Happy Mother’s Day

Ellen White said “in rightly training and moulding the minds of her children, mothers are entrusted with the greatest mission ever given to mortals.” So, to all the mums, grandmothers, aunts and women who play such an vital role in our lives and our Church, Thank You. May you be blessed this Mother’s Day.

“The world needs mothers who are mothers not merely in name but in every sense of the word.”—Ellen White

Join us as we celebrate the love and legacy of mothers in this week’s edition of Record eNews.
Ben Carson announces run for US presidency

Renowned Adventist neurosurgeon Dr Ben Carson officially announced on Monday that he is a candidate for the American presidency.

A revolution 110 years in the making

Over time, some things rust. Others remain stable, while a precious few flower and grow. This is Wahroonga Adventist School’s 110th year of existence and, remarkably, it has the highest enrollment in its illustrious history.

MyStory: Naomi Striemer

Read Adventist Record

Be sure to check out all the Mother’s Day features in the latest issue of Adventist Record.

Read Adventist World

Feeding the 5000 times 500,000 | The experience of pain | A place of worship for all | The truth about hell
Is your lifelong dream always your destiny? Rising star Naomi Striemer signed with Sony Records at just 18 years old. But it seemed something was holding her back.

Legacy of faith

Kriselle Dawson pays tribute to her late grandmother—a matriarch of great faith who provided a spiritual compass for subsequent generations.

The power of no

A young child who loves saying “no” is a powerful force to be reckoned with.

Watch/download InFocus

Making headlines:
• New figures show millions of Australians are struggling financially
• The Church of England is selling its fossil fuel investments
• A church divided for 40 years finds healing

To conscience vote, or not to conscience vote—that is the question the Australian Christian Lobby’s Lyle Shelton wants answered. And why haven’t successive Australian governments moved to officially recognise the Armenian Genocide that commenced in 1915—100 years ago?

Adventist Record offering (May 9, 2015)

Your support helps turn blank pages into Adventist Record every fortnight.
Reflections

A pink plastic pocket mirror, slightly cracked and a little dusty: $5. The reflection of love in a young girl buying her first Mother’s Day present for her mum: priceless.

from Linden Chuang, Adventist Record assistant editor—digital

Copyright © 2015 Adventist Media Network. All rights reserved.

Have something to share? Send in your stories, photos and feedback to news@record.net.au.

unsubscribe from this list | update subscription preferences
Renowned Adventist neurosurgeon Dr Ben Carson officially announced on Monday that he is a candidate for the American presidency. In the months ahead he will seek the nomination of the Republican Party to run in the US presidential election, which is scheduled for November 8, 2016.

Dr Carson is the first Seventh-day Adventist in US history to run for the presidency. His story is well known and admired by Adventists around the world. Church leaders in North America said they’re aware of the increased interest in this development.

“The Adventist Church has a longstanding position of not supporting or opposing any candidate for elected office,” according to an official statement from the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “This position is based both on our historical position of separation of church and state and the applicable federal law relating to the church’s tax-exempt status.

“While individual church members are free to support or oppose any candidate for office as they see fit, it is crucial that the Church as an institution remain neutral on all candidates for office. Care should be taken that the pulpit and all church property remain a neutral space when it comes to elections. Church employees must also exercise extreme care not to express views in their denominational capacity about any candidate for office, including Dr Carson.”

“Dr Carson is a remarkable person,” noted James Standish, director of communications and public affairs for the Adventist Church in the South Pacific, “but the Church as a whole does not endorse candidates or parties. We recognise the domestic and international issues society faces are extremely complex, and that no one party or candidate has all the answers to them.”

Mr Standish, who spent some years representing the Church to the United Nations in New York and to the United States government, said that the Seventh-day Adventist community in the US is very diverse—ethnically,
economically and politically—and that, therefore, monolithic Adventist support for Dr Carson is unlikely. “Polling indicates that Adventists are split between the Democratic and Republican parties,” he said. “American Adventists have been elected to the United States Congress on both Democratic and Republican tickets.”
Photo Source: Sydney Adventist Schools | "Concept art of the new school's exterior."

Over time, some things rust. Others remain stable, while a precious few flower and grow. This is Wahroonga Adventist School's 110th year of existence and, remarkably, it has the highest enrollment in its illustrious history.

"Every single one of our primary school years is completely full and we have an 18-month waiting list to get in. Next year we’re adding yet another primary school classroom to cope with demand," states school principal Michelle Streatfeild.

And there’s more good news. On May 5, Mrs Streatfeild, Dr Jean Carter, Director of Education for the Greater Sydney Conference (GSC), and Pastor Michael Worker, GSC president, jointly announced the new Wahroonga High School building plans have been approved by the New South Wales Department of Planning. The new high school will open in 2016 in modular classrooms, and the new building will be completed in time for the beginning of the 2017 school year.

"Without any advertising, we already have 25 students for our first Year 7 class," reports Mrs Streatfeild, "but we still have room for a second Year 7 class in 2016. We're starting an advertising campaign shortly, but want to let our Adventist community know beforehand."

"Our dream for the new high school is simple: we want to bring more children to Christ. In high school, children are making huge decisions—decisions that will impact their lives forever," continues Mrs Streatfeild. "So, everything we do, will be designed around that most important of decisions."

"The new school is designed for academic and creative excellence," states Mrs Streatfeild, "The top floor of the four story-building is designed for creativity—including art and music. The next floor is dedicated to humanities, food technology and textiles. The industrial kitchen on this floor flows out into the school auditorium—ensuring that functions can be catered. The next floor is totally dedicated to math and science. And the ground floor will have industrial arts spaces. We want the school to cater to the broad strengths, interests and abilities of the children. We will also be building a new primary school—as the current lower campus of our school will be
converted to other development on the estate."

“It is so exciting!” says Dr Carter. “After 50 years of the school community having a vision, it is finally coming to reality. It will be such a powerful ministry to the community with the churches, hospital, media centre and a P-12 school working collaboratively together. It will be a tremendous environment for learning, living and growing spiritually.”

“As a Conference we are so excited that we are able to proceed with a P-12 School in Wahroonga,” states Pastor Worker. “We believe God has been leading in a powerful way to come to this point. The school will be a state of the art development that we will be proud of and will be a beacon for Adventist Education in the Upper North Shore of Sydney. There is a high degree of anticipation in the wider community for commencement of this high school and we are pleased to be able to meet this demand. I have spoken to some church members who have been looking forward to this day for almost five decades and they are just so happy to see the day arrive.”

“I’m doing school tours nearly every day—sometimes I wish there wasn’t quite so much interest,” laughs Mrs Streatfeild. “I love showing the community excellent Adventist education. But I want to be clear, if you are a Seventh-day Adventist, this is your school. We will work to ensure your child can attend.”

If you want to know more about the new high school, or have a school tour, contact the school at info@wahroonga.adventist.edu.au.
I was walking through a newsagency recently with my daughter who was intrigued to see an entire display of giftware designed for mothers. Mugs, coasters, pens, books and photo frames—the only limit is the imaginations of the merchandise designers. Far removed from all of this commercialisation of Mother’s Day is its origins. Anna Jarvis initiated the celebration in the US after her beloved mother died. The idea was inspired by a prayer spoken by her mother, Ann Jarvis: “I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mothers’ day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life. She is entitled to it.”

Anna’s intention was for people to set aside this one day each year to honour “the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world”. Her intention was that people would either take time to visit or write a lengthy letter to their mothers. She expressly stated that she wanted Mother’s Day “to be a day of sentiment, not profit”.

Unfortunately, in later years, she was horrified by the commercialisation of Mother’s Day by companies such as Hallmark. She was arrested and eventually institutionalised over her despair at the profiteering going on around Mother’s Day, and even tried by petition to have the celebratory day rescinded.

Commercialisation aside, I am 100 per cent in favour of expressing appreciation for the efforts of my mother and all mothers on Mother’s Day. This Mother’s Day I would especially like to honour the memory of my grandmother. Some families are fortunate enough to have been blessed with a matriarch of great faith who provides a spiritual compass for subsequent generations. My family is one of them. I was asked last year to share a poem for the eulogy at my grandmother’s funeral and as I wrote down random memories of my grandmother there were two things in particular that stood out as themes: her hospitality and faith.

Every year or two throughout my childhood, her children and grandchildren would converge upon her home for fabulous gatherings of love, good food and good conversation. Family Christmases were the best with the token tree surrounded by brightly coloured packages, the decorated table with bonbons, abundant food, plenty of noise and undoubtedly bowls of lollies (well at least that’s what I remember). I remember her busily scurrying around her kitchen at unearthly hours of the morning to ensure there was a fabulous spread ready for breakfast during our visits. And in spite of the fact that she kept an immaculate home, I don’t recall ever getting into trouble for making a mess or traipsing dirt through the house. Family was a top priority for my grandmother and family was always welcome.
Of greatest importance in my grandmother’s life, however, was her God and her relationship with Him. Like the wise virgins of Matthew 25 she understood the wisdom of being prepared at all times for the coming of her Lord. Far too many of us have fallen into complacency and slumber like the foolish virgins in the parable. But not my grandmother. She faithfully attended church and studied her Bible throughout her life. Her faith was integral to every element of her life; conversation about personal or world events often drew a spiritual application and her stories were peppered with miracles.

One of her favourite stories was of the miraculous recovery of one of her son’s contact lenses. His corneas were conical and he had to wear special hard lenses to try to flatten them out. One day, as he travelled the Sydney rail system, he rubbed his eyes at some point and realised a lens was gone. He searched and searched in vain but eventually had to leave the train without it. When he reached home my grandmother was horrified, knowing the full value of the lens, both monetarily and also in terms of her son’s sight and function.

When my grandfather got home from work they called the train depot and were discouragingly advised that the lens would never be found. Hundreds of passengers had boarded and disembarked the train before it terminated for the day. Her faith unfazed, my grandmother prayed a heartfelt prayer for guidance. She prayed that God would direct their needle-in-a-haystack search, and off they went to the train depot. When they arrived they were informed where to find the train in question, but also that the cleaners had been through the entire train and found nothing. So now there was also the risk that the cleaners might have swept the lens up or that it might have been damaged in the cleaning process. With a heavy heart my grandfather went to the exact carriage and seat where his son had told him he’d been sitting. Perhaps it is obvious that there was a jubilant shout of joy, for there sitting on the seat was the undamaged lens. Such was the legacy of my grandmother’s faith.

Israel always looked back to the example of their faithful forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In fact, the apostle Paul wrote of the spiritual greats of the Jewish faith: “All these people were still living by their faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth . . . Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them” (Hebrews 11:13, 14, 16).

Similarly, my family can look back on the faith and example of my grandmother. Although she is no longer with us physically, she has left with us the legacy of her unshakable faith, dynamic prayers, hospitality and miracle stories.

So this Mother’s Day, in remembering the life of my grandmother and other women of faith like her, I would like to ask a few questions of both you and myself. What legacy are we leaving for our families? Will we be remembered for our faith and our service to the Lord? Is it obvious where our priorities lie, and what we value? Will our children and grandchildren even have a faith? If not, what could we do differently in our lives?

“. . . Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

Kriselle Dawson writes from Mackay, Queensland, where she works as a pharmacist and volunteer freelance writer.
The power of no

Micah has learned how to say “no”. Before, he used to just shake his head or push away whatever he didn't want, but now he says “no” quite emphatically, and with great pleasure.

When the little word immediately gets the results that he wants, he smiles and savours the power of that word.

“When please come down,” I ask, and he looks me straight in the eyes and says, “No”. “Time for bed!” Grandpa announces, and Micah clings to his toys and says, “No”. “Let's change your nappy!” my husband suggests, and Micah runs away, looking back long enough to say, “No”.

Sometimes we tell him he has no choice and carry him kicking and crying to the bed or change table. But sometimes we have to honour this growing independence. After all, he is his own person and there are some things we cannot force. If he doesn't want to eat we cannot wrench his clenched teeth apart. If he doesn't want to read a book we cannot anchor him to our laps.

So we coax, plead and bribe him to get into the pram, eat his veggies and tuck his inner wrestler away as we change his nappy. Sometimes there are tears (on both sides). Sometimes there is just frustrated resignation (on both sides).

And at the end of a long day I ask God, “How do You do it? How do You have the patience to give us free will? How do You have the self-control to watch us delight in selfish, short-sighted decisions? How can You trust us and give us such benefit of the doubt?”

For I often say “no” to God. And I enjoy it. And when He coaxes, pleads and bribes me with promises and rewards, like a child I think I'm in control. And when I don't get my way, I throw as good a tantrum as any toddler.

But He still gives me the chance to say “no”.

And it's through that realisation, that God suffers long on my behalf, that I'm learning the true power of saying “no”: No to my own timelines and plans, no to my own desires and no to the lies inside my head.

There's a song that I love; the lyrics say:
"I was just a child, when I felt the Saviour leading
I was drawn to what I could not understand
And for the cause of Christ, I have spent my days believing
That what He’d have me be is who I am
As I’ve come to see the weaker side of me
I realise His grace is what I’ll need
When sin demanded justice for my soul
Mercy said no
I’m not going to let you go
I’m not going to let you slip away
You don’t have to be afraid
Mercy said no
Sin will never take control
Life and death stood face to face
Darkness tried to steal my heart away
Thank You Jesus, Mercy said no
For God so loved the world, that He sent His son to save us
From the cross He built a bridge to set us free
Oh, but deep within our hearts, there is still a war that rages
And makes a sacrifice so hard to see
As midnight fell upon the crucifixion day
The light of hope seemed oh so far away
As evil tried to stop redemption’s flow
Mercy said no . . .”—Greg Long

As I pray over my stubborn and irresistible child, I thank God that my inadequacies as a mother are covered by His grace. I thank God for the power of “no”.

______________________________

Jinha Kim is a minister in the Victorian Conference.
It didn't look like much. It was just a pink plastic pocket mirror with a Hello Kitty design. It was obviously used, slightly cracked and even a little dusty. But it caught my attention nevertheless, mainly because it was the only object on display I thought I could afford.

“You like that mirror, sweetheart?” He was an old man with greying hair and kind eyes. He smiled as I nodded eagerly.

“It’s yours for five dollars.”

I hesitated. The coins in my pocket had seemed like a monumental fortune that morning. I had been so excited, thinking about all the wonderful gifts I would be able to buy. But I was quickly disillusioned. The blue vase I liked was $35. The pretty floral dish I’d inspected had been $20. Now even this pocket mirror seemed beyond my reach.

Seeing my face fall, the old man asked gently, “How much money do you have?”

I brought out my treasured coins and held them out sheepishly. They were all I had.

His eyes glimmered with understanding. “In that case I'll make you a deal.”

It was the first Mother’s Day present I had ever bought. It had taken all my money to buy that gift but I couldn’t wait to give it to my mum.

Since then, I’ve given her many other gifts—from flowers to furniture, from homeware to holidays, from massages to mattresses. But none of them have ever received quite the same level of appreciation as that used, cracked mirror.

She took that mirror wherever she went, whether it was to work, church or even out grocery shopping. I recently asked her if she still had it and she assured me that she did. I asked her why.

“That mirror is precious to me,” she said simply. “I can still see the excitement on your face as you raced in, hands behind your back, and said you had a gift for me. Whenever I see that mirror I see my daughter’s love.”

Mirrors are interesting objects. Without their capability to reflect images they would merely be plastic or wooden...
frames. Their purpose and value do not lie within themselves but in what they reflect.

Genesis 1 tells us that we were made in God’s image. Our purpose is to be mirrors by reflecting God’s image to the world.

On our own this would be a daunting task. Despite our best efforts the Bible tells us that our righteous acts are like filthy rags. We have flaws. We make mistakes. And like that pocket mirror, we may be used, cracked and broken.

Fortunately our value doesn’t lie within ourselves but in the One we reflect. As CS Lewis puts it, “... We are mirrors whose brightness, if we are bright, is wholly derived from the sun that shines upon us.”

That mirror, cheap to some, cost everything I had. When my mum uses the mirror she doesn’t look at its imperfections. Instead she sees the evidence of her daughter’s love.

In the same way, when God looks at us, He doesn’t focus on our flaws. He sees the reflection of His Son’s love, a gift that cost Him everything to give.

Vania Chew is PR/editorial assistant for Adventist Record.