Stop

They call it “the race that stops a nation”. Yet for those of us outside of Victoria, Melbourne Cup probably had little impact on the way we started our week. Monday and Tuesday was just your average Monday and Tuesday.

But “never fear, the Sabbath is almost here”. How great is it that we all have a day where we can stop every single week? And unlike Melbourne Cup Day, which revolves around glitz, glamour and gambling, the Sabbath is all about God.

The RECORD team wishes you a restful and relaxing Sabbath day.
NAD recommends ordination of men and women

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has approved a recommendation from its Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) that affirms both men and women for ordination to ministry.

The San opens Clinical Education Centre

New South Wales governor Marie Bashir officially opened the Sydney Adventist Hospital (the San) Clinical Education Centre on November 1. NSW premier Barry O’Farrell and ministers Peter Dutton and Jillian Skinner were also present.

Watch/download InFocus

How can you make sure your clothes aren’t made from misery? Should people have the right to express their religious beliefs through their clothing? And got high blood pressure? Nutritionist Sue Radd reveals beetroot’s surprising health benefits as well as some delicious beetroot recipes.
How to be a successful pastor

How can a pastor be both loved by his/her members and successful in soul winning? Pastor Bruce Price offers some suggestions.

Anger is the answer

“Anger is not a sin. And that’s good news. Because right now, I’m spitting chips. And you should be too.” What’s making James Standish so angry?

*This week's offering (November 9, 2013): World Mission Budget Offering (Global Mission)
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America yesterday voted to recommend to the General Conference Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) a recommendation from its own TOSC that affirms both men and women for ordination to ministry.

Each of the Adventist Church’s 13 world divisions are now in the process of holding their own TOSC in response to a call from the 2010 General Conference Session to examine the theology of ordination.

North America’s TOSC’s recommendation to the division Executive Committee was:

“That we receive the Biblical study of ordination prepared by the North American Division Theology of Ordination Study Committee and affirm the conclusion that all people, men and women, may receive ordination as an affirmation of the call of God, and that the North American Division supports the authorization of each division to consider, through prayer and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, its most appropriate approach to the ordination of women to gospel ministry.”

The division’s TOSC was comprised of 14 members. The division’s executive secretary, G Alexander Bryant, told delegates, “As we looked to staff this committee, we sought for balance and different perspectives that will represent all viewpoints of the division.”

The church in North America’s review of the committee’s report will now be given to the General Conference's Theology of Ordination Study Committee, along with the reports from the 12 other divisions. Reports from all 13 divisions will then be synthesised by the General Conference's Theology of Ordination Committee.

The following is the world church’s timeline regarding the Theology of Ordination:

- From December 2013 to June 2014—The General Conference’s Theology of Ordination Study Committee will analyse the materials received from the divisions and prepare a combined report.
- June 2014—Report will be reviewed by General Conference executive officers.
- June 2014—Report will be reviewed with the President’s Executive Administrative Council (PREXAD) and the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM).
- October 2014—General Conference administration will process the report for the 2014 Annual Council.
- October 2014—Annual Council will review the report and, if needed, take any appropriate action. If voted material needs to be placed on the 2015 General Conference Session agenda, it will be processed accordingly.

Click HERE for more information and links to NAD TOSC presentation materials.
The San opens Clinical Education Centre

New South Wales governor Marie Bashir officially opened the Sydney Adventist Hospital (the San) Clinical Education Centre on November 1. NSW premier Barry O'Farrell and ministers Peter Dutton and Jillian Skinner were also present.

The $20 million Centre is a collaborative project between the Commonwealth through Health Workforce Australia (HWA), the NSW State Government, Sydney Adventist Hospital and private philanthropy. It will provide education and training for multiple professions including medical, nursing, midwifery, pharmacy, radiation science, occupational therapy, dietetics and physiotherapy.

“We recognise that education is a cornerstone of our philosophy of caring for our community,” says Adventist HealthCare CEO Dr Leon Clark. “This new Centre provides a home for education and training here onsite at the Hospital.”

The new Clinical Education Centre will provide education and training for multiple professions.

The Centre is home to the Sydney Adventist Hospital Clinical School of the University of Sydney (SAHCS), the first fully-fledged private hospital clinical school in NSW. It is also home to the Avondale College of Higher Education faculty of Nursing and Health.

The facility features two auditoria, a library, a student common room, a simulation centre and rooms for tutorials, lectures, practising clinical skills and problem-based learning.

“James Standish, Communications director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific, with NSW governor Marie Bashir.

“This is a great example of collaboration between the public and private sectors,” said NSW minister for Health and Medical Research,
Jillian Skinner. “The Sydney Adventist Hospital Clinical Education Centre will help train the doctors of the future.”
It has been more than 60 years since I graduated from Theology at Avondale College. During this time I have worked as a pastor-evangelist in every conference in Australia and New Zealand. Just before retirement, I was pastor of the Waitara church in Sydney for 16 years, during which we baptised 235 souls and re-baptised a further 18. From these experiences I would like to share some suggestions on how a pastor can be both loved by his members and successful in soul winning:

**Church elder**

In every church try to follow the counsel of your senior church elder. The elder has been put in that position because he/she has the respect of the majority of the church members. Share with him/her your dreams and plans for the church. Accept the elder's advice. It could save you many pitfalls.

**Deportment**

Act, dress and speak like a minister. We live in a much more relaxed world today concerning these things. However, people still expect a certain standard from those in responsible positions in the community. An even higher standard is expected of those in ministry, sometimes referred to as “people of the cloth”. The time to “dress down” is when a church working bee is being held or you are mowing a disabled person’s lawn, etc.

**Fidelity to church doctrines and standards**

As a Seventh-day Adventist minister you are paid to uphold the teachings and standards of the Church. To do anything less would be dishonest. If you have doubts concerning any of these things make it a matter of prayer and further study or seek out those who can help you. Our teachings are Christ-centred and Bible-based. Enjoy preaching them with confidence and joy. Our people love to hear the old truths that made them Adventists in the first place and they love to hear their minister upholding them.

**Be positive and optimistic**

No church group is perfect. However, if you speak positively of your church as one that you are proud of or that it has caring and loyal members you will set up a standard and bring out the best in the members to uphold this church image.

**Being part of a family/team**

Members love to feel they are part of a caring family and team. The pastor is responsible for creating this and he/she can do it with casual remarks in meetings or in private.

**Visit members**
Get to know your members and their families as quickly as you are able. Connect with whenever possible, either at home, before or after meetings, during church lunches or contact them via SMS or emails. Take a genuine interest in their welfare. As you get busy you will have less time to visit members at home, and will have to use the other methods, especially in a large church.

Emergency visiting

If you receive a call that someone is seriously ill or there has been an accident, drop everything and go straight to help those in crisis. There are no exceptions to this rule. Often you do not get a second chance. To do this you will need to make yourself available at all times—day or night. You can educate your church members as to the times you prefer to receive calls, but they will appreciate knowing you will always be available to them for emergencies. You will find that members will rarely abuse this arrangement but will love feeling they have a shepherd they can depend on in emergencies to care for the flock.

Thank your members

Take every opportunity to acknowledge and genuinely appreciate the work done by your church members. The quarterly business meeting gives you the opportunity to thank (not flatter) many of your hard working church officers. But do not overlook visiting your children’s Sabbath School classes, Pathfinders, youth meetings, etc, and later tell their leaders how much you appreciate the hard work and preparation they put into their work. Deacons, musicians, etc, must also not be overlooked in this regard. Remember they are all unpaid volunteers. You are the one paid to be their servant!

Young people

Attend and support their meetings as much as possible. Take time to single out young people and ask them how they are going or what their future plans are. If they are sitting exams or facing a crisis, pray with them—often right on the spot where you are talking to them. The parents and older members will really appreciate your ministry if you do this and they will forgive you for all other manner of sins or shortcomings!

Music

This is a very debatable subject but is one that can affect the spirituality and tone of the whole church. Sometimes it's better handled by not dealing with the specifics but to suggest we need music that angels can sing along with and that will not drum up demons. Also, stress that music is for worship and not entertainment or self glorification. We are to “worship in the beauty of holiness”. Be patient; changes do not come overnight.

Attend services

If possible, it's a good thing for a pastor to be at every church service and be there early. It encourages those leading out in these meetings and sets a good example for the rest of the church. Often on these occasions you can pick up problems threatening the church and can deal with these “grass fires” before they become “bushfires”!

Organise your church

Plan to hold business meetings each quarter and monthly church board meetings. Make these meetings spiritual. Giving a report of inspiring soul winning successes locally or abroad at the commencement of these meetings with a prayer session to follow sets an excellent tone. Then review what has been achieved and lay plans for the future.

Soul winning

If church members work as a soul winning team it will take the focus off themselves and their own problems as well as build up your membership. In order to achieve this, the pastor must take the lead and be seen as a soul winner himself. Get after the back-sliders, especially the children of members who have lost their way. Follow up any interests given to you. Encourage those who are already involved in soul winning outreaches. Have them tell their experiences to inspire others.

Sabbath sermons

Preach Christ-centred, biblical sermons to inspire and challenge, with an appeal at the end. Choose other speakers who will also “feed your flock”.

Mid-week meeting/prayer meeting
It can be the greatest feature of the week outside of the Sabbath services and a vital asset to one’s soul winning program. One of the early features of the program is having a sharing time for prayer requests. However, include (with discretion) in this the contacts made and the progress of interested persons during the past week. Record on a chalkboard the names of those needing prayer. The congregation then breaks up into groups of two or three (at the most) to pray for these names. The next week this board can be brought out again and the names discussed, with the answers to prayer and the need of further prayer. Following this prayer time a Bible study is presented by the pastor or a guest speaker. It is good if it can be done in a series with handouts so those attending feel the necessity of continuing to attend. Visitors and interests can be invited to these meetings.

**Equip members for soul winning**

Run a Bible marking class to help your members become more effective in knowing how to find texts and conduct a Bible study. Help them to make a set of charts that are effective but inexpensive. Give doctrinal review sheets to members to use with those they have interested and studied with to help them come to a decision for baptism.

**Seed sowing**

Keep your members constantly supplied with cards for letterboxing, Signs magazines, tracts, etc. Have a video lending library with a special librarian to deal with this outreach. Such videos help ground members in the faith as well as introduce interested people to the truth. Talk about this work during the announcements and mission promotion before your church service.

**Interest file**

This will be a little more work for you but no-one can manage the list of interests more effectively than the pastor. You can then delegate to members how they can help to care for these interests. It's a good idea to try to link church members with interests—who may need transport to meetings, help with children, etc.

**Reaping campaigns**

Plan to have regular visitors’ days, in which you have special speakers or music both in Sabbath School and church, to invite your interests to. Try to get your interests into the habit of attending Sabbath School as soon as possible. Also, plan to have guest speakers periodically to conduct evangelistic series, which will reap your interests and help them make decisions for baptism. You may need to have a special evangelism fund to cover the expenses of such programs but members are usually very happy to support such a fund.

**Baptisms**

Have them as often as you possibly can—even for one candidate. At baptisms interested people attending your church will often make their decision for baptism. It can be a joyous occasion and celebration for the members.

**Finances**

Avoid as much as possible any involvement in financial arrangements with members. “Neither a lender nor a borrower be.” You cannot be in debt to any member and still have an effective and impartial ministry. If you produce tracts, booklets and evangelistic equipment, cover your costs but do not make money out of the members.

**Discouragement**

Every church has its difficult members and situations. Take the promise, “Cast all your care upon Him; for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Repeat the line in the hymn which says, “Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.” This is easier said than done! Also, when problems arise, do not always imagine it's all “their” fault! Go to those you can trust in the church and ask them how the situation could be improved. Listen carefully. If they make suggestions where you could improve the problem, be humble enough to follow their advice. It may even mean you have to say sorry but all it will cost you is your pride. In its place you will grow and enjoy your ministry more. Some situations, only time will heal. Write this slogan where you can read it often: “This too shall pass.”

Finally... remember God called you into ministry. The souls you've won are evidence of this. He who called you will continue to enable you. Never give up learning, reading, studying. You've been called into the ministry of no ordinary denomination. This Church was raised up on time to give a last warning message to a dying world. That message has never been more relevant than now. You are seeing the fulfilment of prophecies our forebears would have loved to witness. The work you are doing is one the angels would love to be allowed to do and it will go through to eternity. This world knows no greater calling or privilege!
Bruce Price is a retired minister and writes from Queensland.
Anger is not a sin. And that’s good news. Because right now, I’m spitting chips. And you should be too.

Am I sure anger itself isn’t a sin? Yes. Throughout the Bible, God presents Himself as full of love, full of grace, full of forgiveness, but also from time to time, angry (eg. Deuteronomy 29:27, 28). And while we may prefer to emphasise the “gentle Jesus”, we can’t ignore that our example was the muscular Carpenter raging through the temple overturning tables. Ellen White, writing of the momentous scene, describes Christ’s demeanour as one of “zeal and severity”. In Mark 3:5 we’re again presented with a Jesus who is angry; this time at the hardness of the Pharisees’ hearts. And even in Paul’s epistle on all things faith and grace, he states God’s anger is directed against those who suppress the truth (Romans 1:18). And it’s hard to read Christ’s scathing indictment of those who offend children and not detect anger (Luke 17:2).

It makes sense that a God of love expresses anger. Anger is the appropriate reaction when those we love are mistreated. It’s one thing to turn the other cheek when we suffer wrong; it’s quite another to look on with silent indifference when someone else is wronged. If we see evil perpetrated against the innocent, we are designed to feel anger. That anger should motivate us to action. Not incoherent, ineffective, out of control behaviour, but effective action designed to end, or at least mitigate, the wrong.

Which brings me to why I’m angry today. I’m angry because a Royal Commission in Victoria is examining cases of the abuse of children in faith communities. In the process of preparing for press enquiries, I’m having to wrap my head around the confronting truth about child sexual abuse in our community.

It’s not that I’m naive. I know we live in a wicked world in which evil people infiltrate all organisations and communities—not just ours. I know that in secular boarding schools exploitation occurs. I know child abusers are attracted to secular civic organisations too. And I know that other faith communities have a history as bad, if not worse, than ours. But when a violation so profound occurs in our Church, to the most precious and most vulnerable members of our church family, it breaks my heart—and it makes me angry. And I hope it makes you just as angry.

But the past isn’t the only reason I’m angry. I’m angry because I’m not certain we’ve all internalised the lessons from our painful past. I’ve been meeting with the Safe Places team that works to prevent and address sexual abuse today, and what I’ve learned makes me deeply disturbed. I’ve learned that some in our community still want to sweep abuse under the carpet. I’ve learned that some would rather protect a reputation than protect victims of abuse. And I’ve learned that sometimes we still confuse forgiveness and grace, with stupidity and a licence to reoffend.

Yes, everyone no matter how grave their sin, can repent and find forgiveness. But that doesn’t mean we put people in a position to reoffend. You don’t employ a recovering alcoholic in a pub. You don’t put a kleptomaniac in charge of your finances. And you most certainly do not put someone who has sexually exploited church family members in positions of power or opportunity. To do so isn’t showing grace; it’s showing gross disregard for the safety of vulnerable people.
Today, our Church has superb policies. We’ve got good resources. We employ skilled professionals. And our administration has unambiguously embraced a zero tolerance for abuse. But I fear as a community we still lack something we need.

I fear we lack the level of anger required to motivate every one of us to overcome our collegiality and transcend our comfort levels to confront head on the problem of abuse in the Church. We are still susceptible to valuing community peace and unity over confronting evil when it occurs and dealing firmly with community members who offend. I wish every adult Adventist could listen to the pain and experience the anguish of abuse victims. It would, I believe, make us so angry we would never let complacency reign again. Anger is, in this case, the answer. And we need an awful lot more of it.

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*James Standish is editor of RECORD.*

*For more information visit <safeplaceservices.org.au>.*