Making history

Some history-defining moments are good. Some are bad. Some are completely devastating.

Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines last weekend, officially becoming the biggest storm to ever make landfall. The United Nations this morning (AEST) raised the death toll to more than 4400, and thousands more are still in desperate need of assistance.

As part of its initial response to the disaster, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is delivering emergency food and water to more than 3500 families in the hardest hit regions of the Philippines. In Australia, leaders of the Adventist Church have confirmed a special offering will take place on November 23 in support of ADRA’s response to Typhoon Haiyan. The last time the Adventist Church in Australia conducted a nationwide response offering (2011), $1.1 million was raised as part of the appeal (Horn of Africa).

A PowerPoint about the special offering has been provided for you to share in your church. Please spread the word and encourage as many people as possible to get behind this initiative.

Another history-defining moment took place this past week at the South Pacific Division’s headquarters in Wahroonga, New South Wales. What was it? Keep reading this week’s edition of Record eNews to find out.
**SPD recommends women’s ordination**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific has unanimously affirmed a report from its Biblical Research Committee that “does not see any scriptural principle which would be an impediment to women being ordained”.

**SPD recommends new general secretary**

Pastor Lionel Smith has been recommended for the role of general secretary of the South Pacific Division. The announcement comes as the SPD executive committee held its year-end meetings this past week.

**Volunteers recognised for decades of service**

A number of long-serving volunteers were acknowledged by

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Church aid agencies respond to super-typhoon Haiyan; mass graves containing the bodies of dozens of Christians in Syria; and a remarkable response to evangelistic meetings in Samoa.
the Adventist Volunteer Service at the South Pacific Division’s (SPD) year-end executive committee meetings this past week.

High tech high school

Mount Diamond Adventist school in Papua New Guinea recently held the nation’s first online exam. It's ironic—a place that can be hard to get to physically when it rains, may have better internet access than many locations in Australia.

Big boys do cry

Where did some people get the idea that boys shouldn’t cry? It’s time to redefine society’s version of manhood.
Storm-damaged hospitals in the Philippines struggled to treat patients as the United Nations on Thursday raised the death toll from the monster typhoon that ravaged the country to more than 4,400 — almost double the previous figure and far higher than an estimate given by the Filipino president.

As water poured through smashed roofs, flooding corridors, Tacloban’s sick and injured lay on ramshackle hospital beds awaiting treatment at the local hospital.

Alberto de Leon, hospital director, said he would immediately evacuate patients and condemn the building — but there is nowhere else to go.

As a result, the neo-natal ward has been moved to the hospital chapel. But de Leon said many of the babies born over the past week may not survive due to the lack of medicine and proper care and the risk of infection.

“It’s very distressing,” he said. “If this is not corrected immediately, there could be babies dying.”

In Tanauan, at a medical center staffed by volunteer American doctors, surgeons working with limited supplies performed life-saving operations — including an amputation while the patient lay on an old office desk and an emergency C-section birth.

But doctors warn they might have to start turning patients away.

“Very minimal supplies. I think we've got about a day left,” said Sara May, one of the doctors. “Then we shut down unless we have more supplies. We also don’t have any medicines right now.”

The U.N. also said that more than 900,000 people had been displaced by the storm, perhaps the most powerful ever to strike land, and that nearly 12 million people had been affected in some way.

It warned that fuel in the devastated city of Tacloban was expected to run out within days.

The U.N. put the death toll at 4,460, up from the government's 2,360 figure, said Amanda Pitt, a spokeswoman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. She cited the Filipino government in reporting the figure.

President Benigno Aquino predicted earlier this week that the toll would be 2,000 to 2,500, and said that higher estimates had been influenced by “emotional drama.” A government civil defense official said early Friday that the official death toll had climbed closer to the U.N. figure, reaching 3,621.

On the sixth day after Typhoon Haiyan slammed into the Philippines, packing 195 mph wind and overwhelming surges of water, the USS George Washington arrived off the coast to begin moving aid to increasingly desperate survivors. The George Washington arrived with 5,000 sailors and two cruisers for support.
Most of the people hurt by the storm were still waiting for food and medicine, even as boxes of aid piled up at airports and military bases. Damaged roads and other logjams have kept the help from reaching the people who need it.

The mayor of Tacloban said workers had to choose whether to use trucks to distribute food or collect bodies, and the main convention center has become a temporary home for hundreds of people living in squalor.

The official in charge of humanitarian operations for the U.N. acknowledged frustration at the pace of aid distribution and said: “We have let people down.”

“I think we are all extremely distressed that ... we have not managed to reach everyone,” the official, Valerie Amos, told reporters in Manila, the Philippine capital.

She said that the immediate priority for humanitarian agencies over the next few days is to move and distribute high-energy biscuits and other food, tarpaulins, tents, clean drinking water and basic sanitation services.

At a medical center in Tanauan, the only one for miles, a cesarean birth on Thursday saved the life of mother and child. The baby was named for the doctor who delivered her.

But operations there may have to end soon because there were only a few hours’ worth of supplies left.

“We expect to see a massive response. We expect to see millions of gallons of water, and food, medical supplies, personnel,” said Chris Wharton, a veteran aid worker. “There’s an absence of that here. And these people are screaming out for help.”

Tacloban has been the center of world attention on the disaster, but Chris Clarke, the head of the humanitarian organization World Vision of New Zealand, expressed fear that “we have a number of different Taclobans around and we will discover that in the next few days.”

“Our concern is as much for the other islands, for the simple reason that we have not heard a world in the last seven days,” he told Reuters. “So we do not know what the situation is beyond Tacloban.”

Aquino, already under pressure because of the logistical problems that have slowed the distribution of aid, now faces the task of containing rising anger and deteriorating security.

Eight people were crushed to death when looters raided rice stockpiles in a government warehouse in the town of Alangalang, causing a wall to collapse, local authorities told Reuters.

The precarious security also worries humanitarian workers.

“The Tacloban team is facing enormous constraints because we cannot move around freely due to the security situation,” said Elisabeth Byrs of the World Food Program, which is coordinating logistics for the aid and recovery effort.

Tacloban Mayor Alfred Romualdez, said authorities lacked the necessary manpower and vehicles to both deliver supplies and to clear bodies off the streets.
“It’s scary,” Romualdez told Reuters. “There is a request from a community to come and collect bodies, they say it’s five or 10. When we get there, it's 40.”

He said the options were bleak in his city: “The choice is to use the same truck either to distribute food or collect bodies.”

The USS George Washington was carrying purifying machines that can make about 100,000 of gallons of drinking water a day. Its presence significantly boosts the U.S. aid already in the region. Since U.S. Marines arrived Sunday, they have brought about 100,000 pounds of supplies into the area.

The main task of the carrier and its support vessels will be to provide aircraft to move aid around the devastated region.

“One of the best capabilities the Strike Group brings is our 21 helicopters,” Rear Adm. Mark Montgomery said in a statement. “These helicopters represent a good deal of lift to move emergency supplies around.”

Late Wednesday, the Navy also activated the hospital ship USNS Mercy to be ready to support the disaster relief effort. If ordered to deploy, Mercy would get underway in the next several days and could arrive in the Philippines in December.

In Tacloban’s Astrodome convention center, families cooked meals amid the stench of garbage and urine, Reuters reported. Debris was strewn along rows of seats rising from dark pools of stagnant water. "We went into the Astrodome and asked who is in charge and just got blank stares," said Joe Lowry, a spokesman for the International Organisation for Migration, which is setting up camps for the displaced.

Outside Tacloban, officials began burying about 300 bodies in a mass grave on Thursday. A larger grave will be dug for 1,000, city administrator Tecson John Lim told Reuters.

Elsewhere, Britain announced it was sending its carrier, HMS Illustrious, to the region while Internet video call service, Skype, offered a credit voucher for free calls for users trying to reach family and friends affected by the typhoon.

NBC News’ Dr. Nancy Snyderman, Lou Dubois, Becky Bratu, F. Brinley Bruton, Jim Miklaszewski and Courtney Kube, and Reuters contributed to this report. Alastair Jamieson reported from London.

Related:
By Braden Blyde

Published on: 15 November, 2013

Leyte, Philippines

As part of its initial response to Typhoon Haiyan, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is delivering emergency food and water to more than 3500 families in the hardest hit regions of the Philippines.

The typhoon has affected more than 11 million people and displaced close to 600,000. The revised death toll stands at 4400, but as unreached areas are entered, this is likely to increase.

"Food, water and shelter are the biggest needs at the moment," said Beryl Hartmann, Humanitarian coordinator for ADRA Australia. "The death toll will continue to rise if the essentials are not delivered quickly and to those who need it most."

ADRA staff and volunteers are now distributing food packs containing enough to feed a family for three days in Northern Cebu and Iloilo, both of which have seen less aid than higher profile regions including Tacloban city.

"Working in collaboration with the United Nations, the Philippines government and other responding agencies we identified a gap in the response," said Ms Hartmann. "We have moved quickly to ensure those missing out receive life-saving aid quickly."

"Both high capacity and portable water purification systems are also being deployed to ensure families survive through this initial phase," she said. "Our teams are currently working on plans to provide emergency shelter and improve hygiene facilities in the coming days."
Additional ADRA staff have flown into the Philippines from across the globe during the week to support the local offices response.

ADRA is appealing for public support to ensure its response in the Philippines can continue. Tax-deductible donations can be given online at <www.adra.org.au> or by calling 1800 242 372.
Australia-wide Special Offering

NOVEMBER 23

Donate online – www.adra.org.au

Donate by calling – 1800 242 372
As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.

1 Peter 4:10
SPD recommends women’s ordination

Wahroonga, New South Wales

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific has unanimously affirmed a report from its Biblical Research Committee that “does not see any scriptural principle which would be an impediment to women being ordained”.

The report, based on lengthy deliberations and seven research papers on the theology of ordination prepared by academics from around the South Pacific Division (SPD), concludes that “the calling of the Holy Spirit needs to be recognised for both men and women. There is a sense of injustice that needs to be addressed.”

Dr David Tasker, Field Secretary director for the South Pacific Division, presents a report on the theology of ordination on behalf of the Division’s Biblical Research Committee.

The vote at the Division’s year-end executive committee meeting does not imply a change of working policy within the South Pacific at this stage, but it does signal a clear message to the world church’s Theology of Ordination Study Committee ahead of the 2015 General Conference (GC) meetings, when the issue of the full ordination of women pastors will be discussed.

“My personal conviction is that ordination should not be dependent on gender,” said SPD president Dr Barry Oliver after the vote. “But I also recognise the enormous importance of unity in the Church. Our global unity is a wonderful gift from God and it is my hope that, as a global church, we will move forward in an orderly, unified manner.”

Delegates from across the Pacific voted unanimously in support of the conclusions, but recognise the complexity any change would have in the diverse cultural landscape across the region. “Currently, ordaining women is difficult in our culture,” said Pastor Roger Tetuanui, president of the French Polynesia Mission. “But the younger generation is more open, and they may ordain women in the future if the GC accepts our conclusions.”
“I wholeheartedly agree with the recommendation,” said Ellie Kotoveke, principal of Sonoma Primary School in Papua New Guinea. “We have women joining the pastoral team and they can minister to other women in a special way. They have a spiritual dimension that contributes to the vitality of our church family.”

Church delegates look through a report provided by the South Pacific Division’s Biblical Research Committee during the Division's year-end executive committee meeting on November 13.

“In Fiji we have a more positive attitude towards the importance of women—in society in general and in the church—than we did historically,” said Pastor Nasoni Lutunaliewa, personal ministries director at the Fiji Mission. “Historically we haven't seen women as leaders, but we're changing. There is opposition, but I see the Biblical basis for ordination of women. As I’m committed to following the Bible not the culture, I support this move. This is my personal view, not the view of our church in Fiji at large. So, even if the GC moves to open ordination to women, I don't expect the church in Fiji will move in that direction for some time. We will have a thorough and respectful conversation about this.”

A number of church territories in North America and Europe have moved unilaterally in implementing women’s ordination, despite counsel from General Conference leaders. Union and conference presidents within the SPD have maintained a commitment to continuing to move together on the issue with the world church.

“I am certainly very supportive and encouraged by our unity in supporting the conclusions of the SPD Biblical Research Committee,” said the Australian Union president, Pastor Chester Stanley. “I think as a church it's key that we work together on this question. We appreciate there are many cultures in our global church. We understand that going forward our cultures will determine how this is implemented should the GC open ordination to women. That is part of the respect necessary when we’re part of a global community.”

Click here to read the ordination research papers and the “Theology of Ordination” report from the SPD's Biblical Research Committee.
Wahroonga, New South Wales

Pastor Lionel Smith has been recommended for the role of general secretary of the South Pacific Division (SPD). The announcement comes as the SPD executive committee holds its year-end meetings this week.

Pastor Smith has served as director of the Western Australian Conference’s Religious Liberty and Trust Services departments for a number of years. In 2009, he was appointed as the Conference’s general secretary.

Pastor Smith also possesses an extensive amount of experience working in the South Pacific islands, having served the Church in Papua New Guinea—the country in which he grew up—for 13 years.

If he accepts the position, Pastor Smith will replace retiring SPD general secretary Lawrence Tanabose, who has served in the role since 2008.

Pastor Tanabose has served in a number of different administrative roles since 1991, including general secretary and president of the Trans-Pacific Union Mission.

“As the first Pacific Islander to be elected to the senior leadership of the SPD, Lawrence has demonstrated a level of commitment, wisdom and discernment that has ensured that he has contributed immeasurably to this Division,” said SPD president Dr Barry Oliver in October.

“His knowledge of particularly the work of the Church in the island nations of the Pacific has been invaluable.”

To learn more on Pastor Tanabose’s work for the Church in the South Pacific, click here.

More details to follow.
Volunteers recognised for decades of service

Wahroonga, New South Wales

A number of long-serving volunteers were acknowledged by the Adventist Volunteer Service for their years of service at the South Pacific Division’s (SPD) year-end executive committee meeting yesterday, November 13.

Among those recognised were Dennis and Marjorie Perry and David and Elaine Woolley, co-founders of Operation Food for Life (OFFL), and Trevor and Helen Oliver, founders of Serving Overseas Nations by Ship (Sonship).

For the past 20 years, OFFL has provided physical and spiritual support to thousands of people in the South Pacific islands. Sonship, meanwhile, has been bringing volunteers to work with communities in the Solomon Islands since 2004.

Adventist Health Ministries associate director Dr Chester Kuma shakes the hand of Helen Oliver.

Pioneer leaders of the fly’n’build movement were also acknowledged during yesterday’s meeting. Warren and Maureen Bailey, Derek and Betty Peacock, and Elwin (Arthur) and Valmae Ferris have, between them, led more than 100 service trips throughout the Asia Pacific. The three couples represent more than 20 volunteer leaders and hundreds of others who have participated in fly’n’build projects over the past several decades.

As the leaders were being acknowledged inside the SPD office headquarters, volunteers were outside filling a six-metre shipping container with supplies for an upcoming OFFL project to Papua New Guinea. In addition to donations of clothing, wheelchairs and walking frames, more than 500 new Bibles from the Adventist Youth Ministries department were being packed in.

Filled to the brim. OFFL co-founder David Woolley (left), Ewan Brown (right) and Allan Tinworth (top right) in front of the packed container. [Photo courtesy: Dennis Perry]

“Our calling in ministry is inspired by the example of Jesus, by meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the poor, disadvantaged and..."
forgotten,” said Dennis Perry. “The Bibles will provide the spiritual food in the areas we minister, some of which no relief agencies enter because of personal security issues.”

For more information about the South Pacific Division’s Adventist Volunteer Service, visit <adventistvolunteers.org.au>.
High tech high school

When the tropical rains hit, the dirt roads to Mount Diamond Adventist school turn into rivers. It's hard to know whether you’d have better luck getting to the school in a monster truck or a little boat. But today it's hot, dry and every shade of green is so bright the terrain looks almost surreal as we bounce along the heavily rutted road.

We’re on our way to Mount Diamond, Papua New Guinea, to see the nation's first online exam system in action. Indeed, it looks like the kind of place where you may be treated to some cultural dancing or woodcarving, not cutting-edge technology. But I’ve been assured by Darren Yorio, ADRA PNG program director, that we are about to see something special.

The internet doesn’t come to Mount Diamond over fibre optic cables; it comes through a large dish connected with a satellite spinning high above the planet. So a place that can be hard to get to physically when it rains, may have better internet access than many locations in Australia. That's the power of technology.

But disruption has come to PNG’s national exam process in the form of cheating. In fact cheating is such a serious problem that results of entire areas were recently discarded. And cheating isn’t the only problem. The national government has put great emphasis and funding into universal education. That led to a spike in enrolments. Resources naturally lagged, so today teachers are struggling to cope with the larger student loads. Marking is falling behind, students lack timely feedback, impeding academic progress, and tracking and analysing student data is not happening effectively.

In response to the problem, ADRA funded the development and implementation of a pilot online exam system at Mount Diamond through the Church Partnership Program. It’s much harder to cheat using online exams. Grading is automatic and feedback immediate. And tracking and analysing data is simple. But could online exams really work in a place like this?

Sitting in the school’s computer lab, principal Jeff Kombil said, “Results so far have been very promising. The secretary of the national department of education, Dr Michael Tapo, came to the school for the official launch in August. The Australian Government’s aid program also sent officials to the school to see the online exam program in action. The National Research Institute is evaluating its effectiveness, and so far it is going well. In fact, it looks like they’ll roll it out nationally. It’s not that we don’t face challenges. For example, power supply can be an issue for us. So we’re putting in a backup generator and we’re upgrading our electrical system. Progress is never simple, but the results we’re seeing are very encouraging.”

Science department head David James said another obstacle was that not all teachers have kept up with technology.

“Spending time training our team was necessary before beginning,” he said. "About three-quarters of our teachers now are regularly using technology. Our students are faster learners—they just love it! They take to it naturally.” Is it possible the best selling app in the world will be created by Mount Diamond students? “Of course it is!”
Mr Kombil said ADRA training in grant writing has also proven very helpful. “Do you see the construction site over there?” He points past mango trees heavy with fruit to the far side of the large, well-kept campus. “We’re building a new dorm for 50 girls with a grant we received from the New Zealand government,” he said.

“Other Adventist schools trained by ADRA have also had success in writing and managing grants. We have grown from 560 students to 720 students in just the past couple of years. The ADRA grant writing training has proven extremely valuable as we struggle to increase our facilities to keep up with demand. The Church is also adding resources for new dormitories. With all these resources combined, we are starting to catch up—but we still have a long way to go.

“We want this to be a place where tithe payers can see tangible returns,” Mr Kombil said. “That means quality Christian education that incorporates the latest technological innovations. Our new buildings will be very modern. We also want to expand our computer lab from 25 terminals to 100. We want to match our aspirations with reality.”

James Standish is editor of RECORD.
“That must have hurt,” I said in awe, as my six-year-old friend showed me his bloodied knee.

And being a five-year-old girl, I had to ask, “Did you cry?”

He stared at me incredulously. “Boys don’t cry.”

Having seen a boy burst into tears just a few days earlier, I begged to differ, but my friend shook his head firmly.

“My dad gets angry when I cry,” he revealed. “Boys aren’t meant to cry.”

At that point, his mother came in and asked us if we wanted ice-cream. Silly question—of course we did! Our conversation was instantly forgotten.

Years later, I was walking through a crowded shopping centre when I saw a familiar face and called out to him. A catch-up was in order. So we headed to the nearest bench and of course the topic of relationships came up.

He told me that he had recently ended a three-year relationship with a girl whom he’d been hoping to marry. A week after they broke up, she had begun dating a good friend of his.

“How are you coping?” I asked.

A fleeting expression of hurt crossed his face. It then vanished so quickly that I was left wondering if I had imagined it.

“I’m fine,” he said coolly, before swiftly changing the subject to something more neutral. Only the slightest tremor in his voice betrayed any hint of the emotions he kept bottled up.

I didn’t push him to talk about it. But now, as I think back to that moment, I contemplate whether I should have.

I wonder just how much a father’s admonition affected the tender heart of a six-year-old boy. Cultural stereotypes of what men should and shouldn’t do can impact their willingness to share their feelings, even with loved ones. Men are less likely to talk about experiencing depression than women, meaning that they are often left undiagnosed and untreated. But like a volcano, keeping things bottled up inside eventually leads to an eruption.

Where did some people get the idea that boys shouldn’t cry? It certainly didn’t come from the Bible.
The Bible is filled with stories about men who dared to show emotion. David and Jonathan wept together when they were forced to part ways. Peter wept when he realised that he had denied Jesus. Nehemiah cried when he heard that Jerusalem was still in ruins. The elders of the Ephesian church wept as they farewelled Paul.

And let’s not forget the shortest verse in the Bible—the one which tells us that Jesus, our ultimate example, wasn’t afraid to shed tears.

It’s time to redefine society’s version of manhood.

Big boys—and godly men—do cry.

Vania Chew is PR/editorial assistant for RECORD.
### Poll results

**What is most important in a pastor?**

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