SAH awarded for excellence

WAHROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

The Sydney Adventist Hospital (SAH) took out the Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) Award for Clinical Excellence at an awards ceremony held recently on the Gold Coast, Queensland.

The award in the category of hospitals of 70 beds and over was awarded to the hospital in recognition of its “provision of clinical treatment and demonstrated excellence in patient care throughout the entire hospital operation.”

The executive director of APHA, Michael Roff, said by winning the award, SAH had shown a continuing commitment to providing quality care, achieving best practice outcomes for patients, staff and the community.

Mr Roff says, “The hospital has excelled at providing services and technology to meet the changing needs of the community. “The judges for this award found evidence of this through innovative services such as ‘Hospital in the Home,’ multi-million dollar investments in new and upgraded facilities along with the latest in technology, including a new fl at-plate technology Cardiac Catheter Laboratory, Greenlight Laser.”

(Continued on page 4)
**editorial**

**Somewhere, sometime, each of us has to look at the options and make a decision.**

**Why am I a Christian?**

All of us who have been involved with church for any length of time know people who have had faith and chosen to walk away from it. At times, I have thought of such people with sadness and asked myself, *Why haven’t I gone down that road? Why have I maintained my faith?*

So why am I a Christian? Simple question, many answers—as many answers as there are Christians. But, reflecting on these questions, I have come up with three reasons that are compelling for me:

1. **Because of the amazing grace of God and the good news of the gospel.**
   
   I am a Christian in the first place not because of me and what happens to me but because of God and everything He has done.
   
   It’s all about Jesus. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

   This is not about obligation; this is all about privilege. Too many may throw Christianity out the window because they are so obsessed with the obligation they forget that the basis of their salvation—the very essence of their faith—is privilege. It is the privilege of being declared right when we are wrong, the privilege of being called sons and daughters when we are hopeless orphans, the privilege of being created and loved by the King of kings.

2. **Because of the life of Jesus Christ.**
   
   My appreciation of Jesus Christ has been like the dawning of a new day. The light has come slowly but surely. Jesus emphasised the importance of this discovery: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

   I have become compelled by the person Jesus Christ. How can I claim to be Christian if I know nothing about Him?

3. **Because I choose to give my allegiance to God and His kingdom.**

   The stories in the Old Testament and study of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ yield a recurring theme. It is the theme of allegiance. The question is posed: Is our allegiance to the kingdom of God or is our allegiance elsewhere? To ourselves, our material wellbeing or ultimately to the powers of darkness?

   The stories and prophecies of the book of Daniel are calling for allegiance. The great controversy theme throughout Scripture and brought to its climax in the book of Revelation calls for a decision about allegiance. This is the ultimate question.

   As the Son of God agonised in Gethsemane, endured ridicule and abuse by the mob, heard crowds screaming for His death, then hung in mental and physical torment on the cross, the whole universe watched, sick at heart. For them, any lingering doubts disappeared. Satan’s subtle mask was ripped aside.

   And in a similar and more glorious way, a day is coming when the clouds of our doubt about God and His government will be swept aside. Then we too will finally shout: “Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages” (Revelation 15:3).

   Recently, one of my friends—who had left some years ago—returned to church. He has rediscovered God. He has found again a God who always loves us, who loves us enough to save us. He has found a God who, despite gross misrepresentation and abuse, is there when we need Him—and even when we think we don’t—the same Christ who walked the dusty roads of Judea. He has found again a God who has given us His allegiance and invites ours again.

   Somewhere, sometime, each of us has to look at the options and make a decision to be or not to be Christian. While I am convinced these reasons are compelling, I still must have faith, not all my questions are answered. But I choose to give my allegiance to my God.

   Are you with me?  

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Barry Oliver  
General secretary  
South Pacific Division  

*Bible quotations are from the New International Version.*
Record number of graduates complete Discovery Centre courses

WAHROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

More than 90 students graduated from courses offered by the Adventist Discovery Centre in October, making it the highest number of diplomas distributed in one month on record.

“We are extremely excited about the news,” says Sharon Martin, course instructor at the Adventist Discovery Centre. “We also send out a free Signs of the Times magazine with every diploma that we send and it’s a great way of further advertising and exposing the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

The Adventist Discovery Centre, part of the Adventist Media Network, offers free correspondence lessons or e-learning via online internet courses on 13 different topics including lifestyle and health, archaeology as well as on biblical subjects.

Students take from two to six months to complete a course, depending on the subject and medium used. According to Pastor David Price, associate director of the Adventist Discovery Centre, more than 120 people are baptised every year as a result of studying these courses.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of students, partly due to growing use of free letterbox cards about the courses by local churches.

Advertising for courses will also be featured on website <ninemsn.com.au> in November and eight primary schools in Australia have already shown interest in taking up the Adventist Discovery Centre’s children’s courses for their students.

The majority of the 5500 Adventist Discovery Centre students are based in Australia and New Zealand, although the online courses have recruited students from countries in Africa, Europe and from the United States.

Course instructors also receive questions from the students relating to the Bible, including inquiries about the Sabbath, how to pray, how to develop a relationship with God and tips on witnessing.

According to Mrs Martin, an average of about 45 students graduate and receive a diploma every month, “but we are aiming for more than 100 graduates in November.”

—Melody Tan

More @ <www.adventistmedia.com.au/courses> or call 1300 300 389 within Australia for information about how to use the Discovery Centre’s material at your local church.
SAH awarded for excellence

(Mr Roff adds, “This award also recognises the work of the staff throughout the hospital who put so much work and commitment into providing exemplary patient care.”

SAH Quality Management manager Mary-Anne Noonan and director of the Business Development, Marketing and Public Relations Unit at the SAH, Julie Behrens, accepted the Award from Baxter Healthcare Area Director Maree Coy and Mr Roff during a ceremony at Jupiters Hotel on October 9.

SAH CEO Dr Leon Clark and members of the executive committee have asked for their thanks to be passed on to all the dedicated and committed SAH team members.

“Following on from our great success of achieving four-year accreditation from the ACHS this is a wonderful milestone for the SAH,” Dr Clark said. “It is a tribute to the vision, hard work and team spirit of the wonderful people who are part of our SAH community and who help us to achieve our mission of helping others. Thank you.”

Ms Noonan thanked the APHA on behalf of the SAH community, saying, “This is truly an honour that the hospital will hold very dear to its heart. Since its inception over 103 years ago as a sanatorium, a place of health and healing, the mission of ‘the San’ has always been to provide the best quality care to our local community.

“In accepting this award we are thrilled that the efforts of the hospital executive, the medical, nursing and other allied health professionals, our visiting medical officers, and all the members of the San community, have been recognised.”

The award is currently on display at the SAH. APHA is a national body representing private hospitals across Australia. Baxter Healthcare was the sponsor of the award.—Leisa O’Connor/APHA

Cannington church on fire—literally

CANNINGTON, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Cannington Adventist church in Western Australia suffered between $A100,000 and $A150,000 damage when a fire was deliberately lit in the church around 6.30 am on October 26.

A neighbour noticed black smoke billowing from the church and contacted the fire brigade, who in turn contacted the Police Arson Squad. The church pastor, Jim Tonkin, was also notified.

Several fires were lit inside the building, but only the one by the church organ got started, reducing the organ to ashes and badly damaging the rostrum. The church was blackened with smoke and hymn-books, furniture and electrical equipment were destroyed.

The large open Bible at the front of the church was remarkably found undamaged by the fire.

Repairs to the church had commenced by October 30. Pastor Tonkin said there was major work to be done in the church itself and that it may not be ready for worship services to be held there before Christmas.

With repairs completed in the church hall, members will meet there until the main building has been repaired.—Thea Dines

Day and Offerings:

DECEMBER 9—MISSIONS EXTENSION OFFERING

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With repairs completed in the church hall, members will meet there until the main building has been repaired.—Thea Dines
Satellite evangelism in NNSW sends the right signals

COORANBONG, NEW SOUTH WALES

A little over three years ago, Pastor John Lang, president of the North New South Wales Conference, suggested that the Adventist Book Centre (ABC) based in Cooranbong work to supply satellite dishes to church members.

Allan Hill, manager of the ABC, says, “At that time the price of the equipment was rather expensive and just another problem for us to handle but it was kept in mind. After more than a year, it was still too expensive. But God answers prayers and one supplier could supply us at a reasonable price, so by the end of June the ABC was up and running, supplying satellite dishes.”

A decision was made not to totally “preach to the converted,” meaning that the satellite evangelism would be used to reach all people, Adventist and non-Adventist alike. Advertisements were aired on the local Christian radio station, Rhema FM, and were a success.

Mr Hill says, “Our first sale was to a family who were travelling down the freeway—they heard the ad on Rhema and immediately turned off on the Morisset off-ramp and came to the ABC and purchased their satellite equipment and they are rapt in the programs.

“We have had another two people do the same thing. One person—a Baptist—was travelling home to Brisbane, heard the ad and came in and purchased his dish. It gives us the opportunity to communicate to people about our beliefs and experiences.”

A variety of people have had the satellites installed, including employees of Rhema FM.

With approximately 80 per cent of sales of satellite equipment made to non-Adventists, Mr Hill says there are many stories to tell of outreach and people’s further interest in obtaining Christian and Adventist material to read and listen to.

Currently, the Nelson Bay Adventist church is going to work in partnership with the ABC, by placing an ad in the local paper to advertise satellite TV.

“We have many calls from people wanting information on the dish,” says Mr Hill. “They ask many questions, both regarding the systems but also on what we believe and the events occurring in the world. It just opens up the opportunity to witness to them and provides opportunities for us to meet more people, listen to their needs and find out how they worship and advise them that there are programs that would suit their needs—programs that are available on Hope Channel and JABN.

“The Sabbath question is nearly always mentioned because we are closed on Saturday but open on Sunday, so they want to know why we are closed. Some of them already know about Sabbath and respect us for keeping it.”

Mr Hill adds, “Working at an Adventist Book Centre is a tremendous privilege as God brings the people to us and we can witness to them.”

—Adele Nash/Allan Hill

More @ www.nnswabc.com

Reg and Wanda Swensen rode their bikes some 240 kilometres to get to the Indiana camp-meeting, Michigan, USA. At an average rate of 17 km/h and stopping every hour or so to rest and refill their water bottles, the Swensens spoke at the camp-meeting, sharing how a new interest in their health—particularly in the CHIP (Coronary Health Improvement Project) program—changed their lives.—Candy Clark

◆ The British government is proposing new religious-based schools that receive government funding will have to make at least 25 per cent of their admissions available to “non-believing” students. The announcement follows concerns expressed in the media that some faith-based schools tend to be exclusive, making it more difficult for children to integrate into general society and to learn to tolerate those with different backgrounds. Seventh-day Adventist educators have always welcomed pupils of all faiths and a recent survey of all 11 Seventh-day Adventist schools in England and Ireland shows some 47 per cent of pupils come from a non-Adventist background.—Victor Halbert/ANN staff

◆ During a Sesame Street Live tour, Elmo made the rounds at Seventh-day Adventist-owned Florida Children’s Hospital on October 4, cheering up young patients with an entertaining routine and bedside visits.—ANN staff

◆ iGive.com is generating donations to Hope Channel. iGive.com has arrangements with more than 650 stores, including major brands like Barnes & Noble, Dell Computers and eBay, and has already donated more than $US2 million. A sign-up, with Hope Channel your selected charity, earns a $US5 donation with the first purchase (made within 45 days of sign-up) and up to 26 per cent from all other purchases. This opportunity is officially endorsed by Hope Channel.—Gary Gibbs

Signs up @ iGive.com/html/referr.cfm?memberid=462858 &causeid=32585

STRETCH YOUR HEART AND ATTITUDE @ WWW.ADVENTISTVOLUNTEERS.ORG

November 25, 2006
PAU hosts international conference

PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Pacific Adventist University (PAU) held a two-day Capacity Workshop Program on September 21 and 22. The conference was sponsored and funded by the Oceania Development Network (ODN) in an effort to help train researchers in not only writing research proposals but implementing them successfully and also to collaborate in a united effort to turn findings into policies.

ODN is an affiliation of Global Development Network, which is based in New Delhi, India.

The program was officially opened by Dr Ian Whiston, acting deputy vice-chancellor for PAU, who welcomed all participants and thanked ODN for the initiative of sponsoring a workshop “of such wonderful potential.”

Attending were faculty members from local universities, representatives from the University of the South Pacific, National Research Institute, Bank of Papua New Guinea and the International Monetary Fund.

Sessions included topics on policy tools, research techniques, case studies in research and research administration and report writing, all presented by highly qualified academics from around the South Pacific. John Corcoran, senior lecturer in the School of Arts and Humanities at PAU, who helped convene the conference, also presented his most recent research paper.

More than 40 participants attended the conference. For the past two years, ODN headquarters has been based at the University of Papua New Guinea. As of July next year, however, the headquarters will be relocated to the National University of Samoa.

Church provides HIV/AIDS training

MILNE BAY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Adventist youth leaders in Milne Bay were able to learn more about sexual health and lifestyle diseases during a health promotion and HIV/AIDS training week held in mid-October at Alo-Tau. The training was a follow-up to prior training given to some of the leaders who attended similar workshops.

The nine days of training were conducted by Adventist health ministries director Gad Kosto and program manager James Gahare, who are both health workers.

Mr Kosto encouraged the youth leaders to set an example to their peers through their positive attitude toward promoting good sexual health behaviours and living a healthy lifestyle.

The 56 participants, 20 of whom were women, are mainly youth leaders in Adventist churches. They said they felt they were equipped with a basic knowledge of sexual health, which will make them feel more confident to discuss HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections with their peers. The majority also said that this is the first time they had attended church-organised training on sexual health to target their peer group, which has helped them a great deal.

—Martina Darrias

◆ The small Truthfinders church in Motueka, New Zealand, was so affected by the tragic death of two children in a house fire that it initiated a fund to supply at least one smoke alarm to every home in the area. Members joined with schools, individuals, businesses and other churches in raising $NZ6000 to buy more than 1000 smoke alarms. The alarms were delivered to householders who asked for them and the local fire service offered to fit them for free. Church members dropped flyers into 2453 mailboxes to notify homeowners of the offer. Help is also offered to those who need help with chores around their house or property and the church leaders meet other community organisations in the area once a month. “Giving out these fire alarms I think was probably one of the best ways that we have been able to reach out into the community,” says Ken Frost. —Lavinia Ngatokoko

◆ The Australian Democrats political party are refusing to publish an online survey about God and government after a campaign by Christian groups “skewed” the results. Democrats leader Lyn Allison said 40 times the usual number responded to the survey, and overwhelmingly took the position advocated by some Christian leaders. Normally the party would be happy with 1000 responses, but the church and state survey got 40,000. Senator Allison says it is ironic that a survey on the influence of churches should attract such an intense effort by churches to apply influence. —Australian Prayer Network

◆ A vicar has come to the rescue of a small New Zealand town that ran out of women’s underwear. A group of women at the local Anglican church revealed the crisis caused when the only clothing shop in the small town of Inglewood no longer stocked women’s underwear.

“We’re going to have what’s been called a knickers run,” says Reverend Gary Husband, who came up with the solution. Volunteers will now take anyone without transport to the nearby city of New Plymouth, about 20 km away, to buy their essentials.

—news.com.au

November 25, 2006
Study: Is church making you chubby?

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, USA

Church attendance is supposed to be about growth—spiritual growth—not physical growth. But that’s not always the case among churchgoers in the United States, says Dr Ken Ferraro, a Purdue University researcher.

According to Purdue University News, Dr Ferraro, a professor of sociology who has studied religion and body weight since the early 1990s, analysed the religious practices and body mass index of more than 2,500 people from 1996 to 1999. He found that those who are religious are more likely to be obese than the general population. The results of Dr Ferraro’s study appeared in the June issue of the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion.

Many church leaders agree that health-wise Adventists are starting to look a lot like the general population. A 2001 survey on Adventists living in Australia and New Zealand showed 53 per cent of adult members are overweight.

Adventists in the countries of the church’s Northern-Asia Pacific region don’t seem to have an obesity problem just yet, something that church leaders are linking to lifestyle. Clearly church affiliation in and of itself does not cause obesity. But Adventist Church leaders agree that many of the traditions church members hold dear can contribute to weight gain.

Dr Ferraro explains that many religious activities are rooted in the high-calorie food often served at Bible-study breakfasts and fellowship lunches. Add to that the sedentary nature of most religious programs—sitting through midday service, prayer meetings, Bible studies and Sabbath-afternoon programs—and it’s clear that being religious can help pack on kilograms.

Dr Allan Handysides, health ministries director for the General Conference, points to individual responsibility. Dr Ferraro, though, says churches must do something about their members’ health soon. He says, “If religious leaders and organisations neglect this issue, they will contribute to an epidemic that will cost the health-care system millions of dollars and reduce the quality of life for many [members].”

Jonathan Duffy, the health ministries director for the South Pacific Division, believes the health message of the Adventist Church is fast becoming pure rhetoric, rather than being practised, and points to a 2001 survey of Adventists in New Zealand and Australia.

Of the results, Mr Duffy says, “Indeed this is surprising for a group who profess to be a people of health, but are we, or is it just a part of our heritage? When was the last time you heard a sermon on health?”

Mr Duffy continues, “Health has long been a litmus test for our religiosity. You were a good Adventist because you didn’t do this, now you are a mature Adventist because you are no longer tied to the old ‘works’ thing and you show it by doing what you didn’t used to do.

“For example, Adventists didn’t eat meat or drink alcohol. So how do we emphasise the theology of health, the relationship between my health and my spiritual well-being? We have stopped talking about it and the church has stopped doing it and who is left to talk about it?”

Jonathan Stacey

Students return to serve communities

COORANBONG, NEW SOUTH WALES

Almost half the record number of Avondale College students who volunteered a week of their holidays to serve in local communities have returned this semester.

A team of 22 from the college’s Lake Macquarie campus returned to Coonabarabran in northwest New South Wales, 12 from the college returned to Macquarie Fields in southern Sydney, while 10 returned to Bourke in the Outback.

“You can make a good impact in a week, but when you start coming back, that’s when your presence becomes more tangible,” says Mr Knut. Local builder Jonathan Butcher helped the team by providing tools and materials. The team also cleared the couple’s walls, cleaned under their house, mowed their lawn and painted their house.

Corina Goncalves and Monique Rogers say it is important to return to a local community as it reinforces relationships. “It’s amazing how God is slowly breaking down walls,” says Miss Rogers.

Macquarie Fields member Jess McNeill agrees. She and other team members speak of the week-long visit in July who is still attending church. “While we were there, it didn’t feel like we made an impact, but now we know we have.” —Brenton Stacey

ADRA—UK accepts donations via SMS

LONDON, ENGLAND

The short messaging service (SMS) is used for everything these days, from voting for reality TV contestants to downloading ringtones, MP3s and videos.

And now in the United Kingdom it can be used to make donations to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). ADRA—UK officials say small donations by SMS are appealing to younger people because it is an amount they can afford to donate via a medium they use and understand.

They do not need a credit or debit card, chequebook or even cash to make a donation—all they need is a phone. The messages are charged at standard rate, and the service currently only available in the UK.—ANN

November 25, 2006
You should be angry!

BY BRUCE MANNERS

There are two reasons why you should be angered by the Ron Williamson story. The first is simple: Williamson was one of life’s losers who found himself on death row without conclusive evidence that he’d committed the murder that put him there.

In his first foray into nonfiction, best-selling author John Grisham tells Williamson’s story in The Innocent Man. “Not in my most creative moment could I have conjured up a story as rich and as layered as Ron’s,” writes Grisham. He came across the story accidentally when he found Williamson’s obituary in The New York Times a couple of years ago. “Within a few hours, I had talked to his sisters, Annette and Renee, and suddenly I had a book on my hands.”

Williamson was born in the small town of Ada, Oklahoma, and showed promise as a baseball player. In 1971, as a teenager, he was signed up by a major league team, but only ever played in the minor league. Six years later he was home, his “dreams broken by a bad arm and bad habits—drinking, drugs and women.”

He began to show signs of mental illness. He spent his time in and out of depression with bouts of drinking and clubbing while waiting for another baseball team to recognize his talent.

In 1982, Debbie Carter, a 21-year-old waitress, was brutally raped and murdered. For five years the case went unsolved, with Ada police showing little interest in one suspect, Glen Gore, who had argued with her outside a nightclub that night.

Gore’s testimony that Williamson was at the nightclub on the night of the murder (he wasn’t) pointed the finger in a direction police wanted to go. Poor police work, poor legal representation and poor work from the judge placed Williamson on death row.

Once there, his mental condition deteriorated as he loudly and tirelessly protested his innocence. And why would authorities try to properly deal with a mental condition in someone about to die? The only medication he received was to quieten him down.

A few months later, he was told his execution date had been set, but there had been a clerical error. When the date was set—in 1994—a legal team was called in to check his case—part of the normal procedure before an execution.

Here, at last, the holes were found in the case. A judge ordered a stay of execution and 12 months later ordered a retrial. DNA testing had come in by then, and this proved conclusively that Williamson was not at the scene of the crime.

He was released to live his final few years in freedom, but he remained a troubled man. Angry about how he was treated? You should be!

Glen Gore is currently serving life imprisonment for the crime. DNA testing placed him at the crime scene.

Williamson was never a faithful church attender. His parents were, as are his sisters—Annette played piano and organ in their church for 40 years. His was a Pentecostal church where, Grisham notes, the “worship service is not for the timid.”

The first Sunday after his exoneration and release, Williamson, his family and a few friends arrived at church and took the front row. During the first hymn he was on his feet, clapping along and singing and smiling.

The pastor, however, failed to mention his presence, but did manage to say during the prayer that God loved everyone, including “Ronnie.”

“As the music cranked up and the choir began rocking and the congregation got loud, a handful of church members made their way over to Ron for a hello, a hug, a welcome back… . The rest of the good Christian folks glared at the murderer in their midst.”

Angry? Does how he was treated make you angry? It should!

Do you understand why their organist was not available next Sunday, or any Sunday after? Annette now attends elsewhere.

But this is bigger than this case and this situation. And this is not a time for finger-pointing, but for learning. There are many unfair situations where we have little control or say. We should be angry and do what we can.

Then there are situations where it’s more personal, where we do have a responsibility to act like a follower of Jesus. On that basis, how should a Ron Williamson be treated, even if he were a killer?

Besides, who commits the greater evil? Those who judge and act in a way that threatens an individual’s here-and-now life? Or those who judge and act in a way that threatens an individual’s eternal life?*

* When Williamson was dying of cancer, he made a firm commitment to God. Grisham—a Sunday-school teaching Baptist—details this conversion experience at length in his book, using Williamson as a case study.

Bruce Manners is senior pastor of Avondale College church, Cooranbong, New South Wales.
Several months ago, I was invited to an in-home demonstration of a cleaning product. Not being the kind of person to get wildly excited about cleaning, I decided not to go—there were other things I’d much rather do than sit around eating hors d’oeuvres and attempting to look excited about mindless chores.

But, at the 11th hour, my friend convinced me to attend with her. If nothing else, the food would be worth the outing, plus we both wanted to see the inside of the hostess’s home. We promised each other solemnly to not buy anything.

We sat in her immaculate home and nibbled the (very delicious) food. I studied my surroundings surreptitiously. There was no dust on bookshelves or light fittings. There were no grimy fingerprints on light switches and the big mirror hanging in the entry-way had not a single flyspeck.

The saleswoman delivered her pitch and invited us to the bathroom to witness the cleaning powers of her product. So off we went to the immaculate space, while the hostess—as hostesses are wont to do—apologised for the kids’ fingerprints on the handbasin and the soap scum on the bath. She hadn’t, she said, cleaned for a week so that we could see how well the product worked on a less-than-immaculate home.

I proceeded to invite my friends. Their reaction was similar to mine. A bit of a snigger, followed by a polite refusal. I could see that if I really wanted to benefit from this demonstration I would need to sell it a little harder.

I brought myself to the lowest level. I invited friends and acquaintances with the assurance that only at my house would they discover the truth about whether or not the product really worked. I talked about the product’s amazing qualities (according to the saleswoman) all the time. If there were questions that couldn’t wait until the big night, I found the answer in the product catalogue. It hurt, it really hurt, to tell the world that my house was dirty—but it had to be done, because I thought it was important.

Even worse though, was that the bathroom and kitchen did actually need to be dirty when my guests arrived.

It is possible to ignore sticky floors and spotty bathrooms when one’s friends come to visit—but only if there is no cleaning lady excitedly demonstrating her wares and bringing the attention of my friends to the dirty “before” and the clean “after.”

But it was worth it, because my actions reinforced my belief in the product; my actions helped my friends improve their lives; my actions have contributed to making the world a better place.

An uncomfortable feeling followed me as I closed the door after the last guest that evening. Would I do this same thing for Jesus?

Would I incessantly talk about Jesus to people with whom I came in contact? Would I go out of my way to introduce my friends to the only One who can truly improve their lives? Would I steer the conversation in a direction that would ensure I’d get a chance to talk to them about the power of His love? Would I hunt down the answers to their questions in my Bible?

Would I want to give people a genuine chance to have their dirty “befores” transformed into clean “afters”? Or would it be less humiliating to keep my knowledge to myself?

Christine Miles writes from Auckland, New Zealand.
The appeal—and peril—of fundamentalism

BY BERT B BEACH

Fundamentalism" began as a pow-
cerful theological and social reaction
against the 19th and early 20th cen-
tury “higher criticism” of the Bible, and
the concentration of “modernist” church
leaders and theologians on the social and
political issues of the day. Christian funda-
mentalists also took dead aim at the “demon
of evolution,” which they believed needed
to be exorcised from public education and
institutions of higher learning.

While originating in the earlier 20th
century in the United States, fundamental-
cism can no longer be simply associated
with one religion; it has become a world-
wide phenomenon that has infiltrated, so
to speak, all major religions and has be-
come a dominant factor in many local or
national situations.

New equals bad

Church historian Martin Marty says
fundamentalism is essentially a reaction to
and fear of “modernity.” It is also a reaction
against “secularization.” Most human socie-
ties in our world today are generally favourable
to rapid change and pluralisation.

The fundamentalist, in contrast, is op-
posed to change in general, and more spe-
cifically, to pluralism of world views. He
or she wants one view—always their own
view—to have exclusive validity, and there-
fore domination and control. This world
view protests—even with anger and vio-
ence—against the sweeping changes that
have already overwhelmed some societies
or threaten to do so. Fundamentalism as
an organising principle expresses resent-
ment—even rage—against the secularisa-
tion of society, with its resulting moral per-
missiveness and amoral consumer-oriented
materialism and globalisation.

The cumulative effects of the 18th cen-
tury Enlightenment, the American (1775-
83), French (1789-93), and Russian (1917-
19) political revolutions, and the scientif-
ical revolution of the past two centuries have
shifted focus more and more to gaining the most
now from concrete material opportunities.

The attraction of human societies is to ward
totality and freedom, to “live and let live,”
and for flexibility in dealing with sociopolitical
and cultural issues.

Fundamentalism, it seems, is in its es-
sence not a doctrinal phenomenon, but a
basic outlook directed toward the cur-
rent world, protesting against liberalism
and the civilisation. The result is often vehement,
inflexible, pitiless opposition to anything
new and the trampling on the human rights
of the exponents of change and different
opinions. Fundamentalism makes its case
in blood every day, from misguided zealots
who blow up abortion clinics in the name
of Jesus to doctrinal fanatics who blow up
villagers in the name of Allah.

What’s at the core?

Despite all the differences of creed and
kind, there are some consistent threads
running through the tapestry of funda-
mentalism that hold it together: the quest
for purity and perfection; the search for
absolute certainty; tradition and authentic-
ty; and the predilection for a total, glo-
bal world view that controls all aspects
of life. The attention to tradition and the
past characterises most expressions of
fundamentalism.

Today, fundamentalism is found in all
major world religions. While the violent
behaviour of some of its adherents un-
derscores that there is much to deplore
in fundamentalism, thoughtful Adventists
tend to be sympathetic to a number of its
concerns, while also avoiding its mindset.
Adventists have learned we must not ideal-
ise the past, as though life 100 or 200 years
ago was wonderful, with everyone healthy,
well-fed, sober, moral, justly treated, free,
and happy and at peace. When Adventists yearn
for a “revival of primitive godliness,” we
are not wishing to go back and live in the
distant past with all its suffering, horrors
of exploitation and injustice. What we are
seeking is the dedication and surrender to
God’s will exhibited by the early church,
and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit today
in order to finish the work tomorrow.

The breakdown of traditional morality,
followed by growing social permissiveness,
and the economic (and cultural) exploita-
tion of developing countries and segments
of society in Western countries are the evils
against which fundamentalists appropriatel-
ly are protesting. Adventists must continu-
ously give evidence that we never worship
at the altar of secular progress or blindly
accept the modern notion of perfectibility
on earth as inevitable and irresistible.

Inequality writ large

One key reason for the growth of con-
temporary fundamentalism is marginali-
sation. Marginalisation occurs when any
group of people—by race, ethnicity, reli-
gion or economic status—is made to feel
excluded from decision-making in their
society. This is increasingly the case with
the poor in today’s world. Fundamental-
ism can become attractive as a form of
protest for those who feel hopelessly poor,
discriminated against, powerless, margin-
alised and exploited.

Fundamentalists tend to oppose shifts in
international or global power relationships
and object to the socioeconomic and tech-
nological changes that have caused them.
An increasing number of people groups
feel “out of the loop” and marginalised.
Having won independence and nation-
hood, many young nation-states hunger
for the esteem they believed would come
with national identity, and feel humiliated
by the economic, cultural and occasionally
military hegemony exerted over them by

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more powerful states. To them, it seems a kind of “new colonialism,” an attempt to control their cultures and morally subvert their way of life. The resentment of the marginalised is still the most prolific breeding ground for fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism is also frequently a protest against secular national governments, religious neutrality grounded in some form of separation of “church and state”; democratic, representative government, and loyalty to a particular country or people. Fundamentalists object to having religion and religious leaders pushed from the power centre, from the public square, to the periphery and the private home.

In general, fundamentalists view the secular nation both as a danger and a failure. It has not achieved social justice. It has not provided family stability, sobriety, respect and honour. Often the result of secular national government has seemed to be greatly increased crime and divorce rates, drug culture, pornography, homosexuality and rampant corruption in business and political life.

“The good old days”

While we might agree with some of the fundamentalist critique, Adventists must note an element of mythology and historical blindness in fundamentalism. While its adherents are basically against change, and dislike modernity with a vengeance, they do favour one selected change: going back to the “golden age” of tradition.

For fundamentalist Muslims this means “going back” more than 1000 years. For fundamentalist Christians, “going back” can vary greatly—to the 19th century, to the “united” Christendom of the Middle Ages, to the time of the Church Fathers, to the 1st century.

Fundamentalists all seek in their own ways a traditionalism, to go back to the past, adopt the standards of the past, the theology of the pioneers, the legendary heroism of the Teutonic knights, the fortitude of the pioneers, the legendary heroism of the Puritans in America.

Many fundamentalists seek one major reactive change: they want to place their religious views at the centre of life in the home, government, courts, media, schools, the military—in short, everywhere. There is a natural progression in fundamentalism toward religious extremism, and finally to a totalitarian alliance of religion and state working hand in glove.

Each according to its kind

Yet there are, according to some experts, at least three types of fundamentalists: (1) those who engage in direct confrontation with the state and wish to take it over and gain power by the use of every means (the end justifies the means!), including violence and terror, (2) those who want to keep some distance, autonomy and separation from society in order to preserve, protect, and promote their purity, exclusivism and essential identity, (3) those who “flee” the world and avoid contact as much as possible. Those with a flight or escapist mentality try to avoid state requirements such as taxes, licences, military or civilian service, schools, memberships and, of course, any public office. Those with a separationist mentality stay much within groups of like-minded individuals with regard to housing, education, recreation (if any), work and social intercourse. They even tend to use a separate vocabulary, engage with their society only on points of interest, and seek converts who are similarly searching to minimise contact with a distracting world.

Life by the book

While Adventists share with fundamentalists a “high view” of Scripture, we have learned that they tend to quote their Scriptures selectively—be it the Torah, the Bible or the Koran—often using an out-of-context and primitive proof-text approach. Many devout fundamentalists take passages very literally, without seeing the entire perspective, and then apply them simplistically and without reflection to very different present-day situations. Some fundamentalists even rationalise extreme interpretations of their Scriptures to justify the suppression of other opinions and dissent, to support violence, the killing of innocent people, political assassinations, and the “glory of suicide-martyrdom.”

Adventism reminds the world that God inspires His prophets, not in order to provide a weapon for intolerance and rigid dogmatism leading to persecution, but in order to give spiritual inspiration, hope, the gift of love and reasoned guidance to all people. The truth that comes from God through chosen messengers leads to salvation and, in the words of Jesus, “makes you free indeed.”

From their Scriptures, fundamentalists have learned that all humanity is involved in a cosmic war: salvation is at stake and so is eternity. Adventists also witness to a cosmic war—a great controversy between Christ and Satan. But for the Adventist Christian, there is no physical war—no conquest, no jihad, no crusade—between true believer and infidel, but a spiritual conflict between truth and error. There is no place for obstinate, merciless, violent intransigence, harsh punishments or for brutal retaliation against perceived wrongs. Such human-to-human conflicts are ultimately counterfeit controversies, distractions from the spiritual battle for hearts and minds.

It comes down to freedom

The fundamentalist mindset is finally unacceptable to a child of God who is created in His image as a free moral agent and committed to the teachings of Jesus. There is in fundamentalism a built-in resistance to freedom, to learning and to creativity that opposes itself to the God who gave us all these gifts.

Fundamentalism wherever found reveals its taste for bigotry, for fanaticism, for rigid sterility and exclusiveness at a moment when the world is crying out for bridge builders and peacemakers. It revels in control—dogmatically, politically, even in the family—and justifies its refusal to dialogue and learn by its suspicions of other opinions and other faiths. While seeking to preserve the truth about God, fundamentalism ultimately gives a terribly distorted view of His character and His attitudes.

While we may share some of its concerns and also look forward to the day when all things are restored to God’s design, Adventists will relate to fundamentalism as they do to every other human “ism.” In the name of Him who died to set us free, we will build up the kingdom in His way: “For not with swords, loud clashing/Not roll of stirring drums/With deeds of love and mercy/The heavenly kingdom comes.”

Reprinted, with permission, from Adventist Review.

Bert B Beach is a former director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department for the General Conference.

November 25, 2006
"I give up!"

BY JOHN GATE

No don’t! Be patient! The devil is vigorously opposed to anyone actively sharing the good news of Jesus. He will stop at nothing to prevent video ministers from fulfilling their ministry. One of the challenges of video ministry is that video ministers get discouraged for a number of reasons.

Often there’s a lack of accountability. Who do they report to? Usually there is little support in the local church for video ministers. Lack of ownership leads to half-hearted commitment. If a church member is doing video ministry simply because the pastor has asked them to, the chances are there will be little commitment and enthusiasm for the ministry. The result is that the video minister becomes discouraged when people don’t respond as expected.

We need to be persistent and consistent as Jesus was.

In the early Christian church and in the early days of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, pastoral ministry or support ministry was the function of the laypeople. One of Paul’s most recurring pastoral terms is “one anothering”—comfort one another, care for one another, edify one another, exhort one another, forgive one another, love one another and more. These are all pastoral terms.

A local church pastor who invests most of his or her time in pastoral work is denying church members that privilege, and will be short on time to involve him or herself and church members in outreach, which is his or her primary calling.

So how do we support our video ministers? Some of the functions of support are listening, caring, training, encouraging and praying with. Members can support members, and that’s God’s plan. There is no need to introduce another level of meetings or training within the church program. We have enough programs already.

A number of churches have implemented the Sabbath school class as a support group. The first five or 10 minutes of Sabbath school class time are spent on reporting on video ministry, and then praying for the video ministers and the people who are watching the videos.

In larger churches it may be possible for a Sabbath school class to be made up wholly of video ministers. This is an ideal situation, and members then get support, accountability and encouragement.

The devil will give lots of good reasons and excuses why you ought to stop delivering videos. Don’t give up. Don’t let the devil win. Keep on until there is no further interest in viewing the videos. 

This is part of a series of articles exploring video ministry and how it can work in your community.

John Gate is director of the Adventist Discovery Centre.

And the ________ grew, and she brough him to Pharaoh’s ________ and he became her ________.

So she called his name ________, saying, “Because I drew him out of the ________.”

Exodus 2:10 NKJV

Draw

Draw this picture of Moses, the prince of Egypt.

1. Sketch a circle for the head and an oval for the body.
2. Add lines for arms and circles to indicate where the hands and feet will go.
3. Add lines for legs and sketch in the face.
4. Fill out your drawing with clothes, hair and jewellery. Ink in the lines then colour in your picture.

Hi kids, Moses grew up the palace as a prince of Egypt. You can read all about his amazing childhood years in chapter 2 in the book of Exodus in the Bible.

Record Roo’s kids corner

Fill in the Blanks

RR: [ = [ Ve

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Noncombat irrelevant

STEPHEN FERGUSON, WA

Having served as an officer in the Australian Army for four years, I enjoyed “Adventists and noncombatancy” (Feature, October 21). The rise of asymmetric warfare has made the noncombatancy distinction increasingly irrelevant. It is far more dangerous to drive a truck, be a medic or even a chaplain in Baghdad than it is to drive a tank. The distinction also means nothing to the insurgents.

The distinction between military and police is also blurring. There really is little difference between a Federal Policeman and a soldier walking the beat in Honiara.

There is also hypocrisy in paying taxes, voting and working for governments (see Romans 13:1-7) who send sons into harm without being willing to make the same sacrifice. If you voted Liberal in the last Australian Federal election, you’re culpable.

Finally, John the Baptist (see Luke 3:14) and Jesus (see Matthew 9:9) told soldiers to be just, but not to resign. Jesus told Peter to put the sword away (see Matthew 26:52), but it was Jesus Himself who’d commanded it be taken up in the first place (see Luke 22:36). While we should “turn the other cheek” (see Luke 6:29), this was against personal vengeance (see Romans 12:17-19), and not the legitimate use of force (see John 2:15, Romans 13:1-4, 1 Peter 2:13, 14).

Remember God is a God of justice as well as mercy (see Genesis 9:6; Matthew 23:23; 12:20, Isaiah 11:4). While we should always do everything to encourage peace (Isaiah 2:4), we must never allow it as an excuse for evil to prosper (Isaiah 1:1-31).

Caring words

LEONIE DONALD, NZ

I shed tears as I read “Mourning the Crocodile Hunter” (Perspective, September 21). Steve Irwin surely shared his passion for all creatures great and small with millions around the world.

I really appreciated the article that was written with so much sensitivity, an article that would have taken many hours of thought; an article that was written for the Glasshouse Country News and therefore had to cater for a secular reading audience.

People were in shock at the sudden demise of Steve Irwin. So thank you, Pastor Brownhill, for an article I hold with the high esteem it deserves.

And, yes, thankfully God is in control.

Commiss-or-dained?

UNA TURNER, NSW

In response to “Celebration as ministry is affirmed” (News, October 28), I looked up the word “commissioned” in the World Book Dictionary and it states “give authority, power or duty to.” Is this merely a subtle way of ordaining pastors? What else could it mean? Also, having an Anglican female pastor included in the ceremony—does this not demonstrate that we are following in the footsteps of the Anglican Church to ordain female pastors?

It also mentions two others who have been “commissioned.” If our church is going to ordain woman pastors, say so, don’t use veiled terminology like “commissioned” to disguise the fact. I have heard there are female pastors ordained to the ministry in the United States in our churches.

I am not against women working for the Lord; take ministers’ wives for instance—they do a mammoth job in helping their husbands. There are those who minister to old folk and others again who fill very much needed tasks for women.

But to single out any one of them for ordination is not biblical—there were good women in Jesus’ day who could well have been ordained—and they were by the Holy Spirit to do the work allotted to them—but none of them were ordained as pastors.

If our church is going to ordain woman pastors—say so—don’t use veiled terminology like “commissioned.”

Novel gazing

FLO CRAM, SA

Psychiatry lectures not mentioning a connection between novel reading and lunacy (“Careful reading,” Letters, November 4) does not mean the statement is untrue. Experts are sometimes wrong.

When the statement was made many years ago that tobacco was an insidious poison, few agreed. In fact, even in the 1990s, some doctors were telling their patients to draw the smoke into the lungs as it would do them good. No-one in their right mind would advocate that position today.

I can remember when some university students were told to smoke “pot,” as it was good for the brain and would help their studies! Of course, this too has been entirely disproved.

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.
**Noticeboard**

**Obituaries**

Badley, Leon Richard (Les), born 2.8.1921 at Blaydon, England, died 13.10.06 at Royal Perth Hospital, WA. He migrated to Perth with his family when he was three years old in 1935. He married Joan, who predeceased him in 1997. He is survived by his sons and daughters-in-law, Terry and Dianne (Linda, California, USA), Allan and Judy (Sydney, NSW), and Barry and Gay (Perth, WA); his seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Nicole McInerney.

Johnson, Eric John, born in 1912 in Wingham, eldest child of missionary parents, Patricia and Mrs E J Johnson, died 9.9.06 at Kings Langley, NSW. In 1942 he married Lorrie Hazenra. He was predeceased by his brother, Lynn, and his sister, Joan. He is survived by his wife (Kings Langley), his daughters and their spouses, Christine and Peter Gribb, Outlook (Brisbane, Qld), Nette and Peter Vetter (Mount Colah, NSW), and Donna and Rattie Serle (Cooranbong) and his sons, Robbin Frab and Bob Lumsden (both of Cooranbong), his seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Eric was greatly loved and widely respected. From Interview Magazine, the Christian Book Centre.

Kemp—Brown. Trevor Jeffery Kemp, son of Stanford and Ivey Kemp (born, SAI), and Thelma Elizabeth Ann Brown, daughter of Thomas and Melis Brown (Strathalbyn), were married at Agapantha Farm, “Little-wood,” Little Hampton, on 16.10.06 at Coast Chapel, Little Bay, NSW, and Kylie Adele Jeffcoate, daughter of Terence and Judith Geelan (Sydney, NSW), and Dina Bratovic, daughter of Gino and Estelle (Geelong, Vic), were married on 3.9.06 at the Werribee Mansion, Werribee. The couple have just celebrated their first wedding anniversary and are happy and planning for more. With best wishes. Trevor and Dina.

**Weddings**

**Obituary**

Johanson, Irene Louisa, born 10.1.1909 in the Barossa Valley, SA; died 1.9.06 at Grafton. She is survived by her children, Jim, Joan, and Keith; her two grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. She was a tireless worker for Charlestown and Hamilton churches. As a deacon, she had a passionate involvement with JMVs and Pathfinders. She was always serving and giving in her local community. Gail Kennewell.

Tayler, Halle Vivienne Rose, born 12.9.06 at Grafton, NSW; died 13.9.06 at Grafton. She is survived by her parents, Chris and Mo, her sister, Charlie, and her grandparents, Trevor and Doreen Haul (Wingham) and Lorraine Tasker (Ferry Island). When Jesus comes “little children are borne by holy angels to their mother’s arms.” The family are eagerly awaiting this event.

Robinson, Katherine, born 2.10.1915 in Mount Gambier, SA, died 13.9.06 in St George Hospital, Sydney, NSW. In June 1940 she married Alan, who predeceased her in 1981. She is survived by her children, Joan, Ria, John and Barry, her eight grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Kath was a trained nurse and teacher. She faithfully served in many offices throughout the 60 years she attended Hurstville church. She rests in the hope of the Resurrection.

Peter Robins.

Skelton, James Francis (Jim), born 9.2.1912 at West Wyalong, NSW; died 5.6.06 in Charles Harrison Memorial Home (Cooranbong). On 29.1.37 he married Lorna. He is survived by his parents, Chris and Merv, and his seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. They all gathered at the graveside to watch Jim be placed next to her loving husband, George, to await their Lord and Saviour.

Mark Taylor.
Positions vacant

- **Karalundi Aboriginal Education Centre (Mookatharra, WA)** is seeking expressions of interest in the following positions for 2007: Cook; Male Dorm Parent; and 2 Teachers (Years 1–3 and 8–10). For job descriptions and general inquiries please contact Glenn Grey, administrator@karalundi.wa.edu.au; or phone (08) 9397 8000. Applications in writing (including your CV) should be forwarded to Administrator, PMB 6, Mookatharra WA 6642.

- **Accountant, Macquarie College (Walland, NSW)**. The Macquarie College Council is seeking to appoint an experienced and qualified Accountant to oversee and administer the financial, business and property operations of the college. For job description, email <administrations@macquariecollege.nsw.edu.au>. Essential criteria: Practising member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; financial management experience; and relevant tertiary and professional qualifications. Applications in writing (including detailed résumé and references) should be forwarded to the Principal, Macquarie College, PO Box 517, Wallendah NSW 2280; no later than November 30, 2006.

- **Macquarie College teaching opportunities—Macquarie College (NSW)** is seeking qualified teachers in the following disciplines: Science Mathematics, Bible/History, Business/Legal Studies. Job description and applications: email <principal@macquariecollege.nsw.edu.au>; phone (02) 4954 6222.

- **Nurse Manager—Bethesda Home and Hospital (Manukau City, NZ)** is seeking a registered general or comprehensive nurse with a current practising certificate, preferably with a postgraduate qualification related to the industry. Requirements include: strong clinical skills, experience in Human Resource management in nursing; the ability to work effectively with multidisciplinary and management teams; and fantastic rapport with staff, residents and families. Applications in writing (including CV) should be forwarded to CEO, Bethesda Private Bag 5080, Manukau City, Auckland, NZ; or email <mcmichael@adventist.org.au>; no later than November 27, 2006.

- **Accountant—Seventh-day Adventist Age Care (Western Australia) Limited** is seeking an Accountant to join the team at its Retirement Village/Nursing Home complex at Busselton, Perth. The successful applicant will hold a degree in business/accounting and/or an accounting qualification (CA/CPA), and have suitable experience and knowledge of accounting/palliative packages. They will also have a commitment to the church and its mission. Applications in writing should be forwarded to the CEO at 31 Webb Street, Rossmoyne WA 6148; or by email <adventistinfo@adventist.org.au>; by December 9, 2006.

- **Health Course Coordinator—Manumpana College (Karragullen, WA)** is seeking a full-time coordinator commencing March/April, for a new Health Centre in 2007. The successful applicant will be deeply committed to Christ and the SDA Church; balanced in theology and lifestyle; sensitive to indigenous people, issues and culture; and with formal qualifications in health science. Applications in writing (including résumé, referee, copies of details and current SDA membership) should be forwarded to Human Resources, Manumpana College, 198 School Road, Karragullen WA 6121; phone/fax (08) 9397 7244; or email <adventistinfo@adventist.org.au> by December 15, 2006.

- **Business Manager—Seventh-day Adventist Age Care (New South Wales) Limited** is seeking a Business Manager for the aged care operations of the church in northern NSW. Those interested in this senior management position must be team oriented and capable of developing and maintaining the financial operations in accordance with the objectives of the company. Applicants in writing (including details of current SDA membership) should be forwarded with your resume to Mr Greg Fordon, Assistant CFO, North NSW Aged Care Investments Limited, c/o 31 Webb Street, Rossmoyne WA 6148.

- **Principal, Macquarie College (NNSW)** is seeking an experienced and qualified Principal to lead the College. The successful applicant will hold a degree in business/accounting and/or an accounting qualification (CA/CPA), and have suitable experience and knowledge of accounting/palliative packages. They will also have a commitment to the church and its mission. Applications in writing (including CV) should be forwarded to CEO, Bethesda Private Bag 5080, Manukau City, Auckland, NZ; or email <mcmichael@adventist.org.au>; no later than November 27, 2006.

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Finally

There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, to find fault with the rest of us.

November 25, 2006