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Aussie aid for African building

The atmosphere of Sabbath

“The winning way” launched for Games

Pastors Derek McCutcheon, Loren Pratt and John Denne with materials, including a special issue of Signs magazine, that will be used in outreach at the Commonwealth Games.

First settlers’ five-star comfort

The Victorian Conference is using the Commonwealth Games as background to the launch of its 2005 evangelistic thrust, called “The winning way,” a comprehensive program targeting both Victorians and visitors to the state for the games.

Launching its website, <thewinningway.com.au>, Pastor John Denne, project manager for “The winning way,” said, “The church in Victoria has a growing passion for those who are strangers to Christ’s love. Pastors, conference office personnel and other members have been dreaming and scheming for the past 18 months about how they can be more culturally relevant to meet people’s needs.

The website, as part of this initiative, aims to encourage people to be “winners” in Christ. Pastor Denne says its aim is to send the message that to be an Adventist is to be a winner, and to encourage people to see it as their role to “coach” others for Jesus.

The program itself is not limited to the duration of the games, although it features a green-and-gold logo, but will be ongoing. Pastor Denne said the idea was to capitalise on sport, “the ‘god’ of many in our culture,” as did Paul in New Testament times.
This simple act may have been the most important event to take place that afternoon.

A good afternoon

The call of the bellbirds echoes across the broad bend in the river and the mild afternoon sunlight filters through the restless gum trees. The small group of people—some still dressed in their Sabbath best, others more Sabbath–afternoon relaxed—includes some of the patriarchs and matriarchs of the local church, as well as younger friends of the baptismal candidate.

As the group assembles at the chosen spot, the family playing cricket nearby on the riverbank choose a tactical retreat and, when I look back, they are gone. But another nearby mother calls her sons away from throwing rocks only out of respect for the group and they continue to play in the shallows just a little downstream.

The younger minister speaks for a few minutes and the quiet of the location allows him to be heard easily above the gentle breeze and the bird calls. Then the local pastor and the about-to-be-baptised brave the uncomfortable chill of the water. As they make their way midstream and the pastor lowers the other candidate below the water. As they make their way midstream and the pastor lowers the other candidate below the water, the family, the nation, the market, the employer, the university, the advertiser, the retailer, the opinion-makers are “no longer the primary source of identity, support and growth” for the new believer. As such, Clapp argues, “baptism is profoundly subversive. A five o’clock church takes baptism seriously, which is to say on its own terms, the surrounding society cannot help but see it as at least potentially politically threatening.”

Clapp isn’t focused on political as in the “politician” sense that happens in a capital city, election campaign or media debate near you, although it is not entirely disconnected. Instead he is highlighting the real sense in which to say “Jesus is Lord” must also be a powerful statement that everything and everyone else is not. To choose baptism is to choose citizenship in a different kingdom—and a different type of kingdom.

Living out of step with the dominant society—creatively and with grace—is not necessarily easy for either party. The mainstream must endure continual prodding. The disserter must resist the subtle and not-so-subtle pressure to conform.

But that is the call of God, answered at the time of our own baptism and renewed with each baptism we share: “For we died by the glorious power of the Father, and were buried with Christ by baptism. And if we have been buried with him in baptism, we shall also be raised with Christ by our baptism” (Romans 6:4, NL T).

Some would argue it’s not quite Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat on the bus that day in 1955, thereby sparking the civil rights movement. But, on the other hand, perhaps baptism is not so different, an act of civil disobedience in a self-centred and self-destructive society. Seemingly small things can have big consequences and the consequences don’t get much bigger than eternity.

It was a good afternoon, in the best, truest and most powerful sense—whether we realised it or not.

Nathan Brown

Cover: John Denne

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“The winning way” launched for Games

(Continued from page 1)

Pastor Denne said that when Paul wrote about training, running, fighting and winning, his readers clearly understood his language. “It was a method he used to motivate those who received his messages. We believe that we can do the same.”

Resources for “The winning way” include “gold” medals inscribed with the words: “You can be a winner—Try Jesus”; a letter-box mailer; a song written by Leanne Danson and maxiPraise; and a DVD sampler of a variety of video topics. “These, when coupled with the friendship of the person that regularly delivers them, will meet a broad spectrum of needs,” he says.

All resources are available via “winning way’s” website. Once there, people can also ask information on seminars, order resources, engage in correspondence courses, make prayer requests and learn about Adventism.

Pastor Denne says he’s been delighted to see schools and churches keen to place orders, with demand so strong that a re-order of some products has already been necessary.

He emphasises that the resources are not an end in themselves. “They’re designed to be a catalyst to assist the development of friendships. Schools have planned curriculum units and sports events based on the “winning way” theme. Churches have planned seminars on health, family life and prophecy, under the “winning way” banner.

“These will lead to evangelistic series in church worship services, and then to Bible studies, baptism and discipleship. The result, we believe, will bring praise to God and we will see our churches rejoicing and growing. This is what really matters, because the church is essentially the local church.”

Pastor Loren Pratt, Victoria’s personal ministries director, says, “A lot of us are planning on going to our neighbours with a gold medal, the sampler DVD and mailer card, and also with the specially produced Signs of the Times Commonwealth Games issue. We’ll be telling them that everyone can be a winner. We want to be a positive influence for Christ; we believe that this project can really help us to meet needs for Jesus.”

Wayne Boehm, the Victorian Conference youth director, says he also is enthusiastic about the program. He says a youth rally is planned for St Paul’s cathedral, in the heart of Melbourne. “Our vision is to beam this to the world on Hope Channel [1100 hrs EADST, March 25]. Through this, Commonwealth Adventists will be able to invite their friends to view a celebration of one of the longest pastoral stints for a minister in an Australian church. He commenced at Morphett Vale in 1983, remaining there until the end of 2005. Pastor Croft said that he felt he had a call to be in that church for an extended period early in his ministry, which, he says, was always oriented toward people, using their gifts. He encouraged the church to experiment with different worship styles. Recognising that it may be best to move out of the church to allow a new pastor to establish himself, prior to his coming back and being a part of the congregation, he will be the pastor of a number of smaller churches further south of Adelaide.—David Peterson

Several women at Muswellbrook, NSW, have operated a stall at the monthly Aberdeen markets, raising funds for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Appeal. At a recent church service, they were paid tribute for their success in 2005, having raised $A1100.

The Western Australian Conference Easter Big Camp will feature a photographic competition for its members. Called “Glimpses of glory,” each entry must portray a symbolic expression of one of the following texts: 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4; 2:15; 3:3; 4:6, 7, 16. Divided into three age-based sections, entries will be on display at the camp. The first prize in each category is $A100.

The stall sells a variety of crafts and foods, and shawls and, at Christmas, gingerbread houses. They plan to continue the project in 2006.—Clive Nash

More @ http://thewinningway.com.au and in the March Signs of the Times.

◆ Pastor Allan Croft, supported by his wife, Noeline, has recently “moved on” after 23 years as the minister of the Morphett Vale church in South Australia, possibly one of the longest pastoral stints for a minister in an Australian church. He commenced at Morphett Vale in 1983, remaining there until the end of 2005. Pastor Croft said that he felt he had a call to be in that church for an extended period early in his ministry, which, he says, was always oriented toward people, using their gifts. He encouraged the church to experiment with different worship styles. Recognising that it may be best to move out of the church to allow a new pastor to establish himself, prior to his coming back and being a part of the congregation, he will be the pastor of a number of smaller churches further south of Adelaide.—David Peterson

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March 18, 2006
 Churches to pass on their faith

WAHROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

The Children's Ministries Department of the South Pacific Division (SPD) has produced a poster urging people to pass on their faith to the children in their churches.

"When it comes to children, the whole church needs to get involved in passing on their faith," says Mrs Julie Weslake, director of children's ministries.

"It shouldn't be left only to children's leaders and teachers."

Research, says Mrs Weslake, has shown that children develop faith in God in the context of relationships and role models. "It's something that parents, the older youth and other adults of the church need to see as their responsibility," she says.

The poster is based on Psalm 78:4, which "is a mandate to the older generation to make sure that they pass on the deeds and commands of God to the next generation," says Mrs Weslake. Using FAITH as an acronym, it also points out key things that children need as they grow their faith that "hopefully church members will implement."

"Pass on your faith" will also be the theme of the upcoming Australian Children's Ministries Expo, to be held in Sydney's Collaroy Centre from August 18 to 20 this year. Guest speakers will provide children's leaders, parents, pastors, church elders and members with practical skills to pass on their faith during workshops.

The keynote speaker of the expo is Dr Bailey Gillespie, author of Keeping the Faith: A Guidebook for Spiritual Parenting and one of the initial planners of the GraceLink curriculum.

"All of us want children to be firm in their faith and committed to God in a lifelong relationship," says Mrs Weslake. "And unless we provide them with opportunities to develop a personal faith in God, all they will ever have is head knowledge."

Children's ministry expos are being planned for the SPD over the next five years. The posters will be sent to children's ministries directors of unions or conferences who will distribute them to churches in the coming weeks.—Melody Tan

White River church to expand

HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

The White River Adventist church in Honiara is about to start work to expand its church building to cater for increasing numbers.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held at the church site on February 26, which was attended by state and mission dignitaries, including the Hon Yukio Sato, MP, the member for West Honiara, and Pastor Benjamin Asa, secretary of Eastern Solomon Islands Mission (E SIM).

At the ceremony, Mr Sato said he was pleased with the role the church played in the White River community through its activities, adding that all churches have a role to play in keeping communities together.

Work commenced in early March and is expected to be completed for five years. It will cost an estimated $SB 68,000. The chairman of the building committee thanked the E SIM for its help in the redevelopment.

The White River church serves the western portion of Honiara and is the only church on the western side of the city.

A constantly increasing membership has meant that the church has outgrown its original structure, first constructed in 1971, and then expanded in 1980.—Solomon Star

◆ Lisa Grice, 23, right, of the Kellyville, NSW, church, recently launched a new ministry with Pastor David Riley at his London, UK, church. She will be its music pastor for 12 months. Accepting the invitation as an "opportunity of a lifetime," she commenced in her volunteer role in February. "I would love to see a lot of mentoring going on within the church by the time I leave," she says. Ongoing training is so important within a church to prevent a huge loss when leaders leave. I want to give everyone a sense of ownership and pride in their church."—Robyn Crabtree

◆ A Marmite sandwich did what Whiskers, water-spraying firefighters and animal-control officers couldn't—sweet talk a wild cat out of a Napier, NZ, palm tree. The stubborn cat had been stuck for more than a week in the tree until local Jamie Green lured the feline felon to safety with a moggy Marmite meal.—Sanco News

◆ The South England Conference (SEC) has a "magnificent seven" line-up for the SEC youth leadersh ip convention to be held September 3-10 in Madrid, Spain. They include youth directors Gilbert Cangy (South Pacific Division), James Black (North American Division), Paul Tompkins (Trans-European Division); Bailey Gillespie, director of the Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry; Courtney Rae, youth pastor of the Miracle Temple Adventist church; Ron Whitehead, director for the Centre of Youth Evangelism; and Steve Case, president of Piece of the Pie Ministries. These are seven of the 29 specialists teaching at the convention.—Japhet de Oliveira

◆ The Adventist Review website has expanded its online listening room, now featuring CD-quality radio in 16 languages. Stations include Life-talk Radio Network, Hymns and Favorites and Praise 90.1. In the "TV room," one can view a discussion of the weekly Bible-study lesson at Sabbath School.
Aussie aids African churches

HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Over the course of 2005, some $US51 million was raised for the construction or completion of four churches in Harare, Zimbabwe, by Melbourne layman Dr John Jeremic.

Building on the success of an initial fundraiser for the Highlands church in early 2005, in which some $ZM2.7 billion* was raised, Dr Jeremic returned in late 2005 and visited five congregations, to bring vision and motivate members. Despite low average per capita incomes, high unemployment and inflation of up to 700 per cent, the week, offering innovative approaches to the exploration of the topic.

In a fundraiser for a city-centre evangelism and conference complex, a congregation of visionary, mostly young business people and professionals pledged some $ZM14.7 billion. When completed, the multi-storey church and outreach centre, with a 1000-seat auditorium, will be the largest Adventist facility in Africa.

Dr John Jeremic, centre, talks fundraising plans with Dr Jonathan Mosvosi, left, on the site of the proposed Harare Evangelistic Centre, in downtown Harare, Zimbabwe.

It will occupy a site in the elite civic zone of downtown Harare. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on November 6, 2005.

Also benefiting from Dr Jeremic’s visit were the suburban churches of Highlands, Mandara, Borodale and Greendale, each of which has grand plans for representative and multifunctional complexes. A total of $ZM26 billion was raised for the developments.

In thanking Dr Jeremic, Dr Jonathan Mosvosi, the then pastor of the suburban churches, said, “You have probably accomplished more in Africa as a good businessman from Australia in outreach and evangelism than any local or visiting pastor.”—Lee Dunstan

*$A1 = $ZM25,000

School students reach out in NZ

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

A total of 48 members of the Port Macquarie church in New South Wales recently spent their school holidays conducting an outreach program called “God factor” in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The four-night series was conducted over two weekends in the Bishopdale church and featured two teens preaching each night, drama ministry, musical items and activities. Teens from the Bishopdale church also joined the group in preaching.

Response from the teens at Christchurch was enthusiastic. One wrote a letter to the “God factor” team thanking them for sharing God, saying, “I now believe that God does exist and I’m going to try and spread the good news to everyone.”

A number of others who went to the “God factor” meetings are planning to attend the Bishopdale church. A parent of one of the children who attended commented, “It helps them to focus on what’s important in life.”

Trish Campbell, the program leader, says, “This was designed as an opportunity for teens to answer other teens’ questions about God. ‘God factor’ not only helps those attending, but also those participating.”—Northpoint

University, a 30-minute satellite broadcast produced cooperatively between the General Conference Sabbath School Department and Hope Channel. The programs feature Australian Pastor Casey Wolverton as host and moderator, with four interacting, international young adults discussing the topic for the week, offering innovative approaches to the exploration of the topic.—Adventist Review/Gary Swanson

More @ www.adventistreview.org/onthair.html and ssu.adventist.org

◆ A film crew from the National Geographic Media Department filmed a Sabbath service at the Sacramento Central church, USA, which included an interview with Pastor Doug Batchelor, president and speaker for Amazing Facts Ministries. Pastor Batchelor came to the attention of National Geographic as a result of the high level of internet traffic on the Amazing Facts website, which features the prophecies of Revelation.

The interview included questions on the rapture, the tribulation, the antichrist, the battle of Armageddon, and the various apocalyptic symbols of Revelation. Pastor Batchelor says he “sensed the prayers of God’s people” as he answered the broad spectrum of questions, all without his Bible, because the interviewer did not want read answers. Later the interviewer confided to Pastor Batchelor that his answers had made more sense to him than anything he’d heard before. The title of the 60-minute documentary, called The Riddle of Revelation, includes the conclusions of other religious commentators from around the world. Says Pastor Batchelor, “Please continue to pray that as the editing process takes place, the final product will bring glory to God and help people recognize the truth.”—Amazing Facts

CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF ADVENTISTS IN WARBURTON @ WWW.WARBURTONADVENTISTS.COM

March 18, 2006
Underground resurfaces

WAHROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

The Underground small-group study guides are about to make a comeback, four years after first being published. This will be in line with the recently launched Elijah Project, a General Conference youth evangelism initiative embraced and adapted by the South Pacific Division (SPD).

“Small groups will play a part in the Elijah Project and the study guides are really good resources based on solid biblical materials produced by the church,” says Pastor Gilbert Cangy, director of youth ministries for the SPD. “We did not do a good job in promoting these books four years ago, but I hope it will be different this time round.”

According to Pastor Cangy, one of the reasons for the lack of demand for the study guides was the misconception that the books were Underground outreach materials only, and therefore unsuitable for use by other church members. Underground was an SPD Youth Department outreach initiative conducted in 2002.

The study guides feature a contemporary format and deal with topics such as the Holy Spirit, the Sermon on the Mount, how to share one’s faith, as well as one for the Holy Spirit, the Sermon on the Mount, how to share one’s faith, as well as one for the Holy Spirit, the Sermon on the Mount, how to share one’s faith, as well as one for

youth and young adults, Pastor Cangy says anybody, ranging from teenagers to adults in their 40s, will enjoy using the study guides.

“Church members in small groups are often searching for resources to study and often end up with material from other churches,” says Pastor Cangy. “They often do so without realising that the Adventist Church has produced some very good materials that they can use as well.”

All study guides have been written and developed by youth workers within the SPD. A fifth study guide, based on prophesy, is currently being written.—Melody Tan

Contact your conference Youth Department for the guides or email the SPD department at <ateina@adventist.org.au>.

 Gilson College’s record enrolments

TAYLORS HILL, VICTORIA

Gilson College, on Melbourne’s western fringe, is experiencing exciting times, according to its principal, Mark Vodell, where, for the 10th year in succession, the enrolment has set a new record.

In 2005, the college extended its library to include a new primary wing, along with a new administration block. The growth of enrolment this year to 620 students has also seen an increase in the number of teachers employed.

This year the college has two new secondary classrooms and art complex under construction, with the project due for completion in late March. The final stage of development, in the primary school, will see two classrooms added to the middle school.

“The completion will alleviate congestion that’s presently being tolerated with good grace!” says Mr Vodell.

“Each day [in this area], thousands of people are being introduced to the great hope and joy that we believers so often take for granted. We ask for your continued prayers as we evangelise an urban area that has, per capita, the lowest number of Adventists in Australia.” —Mark Vodell/Adele Nash
Sanitarium gets Wiggles onside for kids cereal

BERKELEY VALE, NEW SOUTH WALES

Sanitarium has teamed up with one of Australia’s best known children’s entertainers, The Wiggles, to launch its new children’s breakfast cereal, Weet-Bix KIDS, which has been developed specifically for infants and children.

Weet-Bix KIDS has been specially formulated by Sanitarium, says Cathy McDonald, Sanitarium’s Nutrition Service manager. “We’re pleased to introduce Weet-Bix KIDS as a healthy breakfast cereal that offers the goodness of wholegrains and the nutrients kids need. Active, growing children need the natural goodness from the 96 per cent wholegrain wheat in Weet-Bix KIDS,” she says.

The new product packs contain a Wiggles storybook and stickers for children. Sanitarium’s marketing manager, Rex Sheehy, says The Wiggles are a fun way to help mothers provide their growing children with a nutritious meal. “Weet-Bix KIDS and The Wiggles is a perfect fit to bring health and fun to the family breakfast table,” he enthuses. “On behalf of Sanitarium, I would like to thank The Wiggles for their support.”

Paul Field, general manager of The Wiggles, said of the partnership, “Like most Australians, The Wiggles have grown up with Weet-Bix and understand its position on the Australian breakfast table.”

Weet-Bix KIDS is low in salt and sugar, setting it apart from many other cereals in the supermarket, and, according to Ms McDonald, who is also a nutritionist, children develop their food taste preferences at an early age, which then stays with them for life. “Choosing foods low in salt and sugar may prevent children becoming accustomed to the taste of less nutritious salty or sugary foods,” she says.—Jaemes Tipple

More @ www.sanitarium.com.au

South Australian summer-camp success

WALKERS FLAT, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Eight juniors and 14 teens indicated their desire to prepare for baptism at South Australian Conference’s summer camp, held Ankara, Walkers Flat, in January. A number of other youth and juniors also requested Bible studies and prayer. It is tradition of the camps that a baptism be held each Sabbath, and three young people being baptised.

While Pastor David McKibben challenged juniors under the “Live the life” theme, Pastor Mau Tuaoi talked to teens on the theme of “Living a life that matters,” using the story of Solomon.—South Australian Grapevine

March 18, 2006
While on a ski trip to Queenstown, New Zealand, some 20 years ago I saw some provocative graffiti in a public toilet block. Although it may have crude innuendos to which some readers may take offence, the statement nonetheless succinctly expresses the outlook and feelings of desperation experienced by so many people. It stated, “Gravity is a myth; the earth sucks.”

After spending some time in the mortuary, I became confident that gravity is not a myth. During my medical studies, we were encouraged to view at least one autopsy. I randomly picked a day, unaware that the morning’s task for the forensic pathologist was to investigate the cause of death for three men, aged 30-50, who were victims of suspected suicides. Two of the three men had apparently taken advantage of the law of gravity to hasten their demise.

As for the second half of the statement? I would not be alone in acknowledging that our world is no longer a nice place to live, which is why God is so desperate to cleanse and re-create it. In some form or other, gravity will probably persist for eternity. But evil will not, nor will the pressures that compel our friends and loved ones to take such drastic steps to end their lives. That is our hope and God’s promise.

Adventism has much to offer this busy world, including the benefits of repose on the Sabbath. Unfortunately, we do not always promote a message of temperance in our own working lives. If anything, a culture of “busy is better” prevails. In church work, it is dangerously appealing to believe that extended working hours is our “sacrifice for God.” Such misdirected beliefs can be easily abused, especially if God is not calling for such sacrifice (see Isaiah 1).

If our business, even for worthy endeavours, causes us to neglect communion with our Creator, then something is wrong. Jesus counsels us in the parable of the sower against becoming seed that is choked out by thorns. “[W]hat you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone” (Exodus 18:17, 18*).

Due to self-importance, pride, wanting to be seen as a team player, not wishing to be perceived as slothful, and for many other reasons, we don’t like to say no. Productivity and industry must occur at almost any cost. We find it difficult to delegate responsibilities, or in many circumstances have no-one to whom we can delegate or share the load.

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Bible quotations are from the New International Version.

Robert Granger writes from Hobart, Tasmania.
You wake up on Saturday morning. It's a beautiful day outside, the birds are singing, the warm rays of the sun are beaming through your window. But you miss all this because you are rushing around getting ready for church. Even though you prepared everything the day before, you still somehow manage to be late. You sit through the long 30-minute sermon trying to keep awake. You rush home after church to lay out food for the visitors you invited for lunch. Finally, when they leave, you take a nice long nap. When you wake up, the sun is setting.

This is the Sabbath atmosphere for some people. We anticipate it but somehow rush through it without stopping and really enjoying the experience.

I've often wondered, if I were stuck on an island all alone for months and lost track of the days, would I be able to tell it was Sabbath when it finally rolled around at the end of the week? I mean, there'd be no actual physical signs to let me know that it was. The sun would set every day as usual, there would be no special sign in the sky from God saying: "Today is the Sabbath." So how would I know? Would I suddenly feel relaxed and all my worries disappear as soon as the sun set that day?

There's something about the atmosphere of Sabbath that sets it apart from all the other days. Think about the lead-up to Sabbath in your family. Your life changes gear and starts to slow down on Friday afternoon, with the rush and hectic business of the week, slowly changing into the relaxed, serene atmosphere of Sabbath: the smell of special Sabbath food waiting from the kitchen; the house vacuumed and tidied up; Sabbath clothes ironed and hung out ready to wear; Heritage Singers playing in the background to set the mood for the coming hour when the sun sets. And when the sun does slowly sink into the west, you gather in the warmth of your lounge room to open the Sabbath.

Growing up, my family would sometimes sing a few hymns, then my dad would read something from the Bible and then pray. After worship and tea we'd slip in a tape (yes, Heritage Singers, their 30th Anniversary Reunion) and we'd all sing along (well, mostly my dad since he likes to pretend he can sing just as well as them) or maybe a Doug Bachelor tape or something like that. These are the traditions I've become used to in my family that define and set the Sabbath apart from the other days of the week.

But, as I was saying before, if you were stuck on an island or didn't have traditions to follow that helped distinguish the Sabbath, how would you know? Would there be an overwhelming sense of peace that washes away the stresses of a hectic week? Would the tension in your muscles relax and that pounding headache cease as if to say in one big sigh, "Ahhh yes, it's the Sabbath, I can feel it. It's time for some R&R!"

It's a Sabbath afternoon and starting to get a little bit dark outside as I sit here writing. All I can hear is silence, except for the occasional chirp and whistle of birds that somehow enhance the peacefulness I feel.

It's hard to find a quiet place to take time out and reflect these days, especially if you live in the city. Sure, a place can help establish a more serene atmosphere for the Sabbath, but the peace that you experience on this day shouldn't be influenced only by your surroundings; it should come from within. It should be the sort of peace that can come only from the Lord of the Sabbath. John 14:27* tells us, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives." I hope that the atmosphere you create on your Sabbath is one where, even if you were stuck on an island, you would undeniably know that it was God's holy day.

*I New International Version.

Eleanor Lukale writes from Cooranbong, New South Wales.
feature

I was there

BY KRISTINA BEEBY

There were some wispy, white clouds scattered across the otherwise blue sky. A gentle breeze blew and the sun shone brightly. A perfect day—or was it? Something seemed wrong in the atmosphere. It was almost like the earth knew something that I didn’t know.

As I walked through the city on the way to my house, everyone I passed seemed agitated. I had been away for a few days, so I began to wonder what I had missed. What was going on?

Everyone seemed to be heading in the same direction, so I decided to follow the crowd. I tried asking someone what was going on. He just grunted at me and said, “Where have you been?” I started to explain that I had been away for a few days, but he wasn’t interested. He turned away from me and disappeared into the crowd.

It seemed that people were lining the main street leading out of the city. It must be for some parade, although I’ve never known a parade to happen at this time of the year. Something seemed to be happening in the distance. The crowd was becoming more aggressive, some even preparing to throw stones and rotten fruit.

“Why is happening?” I asked no-one in particular. As the procession came closer I could see that the person in the midst of the crowd was struggling to walk. He was trying to carry a large object but he didn’t seem in any condition to walk, let alone carry anything.

Ever so slowly the procession moved down the street to where I was. I had managed to squeeze through the crowd so I was in the front row. I could see everything now. But what a shock, as I looked at the man. He was covered head to foot in blood. I was almost sick, yet I could not take my eyes off him. What had he done to deserve this? I was almost sick yet I could not take my eyes off him. What had he done to deserve this?

I remembered him. I had looked into those eyes before. This man was not a violent murderer. He was the one who seemed to have an endless supply of bread and fish. He was the one who had healed my best friend. I’d heard so many stories about this man and they were all good. Sure, he may have been a bit unconventional at times, but he didn’t hurt anyone. I ate the bread that seemed to come from his hands. It was the best bread I’ve ever eaten, and it satisfied me. I wasn’t hungry anymore, except for more of that bread. Where had he got it from?

The crowd seemed to carry me along, but I was oblivious. This man consumed looking into a deep ocean. He just stared at me, like he was looking deep into my soul. Then he smiled at me. Through the pain he smiled at me! It broke my heart and I felt tears run down my cheeks. The soldiers pushed him on—toward that horrible hill. I could not go there, yet I felt I must.

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sitting with crowds on the mountain. He spoke to them in a way that seemed plain, yet hard to understand. He spoke great promises and expanded the law of Moses. He talked about salt and light. What does that mean? The things He spoke were a whole new way of living. Who had ever loved their enemies and prayed for those who persecuted them? But this Jesus did. I saw it the day He died. Somehow He loved those people who tormented Him. I heard Him as He asked God to forgive them.

Then there were all those reports of people who had been healed of all kinds of sicknesses. Even the demon possessed were healed. How did He do that? He even raised people from the dead. My friend was there when Lazarus walked out of his grave. He remembers there being such a peace about Jesus that day.

Jesus said so many times that He only did what He saw His Father doing. How did He see what His Father was doing? Who was His Father? When He taught His disciples to pray He started out by saying, "Our Father in heaven . . ." (Matthew 6:9). He must have heard God. The prophets talked with God, but He was more than a prophet. God was His Father!

All these thoughts and many others kept going through my mind for days and days. I heard reports that He had disappeared from the tomb where they had laid Him. No-one seemed to really know what had happened. Some said He was raised from the dead, others said that He is followers stole the body. The disciples seemed to have disappeared altogether. I wanted to find them and ask them about Jesus. Why had He died? Why had they punished Him so violently? But the disciples were nowhere to be found. I kept pondering these questions and praying to God that somehow I could find out. Since Jesus said to pray to God as our Father, I decided I would.

I was walking through Jerusalem some days later, when I heard a noise in a house down the road. It was like a great wind had hit just the house. Suddenly the front door burst open and all these people ran out yelling and calling to people to listen to them. I ran closer and someone grabbed my arm and told me that Jesus had been raised from the dead. He was the Messiah that we had been expecting—the one about whom Isaiah had prophesied. This Jesus died for my sins!

I listened to Peter as he spoke of Jesus. He had been there. He knew. But now he seemed to be a different person. He spoke with such boldness and authority. I was captivated and wanted to know more. How could I know this boldness, this Holy Spirit? I had seen Jesus. I had watched Him die. I remembered how He looked at me—that smile that broke my heart. I felt a love and compassion in me. I had never felt before. Jesus loved me and on the day when He was suffering most He told me with His eyes. Such joy filled my heart, and yet such remorse for what we had done to Jesus. What could I do? Peter said, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

That was enough for me. With tears I was baptised and joined this group of people, as did many others. And there started a journey that will never end. I praise and thank God for His goodness and mercy toward us, for His love that we will never understand, and for allowing us to be filled with His Holy Spirit. Amen! *Bible quotations are from the New International Version.

Kristina Beeby writes from Concord West, New South Wales.
A broader view

JOHN RALSTON, SA

Mark Friend (Letters, March 4) longs for a church that focuses on Christ as Creator, Saviour and Redeemer rather than on “other teachings.” Are not these “other teachings” the inspired instructions of Jesus, the Word?

To focus on Him as Creator involves His claims of sovereignty over our lives and His right to direct us—the Ten Commandments.

To focus on Him as a Saviour involves our past sinful lives that lead to future destruction, and His ability to save us from it (forgiveness, justification by faith).

To focus on Him as Redeemer reveals our inability to overcome the inherent sinful selfishness and His ability to deliver us from it (surrender, trust, sanctification).

So it’s evident that we can’t simply talk about the “story of redemption” without accepting His instruction, why it’s necessary, and how it’s applied.

It is impossible to honour Jesus as the Author of our salvation while disregarding all His instruction about it. It is His “doctrine.”

A 3ABN story

JAN KNOPPER, NSW

If you like to patronise your local ABC, buy the book Mending Broken People, written by Kay Kuzma and published by Pacific Press. It is the remarkable story of 3ABN.

In case you have lost your faith in modern-day miracles, this book will restore that faith to more than 100 per cent. The Lord is still working in mysterious ways.

Our youth

LEESA FOWLER, WA

Each year I am pleasantly surprised that here in Western Australia, youth willingly give their time to serve on advisory committees and various other teams to make events happen. Our Youth Advisory Committee plan and run youth rallies and Friday-night fellowships monthly.

The youth take on the responsibility of carrying out STORM Co trips year after year. We adults are there to mentor and guide them. These kids want to serve; they want their voices heard and their vote to be counted. Maybe they just need us to ask them.

Ministry to ministers

NAME WITHELD

I am amazed by the effort and energy that goes into ministering to our churches. The dedication of our pastors makes me wonder what I can do to help. Imagine praying over the phone each week or sending flowers to the spouse who spends evenings alone.

Maybe I could send a card of appreciation or share that with the pastoral couple over a meal together. A special gift of thanks to the kids could be in order.

There is so much I can do! I praise God for the dedication of our ministers and their families. Do you think there could be something you can do?

Keeping uni youth

PHILIP SMITH, QLD

I am inspired by the concern expressed in “Stemming the Adventist brain drain” (News, March 4) about the pattern of departure demonstrated by young Adventists graduating from university. It’s time this aspect of apostasy is thoroughly investigated.

I suggest starting by looking in Adventist homes. Parents who display overtly materialistic tendencies and place too great an emphasis on worldly success are setting their teenagers up to leave the moment they get to uni. It isn’t just that a university environment can destabilise a young person’s faith because of spiritual, philosophical or even emotional challenges that they are not mature enough to face.

I’ve seen many graduates—my peers—who, like me, assumed leadership positions in QUSDAS and ASA, who retained a seemingly firm commitment to the church while studying, and yet when they entered the workforce as young professionals, rapidly drifted away from the church, swept up in a tide of worldly expectation.

While apologetics is important, the key to stemming the brain drain is to make Adventist homes more Spirit-filled havens, and gear the ministries for university students to manage the transitions from high school to uni, and uni to employment.

The workplace brings a whole new set of pressures on young people, especially genuine Sabbath-keeping Adventists, who often have to choose between a path to prosperity or the sacrificial road to redemption.

ROB THOMSON, QLD

Adventism has given only token support to the young Adventist university students unable or unwilling to attend Avondale College. They are effectively de facto second-class Adventist students and, apparently, not worth putting resources into.

I’ve seen agnostics and professed atheists change into seekers of Christ through the story of redemption.

God’s Spirit given

LEONIE DONALD, NZ

It really is a fear-fed society we live in—threats from terrorists, pandemics and extreme world weather conditions (Editorial, January 28).

One of my favourite scriptures is 2 Timothy 1:7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (KJV).

Note: Views in Letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Letters should be less than 250 words, and writers must include their name, address and phone number. All letters are edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author’s original meaning will not be changed. Not all letters received are published. See masthead (page 2) for contact details.
Anniversaries

Redbelt, Laurie and Mavis never imagined they would reach their 70th wedding anniversary when they were married on 31.12.35 at Tenterfield, N.S.W. They were just teenagers when they eloped, but 70 years after their marriage they celebrated the occasion with family and friends. Laurie and Mavis are foundation members of the Warwick (Qld) church and even now hardly miss a Sabbath.

Ward, Charlie and Ruth still hold hands when they walk down the road together, 60 years after their marriage. They couple met when they were both members of the Youth Hated Association at the trend of World War II. Almost 15 years after their marriage Charlie became a Seventh-day Adventist at Ryde church in Sydney, N.S.W. A year or so later Ruth was also baptized. And since then a dozen of their relatives have also been baptized. Charlie is well known for his model of Noah's Ark. He has taken lectures on the ark in every mainline conference in Australia. Charlie and Ruth have lived just north of Brisbane, Qld, and are foundation members of the then Bribie Island church.

Weddings

Lawson—Young, Ben Lawson, son of Grant and Jill Lawson (Coorobong, N.S.W.), and Kate Young, daughter of Greg and Alison Young (T Halland, Vic), were married on 12.06 at Mosman, Sydney, N.S.W. Lyell Helle

Ormiston—Kightly, Kevin Ian Ormiston, son of Gordon and Fay Ormiston (Redland Bay, Qld), and Fayley Lynette Knight, daughter of Jesse (Brisbane) and the late Lenard Schumann, were married on 14.06 at the Seventh-day Adventist Community Centre, Coorobong, N.S.W.

Purcell—Peach, Linton Purcell, son of Robert Hughes (Mebourne, Vic) and Christina Purcell (Barto, Tas), and Roseanne Peach, daughter of Barrie and Rose- li Peach (Warrnambool, Vic), were married on 4.11.05 at Lindsay House, Darling Point, N.S.W.

Obituaries

Raguy, A lvina (Allie) Grace (nee Walters), born 19.09.1929 at Caboolture, Qld; died 5.06 at Nambour, Qld. She is survived by Frank, her husband of over 56 years her children, Janice, Vicki, Gary, Keith and Ian; their spouses; her eight grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. A lifelong loved painting. She was a down-to-earth, practical, compassionate Christian who loved her Lord. She was much loved by her family who will sadly miss her. Allie fell asleep, confident in her soon returning Saviour.

Shin, Don, born 1935 at Melbourne, Vic; died 1.06 at the Northmead Baptist Home, Northmead, N.S.W. He is survived by his wife, Freda Shin; his daughter, Jill Shin; his son, Peter Shin; and his grandchildren, Peter Shin and his wife, Linda Shin, and their son, Matthew Shin. Don was a Christian who loved the Lord and was active in his church. He was a quiet man who always put others first. He was a devoted husband and father, and a beloved grandfather. His passing will be greatly felt by his family and friends. Services will be held at the Northmead Baptist Home, Northmead, N.S.W., on Saturday, 7.06, at 11.00 a.m.

Ralph, John, born 1917 at Newry, N.S.W.; died 14.06 at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, N.S.W. He is survived by his wife, Miriam Ralph; his daughter, Lynne Ralph; and his grandchildren, Lynne Ralph, Lynne Ralph and her husband, John Ralph, and their children, Ben and Alex Ralph. John was a devoted husband and father, and a devoted grandfather. He was a kind and caring man who always put others first. His passing will be greatly felt by his family and friends. Services will be held at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, N.S.W., on Saturday, 7.06, at 11.00 a.m.

Volunteers!

Youth Pastor—Taunana Church (New Zealand). Duties include: Train youth workers to deal with students on weekends. A youth worker will, by daily commitment to God. 1, Create an environment in which the youth church youth can make Christ-centred decisions. 2, Tend and encourage the youth to attend all organised church functions. 3, Provide genuine friendship to the youth. 4, Be a good role model. Term: 12 months, commencing in March.

Email: <volunteers@adventist.org.au>
For more positions, check the web on <www.adventists.org.au>.

Adrian Seben

Retirements


Positions vacant

▲ Administrative Assistant—Macquarie College (Wollongong, NSW) is seeking a person with skills and experience in office management, technology, public relations and event management who would be responsible to the Principal. The position description and selection criteria may be obtained by email to <office@macquariecollege.nsw.edu.au>. A closing date for applications is 10.06.

▲ Senior Engineer, SDJ—Sanitarium (Coorong, SA) is seeking a Senior self-motivated Mechanical or Electrical Engineer for the SDJ (Sanitarium Development & Innovation) Group. The successful applicant will have relevant tertiary qualifications at degree level or equivalent in Electrical Engineering; demonstrate practical design ability in their relevant discipline; proven ability in project management; think creatively and suitably apply; ability to lead while maintaining a team environment; and a minimum of five years relevant industrial experience, preferably in the food industry. A closing date for applications is 10.06.

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Lester, Clyde Cameron, born 23.3.1917 at Kingwood, Vic; died 14.12.06 in an orphaned hospital, N SW. On 7.8.46 he married the love of his life, Betty Chaeling, who predeceased him in 1998. He is survived by his siblings, Owen, Lynette and Don; his children, Grant and Merridy; his five grandchildren; and his four great-grandchildren. Clyde served at Mona Vale Community Hospital. On 22.12.37 he married Thelma, who predeceased him in 1995. He is survived by his son, Barry Wright, and his four great-grandchildren.

Marjoram, Owen Morris Sydney, born 1.6.1908 at Lithgow, N SW; died 12.12.80. He and Joyce married 26.3.1927 at Bickley, WA; died 21.2.06 at Sherwin Lodge, Perth, WA. He was a deacon for 30 years at Prospect church; then attended Elizabeth church for 10 years. He was a camp superintendent and at times a conference committee member. He also served as a camp superintendent and at times a conference committee member. He is survived by his wife (AVF, Victoria Point); his sons, Bruce, Evan (both of Perth, WA), Myron (near Tamworth, N W ), and Mark Brinsmead (Albury, NSW); and five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Moran, Trust (nee Grice), born 31.1.1910 at Oakey, Qld; died 4.2.06 in Royal Children’s Hospital, Brisbane, Qld. On 17.11.43 she married Iane Bruce. He is survived by his wife (AVF, Victoria Point); his sons, Bruce, Evan (both of Perth, WA), Mario (Brisbane, Qld); his 10 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Peters, Charles, born 23.3.1921 at Katherine, NT; died 14.12.06 in Hornsby Memorial Hospital, NSW. On 7.8.46 he married Thelma, who predeceased him in 1998. He is survived by his son, Barry Wright, and his four great-grandchildren.

Schimpf, Ruth (nee Graf), born 22.1.1916 in Argentina; died 4.2.06 at Sherwin Lodge, Rossnowye, Perth, WA. On 15.9.37 she married Jorge (George). She was predeceased by her daughters, Carolina Petrone and Mirta Massi in 2001. She is survived by her sons, Edmond, Hilario (both of Perth); Mirtha Petrone (George). She was predeceased by her daughters, Carolina Petrone and Mirta Massi in 2001. She is survived by her sons, Edmond, Hilario (both of Perth); Mirtha Petrone (George). She was predeceased by her daughters, Carolina Petrone and Mirta Massi in 2001. She is survived by her sons, Edmond, Hilario (both of Perth); Mirtha Petrone (George). She was predeceased by her daughters, Carolina Petrone and Mirta Massi in 2001. She is survived by her sons, Edmond, Hilario (both of Perth); Mirtha Petrone (George). She was predeceased by her daughters, Carolina Petrone and Mirta Massi in 2001. She is survived by her sons, Edmond, Hilario (both of Perth); Mirtha Petrone (George). 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Advertisements

In his sleep 4.02 am in hospital at Gordonvale. He is survived by his daughter, Ellen Taylor, and his son, Theodore. The service was held in the Cairns church.

Roger Ward, Brent Jones

Wong Yee, Daryl Leslie ("Ozzie"), born 16.7.1950 in Sydney, N SW; died 7.06 at home in Douglas, Townsville, Qld. He is survived by his former wife, Dagmar (A delade, SA); his sons, Phillip and Geoffrey (Melbourne, Vic). Daryl was a long-time active member of the Aikikenvalie Seventh-day Adventist church. He was also very involved in the Scout movement. He will be sadly missed by his family, his church and the community.

Cranville Tookey

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For any further Information please contact Hoxton Park Church on: +61 411 512 457

Sacred concert—March 25, 2006 at 7.00 pm. You are invited to experience an evening of beautiful vocal and instrumental sacred music performed by popular artists, Ben Slade, his family and Melissa Cunningham. A vandalised memorial church, Cooranbong, N SW. Donation box at door. Phone 0438 622 540.

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Adventist Aviation Association—North NSW. The Annual General Meeting of the Adventist Aviation Association will be held on Sabbath, March 25, 2006, at the Cooranbong Community Centre, Cooranbong, commencing at 6 pm. The program will include reports of current evangelistic outreach, a basket tea and close of Sabbath—followed by the election of officers and executive committee members for the following year. All members and those interested in this ministry are very welcome.

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March 18, 2006