. SHE IS A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER.



Most people wouldn't think of riding motorbikes as a type of Christian outreach. Adventist biker Geoff Dodd hopes to change that perception.

"I've been a biker since I was 16—I'm currently 54," he told me at South Australia's 2017 Big Camp. "Riding motorbikes is a great opportunity to reach people. People may stop attending churches but miss the community and mateship that they had there. Sometimes God knows when we're down and uses different ways to reach us."

He credits his wife Jacqui as being the instrument God used to bring him back to church but notes that he also appreciated the community and mateship that he experienced as a biker. His goal is to spread the gospel of Christ in South Australia by opening the state's first chapter of Adventist Motorcycle Ministry.

"There is a chapter in Victoria already, which is run by my literature ministry mate John Brereton," says Geoff. "We have interest here (in South Australia) now—people who have bikes, people who want to buy bikes and those who just want to support what we're doing."

Statistics show that the number of men attending church is rapidly decreasing and this convinced Geoff of the need to share the gospel in a non-confronting way.

"It's all about community and relationships," he says. "We're out there to communicate with the unchurched and show other bikers there's a different way to life." He's quick to note that the group abides by "Christian ethics" during their rides—there's no drinking alcohol or smoking for this group of bikers.

"There's this 45-year-old man I know; he has been in jail half of his life. He used to be an extremely angry and violent person," says Geoff. "We've been trying to share love with him. We took him and his son for a ride a while back. We got home around 11:30pm. He told us that he didn't end up sleeping until 3am because he was so pumped with adrenaline. And he said that nobody has ever loved him like we did."

The group's intention is to visit different churches and share their testimonies, especially in rural areas that don't generally receive many visitors. They are keen to run maintenance workshops where attendees can learn about motorbike safety. And, of course, they plan to go on plenty of rides.

For more information go to Adventist Motorcycle Ministry South Australia Facebook page.

VANIA CHEW ATTENDED SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CAMP FOR ADVENTIST RECORD.

LIVING HIS WORD

WITH WAYNE BOEHM

500 YEARS ON

Intended to promote local debate among scholars, Martin Luther's 95 theses ignited something far greater. Emerging from the Dark Ages, key individuals, including Luther, began to challenge established thought, bringing attention once again to the great truths of the Bible. One of the books that made a profound impact on Luther was Romans, which he translated during his time in exile at Wartburg castle. Luther said it was the "purest gospel."

CONSIDER PAUL'S PERSPECTIVE OF THE GOSPEL. ROMANS 1:16,17.

Paul makes three points:

1. The gospel comes from God and Paul wasn't ashamed of it.
2. The gospel is available to all.
3. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God.

CONSIDER: WHAT DOES ROMANS 1:20 TEACH US ABOUT GOD AND THE VALUE OF CREATION? WHY DOES PAUL INTRODUCE CREATION TO EXPLAIN THE GOSPEL?

Creation reveals God and emphasises that creation could not have happened without Him. Likewise when the miracle of creation is forgotten or replaced with false images, humanity shows no restraint.

CONSIDER: WHERE DID PAUL SEE IT GO SO WRONG? ROMANS 1:21,22.

It seems clear from Paul's writings that the glory of an incorruptible God (Genesis 1:26) had been replaced by an "image made like corruptible" humanity (Romans 1:28-32, 3:23). It seems that humanity could not fall much further, so what was Paul's solution?

CONSIDER THE RICHNESS OF THE IMAGES FOUND IN ROMANS 3:24,25.

All have sinned and fall short of God but the gospel reaches beyond the boundaries of sin to make the sinner right before God. This is the joy of the gospel experience. Not only did Paul and Luther experience a change through Christ but we can experience the beauty and power of the gospel.

EXPLORING EQUALITY



There is currently a lot of discussion about equality. Some advocate that everyone and everything should be treated equally. In addition, there is a trend to resist diversity and have everyone become the same. But what equals what? Being equal needs to have material sameness. It is equal *with* what, *to* what or *between* whom. Even though two things can both be of equal value, they are not necessarily equal. Equality needs to be precisely the same. Similarity is not enough.

CREATION

When discussing the complexities of creation, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12, introduces the body image into a discussion of ministry within church. Paul identifies the values of sameness and difference. In his initial illustration, he discusses the foot and the hand

(v15), and the ear and the eye (v16). In each pair, the components belong to the same body system: the foot and the hand to the transport system; and the eye and the ear to the sensory system. Even where the systems are the same, the individual components are different, serving complementary functions. Interestingly, because of the similarities in function, Paul projects feelings onto these components, when viewing the other, by imagining them saying, "I don't belong!" It was as if they were inferior victims which, although included, didn't perceive that they were integrated.

In his subsequent illustration, Paul discusses the eye and the hand, and the head and the feet (v21). Each pair belongs to different body systems: the eye to the sensory system and the hand to the transport system; and the head to the coordination of all systems

and the feet to the transport system. Naturally, where the systems are different, the individual components will be different, serving diverse functions. Interestingly, Paul also imagines the feelings of these "superior" components, which, when viewing the other, say "I don't need you". It was as if they were superior villains whose actions isolated others and prevented them from feeling included.

However, Paul concludes this discussion by noting that all of us are the body of Christ (v 27). In this model, isolation is not acceptable. What is needed is intentional synergistic integration. This is not a struggle for power but a call to service. *I belong and you belong. God has arranged us. I need you and you need me. God has brought us together.*

Far from advocating the reduction of everything to the lowest common

REDUCING EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING TO UNIFORMITY IS CONTRARY TO GOD'S CREATION.



denominator of equality and uniformity, this passage is a celebration of diversity in the context of mutual respect and common unity. Difference is the spice of life. In creation, God has given us so many different shapes, colours and sizes. Reducing everyone and everything to uniformity is contrary to God's creation. We are more than mass-produced machines. Even robots with artificial intelligence have variations!

Not only is this true for bodies, it is also true in families. Every child is different—even identical twins. Everyone has a variety of physical features such as height, shape and colour, with some aspects unique. This is why fingerprints and facial recognition software can be used for identification. Everyone also has a different personality with their own favourite likes and dislikes. There may be hered-

itary or environmental similarities but everyone is unique. Consequently, wise parents will treat their children equitably (even-handedly), not equally. There is no one-size-fits-all manual for parenting. It's all about applying the same principles to different children in different contexts.

MACHINES

For Qantas there are many similarities between an Airbus A380¹ and a Dash 8². In terms of sameness, both are planes with wings, motors, navigation and communication systems, seats, wheels, etc. However, an A380 has four jet engines, while a Dash 8 has two turbo-props. An A380 is a wide-bodied, double-decker, double-aisled plane capable of seating 853 people (all economy configuration), while a Dash 8 is a narrow-bodied, single-decker, single-aisle plane capable of seating 86 (Q400 configuration). The speed, altitude, load and range of these aircraft will be different. The qualifications and experience of the flight crew will be different. The number of cabin crew will be different. The cost of operation of each aircraft is different. So the list goes on. Although both planes are fit for their purpose and at times could even fly some of the same routes, they also have unique features that determine their essential purpose. As the sameness is limited, these planes are only similar and not equal. For example, I am confident that if Qantas had a Dash 8 broken down, it is extremely unlikely that they would send an A380 as a replacement or vice versa.

MEDIA PERSPECTIVES

Yet when we compare ourselves to the airbrushed models popularised by the media and revered by society, we can devalue our uniqueness. We are tempted to interfere with nature and conform to these expectations and try to imitate what we think will be the ideal. Some have spent thousands trying to imitate the Barbie doll.³

Modern technologies, without always knowing the consequences, have provided options for facilitating

or controlling fertility and reducing mortality by overcoming diseases often induced by lifestyle. What may have started as a noble commitment to improving the quality of life has at times been applied to control the beginning and end of life, and change the essence of humanity in between. It is as if we are subscribing to a humanistic perspective and choosing to play God and build our world in the image of ourselves and not the image of God. These developments have created many of the current ethical dilemmas. For example, gender fluidity is only possible because of advances in medical science and practice—hormone treatment, reassignment surgery etc, and even then it has limitations in reversibility!

CONCLUSION

After two decades of popularising the differences between men, who come from Mars, and women, who come from Venus,⁴ as a means of enhancing the mutual respect of differences, it appears the latest fad is to reject these psychologically-based insights and replace them with a philosophical egalitarian reductionism.

It is time we, as a community, embraced our diversity and advocated equitability and mutual respect instead of equality and uniformity. Just like an orchestra is richer when different instruments come together and contribute their unique strengths to creating harmonious music, so humanity is richer when we can celebrate all of our diversity.

1. For Airbus A380 specifications see <http://www.flugzeuginfo.net/acdata_php/acdata_a380_en.php> [accessed 19 October 2017].

2. For Bombardier Dash 8 Q 400 specifications see <<http://www.flyradius.com/bombardier-q400/specifications-dimensions>> [accessed 19 October 2017].

3. For an example, see the story of Nikki Exotika, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-4984238/Transsexual-spent-1-MILLION-plastic-surgery.html>> [accessed 19 October 2017].

4. John Gray, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

DR STEVE CURROW COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR,
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY LIAISON AND FIELD SECRETARY
FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION.

Baptised

AT FIRST SIGHT

The remarkable story of a man who was baptised the first morning he set foot in an Adventist church

When I was 13 years old," recalls Robert Ainsworth, "I had my first calling from the Holy Spirit. And that experience was overwhelming. Ever since then I've had a very close relationship with the Holy Spirit." But no-one could have predicted what the Holy Spirit did recently in Robert's life.

"I became a very busy professional photographer," continues Robert, "but in 2012 I found out I had kidney cancer. My faith in God was very strong. Due to God's grace, my left kidney was successfully removed. After that, I moved to Hawke's Bay (New Zealand) to start a new life, and I was looking to find a new church where they baptised by immersion like Jesus was baptised, as I was only baptised as a baby with the sprinkling of water over my head.

"But I was having no luck finding the church I was looking for. About

the same time a new channel called Hope Channel New Zealand started appearing on my TV set. I saw it as I was flipping through the channels and I was intrigued. So I started watching it. And something really strange started happening. Every time I got stuck on a passage or concept in the Bible, within a short time, a speaker on the new channel would answer my question from the Bible. It was uncanny.

"I decided I needed to know more. The channel had teachings from the Seventh-day Adventist Church between other programs. I knew where the Hastings Adventist Church was, so I went down there, and on the sign outside was a phone number. So I gave it a call and Pastor Hugh Heenan answered."

Pastor Hugh remembers the call.

"I picked up the phone and Robert said, 'I've been watching Hope Chan-

nel and love what I'm seeing. I want to come and talk with you.' It was one of those conversations you always look forward to!"

"I told Pastor Hugh that I was going on a big trip touring the whole of New Zealand, and when I got back, I'd drop by and see him," continues Robert. "One Sabbath morning I was relaxing in bed after returning from my trip and Pastor Hugh phoned me. He had no way of knowing I was home as I'd only just returned and hadn't contacted him. He asked me, 'Would you like to come and see how we do baptisms?' And I said, 'yes, that would be great, I'd really love to see that.'"

That phone call almost didn't happen. "It was a really busy morning," explains Pastor Hugh. "My thoughts were on everything coming up at church that day, and certainly not on Robert, who I hadn't even met yet. But

the Holy Spirit kept saying to me, 'Call Robert. You need to call Robert.' And so I did. But I never expected what happened next!"

Robert remembers his first moments in the church, "I turned up at the Hastings Seventh-day Adventist Church and I was welcomed by the greeters and, just behind them, was a man who smiled and said, 'Rob, how's it going—welcome!' I was surprised. I'd never seen Pastor Hugh but he knew who I was!"

"We had a lot of visitors that day but as soon as I saw Robert, the Holy Spirit impressed me, 'that's Robert'," Pastor Hugh recalls. "There was something very different about Robert. He'd been watching Hope Channel New Zealand for some time. He knew a lot about biblical truths. And he had a burning desire to be baptised like Jesus. So when he actually witnessed a baptism by immersion, he was ready."

Pastor Giovanni, who conducted the last of the baptisms planned for that morning, asked if anyone would like to come down and be baptised.

"I had the biggest goosebumps when he asked," says Robert. "I could not believe my ears. This was my opportunity to be baptised just like Jesus was. So I stood up and said to the whole church, 'I would love to be baptised.' My feet didn't touch the ground until I was in the pool next to Pastor Giovanni, praying to my loving God."

"We've all become accustomed to the fact that someone will come forward after an appeal, they'll stop, they'll wait until after the baptism to meet with the pastor and they'll discuss the next steps," says Pastor Hugh. "Robert had never been to an Adventist church so he had no idea that was our custom. He walked right up to the front and down into the baptismal font with Pastor Giovanni, clothes and all! And his baptism took place there and then. It was a beautiful baptism."

"When I got into the baptism pool," recalls Robert, "all I could do was just look up and pray. I couldn't believe it. My prayers were answered. My past was gone. I was free. And I was given true life again. I was praying to God

for a new life. A new start. A new beginning. And He gave that to me. I got baptised that day. And I've never looked back.

"Of course, after the baptism I came up dripping wet and I had nothing to wear," remembers Robert. "Until I was told Patrick, one of the church attendees who I had never met, had brought a spare set of men's clothes to church that day. And they were the right size and all. Amazing."

"Robert knew our doctrines," states Pastor Hugh. "He already understood biblical prophecy with a level of detail that very few baptismal candidates have. I knew from talking with him that Robert had marched his way through Adventist doctrines, his Bible on one side, Hope Channel on the other. It was remarkable!"

"I'm now a greeter at Hastings Adventist Church, the gardener, photographer, and sometimes I use my photography skills as a cameraman for Hope Channel New Zealand when we make programs down here in Hawke's Bay," Robert says with a big smile.

"I'm also an ambassador for Hope Channel in our community. I go door-to-door inviting people to watch the channel, giving them literature and talking with anyone who is willing to listen about what Jesus means to me!"

"Robert inspires everyone he meets with his love for Christ. And Robert isn't the only one. We've had multiple families connect with our church because of what they've seen on Hope Channel," says Pastor Hugh. "And not just Hastings Adventist Church. Now Hope Channel is available on almost every TV set in the country, I'm hearing similar stories from Adventist churches right across New Zealand."

Dr Brad Kemp, president of the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference, says there are about 8000 people in Adventist churches in New Zealand on an average Sabbath. "But, according to the independent secular ratings agency Nielsen, we've got more than 200,000 Kiwis watching Hope Channel," he states. "That's about 25 people watching Hope Channel for every person who is in church on an average

Sabbath. It proves the words of Jesus right: the fields really are ripe for the harvest!"

"The next big challenge," says Hope Channel New Zealand manager Neale Schofield, "is to connect more viewers with local Adventist churches. For every Robert, we know there are literally thousands of others. We just need to help them make the connection between the message that they have come to love on Hope Channel and the local church where faith in Christ is expressed in a living community. But how to do that?"

"First, we've found Kiwis respond best to local content, so we're developing new Kiwi shows on health, family, finances, ADRA's amazing stories and, yes, cutting-edge shows about the amazing truths in the Bible," says Neale. "Second, we're also in the process of developing better ways to interact with viewers."

"Third, in the next six months we plan to roll out signage that clearly makes the connection between local churches and Hope Channel New Zealand. They've done similar signs already in Brazil and it has had an amazing impact—with people walking off the street and into Adventist churches all over the country. The new signs are going to make it a lot easier for the 200,000 Hope Channel viewers to find a local Adventist community where they can become part of the body of Christ. Not because God needs numbers but because our neighbours need God."

"Hope Channel can help do for others what it has already done for me," says Robert. "I thank God for it. Because God used Hope Channel to change my life."

To experience a taste of Robert's infectious love for Christ, see his video at <record.adventistchurch.com>.

JAMES STANDISH FORMER EDITOR OF ADVENTIST RECORD AND CURRENTLY RESIDING IN WASHINGTON DC, WRITES ON BEHALF OF HOPE CHANNEL NEW ZEALAND.



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PALEO DIET LINKED TO LOW IODINE LEVELS

The paleo diet has received a lot of publicity for being attached to claims around weight loss and a range of other supposed health benefits. The diet advises followers to avoid processed foods as well as grains, legumes and dairy. And while it may be able to offer short-term weight loss, research on the long-term effects of such a diet has been limited.

Whenever a diet asks you to remove multiple food groups, there is a risk of unintended consequences. A recent study out of Sweden found this when researchers looked at older women eating a paleo diet compared to those eating a "Nordic" diet—one nutritionally similar to a Mediterranean diet.

After two years it was found that those on the paleo diet were more likely to have developed a mild iodine deficiency. Researchers noted that all women had similar iodine levels at the start of the study but, by the six-month point, average levels in the paleo group had already begun to drop.

While at the end of the study the effects were minor, when more severe iodine deficiencies occur over the long term it can lead to hypothyroidism in adults, with symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain and mood swings.

So what do the researchers think led to the deficiency? While seafood and foods like seaweed are good sources of iodine, they're not the most commonly consumed sources. Most of us get our iodine from iodised salt, dairy products and breads—the very foods the paleo diet excludes. In fact, since 2009, food standards in Australia have required almost all breads to use iodised salt to help combat growing iodine deficiency across the population.

So it's important that we keep in mind the long-term consequences before adopting any major dietary change.

THREE WAYS TO A HEALTHY BALANCED DIET



PACK YOUR PLATE WITH PLANTS

Whole plant foods—and lots of them—are the cornerstone of a healthy diet. Prioritise getting five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit every day. Make sure you include a serve of legumes too!



EAT HEALTHY WHOLEGRAINS

Wholegrain foods provide the body with fibre, vitamins, minerals and a sustained source of energy. Choose wholegrain breads and pastas over white and refined versions where possible.



CHOOSE HEALTHY FATS

Diets like the Mediterranean diet aren't low fat, but the fat they contain comes in the form of healthy unsaturated fats like olive oil, nuts and seeds.

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CLOSE THE GAP

I read (*Adventist Record*, October 21) with so much interest [especially] in what Pastor Mike Sikuri did in New Zealand.

"If we do not address this issue now (not many youngsters in our churches), in 10 or 20 years we will have to close some of our churches," he said. And he is absolutely right. Our youth are "struggling to be (feel) relevant and to be accepted".

Our youth are the church of tomorrow; no youth, no church. Of course, this doesn't mean that we have them do all they want to do, but we need them to be incorporated into the church services—at every level possible.

We need to close the gap between we "adults" and them. And in a way we need to learn from them—their camaraderie and enthusiasm. May the Lord help us in reaching the goal.

Gennaro Cozzi, *Vic*

SOLA SCRIPTURA?

In the *Adventist Record* of October 21, two authors extol the fundamental Protestant position of *sola scriptura* but seem blind to the extra biblical authority they and their Church have bestowed upon the writings of Ellen White.

Could our Church have taken a valid New Testament (NT) gift and given it an invalid veto power over any fresh understanding of Scripture? This is evident in the Church's negative responses to: Desmond Ford's questioning of the investigative judgement doctrine, varied views on the age of the earth, the nature and authority of the NT prophetic gift, etc. The words that invariably greet any suggested new understanding are: "What does Sister White say?"

Sadly we ignore the NT instruction regarding the believer's sacred responsibility to test all extra-scriptural prophetic utterance: "Do not despise prophecies but test everything, hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:20; see also 1 Corinthians 14:29 and Acts 17:11). Failure to adhere to

this fundamental principle has resulted in the excessive authority bestowed upon White's writings. The outcome of this is the stifling of the search for truth and the horrific loss of many thinking members and ministers.

If Adventism seriously wants to progress the Reformation it needs to truly allow the Bible to speak for itself without deference to any extra-biblical authority. We can value much of White's writings but let us not exalt them to a position that restricts our opportunity to continue the progressive understanding of truth!

Winston McHarg, *via email*

LOGICAL FALLACY

In "Another view" (October 21), the author's rejection of renewable energy is based on a logical fallacy. While it may be valid from a Christian perspective to deny that "overwhelming scientific consensus" constitutes proof of truth (indeed many genuine scientists would concur), it is not valid to imply that the existence of "overwhelming scientific consensus" constitutes proof of untruth. There is "overwhelming scientific

consensus" that the earth is round. Does this mean we must assert it's flat . . . though I must admit I do know some people who tend to think like that.

Indeed, if the Bible is the ultimate arbiter of truth, as Adventists assert, then God's pronouncement that He will "destroy those who destroy the earth" might be harnessed as evidence of the real existence of climate change.

David Hancock, *NSW*

ENGLISH USAGE

We read with great interest "The Power of the Word" (Feature, October 7) by Serah Keliwin of the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM).

For the past 10 years we have been involved in a special teacher education program for untrained, practising primary teachers in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. This is a project of Fulton College and ADRA Australia. We have been coordinators and lecturers for the program.

One of the biggest drawbacks for teachers and students is the lack of English usage in classrooms. Either

Tok Pigin or *Bislama* are the languages of instruction in most schools we have visited. I would assume that this is also the same in PNG. We realise that this is the language of the people but if students and teachers wish to have a greater understanding of English, especially for higher education, then English usage must be encouraged for maximum educational benefit.

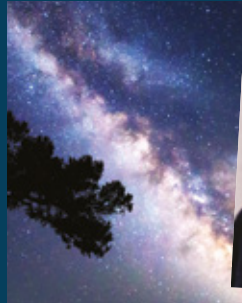
This program of Bible reading combined with written summaries is an excellent approach and hopefully there is an oral component also.

Keep up the good work, Serah, of encouraging your teachers in PNGUM.

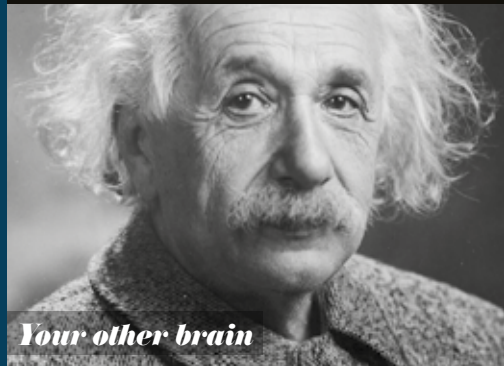
Peter and Glenda Roberts, *NSW*

NOTE: Views in "Have your say" do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Comments should be less than 250 words, and writers must include their name, address and phone number. All comments are edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's original meaning will not be changed. Not all comments received are published.

THIS MONTH IN



God's signature



Your other brain



Why the week has 7 days



Food Matters - beetroot dip

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KIDS SPACE



WATER INTO WINE

Jesus, His disciples, and His mother are at a wedding. Jesus' mother learns that the wine is all gone. She tells Jesus about the problem, then tells the servants there to do whatever Jesus says. Jesus instructs the servants to fill some large jars with water and then pour some out for the master of the banquet. They do what He says, and it is delicious wine—the best. This is Jesus' first miracle.

DECIPHER THE MESSAGE

USE THE KEY TO CRACK THE CODE

MEMORY VERSE

Each of you should use whatever gift you have

_____ c _____ v _____ d to _____ oth _____ . (1 Peter 4:10)



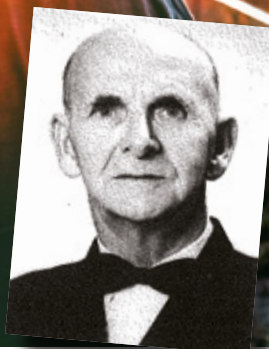
KEY

- = E
- = I
- = R
- = S
- = V



Abide with me

Gordon Branster's life of service



Gordon Brandstater was born to Emanuel and Wilhelmina (nee Darko) Brandstater on October 22, 1896. Born into the Adventist message, as a boy Gordon attended the first Adventist school in Australia, located in Collinsvale, Tasmania.

After leaving school he worked in the sawmill industry. A miraculous escape from death in a logging accident convinced him that the Lord had a plan for his life. So he attended Avondale College for five years before graduating in 1917 with a teaching diploma.

Entering denominational service at the end of 1917, Gordon taught at the Marrickville church school in Sydney for a little more than two years before being appointed to mission service in Fiji.

Gordon married Idarene Felsch in January 1920 and, in time, three children were born: Russell (1921) and Marjorie (1924), both in Suva, Fiji, and Beryl (1926) in Sydney.

Before leaving for Fiji in January 1920, Gordon changed his surname from Brandstater to Branster.

In Fiji, Gordon was a teacher on the Wainibuka River, quickly learning the language and, enjoying music, often used his rich baritone voice in his worship services. He also started the first brass band in the country, which the music-loving Fijian people really

enjoyed. Later Gordon was to serve at the Navuso Central School and in the Naqia and Buca Bay districts. Gordon's service record also notes that during this initial posting to Fiji he became a district director. Gordon was ordained to gospel ministry in Tasmania in January 1926. On his return to Australia, he was a pastor-evangelist in the South NSW Conference from December 1934 until March 1938.

Gordon and his family returned to Fiji in April 1938, this time as a pastor-evangelist, remaining in that post until August 1940 when Gordon became the superintendent of the North Queensland Mission. From October 1941, Gordon was president of the Queensland Conference. In December 1943, he returned to the South NSW Conference, this time as president, and continued in that role for five years until the end of 1948.

For the next decade, Gordon was president of the newly established Central Pacific Union Mission, based in Suva. Travel around Polynesia was difficult and time-consuming in those days. Pitcairn Island was a particular challenge. With no regular shipping service, visitors to the island had to depend on passing cargo freighters and passenger ships willing to stop and let visitors on or off the vessels.

On one occasion, Gordon took six

weeks to get to Pitcairn. The weather when the ship reached the island was so bad he could not get off the ship. He stayed on board until the vessel reached Panama and then had to find a vessel willing to let him off as it passed Pitcairn. In his eventual five weeks on the island Gordon provided pastoral ministry and conducted a baptism.

At the end of 1958, Gordon returned to Australia where, after a short time in pastoral work in the North NSW Conference, he retired in 1960 having accumulated a little more than 42 years of denominational service.

During retirement (south of Newcastle), Gordon remained active in local church work, especially with the placement of hundreds of copies of *Your Bible and You* in the region's motels. His funeral on March 25, 1987, concluded with the hymn "Abide With Me". For 100 years it had been a tradition in the Branster family to close Sabbath each week with the singing of that hymn so it seemed fitting to the family to sing it once again at that time as the postlude to an effective life of Christian service.

DR LESTER DEVINE DIRECTOR EMERITUS OF
THE ELLEN G WHITE/ADVENTIST RESEARCH CENTRE
AT AVONDALE COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Weddings

FORBES-WARD. Cody Forbes, son of Barry and Erana Forbes (Leyburn, Qld), and Shanelle Ward, daughter of Warren and Louise Ward (Gatton), were married on 18.6.17 in a lovely farm setting just outside of Warwick. The young couple are setting up house near Toowoomba with the Lord as the third member of their relationship.

Victor Torrens, Barry Forbes



HYLAND-MARTIN. Isaac Hyland, son of Brent and Lindsey Hyland (Narromine, NSW), and Jessica Martin, daughter of Dale and Lynley Martin (Bilambil, Qld), were married on 4.9.17 at Taronga Western Plains Zoo, NSW. Jess's grandfather, Pastor Ken Martin, took the prayer of blessing on the marriage. Pastor James Watanabe, took Isaac and Jess through their pre-marriage

counselling. Their wedding day was a delight for all who attended and they have set up their home in Nyn-gan, where Isaac is a self-employed electrician and Jess an explorative geologist.

John Rabbas

Obituaries

ALLEN-CHEVALIER, Kevern, born 10.10.1933; died 28.7.17 in Whyalla, SA. He was predeceased by his step-daughter Nicola. He is survived by his wife Margaret; daughter Julyann; step-children Susan, Wendy, Yvonne and Martin; 13 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. Kevern passed away peacefully after a long illness surrounded by his loving family.

Andy Krause

CRAIGIE, Aileen Wilma, born 7.9.1929; died 24.9.17 in Wyong Hospital, NSW. In 1953 she married Donald Craigie, who predeceased her in 1998. Aileen is survived by her two children Stephen and Jenny; and

grandchildren Liam and Michael. In earlier years Aileen worked at the Sydney Adventist Hospital and in the Greater Sydney Conference office. She was very gifted artistically and was involved in the Art Lovers Movement and the Toukley Art Society. For many years Aileen instructed others who were greatly blessed by her knowledge. She will be remembered as a generous, kind and gentle Christian.

Roger Nixon



DICKINS, Roy William, born 20.2.1927; died 20.9.17 in Nunawading, Vic. On 26.3.1950

Roy married Eldelyn, who predeceased him in 2002. He was also predeceased by his son Raymond in 1990. Roy is survived by his daughter and son-in-law Sherilyn and Allan Gray (Whittlesea) and daughter-in-law Gail Shalliker (Sale); seven grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren. Roy was a long-time member of North Fitzroy church where he served faithfully in various roles for many years. In 1985 he retired from the printing industry where he worked most of his life. He treasured those retirement years, spending time with his wife, who was truly the love of his life, and his grandchildren. He will be remembered as a meticulous gentleman who, among other things, loved God, people, social life, driving and racing cars. But his greatest interest was to see Jesus along with his family at the second coming.

Iutini Rimoni



DOBLE, Daphne Alvina Daisy (nee Maher), born 21.12.1917 in Birriwa, NSW; died 1.10.16 at home. On 5.11.1950 she married George Doble, a minister. She was predeceased by George in 1955 and by two grandchildren. She is survived by her three daughters: Carol Lomas, Judith Dansie and husband Dave, and Georgeia Booth and husband Doug; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Daphne loved her Jesus, was a devoted church member and looked forward to Christ's return. She was a lady of tremendous faith and greatly respected and cherished by her family. She was a Proverbs 31 woman, a true "mother in Israel".

Ken Bird



DUFFY, Joy Isobel, born in 1927 in Ardrossan, SA; died 4.6.17 in Hackham. She was married to John, who prede-

ceased her in 2014. Joy is survived by her children: Peter and Margaret (Whyalla), Ruth and Brenton Bailey (Broken Hill, NSW), Timothy (Adelaide, SA), and Jonathan and Katherine (Maryland, USA); and four grandchildren: Callum, Tyson, Jessica and Mark. Joy supported John throughout his career as a school teacher. She made an invaluable contribution to the out-of-class activities of the schools and the children's divisions of the churches where she and John worshipped. In later years Joy realised her dream to be an enrolled nurse. She will be remembered as a caring, kind, loving and hospitable person. She was a gentle lady who had the capacity to make people feel special, wanted and accepted. Joy's love for God gave her a quiet dignity that spilled over in the way she dealt with all who had the privilege to have known her.

Douglas Robertson



FITZGIBBON, David Claude, born 29.12.1939 in Akaroa, NZ; died 20.9.17 in

Newcastle, NSW. He is survived by his wife Elva (nee Higgins); children Justin and Carla Fitzgibbon, Melissa and Amanda; and grandchildren Thalia, Cassie and Rohan. David served as a barrister in New Zealand and later in Australia and handled a wide range of legal cases. His great hobby was books and restoring them, and his love of old Bibles was legendary. David loved his family and contributed much to his church as an elder, Sabbath School teacher and lay preacher. He was a generous man who valued justice and equity and helped many people through law. David was strong of faith and his spiritual fervour will be greatly missed.

Roger Nixon, Michael Browning, Alan Saunders



MACPHERSON, Karen Gae, born 13.7.1960 in Wyong, NSW; died 5.10.17 in Dalby, Qld.

Karen is survived by her parents Charles and Rose Boyd (Dalby); siblings Annette and Kym Peterson (Dalby) and Peter Boyd; children: Amanda and Scott Waters, Megan and Andrew Constable, Emma MacPherson and Matthew MacPherson (Brisbane); and grandchildren Archie and Charlie Constable, Ella Waters and Jackson Harburg. Karen will be sadly missed by all her family and the many friends

POSITIONS VACANT

OP SHOP CO-ORDINATOR AND STAFF ADRA (BALLINA)

Ballina ADRA Op Shop is looking for a coordinator and staff for its furniture shop. If you have a passion for mission and service and could cope with living on the beautiful North Coast of NSW we would love to hear from you. Our op shop is the primary support for the only women's refuge in the Ballina region, and we have a brand new retail space in which to grow our new furniture store. However, we desperately need a team of passionate and competent volunteers to lead this ministry. If you are interested, or know someone suited to this role, please contact Glen from the ADRA Op Shop Ballina by email <drghenlughes@gmail.com>.

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who gathered to pay their respects at her funeral.

David Kelsey, Charles Boyd



MAEVSKY, Maria, born 2.2.1924 in Croatia; died 29.11.16 in Nerang, Qld. She was married to Wladyslav (Wally), who predeceased her in 2008. She is survived by her daughter Angela Zujic and sons Peter and Kevin; grandchildren Danica, Bethany, Cherith, Andy, Elisha, Able, Christella and Jana; eight great-grandchildren; and siblings Ana Doncevic, Katica Gulai and Nikola Glesic. A skilled weaver in her own country, Maria came to Australia in the early 1960s. She was a charter member of the Granville Slavic church and lived in Cooranbong for 30 years where she faithfully attended Memorial church. Maria loved to read her Bible. A memorial service was held for Maria on December 30 at Avondale Cemetery Chapel.

David Haupt

MANNERS, Owen Neil, born 1.3.1930 in Kadina, SA; died 30.8.17 in Adelaide. On 21.3.1951 he married Valmai Sweet, who predeceased him in 2014. He was also predeceased by his sons Wayne and Kevin. He is survived by his son Brenton and wife Carmel; seven grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; and his twin sister Joan (Kevern). Owen worked as both a commercial fisherman and woodturner. Active in church life, he was head deacon in the Adelaide City church for several decades. His last few years in a nursing home were difficult, but he actively shared his faith and, with the blessed hope in mind, dismissed his problems, saying, "It's only temporary."

Bruce Manners

MUMFORD, Norma Elfrieda (nee Seeger), born 7.11.1927 in Northcote, Vic; died 1.8.17 in Warburton. She is survived by her husband John; daughter Vicki, son John and his wife Julie, daughter Jan and her husband Bruce Petrie; and grandchild Kara. Norma and John moved to many places around Victoria, following farm-related jobs. In addition to raising three children, Norma pursued a wide variety of artistic activities, including cake decorating, painting, needlework, arts

and crafts, and cooking for family and friends.

Kevin Geelan

OUTRAM, Brian Cecil, born 21.6.1933 in Bickley, WA; died 28.9.17 in Forrestfield. On 19.10.1957 he married Gene, who predeceased him in 2016. He is survived by his children: Kim Diletti (Lesmurdie), Keith Outram (Lesmurdie) and Kathy Outram (Bickley); and siblings Neville Outram (Walliston) and Jenny Bell (Waroon). Brian was a keen sportsman and fisherman and loved his family. He spoke often of the return of Jesus and looked forward to that great day.

Robert Kingdon



ROBERTS, Elva Lillian Christina, born 13.9.1926 in Adelaide, SA; died 12.9.17 in Alstonville, NSW. On 6.4.1950 Elva married Harold, who predeceased her. She is survived by her daughters Merrilyn and Roberta. Elva was a great support and soul mate to her pastor husband, and used her skills as an accomplished pianist during concerts and church services. After leaving WA, the Roberts family moved to Port Lincoln (SA) and then to Whyalla where Elva taught piano accordion. Elva and Harold travelled all over the Eyre Peninsula in their pastoral work. Elva loved nature and under the tutorship of Pastor Ken Mead became an accomplished artist. Harold and Elva retired to the Alstonville Adventist Senior Village in NSW, where they enjoyed the peace and support of the community. Elva loved the Lord dearly.

Beth McMurtry, Mel Lemke

SODEMAN, Roy Frederick, born 20.2.1928 in Perth, WA; died 1.10.17 in Victoria Point, Qld. On 9.9.1953 he married Edith Lee. He is survived by his wife (Victoria Point); and children Lee-Anne West, Rochelle Bull and Sheree Sodeman (all of Brisbane). Roy was a God-fearing man who was much loved by his family and all who knew him. He taught for many years in Adventist Church schools and colleges in Australia, Samoa and Papua New Guinea. Many were blessed by the music he played on his violin.

Bob Possingham



SUAVAI, Tapaaatasi Uaitai Oto, born 4.3.1948 in Poutasi, Samoa; died 3.10.17 in Cairns, Qld. On 2.10.1971 he married Tagi Lafai. Oto is survived by his wife; children Eseta, Otto, Fereti, Sene and Tagapulu; and 23 grandchildren. He was a faithful and loving husband to Tagi for 46 years. Otto will be remembered as a Christian man who would not go past another's needs. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Erika Puni



SUTCLIFFE, David Curtis, born 11.12.1930; died 8.10.17 in Cooranbong, NSW. David is survived by his wife Tricia; daughter Leoni and son-in-law Robert Billings; siblings Robert, Maggie and Kathy; four grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. David gave 44 tireless years to the work of education and ministered in this profession in Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Tonga. Prior to retirement he was a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Avondale College of Higher Education. David was a man of many abilities, which included poetic and meticulous editing skills. In retirement he continued to serve God by involvement in local community interests and in overseas Asian projects. David was a generous man who loved his Lord and was strong of faith.

*Roger Nixon, Vadim Butov
Lionel Smith, Bob Saunders*

ADVERTISING

MISSIONARIES LUNCHEON

Education building—Avondale graduation, December 9. Please give a short talk on "Your personal experience on arrival in the mission field". Queries Ken Boehm: 0408 072 313.—Warren Martin.

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AND GO
GOD'S LOVE FOR US
DOES NOT.
—C S LEWIS

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