University students from around Australia and New Zealand met at the Crosslands Convention Centre in Sydney for the annual Adventist Students Association (ASA) Convention, which was held during the week of July 11 to 17. This event provided an opportunity for ASA members to focus on spiritual growth and to enjoy fellowship with other Adventist students.

The convention also provided ASA with an opportunity to determine the future direction of the association with the election of a new executive team. They also examined the achievements of ASA in the past year and made plans for the future. Dr Sven Ostring, who was re-elected as president of ASA, says, “The vision of ASA has been rapidly expanding, from being content as a social group to striving to be a strongly mission-focused organisation that seeks to reach out to high school students, and universities around Australia and New Zealand with no Adventist presence, and by organising mission trips to international university campuses in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe.” To reflect this new drive, four new positions were created within the ASA executive team. These positions are missions director, Year 12 survival pack coordinator, Year 12 survival pack adviser and careers development adviser.
But... having all this knowledge, we still slip up in full view of our Judge.

The Big Brother disgrace

ike it or not, millions have been watching the day-to-day antics in the months past. Though knowing full well that nothing is hidden, it's been noticeable how easy it has been for people to forget (or not even care) that everything is heard, seen and recorded—even in the dark! After months of drawn-out viewing, the finale comes, with a huge prize for the winner. For whoever wins, after such a long time of being scrutinised, and after every task and personal conflict that's gone on during this time, you cannot deny what a courageous effort it will have been to make it all the way to the end. It must also be nice to finally go home after such a long time in confinement.

But will the whole ordeal have been worth it? One thing is sure, it will have been life changing!

And come to think of it, what I just said sounds just like that controversial TV show Big Brother.

It defies logic to think we humans still continue on “sinning,” all the while knowing that God, who ultimately makes the decision of who can and can’t receive eternal life, is watching every action we take.

We know what is right and what is wrong. We know the rules that God provided for our best living. We know what pleases and upsets God. We know He watches every move we make. But our human weakness is shown when, having all this knowledge, we still slip up in full view of our Judge, time and again.

And there’s another dimension to this constant surveillance: not only are our actions being observed and our words monitored, but even our thoughts are being read. So for those who think they can steer clear of physically committing a “noteworthy” and observable sin, this is where you’ll come undone.

It certainly doesn’t take much to think a sinful thought. Many times we don’t even notice how our thoughts are sinful. Pride, judging, desire, hate and curses can run straight through our thought process in an instant.

One tiny thought and ta-da—your’re nominated for eviction from heaven even before you get a glimpse of glory.

What a disgrace we must be to our God! The things we think and do in blatant full view of our Creator.

One day, after reading Matthew 28:20—"Surely I am with you, always, to the very end of the age"—I mused to myself, ‘Is this a promise, Lord, or a threat? Sure, we want protection 24/7. But to gain protection means surveillance 24/7 too. We simply can’t get away from it. It defies logic to think we humans still continue on “sinning.”'

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What if the Lord came walking your way as you were in the midst of sinning? I can imagine feeling embarrassed, apologetic and defensive, trying to shift the blame. I’d certainly rather hide and not be noticed. But the point is there is no hiding place. There is nowhere to run. Nothing we do is in secret.

But beyond seeing our actions and thoughts, God goes a step further. He looks as deep as is possible into our personal lives—past our superficial actions and words, in past our thoughts, and delves straight into our hearts. Thankfully, this is where we finally start to look good in God’s eyes.

In our hearts, He sees our intentions—what it is that’s going on in our hearts that drives our actions. He sees our heart’s remorse over the sins we carry out again and again. He sees that our hearts long to be made new. He sees that our hearts are crying out to be home with Him.

It is the intentions of our hearts that override any of our sinful thoughts and actions for which we feel remorse. In our judgment, good and bad deeds are put aside and good and bad thoughts are put aside. It’s the good and bad hearts that are dealt with, a job no human could ever accurately judge.

(remember, a good heart always brings good deeds, but good deeds don’t always mean a good heart.)

Basically, the scrutiny of our entire lives comes down to our heart’s feelings for God, and nothing else. If this is what God sees in us, even as He sees us stumble, then we actually have a chance of winning.

Scott Wegener
Ella Simmons, was elected to be a vice-president for the first time, a woman, Dr. Rosa Banks, director of Human Relations for the North American Division, was elected associate secretary for the GC. “That should have happened a long time ago,” said Dr Peter Landless, associate director in the Health Ministries Department. But, he explained, including women in leadership “is easier said than done. Cultural issues around the world often prevent that. In some places women are still repressed, sadly even within the culture of the church.”

“We are more open to women in leadership and need to be,” said Pastor James Cress, secretary of the church’s Ministerial Association. Including more women in leadership, he says, “is the first major step in the past 12 years.”

Some said the church must start opening its ranks to younger people. Reports state that 70 per cent of the church is young, especially in places like Africa, South America, Inter-America and the South Pacific. Baraka Muganda, Youth Ministries director for the GC, does not believe church leadership is trying very hard to include more young people.

“The make-up of the church is youth and the church is not reflecting that in all its decision-making,” said Muganda. “Youth still feel they are not part of the church. We’ve got to empower them! The church is not doing that. I am sure if we had more youth at this past session, we would have made some very different decisions.”

What is the church’s most pressing challenge? Reaching out to the world in non-traditional ways and meeting the needs of a very international community in the pews, the leaders said. Issues include the HIV/AIDS pandemic in countries such as Africa and Papua New Guinea, caring for and ministering to those of other faiths and reaching the postmodern population.

However, they agreed that the church is reacting positively to these changes. Ted Wilson, general vice-president of the GC, said, “The church itself isn’t successful because of individuals from different areas, but because of the Holy Spirit. That is the one constant—not the administration, not policies or Bible-study lessons. These all help, but what doesn’t change is our reason for being here.”

—Taashi Rowe/ANN

**Church leaders reflect on challenges and changes facing Adventist Church**

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, USA

Following the General Conference (GC) session meetings last month, leaders of the Adventist Church have looked at the changes and challenges that are likely to occur for the church over the five-year period until the next GC session in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

In a random survey by the Adventist News Network following the GC, several church leaders spoke of what they considered to be the most important change in the church in the past five years, as well as what lies ahead. All agreed the church is highly adaptable, but at the same time still committed to the fundamental beliefs that define it.

The most important change, some said, was the church’s renewed emphasis on reaching out to those in countries not friendly to Christianity, others said it was its use of technology; and still others said it was the make-up of the church itself. But almost everyone agreed that including greater numbers of women leaders in the top tiers of the church is one of the most important.

For the first time, a woman, Dr. Ella Simmons, was elected to be a vice-president for the world church. Veteran Global Mission coordinator Daisy Orion was elected an associate treasurer of the world church, while Dr Rosa Banks, director of Human Relations for the North American Division, was elected associate secretary for the GC.

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—Taashi Rowe/ANN
Church members to shape future direction of church

WAAROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

or the first time, Adventist church members in the South Pacific Division (SPD) will be able to participate in an interactive forum that will influence the future direction of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific.

The SPD has designed a specific web site, <http://adventist.org.au/spdsession>, to coincide with the 13th South Pacific Division (SPD) session to be held in Melbourne from August 30 to September 3, 2005.

Members can go to this web site and will be able to speak about subjects that may shape the future of the church.

“The forum page is probably the most exciting feature of the session web site,” says Peter Brewin, associate general secretary of the SPD. “It offers church members the opportunity to provide feedback on a variety of topics that may help as church leaders formulate strategic plans for the next five years.”

Visitors to the web site before August 30 will also be able to read a historical overview of sessions the church has held since its beginnings in Australia in 1885, as well as further information on the SPD session exhibition.

Delegates to the session will also be able to obtain helpful information as they prepare to attend the session.

“We will update the news and photos section of the web site daily when the sessions commences,” says Jeanelle Isaacs, the SPD’s electronic media assistant. “Visitors can read about the officers elected and the decisions made during the session.”

—Melody Tan

More about the SPD session @ http://adventist.org.au/spdsession

Noosa CC growth continues

COOROY, QUEENSLAND

The Australian flag flares proudly from the flagpole not far from the new classrooms of Noosa Christian College, Queensland. The new gates do much more than just welcome 120 students and their families as they pass through them every morning—they symbolise the growth the fledgling Adventist school has experienced.

Since opening in 2003, the school has increased its numbers by more than 220 per cent. Principal Ross Reed says he is humbled by the response of the Cooroy community to the growth and support of the school. “The prep enrolment is exceeding all our expectations,” he says. “We have already filled one class for 2006, with only 12 places left in a second class. The school has a wonderful ‘try-before-you-buy’ way of introducing prospective students and their parents to the school. The kids can sit in on a day’s classes, to see how they feel about their possible new school. They are usually so keen by the end of the day they don’t want to leave.”

A number of building projects are planned for the coming year to help with the expansion of the school and development of the high school—Cherie Harrop
Northpine students help Fijian primary school

DAKABIN, QUEENSLAND

As a result of two fundraising events held by the Northpine Christian College (NCC), students collected $A4000 to go toward helping the Suva District Primary School, which has a number of desperate needs, including the repair of the school’s roof. The 358 NCC students and 10 teachers paid for the privilege of wearing “casual dress” on a day of school, as well as a “gold coin” donation day. These helped to get them close to their $A5000 aim. Volunteers in Action then contributed a further $A1000 to make up the difference.

The re-roofing has now been completed and Joeli Nukunawa Dziak of the school there says, “We are grateful to Northpine Christian College and Volunteers in Action for their assistance in improving the condition of our school.”

Each year the Student’s Representative Council (SRC) and the school works to raise funds for their college, but in the second half of 2004, the SRC voted to support the school in Fiji to ensure that the students there have facilities and equipment to help with their education. — Katy Bidmead

ASA elects new executive team

(Continued from page 1)

The full ASA executive team that was elected at convention 2005 is:

President: Sven Ostring
Vice-president: Matthew Hunter
Treasurer: David Vincent
Secretary: Lauren Norman
Missions director: Matthew Hunter
Careers development adviser: Leighton Cantrill
Graduate adviser: Philip Rodionoff
Symposium convenors: Wendy Sexton and Mazda Sexton
Graduate Year 12 survival packs adviser: Kylie Ward
Symposium convenors: Sven Ostring, Krysalis Rae Brooks and Philip Rodionoff
Year 12 survival packs coordinator: Lauren Norman
Careers development adviser: Leighton Cantrill
Graduate adviser: Philip Rodionoff

The newly elected executive decided to meet in August for building the team spiritually and to lay out a road map for ASA into the future, a journey that will include a UNICO trip to the University of New England in Armidale, an international UNICO mission trip to Zhejiang University in China, and a major ASA leadership training event to be held on the Gold Coast in February 2006.

“Church leaders who are involved in student ministry in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand and establishing the ASA Foundation for the financial support of a larger university student ministry.”— Adele Nash

ASA members having fun at the fancy dress night held at the ASA convention

Balloon Club to experience training in an adult environment, learning life and social skills and building self-esteem while having fun. Students learn how to crew a hot-air balloon over five sessions. The school is also hoping to “buddy” each student with an adult mentor with the hope that contact will be maintained after the event in order to continue to grow resiliency. — Intrain

At the request of the Ministry of Public Health of Yemen, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency is heading a campaign aimed at eradicating polio in Yemen. The project will vaccinate approximately 80,000 children under the age of five and is also meant to stop an ongoing polio outbreak that began in late February, affecting approximately 179 children. Teams deployed by the ministry will complete the vaccination, going house to house to vaccinate the children in the community. The $US70,000 project is funded by USAID. — Nicole McGill

On June 25, young people and families from a number of churches in both the North and South England Conferences came together at the Leamington Spa for a day of worship and fellowship, focusing on contemporary Christian music. Robert Glinton, elder of the Leamington Spa church and principal organiser of the day, says, “Initially we had just planned to invite our friends from St Albans. However, there was a lot of interest, so we opened it up to the wider public.” Both the Leamington and St Albans churches have worship bands. Says 12-year-old Emily, “The music is really good because it includes the youth.” An evening concert opened with the doxology on guitar. — BUC News

YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE TO SIGNS @ WWW.SIGNSOFTHETIMES.ORG.AU

August 6, 2005
Church helps local community clean up

KAROONDA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Recovering in the aftermath of a mini-tornado, the South Australian town of Karoonda was grateful to receive help from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The small farming community in South Australia, some 56 kilometres east of Murray Bridge, was devastated by a mini-tornado on June 10 and declared an official disaster area by the South Australian Government.

Director of ADRA services in South Australia, Garry McIver, presented the cheque to the Karoonda Storm Recovery Committee, saying, “We are more than happy to respond, with financial support, to the Government’s declaration of Karoonda as a disaster area.”

Committee Chairman, Vince Monterola, says, “This small community has suffered tremendous damage. It is encouraging for us to see an organisation the size of the Adventist Church supporting our community in this way.”

The contribution will become part of a larger pool of funds set aside to help rebuild destroyed and damaged buildings in Karoonda. Pastor Robert Porter, of the Riverland and Copleville churches, says, “This cheque represents the gifts of members of the church and the local community that give annually to ADRA.”

“This community is overwhelmed,” says Kevin Burdett, Mayor for the Karoonda East Murray District Council. “We most graciously receive this assistance from the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

“The community is overwhelmed,” says Kevin Burdett, Mayor for the Karoonda East Murray District Council. “We most graciously receive this assistance from the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

“...and a web site. Launched in 1999, the GodSpeaks campaign had an enhanced concept behind it, the latest nondenominational campaign has an enhanced interactive web site that provides more information to those seeking to entertain and inspire motorists, including ‘As my apprentice, you’re never fired’ and, ‘Life is short, eternity isn’t.’ With the same anonymous sponsor behind it, the latest nondenominational campaign has an enhanced interactive web site that provides more information to those seeking to know more about God and the messages.” —Charisma News Service

More @ www.GodSpeaks.com
Youth host “exciting” regional in Esperance

ESPERANCE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Esperance Adventist church’s normal youth numbers of around 15 were boosted to over 100 for a recent youth regional, held on the weekend of July 15 and 16.

The program started with vespers on Friday night, when Jo Darby, the guest speaker from New South Wales, spoke on the subjects of celebrations and heaven.

She then led out in a sharing time when people spoke about things that made them feel blessed. On Saturday, the youth were treated to music from the Carmel College band and were encouraged by Mrs Darby, who gave an inspiring message on heaven and what it will be like.

People came to the church from Perth, the surrounding areas and locally. Among those attending were 25 youth from the Esperance Adventist church who had never attended an Adventist event before.

In addition to the meetings that were held, there was a church lunch and a bonfire for the youth on the Saturday night.

Esperance church minister Pastor David Whiteley is excited by the passion shown by the youth in Esperance. “The church would be lost without the youth,” he says. “They are making such a large-scale impact with their drive and enthusiasm.”

Jonno Lis, the youth leader at Esperance, says, “The reason we held the regional was to promote some form of unity among Christian youth in Esperance. Adventist youth are left out a bit, because a lot of people just don’t understand what Seventh-day Adventism is about, and they think we’re weird!”

He adds, “We also wanted to subtly approach the concept of heaven and its focus as our main purpose—that’s really what we’re doing as Christians—heading to heaven and getting as many people to join us as possible.”

The success of the program will be followed up by a number of the Esperance youth starting weekly cell-group meetings in their homes with friends who don’t attend church—Adele Nash

STORM Co trips take country by storm

NEWCASTLE, NEW SOUTH WALES

July was a good month to be a part of Service To Others Really Matters (STORM) Co, with a number of teams going out around Australia to provide holiday entertainment and education for children in rural communities.

In the North New South Wales (NNSW) Conference, 271 youth in 14 STORM Co groups went out to various rural communities, including Tumbarumba, Brewarrina, Gwabegar and Narrabri. One group went as far as Arnhem Land, where Adventists have had little or no impact.

Although it is usually difficult to obtain a permit to visit the area, the local town of Maningrida supported them and helped to get the STORM Co team there, including chartering a 21-seat plane to fly the team from Darwin. The local group has no church, but welcomed the group warmly and the Kids Club activities were attended by more than 60 children each day.

The team has been invited to return next year.

“STORM Co continues to impact the community and youth of our conference,” says Pastor Jeff Parker, co-director of NNSW youth ministries with Pastor Bevan Craig. “Some communities like Tumbarumba, on the New South Wales–Queensland border, have had a STORM Co group for nine years, and we have seen a positive change.”

Western Australia also saw three STORM Co groups. The Meekathara STORM Co group, headed up by a group of 24 people who looked after more than 70 children each day and entertained them with singalongs, quizzes, object lessons, clowns, puppets, craft and “happy snaps,” where they took “fun” photos.

The Meekathara team noted a number of changes to the town since their last visit, including a reduction in the amount of graffiti found around the town. “Over the past few years, we have been painting over graffiti,” Ms Hiscox says. “But this year we noticed something unusual—we were running out of fences to paint. It seems as though the locals don’t grafitti over what we have painted, and so we seem to have gotten rid of the majority of the graffiti.

We believe this is a good sign, and perhaps reflects the positive spirit we are trying to bring to the town.”

Another unexpected surprise was a plaque presented to the STORM Co team by the Meekathara Shire CEO. On it is the inscription: “To STORM Co. In appreciation of your service to the Meekathara community.”

“We were blown away by this—we would never have expected it,” says Ms Hiscox. “We could never have done it without God.”—Adéle Nash
EVERY FIVE YEARS, TWO LETTERS evoke awe, glee, resentment and, at times, strike fear, in the hearts of many Seventh-day Adventists. Two letters that every five years are plastered on church noticeboards and bandied around in post-service conversations. Two letters that, well, I knew nothing about until June 29 this year.

GC!

Friends gathered, business suits were donned and behind the scenes of the quinquennial General Conference session, as I discovered, papers flew. From press level six of the Edward Jones Dome, St Louis, Missouri, I observed the deliberations of delegates “on the floor”; the questions, opinions and, at times, angst of those who will determine the direction our church.

Ultimately we are God’s children, and ultimately the work of God was completed.

The formalities seemed alien to me. No longer was church about three hymns and a sermon or the smiling lady greeting visitors at the door. Rather, church was business, God’s business.

Whether it was the re-election of Jan Paulsen as leader or the—what some may call trivial—amendments to the constitution and by-laws, there was never a moment when I doubted the spirituality of our leaders. As every day passed, I became more and more convinced that while our church faces problems, it is a Spirit-led church. Sure, to my young mind, things did move slowly, but then, the delegates all seemed to be older than me.

Unfortunately, there were instances when patriotism were forgotten, times when volunteers were confronted by irate delegates, staff treated impolitely, and ego put ahead of others. Whether because of cultural misunderstandings, stress-related reactions or disgruntled for good reason, the fact was our humanity sometimes prevailed. But ultimately we are God’s children, and ultimately the work of God was completed.

Outside of the formalities, St Louis played a wonderful host. The mid-South city turned on hot, but beautiful weather for all but a few hours of July 4, when we were treated to a display of the power of a summer storm. As the sun glinted off the Gateway Arch, a monument to the city’s tag “The gateway to the west,” we gathered together with the natives to celebrate Independence Day, celebrating the creation of a new American nation.

In much the same way the gathering of the Seventh-day Adventist family celebrated a renewed identity. While our leadership—both heavenly and earthly—may be the same, decisions were made that will have an impact on the face and future of the church.

Although distanced from the decision-making floor by five storeys, I have gained a new and intimate knowledge of the church. No longer was the fact that I belonged to the Seventh-day Adventist Church a mere alliance with a local community; it was a global one. I realised that we may be Nigerian, Serbian or Australian; we may be a division president, an educator or a newsroom gofer, but each of us is a part of God’s church and each has an important role to play.
Jesus, I know how You feel!

It is just five minutes from the school on the morning run for the red, white and blue 62-seat Mercedes school bus. The passengers are behaving well, the engine is purring, and the warmth of the Queensland winter sun is streaming through my window.

Two kilometres ahead, the left lane will congest with commuters entering the freeway, and another couple of hundred past that I need to make a right turn. For that reason I usually move over here where the traffic is more spread out. A check of the mirrors and a sideways glance reveals a clear passage for a considerable distance, so down with the indicator stick and I began to cross the broken white line.

Beep! Screeeeech! And there emerging from a blind spot a low-slung red Mazda sports car with its sunroof open. Quickly I draw back left, avoiding an exchange of paint.

The lights ahead change to red, the colour of my face. As I stop the red Mazda pulls alongside. I salute the driver and mouth a “thank you” for avoiding contact, but my conciliatory words and friendly gestures fail to penetrate the barrier of abuse and defensiveness.

I realised.

I asked God.

I wonder if I sometimes see what others might think of me? Don’t You know what I am going through?

By Anthony Whyatt

When, the next morning, he went on talkback radio repeating his garrulous claims... I was deeply disturbed.

When, the next morning, he went on talkback radio repeating his garrulous claim to the whole city, I was deeply disturbed. Continually my mind was agonising over the incident. I was concerned that people would be thinking ill of me. I was concerned that some people might actually believe my accuser.

I wondered where the other people I share the road with were, who might defend me. Why aren’t they coming to my defence? I asked God. Why did You allow this to happen to me? Don’t You know what I am going through?

Then the penny dropped. You do know what I’m going through, I realised.

Jesus stood before the angry mob accused of things He hadn’t done. He was taken to Annas, who was also the father-in-law of Caiphas the high priest, but neither wanted to be bothered with Him, so he referred Jesus to Pilate. Pilate didn’t want to inflame the situation, so he avoided defending Jesus even though he found no fault in Him. The disciples, and others who had travelled life’s journey with Jesus every day, also failed to come to His defence, and Jesus, when confronted, stood in silence and shouldered responsibility for the sins of the whole human race alone.

Jesus, I know how You feel! But more importantly, Jesus, because You have been here and done that, You know how I feel!

Anthony Whyatt writes from Brisbane, where he still drives the school bus.
Courage:Connect

BY LEE DUNSTAN

The words above are succinctly defined on the poster. That’s the one in your foyer noticeboard. Or the one on the back page of last week’s RECORD. And if you didn’t see that either, it’s the one highlighting Signs 2005 promotional campaign, which kicked off on July 30.

As a slogan, Courage:Connect may appear too abstract, but it is short and memorable. However, what does it mean?

Searching for a theme/slogan that embodied as a slogan, we threw words and slogans onto a whiteboard. Of the dozen or so that stuck, “Courage:Connect” remained glued, resisting all effort to erase it (metaphorically, that is).

“But does anyone know what it means?” We looked vacantly at each other. “We’ll think about it!”

The Courage:Connect concept grew out of the “Circle of courage” cycle tour across Australia. Signs had been a sponsor, and riders gave out Signs in towns along the way. The dictionary definitions of courage and connect on the poster are verbatim and, serendipitously, embody what Signs ministry is about. Signs ministry is about people courageously investing their personal and church resources in expensive projects. Signs ministry is also a long-term commitment. It takes nerve to sponsor Signs to someone for 30 years without any observable result.

But at the recent Christian Resource Exhibition in Sydney, while handing out Signs, I spoke with a man who’d received sponsored Signs for just that long. Being of a differing persuasion, he wouldn’t pay for it himself—that wouldn’t be dialog— but he was happy to receive and read it.

Courage:Connect. What’s it mean? I asked the promotion team what they thought.

Adèle Nash, who edits Edge, says to her it’s “about being a part of something greater than ourselves—connecting with others and the world around us to make a difference—and to be brave enough to let God lead us in new directions.”

Scott Wegen, Signs web-site editor, says, “Connecting with people is what we’re all about. It’s our mission. Jesus could have said ‘Go and connect with all nations’ [Matthew 28:19]. It’s our purpose to connect.

“But is it easy? Often, no! Connecting with people involves risk. It takes our ‘valuable’ time; it dents our pride and even drains our purse. It takes courage to look beyond these risks and step out of our comfort zone. We want courageous people. Where there’s courage, connections are made.”

Ray Portbury, Signs production manager, says to him “Courage:Connect means to reach out to people in the way of helping them to see a better way to live the lifestyle they presently enjoy.”

But at ground level (that’s where the rubber meets the road), what does it really mean?

Mike is elder of a small church with fewer than 10 regularly attending members. His church pastor, who cares for a number of churches, got him into a Signs round last year, showing him how to reach out with friendship and, as he told him, “let the Signs magazine give the gospel message.”

That’s what Mike did. He says it was an approach that made connecting so easy.

“When I go on my Signs round, I’m simply visiting friends!” he told me. One is a single and lonely man.

“When I visited, he’d been drinking. When I knocked on his door, he told me, ‘Go away, I don’t want to see you again.’

“I sympathetically listened to him, and, after five minutes, he invited me in. I continued to listen and attempted to show him the love of Jesus. After 15 minutes, I went to leave and asked if he wanted me to come again. He said yes. He’s been receiving Signs for about six months now.”

Mike has more stories. When a visitor came to his house and saw a Signs, she told Mike of a woman who might be interested, so he made a note. A few days later, with a Signs in his hand, he visited her. She opened the door and upon seeing what Mike was offering, exclaimed, “Come in; this is an answer to prayer!”

“She told me that for many years she’d received a gift Signs from an Adventist uncle. When he passed away, the Signs stopped. She said she missed her magazine, especially the articles on prophecy, but recently felt the desire to once again receive it, so she had prayed about it.

“Within a few weeks, God led me to her door,” says Mike. “She was so happy to get this magazine. She commented that it was now a ‘different size,’ which suggests how long since she’d received her last one. I’m enthused about Signs ministry when things like this happen.”

Mike’s church of 10 finds it difficult to sponsor all of Mike’s Signs, so some anonymous persons does. Mike doesn’t know who they are, but passes on his thanks to them.

So, beyond the slogan, Signs is about real live connections to real alive people.

Andrew Irvine, assistant manager of Signs and who oversees the annual August Signs Month campaign, sees it this way:

“Have you ever been hesitant, nervous or scared? I have. We all have been at some time. The apostle Paul, when he arrived in Rome to face the emperor Nero and his own death ‘thanked God and took courage’ [Acts 28:15] when met by fellow believers. We each can bring joy to the lives of others. In our dark world, Signs is an avenue of hope—hope that provides a closer connection with Christ and gives courage to face whatever our future holds. Paul’s courage when witnessing before Nero can be ours when we’re fully connected with Christ.

“Strength and courage come when we connect with our Maker and encourage others to do so too. To me, that’s what Courage:Connect means. That’s what Signs magazine does. But do you?”

If you forget all else you read in RECORD this week, remember courage, and don’t forget to connect.

Lee Dunstan is senior assistant editor of Signs of the Times and the Signs campaign coordinator.
Hey, would you like a job where you get to share Jesus every day? Where you also get paid to do it plus 10 weeks annual leave? Where you have the delightful opportunity of watching young minds develop?

At this moment we are witnessing an unprecedented situation in many Seventh-day Adventist schools around Australia. For the first time members of the community in substantial numbers are asking to enroll their children in our Seventh-day Adventist schools. In many cases we have to say: “No, not this year, but we’ll put your name on the waiting list, and let you know as soon as there’s a vacancy.”

Wonderful, isn’t it? Non-Christian parents want their children in our schools and are happy to pay not only for a good education but for their children to learn about Jesus Christ and Christian values. But we have a problem. There just aren’t enough Seventh-day Adventist teachers to go around.

Why? Isn’t teaching seen as a good career choice? Isn’t teaching seen as an opportunity to work for Christ?

Here’s what some current teachers have to say.

“I really enjoy teaching,” says Callie Piszczuk (Grade 6), who graduated from Avondale in 1997. “I enjoy the kids, especially the ones who find life tough. I like to help them work through their problems, to encourage them and see them come through. I feel I’ve left that mark of Jesus with them. I’ve taught in the state and for the church, and I’d say the support network you find in an Adventist school far outweighs anything you find elsewhere.”

Colleen Hodgkin (Grade 3) sees teaching as a lot of work, but says, “At the end of the year when you all collapse at the teachers’ breakfast, you know you’ve made a difference in children’s lives! The influence you can have on kids who don’t have God in their homes or lives is incredible.”

Clayton Richardson (health, physical education and drama) teaches in the high-school, while his, Heidi (Grade 4), teaches in the primary.

Clayton says, “I like to see kids grow up and mature into smart, intelligent thinking kids—seeing them develop from scared little Year 8s, when they start in high school, to confident young adults in Year 12. And to see them accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour is just wonderful. In many ways, school is a mission field.”

Heidi says she became a teacher because she liked children. “Every morning when I wake up, I go, ‘I love my job; I love what I do!’ I never wish I’d done something else as a career. I love the kids. You can always see the potential, even in the naughty ones, and you can talk about things. The other day we had the best discussion about Christianity, about heaven and about God. Their minds are so curious, and they get so excited and you don’t want to stop. It’s a great job!”

Tim Borgas (Grade 7) says: “I had three or four teachers who mentored me, and..."
encouraged me to go into teaching. I have Grade 7. I get to pray with my kids. Having a kid come up to you and say, ‘My Mum is sick. Would you pray for her?’ That’s something you just don’t get in state schools.

David Peterson was the principal medical scientist in charge of the haematology and transfusion laboratories at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Adelaide, but now teaches science and IT at both Prescott Primary and Prescott Secondary schools. Why?

“Well, I really wanted to do something that was more of a ministry, and when I thought about my job I realised it was the teaching and training part of it that I enjoyed most.

‘In teaching, every day is different and interesting, there is so much opportunity to be creative and I enjoy working with technology.’

Melanie Wegener (a teacher–librarian) says she was failing in science as a student until a Christian teacher came into her life who encouraged her. “He even phoned me at home to tell me I had received a 98 per cent for science, he was so excited for us! He made me feel I had a brain, and that I was worthwhile!”

“Now it’s my turn. I love being around the children, because they take on your excitement. That’s why I’m a teacher!”

And the final word to Racelle Hinseg, a teacher of many years experience who says: “Choose to be a teacher if you like challenge, variety, and you want to have fun! Choose to be a teacher and you’ll use all your God-given talents, resources and, of course, energy. Choose to be a Christian teacher and have the privilege of leading your class to know your friend Jesus, as well as their family.

Keep focused on your goal of being a teacher and gain everything God has for you! Remember, this life is not all there is; rather, it’s a preparation for the next.

‘Be a Christian schoolteacher.’

Marion Shields writes from Adelaide, SA, where she is education director for the conference.
Congrats, RECORD!

BARB SADLER, NSW

I have just finished reading the RECORD of July 16 and say congratulations on a really great issue—from the editorial challenging us to “get involved” instead of just “watching,” to being challenged to develop our spirituality in the feature “21C spirituality.” The latter again encourages us in how we see and treat those we may not be comfortable around. Then to finish with the knowledge that we can be “free” by being “touched” or by touching our Lord in “Free.” Other interesting articles and news items from the General Conference session made it a great all-round news bulletin.

Let us pray that all who read this will be motivated to have a closer relationship with God, which will be reflected in their relationships and attitude in their churches.

Good for adults, too

B O’HARE, WA

I often read through the Edge RECORD supplement when my daughter brings it home. I’ve taken out “Making goals that are successful” (Issue 50) for my file. Apparently I’ve been a goal-setter all my life without realising it, and now I can put a name to it. I’m grateful for having achieved many of my goals through God’s help.

What better school than the Sabbath school? There’s no better addiction than to Bible study.

STAN MACFARLANE, EMAIL

Where did it creep in? “Seventy-day Adventists” (News, July 16)—do we blame the Dr Davis quoted, Jonathan Gallagher or the editors at Warburton? Perhaps an article setting out the theology of a 70-day Sabbath or 70 days between Sabbaths is somewhere in the future? A Google search reveals 171 results relating to Seventy-day Adventists. This is not one of them. But blame the Warburton staff for the typo and proofing oversight.

New theology!

D M CEFF, QLD

The dictionary defines a school as a place where instruction is given, where there’s a regular course of meetings of teacher and student for the purpose of instruction, or those united by a similarity of method, style, principles etc. What better school than the Sabbath school? There’s no better addiction than to Bible study, the Sabbath school lesson, and our attendance there for discussion. One day we may not be able to attend Sabbath school and even our Bibles will be taken. The opportunities are to learn now. The Sabbath school lessons are among the greatest blessings our church possesses.

And doesn’t our Sabbath school unite us? Let’s take time to enjoy Sabbath school every week.

What better school than the Sabbath school?

PETRO S

Building respect

WENDY BLUCHER, SA

Responding to letters by Bryan Ball (June 6) and Gail Webster (July 16), imagine my surprise when asking my granddaughter why she was in such a place when she should have been in school, she replied that the chapel class had been cancelled!

Chapel cancelled in a Seventh-day Adventist high school? Why? Well, apparently the students had been playing up! My husband worked for many years in Catholic churches making altars, fonts and pulpit's, and was constantly amazed at the reverence displayed by children as they came into the church for any reason.

Is there something to be learned here?

TV-free zone

KEN L LAWSON, QLD

In respect to the sentiments expressed in “Reality or TV?” (Editorial, July 16), I wholeheartedly concur. In both my churches we have not promoted Hope or any other similar media. The reason I don’t endorse them is the lack of editing of the programs. Anything can now be promoted, and all the scholarly contributions of the past 50 years are pretty much ignored.

We are also slipping away from the exposition of the Word in the reading of sermons to the people via a computer. Never mind, I may sound like an old gripe.

Let’s take time to enjoy Sabbath school every week.

What better school than the Sabbath school? There’s no better addiction than to Bible study.

August 6, 2005
noticeboard

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