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The lost sheep

A personal take on this popular parable¹⁴

Adventist boys found after being lost at sea⁶



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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Save our Sabbath schools

Jarrod Stackelroth
Editor

“

Someone who is “not safe” can kill an adult SS faster than you can say investigative judgement. These people can cause others not to come back and must be firmly managed.

I recently watched a YouTube video entitled “Why Sabbath school stinks”. As the host of the video remarks, “Sabbath school done well can be the best part of Sabbath or it can be the worst part.”

The video raised some important issues and got me thinking. But before we get started, some disclaimers. I’m not suggesting we get rid of Sabbath school (SS). We have all the tools to make it work. There are some incredibly healthy children’s, youth and young adult SS groups. Yet in transitioning between some of these age specific divisions, many get stuck or drop away. Not all SSs are struggling and in many areas of the South Pacific, SS may be a healthy and active part of church life. And I don’t think a discussion on SS can be complete without acknowledging the people who, often thanklessly, strive to keep SS going: to the countless volunteers, SS leaders and teachers, thank you.

Yet there are cracks, as I’ve experienced in my own life. Growing up, SS was my favourite part of church, until I moved away from my home church. My church plant doesn’t include a traditional SS element and when I travel, after a few bad experiences, I tend to avoid SS if I can. As I talk to people my age, none of them are big on SS. It’s a shame.

Flora Plummer, the General Conference’s longest serving SS director, said: “The purpose of Sabbath school is the winning of souls.” How many of us can now say that is the case? Attendance numbers are dropping

“COVID has brought to the surface a problem with SS engagement that we’ve been struggling with for some time,” shares Lyndelle Peterson, Australian Union Conference personal ministries, SS and stewardship director in an email to *Adventist Record*. “Churches that had a strong SS program pre-COVID found that moving online has in some cases enhanced their experience. Other churches that may have had multiple groups meeting pre-COVID have opted to combine on return because of a struggle to regain attendance.”

The problems are not new either. In 1889, Ellen White wrote “The Sabbath school, when rightly managed, possesses marvellous power, and is adapted to doing a great work, but it is not now what it may and should be. The influence growing out of SS work should improve and enlarge the church” (CSW9.2).

“Our lives are busier and more complex than they’ve ever been and rather than being a space of belonging, peace and encouragement often our Sabbath schools can feel like a chore; something to be endured,” says Pastor Peterson.

“When Sabbath school becomes a place of connection and community we are more inclined to find a way and make time to engage.”

When our SS becomes insular, we can become comfortable, losing our mission focus. SS can feel like a hostile place for visitors. Something that has really helped me in this regard is small group facilitation training. Understanding the role of a teacher: to lead the conversation, to ensure there are no dominant voices, to provide opportunities for equal engagement (notice I did not say equal input. Some don’t want to be forced to speak or read. They just need to feel safe to contribute if they want to)—these things help find balance. Someone who is “not safe” (aggressively opinionated or always right) can kill an adult SS faster than you can say investigative judgement. These people can cause others not to come back and must be firmly managed.

According to our YouTuber, teachers should be “curious, competent students of the Bible” and teaching SS is an important gift that needs to be developed. If the teacher or leader can create and foster an outward focus, where we expect visitors and encourage the group’s growth, then the SS will discover its purpose. “When groups start to think evangelistically, they start to grow,” said Pastor Peterson.

Aunty Ellen agrees. “The SS is a missionary field, and very much more of a missionary spirit should be manifested in this important work than has been manifested in the past” (CSW10).

This article can’t “fix” SS but it can start a conversation. We can plan, dream, study successful groups and find ways to really enhance this important part of church life.



INSIGHT:

The strength of my life

Raul Lozano
President, Pacific Adventist University

When problems strike and doubts come your way, what keeps you going? One thing I have learned is that looking inside myself to find the strength I need results in temporary solutions or worse, total disaster. Similarly, looking for support from another person is no guarantee of success. For strength, I need to look elsewhere.

In Nehemiah 8:10 we read, "Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. *Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength* '" (*emphasis added, NKJV*).

The people of Israel had gathered to celebrate the Festival of Trumpets which marked the beginning of the Jewish civil year. It was intended to be a day of rejoicing for God's mercies throughout the year, especially evident in the agricultural cycle. With that mindset of grace and abundant mercy, the blowing of the trumpets on the first day of the month heralded a solemn time of preparation for the Day of Atonement.

Reading from the book, the Law of Moses, had made the people terribly sad. Quickly, Ezra and the Levites calmed the people down telling them not to cry. "This is a holy day," they said. "This is a special occasion to rejoice in the Lord."

The Lord had shown His mercy in directing the Israelites to their land. Through His help, they were a free nation now, settled and with a promising future in sight. They were free because they were forgiven. He removed their sins and destroyed their enemies. "The Lord is rejoicing over you with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

How can I be sad when God is happy? "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?" asked Jesus in Luke 5:34. If God is happy, then I have every reason to be happy too. And knowing that He is pleased with me gives me strength to keep going, just like Jesus when He heard the words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Pleasing God gives Him joy, and in God's rejoicing I find my strength.

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The Empty-Nesters during a recent breakfast meet-up at Castle Hill.

Branching out to support Fulton students

📍 Sydney, NSW | Tracey Bridcutt

A group of Sydney Adventists has been raising funds to help theology students attend Fulton Adventist University College in Fiji.

The “Empty-Nesters” was started by a group of Wahroonga church members whose children had “left the nest” and who wanted to catch up socially.

“First we were meeting at a restaurant spending money on ourselves, then we heard of the need overseas and we were convicted of a better stewardship model and chose to direct the funds away from ourselves and into these needy students,” said group member Sandra Weslake.

“Everyone brings a plate of food and we all enjoy ourselves while helping others. We have just as much fun and keep in contact at the same time.”

The group meets four times a year to raise money to pay for third and fourth year theology students’ college fees. The students work to pay for their food and accommodation.

“Every year there is a need for funds to help these struggling students who would otherwise have no way of completing their studies,” Mrs Weslake said. “This project has been going on for about eight years now.”

In 2020, despite the challenges of COVID-19, the group managed to raise more than \$A11,000, which helped three students attend Fulton.

“God has blessed this ministry over the years and the students at Fulton have had many answers to prayer because of it,” Mrs Weslake added.



Dr Roennfeldt holding his new book fresh off the press.

New possibilities modelled for changing church

📍 Warburton, Vic | Nathan Brown

The COVID-19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to re-think church, said Dr Peter Roennfeldt. And with a return to pre-COVID “normal” unlikely, his new book *Your Church Has Changed* offers guidance for asking questions about our understanding of church and how this is practiced in local contexts.

Citing historical examples, Dr Roennfeldt urges that the pandemic will shape our communities, cultures and lives for decades and that these shifts include increased health, economic and social consciousness. “We are now in a new mission environment,” he said, “and it seems unwise—and maybe naïve—to suggest that ‘once we are past this pandemic, we will get on with church life and mission!’ This is now the world we live in, and it is likely to only become more complex.”

With the onset of the pandemic in the early months of last year, many churches scrambled to move their worship services and other programs online. “It has seemed that the Adventist Church, as with other denominations, has been intent on reproducing what

had been offered for decades—two hours of programming to watch each Sabbath morning,” Dr Roennfeldt commented.

“But it quickly became evident,” he added, “that many were not looking in on church—that perhaps less than 50 per cent of pre-COVID attendees were online, some of them surfing the internet for churches other than their own, and the majority of those most social-media connected not present among the viewers of online Zoom or Facebook church.”

At the same time as many people have disconnected from their regular churches, different forms of church, worship and connection have grown.

Your Church Has Changed suggests a hybrid model for smaller in-church worship, online engagement and “households of faith”, offering a model for how these can work and serve together.

Your Church Has Changed: Rebuilding Church and Mission Post-COVID-19 and other books by Peter Roennfeldt are available from Adventist bookshops in Australia, New Zealand and online.



All five guest presenters, (from left to right) David Leo, Peter Watts, Gary Webster, David Maxwell and Rajko Celic, are all Adventist Church local pastors.

New live show on Faith FM to “help grow and build faith”

📍 **Hobart, Tas** | Juliana Muniz

Faith FM in Tasmania has launched a locally produced show, *Tassie Encounters*, which first aired across Australia on May 3.

Produced in their Hobart studio, the show is hosted by Margate Adventist church member Jason Cooke, airing live at 9am (AEST) on weekdays.

The program features five regular guest presenters, David Leo, Gary Webster, Rajko Celic, Peter Watts and David Maxwell—all local Adventist Church pastors. “Each day of the week, I’m joined by one of our expert presenters who share some of their fresh insights on a whole range of various topics,” explained Mr Cooke.

“We cover everything from current events to insights from archaeology, to deep Bible study, and of course Q&A. We think *Tassie Encounters* has something for everyone, and we really believe what we are doing will help grow and build faith,” he said.

Tassie Encounters adds to a grow-

ing line-up of live Australian-produced shows on Faith FM.

“It’s fantastic to see not just a new studio in Hobart for the station, but a new live show. I really think our listeners are loving having another live show each day to add to the breakfast show coming out of our Newcastle studio and the afternoon drivetime show coming out of our Adelaide studio. Faith FM has really become a national radio network,” said Faith FM content manager Pastor Robbie Berghan.

Pastor Webster, Tasmanian Conference president and guest presenter, hopes that “through *Tassie Encounters* the listeners will find a substance for a faith in Jesus Christ, which will transform lives”.

Tassie Encounters airs on weekdays at 9am (AEST) right across the network and again in Tasmania at 4:30pm (AEST). You can listen to the show live on Faith FM or later with the Faith FM app available for iOS and Android.



The three boys, just prior to being rescued.

Adventist boys found after being lost at sea

📍 **Mota Lava island, Vanuatu** | Maryellen Hacko

After being lost for more than 50 hours at sea, a flying search and rescue team located three Adventist boys—aged 11, 14 and 16—who went missing in the waters off Mota Lava island in Vanuatu on Friday, May 14.

The search party began on Friday evening, consisting of multiple boats and Dr Mark Turnbull on his *Wings of Hope* plane, and continued throughout Sabbath and until Sunday afternoon, when searchers in Dr Turnbull’s plane finally found the boys in the middle of the ocean.

The boys were Pathfinders from Mota Lava island in Torba province and had reportedly gone fishing. People across the Pacific Islands were praying for the lost boys throughout the weekend.

According to a post on Dr Turnbull’s Facebook page, the boys were found drifting east, into “a place where kopra ships never go, domestic aircraft never

fly and small boats never pass”.

In another Facebook post, Dr Turnbull—who was part of the search and rescue team—described how they dropped water bottles (half filled, so they would float), coconuts, bananas, a waterproof torch, grapefruit and a note to say “a boat is coming” from the plane, before the boats could get to their location and rescue them.

At the time of rescue, police boats were 16 to 24 kilometres off course and heading to the south, in the wrong direction.

“The solemn realisation has now hit us that if we had not gone way out there to the east . . . (where boats or planes just never fly), most likely these three boys would have been lost . . . maybe never to be seen again,” the post read. “I feel like saying, ‘Hallelujah! Mission accomplished!’”



Inside the 1000 square metre store.

“Upmarket” Hillview op shop transforms local community

📍 **Morisset, NSW** | Mary Fedorow/Maryellen Hacko

In an effort to better serve their local community, Hillview Adventist Church members relocated their ADRA op shop from Tuggerah to larger premises in the industrial area of Morisset (NSW) in August last year, closer to where volunteers live, allowing it to be a more effective community hub.

Locally known as the “David Jones Op Shop” due to its 1000 square metre floor space, running the shop is no small feat, even for 70 enthusiastic volunteers. There are no paid workers on site.

Store manager Pastor Paul Rankin said that while the op shop generates a good profit each day, the focus is not on profit but on “creating opportunities” and showing love to the community. With many homeless and disadvantaged people in the area, profits earned are reinvested into providing services and ministries that can enable the less fortunate to seek a better life for themselves.

“I’d say we get well over 100 people a day,” said volunteer day manager Beverley Chapman. “There’s a wide variety—well-to-dos, professionals and those who are really needy. People are coming in for the social benefits as well. It’s just fabulous as far as outreach goes.”

Selling clothing, furniture and bric-a-brac items, Pastor Rankin and the volunteers intentionally create opportunities to build positive relationships with customers, those who donate items and the wider community.

One of the ways they do this is by channelling profits into community projects: by hosting a CAP Debt Centre that provides free financial counselling for people struggling with debt, and funding tertiary scholarships for six Morisset High School students so that teenagers from lower income families can attend university.

In addition, locals can visit the centre to receive a haircut from “Community Hair Project” volunteers—a mobile service providing free haircuts to Central Coast and Lake Macquarie residents.

Twice a week, free food is also available at the shop, thanks to store profits being used to assist with the purchase of a food van and ongoing fuel costs.

“This op shop is really just like an upmarket shop, not a run-of-the-mill op shop,” said Hillview member Mary Fedorow. “It makes us proud to be Hillview members when we see how much of a blessing it is to the community.”

making headlines

Church in the circus

An inactive circus in Brazil’s capital city unexpectedly became a venue for Bible studies and worship in early May. Local Adventists found the closed place and ended up inviting the unemployed company troupe to join them in worship and study, using the venue to offer hope, comfort and support.

—Rafael Brondani/South American Division



Hope impact

More than 1.1 million copies of the book *Hope for Troubled Times*, the missionary book of the year, were distributed across Chiapas, Mexico, on April 17. The state-wide initiative led thousands of Seventh-day Adventists to share the book with people in their communities amid the ongoing pandemic. —Adventist Review

Comfort in the Word

Bible reading increased significantly in 2020, according to a new poll released on May 11. An estimated 181 million Americans opened a Bible compared to 169 million readers in 2019. The American Bible Society/Barna poll, which surveyed 3354 Americans, attributes the 7.1 per cent increase to the global pandemic and civil unrest.

—Relevant Magazine

Targeting COVID

Queensland researchers and a US team have developed an antiviral therapy that has killed off the COVID-19 viral load in infected mice by 99.9 per cent. Intended for those who are suffering in the ICU where vaccines are too late, the therapy still needs three phases of clinical trials in humans to prove its effectiveness in fighting the virus. —ABC News



More than food

Invited by the Returned Service League (RSL), the Landsborough Seventh-day Adventist Church (Qld) cooked and served the Anzac Day “Gunfire Breakfast” for the community following the dawn service. With around 250 people attending, being part of the event presented a timely opportunity for the church to connect with the local community and show support in a practical way. —**Charles Russell**



Uni outreach

Throughout April, ASOC (Adventist Students on Campus) at Newcastle University (NSW) ran a coastal walk through Boudi National Park (followed by a well-deserved celebratory lunch for the kilometres walked), and vegan cooking classes. More than a dozen students enjoyed being in nature together and learned how to make sushi and vegan sausage rolls. The group also regularly hosts Sabbath morning church services in buildings on campus. —**ASOC Facebook page**



Multicultural women

Around 120 women attended a Women’s Ministry retreat hosted by the North New Zealand Conference at Silverstream Retreat, Upper Hutt, over the weekend of May 1,2. Themed “His Heart”, the event had Pastor Kirsten Lundqvist, Tapa’au Tesese, Tolo Pereira and Lynelle Laws as guest speakers. Closing Sabbath with a multicultural approach, the participants shared prayers in English, Danish, Samoan, Tongan, Te Reo and Afrikaans. —**Lynelle Laws**



Pastor Ugljesa ordained

Noosa Christian College chaplain and Cooroy Adventist Church pastor Jacob Ugljesa was ordained to ministry on May 1. During the service that took place at the Springwood Adventist Church, Pastor Ugljesa shared how having others investing intentionally in him during his teenage years strengthened his walk with Jesus. He challenged others to actively seek out young people and disciple them. Family and friends attended the service along with a group of South Queensland Conference pastoral colleagues to support Pastor Ugljesa and his wife Dari, who is a chaplain at Darling Downs Christian School. The couple have since had their first child. —**Russell Willcocks**



Equipped for mission

Sonoma Adventist College in Papua New Guinea has welcomed a range of new books and other resources gifted from Global Mission Centres of the General Conference, with costs sponsored by the South Pacific Division. “The books are very useful in preparing missionaries for the great unreached cities in the 10/40 Window, including needy areas in Papua New Guinea,” said library head of department Kutan Oli. —**Record staff**



United to march

Every Pathfinder club from across the South New Zealand Conference (SNZC) joined together for a Pathfinder Rally camping weekend with more than 180 Pathfinders, which finished with an Anzac Day march.

Beginning on Friday evening April 23, the clubs set up camp at Pascoe Park (Christchurch) and on Sabbath morning woke up for a parade at 8:30am that led to a church service at an amphitheatre on site, followed by Sabbath school at their tenting sites.

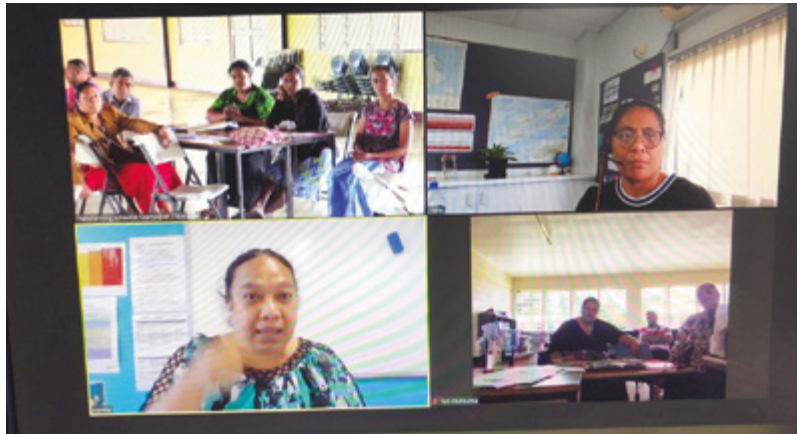
On Saturday night, the Pathfinders finished their program early with hot chocolate and biscuits in preparation to wake up at 4am to attend the Christchurch Anzac Day dawn service. Four buses arrived at 4.45am and Pathfinders and district directors boarded.

The Pathfinders were joined by 21 Adventurers from the Fijian church, bringing the total number of people marching to more than 200.

"It was an absolute highlight for our Pathfinders to have this opportunity to march in the parade," explained Adventurer and Pathfinder director for SNZ, Edwina Davis. "As there were so many of us we stood out. Some of our directors had members of the public approach them asking questions about who we were. What a great witness!"—**Maryellen Hacko/Edwina Davis**

have news to share?

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Teachers supported and encouraged

Teachers from Seventh-day Adventist schools in Tonga received support and encouragement at the first-ever STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) workshop. It was facilitated by Trans Pacific Union Mission education director Mele Vaihola, Tonga Mission education consultant Dr Elisapeti Manson and Mareta Vaovasa from Mountain View Adventist College in Sydney, Australia. Mission education director Fatongia Hopoate said, "The workshop was a success and [we are] planning to continue on with such pedagogy training, especially in such a challenging time to support and encourage our teachers."—**Record staff**



Hundreds attend fellowship night

For the first time, Burns Creek Adventist Primary School (Solomon Islands) held a special fellowship night for students and parents from non-Adventist backgrounds. A total of 276 students and parents attended the event. Guest speaker was former Solomon Islands Mission education director Samson Panda, who focused on the school theme for this term: "Walking with Jesus". Many of the parents spoke about the positive impact Adventist education has had on the lives of their children. "I like Adventist education and schools," one lady said. "Even though I am a South Sea Evangelical church member, I send my children to the Adventist school because they teach my children about God."—**Record staff**



God needs friends

Looking at our relationship with God through new glasses

When photographs were first invented, everyone could see the difference that “being in focus” made upon our appreciation of the final product. Even with the current age of computers and the increased technology at our fingertips, we can generally tell the difference between a photo or image that is in focus, and one that is blurry. But then you get some bright spark come along and say that it depends on how clear your vision is; that even a sharp photo can look blurry to someone who is sight-impaired.

This reminds me, poignantly, of how our appreciation of Jesus—and the relationship He longs to have with us—can be spoiled by our blurry vision; that is, by how clearly we perceive Him. After all, I think it would be fair to say that everyone, in their heart of hearts, longs to have clear vision so they can appreciate the difference between right and wrong, truth and error, best and worst, healthiness and self-destruction. This is the message God has made available to the world, but which has been blurred in so many ways throughout time.

As I began to think of my own perceptiveness to the Saviour’s love for me, and His desire for a personal, wholesome, growing relationship with Him, I became sadly aware of the many ways in which my perceptions had been warped and blurred by the social, cultural, philosophical and technological deceptions that surround me. Although raised to know the general story of the Bible, and having accepted that “God is love”, it shocked me to realise that for most of my life I had been tricked into focusing on myself; on my desires, my aspirations, my needs. I just didn’t get that in order for any relationship to work, the main focus needs to be on the needs of the other person.

So I began to ask myself, *if God is the other person in this most important of relationships, then what are His needs?* In shock, I realised I hadn’t even focused my attention correctly in the first place. I’d blurred my perceptions of relationships to the same extent that the rest of society had shown me: to habitually put myself first, others second and God last (or not at all, for most of society!). Should I have been surprised, then, that my life was less than satisfying, my relationships with others sometimes shaky and my health a wreck? When I had an opportunity to re-focus my attention on God, what an adorable Dad I have discovered Him to be; and it has dramatically changed my relationship with Him.

What made me re-focus though? Like most “kids”, I sadly had to learn from my mistakes. It took threats to my marriage, a loss of self-respect and several near-death health crises to stop me in my tracks and cause me to reach out to God for the help I obviously needed.

He says in Jeremiah 29:13, “You will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart.” To be truthful, I’m still learning to do just that, decades later. But what a wonderful difference He has made in all these areas of my life in the meantime; and without me being able to brag about any effort put in on my part. In a series of ongoing mini-miracles, He has shared insights, resources and experiences that have completely changed my life and made me see, with increasing clarity, just how *adorable* He is!

Sadly, I am not some great paragon of virtue, accomplished authority-figure or charismatic life-coach who can bring the love of God into focus for you. Like me, you will need to have a change of heart in how you perceive the love of God. The great news is that He is eager to open your eyes and



heart. You just have to ask Him and seek Him with *all* your weak, pathetic, damaged heart—you may be quite tentative at first—and He will then pour out His love and resources in such abundance, you will know that He is truly adorable; you'll increasingly want to spend more and more of your time and thoughts on being with Him and doing things His way . . . this will lead you to realise something truly amazing! His way is the absolute best way possible. It is the way you would unhesitatingly choose for yourself if you knew all the facts.

Getting this focus right in your life can make a huge impact, and will truly be the single most important outcome, relationship and success you'll ever have in your whole life. It all starts with wanting to have a genuine, one-on-one relationship with our Creator-God, His Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit; and the place to start is by asking Him to help you seek Him. Prayer, Bible study and a willingness to listen to Him, as He gently begins to touch your heart and mind with His love, is the first baby-step in that process.

I learned a little bit about God's side of the relationship by discovering that He is actually quite needy. After all, we were made in His image, and we're pretty needy, so should that surprise us? Let me explain, if I can. In the story of Job, it becomes obvious that God needs real friends . . . that is, real relationships that He can depend on. When Satan came to the heavenly council (Job 1:6–12) and made accusations against God concerning His relationship with Job, God needed the council and the entire universe to see that Satan's accusations were, in fact, a test of God's character. God's relationship with Job was intended to show everyone what *true* love is really based on.

Although Satan proved he is an insane, cruel, despicable

character by sending horrific catastrophes upon Job and his family, Job remained true to the God he had come to know and love by refusing to reject Him. God needed Job to show a high level of trust and obedience to Himself, and he came through. Could Job have endured all that if he didn't already know and trust God? No. It followed years of connecting with God, on a daily basis, before the bonds of trust between them enabled Job to show us and the whole universe that God is worthy of our loyalty, adoration and love. Job was a friend to God when God needed one. Truth is, God still needs friends!

Since Job's time, many have been martyred for their faith in God. Some even had the luxury, like us, of knowing about the wonderful life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Not all of the martyrs had a truly clear picture of the God they loved and served, but they loved Him enough to die for Him, rather than betray Him. Can you begin to see the level of love and trust that a *real* relationship with God requires? Can this be accomplished in a human relationship without seeing or speaking to the other party? No way! Neither can it happen in our lives today without some investment of time and effort towards getting to know the other party.

I'd highly recommend getting to know the one and only, true heavenly Father of us all . . . as soon, and as deeply and as sincerely as possible. He's sure worth it!

Rouvea Talty

Community volunteer and retired teacher and nurse who attends Leongatha church, Victoria, with her husband.



From coma to Christ: incredible spiritual search leads to baptism

On Sabbath April 17, members of Caboolture Seventh-day Adventist Church (Queensland) burst into spontaneous applause as their friend Peter Harper (aged 54) was baptised by Pastor Casey Wolverton, bringing his journey of spiritual seeking and searching to a beautiful end, and equally wonderful beginning.

From an early age, Peter recognised a God-given hunger within himself, and began a spiritual journey seeking to satisfy it.

At seven years of age, Peter was walking across the pedestrian crossing at Stafford Heights Primary School (Brisbane) on his way home when he was hit by a car. The accident threw him more than 50 metres and he landed on his back, leaving him in a coma for six months. While Peter lay in an unconscious state, his faithful Roman Catholic grandmother became concerned for his eternal future and arranged for Peter to be baptised, which in the Catholic tradition involved sprinkling him

with holy water.

When Peter regained consciousness, it was discovered that the brain-stem injury sustained from the accident had impacted his cognitive ability. Like an infant, he had to begin relearning basic skills such as feeding and toileting. Peter found it difficult to comprehend spoken and written texts. Despite his curtailed ability to understand what he was reading, Peter persevered, trying to teach himself and make himself better. Over the next eight years as Peter worked on his recovery, his grandmother would sometimes take him to the local Catholic church.

When Peter was 16 years of age, he asked his mother if he could attend church more regularly. His mother agreed and Peter attended five times every weekend—once on Saturday evening, three times on Sunday morning and once on Sunday evening—all evidence of Peter's strong desire to satisfy his hunger for spiritual food.

Over the next decade, Peter visited many churches. He married his wife Naomi and they were blessed with two daughters. On one occasion, when Peter was working as a cabinet maker at Eagle Farm (a suburb of Brisbane), a Seventh-day Adventist man told him about his church.

Peter came to live in Caboolture in the same street as Caboolture Seventh-day Adventist Church (CABSDA). As he walked to and from the train station every day, he would see the sign at the church and he wondered what it would be like to worship there. One Sabbath morning when he saw all the cars arriving for the 8:30 am practice, he decided that he would go into the church and have a look. Peter immediately found acceptance and friendship. He was invited to join a Sabbath school class, met some friendly members and was even given a lift home.

That was three years ago and Peter has been joining in CABSDA church activities ever since. Peter sums up his association with CABSDA church as "Awesome." He says, "I found the church people to be so friendly and caring. This is one of the things that has kept me coming to this church."

As Pastor Wolverton studied with Peter, his spiritual hunger for righteousness was finally satisfied as he found all of his needs were being met in Jesus Christ. He was unaware of his first baptism, but this time it was his own personal choice. Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled and they will be happy.

Celebrating with Peter with a fellowship lunch after his baptismal ceremony, members of CABSDA are thrilled by Peter's decision to be baptised, and grateful that they could take part in his faith journey.

"We pray that as he continues to walk with Jesus, he will be filled with joy and peace," said member Lynette Ashby on behalf of the congregation.

Speaking of Jesus, John said, "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world" (John 1:9). God's love is all-inclusive. He longs for a relationship with every human being and plants within each heart a hunger for a mutual relationship of love.

Lynette Ashby/Record staff

DANA GARLETT

greeting cards



with Maryellen Hacko

Specialising in greeting cards that connect people to Aboriginal Australia, Dana Garlett's business Paperbark Prints is an expression of her identity.

"[In] my language, my name is Djida. Djida represents the morning scenes of nature as the sunlight breaks to commence the beginning of a new day. I have very strong Aboriginal heritage and ties to four different regions in Western Australia, which include Whadjuk (Perth Metropolitan), Nyikina (Kimberley), Minang (South West) and Ballardong (Wheatbelt)."

Growing up as a pastor's kid, Dana says that her involvement with church, especially with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, enriched her exposure to the cultural diversity that exists in Australia.

"Through my father's work, we travelled throughout Australia. From the city to remote communities, to the country, rainforest and outback. We had the privilege to meet so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when living and being on their country," she says.

Currently living and working in her birth country, Whadjuk Boodjar (Perth, WA), Dana explains that Paperbark Prints was born out of COVID-19 lockdowns and a desire to connect.

"Working from home, juggling school work with my son and home life, not being able to visit friends and family and having social interactions made me think about how I could maintain that connection with others," she says. "I always find so much joy and happiness when I give to others, so I thought greeting cards would be perfect. [It's] a way I can minister that brings people together through my designs."

In a world that can isolate people through modern technology, Dana says Paperbark Prints uses old ways of communicating to bring conversations back to paper. Using colours found in nature and minimalistic artwork, her designs are created to be shared with anyone.

"I share God through my creative practice by building community that strengthens personal connections with one another. That's a lot like what Jesus did. He brought people together from all walks of life. Through sharing aspects of my culture it brings awareness and understanding which is part of reconciliation in action."

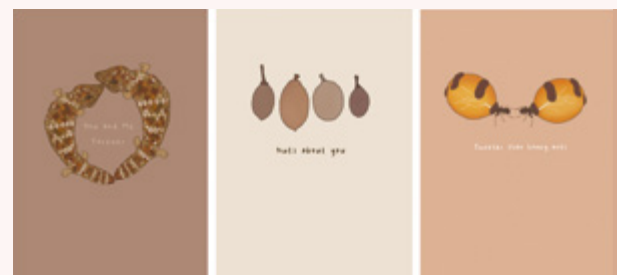
As well as her desire to connect people, Dana's work helps keep her culture alive by drawing inspiration from her family and mentors.

"I think about my grandmother Coral Foley. She is part of the stolen generation and amidst all the hardship and challenges she has faced in her life she still has a strong love for Jesus."

Secondly, my grandfather Greg Garlett was a great leader, teacher and knowledge keeper of our family. Through his hard work, advocacy and fighting for our Nyoongar people, he has taught us how to live in two worlds, balancing culture and modern life. This is his legacy—we still have stories, experiences and knowledge that have been instilled in me, my family and passed to our children to keep our culture alive."

Dana currently attends Karla Bidjar Church in Bassendean (Perth) with her family and says that God has opened many doors for her business since it began in November 2020. "This year we'll be sharing more greeting card designs for all occasions and looking to add prints and digital designs to our range," she says. "I believe God has big plans for Paperbark Prints and this is only just the beginning."

To purchase greeting cards, you can visit her website paperbarkprints.com.au, Instagram [@paperbarkprints](https://www.instagram.com/paperbarkprints), or email info@paperbarkprints.com.au.



LIVING KINGDOM

What man of you?

Luke 15:1-7



The lost sheep

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?” (Luke 15:4).

Like many others, the story of the lost sheep has always fascinated me. I fondly remember when picture roll aids were introduced in Papua New Guinea many years ago, how I would intently gaze upon the Harry Anderson painting of Jesus Christ seeking the lost sheep that was entangled, trapped between a shrub and the steep rocky mountain.

It begs the question, “*what man of you . . . is like this Shepherd?*”

It wasn't until recently that a preacher at our local church shared the story of a prince in the Bible that further enlightened me on the love of God as expressed in this parable.¹

The sheep

Unlike Australia and New Zealand, the rest of the Pacific has very little to no sheep. Christ told this parable to a crowd that saw, knew and looked after sheep. It was all too common to see sheep and shepherds, and easy to imagine the personal relationship that exists between a shepherd and his flock.

Sheep, as we in the Pacific can only read about, are vulnerable and helpless against attacks. Unlike other forms of livestock, their safety is entirely dependent on someone outside of themselves—a shepherd. The shepherd's vital and intimate role is to defend, protect and lead the flock of sheep to graze and drink along their journey. An interesting fact worth noting is that the sheep intimately know the voice of their shepherd,²

even at a well where various flocks converge to drink. Hearing a call from their shepherd, an almost supernatural phenomena unfold: each sheep heeds the distinct voice of its overseer and follows accordingly.

The Good Shepherd

There is a “Good Shepherds Hall of Fame” throughout the Bible. The inductees are men and women who have demonstrated the self-sacrificing love and character of God in their humble and faithful duties as shepherds. Jacob, Joseph, Rachel, Moses and David, to name just a few, were entrusted sheep under their care.

Of course, Christ titled Himself “The Good Shepherd” (John 10:11-16). “As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day” (Ezekiel 34:12).

From the life of the sweet singer of Israel, we learn more clearly of the Lord as our Shepherd and Provider.³ The parable of the lost sheep then is graphically played out in the story of a prince who was “lost” and found.

David the shepherd

During his early years as a shepherd, David was taught by God the lessons of self-forgetfulness in caring for sheep so that he could be a man after God's own heart.

“The Lord has chosen David, and was preparing him in his solitary life with his flocks, for the work He designed to



commit to his trust in after years.”⁴

When David was drawn in tender love and favour toward the house of Saul, Jonathan the Prince of Israel, in particular, showed ultimate self-abnegation and preference towards David. Thus, a solemn vow between the two friends, between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin was forged, which lasted even after the division of the kingdom in the time of Rehoboam, son of King Solomon.

The special prince

After the kingdom was settled under David and he had rested from his battles, he remembered God’s kindness to him and enquired if there was anyone left from the house of Saul (2 Samuel 9:1). There was a son of his friend Jonathan, a prince named Mephibosheth. He was lame. David ordered Mephibosheth be fetched immediately from his caretakers and brought to him.

Upon arriving at the palace to meet the King, Mephibosheth’s striking response is very similar to what a lost sheep might say, if it could speak: “What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?” (2 Samuel 9:8).

As a dead dog or lost sheep, Mephibosheth considers himself unworthy of all the effort that has gone into finding him—the favour bestowed on him, singled out by the King and furthermore, that his special condition could be accommodated—all by someone who he may have, up to that point, considered an enemy.

This man eats with sinners

“So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he ate continually at the king’s table. And he was lame in both his feet” (2 Samuel 9:13). What a special privilege it was to dine with the King as one of his own sons!

When David records his encounter with the Lord, describing God as his own Shepherd, he describes how God has prepared a table for him, even when enemies are there (Psalm 23:5).

The joy that floods the heart of God when one sinner repents is immeasurable. However, when Christ tells the story, He was contrasting this image of the joy in heaven with the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees who accused Jesus of receiving sinners and eating with them (Luke 15:2).

So the question beckons again, “What man of you . . . ?”

The parable is the first of a trilogy of lost entities: a lost coin representing those who are in the house of God, but are lost in the crowd without knowing it and need to be cleansed and have dust shaken off them so their potential

and true value are realised; a lost son who knowingly believes in the love of his father, and finally returns after waking up to himself, despite a time of prodigal living.

The lost sheep however, represents those

who know they have lost their way, and like Mephibosheth, are hanging onto hope, that someone, who is as loving and caring as Christ Himself, the Good Shepherd, just might make the extra effort, maybe through the dark night, at the peril of his life and even at the expense of the other 99 who depend on him, to bring salvation.

A distinct order of sheep

Just as every sheep is special in the sight of the shepherd, every child of Adam is unique and precious to the loving Creator. The human family is extra special since it came from the hand of God as a new and distinct order:

“All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made ‘in the image of God,’ and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth.”⁵

So the question lingers, “What man of you . . . ?” Only the Creator of a special order of beings, His dear children, could “so love the world” that in choosing between the 99, and going further, “He gave His only begotten Son” so that “who-soever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Songwriter Elizabeth Clephane’s classic hymn, “The Ninety and Nine”, is an old-time favourite account of the lost sheep. The hymn closes with these jubilant words:

“And all through the mountains, thunder-riv’n,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a glad cry to the gate of heav’n,
“Rejoice! I have found My sheep!”
And the angels echoed around the throne,
“Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!”

“Likewise, joy shall be in heaven” (Luke 15:7). Fortunately for us, the Bible does not tell of an unhappy and scornful Shepherd.

What man of you?

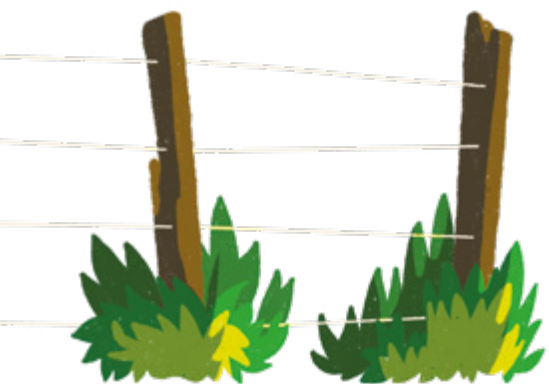
Finally, the question is settled with each of us today; “what man of you . . . after all that the Lord has done for you, are willing to deny oneself, take up your cross and follow Him?”

There can never be any other way! For the work of the Master must be ever carried forward in the spirit of the Master. May the love of Christ continue to compel us!⁶

1. Elder Eric Vegoa of Gordons Church, Port Morseby, September 26, 2020.
2. John 10:27,28
3. 2 Samuel 23:1
4. Ellen G White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p 637
5. Ellen G White, *The Review and Herald*, February 11, 1902
6. 2 Corinthians 5:14

Russell Woruba

PNG Department of Information and Communications Technology





Reading Scripture well

Are you reading rationally or relationally?

I was sitting in church feeling blessed by the sermon my husband had just preached. He'd spoken about salvation as the free gift of God's grace, "the one great central truth to be ever before the mind" (Ellen White, MS 31, 1890), and that our role was to "fix our eyes on Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2).

As I sat reflectively in the pew, I overheard someone say, "I get that we should fix our eyes on Jesus, but how do we do that?" This question, in a somewhat different iteration, had been one that had confounded me for many years.

My early faith had been nurtured by an Adventist family, church and school, so I had a good foundation for embracing faith as my own. However, while I understood and accepted the intellectual (head) and behavioural (hands) aspects of Christian teachings, the relational (heart) aspect of faith baffled me. I'd heard for years about having "a personal relationship with Jesus" but, honestly, relationships with people were hard enough, so how did one go about having a relationship with an invisible God? I knew it was meant to be through reading the Bible, but, in my experience, reading the Bible helped me know *about* God, but it did not help me to really know God. And while I did masters level study in theology, this question of how—how we fix our eyes on Jesus or how we have a relationship with Him—continued to mystify me. It was not until my doctoral studies in practical theology that I understood this how; and, all along, it really was through reading the Bible—but the secret was *how* to read the Bible.

If you've been in Christian circles for any length of time, you've encountered the concept that the Bible is like a letter from God; however, what you may not have thought about is the fact that, just as there are different ways of reading a letter, there are different ways of reading Scripture.

Imagine for a moment that you're returning home after a busy day. As you drive by your letterbox, you stop to check the mail and find two letters addressed to you. The first is a letter from your tax accountant. You've been waiting for this letter for some time, hoping your accountant has been able to

calculate a good refund. You tear open this letter and scan the two pages, for the information you need.

The second letter is from a dear friend you've not heard from in a while. You take this letter inside and put it down on the kitchen counter. You put the kettle on and change out of your work clothes. Then, you settle into your favourite chair with a hot drink and put your feet up. You're now ready to read the letter. You scan the envelope and notice your friend's handwriting hasn't changed in all these years. Only then do you open the letter and slowly begin to read, delighting in each word and enjoying the presence of your friend.

The way you might experience two letters such as these reveals that there are different ways of reading, based on your expectations. In the case of the letter from your tax accountant, your expectations are informational. In the case of the letter from your friend, your expectations are relational. Similarly, there are different ways of reading the Bible.

An informational approach to reading Scripture means the focus is on obtaining information, and so you ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand, and then you think, study and analyse the words that you read. You might also ask informational questions, such as "what might this passage have meant to the author?" and "how might the original audience have understood this passage?" The purpose of informational Scripture reading is to understand all we can about God and His purposes in the world.

In contrast, a relational approach to reading Scripture means the focus is on enjoying the presence of God. So you ask the Holy Spirit to help you know what God might be saying to you, personally. You might also ask relational questions, such as "what does this passage say about who God is?" and "what does this passage say about how God sees me, or wants me to be?" The purpose of relational Scripture reading is to know God.

Which of these is more important? This question is like asking, "which is more important, breathing in or breathing out?"

Informational Scripture reading is important as it shapes our thinking about God; however, it is possible to spend many hours in study of the Bible and not be touched by the love of God. Consider Jesus' words: "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (John 5:39,40).

Furthermore, as demonstrated in the lives of the Pharisees, a purely academic study of the Bible can result in cold intellectualism, which ultimately leads to spiritual pride. In contrast, a relational approach to Scripture reading is important as it helps us know God, enjoy His presence in our lives, and experience His love at a deeply personal level. However, a purely personal reading of the Bible can be self-centred and superficial at best and, at worst, can become deception and delusion if not balanced with careful thinking and study. Just as breathing involves both inspiration and expiration, informational and relational reading of Scripture must function together.

Because Adventists have tended to emphasise careful thinking about and study of God's Word, many of us have a relatively good grasp of how to study the Bible for information about God and His purposes for the world. However, like my younger self, you may be unsure how to read the Bible relationally. To explore the how of relational Scripture reading, it's helpful to think about our human relationships, which grow and develop as we spend time with others. Similarly, our relationship with God can only flourish as we spend time with Him. But how do we spend time with an invisible God?

Ellen White explained it this way:

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones" (*Desire of Ages*, 83).

These simple words provide a blueprint for reading Scripture relationally. First, a good starting point is reading about the life of Jesus, as described in the Gospels, as this allows us to know God within the context of human life. Second, reading thoughtfully, considering each scene "point by point", implies that this way of reading is not about speed and volume, but rather, about depth and receptivity; hence, it is important to choose just a small passage. And third, we are encouraged to allow "our imagination to grasp each scene". While we all excelled at imagining as young children, many of us lost this ability somewhere between kindergarten and high school graduation. Moreover, because of our emphasis on truth and rational thinking, many of us regard the God-given gift of imagination somewhat dubiously when considering Scripture reading. However, as we "allow our imagination to grasp each scene", we are creating space for the Holy Spirit to help us enter into specific moments of Jesus' life and to share His experience. Just as shared experiences are foundational to all human relationships, it is through shared experiences with Jesus that our relationship with Him can flourish.

To demonstrate how informational and relational Scripture reading function together, I want to share my experience, earlier this week, of reading and reflecting on Luke 13:10-17.

I like to begin by praying that God "may give [me] a spirit of wisdom and revelation as [I] come to know Him" (Ephesians

1:17). I then read the passage at least twice, beginning with an information-gathering or studying approach and then progressing to a relational reading. In this passage, which describes Jesus healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath, some of the data I gathered through an informational approach included the following: Jesus was in the synagogue on the Sabbath; the author considered the woman to be crippled by a spirit; Jesus had the power to heal disease—evidence of His divinity; the synagogue leader cited the law of God when rebuking Jesus for healing on the Sabbath; Jesus prioritised the woman's life over a strict interpretation of Sabbath-keeping; and Jesus' audience was divided in their response to Him.

Having a clear sense of the truths I needed to know from this passage, I then read the passage through again, this time imagining myself as the woman, bent over and unable to straighten up, in the synagogue on a Sabbath morning. I imagined the many people surrounding me, most of whom took no notice of me, a woman in a patriarchal society, and a disabled one at that. I imagined how I might have felt when Jesus made eye contact with me and called me forward. As an introvert, I don't like being the centre of attention in a crowd of people, and this woman might have felt similarly due to her disability. And then I imagined what it must have been like to have Jesus place His hands on me and pronounce that I'd been set free from my infirmity, which resulted in my being able to straighten my spine for the first time in 18 years.

As I imagined myself in this story, I was reminded of the beauty and goodness of Jesus, who knows my brokenness and yet sees me; among all the crowd of humanity, He sees me and loves me and wants to give me wholeness of life. And as the passage spoke to my heart rather than just my head, I was convicted of my own failure to sometimes see the marginalised people of this world through Jesus' eyes, and of the reality that when I fail to uphold the dignity of "the least of these", I am failing to be His hands and feet in the world.

Reading the passage in this way created a special time between Jesus and me. No-one else was encountering Jesus in exactly the same way, through exactly the same passage, at exactly the same time. And as with human relationships, this special moment with Jesus added a new memory to the layers of memories of similar moments with Him, strengthening the relational aspect of my faith.

So, if you've ever wondered how to fix your eyes on Jesus, or how to have a personal relationship with Him, I encourage you to be intentional in making space and time for reading Scripture in a way that allows you to enter into specific moments of Jesus' life and sharing His experiences, for it is shared experiences that are the core of all relationships. I've always thought there was something missing when many Christians talk about grace. Don't get me wrong, I agree wholeheartedly on the importance of grace. After all, "by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:5 NRSV). It's hard to find a more important topic.

Edyta Jankiewicz, PhD

Wife and mother. Professional interests include faith formation and discipleship, particularly in family life.



Creamy cauliflower soup

This deliciously creamy soup is quick and easy to make, a good source of protein, calcium and fibre and low in saturated fat. A great light meal for those cold winter evenings.

Ingredients

- 1 tbs oil
- 1 ½ tsp cumin seeds
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1kg cauliflower florets
- 1 ½ vegetable stock cubes
- 4 cups water
- 1 ½ cups So Good Regular soy milk
- ¼ tsp salt (optional)

Method

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan. Add cumin seeds and onion and sauté until soft.
2. Add cauliflower, stock cubes and water. Bring to boil, then reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat. Place in a blender and puree until smooth.
3. Add So Good and salt and process until combined. Return to saucepan and reheat.

Tips: Sprinkle over croutons for a delicious crunch.

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sanitarium.co.nz/recipeoftheweek

The basics on *cauliflower*

Remember boring old cauli? Neither do we! Cauliflower has had a millennial makeover and it's never been more appealing—which is just as well, because this versatile veggie has some enviable nutrition creds.



A member of the cruciferous vegetable family, which also includes broccoli, bok choy, brussels sprouts and kale, cauliflower is an excellent source of vitamin C, B vitamins and vitamin K. Vitamin K is best known for its crucial role in bone health and also contains phytochemicals that may have anti-bacterial and anti-viral effects in the body.

Cauliflower can be smelly when it is cooking due to the phytochemicals it contains, called glucosinolates. While being a little on the nose, these sulphur-containing chemicals are also broken down by the body to form bioactive compounds, which are being researched for their potential anti-cancer effects, helping to inhibit the development of cancer.

For years cauliflower has been a staple side, steamed or baked and smothered with cheese sauce, but there's so much more to do with the humble cauli. Finely cut cauliflower can make a great white rice replacement, thick slices are perfect for roasting as veggie steaks and with a simple blitz, cauliflower makes an ideal "dough" for a healthier homemade pizza base.

Why not try using cauliflower in some of your recipes, or visit our website for more delicious cauliflower recipes? Some of our all-time favourites are: cauliflower and edamame dhal, creamy cauliflower shepherd's pie, cauliflower fried rice, cauliflower fritters and our balti-style cauliflower. All these recipes are available on the Sanitarium website.

“God’s been very real in my life”

How Tara’s baptism brought clarity to her calling as a Christian science teacher



A dream about the death of her father and a stranger by the side of a road in Darwin play key roles in the story of Tara McDermott’s baptism. They are just some of the providential experiences that brought meaning to the science graduate’s life and led her to study teaching at Avondale.

Tara’s journey of faith began when she received a pocket Bible. “God felt real; the words rang true.” When her car broke down, a mechanic invited her to a Seventh-day Adventist church—the worship service felt like “a homecoming”. Then she purchased land next to another Adventist church. Along the way she met church members who helped answer her questions and provided sources for evidence. But, about four years later, she still hadn’t been baptised. “I felt frustrated.”

Then came the “vivid” dream. Despite being estranged from her father, “I just knew I had to see him.” Tara flew to the Top End the next day only to learn her father had received an urgent call to Afghanistan. The two spent only one day together. “I asked

God, ‘What am I doing here?’” Then, while on a walk, Tara found an ID card, which she decided to return personally to its owner.

On the drive out she twice saw an old man by the side of the road and sensed the need to stop. “I don’t usually offer lifts to strangers.” He was a follower of Jesus and wanted to visit his sister, a pastor, who lived a long way out of town. A couple of weeks later Tara found herself worshipping with her new friends and their friends. “Someone had a guitar and we sang, then talk turned to baptism. ‘Oh, you haven’t been baptised,’ they said. So, we all jumped in the car and went off to this river. I’m excited but as we get to the river they sense I’m a bit hesitant. ‘We’ve never had anyone taken by a crocodile.’ It’s another test of my faith.”

The experience is a blessing for Tara. “God gives you the desires of your heart, right? Well, I got to be baptised just like Jesus.”

Tara joins the Wyee Seventh-day Adventist Church through profession of faith. Serving as the young adult ministry leader has helped her develop as

a teacher. “God’s been very real in my life. He’s done things I want to tell other people about.”

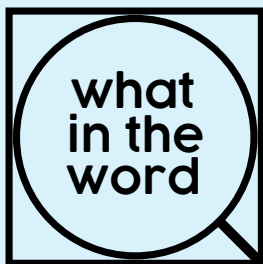
Tara is clear now about her role as a Christian science teacher: “I need to help students look at the evidence and follow a logical progression but also to understand where the answers end and faith begins.”

This influence begins with an investment in education: quality teachers produce quality students. Avondale offers pre-service science teachers like Tara some of the best mentoring, modelling and training in the country, but it lacks some of the necessary equipment. “Science is difficult enough without having to worry about whether the problem is with your equipment,” says Tara. New equipment works and reflects advances in science. “You’ve got to trust your equipment so you can test the theory.”

Science matters to Tara and to the children who will sit in her classroom.

Brenton Stacey

Public Relations and Philanthropy Officer,
Avondale University College.



presented by
Avondale Seminary



grace

noun: χάρις | *charis* (Greek)

Everybody knows “grace” means God’s unmerited favour. This is emphasised in Romans 3:24, which literally says that despite the fact everybody has sinned, they are all “justified freely [*dorean* without cost to the human] by his [God’s] grace”.

Indeed, it’s true that grace means favour in the New Testament. The Greek word for grace (*charis*) is often translated with the English word “favour”, as for example, in Luke 1:30, when Mary is said to have found “favour with God” (KJV, NRSV, etc; see also Luke 2:52; Acts 2:47).

True, grace is a gift given to us by God, without any account of our merit. But the point that is so often missed, according to the custom of the ancient world, is that accepting this unmerited gift places significant obligations on us.

Let me illustrate by describing the relationship between a patron and a client in ancient Rome. A patron would do something significant for a prospective client. The range of such gifts was enormous. They could include a gift of money, sorting out a legal problem, influencing business deals, arranging a marriage etc. By accepting the gift, the client became part of the patron’s extended family. They would often meet with their patron at the beginning of the day (with the other clients), and at that time, the patron would inquire as to the needs of his clients. But the gifts and favours did not only go one way. While

the client could never give back to the patron what had been given to him (and it would be a mortal insult to even try to do so), there were things a patron needed that the client could provide. For example, they, their family and all those who they could influence, would vote for the candidate of the patron’s choosing. Indeed, if there was any service the patron needed, the client would hasten to do it. Prestige and influence was built upon the size of the gifts that a patron could give and the number of clients they had. The largest patron of all was the emperor, whose gifts could be extraordinary in terms of value.

The style of patronage I’ve been describing belongs to Roman culture, not necessarily the culture of the earliest Christians—although they would all know about it, given that they lived in the Roman empire. Roman patronage is just a well-developed example of a relationship that existed everywhere in the ancient Mediterranean world, including Judea and Galilee. In those cultures, the relationship between a patron and client was a reciprocal one. Clients received an enormous favour or gift, but in return, gave back to the patron anything within their power.

Those who wrote the New Testament, and those who first heard it read, lived in a world where they would naturally understand what it meant to receive a large, unmerited gift. It established a relationship, in which the client

did everything within their power to fulfil the wishes of their patron.

Now we understand the reciprocal relationship that is established by accepting a large gift in the ancient world, we can see something important in the way the New Testament speaks of grace. God has given us an enormously costly gift. We have been redeemed by nothing less than the cost of the death of God’s Son (Romans 3:24,25). If we accept God’s gift of salvation, we gain enormous benefits: justification, forgiveness and eternal life among them (Luke 24:47; John 3:16, 36; 5:24; Acts 2:38, 10:43). But accepting this wonderful gift, provided by God at such cost, places significant expectations on the Christian. They don’t live moral lives to become saved (salvation is a gift, freely given to them), but they live moral lives because they are saved. Paul puts it this way. He asks, “What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?” and provides this answer, “By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?” (Romans 6:1,2).

Robert McIver
Professor School of
Ministry & Theology,
Avondale University
College



Obituary



HAWKEN, Nola
Thelma (nee Powell),
born 12.1.1937 in
Newtown, Sydney,
NSW; died 28.2.21

in Newcastle. On 29.6.1958 she married Maurie, who predeceased her in 1995. Nola is survived by her sons, Gavin and Louise (Maitland), Dene (Newcastle) and Wayne and Amanda (Cooanbong); six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Family and friends were left devastated by her unexpected passing. Nola was a proud Awabakaleen elder, holding a BA in Aboriginal Studies. She nurtured her spiritual life and took a studied interest in the mysteries of the universe. Her love of family meant the most to her.

Paul Roussos

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VICTORIAN CONFERENCE CONSTITUENCY MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the next regular constituency meeting of the Victorian Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be held at Nunawading Christian College Hall, 161 Central Road, Nunawading, September 26, 2021. The constituency meeting will commence Sunday morning at 8 am and conclude no later than 5:30 pm. Delegates

will be appointed in harmony with the Constitution. The business of the constituency meeting will include presentation of administration and departmental reports, financial statements for the years 2017-2020, all business as required by the Constitution and all matters as arising from the constituency meeting of 2017.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND RECORD ON CD

The SPD's Christian Services for the Blind (CSFBHI) produces a monthly audio compendium of articles from recent *Record*, *Adventist World* and *Signs of the Times* issues, along with Sabbath school lessons, for the vision impaired. If you or someone you know could benefit from this service, mail or email CSFBHI including postal address. Email <CSFBHI@adventistmedia.org.au> or write to Christian Services for the Blind, Locked Bag 1115, Wahroonga NSW 2076. For the legally blind in Australia and New Zealand, CSFBHI also has a large audio library of Christian and denominational books available.

Positions vacant

DEPARTMENTAL ASSISTANT—MARKETING AND SALES, ADVENTIST MEDIA

Wahroonga, NSW

Do you have general administration or personal assistance experience? Are you looking for a role with meaning and purpose? This permanent, full-time role primarily focuses on providing support to the literature ministry coordinator, manager marketing and sales; and coordinates the marketing and sales department's general administrative activities to ensure the department is functioning productively, efficiently and smoothly. Join a team who is passionate about sharing Jesus, better health and wellbeing through literature. Please email <corpserv@adventistmedia.org.au> for a copy of the full job description. The appointing body reserves the right to fill this position at its discretion and to close applications early. Only those who have a legal right to work in Australia may apply. **Applications close June 18, 2021.**

VICE CHANCELLOR, PACIFIC ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Koiari Park, Port Moresby, PNG

Pacific Adventist University (PAU) is seeking qualified applicants for the position of vice chancellor. The ideal candidate will be a baptised member of the Adventist Church, have appropriate academic qualifications to the doctoral level, be eligible for appointment to the academic rank of professor or associate professor—including a publication record with refereed journals, have current Adventist missionary, ministerial or teaching credentials, and a sound working knowledge of the Adventist Church and its management throughout the South Pacific. Please email <carolboehm@adventist.org.au> for a full job description. **Applications close June 24, 2021.**



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Consulting editor

Glenn Townend

Editor

Jarrod Stackelroth

Assistant editors

Maryellen Hacko
Juliana Muniz

Copyeditor

Tracey Bridcutt

Graphic designer

Maryellen Hacko

Template designer

Linden Chuang

Noticeboard

Julie Laws

Letters

editor@record.net.au

News & photos

news@record.net.au

Noticeboard

ads@record.net.au

Subscriptions

subscriptions@record.net.au
+ 61 (03) 5965 6300
Mailed within Australia and
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Website

record.adventistchurch.com

Mailing address

Adventist Media
Locked Bag 1115
Wahroonga NSW 2076
Australia
+ 61 (02) 9847 2222

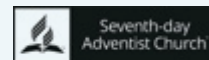
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Next issue

Adventist World, June 12

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