Sanitarium Cooranbong factory to close

In what has been described as a “tough decision” Sanitarium Health & Wellbeing will close down its health food manufacturing operations at Cooranbong (NSW) over the next three years.
Baptism: before and beyond

Seventh-day Adventists could do better to prepare and care for those who choose to join the Church through baptism, a new study shows.

Solomons group helps Vanuatu

A group of 115 volunteers belonging to a lay self-supporting and outreach ministry from Honiara, Solomon Islands, has helped to rebuild 24 houses in Vanuatu for families affected by Cyclone Pam.

More News

Oblivobesity: Waistlines are expanding and many parents are losing perspective on how overweight their kids really are.

For tomorrow: An exclusive acapella performance by Joel McKerrow.

Airwave to heaven

Faith FM isn't just another radio station. It's an avenue which God is using to perform miracles and change lives. You can help support this ministry by giving to the Australian Union Conference offering.

The spirituality of an activist poet
Performance poet Joel McKerrow says everyone is creative and we all have something important to say.

Scientist and creationist?

It is possible to be a woman of God and a woman of science? Christiana Leimena shares her story.

Like a child

Is it childish to jump in puddles while wearing your church clothes? Probably. But that’s exactly why more of us should do it.

A new revelation

Do we really need another book on Revelation? That was just one of the questions recently presented to Avondale College senior lecturer Dr Kayle de Waal, who will launch his new book Ancient Words, Present Hope in Cooranbong (NSW) this Sabbath.
Sanitarium Cooranbong factory to close

Cooranbong, New South Wales

In what has been described as a “tough decision” Sanitarium Health & Wellbeing will close down its health food manufacturing operations at Cooranbong over the next three years. By the end of 2018, Cooranbong’s production capacity will be taken up by the Berkeley Vale and Brisbane facilities.

Located on the site of Sanitarium’s original factory (dating back to 1899), the current Cooranbong buildings date from 1937 and are showing their age, requiring frequent and costly maintenance.

“The consolidation of our operations . . . sets Sanitarium up for future growth and represents a new phase in Sanitarium’s presence in the Australian market,” said Sanitarium CEO Kevin Jackson in a letter to Adventist Church leaders. “I assure you that this is not a decision we have taken lightly and we recognise the impact this has on our Sanitarium family and the surrounding community.”

Mr Jackson says Sanitarium’s leadership team does not anticipate any changes to employment at Cooranbong during the next 12 months. After that staff will be offered transfers to other sites where possible as well as access to support services to transition to other employment or future opportunities.

“As a leadership team, we are committed to stand by our staff throughout this change journey,” Mr Jackson said.

The changes will not immediately impact Sanitarium’s development and engineering teams, who are also located in Cooranbong, but have their own purpose-built facilities.

Click HERE to read Sanitarium’s official press release regarding the consolidation of their NSW facilities.
Cooranbong, New South Wales

Seventh-day Adventists could do better to prepare and care for those who choose to join the Church through baptism, a new study shows.

Almost 1500 Adventists aged 18 years and over participated in Before and Beyond Baptism, which the Church in the South Pacific sponsored to investigate the relationship between the Church’s baptismal practices and its membership, Christian maturity and commitment to core Adventist beliefs. The findings of the preliminary report reveal more than half of the participants were baptised before age 16. However, one in three aged 11-14 indicated their parents told them they were too young. One in five accepted Jesus as their Saviour before, or by, age nine.

Many participants commented that the decision and request of a child to be baptised must be taken seriously. “I wondered whether I needed to be re-baptised because I was baptised so young and began to understand and develop a loving and passionate relationship with God only a year or so later,” wrote a young woman aged 20-25. “Since then, I’ve decided God used my early baptism as the beginning of my journey. If we were baptised only when we understand everything, we’d never get baptised.”

These findings are, on the whole, encouraging, and a reminder of why the Church funds children’s ministries and Adventist education. The next findings are more concerning, though.

One in four of the participants had no intentional post-baptism mentoring. Eight per cent indicated they had no pre-baptism instruction; four per cent because “the person baptising me considered I needed no special instruction because I was brought up in the Church”. Twelve per cent indicated they had been re-baptised. And many participants expressed concern about the use of the term “baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church” compared to “baptised into Christ.”

The research team includes academics from Avondale College of Higher Education and Andrews University and administrators from the Church’s conference, division and General Conference levels. It distributed a 38-item questionnaire at the Church’s conference camp meetings and regional meetings throughout Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific in 2014 and 2015. Of those who participated, 55 per cent were women and 45 per cent were men.
The questionnaire incorporated items about the participants’ background with one question asking about baptised Adventist relatives. Some 95 per cent indicated their close family included at least one baptised member. The most influential member of the family, and the one most likely to be baptised: the mother. It appears the Church gains most of its membership from within its ranks with less than 10 per cent of its members coming from outside the church family.

Open-ended questions provided the opportunity for participants to include personal experiences and comments, such as this: “My aunty and uncle were having Bible studies with a minister every week. After a time, the minister asked my relatives if they’d like to get baptised. They replied with an emphatic, ‘No.’ I was so embarrassed, I stepped in and said, ‘I’ll be baptised.’ I felt sorry for the minister because he’d gone out of his way to regularly visit my relatives.”

A section of the questionnaire asked participants about their past relationship with the Church. Seventeen per cent indicated they had been disassociated for a time—a third between six and more than 10 years.

The final section asked about the participant’s faith and relationship with the Church. It showed most respondents attend church once a week and would continue to do so even if they moved to a different location. Significantly, eight out of 10 participants, when asked if they could see themselves as a member of the Church in 10 years, responded, “Definitely.”

Barbara Fisher is principal researcher of the Before and Beyond Baptism study, and retired senior lecturer in education, religion and literacy (Avondale College of Higher Education).
Honiara, Solomon Islands

A group of 115 volunteers belonging to a lay self-supporting and outreach ministry from Honiara, Solomon Islands, has returned from Vanuatu after completing rehabilitation work on the island of Pele.

Niuleni Community Music Ministry (NCMM), with the help of members of Freshwind Adventist Church, Port Vila, spent almost a week on the island rebuilding 24 houses (sleeping, eating and cook houses) belonging to families affected by Cyclone Pam. The project involved the building of Natagura (sago) leaf houses. Sago is scarce on the island and iron roofing is expensive. As a result of the cyclone, all bush materials for building houses in the villages were destroyed.

The sago leaves were bought from Malo, near Santo, and shipped to Pele. Financial assistance came from some generous Australian families through Chris Cavilla of Perth, and the rest was raised locally in Honiara.

Pele Island has a population of about 500 people and five different denominations—with Adventists being the smallest, numbering less than 20. The local church has found it difficult to make inroads into the hearts of the villagers. It’s hoped that this project, although small in monetary terms, will open doors for the Adventist Church on Pele. Along with building the houses, the women taught some simple cooking methods and recipes, and handicraft skills like cloth dyeing. The group also did gardening, weeding, general cleaning around the island community and church repairs.

The NCMM group comprised children, young people, women and men who played with the local children, swam together, shared stories and lived alongside Pele’s inhabitants.

A child who was born on the island on July 1 was named Niuleni after the ministry. Tragically, a Freshwind mother and Dorcas lady who accompanied the group had a severe stroke and died on the day the group returned to Port Vila.
I was 18 when my sister and I moved into a room at the home of a retired Presbyterian pastor and his wife in Seaforth, Sydney. It was part of growing up. I was in uni. And life was great.

I loved my undergraduate science studies. I loved my uni friends. And I loved going clubbing. My favourite music was American R&B, soul and dance music. If you can dance to it, it's a good song. I was a Christian. But I didn't see a big conflict between my lifestyle and my faith.

One time we were out at a pub and a Baptist friend joined us. We were doing rounds of shots. I said to him, "have a shot." And I couldn’t figure him out as he turned it down. I pressed him again. He said no. So I coaxed him a little more. And he turned to me and said, “You know, Christiana, you are like the devil tempting me.”

It really shocked me. I still think of that guy sometimes. I don’t think he realised the impact he had on me. Though a long time has passed I wish I could tell him now, "sorry!"

I had another friend who invited me to a campus Bible study. But I wasn’t interested. I always went to church every week. Even when I got home from the clubs at 5 am Sunday, I’d still be in church by 10 am. But studying the Bible? That wasn’t my interest.

Of course, during my studies I learned evolutionary theory. One day I asked the kindly Presbyterian pastor who had become like a grandfather to me, how to reconcile the Bible and evolution. He was a lovely man. And a very godly man. He calmly explained that in the past, people thought the Genesis account literally described how the world was created. However, as scientists studied the question further, we learned that evolution was the actual creative mechanism. And so we realised the Genesis account was a metaphor and shouldn’t be taken literally. It made sense to me, and I didn’t think about it anymore.

I saw myself as a very balanced Christian. I believed in Jesus and went to church. But I also knew how to have fun. I sort of tried to have a foot in both worlds. I couldn’t understand why Jesus says you can’t love the world. Why not? I loved the world! It was only later it became clear to me that I had to choose between the two.

After uni I got a plum job as a researcher at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. It had taken me a little while to find a job so when that came through I was incredibly thankful. The Institute is among the premier medical
research entities in Australia—and a global leader.

In the interim, my parents had migrated back to Australia and I moved in with them and we eventually—provocatively—settled in Wahroonga. One day a flyer came in our mailbox for a meeting at the Sydney Adventist Hospital focusing on prophecy. My parents were enthusiastic Presbyterians and so they decided to go.

They enjoyed the meetings and encouraged me to go. So that Friday night I went along. The young people from Waitara Adventist Church running the meetings were very friendly. But that night they presented the Sabbath and I thought, “This is really off.”

To my chagrin, we started having Bible studies with these two guys named Neale and Kevin. I warned my parents, “They are trying to brainwash us!” My mum said, “Christiana, keep an open mind. Don’t worry about these men, let’s look at what is actually in the Bible.” I took her advice and I was shocked at what we found.

Part of the Bible study focused on the interdependency of Scripture. I’d never thought about it before. But now I wondered how Genesis could be discarded and the rest of the Bible kept? What is the point of the Sabbath if there was no creation week? And that’s just the beginning of the problems. Romans 5 focuses on Christ being the second Adam. But how could there be a second Adam if there wasn’t an Adam in the first place? And if there was no fall how did sin enter the world? And if there was no Adam and Eve, why did Jesus Himself refer to them?

It was clear to me that Christianity without creation made no sense at all. So, either evolutionary theory was right and Christianity a myth from start to finish, or Christianity was right and evolutionary theory a man-made myth. The only way to decide was to look at the evidence.

And that’s exactly what I did. I talked to many of my fellow researchers. I explored the question thoroughly. And I was astonished at what I found. The longer I looked the more evidence for creation I found and the larger the holes in evolutionary theory. Let me give you just one example.

For DNA to synthesise a new protein there has to be a pre-existing protein in order to copy the DNA into RNA. That synthesis can’t happen until all three—that is DNA, RNA and protein—are in existence. Can you see the problem? In order for life to replicate we must have at the cellular level three interdependent building blocks. And one of those building blocks—RNA—cannot exist without the other two. But protein can’t exist without RNA and DNA. So where did the first protein come from? All three must have, at the start, been in existence together or none of them could exist. And without that very complex basic building block no life can exist. So it’s clear at the cellular level that life was created as a complete unit. If not, it simply could not exist. So why the resistance among scientists to accepting a designer? First, many scientists do believe in some kind of creative input from God. Second, scientists are just like the rest of humanity—sinful and proud. Many would rather believe there is no God than to acknowledge Him and thereby acknowledge their responsibility to Him. But maybe the most startling reason is that many haven’t thoroughly investigated the question.

One of my fellow researchers said to me one day, “If I were to walk into a church I’d have to take out my brain and leave it outside.” “You’re exactly wrong,” I replied. “We were taught evolution explains the origins of life on earth. And we unquestioningly believed it. We are the ones lacking critical thinking. We are accepting as true the orthodoxy we are taught. But when you look at the evidence it doesn’t hold up. The truth is, my faith confronted my lack of critical thinking. And it is through that challenge that I’ve really learned to critically evaluate the world around me.”

I’ve now completed a PhD in biomedical science at the University of New South Wales. Along the way I’ve seen so many evidences of creation in science. And my life has been thoroughly blessed by the God behind that creation. Today I love being part of the Fountain in the City church plant in inner Sydney. And remember those Neale and Kevin guys I mentioned? That’s Neale Schofield, my boss at Adventist Media, and Pastor Kevin Brown, who also attends Fountain.

We have to be open-minded as we search for the origin of life. The evidence points towards creation. I was blind.
When I really looked into it, the evidence was overwhelming. What I find disappointing as a scientist are theologians who buy into evolutionary theory and try to bend the Bible around it. In doing so, they show a complete disregard for science, theology and logical reasoning.

Since coming to know the truth my life has turned upside down with a new desire and purpose. I’m not proud of my past. I no longer crave for the old entertainment and night life. I crave now for God’s presence, a daily feeding from my Saviour, yearning to meet people to share about the God behind the creation and Jesus who died to set me free from my old self. Neale preached a sermon on the day our whole family was baptised together—saying that the old husband of self has to die and be buried before we marry the new husband Jesus. With God’s grace I’m now a new creation as I walk on a journey with Jesus.

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Dr Christiana Leimena works for the HopeChannel Discovery Centre at Adventist Media in Wahroonga, New South Wales.
“Stop acting so childish!”

I guess it was an appropriate response to my jumping in puddles in my church clothes. But to this day I stand by my actions, for three very good reasons:

1. I was nine. Boys will be boys, right?
2. It was hot. There was no ice-cream.
3. It was fun. Umm . . . it was fun.

These won’t seem like valid reasons for some people. If you are one of them, allow me to revert to my nine-year-old self for a moment and do what comes naturally . . .

:p

That was me sticking out my tongue at you, just so you know.

Okay, yes—I’m being a little immature. But I honestly think we adults could stand to be more childish at times.

That’s not an invitation to start throwing tantrums at church board meetings (although I’ll admit that would be somewhat hilarious—well-dressed men and women stomping around the room). After all, the Bible says we are to put away “childish things” (1 Corinthians 13:11).

But growing up doesn’t mean we should lose the essence of being a child. Because when we really think about it, children do the best things in life better than us adults—things like expressing joy and sorrow, finding peace, making friends and having fun.

Loving.

Is there any purer form of love than that of a child? Kids love who and what they love, without the complicated mess we adults seem to infuse into everything.
I recently attended a one-year-old’s birthday party. It was amazing to watch the little guy do what one-year-olds do—crawl where he crawls, laugh when he laughs and love who he loves. There was no agenda and no need for analytics. I could just watch. Because he just was.

It's here where I see the essence of what Jesus was talking about when He told the oldies of His time, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Our love for Christ needs to be like that of a child—pure, innocent and true.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1 NIV).

Notice the exclamation marks (those are legit)! The greatest thing we can be called is a child of God. So to my fellow educated, domesticated and complicated “grown ups”—it’s time we reclaimed the childlike spirit we abandoned long ago.

Where should you start? Well, perhaps where I started this editorial. If you happen to see children jumping in puddles in their church clothes, don’t call them out for being “childish”.

Join them.

“You will find more happiness growing down than up.”—Unknown

Linden Chuang is assistant editor of Adventist Record—digital.
Airwave to heaven

“Is this ABC radio? Because you don’t sound like ABC radio.” Jim, a retiree from Tasmania, went on to explain his confusion. Every morning after breakfast, he and his wife would sit on their recliners and listen to ABC Radio National.

This particular morning was no exception—turn it on, sit down, enjoy. The station as always was tuned to ABC Radio—no-one had changed the frequency for years. Except that today it didn’t sound like ABC Radio. There was someone talking about hope, a new life in Jesus, forgiveness for the past. And at the end, they announced a phone number offering a Discovery Bible study course. So Jim rang. To this day, no-one knows who re-tuned the radio.

Starting out as a mission project of several churches in regional Victoria, the Faith FM radio network has expanded to more than 100 radio stations across the country, transmitting the gospel message 24/7 to a potential audience of more than 4 million people. Over the next few months, Faith FM will evolve into HopeChannel radio, allowing greater synergy between the Church’s various media ministries. Radio, TV, web and print will share content and work together to increase the impact and exposure of HopeChannel across the SPD.

Ben, a young mechanic in his early 20s, rang to say he enjoyed listening to the station at work and after doing so for three weeks, had been convicted to quit smoking. Another listener, a middle-aged sales representative from Adelaide, continues to ring regularly, requesting copies of programs aired.

And that’s only the beginning. Over the years dozens of people across the country have walked in to Adventist churches and become disciples of Jesus as a result of listening to Faith FM.

Rob and Natasha, who were both heavily involved with the occult, stumbled across a sermon about the Sabbath on Faith FM. The next day they attended an Adventist church and today they are active members of their local congregation.

Berren and Tamara, who both run successful businesses, listened to the radio for eight months. They closed their businesses on Sabbath, made significant lifestyle changes and finally walked in to an Adventist church one morning asking for baptism.

Gary stumbled across Faith FM while terminally ill in hospital. At his request, and several weeks before he lost his
battle with cancer, he joined the Adventist Church by profession of faith.

A listener from Tasmania wrote, “Just to let you know that I listen to your station in my house 24/7 and in my car. It is so nice to hear teachings about the Bible . . . Thank you. Your radio programs are very powerful . . .”

Wheelchair-bound in a nursing home, Jan-Marie’s main source of company was the radio by her bedside. She stumbled across Faith FM, listened regularly and even started sending tithe to the local Adventist church long before she joined it by profession of faith.

Chi dropped her son off at work and turned the radio on while waiting for him. She heard a talk on prophecy, went home and studied further, before turning up to her local Adventist church. Today she is a baptised member and actively involved volunteering with Adventist Aviation around Australia.

These are not stories from ages past or distant lands but from our very own backyard, showcasing the tremendous power and influence of media to reach the unreachable. And just as exciting is the ability for Adventist churches to produce and broadcast local programs. Faith FM uses infrastructure allowing each individual radio station around the country to play content specific to its area.

Australian Union Conference president Pastor Chester Stanley has spearheaded the development of radio in Australia and sees exciting possibilities ahead.

“There are parts of Australia with absolutely no Adventist presence—radio can get us there,” he says. “It is also a wonderful opportunity for our young people to use their media skills to reach the community.”

Pastor Cristian Copaceanu is Radio Network manager for HopeChannel in the South Pacific. Proceeds from the August 15 AUC offering will go towards supporting the Faith FM ministry.
A new revelation

Dr Kayle de Waal is head of Avondale Seminary and senior lecturer in New Testament at Avondale College of Higher Education. The missionary teacher, minister and evangelist has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, the country of his birth, South Korea and New Zealand. de Waal has now written a book called *Ancient Words, Present Hope*, which unfolds the history of salvation through an Old Testament analysis of Revelation. Signs Publishing book editor Nathan Brown asked him about it.

**Why do we need another book on Revelation? What does *Ancient Words, Present Hope* add to our understanding?**

Revelation is so rich and complex—we won’t exhaust its meaning this side of the kingdom. I take some ideas about Revelation and attempt to re-invigorate them and to make them more relevant. The ideas include the Old Testament background to the fifth trumpet, establishing the centrality of Satan’s role in the narrative and a more gospel-focused understanding of the remnant.

**You’ve worked as a teacher, pastor and scholar. How do these different roles influence what you’ve written?**

The teacher in me has sought to simplify difficult concepts. As a pastor, I’m concerned readers grow in their walk with the Lord, so I’ve tried to make relevant application. As a scholar, I’m interested in new ways of understanding Scripture and also in digging deeper into what Scripture says.

**In a changing world and changing church, why are places such as Avondale Seminary still important?**

Avondale Seminary continues the tradition of training men and women for service in the Adventist Church and in the community. We’re totally committed to equipping soul winners and ministry leaders. The seminary is one of the thought centres of the church in the South Pacific. It’s also a champion of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ and the Advent message God has entrusted to us. Our staff members are producing world-class research about the Sabbath, the book of Matthew, the Great Controversy, Ellen White in her social and historical context, Adventist church history, Adventism in the context of other faith traditions, discipleship and church health.

**Is there a risk of being too academic in our approach to the Bible? How do we avoid this?**
We need to trust the leading of the Spirit and use good principles of interpretation. Being open to the criticism of our peers is important, too. A Christo-centric and Christo-climatic reading of Scripture is true to the divine intent.

*Ancient Words, Present Hope* is a textbook for a unit you're teaching this semester. What do you hope your students will take away from the classes?

I hope my students will appreciate the historical and social context within which Revelation emerged. We'll reflect on our Adventist heritage and read widely from Adventist scholars. We'll also look more closely at Ellen White and the interpretation of Revelation. I also hope students will see the centrality of Christ and develop a good methodological approach to Revelation.

But more than a textbook, you also chose to write and publish for a general readership. Why?

My purpose in writing this book is pastoral, practical and missional. I want readers to have sound principles to interpret Revelation and a good framework within which to understand the book. I also hope pastors and evangelists will see fresh insights that can enrich their ministries.

As a church, how can we do better with the complex book that is Revelation?

We need to be humble and honest with Revelation and acknowledge we don't know everything in this enigmatic book. This kind of openness and vulnerability will draw people from the community more than a "know-it-all" attitude.

*Dr Kayle de Waal.*

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A symposium and book launch with Dr Kayle de Waal will be held at Avondale College of Higher Education in Cooranbong, New South Wales, this Sabbath (August 15). Ticket holders will receive a copy of *Ancient Words, Present Hope*, lunch and refreshments. Purchase tickets online at [www.avondale.edu.au/events](http://www.avondale.edu.au/events).