A group of Seventh-day Adventist pastors has returned from a month-long Bible and study tour to the Middle East. This is the largest number of pastors from the Trans-Pacific Union Mission and Papua New Guinea Union Mission to go on this annual tour in 10 years.

The group of 19, the majority of whom came from the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, visited prominent Christian sites in Turkey, Israel and Jerusalem.

“Visiting Jerusalem has been a dream come true for me,” says Pastor Aki Pawa, the district director for the Adventist Church in Central Manus, Papua New Guinea. “I couldn’t eat properly for an entire week when I first learned I would be going on the tour!”

The Island National Ministers Bible and Study Tour was organised by the Institute of Public Evangelism of the South Pacific Division. Pastors were nominated by the local missions based on their involvement in evangelistic work and commitment to sharing their experience in future evangelistic meetings.

“The study tour has brought home the reality of Jesus’ life and His ministry. I can read the Bible now and picture in my mind the places mentioned,” says Pastor Dexter Lilo, from the Western Solomon Islands Mission.

The pastors will hold meetings to share what they have seen and learned on their return home. —Melody Tan
A women’s literacy class coordinated by ADRA, near Siem Reap, Cambodia.

A n Australian man, working with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)–Cambodia, has been busy telling media outlets around the world of his family’s involvement in school hostage drama—and of his work with ADRA.

The siege, which made headlines around the world, took place at a school in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on June 16. David Cowled says he did not take too much interest when first told there may be a problem near the Siem Reap International School. “However, when a few minutes later the deputy school principal spoke to me in a somewhat urgent tone to come to the school gate and pick up my daughter, I rushed out of the office, still not knowing what the problem was,” he recalls. “A staff member told me that some robbers had gone into the school and had some kids in a classroom.

“As the school had told me to pick up my daughter Kanika, I knew she was safe.

However, when I did hold her I felt the emotions welling up inside me, and thanked God for His protection.”

Later in the day, Mr Cowled went back to the school to assist in information gathering for the Australian Embassy. “Being at the scene put things into perspective. Only then, I realised the seriousness of the situation, and how fortunate I was to be able to get Kanika,” he reflects. “I hear it all the time by others who have been in life-threatening situations how it helped them to re-evaluate life and how precious it is. Our children are precious gifts from God, and we must never take these gifts for granted. The parents of Maxim—the little two-year-old who died in the siege—are left with a lifetime of pain, and our hearts ache for them.”

Originally from Western Australia, Mr Cowled has lived in Cambodia since 1997. He has married a Cambodian, Kheann, and they have three children—of which six-year-old Kanika is eldest. Mr Cowled’s work with ADRA involves overseeing three development projects. “My role is to train Cambodia staff to implement the projects and assist in developing strategic plans for future projects based on the needs in rural communities,” he explains.

“ADRA’s three projects in this area are funded by governments of Australia, Canada and Germany. They range from water and sanitation installations to improving food production, women’s literacy and micro-credit. Overall, an integrated approach to development in rural communities.”

Mr Cowled says he enjoys working in Cambodia and read The Westfeld Australian on June 18 that this experience has not dented his enthusiasm for working to improve the lives of Cambodians. “In the eight years I have been here, not once have I felt insecure, even though when I first came there was still fighting between the government forces and the last remnants of the Khmer Rouge,” he says. “ADRA was one of the first non-government organisations to enter the former Khmer Rouge strongholds and assist the poor to improve their livelihoods. This area is still one of the poorest areas in Cambodia. Because of the poverty, there are always the small criminal activities that take place. However the events of Thursday 16 June were extremely out of the ordinary.”

As an Australian in the middle of a world headline story, Mr Cowled spent the following day doing as many as 20 media interviews. “An unexpected spin-off occurred,” he reports. “I received emails from people all over the world whom I had met at some time and who were concerned for our family’s safety. Fortunately this was an isolated incident and I have not even slightly thought about leaving Cambodia,” says Mr Cowled. “Siem Reap is still a safe place to be. Of course as a family we will review areas in our daily routines that could be made more secure and we will implement these measures as a precaution. However our main defence will always be our faith and trust for God’s continued protection. Every day is a gift from God; live it to make this world a better place.”—Nathan Brown

Six-year-old Kanika Cowled is a student at the Siem Reap International School in Cambodia, scene of the recent hostage drama.
TPUM conference for principals

HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Close to 60 primary and secondary school principals from Adventist-run schools from the Eastern Solomon Islands Mission and Malaita Mission recently completed a three-day training course that focused on maintaining Christian values in education.

The three-day training course was held at Betikama College from June 10 to 12, and was one of several such conferences the Trans-Pacific Union Mission (TPUM) has held to improve principals’ effectiveness within the TPUM education system.

According to the associate education director of the Honiara branch of the TPUM, Pastor Titus Rore, the conference was the first of its kind to be held in the Solomons and has been beneficial for those who attended.

Ken Weslake, associate education director for the South Pacific Division, and David McClintock, Tweed Valley College Bible teacher, were presenters at the conference, and they covered topics in workshops relating to education policies, school structures, strategic planning, teamwork and how to manage students and staff.

“We went into a number of things that help us to identify some of the special characteristics of mission schools so they can be distinguished from other schools,” says Deddy Masaca, Betikama College principal.

“This conference was designed to improve the standard of education to an expected level. The main idea is to lift the standard of mission schools, and this training really helped to give directions,” he says.

Principals are encouraged to travel to see other schools, and further conferences are planned for principals of schools in the TPUM, as well as conferences for Bible teachers.—Adele Nash/Solomon Star

New Edge web site launched

WARBURTON, VICTORIA

After many years of slow-loading pages and a lack of archival ability, a new Edge web site was launched to coincide with the release of the 50th issue of the magazine last month.

Adele Nash, editor of the Edge, says, “It’s exciting to have a new web site that we can do so much more with. Now all of the magazine’s content is available online, along with a lot of bonuses that can be accessed via the site.

“I’m glad we’re able to offer readers so much more of the Edge online, and hopefully we’ll be able to reach others through the site who otherwise wouldn’t get to see the magazine,” she adds.

Scott Wegener, online editor and web developer, says, “We’ve taken a risk with the new look Edge site. We’ve moved away from the stereotypical corporate layout and come up with something that provides an opportunity for exploration.”

Features of the web site include forums, polls and an Edge “blog.”—Recono staff

Inquiries changed every 12-18 months. Inquiries have already been received from the ads, which are planned to be changed every 12-18 months.—Focus

More than 1700 visitors came to the fifth biennial World Environment Weekend held at Fern Tree Gully (FTG), Vic, church on June 4 and 5. With the church cancelling its traditional Sabbath routine, Andrew Wegener’s Australian Wildlife Lectures, the Wildlife Observer’s Club, and FTG church members presented an Australian nature display that included many preserved animals, live reptiles and minibeasts, craft activities and refreshments. Along with all of the smiling faces and positive feedback, more than 30 contacts were gained for follow-up lifestyle seminars.—Elayne Stanford

Full-colour student photos and contact details have been added to the back of Brisbane Adventist College’s (BAC) school buses. “Total cost for advertising on eight buses is less than the additional income generated from one secondary student,” says Gavin Williams, principal of BAC. “It makes financial sense to have our buses as moving ads.” Inquiries have already been received from the ads, which are planned to be changed every 12-18 months.—Focus

Independence Day celebrations, during which the Pathfinders marched. The Pathfinders’ community-service rubbish-collection efforts that week, along the downtown Apia esplanade, were published in three newspapers and broadcast on Radio.—Levi Mote

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Adventist youth organisation gets fund boost from Oprah Winfrey

WASHINGTON, DC, USA

Talk-show host Oprah Winfrey jump-started fundraising at the fourth annual “Power of a dream” gala held on May 24 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC, by presenting a cheque for $US1 million to Adventist pastor, musician and US Dream Academy president Pastor Wintley Phipps. Winfrey was the keynote speaker for the event, during which more than $US1.8 million was raised for the academy.

Ms Winfrey spoke about the importance of helping others through sharing of time, talents and resources. She told the crowd that everyone cannot be famous but all can be great when serving and investing in others.

“Oprah understands the power of dreams, and how having them can positively alter a person’s journey,” said Pastor Phipps. “We were thrilled and honoured to have her spend the evening with us, and be great when serving and investing in others.

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Aquaints visitors to rate its friendliness, the Manoocbyrone, QLD, church found the lowest rating was as high as 9 out of 10. A key reason for this is thought to be because of a church directory, with names, photos and addresses of members that has been created by a team led by David McDougall (pictured). Because members can recognise who the regular attendees are, they are more likely to be able to spot visitors and befriend them.

When the Avondale College classroom that accommodated the Cooranbong Valley Community Preschool was no longer available, the 23-year-old preschool was facing imminent closure. The preschool committee approached the Cooranbong Community Services Centre, the local ADRA Op-Shop, for help. The centre board managed to get a $A400,000 project, funded by the op-shop and personal donations, under way.

After hours of volunteers’ time developing the complex, a festive opening was held on May 15.— Tim Garle

Pastor Daniel Teta went to Pori, near Koroba, Southern Highlands Province, PNG, and set up a micro-phone and speakers and began to preach. With his voice carrying through the valley, people came out of their homes to listen to Pastor Teta. After the week of preaching on health and the Bible, some 25 candidates were baptised.

More @ www.sah.org.au
Emergency!

BRUNA TAWAKE, NSW

Thank you for your call to do something about social justice issues, such as HIV/AIDS in the South Pacific (“This is an emergency!” Editorial, June 18).

To your numbers, I wish to add a few more:
- The life expectancy of indigenous Australians is 20 years less than other Australians, similar to that of Bangladesh, yet Australia is 10 times richer.
- About a quarter of a million Australian job seekers have not had substantial work for a year or more.
- About half a million families have no members in paid work.
- Each night about 100 families cannot find places of refuge.
- Australia’s overseas aid has fallen to about one-third of the agreed international benchmark.
- An estimated 27 million people are enslaved worldwide. For some it begins as young as four years of age. The most widespread form of slavery is bonded labour—some 20 million (1999). The US Government estimates between 700,000 and two million women and children are trafficked across borders each year. More than 80 million children worldwide under 14 work in conditions dangerous to their health.

HIV/AIDS in the South Pacific, poverty in Australia, slavery, global warming—social justice issues abound. We might not be able to address them all at once, but let’s pick one and give it a try. And let’s do so soon. Jesus wants us to. And I want to belong to a church that not only knows and experiences hope but also shares it in a practical sense.

NIGEL BROWN, SA

As a former Adventist member, I applaud the June 18 editorial. Even in this country, the vulnerable are gradually being left behind. Is it not our Christian obligation to look beyond the six o’clock news and our financial interests to consider how our choices affect “the very least of these”? As Christians, I believe we are responsible for the actions of our leaders and we are responsible for being a voice for the voiceless.

We are responsible for being a voice for the voiceless.

Offerings loss

HELEN BARKER, QLD

May I suggest a reason for the decline in mission giving at camps (News, June 11): No feedback!

At a recent camp-meeting I asked the conference secretary the total of the mission offering that afternoon. I was told it was confidential and not released as a matter of policy—it was a “security” issue. I’m sure people would like to know what is given at the time. It’s a bit late telling us six years down the track!

No celebration

COLIN JOB, VIC

The editorial “Pride of death” (June 4) is incorrect in describing Anzac Day as a “celebration.” Left-wing politics criticises such remembrance days by calling them a glorification of murder and senseless slaughter. Anzac Day isn’t a celebration. Rather, it’s a commemoration remembering the fallen who never came back (hence the saying, “Lest we forget”), a giving of thanks to God for the safe return of those marching, and for the peace that rules in our countries.

Denigrating Anzac Day with terms like “celebration” and “pride” shows ugly ingratitude to the RSL and the extended families of people who defended and died to keep our countries peaceful and free.

There is such a thing as a just war. The writer should realise there was a war in heaven to keep it free too.
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Whit, Marion Rose (known as Maria), born 28.10.1941 at Wellington, NSW; died 13.6.05 in Biggenden Hospital, Qld. Maria was bubbly, warmhearted and loyal much loved by her husband, Bill, also by her children, Lindsey and Nancy. Both her family and her church family miss her. "We will see you in the morning, Maria." Bruce Barlow, Erin Wayne

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Help needed for Adventist member—Ypeen, Qld. Due to a house fire that made the home inhabitable, repairs are estimated to cost approximately $45,000. An appeal is being conducted by the Ypeen SDA church. Email Ken Simpson—ypprojectcomputedora; phone (07) 4195 1466. If you are able to help please deposit into the designated Appeal Account: BSB 044- 2101; account number 55999; Yeppoon Bank, Yeppoon, Qld. Thank you.

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7th Annual Sacred Concerts—Salubrit, July 23, 2005, 5:00 pm Parramatta church, Homestead Road, 8:00 pm Knox Grammar School, Pacific Highway, Wahroonga. Featuring: Vh. Melczewski, Susan Yares ( soprano), Sandra Entermann (solo piano). Accompanied by Ben Mold (cello), Dallas Wills (harmonica). Graham Fletcher (marimba), Parramatta Choir, Rose Gallery Choir, Chant photo/organ/sax, photos by Adron. RSVP to ADRA. Knox tickets—phone (02) 9623 4235.

Obituaries

Browning, Leslie Claude (known as Claude), born 26.1.1927 at Greelford, NSW; died 28.5.05 at Port Macquarie. He was pre- deceased by his first wife, Vera (nee Browning), on 16.5.61. Following his graduation that same year from the University of Queensland, he came to Australia as a refugee, and while attending the Springvale Spanish church he was a teacher for 50 years. He was a sincere, father, and was highly regarded as an officer in St John Ambulance.

Liggett, Evelyn Fay, born 24.12.1946 in Auckland, NZ; died suddenly 8.5.05 at Hollywood Medical Centre, Adelaide. On 15.8.44 he married Midge, who professional him as 241181. He was also predeceased by his daughter, Elizabeth Green, on 19.1.51. On 10.8.56 he married Marion Hekelboom. He is survived by his wife (Napier), Hekelboom, and his daughter, Debbie (Green), to his four marriages, Judith Denes (Miplisun), Malcolm (Parr, WA) and Jennifer (Ytung, Creek, NSW). All was a faithful member and leader of the Tooperang church for many years. He will be sadly missed.

Cable, Kevin John, born 22.5.1929 at Niddrie, WA; died 6.6.05 at Hollywood Medical Centre, Sydney. Kevin was predeceased by his first wife, Vera (nee Browning), on 16.5.61. Following his graduation that same year from the University of Queensland, he came to Australia as a refugee, and while attending the Springvale Spanish church he was a teacher for 50 years. He was a sincere, father, and was highly regarded as an officer in St John Ambulance.

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Positions vacant

Lower Primary Teacher—SDA Schools Victoria Ltd is urgently seeking a Grade 1–2 Teacher for a six-month contract, to teach at Henderson College, Mildura, commencing immediately. For further information interested teachers should contact Lyndon Chapman, Education Director, on 0414 159 255; or Sandra Ferra, Principal, Henderson College, on 0427 374 936; or Henderson College, on (03) 5023 5110; email: principal@henderson-college.com.au.

Human Resources Manager—Avondale College (Coomabong, NSW) is seeking an experienced Human Resources Manager to administer workplace relations and procedures at the organisation. This three-year term is renewable by mutual agreement. The position description and selection criteria may be obtained at: <www.avondale.edu.au>. Applications in writing (including a CV and the names and contact details of at least three referees) should be forwarded to Sonya Muhl, Human Resources, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Coomabong NSW 2265; email: s.muhl@avondale.edu.au; phone: (02) 4986 2296; or fax: (02) 4980 2260. Applications close July 25, 2005.

Short-term winter staff—Adventist Alpine Village (Jindabyne, NSW), an Adventist accommodation and conference facility, has vacancies for short-term winter staff to assist in the winter ski season from late July to early September 2005. For further information please visit the Positions Vacant section of the SPD web site at <www.adventist.org.au/employment>. Applications close July 15, 2005.

Teachers—SDA Schools South Australia Ltd is seeking expressions of interest for dedicated and competent Teachers to join the Prescott team in their dynamic and growing school system. Have you ever thought of moving to Adelaide some time in the future? For further information please contact Marion Shields, Education Director, on 0419 811 817; or email: m.shields@avondale.org.au. A secondary IT specialist would be especially welcome!

For church-related employment opportunities visit the Employment section on the SPD web site: <www.adventist.org.au>.

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Duty makes us do things well, but love makes us do them beautifully.—Philip Brooks

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