All about love

If you had one word to sum up what Valentine's Day is all about, what would it be? While there may be some merit to dubbing the occasion "pagan" or "monetary", Valentine's Day really is all about "love". But if God is love (1 John 4:8), couldn't it be said Valentine's Day is all about God? We'll leave that up for you to decide. Nevertheless, RECORD would like to wish all our readers a happy, love-filled, God-centred Valentine's Day. Well, for yesterday really... but, as they say, better late than never.

While we're on the subject of love, we know you're going to love the stories in this edition of RECORD eNews. There's just a wonderful Marmite-y flavour to them...

Marmite resumes production in Christchurch

New Zealanders around the world breathed a collective sigh of relief as Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing announced production has started on the yeast spread Marmite.

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**Marmite and the second coming**

Rennée Mason loves Marmite, and was one of the lucky few who was able to grab a few tubs in preparation for Marmageddon. But the experience left her wondering, "am I as prepared for the second coming of Jesus as I was for Marmageddon?"

**Will you be my Valentine?**

Ladies, feel free to read on, but this one’s for the fellas. It’s time to abandon Hollywood’s concept of love. The Bible gives a much clearer picture of what true love is. And men, listen up—it’s a tough, strong, heroic type of love, not the mushy stuff promoted by chick flicks and magazines.

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Moves towards same-sex marriage in the UK, France and the US – is change inevitable? And are there serious scientists doing real science on the creation/evolution issue? Or are they just lobbyists pushing an ideological agenda? Answers to the tough questions on this week’s episode of Record InFocus.

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Christchurch, New Zealand

New Zealanders around the world breathed a collective sigh of relief as Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing announced production has started on the yeast spread Marmite.

General manager of Sanitarium’s New Zealand operations, Pierre van Heerden, announced this week that New Zealand retailers would have Marmite on the shelves from March 20. Only the 250g jars will be produced until the supply chain is filled.

“Our loyal consumers have really struggled not having marmite available to them,” said Mr van Heerden. "We are so pleased to can announce Marmite will be back on retail shelves again. Once we’ve filled the pipeline in New Zealand, we will export to Australia again. This may take a few months."

Marmite’s return was a carefully guarded secret. New Zealand media reported that only Mr van Heerden and Prime Minister John Key knew the exact date of return.

"People have been so relieved," said Mr van Heerden. "Everyone is very excited from the prime minister right through to the retailers."

The iconic brand, loved by New Zealanders for more than 100 years, has had a 15-month hiatus after severe earthquakes damaged the Christchurch factory.

The factory has been reinforced and strengthened, meeting stringent safety standards. "The most important thing for us was that [the factory is] safe for our staff," Mr van Heerden
commented. "That is absolutely non-negotiable for us and we’re really pleased now that we’ve got the factory back up to standard and that we’re back into production."

While Marmite’s return is a triumph, this story is just as much about human resilience and Christchurch’s recovery. Initially, it was feared that Sanitarium would have to relocate out of Christchurch permanently. While Weet-Bix production was moved to Auckland, Marmite staff were retained on full wages during the shut down period.

"It was a really difficult time for staff in Christchurch," said Mr van Heerden. "A lot of them lost their homes. It was a very difficult period."

The factory looks very different now that rebuilding has taken place but Mr van Heerden is keen to assure customers that the product is still the same. "We are using the same equipment, making the same product to the same recipe."

And for those of us that have lived through "Marmeggedon", that is the best news of all.
You may have heard (and many of you will be experiencing) that New Zealand is having a Marmite drought due to production stopping while Sanitarium repairs damage sustained during the Christchurch earthquake.

I admit I am somewhat of a Marmite addict. Luckily I obtained some "inside knowledge", so I was warned that Marmite would run out. Therefore, when I noticed the Marmite shelf at my local supermarket looking a little bare, I realised this was a sign of the coming Marmite drought rather than just a hiccup in stock getting to the store or lazy workers not stocking shelves. With this knowledge I prepared for "Marmageddon" (as the media has been calling it) by stocking up.

I also warned one of my workmates—a fellow Marmite addict—so she could prepare herself. Luckily I received the tip-off before the television news announcement that resulted in people stripping the supermarket shelves bare of Marmite by the end of that week.

My experience with Marmite has made me think: am I as prepared for the second coming of Jesus as I was for Marmageddon? As Seventh-day Adventists we have "inside knowledge" of what is about to happen. We see the signs as described in Scripture, we know time is about to run out and that people need to prepare. Am I using this information to prepare myself and warn others so they will also be prepared when Jesus comes? And am I looking forward with anticipation to Jesus' return as much as I am looking forward to the return of Marmite?
Rennée Mason is a psychologist who works with children with special educational needs in Whangarei, New Zealand.
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Ephesians 5:25–33

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her
26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to
present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish,
but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their
own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own
body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are
members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be
united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I
am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his
wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

I can’t write an article on Valentine’s Day without giving a shout out to my beautiful wife.
Happy Valentine’s, Lina! Love you lots!

Valentine’s Day—a day of roses and chocolates, notes and whispered sweet nothings. A day
to cook your spouse breakfast in bed and be especially nice. It's a day that supposedly
celebrates love. Love is a good thing to celebrate, I guess. After all, John says that God IS
love. We are told that hope and faith are important but the greatest of the trifecta is love.

Valentine’s is an opportunity to do something nice for the ones you love. However, I’m not
sure about all the glitter and commercialisation that Valentine’s has become. According to
news.com.au, Australian pet owners are expected to spend $46.9 million on gifts for their
pets. Just on their pets. How much more will people spend on each other. The price of flowers jumps before Valentine’s, shops have a lot of red, a lot of chocolate and teddy bears out to exploit our guilt or need to get our other half something special. The pressure is enormous. It is everywhere. Everyone tries to cash in. But what are we really celebrating. Is Valentine’s Day just a monument to materialism?

Sometimes, society presents love as a sugar-coated, soft lens, warm fuzzy feeling that warms your heart and brightens your face. Myths like love at first sight, falling out of love and “it’s all about physical chemistry” abound. The way it happens in the movies is not much like real life. When Hollywood tries to take a “real life” look at love, it is often cynical and heavily individualistic. Traditional notions of marriage being forever between one man and one woman are seen as unnatural.

I find the Bible gives a much clearer picture of what true love is. And men, listen up. It’s a tough, strong, heroic type of love, not the mushy stuff promoted by chic flicks and magazines. Sorry ladies, I’m going to be talking to the guys a bit, but you can probably learn something too. With divorce rates rising and often topping 50 per cent, clearly something is wrong. Modern love needs fixing.

In Ephesians 5, Paul gives some very practical advice to those in marriage. I’m going to focus on Paul’s advice to husbands about what love is because I am a husband and it’s something I need to practise. Here we go!

1. True love equals sacrifice. Women often read these passages and stop at the submit. They say, “we have to submit, while he only has to love? Love is easy, not fair.” But they are thinking of worldly love. Look at the love husbands are called to. Love like the love Christ had for His church, where He “gave Himself up for her.” I don’t know about you but this is often the hardest part of my marriage. Putting aside my wants, my desires, my schedules, my expectations for my partner. Now this is not about sacrificing dreams, beliefs or standards. That is where we are often confused. We think sacrifice is compromise and we compromise the wrong stuff. To sacrifice like Christ is to put your life on the line to save, protect and love your spouse. I will admit to struggling with this lately. My daily prayer is that God forgives my selfishness and helps me to be more patient with my wife, when she doesn’t meet my expectations or when I verbalise my frustration at her. At church we talk about the world’s 50/50 model. In a relationship you are expected to share everything, compromise and meet the other’s needs but only to 50 per cent. The problem is that that leads to score keeping. I did my bit, did you do yours? Christ demonstrates the 100 per cent model. Go 100 per cent of the way and you’ll be too busy to count. You’ll be focussed on meeting your partner where they
are at. Men, be willing to provide that love she needs. It’s not easy but neither is dying on a cross.

2. Bring out her best. My mother told me before I was married that my girlfriend (at the time, now wife) and I should bring out the best in each other. That stuck with me. Here Paul encourages us to sacrifice like Jesus for the purpose of making His church holy and blameless. While we can’t do anything that can “save” our wives or cleanse them of sin, we can model righteousness to our families, set a good example and encourage our wives and families to do right. Jesus overlooks our failures and covers our faults. It doesn’t mean we are perfect but His true love gets us through. Making our wives clean and unblemished doesn’t mean they’ll be perfect, but that they will be working on it as we work on loving them better. Role models are few and far between these days and there are countless studies to show that children who grow up without a solid male role model are more likely to show at risk behaviour. Husbands, if you put your body on the line and her life ahead of yours, you will both grow together.

3. Feed your body. Most of us have enough to eat, we shower every day, we visit the doctor if we are sick or wounded. In short, we care for ourselves. If we are one flesh, we are called to care for each other as well. If you have already sacrificed and put her first then you must provide. This is a call to provide spiritual food as well as physical. If you love her more than yourself (as so many love songs and Valentine’s cards proclaim), then it shouldn’t be hard to service her needs before your own.

This is challenging love, this is true love. The more we understand the revolutionary, sacrificial nature of God’s love, the more we realise what true love means and what we are called to do. True love is a choice. It isn’t always rosy and neat around the edges. It can be gritty, painful and hard but in the end, is so rewarding. So this Valentine’s Day, dwell on what God’s done for you and maybe He’ll show you what you need to do for your significant other.