Manifest and Marmite

The Manifest Creative Arts Festival is underway at Avondale College's Lake Macquarie campus in Cooranbong, New South Wales. The Adventist Communicators Awards were held last night as part of the four-day event. While only a select few came away as winners, everybody who attended went home with their own special trophy—a jar of Marmite. See below for more information on the return of Marmite. To find out more about Manifest (including the full program for this weekend) visit www.artsmanifest.info.

Adventist youth impact their city

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Youth Day initiative, the young people gathered at Epauto church before splitting into 10 groups to cover the city.

Marmite’s return brings hope to quake affected

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Augustine: sinner or saint?

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Part of the Global Youth Day initiative, the young people gathered at Epauto church before splitting into 10 groups to cover the city. Dressed in white, blue and yellow shirts, printed with the motto "be the sermon", they gave out bus fares, water bottles with a Bible verse, fruit, soft drinks, clothing, kitchen items, Bibles and devotional reading books. They also sang and prayed for people.

Vanuatu Mission youth director, Pastor Charlie Jimmy, said, "Every Sabbath we hear sermon after sermon but this Sabbath is different. The youth won't preach a sermon. They are to 'be the sermon'."

Pastor Jimmy, Efate District pastor John Leeman, and Efate Youth and Pathfinder leaders encouraged the young people to "be the sermon" as a lifestyle.

An old man who received a Bible from Epauto ambassadors said he had been praying for a Bible and on that Saturday morning walked to town not knowing his need would be answered.

That afternoon 27 young people donated blood to the Vila Central Hospital blood bank. According to blood specialist, Dexter Takau, "Our blood bank is at zero. Each day 10 people are short of blood, especially those with cervical cancer, anemia and patients undergoing big operations."

Mr Takau thanked all the young people who donated their blood, saying it would save lives.
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Mr Shelford, accompanied by Sanitarium NZ general manager Pierre van Heerden, arrived at homes around Christchurch with the new jars.

"It’s fitting that the first jars of Marmite go to Christchurch families directly impacted by the earthquakes," said van Heerden. "These jars are a symbol of Christchurch’s rebuilding and resilience."

Mr Shelford also visited Sanitarium’s newly strengthened factory, helping to pack and stack pallets for distribution across the nation.

"I am really pleased to be involved in bringing Marmite back to the nation," said Mr Shelford. "The families impacted by the quakes really deserve to get the first jars off the production line."

Deon Swiggs from the Rebuild Christchurch Foundation says this positive initiative from Sanitarium has given a lift to some families who are still struggling due to earthquake related issues.
If you were going to make up a list of the most interesting people in the history of Christianity, who would you include? Perhaps your list might include someone who confessed in a book that he prayed, "Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet".¹

Who said it? Augustine, who also happens to be the patron saint of brewers, theologians and sore eyes. (Is there a connection between the three?)

Even if this doesn’t convince you to put Augustine onto your "most interesting" list, he should certainly make it onto your "most important" one. Why? Because Augustine is one of the most influential shapers of Western thought and of views widespread in Christianity today, including many of the views that the Seventh-day Adventist Church explicitly rejects.

His life

Augustine was born in 354 AD in what is today Algeria. He was born into a wealthy family and so he received a good education. Augustine had a love for philosophy, and his younger years were spent doing two things: studying, and keeping mistresses and prostitutes entertained. From early on, Augustine had major personal problems with sex and many believe this was an important factor in shaping some of his later theological views as a Christian. He was converted to Christianity when he was 32 years of age (AD 386) in Milan, where he led a school of rhetoric.² As a result of his conversion, he quit teaching and decided to become a priest and to be celibate for the rest of his life.

Augustine went on to become ordained in AD 396 as the Bishop of Hippo (then part of the Roman Empire, but today the city is called Annaba and is located in Algeria), and to become possibly one of the most influential theologians and writers in the history of Christianity. He died in AD 430 and was later canonised as a Roman Catholic saint.

His teachings

Augustine was responsible for fusing philosophy and Christianity into a synthesis that gave the Catholic Church an intellectual basis for its future development into the Middle Ages and beyond. Here's a sample of his teachings:

1. Creation and the interpretation of Scripture
Augustine warned that the purpose of the Bible was not to teach about the natural order, but rather to teach only those things that are essential to salvation. He also taught that God had “accommodated” the language of Scripture to the understanding of ordinary readers, so that when the Bible refers to the natural world in ways that disagree with science, these are not “errors” but instead “accommodations”. Augustine taught that both Scripture and science are of equal authority, and must always be interpreted so that they are in agreement. Because of that, the Bible had to be interpreted consistently with the natural world. Augustine believed that the days of creation could not be understood as six 24-hour days, and that supernatural biblical events such as creation might be able to be explained through natural means.

2. Original sin

Augustine wrote extensively on the role of the will, and he is also largely responsible for inventing the theory of “original sin”. This theory teaches that (1) we are all conceived as actually guilty of Adam’s sin as our own; (2) each one of us is punished for Adam’s sin; and (3) as a result of Adam’s sin our will is weakened and debased.

3. Just war

To a large extent, the Western (and the Christian) idea of “just war” finds its origins in the writings of Augustine; in fact he invented the term. Augustine argued that a war could be just if its purpose was noble, the war was led by the appropriate authorities and if it was underpinned by the principle of love.

His influence

1. Creation and the interpretation of Scripture

Augustine’s influence upon the history of Western science was immense, and he insisted that Christians should not fear the discoveries of science. In fact, in defence of his quest for scientific knowledge, Galileo quoted Augustine back to his accusers.

The teachings of Augustine about the relationship between Scripture and science in relation to origins are reflected today in the fact that the official pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church include theistic evolution as a possible model of origins. However, many in the Protestant world who also believe that God used macro-evolutionary processes in the creation of the world also owe the same debt to Augustine’s method of interpreting the Bible. This extends even to the fact that Augustine came up with the idea that in the beginning God implanted “rational seeds” which developed over time into the products of creation, so that together with matter itself, the potential of natural things was also created in the original creation.

2. Original sin

Augustine’s understanding of original sin was later adopted as official Roman Catholic doctrine by various councils of the church. It is foundational to Roman Catholic theology and a large part of Protestant theology as well. We should not forget that Martin Luther himself had been an Augustinian monk, and this teaching was deeply engrained in him. Although Augustine never himself developed a strict view of predestination, the reformers Luther and Calvin certainly did. Luther taught that because of Adam’s sin, and the total depravity that is therefore part of our nature, humans have no such thing as free will.

To explain his view, Martin Luther wrote a small book called On the Bondage of the Will. In this book he compares the human will to an animal, like a donkey, to be ridden by its master. Luther explains that the animal has no say whatsoever in who will ride it; and that if Satan sits on it, it will go where Satan wants to go; if God sits on it, it will
The reformer John Calvin in Geneva developed this line of reasoning even more systematically so that it became a basic doctrine of many evangelical and reformed churches. It is from here that the widespread idea of “eternal security” (“once saved, always saved”) comes from.

3. Just war

Augustine's ideas of a “just war” are still influential today in Western culture when war is discussed even in a secular context. However, Augustine also applied this idea to groups within the church that were considered to be heretical. Augustine asked, “Why, therefore, should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return?” Augustine's ideas became enormously influential, particularly in the Middle Ages and afterwards, and they were used to justify the Crusades and the Inquisition.

Conclusion

Augustine is probably the most important post-canonical church leader in terms of shaping Western thought and Christianity today. The Catholic Church made him a saint; other Christians have not been so sure.

Seventh-day Adventists disagree with Augustine on each of these major points: We believe that God has given human beings free will so that anyone can choose to believe in Christ (John 3:16); we believe that when God wrote with His own finger in the Ten Commandments that He created the world in six days and rested on the Sabbath, that is what He meant; and we believe in religious liberty for everyone as salvation is through freely responding to Christ with love, and love can never be coerced.

1 Augustine, Confessions, 8.17.
2 Augustine, Confessions, 8.29.
3 Augustine, The Literal Meaning of Genesis, 2.9.
4 Augustine, Letter 138.1.5. See also Augustine, The Trinity, 15.20.
5 Augustine, The Literal Meaning of Genesis, 2.18.
6 Augustine, The Literal Meaning of Genesis, 4.27.
7 Augustine, The Literal Meaning of Genesis, 1.18.
8 Augustine, The City of God, 19.7; Against Faustus the Manichaean, 22.74.
10 See Pope Pius XII, Humani Generis, and subsequent endorsements by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.
12 Luther, The Bondage of the Will, 25.
13 Augustine, The Correction of the Donatists, 23.

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