

RECORD

10 Ways to
Reach Kids in
Church—8

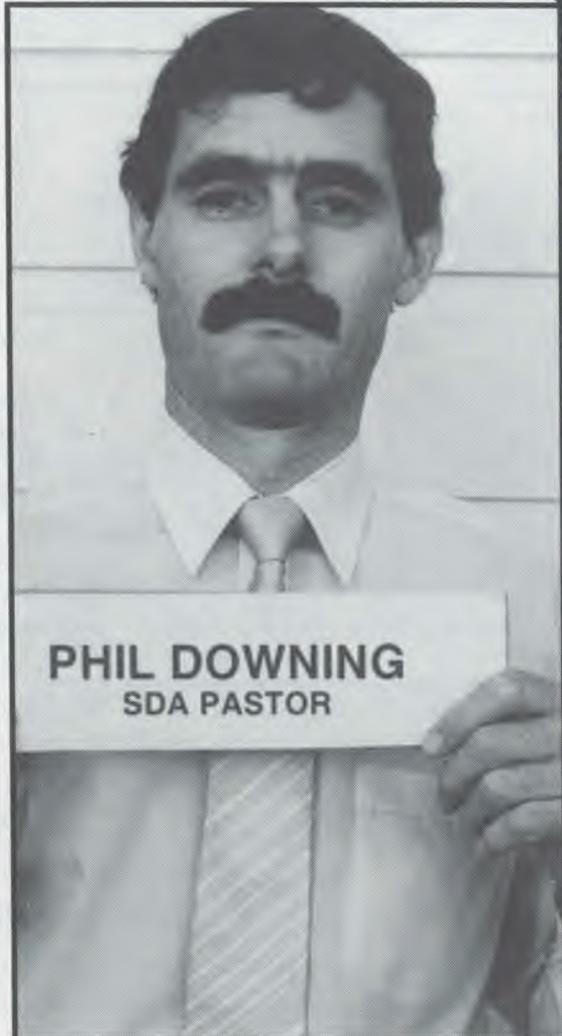
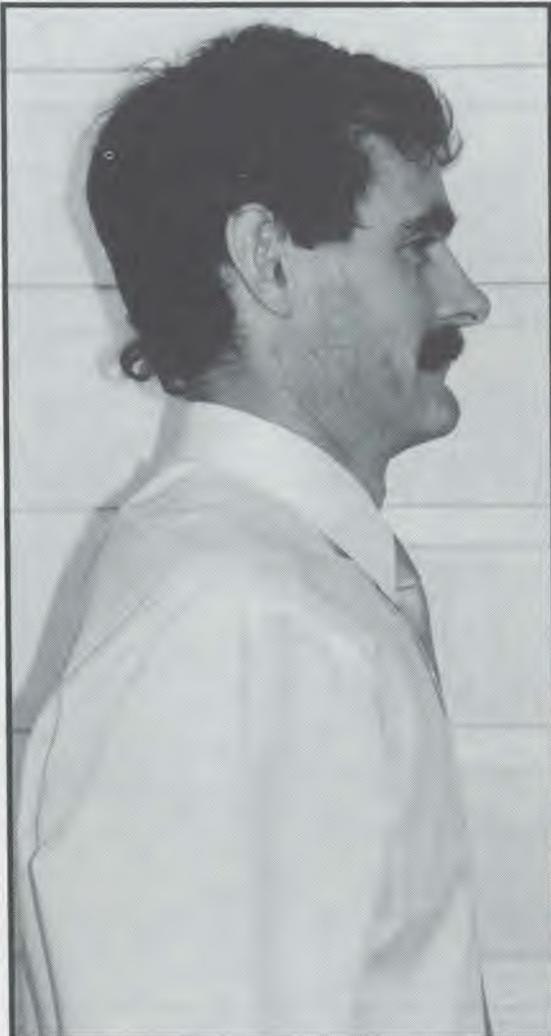


**He Threatened
to Kill the
Pastor—6**



**Death of
Former SPD
President—12**

**The Church
Helps During
Bushfires—11**



PHIL DOWNING
SDA PASTOR

Police Investigate New Pastor

The pastor of the Gin Gin church, Queensland, recently discovered that Neighbourhood Watch works when he was stopped by police during preparations for the opening of the Gin Gin church on November 6, 1993. Newly ordained Phil Downing was questioned about a refrigerator and television set he was carrying in his trailer.

He had arranged to borrow from a church member a refrigerator for catering, and a television set to be used as a monitor for the overflow crowd who would not be able to be seated in the church.

"When he and church member Lance Findlay went to the country house to pick up the fridge and the TV," reports Dr John Hammond, communication director for the South Queensland Conference, "they discovered that the woman was not home. One glance through an open door revealed that the fridge and TV were sitting there waiting to be loaded.

"The front door was open and Phil took the items, but left a note explaining his actions. What Phil didn't expect was that Neighbourhood Watch also applies to farmhouses. A watchful neighbour phoned the police." (Report continues on page 12 under "New Pastor Conducts Baptism.")

What If It Weren't There?



I was with a group of Adventists recently when the conversation turned to the RECORD. Someone asked: "Would we really miss the RECORD if we never had it?"

"Well, I'd miss Berto," said one, before I had time to even think about job security.

"What would we do during a boring sermon?" asked another, laughing.

"And what would I put in the bottom of the budgie cage?" someone else mocked, obviously for my benefit—he doesn't have a budgie.

We enjoyed the joke, but then the mood changed as they began to express genuine appreciation for the RECORD or particular sections of it. The initial question, however, continued to play over in my mind.

Familiarity means that the RECORD is probably something we take for granted. It was there last week, this one came this week, and next week's is almost complete as you read this.

The RECORD has been a part of the church in the South Pacific Division for some 90 years now. It seems like a permanent fixture.

But what if...?

What would you miss most?

Would it be the cut and thrust of Letters? No Newsfront would probably mean that you wouldn't be kept

abreast of church happenings in this division and overseas? Perhaps, to you, it would be the challenges or inspiration from Features. What about Berto? Would your children miss their page, or your youth YOR?

Something we've developed during the past two years have been stronger links with Adventist news services in other parts of the world. This has meant greater immediacy through more direct contact with the worldwide church, with less reliance on big sister, the *Adventist Review*. Because the church news is coming directly to us, it gets to you much more quickly.

The tyranny of distance is particularly a feature of Australian life. This was reinforced for me, when, as the pastor of our church in the remote outback city of Broken Hill. News from further afield came to be something I greatly appreciated. I realised it even more when, as a family, a couple of times a year, we'd pack camping gear for a three-day trek by car to visit three families. They were literal isolated members. Distance to them meant church perhaps just once or twice a year.

For most of the time, the RECORD is the only means that such Adventists have of keeping in touch with their church.

But you don't have to be isolated to need to know what's happening. And, despite my obvious bias for the RECORD, it's nevertheless true to say that advances in modern technology haven't come up with a more suitable or cost-effective way of keeping in touch.

Not that the RECORD is perfect; we know it isn't. I would challenge you to find a group of people, anywhere, who are more critical of RECORD than the editorial team as week by week we analyse each hot-off-the-press issue.

We're constantly working at improving the RECORD. Late last year, for example, lecturers in journalism and magazine design from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) spent two days with us, giving advice on how to improve the news presentation and layout of the RECORD and layout in *Signs of the Times*.

We want to make the magazines more readable and visually more inviting. There's little value in having the best message in the world if it's written and presented in a way that makes it difficult to read and understand. And why not make it as appealing to the eye as possible?

I'm sure you've noticed some minor changes in the past couple of months. (The new design elements appearing on the cover of this issue, for instance, are devices to make you want to read what is inside.)

While we expect and plan that the RECORD will continue until the Lord returns, we shouldn't take it for granted. Familiar things (and persons) that we've taken for granted do disappear. And that's the best reason I can think of for encouraging your generous support for the RECORD Offering next week.

What would you miss most if the RECORD weren't there?

Bruce Manners

Official Paper
Seventh-day Adventist Church
South Pacific Division



Editor Bruce Manners
Assistant Editors Lee Dunstan, Karen Miller

Editorial Secretary Glenda Fairall
Copy Editor Graeme Brown

Senior Consulting Editor Laurie Evans
Manuscripts All copy for the RECORD should be sent to: The Editor, RECORD, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria 3799. Manuscripts or computer disks will be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Phone (059) 66 9111. Fax (059) 66 9019.

Cover Photo: P Colquhoun

Subscriptions South Pacific Division, \$A31.00 \$NZ43.40.

All other regions, \$A67.00 \$NZ94.00. Air mail postage rates on application. Order from Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria 3799, Australia. Printed weekly by Signs Publishing Company.

Directory of the South Pacific Division
148 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, NSW 2076. Phone (02) 489 7122.

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Treasurer Tom Andrews
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Vol 99 No 5

Coin of Great Worth

I want to send you something. In this envelope you will find an American silver dollar from about 20 years ago. I feel that I should send it to you. I was keeping it, but decided that it could be better used doing mission work. I realised that this money could go to helping the work of God. I hope that this dollar will stretch to finish God's work.

Stanley McCalla,
Bahama Islands

Downies, Melbourne-based numismatics, suggest that the coin, being a commemorative issue recognising the work of Susan B Anthony, would be worth about \$A10-15. However, it was probably worth a lot more to Stanley McCalla.

Seeking Friendship

I'd like to reply to the letter "Unity Based on Love" (December 11) that said, "I look forward to a church of believers who love and respect each other...."

May I suggest you mix more with the ones who love their Saviour and who believe that He will soon be returning to earth as He promised. They will be people who will not try to indoctrinate you with man-made doctrines. Those kind harp on love, but the love eventually proves to be not genuine.

The study of books is certainly not essential for one's salvation, but we should and must carry out the principles Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

I A Nolan, Qld

Supertime

If we have confidence in the 20th-century prophet (E G White) at all, surely the health message is part of that confidence. So much of what she said 100 years ago has been vindicated by modern science.

Yet there is a disturbing trend in recent years to serve supper at church functions. It's very puzzling to some new Adventists, particularly those who were attracted to the church through the health message in the first place. The church should not dictate what individuals do, but I believe that at official church functions we should uphold the principles given to us by God.

Please don't continue to tempt me.

Perhaps the right arm of the message needs a little microsurgery so that the whole body will be strengthened.

Lorna McCallum, Vic

Special Thanks

Reflecting upon the character and work of the pastors that have crossed our path, we have reason to be grateful.

Their families must have missed them during those evenings that we consumed them in Bible study, in our early days. Hard questions brought the response: "Let's see what the Bible says"—and it was enough. Although my recalcitrant spirit made it difficult at times, their courtesy and patience never failed. They persevered and waited for the working of the Holy Spirit.

In times of need they came—despite their busy schedules. When dangerous illness struck, we rejoiced in the blessing of anointing, which the Lord saw fit to give. We're grateful for their prayers and sermons, which God has used to speak to us. Their lives have evidenced the principles of their faith.

They moved on, for there are other sheep, but gradually we learned our responsibility to represent the Saviour too and to reach out for those He draws to Himself.

We're glad that the Lord used these servants to introduce us to Seventh-day Adventist truths as revealed in the

Just a Coincidence...



Islamic Studies Centre

Are you, or do you have relatives, friends or fellow believers working or studying in Arabic countries? Please send your or their name and address to me at this address:

Associate Editor
Islamic Studies Centre
2 Wiggett Grove
Binfield
Berkshire RG12 5DY
England

This is a disciplined and responsible project for people who live either temporarily or long-term in sensitive areas.

Jack Mahon, England

Scripture and to the Spirit of Prophecy. If we don't continue to search out and live them under the power of the Holy Spirit, we have only ourselves to blame.

It's time to say thank you to these pastors and their families, and there were many.

Suzanne Harrison
and the Frost family, Vic

Views expressed in Letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Letters should not exceed 250 words and should be mailed to RECORD Editor, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton Victoria 3799. Writers must include their name, address and telephone number. Letters received more than three weeks after the date of the issue carrying the article to which they respond will normally not be printed. All letters will be edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's original meaning will not be changed. Not all letters received will be published.

Seminar a Winner

A simplified version of the Revelation Seminar, called the "Home Series," has been developed for small-group use. Both the guide and the program are written to help the teacher. The lessons are colourful and Adventist doctrines are linked with the Revelation study in such a way that people are prepared for baptism at the series' conclusion. Already they have proved to be a success: Barbara invited seven neighbours to study the series with her, and three were baptised and another later, even though she had never given a Bible study before; Rona, a senior citizen and new to the church, attended a Home Series training program and decided to teach a group herself, resulting in one of the three attending her group being baptised, and another returning to church; Richard has seen 15 of his Home Series contacts baptised in a year.

Potts in Subotica

Evangelist Desmond Potts of Port Macquarie is currently conducting campaigns in the territories of the former Yugoslavia in the three cities of Subotica, Sombar and Zrenjanin.

The Subotica meetings are expected to consolidate new people already attending church, and those others studying the Adventist message from the 1993 campaign. Preparation for these programs was done by his parents, Pastor Tom and Joan Potts, who arrived in the area earlier this year.

Auckland Hospital

The new extension on the Auckland Adventist Hospital was opened on January 20 by New Zealand's Governor-General, Dame Catherine Tizard. The extensions include an X-ray department, pharmacy, radiography and 24-hour emergency clinic.

Camp Grows

North New Zealand's 42nd annual camp took place from January 14 to January 22. Numbers had increased on previous years, according to Pastor Larry Laredo, communication director for the North New Zealand Conference. Keynote speakers were Pastors Martin Weber, John Gratz and Kurt Johnson.

Media Exposure

Adventist Media Centre 30-and 60-second spot ads

The Gospel Binds All Peoples

The power of the gospel has been seen again to know no boundaries as Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, Slovenians, Hungarians and other nationalities met together from December 24 to 26 at Kallangur Adventist campground, Queensland, for a time of spiritual renewal and encouragement. They were bound by their one faith, one goal and one vision, and that is to preach the gospel to those in Australia whose mother tongue is other than English. Amid the praise and the study of God's Word there were reminders of the scars and pain that war brings and is being experienced in our former homeland," reports Pastor Peter Stojanovic, the chairman of the Coordinating Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches for the Peoples from the Territories of the former Yugoslavia. "Our firm desire is that Jesus will come soon and end this misery that sin has brought. With renewed commitment to Jesus and a decision to work together to preach the gospel, we have decided to meet again in 1995 in Victoria, where once more we will meet together and experience in a small way that which is going to be experienced by all when Jesus comes," he says.

were viewed on New Zealand national television in prime time on a recent Friday evening. Both spots were viewed during a program linking archaeological finds to the accuracy of Scripture. One spot was on "Digging Up the Past," and the other covered the concept of "finding the missing part" in your life. Pastor Laredo reported an excellent response from those spots.

Managers Change

Recently Peter Howard returned from being the Adventist Development and Relief Agency representative in Honiara to take up the position of farm manager at Longburn Adventist College, New Zealand. John Hall, who has been the longest-serving manager employee, has moved to his own farm after serving at Longburn for more than 25 years. Last year the farm made a contribution of \$NZ6,000 to the college. We thank John Hall for his contribu-

tion and wish him the best in the future.

PACIFIC ISLANDS

Congress Praised

An Adventist youth congress, with an attendance of more than 1000 young people, held at the University of Papua New Guinea on January 12, drew the following comments from the *Post-Courier* newspaper in their editorial: "Such conventions should be held regularly to remind young people of their responsibilities and the roles they are expected to play in society. As National Capital District Commission Chairman David Unagi told the congress, 'The youth of today can gain inspiration for future life by attending such events and sharing ideas and initiatives.'" The week-long congress aimed at giving Adventist youth the chance and vision to become future leaders, in the community and church.

America's Earthquake and Deep Freeze

Preliminary reports on the deaths of 42 people after the southern California earthquake, USA, include no Seventh-day Adventists. There was some damage to San Fernando Academy and three churches in the area were designated as emergency centres—Northridge, Pacoima and Mission Hills. The Simi Valley Adventist Hospital evacuated some sections in the early hours after the quake. Nursing students from Pacific Union College travelled to Simi Hospital to alleviate a nursing shortage. In the east, subzero temperatures have claimed more lives. The cold closed the General Conference office for two days.

WORLD CHURCH

TED Valuegenesis

Trans-European Division youth are to undergo a survey preparing for a Valuegenesis analysis similar to that carried out in the North American Division and the South Pacific Division. It will be written in 12 different languages and survey 5200 Adventists between the ages of 14 and 30.—ANR

Centre Sold

On February 1 ownership of the 68-bed Jeloy Kurbad Rehabilitation Centre, Norway, changed from the Adventist Church to church member Daniel Joensen, a physiotherapist with experience in physical rehabilitation. The new owner guarantees continued employment to those at the institution and will manage the institution according to Adventist principles.—ANR

NEWS EXTRA

Six Million Bibles

Amity Press in Nanjing, China, has printed its six millionth Bible in Chinese. Financed initially by Germany's Christian community (including Adventists), Amity plans to print 1.6 million Bibles during 1994 and another 1.8 million in 1995. Amity also has permission to print *The Desire of Ages*.

Roman Word

The Catholic Press highlighted three main points of a recently released 120-page document on the interpretation of the Bible. They state that "access to Scripture is not 'immediate' but requires study and effort; that the Bible is not

meant for individualistic reading but is read in the church, with the church and for the church; and that 'fundamentalist' and 'sectarian' tendencies to read texts written two or three millennia ago with the categories and prejudices of today must be avoided." Although not a papal encyclical, observers say its importance is indicated by the preface being signed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.—ANR

Pope Chastises

The pope issued a letter to the Italian bishops calling for a united and coherent Catholic presence in the country's politics and condemned tendencies leading toward a separation of the rich north from the poorer south of Italy.—ANR

God's Bricks

The Soviet republic of Belorussia granted a group of Baptists permission to demolish a Soviet Army barracks and missile silo in order to use the bricks, cement and steel to build a new church. The volunteer church construction workers found a letter tucked into a World War II artillery shell, which had been sealed in a brick wall. The letter said the bricks used to construct the missile silo and barracks had been from local churches on the orders of the then-dictator Joseph Stalin. The letter asked that if the missile launcher was ever demolished, could the bricks be used to build churches again?—*News Network International*

Ark Again?

Scientists claim they

Centenarian Honoured in Fiji



Photo: W Talemaloga

One-hundred-year-old Pu Bale recently celebrated her 100th birthday at Delainavesi, a town outside of Suva, Fiji. Pu Bale has 12 children, 24 grandchildren and 74 great-grandchildren. She gives credit for her long life to temperate living and a vegetarian diet. Pu Bale is pictured with some of her children and grandchildren.

have found the remains of Noah's ark buried in a remote area near Mount Ararat on the border between Turkey and Iran. A report in London's *Observer* said the alleged ark is wider than the *Queen Mary* and half as long. The Turkish Government is said to be so convinced by the findings of the six-year investigation, it has ordered the excavation of the site, which is about 25 kilometres from the mountain.—*Herald-Sun*.

Suicide Teens

Australia now has the highest teenage suicide rate in the industrialised

world. The United Children's Fund report lists Australia as having 16.4 deaths per 100,000 among 15-24-year-olds, closely followed by Norway with 16.3 and Canada with 15.8. A separate report revealed that suicide rates are twice as high in rural NSW as in the cities.—*On Being*

ANR: Adventist News Review
AR: Adventist Review

CHURCH CALENDAR

February 19	Stewardship Day RECORD Offering
March 5	Evangelism Sabbath Community Guest Day
March 12	Youth Week Adventist World Radio Offering

Blood on Our Carpet

by Eoin Giller

The situation was dangerous, but not beyond redemption; after all, the crazed biker hadn't shot anyone—yet.

Pastor!" he yelled. "Police brutality! Help!" The five men struggled on the floor in the foyer of the church.

"If you'd stop fighting them, they probably wouldn't be so brutal!" one of the pastors replied. Then, in a torrent, blood gushed from a wound received earlier in the evening.

The pastors exchanged worried glances. They knew some of their members would be more concerned about the carpet than the person struggling with the police.

It was almost midnight. For three hours Pastors Elrod and Giller had struggled to calm down the angry man who'd confronted them. Known as Bert to his biker friends, he'd arrived at the church with a gun—seeking to do battle with the devil. He'd come to the church because Pastor Elrod had refused to meet him on the dark street corner that was Bert's first choice.

Bert was having some domestic problems and, just the night before, Pastor Giller had advised Bert's wife to take a break from the tense family situation. Bert believed Pastor Elrod was of the devil.

Then, after a call from one of the pastor's wives, three police cars, a fire engine, and a county hospital vehicle were parked outside the Adventist church. She'd called the emergency number after her husband had whispered to her over the phone that there was an armed man at the church. She then called the other pastor's wife who, before falling asleep again, had assured her, "Well, don't go to the church, they'll be all right!"

For years Pastor Elrod had been praying that he might somehow reach a specific group of bikers. Nine years had passed since the Dirty Dozen and Mongos had killed Rick, his brother. He wanted to lead them to Christ rather

than condemn them to hell! This night his prayer was beginning to be answered.

After separating Bert from his gun, the pastors led him into the church office, but, confused by drugs, alcohol and witchcraft, he was rational for only short periods. The pastors prayed with him and anointed him. He calmed down enough for a psychiatrist to talk with him, but refused to go to hospital for help.

That's when the police moved in. After putting on surgical gloves, as a protection against AIDS, they took hold of Bert. He fought them off. The pastors ducked and side-stepped like pros. On went the cuffs. It was then that Bert began to bleed onto the near-new foyer carpet.

Finally subdued, the police led their

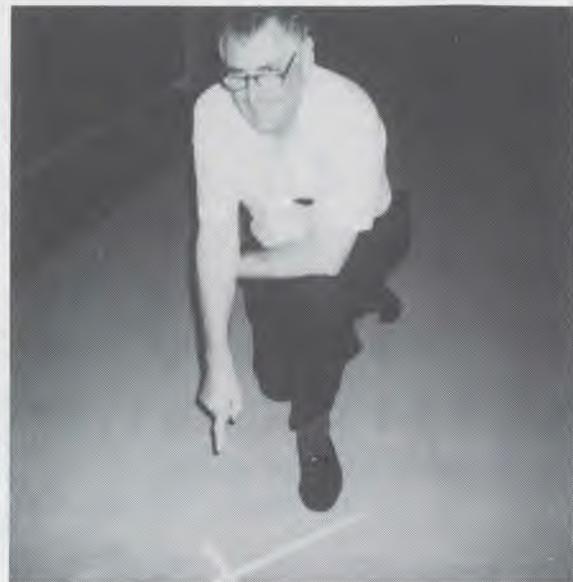
Nine years had passed since the Dirty Dozen and Mongos had killed Rick, his brother.

reluctant prisoner to their patrol car and pushed him in. Pastor Elrod accompanied Bert and promised to stay with him through his trouble.

"You're not good pastors. I trusted you guys," Bert wailed. "You said you'd help me. You're both dead meat when I get out!" he continued as they sped to the psych hospital.

When the Desert Valley church members heard of the drama, they entered into prayer for their pastors' safety and for Bert's conversion. During one visit a social worker commented to Pastor Elrod that the unit staff concluded that his involvement in witchcraft was the key to his strange behaviour and lifestyle. Bert wasn't mentally ill.

As the ministers continued to visit



Pastor Eoin Giller points to the bloodstains on the floor of the Desert Valley church foyer.

him in the hospital and rehabilitation centre, Bert's heart softened to the message of Christ's love and His forgiveness. He accepted eternal life as a gift by faith.

Since Bert accepted Christ, he has helped lead another biker to Christ. Both these men were previously acquainted with Rick Elrod. Their biker friends are amazed at the change that's taken place in the men's lives and some are interested in attending church. One is having weekly Bible studies.

Bert was baptised a few weeks ago. His former biker friend, "King of the Hill," who came to church at the pastor's invitation, is planning his own baptism.

Christ's blood—shed on the cross—was mirrored in Bert's blood on the carpet. The now-fading stain is a reminder to church goers that a faith in Christ brings deliverance to those who accept Him. It also testifies to nine years of trusting prayer.

Bikers are being saved in Tucson because one man and a praying church had enough faith to believe Christ is Lord today. □

Eoin Giller, an expatriate Australian, is pastor of the Desert Valley church in Tucson, Arizona, USA.

Sabbath would seem empty without the RECORD. It costs someone \$25 for you to have the RECORD waiting at church for you each week. Please support next week's RECORD Offering.

Reaching Kids in Church

by Phillip Lomman

How long is it since your kids told you how much they enjoyed the worship service? If it's been awhile, here's some ideas that might change that.

Whoever heard of a minister actually suggesting that a good-sized proportion of his congregation need *not* listen to his sermon? Yet each Sabbath, in many of our churches, this is exactly what happens!

The developmental process that has taken place in our church over the decades has brought some great innovations in regard to the young people and children. Since such a large proportion of our congregations is composed of young people, the programs provided specifically for them are much needed and appreciated. These are: divisional Sabbath school; youth and Pathfinder rallies; Pathfinders; worship-hour features; providing a Scripture reading or item for the worship service; services being taken by the youth; and junior, earliteen and youth camps, among others.

There are many things we do for our young people and children—but could we, *should we*, do more?

Next Sabbath, as you sit in church, take note. What is there that makes the children and young people sit up and listen? I'm sure that most could report that the children were provided with a story. Great! But what then?

Perhaps the organist plays "Jesus Loves Me" and instinctively the children know it's time to head down the aisles to the front of the church for a story. Few can resist the invitation to share in the story. Not only the children, but adults as well, thrill to the excitement of this special time for the children. These stories generate enthusiasm! The children catch a vision of service to their God, their friends and family. A good story is a powerful tool, so let's not neglect to tell good stories to the children!

The preacher too often then utters

those dreaded words: "Now children, you've had your turn, quietly return to your seats while I talk to Mum and Dad!"

From the peak of inspiration the children are put back into their place and by words or inference are told not to listen to the sermon—it's strictly for the adults! And so they go about entertaining themselves until 12 o'clock—colouring books, Lego, toys, lollies . . . you name it.

What a sad indictment on our attitude to worship.

Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Isn't it time that we took a close look at what is in our worship hour that will fill the needs of children, youth and adults alike?

Here are some ideas that may be used in a sincere effort to make the worship service truly relevant for all age-groups:

1. Make the service itself more interesting. Do this by including more stories as well as a story or nature segment time. Use object lessons.

2. Involve children and young people directly in the program. They can present the Scripture reading, a musical item, announce the hymns or pray, collect the offering, pass out the RECORD or church bulletin, operate the overhead projector, or give or take an interview.

3. Provide them with a work sheet for the sermon. This might be in the form of crosswords, acrostics or question and answer sheets.

4. Use variety. Vary hymn choices; sing using the hymnal and songs on an overhead projector that allows for youthful tastes. Involve the young people in running this section.

5. Have the congregation come to church with a sense of anticipation. What format will the service take today? Variety holds people's interest. But don't ignore older members. They, too, must have their worship needs cared for.

6. Pepper the sermon with story illustrations. They help a congregation to remember the message beyond 12 o'clock.

7. Be interactive. Use methods that demand a response. Activities such as reading by the congregation or individuals adds to the feeling of involvement. Have the children sing a song or two from the front.

8. Offer incentives. Get the children to seek out some simple truth or complete an assignment based on the service. Have them report back the next Sabbath on what they've found. Don't be frightened to offer a small reward to those who participate—your local ABC or Christian bookshop has plenty.

9. Use your local musical talent. Form an orchestra or band to add an extra dimension to your worship.

10. Be daring. Put the worship service first on a Sabbath morning to be followed by Sabbath school. We provide a specially-prepared Sabbath school program at a time when the children are fresh. Then, when their concentration span is lower, we expect them to sit still and be quiet for an hour.

The potential for variety in worship is enormous. True, variety involves extra planning and effort, but in an age when so many young people are leaving the church we should be prepared to make that sacrifice.

For too long we have geared our worship hour almost completely for adults. It's time that the younger 50 per cent should be given the same privilege in worship. □



Phillip Lomman writes from Silverdale, NSW.

Firebrands

by Richard Stone

Where was God when the fires came? In the midst of life, where the smoke was, and is, at its densest.

The fires have been extinguished, the firefighters have returned home leaving those who suffered loss counting the cost. But during that horrendous week, when Sydney and numerous other New South Wales cities and towns were assailed by the bushfires, what went through your mind?

Some of us experienced a vast sense of relief and gratitude that both our families and houses were safe. Perhaps some grieved.

We felt the inspiration of the miraculous escapes—of the gritty determination of people to save their homes, the inspiration of the selfless courage of the firefighters who worked beyond endurance and risked their lives.

We witnessed, too, the sense of community this disaster inspired, and speculated on how long it would take for those sentiments to evaporate once the danger had passed.

And, as in many other crises, we saw humankind show itself not just at its best, but also at its worst.

We heard tales of looting, of the callous indifference in some who, without lifting a hand, watched others' livelihoods and life's product burn. Joy-riders to the fire fronts—people with only time to burn—thrill-seeking at others' expense.

There was indignation also from the incomprehensible knowledge that a number of these fires were deliberately lit.

The recriminations have begun. Who's to blame? A government that hadn't adequately funded firefighting? Or a moral decay that devalues the meaning of life and property and provides no home or rehabilitation for society's alienated and dysfunctional people?

In the end, especially for those who suffered most, it's almost inevitable that they will for a time blame God. It seems to be a typical human response to disaster.

It's reflected in the fact that natural

disasters such as the bushfires and Los Angeles earthquake are institutionalised as "acts of God."

Each day, on my way to and from work that horrendous week, I passed a sign set before a church.

Begrimed, it featured a cartoon-like figure reclining in a hammock, cool drink in hand, captioned "It's God's world—enjoy your holiday." The sentiment: God is in His heaven, all is well with the world, relax—you're in His care.

Unfortunate timing.

As well-intentioned as it was, to some—those suffering loss and the bereaved—it must have seemed to mock their grief.

A disaster such as the bushfires does challenge us. It tries the strength of our commitment, for the issue is too close

"Prayer may not save us from pain or sorrow, but it can draw the sting...."

to home for it to be otherwise.

On that blackened Sunday a few weeks ago, as the fires still raged, the Premier of New South Wales called for a day of prayer—prayers for relief and release from suffering.

I wonder if on the subsequent Sundays, with the fires consigned to history, if there were any prayers of thanks. There'd be some, but, I venture, not as many as for relief.

That's the reflection of another human trait. We blame God because He didn't still the self-willed hand that held the match that turned bushland into an inferno—yet we dismiss the strength He lent the blackened arms of those who fought the flames.

Typically, humanity has so often used religion as some primitive, "costless" form of fire insurance—and cursed Him when it failed.

"Where was God when the fires started, my house was burnt and my children died?" It's a plea as old as time—blinded by tears and smoke.

We're forgetful that, beyond the uni-

verse of pain, He grieves most.

We fail to see that, in a sense, this whole world has been ravaged by a fire. We're left in a blackened no-man's land where once were fields and flowers, and that the pall that swirled round Calvary represented the smokiest night of all.

Calvary, in its grimmest detail, showed above all else that there was no short cut to end injustice, suffering and travail; no gentle path for love to lead us by the hand. The path, the only path, was the one where He has led the way—the fire trail through conflagration.

Where was God when the fires came? In the midst of life, where the smoke was, and is, at its densest.

There . . . or not at all.

A God who suffered on the cross, and suffers with us still in the midst of our disjointed and our smoke-filled lives.

Christ never promised any of it would be easy. All through history life has been hard—the dying harder. Christ's first followers were people of prayer, and yet they were tortured, flung to lions—and burned. Prayer neither quenched their flame nor shut the lions' mouths, but it did give them strength to die with a song on their lips.

A padre, in the trenches of World War I, wrote: "The spirit of Christ is the answer to prayer, the power to see our duty through. To see it through unbroken and unbroken to the end. . . . Christ was quite honest about it. . . . It's the only answer [He] ever promised. . . . Just as the rain descends upon the just and the unjust, so do the shells. Prayer may not save us from pain or sorrow, but it can draw the sting. . . ."

Yet, to many, what he's written can still be mere words. Words are easy enough to come by.

I have to admit that there have been times in life when I felt God was against me, because the road has been hard, the going tough. That's an all-too-human reaction.

And, I guess, that if I'd lost my house that week, at a stretch, I could have stood gazing into the ruins and felt and expressed these same thoughts. But perhaps I would have stood there embittered all the same.

I guess that just shows—I've got a way to go. □

Richard Stone writes from Hornsby Heights, a suburb of Sydney. He presented this as a talk in the Wahroonga church, NSW, soon after the Sydney fires.

Aborigines Trained to Share Faith

Cultural difficulties experienced by Aboriginals attending Adventist churches was only one of the issues discussed at a recent Aboriginal Lay Training School held at Karralundi Aboriginal Education Centre, north of Meekatharra, Western Australia.

The school's key objective was to assist Aboriginal people in fulfilling the mission of the church. Those attending came from coastal areas and Perth metropolitan area, as well as isolated inland areas. Some were not yet baptised, but said they were keen to do God's work, according to Pastor Ken Vogel, president of the Western Australian Conference.

Scripture was emphasised, as was the importance of prayer. Practical guides were given to the use of both. An understanding of the church was furthered by reviewing church history. Yet Christ was the training school's main emphasis.

Those conducting the school were Pastor Doug Robertson, who has many years of experience in cross-cultural ministry as well as training church members throughout the South Pacific; Pastor Eric Davey, associate coordinator for Aboriginal Ministries, South Pacific Division; Pastor George Quinlin, an Aboriginal; Pastor Keith Godfrey, Aboriginal Ministries Coordinator, Western Australian Conference; Kevin Merrit, an Aboriginal volunteer minister, and Pastor Vogel.

"Those who received their certificates were ecstatic over the training," says Pastor Vogel. "They have requested this program be offered every year in various centres to provide constant support to those who want to do the will of God in preparing Aboriginal people for Jesus' soon return."



Photo: K Vogel

The Aboriginal Lay Training School in Western Australia further prepared more workers for Christ.

Personal Stories of Witnessing Faith:

Cathy and Darren

Cathy's life was unhappy. She and her de-facto husband, Darren, were caught up in drugs and alcohol. And there was a thought that gnawed away at her constantly—Christianity might possibly be the answer to their unhappiness.

After unsuccessfully attempting to get Darren's family to take her to a church, she decided she would somehow get there herself. This was no simple task, as they lived out of town. It was further complicated by the fact that no buses ran on Sunday. One Friday, Cathy was in town and saw a sign outside the front of a church declaring its services to be held on Saturday. The next day she was in church. Over the next few days Cathy

spent much time talking to God and soon, privately, gave her heart fully to Jesus.

On arriving home after working in the country, Darren found an ecstatic Cathy. She told him she needed to do some praying because "this was the way to real happiness." And so Darren prayed. They then began attending church together and have not missed since.

Cathy and Darren accepted God's free salvation. And their lives have been bound to each other in marriage and to God in baptism.

Cathy's mother has just recently been baptised. Several other family members have now come out of the drug and alcohol scene and are attending church. Some of Darren's family are strongly opposing them. This causes much anguish to these newly committed children of God, but they are putting their concerns directly to God in prayer, as well as personally making every effort

to help Darren's family so that they will come to God.

Jimmy Cutter

Jimmy Cutter was sentenced to death by the older people in his community after deciding to become a Christian.

During the 1950s he was a respected stockman renowned for his horsemanship and hard work. Against the direction of his elders, he attended the evangelistic meetings of Pastor A D Vaughan at Carnegie Station. He learned of the love of God and decided to become a disciple of Christ, be baptised and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On his way back to the station property the elders were waiting for him on the side of the road.

A quick glance told Jimmy more than he wanted to know. They pointed at him—meaning he was to die.

Before he got home he had a motorbike accident and yet came through unscathed. The next morning he rode around a corner to go through a gate that was *never* closed—but this day it was. It was a serious accident and Jimmy should have been killed, but he escaped serious injury.

Jimmy believes that God intervened to protect him. This strengthened his faith and made the Aboriginal elders think about Jimmy's God. Jimmy was later baptised at the Wiluna Mission sometime around 1960.

Though he faced social and personal problems in the intervening years, he has never lost his faith in God and God's church. Both Jimmy and Rita, his wife, came to the training school and are potential leaders in the Wiluna area of Western Australia.—Ken Vogel

Adventists Respond to the Bushfires

Adventists were involved in organising accommodation for some 5000 people during the bushfires that devastated much of New South Wales during the first days of January. This included people in Sydney, the Central Coast and as far north as Nyngan (where our volunteers found accommodation for no less than 937 people).

"In NSW we have the government-assigned responsibility of organising emergency accommodation in any disaster situation," reports Dr Alwyn Salom, ADCARE director, South Pacific Division. "And it is that responsibility our church members completed so admirably.

"We have the task of giving a bed to the homeless and temporary evacuees. Although this is a vital responsibility, it is not a high-profile one.

"It would be impossible to mention the names of all of those who took part in disaster relief during the time of the fire without possibly omitting some who should be mentioned. There were many church members who supported those in need without fanfare or recognition."

Four Adventists were officially

involved in relief efforts.

Lew Stevens, a Mount Colah church member, is the coordinator for Emergency Accommodation for the State Emergency Services (SES). All through the bushfire emergency he was at the state headquarters of the SES.

Rolf Garda is the Deputy Controller for the SES in the Gosford area, and Lew Heath was in charge of the immense operation involving so many of our volunteers on the Central

"We have the task of giving a bed to the homeless and temporary evacuees. Although this is a vital responsibility, it is not a high-profile one."

Coast. Both are from Erina church, and were supported by a large team of church volunteers.

Dr Alex Currie, the ADCARE director for Greater Sydney, was the leader in the Sydney area among those volunteers arranging accommodation. He spent many hours with his supporters answering the three phone lines used to arrange housing for the bushfire victims.

"Some church members expressed disappointment at the church receiv-

ing so little media recognition for the work done," says Dr Salom. "However, at least four radio interviews with our personnel were aired in Sydney.

"Now that the emergency has passed, government bodies are debriefing the whole operation. And the church is doing the same. Can we learn anything that will make our role in a future emergency more effective? Of course we can learn.

"Already initiatives are coming into place. Yvonne Wilmot, who worked as one of our volunteers on the Central Coast, noted that we needed to improve our visual identification and is in the process of helping to correct that situation.

"Emergencies in the community come under the umbrella of ADCARE. In every church we need to have a prepared and trained emergency services team ready to go into action whenever the circumstances call for it.

"But when we have talked about what might have been done, our hearts still go out to those who have lost loved ones or their homes. It may have been a month ago, but for them time has stood still in the loss they have suffered."

Feeding the Hungry on the F3 Freeway

An Adventist woman living near the F3 Freeway between Sydney and Newcastle and worried about her seeming inability to help in the disaster overtaking the inhabitants of New South Wales, decided she would do something.

She felt impressed to go to neighbours in her street and ask if they would each donate a loaf of bread to make sandwiches. To her surprise and delight not only was the suggestion warmly received, but each person brought a wrapped parcel of sandwiches from their homes.

In the meantime she had gone to a neighbour owning a panel van with the request it be used in the distribution of food. This was readily granted, so that when a Salvation Army officer arrived on the scene he was delighted to be presented with a vehicle loaded with sandwiches, which he took to feed those hungry motorists stranded on the freeway. When he returned he was given another load of sand-

wiches to distribute.

There were two added points of interest to the story: one was the changed atmosphere in the street—a warm feeling was now felt toward each other; and the other was that my son-in-law had been stranded on the same freeway, hungry and in need of food.—Winston Kent

**Don't Forget
RECORD Offering
Next Week
February 19**



Pastor Keith Parmenter, 1918-93

Pastor Keith Parmenter, South Pacific Division president from 1976 to his retirement in 1984, died on December 16, 1993, in Mullumbimby Hospital, New South Wales.

He was born on March 14, 1918, in Lismore, NSW. His family later moved to Inverell where they became Seventh-day Adventists after attending meetings conducted by Pastor C Reynolds. Keith had decided he wanted to serve the church and so went to Avondale to study accountancy. He returned home to the farm after only

Past SPD President Dies

one year due to his father becoming ill.

In 1939 he married Heather Chilcott, a gracious woman who supported him in his ministry throughout his life. The couple had four children: Glen, Vernon, Daryl (who died in infancy) and Colin.

Soon after the wedding, Keith went canvassing in the Tamworth district, and then when their second child was only three weeks old the family went to Avondale College where he studied for the ministry. He graduated from theology in 1947. He was ordained in 1951, after two years service in the Victorian Conference.

This was followed by service in pastoral and departmental work as a member of the conference executive committee. From Victoria he was called to be Wahroonga church pastor in the Greater Sydney Conference, NSW. During that time the present Wahroonga church was built.

Keith's administrative ability was quickly noticed, and 23 of his 36 years of service were spent in administration. He was first called to be presi-

dent of the South Queensland Conference in 1961, followed by president of North New Zealand. In 1970 he was elected division secretary, and at the annual meeting of the division in 1976 he was appointed president, a position he held with distinction until his retirement on February 24, 1984.

Keith and Heather retired to Ocean Shores, northern New South Wales, where he continued to work vigorously in the establishment of a new church complex in that centre. His son, Vern, now associate secretary of the division, said recently of his father: "Relaxation was working in his garden where he felt close to God, preaching, giving Bible studies, fundraising and working for the church he loved."

Pastor Keith Parmenter was a man of conviction who served his church with distinction; but he was also a kind, humble man who lived what he preached and was highly respected by both those for whom he worked and those who worked with him.—Ron W Taylor

New Pastor Conducts Baptism

When the Gin Gin (Queensland) pastor and a church member borrowed a refrigerator and a television set for the opening of the new church, a neighbour thought he was a burglar and rang the police.

"Pastor Phil Downing was driving home when a police car came and did a big U-turn on the road and stopped the hapless pastor," says Dr John Hammond, communication director for the South Queensland Conference.

"The first thing the policeman asked was, 'What have you two been up to?'

"Phil replied somewhat innocently, 'We have just picked up a fridge and TV from a house.'

"How did you get into the house?"

"Oh, the front door was open and we just picked them up."

"And what do you do for a living...?"

"Phil's story was believed, but only after the police accompanied them back to the house and found the note Pastor Downing had left for the owner."

Pastor Downing was ordained on December 4. Originally from Victoria, he has a Bachelor of Economics degree and was a high-school teacher. He became an Adventist while working as a teacher.



Pastor Phil Downing is pictured on the day of his ordination with his wife, Julie, and children (left to right): Sam, Anna and Sarah.

He entered the ministry and has served in the South Queensland Conference in Brisbane and in Bundaberg, Dalby-Chinchilla, and the Gin Gin and Monto churches.

He and his wife, Julie, have three children: Sarah, who is 14 years of age; Sam, who is 12 years; and Anna, who is eight.

The week after his ordination, on December 11, Pastor Downing baptised 11 people in the Kolan River near Gin Gin. The first of the 11 to be baptised was his son, Sam.

Ben's After-fire Worships

Last week Ben felt very angry with God for not stopping the bushfires quickly. His Dad planned some extra special worships to let Ben know that God is love—perhaps you might like to try them:

- Get ready for a bushfire walk. Take a ball of string, scissors, paper and pencils, an exercise or project book for a diary, a magnifying glass and—if you have one—a camera.
- Find some badly burned bush. Make a big square in the bush by tying a piece of string around the base of one tree and then looping it around three others—and then bringing it back and tying it to your first tree. This square is your family's bush book.
- Choose a person to write diary notes. Write Visit 1 and the date on the first page. Rule the page into four columns. Name each column:

We saw. We heard. We smelt. We felt.

- Walk inside your square. Look around you. Look up high then down low. Use the magnifying glass. Are there any plants, insects, birds or animals? What are the colours? When you lie on the ground, what does the sky look like? Take a photo of the square from the first tree. (Glue this in your diary for Visit 1.)
- Each choose a part in the square that is very ugly (perhaps a branch or some burnt, black ground). Tie a string on it to remind you where it is on your next visit. Draw and colour it. Put your name on the page. Glue these into your diary pages near Visit 1.
- Keep very still and listen. Don't talk. Is anything making a sound in your square? Put your ear next to the ground—then a tree. Shut your

eyes and listen again.

- Walk to each corner of the square and shut your eyes. Smell the air. Does it tell you anything?
- Touch things very carefully. Feel the ground. Run your hands over a burnt branch. Leave the plants as you found them. Sit down and think. How are you feeling?
- Talk about your feelings together. Think how God must be feeling. Talk to God and share with Him what you are thinking. Ask God to remind you of His love through your family's bush book.
- Visit the square once a week for three months or longer. Do the same things, draw the same things, photograph from the same tree and keep your diary for each visit. God is going to surprise you. And that surprise will be saying "God is love."

NOTICEBOARD

Appreciation

Parmenter. The Parmenter family would like to express their heartfelt thanks, appreciation and gratitude to their friends and relatives for their messages of comfort, condolence, flowers, love and phone calls at the time of the loss of their loving husband, father and grandfather, Keith Samuel Parmenter.

Weddings

Ashfield-Smith—Wollaston. Simon Douglas Ashfield-Smith, son of Milton Smith (Albury, NSW) and Ruth Ashfield-Smith (Sydney), and Janelle Maree Wollaston, daughter of Ronald Wollaston (Maitland) and Mavis Perna (Mackay, Qld), were married on December 12, 1993, at the Galston SDA church, NSW. Simon and Janelle will live in Cooranbong while continuing to study at Avondale College. G B Scott

Cady—Lloyd. Neil Martin Cady, son of Jeff and Ruth Cady (Rockingham, WA), and Leonie Grace Lloyd, daughter of Michael and Lois Lloyd (Gosnells), were married on December 19, 1993; at Livingston SDA church. Neil and Leonie plan to set up their home at Carmel.

Tony Knight

Davis—Cortaville. Kelvin Ronald, son of Ron and Carol Davis (Kempsey, NSW), and Alexandra Pauline, daughter of Bruce Cortaville (Moss Vale, NSW) and Pauline Ridley (Port Macquarie), were married on December 12, 1993, at Pymble Ladies College Chapel, Sydney. Kelvin and Alex plan to set up their home in Sydney. Bruce Roberts

Gillies—McMurray. Brian Rodney Gillies, son of Bruce and Lorna Gillies (Port Macquarie, NSW), and Lynette Mary McMurray, daughter of John and Kay McMurray (Gawler, SA), were married on December 19, 1993, at Nunawading, Vic. Brian and Lorna plan to set up their home in Baulkham Hills, NSW. B G Whelan

Hersom—Chiew. John Hersom, son of Grace Hersom (South Berwick, Maine, USA), and Sheryl Chiew, daughter of John and Shirley Smith (Thornlie, WA), were married on December 19, 1993, at the Gosnells SDA church. John and Sheryl plan to set up their home in South Berwick, USA. Ian H Royce

Lawson—Roberts. Timothy John Lawson, son of Peter and Jane Lawson (Rockhampton, Qld), and Lisa Susan Roberts, daughter of Bruce and Sandra Roberts (Kempsey, NSW), were married on December 19, 1993, at the Springwood SDA church, Qld. Tim and Lisa will be setting up their home in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Bruce Roberts

Manners—Robb. Kenneth Manners and Diane Robb were married on December 19, 1993, at the Kadina SDA church in South Australia. Ken and Diane plan to set up their home in Tickeria. Bruce Manners

Mulholland—McGuire. Ivan Bruce Mulholland (Armidale, NSW) and Melva Rae McGuire (Wallsend) were married on December 26, 1993, at Woodlands Place, Wallsend. They will set up their home at Woodlands Place, Wallsend. Tom T Turner

Northey—Sullivan. Glen Andrew Northey, son of Brian John and Valinor Joyce Northey (Sydney, NSW), and Teena Louise Sullivan, daughter of John Edward and Helen Sullivan (Coonabarabran), were married on December 19, 1993, at Cherry Nook, Kotara. Glen and Teena plan to set up their home near Carmel College, WA. Wilfred Pascoe, Steve Wold

Reeves—Phillips. Clayton Reeves, son of Robert and Joan Reeves, and Jeneille Phillips, daughter of Martin (Mick) and Sadie Phillips, were married on December 19, 1993 at the Brighton SDA church, Adelaide, SA. Clayton and Jeneille plan to establish their home in Adelaide. George Hirst

Thomson—Thompson. Joseph Thomson, son of Joan Thomson (Cooranbong, NSW) and the late Robert Thomson, and Lisa Linn Thompson, daughter of Steven and Kristin Thompson (Cooranbong), were married on December 28, 1993, at Old Sydney Town, Somersby.

NSW. Wes and Lisa will live in Cooranbong and continue their studies at Avondale College. Arthur Patrick

Obituaries

Day, Colin Stanley, aged 64; died December 20, 1993, at Maroondah Hospital, Lilydale, Vic. A quiet, private person, he became a member of Auburn SDA church on profession of faith. He is survived by his mother, Myrtle Lowther; and sister, Sally Petty (both of Lithgow, NSW).

Mike Francis

Eustace, Les, born 1920; died December 27, 1993, and was buried in the Redlands Lawn Cemetery, Qld. Les was received into church fellowship in the Adventist Retirement Village church, Victoria Point, 18 months ago, on profession of faith and previous baptism. He is survived by his wife, Louise; daughter, Leslie Diblasio; and stepson, Paul Hemming. S A Bartlett

Langford, Elisapeta Lealofisa, born February 5, 1929, at Faleula, Western Samoa; died December 8, 1993, at Royal Brisbane Hospital, Qld, and was buried at Redcliffe Cemetery. She devoted her life to the church and was well-known for her singing and deaconess duties. Her first husband, John Taui Lessa, predeceased her. She married John Langford on December 24, 1992. She is survived by her husband; her children, John (Gold Coast), Dawson (Sydney, NSW), Temukisa (Brisbane), Eric (New Zealand) and David (Brisbane); and her six grandchildren, stepchildren, sisters and brothers and their families. T Tesese

Parmenter, Keith Samuel, born March 14, 1918; died December 16, 1993, in the Mullumbimby Hospital, NSW, and was buried in the Mullumbimby Cemetery. He served as pastor and departmental leader in the Victorian and Greater Sydney Conferences, president of North New Zealand and South Queensland Conferences, and more recently as president of the South Pacific Division until retirement. (A full report

appears on page 12.) He is survived by his wife, Heather, and sons, Glen, Vernon and Colin and their families.

K E Martin, R Taylor, L Hooper

Phillips, Carl Douglas, born December 29, 1959, at Coffs Harbour, NSW; died January 3, and was buried in the Coffs Harbour Lawn Cemetery. He is survived by his mother, Alison; and sisters, Bronwyn and Marilyn; and daughter, Eliza.

C G Allen, O R D'Costa, C O'Neill

Van Der Wall, Derek ("Digger"), born November 12, 1912, in London, UK; died December 5, 1993, at Murwillumbah, NSW. Digger came to Australia at 13 years to live on his uncle's farm at Nambucca, and took up farming and timber-felling in the Tweed district in 1935. In 1937 he married Muriel Irene ("Rene") Jeffery. He founded the Tweed Heads church in the mid-1940s and loved giving Bible studies. He is survived by his wife; and daughters, Barbara Wilson (Darwin, NT) and Brenda Searle (Brisbane, Qld).

Peter Raymer, Keith Grolimund

Advertisements

Fly'n'Build—Papua New Guinea. Volunteer carpenters, blocklayers, electricians, plumbers and handymen needed for a special fly'n'build to erect a four-classroom block at the Carr Memorial School in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, during February and March 1994. Please contact team leader, Robbie Ercig, (02) 653 1154, or Pastor Eric White, Volunteer Service Coordinator, (02) 489 7122.

Volunteer Teachers—Vietnam. ADRA Vietnam requires the services of two male volunteers to teach in the newly opened English Language Schools. Applicants should be 20 years or older, be a native English speaker and be spiritually mature. Service is for 10-12 months, commencing early 1994. Please contact your local conference Youth Department or Pastor Eric White, Volunteer Service Coordinator, (02) 489 7122.

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Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer. The Adventist Aviation Association requires the services of a Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer for our Cooranbong facility. The successful applicant would be licensed in Groups 1 and 5 Airframes and Group 1 Engines. Groups 6 and 10 Airframes and Group 3 Engines would be an advantage. Please direct inquiries to Trevor Robinson, Chairman of the Board, Avondale Aircraft Maintenance, PO Box 7, Cooranbong NSW 265. Phone (018) 64 0060, (049) 77 1475 or fax (049) 77 1205.

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Retired Workers Fellowship of Victoria. The

fellowship will meet at 11 am on Wednesday, February 23, in the Church Hall at Warburton for the first get-together and luncheon for 1994. All retirees and friends and also any interstate retirees are given a very warm welcome and invitation to attend. We will have a guest speaker and items of interest on the program for the day. The usual charge of \$3 to help defray expenses will be collected. Ladies are kindly asked to bring a plate of savouries or cakes; gentlemen, drinks.

The Victorian Adventist Book Centre advises that they now stock a select range of Sanitarium products, including *Granola* and most tinned lines. Very competitive prices. Call us on (03) 878 9833 to inquire further.

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Applications are invited for the position of Marketing Director of the Sanitarium Health Food Company. Reporting directly to the Managing Director, the successful applicant will be responsible for all aspects of the Company's sales and marketing program in Australia, New Zealand and its export activity.

Specific responsibilities will include the development and implementation of marketing strategies, management of advertising and promotional activity, achievement of sales targets, and new product development.

Candidates will need to demonstrate a strong track record in marketing, with some years of experience at a senior level. Ideally degree qualified in a commercial discipline, candidates will be expected to possess skills in strategic planning, market analysis and research, a broad range of implementation skills and proven ability in communication and presentation.

Human Resources Manager

A position exists for a senior HR professional to assume overall responsibility for the HR function at Sanitarium Health Food Company—Head Office, Sydney.

Reporting to the Managing Director, the appointee will be responsible for establishing and implementing comprehensive HR management programs in a changing environment. The key challenge will be to ensure that Sanitarium continues to develop a performance-driven culture.

As this is a senior appointment, the person we seek should have had broad exposure to both strategic and operational HR management at a senior level, possess relevant tertiary qualifications and, ideally, have experience in the manufacturing or distribution industry.

All inquiries to Eugene Grosser, Managing Director, Sanitarium Health Food Company: PO Box 249, Wahroonga NSW 2076; Telephone: (02) 487 1711; Facsimile: (02) 489 5175.

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