Taking notice

For 150 years, the Adventist Church has heralded the benefits of a vegetarian diet. It now seems the world is starting to take notice. A study of more than 70,000 Adventists in the United States said vegetarians experienced 12 per cent fewer deaths over a six-year period of research. Click here to find out more about the study. And while you’re at it, check out the latest news and views from the South Pacific Division in this week’s edition of RECORD eNews.

Union president to retire

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New Caledonia gets local president

Pastor Felix Wadrobert has been named president of the New Caledonia Mission, making him the first New Caledonian to serve in the role.

Quest for peace

Can we only find peace when we go off the beaten track? What happens when we return to our busy lives? Tracey Bridcutt shares her insights into finding peace.

*This week's offering (June 8, 2013): Pacific Adventist University (PAU) Offering. Please give generously and
support the exciting spiritual developments taking place at PAU.
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

People who eat a vegetarian diet live longer than those who eat meat, according to a study of more than 70,000 Seventh-day Adventists.

A study published yesterday in JAMA Internal Medicine, a journal of the American Medical Association, said vegetarians experienced 12 percent fewer deaths over a six-year period of research.

The study, funded by the United States’ National Institutes of Health, was conducted by researchers at Loma Linda University, an Adventist institution in Southern California. Researchers tracked 73,308 Adventist Church members who follow the church’s dietary counsel of a plant-based diet to varying degrees.

Of the study’s participants, researchers said 5548 were vegans, 21,177 were lacto-ovo vegetarians (also eating dairy products and eggs), 7194 were vegetarians who also ate fish, and 4031 ate meat infrequently. The rest of the study participants ate meat.

The findings confirm health benefits of eating a vegetarian diet, the lead study author Dr Michael Orlich told Bloomberg News.

“People should take these kinds of results into account as they’re considering dietary choices,” Orlich told Bloomberg. “Various types of vegetarian diets may be beneficial in reducing the risk of death compared to non-vegetarian diets.”
Orlich, director of the preventive medicine residency program at Loma Linda University Medical Center, said the study was aided by studying subjects who have low rates of alcohol and tobacco use.

The Wall Street Journal today pointed out that the study said cancer still struck meat-eaters and vegetarians at similar rates. Also, a vegetarian meal doesn’t automatically make it a healthy one. Deep fried foods contain high amounts of fat, and some meats are healthier than others.

Researchers pointed out that the health benefits were even more beneficial for men. It remained unclear why women were less affected by a vegetarian diet. Future research will examine gender-specific reactions to certain foods.

Dr Kathleen Kuntaraf, associate Health Ministries director for the Adventist world church, said a vegetarian diet is part of living a holistic, healthy life.

“More and more people are recognising our principles from 150 years ago are truly scientific,” she said.

Seventh-day Adventists have long advocated a vegetarian diet. The founder of Loma Linda’s School of Public Health overcame resistance in the health community in the 1940s to produce a landmark study on the benefits of a vegetarian diet, discovering that such a diet indeed contained sufficient protein, among other benefits.

In recent years, Adventists have been noted as one of the longest living people groups ever studied. In 2008, Blue Zones book author Dan Buettner wrote extensively about the health principles of Adventists and their longer, healthier lifespans.
Pastor Jerry Matthews has announced his retirement from his position as president of the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference (NZPUC).

“It was with a twinge of sadness that I announced to our staff in the [Union] office this morning that I will be retiring next month,” said Pastor Matthews in an email statement. The NZPUC oversees the Adventist Church’s operations is New Zealand, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Pitcairn Island.

Pastor Jerry Matthews.

Pastor Matthews has been serving in the role as NZPUC president since 2005. During his 25 years of full-time ministry, Pastor Matthews has worked in a number of church administrative roles, including general secretary of Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission in Papua New Guinea and president of the North New Zealand Conference.

Prior to entering the ministry, Pastor Matthews also worked as a literature evangelist in his home state of Queensland.

Pastor Matthews acknowledged that retirement would take some time getting used to. “It is uncharted territory for me,” he said. “[But] I am looking forward to spending lots more time
with [my wife] Cheryl, doing the things together that we haven’t had time to do up to now.”

Pastor Matthews and Cheryl have three adult children.
New Caledonia gets local president

http://record.net.au/items/new-caledonia-gets-local-president

June 11, 2013

Howick, New Zealand

Pastor Felix Wadrobert has been named president of the New Caledonia Mission, making him the first New Caledonian to serve in the role.

The announcement was made following the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference's (NZPUC) mid-year meetings at its headquarters in Howick, New Zealand, in May.

“While I am in this position as a servant, I have a dream to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ continuing to spread over the whole territory of New Caledonia,” said Pastor Wadrobert. “The people here must hear His word and prepare for His coming.”

Pastor Felix Wadrobert.

Pastor Wadrobert has served the New Caledonia Mission for more than 30 years as a church pastor, youth director and administrator. The NZPUC Executive Committee voted unanimously for his appointment as president.

“Pastor Felix is a humble, calm and friendly pastor who is well respected by both church members and the community,” said NZPUC secretary treasurer Graeme Drinkall. “We wish God's blessings to Pastor Felix as he takes up this new role.”

Pastor Wadrobert will continue to serve as general secretary of the New Caledonia Mission, and pastor of Bethanie Adventist Church, until the end of the year. The NZPUC executive committee also appointed retired pastor Claude Couty as Pastor Wadrobert’s assistant for
the remainder of 2013.

Pastor Wadrobert and his wife, Jeannette, have four children, Audrey, Sébastien, Rudy and Aenaelle.
I've never been a fan of camping. I decided to give it a try a few years ago and sure enough it rained—non-stop—and everything inside the tent got wet. There were plenty of other challenges too—from pitching the tent to cooking by torchlight. Then there were the spiders, leeches and other creepy crawlies lurking nearby. Not to mention the toilets—or in this case the lack of them!

So it was with some trepidation that I agreed to go on a Pathfinder camping trip recently. I guess I felt somewhat obliged to go as I have two children in Pathfinders—one has only joined this year and it was her first camp.

We set off for the campground late Friday afternoon so by the time we arrived it was dark. As I expected, pitching the tent at night was a rather laborious exercise but by the second attempt my son and I had achieved success, albeit a somewhat distorted shape to what it was supposed to look like. Cooking the vegie sausages went smoothly enough although I had to hold a torch in my mouth to see what I was doing. But a visit to the toilets confirmed my fears that this was going to be a rough weekend!

One thing I hadn’t anticipated was that there would be no mobile phone coverage at the campground. No phone—how would I survive? I was totally isolated from the outside world. Funnily enough, though, I didn’t miss it: no calls, no Facebook, no Twitter. It was quite a refreshing change. Indeed very peaceful.

Peace was the theme of the camp and it is something I rarely get to enjoy. Juggling three children, two jobs, Sabbath School commitments, household chores and other activities...
leaves me little time to put my feet up. But here I was sitting round a campfire, relaxing and chatting to people while also being spiritually blessed.

“I've Got Peace Like A River” was one of my favourite campfire songs. Peace, it seems, is much easier to find when you are out in the middle of nowhere: sitting by the river in the early morning; watching an eagle soar overhead; participating in Sabbath worship on a bush plateau; listening to the wind whistle through the trees; gazing at the myriad of stars.

But can we only find peace when we go off the beaten track? What happens when we return to our busy lives? That sense of tranquillity can soon disappear once you get caught up in peak hour traffic or feel under pressure to meet a work deadline. The only solution I have found is to put my life in the hands of the Prince of peace. John 16:33 says: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

While I’ll never truly embrace camping, this experience has shown me that sometimes we need to step outside our comfort zone to discover more about ourselves, the beautiful world we live in and our God. And no matter where we are and what we are doing we can always rely on Jesus as our ultimate Source of peace.

Tracey Bridcutt is copyeditor for RECORD.
Dear God, I don’t know where I am heading right now. I feel that all of my problems have burdened me so that I cannot feel Your presence in my life. All I can say is that I am alive and well because of You, Jesus. You know that I tried to love You, but my sins are greater and deeper than my love for You. Help me to love others in Your way. Come into my life and be the God of my life, please Father. In Your name Jesus I pray. Amen.”

This prayer, written recently by a Pacific Adventist University (PAU) student, highlights a theme that is common among our youth. There is a genuine desire for a close relationship with God, despite the struggles.

As vice-chancellor of PAU, my biggest challenge is to ensure that the spiritual environment is such that our students, staff and their families develop a strong enough relationship with God that will last for eternity.

The primary role of an Adventist university is not to provide academic qualifications but to holistically prepare students for life—eternal life to be precise. That requires an environment where our students want to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is a tough challenge. Temptations for our youth are increasing every year. The Pacific region is no exception. With the arrival of mobile phones, pornography is readily available; shopping malls present the idolatry of materialism; and the diversification of entertainment directly challenges their time spent in spiritual activities.

In September last year, we asked our students to answer an anonymous survey. Amongst the questions were two responses I had a particular interest in: “I strongly recommend...
Pacific Adventist University as a good place to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ” and “My subjects at Pacific Adventist University are taught from a biblical–Christian perspective and convey Christian values”. The response was that 98.5 per cent of the students who completed the survey agreed or strongly agreed with both of these statements. I believe that this response is a direct result of the emphasis that the administration as a whole has placed on spiritual development over many years.

While the evidence shows that PAU is on the right track, I know that there is still much more we can do. I am personally concerned about regular worship attendance, ensuring we integrate true Adventist values into each of our subjects, reaching our day students in a more effective manner—the list goes on. The administration is prayerfully working to implement programs that will encourage the students in their walk with God—and God is richly blessing our endeavours. Over the past two years, more than 80 students have been baptised. Many of these students did not come from Adventist homes, but made a decision at PAU to commit their lives to God.

PAU has more than doubled its enrolment since 2009 and will continue to grow. The reason for this rapid growth is not to build a monument for the Church in the Pacific, but for one specific reason: to develop young people who are passionate about the Gospel will greatly assist in fulfilling the gospel commission. The population in the Pacific is growing at double the rate of Australia and is in desperate need of more skilled workers, particularly pastors, nurses and teachers.

In order to improve our ministry to students, we have recently doubled the size of the ministry team. With four full-time pastors, the university is able to fulfil its mission far more effectively than before.

Next week’s offering goes to PAU, specifically to upgrade our kitchen facilities and expand the cafeteria in line with our increasing enrolment. While I am very grateful for your generous donation, there is one thing that I personally request from you that is even more important. Please pray for us! Pray for our students, that they will truly develop a deep relationship with Jesus Christ. Pray for the staff, that we may fully reflect God in all our
actions. Pray for the administration, that we will make decisions that are completely in line with God’s will. Through our combined prayers, PAU will be able to fulfil its mission of preparing the youth of the Pacific for service and eternal life.

Professor Ben Thomas is vice-chancellor of Pacific Adventist University.