Dad's day

Here's something you might not have known—Father's Day is celebrated on the same day in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. While this Sunday (September 1) is not officially recognised as "Father's Day in the South Pacific", it's great to see a sense of togetherness and unity within our division on such an important day. We would like to wish all the dads, uncles and father-figures in our churches across the South Pacific a "Happy Father's Day".

Keep reading this week's edition of Record eNews for more on Father's Day. And to all the Australians gearing up for next week's election, we've got James Standish's—and Ellen White's—take on the subject of voting.
**A Father’s Day message**

Dr Barry Oliver, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific region, reflects on the legacy his father left him.

**To vote or not to vote?**

Should Adventists care about the election process? Is it okay to cast your vote on the Sabbath? James Standish shares Ellen White’s thoughts on the subject of voting.

**New associate general secretary for SPD**

**Read RECORD**

This year’s Week of Prayer readings focus on “Revival and the Christian Life”. You won’t want to miss a day of these special readings that go beyond outward appearances and aim straight for the heart.

**Watch/download InFocus**

The week’s Christian news, with an election twist. Plus some cooking advice from nutritionist Sue Radd and an interview with a woman who takes the battle against human trafficking right into the brothels of India.
Dr Danijela Schubert was appointed on Tuesday as the associate general secretary of the South Pacific Division (SPD).

**ADRA encourages open communication in Samoa**

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Samoa has launched a new project to counter various social problems in the South Pacific Island nation.

Check out the latest eGIVING videos for [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#).

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*from Linden Chuang, RECORD editorial assistant*

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To vote or not to vote?

Apparently there isn’t a political party for me. I say that after taking the ABC’s Vote Compass and finding myself pegged somewhere between political no man’s land and electoral outer Siberia. So what to do? Hold my nose and vote for the party closest to my views on everything from abortion to asylum seekers, the economy to education? Or, because there is no perfect party, should I just not vote at all?

It’s not a new question in Christianity in general, and Adventism in particular. Early Adventists first completely abstained from involvement in political campaigns, believing Christ’s soon coming made voting irrelevant at best, and a distraction at worst. But as the Church became involved in the temperance issue, attitudes changed. Still, it can be hard to make sense of Ellen White’s advice on voting if taken in isolation.

Talking about politicians who were agitating for Sunday laws, she stated:

“We cannot safely vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for. We cannot safely take part in any political schemes. We cannot labour to please men who will use their influence to repress religious liberty, and to set in operation oppressive measures to lead or compel their fellow men to keep Sunday as the Sabbath . . . The people of God are not to vote to place such men in office; for when they do this, they are partakers with them of the sins which they commit while in office” (Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 475, emphasis added).

Unsurprisingly, some have read this quote, and others like it, and concluded that voting is a dangerous proposition. After all, most of us have enough of our own sins to be concerned about, without “partaking” in the sins of the politicians we vote for. But, it turns out, refusing to vote isn’t a safe course of action either. Ellen White states we are responsible if we fail to use our vote to address the wrongs in our society:

“Many deplore the wrongs which they know exist, but consider themselves free from all responsibility in the matter. This cannot be. Every individual exerts an influence in society. In our favoured land, every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue?” (Review and Herald, Oct 15, 1914, emphasis added).

But Ellen White went even further. She prayed Adventists would vote:

“Men of intemperance have been in the office today in a flattering manner expressing their approbation of the course of the Sabbath-keepers not voting and expressed hopes that they will stick to their course and like the Quakers, not cast their vote. Satan and his evil angels are busy at this time, and he has workers upon the earth. May Satan be disappointed, is my prayer” (Temperance, pp. 255, 256).

And were that not enough, she even approved, in some circumstances, of voting on Sabbath:

“[P]erhaps I shall shock some of you if I say, if necessary, vote on the Sabbath day for prohibition if you cannot at any other time . . .” Ellen
So what can we take from all of this? It turns out that voting is not altogether different from anything else we face in life. There is culpability for actions that are bad, but no less culpability for inaction that fails to do good or stop evil. And, sometimes knowing what is right, what is wrong, when to act and when not to, is not simple.

At elections we aren’t faced with a clear choice between a party of all things good and pure, and another that is evil. And there isn’t just one moral question per election—there are many profound issues at stake and a party that may be good on one issue, may be equally awful on another. Balancing or prioritising the issues is complicated.

So should we quiver in a corner paralysed by indecision? Better to treat voting like every other complex moral decision we face on a daily basis. Put our lives in God’s hands, asking for His guidance as we prayerfully consider how to vote, and trust in His grace should we fail to comprehend His guidance. After all, nearly every nation in the South Pacific is what Ellen White termed a “favoured land” in which every voter has a voice. Let’s prayerfully and humbly cast our votes to advance the common good.

James Standish is director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the South Pacific Division.
**New associate general secretary for SPD**

*record.net.au/items/new-associate-general-secretary-for-spd*

**Wahroonga, New South Wales**

Dr Danijela Schubert was appointed on Tuesday as the associate general secretary of the South Pacific Division ( SPD).

Dr Schubert replaces Dr Brad Kemp in the administrative role. Dr Kemp has been called to be president of the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference.

Originally from Croatia, Dr Schubert began her career in education. She then went on to achieve a Master of Arts in Health Ministry, another in Theology and most recently her doctorate of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary, US.

“I have been amazed at what assignments God asked me to do,” said Dr Schubert. “And by His grace and power, I was able to do them well. So I trust this will continue now too.”

Dr Schubert lived and served in a number of countries, including Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. In Pakistan she was head of the religion department of Pakistan Adventist Seminary from 1998-2001 and headmistress of Pakistan Adventist Elementary School in 2001. In Papua New Guinea she was a lecturer in the school of theology at Pacific Adventist University, from 2002 to 2010, when she became special assistant to the president of the SPD, Dr Barry Oliver.

*Dr Danijela Schubert poses for a photo with Pacific Adventist University students.*

“I am delighted that Dr Danijela Schubert has been appointed to the position,” said Dr Oliver. “This is a particularly critical and influential role in the life of the Church and Danijela brings a depth of experience and knowledge to the role which will well equip her to fulfill her responsibilities. I have been personally blessed by her service and ministry as she has been serving as the special assistant to the president and look forward to ongoing close working relationship as she takes her place among the senior leadership team for the South Pacific Division.”
Dr Schubert is fluent in Croatian and English but understands and speaks Urdu, Tok Pisin, French and Italian.

Her husband, Dr Branimir Schubert, is leadership and professional development manager at the SPD. They have two adult children.

*Click here to watch the RECORD InDepth interview with Dr Danijela Schubert.*
Apia, Western Samoa

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Samoa has launched a new project to counter various social problems in the South Pacific Island nation.

The project, called “Open the Door”, encourages parents and children to talk about sensitive issues such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, drug use, suicide and teenage pregnancy—topics not often discussed openly within families.

“We want to show people there is another way we can deal with our problems,” said project coordinator Su’a Julia Wallwork. “There is a way to open the door to create dialogue, to create better communication amongst families, communities and churches.”

A key part of the “Open the Door” initiative is its use of local media outlets. According to Mrs Wallwork, who serves as ADRA liaison and Adventist Women’s Ministries director in Samoa, there has already been a very positive response to the message on a local radio talk show.

“We’re using television, radio, even newspapers to reach out to our community,” said Mrs Wallwork. “We want ‘Open the Door’ to become an everyday saying that people can use if there’s a conflict anywhere, or if there’s a problem they’ll say, ‘hey, open the door, let’s talk about it.”’

To find out more about ADRA's work in Samoa and the rest of the South Pacific, visit <www.adrasouthpacific.org/our-network>.