

How can anyone put his faith in Christ
if he's never even heard about Him?
How can he hear about Him if no one
tells?

Romans 10:14

IntraVic

February 2017

Great

Expectations



Victorian Adventist
COMMUNICATIONS

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Victorian Adventists



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

Victoria

A note from the Editor's Office



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God Needs You in 2017

What would you do differently if you knew the date of the second coming of Christ?

Would it change your eagerness to share Jesus with family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues?

How can we be more effective in achieving the mission Jesus gave us? Mingling, getting to know our neighbours, eating with them – simple ideas, but important for connecting with community people. First steps are important.

On June 5 – 9 2017 thousands of Adventists across Australia will open their homes and reach out to the community inviting friends, neighbours or colleagues home for a meal, prayer and a gift. The 'Open Home Movement' is a simple initiative, developed by the Australian Union Conference, to help us connect. It's not that hard to have someone over for a meal. Sounds do-able. Simple steps: Think, Pray, Register, Invite, Enjoy, Pray and Give a simple gift. How easy is that? Are you in? You can sign up on-line – talk with your Pastor about it.

So that's a good start and we need other great strategies to follow on.

We're needing committed people, passionate about Jesus. Is that you?

We're needing ideas – do you have some to share? We've planned the "Reaching Victorian Cities Think Tank" on March 4 this year. Who'll come from your church? Do you have ideas that will work?

God could have used angels to reach our world – yet He chose to get us involved.

Please pray that God will lead our conference through His Spirit as we work to achieve the core business He's given us.

We don't know the day nor the hour of Jesus return, but we do know time is short. So, how will you be involved in 2017? Remember, God's needs you!

Graeme Christian

IntraVic February 2017

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Victorian Adventist

Great Expectations

Looking for God in 2017

Written by Brianna Hailey
YOUTH PASTORAL WORKER
BURWOOD ADVENTIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

This devotional is taken from a sermon presented by Brianna soon after the New Year. How much do we miss when we fail to look for where God turns up in our lives, on a daily basis? How much more could we achieve if we expected Him to show?



It is well into the new year and I'm sure we all had resolutions and high hopes for what we want 2017 to look like. Maybe this is the year that you'll get a new job, get better grades or like me, maybe not spend so much money on pointless things! But amongst these expectations and resolutions, we need to live in a constant state of faith and expectation that God will act in our lives.

Romans 12:12 says "be cheerfully expectant, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer." Prayer is one part, so is waiting in confident assurance that God will hear. It is one thing to ask God to be involved in our lives, but we have to believe it and expectantly look for it too.

Now I love classic literature, so when thinking about the new year and my expectations, naturally the novel *Great Expectations* came to mind. The main character, Pip, has 'Great Expectations'. He's an orphan that expects to move up in the world and expects to make something of himself and this expectancy takes the form of ambition and constant self-improvement.

There's a lot we can learn from Pip. We need expectations. And like Pip, we can try and improve ourselves, but the reality is that without God, it won't go so well. We need the faith to expect God to show up in our lives. It's this kind of expectancy that gets people's attention, and it gets God's attention.

In Mark 5:25-34 you'll find the story of the woman who touched Jesus' robe with the expectancy of being healed, if she could just touch His clothes. She wasn't merely hopeful, she believed it whole-heartedly. Healing WOULD come. So as Jesus passed, she barely touched the edge of His robe but was instantly healed. Jesus smiled at her, saying "Faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your

“ WE NEED TO EXPECT GOD TO ACT, TO APPEAR IN OUR DAILY LIVES, AND LIVE IN THAT CONSTANT STATE OF FAITH AND EXPECTANCY... ”

suffering.”

You see, when we live with such expectancy, it gets God's attention. When we go through the day with faith, we're doing exactly what this lady did. Our faith gives Him permission to heal us and change us. Faith is what allows God to work. You can be at the right place at the right time but if you're in the wrong frame of mind, you'll miss God's best. This lady was in the right place at the right time, in the right frame of mind - expecting things to change... and they did.

Are we in the right frame of mind? Are you?

Jesus is passing through right now, so to speak. But are we, individually and as a church, doing our best to reach out and touch Him with expectant faith?

There's a story of a businessman selling a warehouse property that had been vacant for months and badly needed repair. The man tells a prospective buyer that he'll replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct structural damage and clean out the rubbish.

"Forget about the repairs," replied the buyer, "when I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. It's the site I want, not the building."

God has a renovation in mind for us too. We can try to improve ourselves alone, clean a few windows, sweep the floors, but compared to God's plan, the old life is over. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone, the new is here!" God wants to make all things new; He just needs the site and the permission.

So we've given Him permission - how then do we live expectantly?

Waiting can test our faith, especially when there's no guarantee God will act in the way we want. Learning how to love God with all our heart and being content in Him alone, however, makes it easier to wait on anything. And we cannot build a better foundation than by putting our hope in His Word. Isaiah 30:18 says "Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore He will rise up and show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice, blessed are all those who wait for Him!"

While Christ set us free from sin's power, its presence is still at work. During long seasons of waiting, we may feel frustration and discouragement.

Thankfully, the Gospel assures believers God is for us and works all things together for good. The Lord longs to graciously work in our lives if we allow Him to. He is Immanuel, God with us. He will never leave or forsake us and that's a sustaining promise while we wait for answers to prayer and even more, for His second coming.

Norman Vincent Peale authored "The Power of Positive Thinking" and he writes that a most powerful concept is that "...**Almighty God will be your companion, will stand by you, help you and see you through. No other idea is so powerful in developing self-confidence as this simple belief when practiced. To practice it simply affirm "God is with me; God is helping me; God is guiding me."**

It is one of the simplest Christian teachings but for some reason, as we grow older, everything gets more complicated and difficult. This is the reason why Jesus said that unless we changed and became more childlike, His kingdom was unattainable.

I work at a café and giving a baby-chino to a kid never fails to put a smile on my face. They're always so excited and happy, like they've never seen milk and

marshmallows before! We too have to get excited by and have this joy in Christ. God wants to expose Himself to us, but we must have child-like wonder to see it and expect it from our Father.

In our expectancy, however, we must remember God's ways are not always ours. We need to have the spirit of readiness to go where He calls. Sometimes we have to experience things we don't understand, just so God can bring us to the place He needs us to be. We need to trust Him in that because God is expectant of us too.

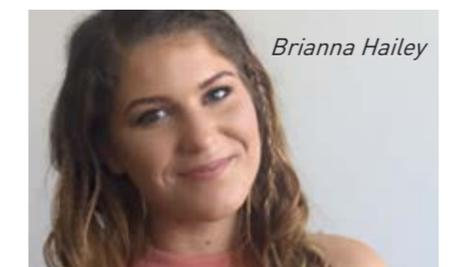
If you look at the Old Testament, every character was a promise of something more, the shadow of what was meant to be. Jesus was the hope and the answer to those promises. He fulfilled the duties of Adam. He is the true King of Israel that David was supposed to be and He was the final sacrifice that all of creation so desperately needed. The whole biblical meta-narrative has been telling the grand story of Christ and now God expects us to tell the rest of it.

It's up to us to let the world know we have a King who is calling us to Him.

As Christians, this is our job; reflecting Jesus. We need to petition God unrelentingly, to be the best people we can be and share the message in the best way we can. For His glory.

So in this New Year, be expectant.

Expect God to show up.



Brianna Hailey



THE
Courage
BE
SUMMER CAMPS 2017



Departmental Overview

VICYOUTH

The focus at VicYouth over the last term of office is clear... its mission statement says it all...

"To lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship."

The VicYouth team, led by Phil Hyland as Director, driven by four key values (innovation, collaboration, diversity and intergenerational relationships), has seen solid growth over the last three years.

A growing ministry need amongst our senior teens was identified. The social climate is changing and there has been an increasing demand from our senior teens, for the limited number of junior counsellor roles at summer camps, indicating a need to extend their summer camp experience.



Inaugural Avondale Trip

So in 2016, GAP camp was launched, for 16-18 year olds. Changes were made across the board to ensure it was age appropriate. Its success has ensured GAP camp now features as a regular part of the Summer Camp program.

Summer camps play a significant role in developing campers spiritual journeys, as well as an opportunity to strengthen social bonds and have fun in an outdoor environment. They are invaluable.

Pathfinders has gone from strength to strength, with seventeen clubs now participating with three or four more in the incubator stage. Some more info about pathfinders.

Without the support of the local churches and the seven dedicated district directors, who put in many hours work, Pathfinders would not be what it is today.

Another aspect of VicYouth's ministry that has also grown significantly over

this recent term has been Adventurers. Adventurers had basically been on "life support" for many years with only a couple of clubs operating. In 2012 VicYouth decided to run Adventurer Camporee three years in a row, rather than the usual bi-annual event. This initiative gave Adventurers the momentum it needed and we now have nineteen clubs which have become feeders into Pathfinder clubs, to continue and maintain growth. A couple of Pathfinder clubs even owe their existence to Adventurers!

Our Adventist high schools plan trips to Avondale each year, where their senior students experience the facilities and what is on offer. Identifying a similar unmet need for students attending non-Adventist schools, VicYouth, in partnership with Avondale College, organised and led a college campus tour specifically for these students in 2016. This was really appreciated, and VicYouth is currently exploring dates and options for 2017 including partnering with other (smaller) conferences so if you know someone interested, please give VicYouth a call.

Late 2013, VicYouth was invited by the General Conference Youth department to be a part of a global social media broadcast the following year – Global Youth Day 2014. This was a day for our churches around the globe to get involved in reaching out to and serving their community together. For one hour, Victoria broadcast to the rest of the world, sharing what they had done as Jesus' hands and feet that day. It was a great opportunity for our youth to experience being a part of a world-wide movement. VicYouth was able to



Nurturing our youth to Christ... what VicYouth is all about

participate for three years.

In 2014, Moe Stiles was appointed as part-time chaplain, to our university students, establishing a regular Friday night fellowship and a database of contacts. Under the leadership of Roy Kim since beginning of 2016, we have seen Adventist university campus ministry surge ahead with an expanded team heading up various aspects of university student ministry including its own website. A team from Victoria attended the national ASA summit in Sydney last July helping to further establish a strong F.O.C.U.S. in Victoria. Check out their brand new website <http://focusontheone.com.au>.



Worship... Fellowship... Nature...

Training, equipping and leadership development for discipleship is a major focus for VicYouth in 2017, beginning with the Leadership weekend in February with Dr Nick Kross, from the SPD is the keynote speaker.

Then there is a ShareHim trip to South Africa starting July 18. If you are keen to develop your public speaking skills and to share our key Adventist teachings, then this trip is for you. It will culminate in attending the European-wide youth congress in Valencia, Spain.

VicYouth will be involved in a number of national events in 2017: the Digital Discipleship Conference in July; the SPD's Youth Leadership Conference in September; and the National Youth Ministry Convention in October. Contact VicYouth for more information.

The local church MUST become the primary target of youth ministry. VicYouth's core function is to resource and build up youth ministry in the local church and it is only effective when it is in response to local needs, guided by local convictions, in the hands of local people.

MINISTERIAL



GROW Conference

The work of the Ministerial Association continues to grow and develop as the Association Secretary, Darren Croft, supports and empowers our local church pastors and leaders in their service to their churches and local communities.

The annual GROW Conference, which initially began as a retreat for church Elders, currently has expanded to include local church leaders in other areas, and is a well-attended highlight each year. It provides information and resources on varied topics, and provides opportunities for attendees to share their experiences and ideas, strengthening each other in their ministry. More than 100 have attended each of the GROW Conferences and speakers have included biblical scholars, authors, church planters and leaders from the General Conference.

The Association helps to coordinate the Youth Pastoral Worker (YPW) program. These local young people continue to make a difference in their churches. Each year the YPW's have attended a weekend retreat in order to be further trained and provide opportunity for them to network together. In 2016 the YPW retreat was incorporated into the bigger Youth Leadership weekend, offering a wider range of



2017 YPWs

learning, networking and mentoring opportunities. In 2017 the YPW retreat will return as a stand alone event in May, and it is expected that it will alternate year about with the Youth Leadership Weekend.

Professional Development and pastoral care are an important part of the Association's role. A varied range of professional development opportunities are made available, both in meeting format and in optional individual development. All pastors attend the Pastors Retreat and a two day Professional Development program. The retreat provides time to dig deeper into scripture and pastoral practice in a relaxed environment. In 2015 the Victorian Conference invited the ministers from the Tasmanian Conference join the Victorian ministers at Philip Island – which added another dynamic to the retreat experience. At the 2015 retreat the Ministerial Association took on a project to provide funds to complete an unfinished church in the Kakuma Refugee village in Kenya. \$3000 was raised in donations and the church building was completed, resulting in 76 baptisms in the village as an immediate fruit of this project!

The Professional Development days are held at a local church in Melbourne and provide an opportunity to address practical pastoral issues – ranging from learning more about different people groups and cultures, to dealing with relationship and life issues, the growth of the church, and opportunities for peer to peer learning.

Additional optional events are also provided through the year allowing groups of pastors to engage in learning that is specific to their interests and needs in ministry.

District meetings are also a feature throughout the year. The Conference currently is divided into six regions, and on any given Tuesday one of these regions will be meeting. These are times where pastors can keep touch with the others in their district, sharing experiences and ideas, liaising with each other to maximise resources in their work, socialising and praying together.

Caring for the ministers and their families is important. In the last two years, pastors and their spouses have been given opportunity to attend Marriage Enrichment weekends hosted



Professional Development

by Trafford Fischer and Bryan Craig. The annual Family Camp at Howqua is also appreciated by pastors' families and provides opportunities for the team to get to know each other better.

While the total number of pastors employed in Victoria has been largely unchanged in recent years, research undertaken by the Ministerial Association has highlighted the challenge of providing pastoral staffing into the future. With approximately half the ministerial workforce potentially being of an age where they could retire in the next ten or so years, the need for employing and training young pastors on an intentional basis has been recognised by the Conference. More recently research utilising new generation mapping data has also provided stronger insights into the distribution of Adventist members in Victoria and how that corresponds to the broader population. It is anticipated that this will help to inform future plans for planting new churches.

The Ministerial Association also facilitates the process of progressing ministers in ministry. Internship is the program that is used to train graduate pastors before they progress to a ministerial 'license'. Internship is a systematic and intentional two year process involving practical training and support, a designated mentor for the intern, and regular assessments. Three pastors successfully completed their internships at the end of 2016. Currently Victoria has one second year intern, and three first year interns with a fourth first year intern expected to start in the next couple of months. Each year the Conference has also acknowledged the call of God to full time gospel ministry in the lives of those pastors who are ordained or commissioned into ministry. Those recently acknowledged are Justin Bone and Boriss Soldat (2015), Kojo Akomeah and Jinha Kim (2016), and Fraser Catton (2017).

Charlie Connor



Trish Corner



Ramona



Christina and Sophia

Shirley Roberts



Kate McKenna



Janine vanVuuren



Alec, Ben and Jared with Josh Wood



God is Good Nunawading Church

2016 was a blessed year at Nunawading, with our long awaited new facility being opened. But by far the most exciting and inspiring events have been the thirteen baptisms we have witnessed. Each candidate has a Spirit-filled testimony, and to give glory to God, we share a glimpse of each with the wider church community.

Charlie Connor was baptised on New Year's Day, 2016, by Pr Brian Lawty. Charlie is a talented young man who is already using his God-given talents to serve the church and the community.

In October, Josh Wood baptised Trish Corner and Troy Alphonso (Casey Church). In Trish's testimony, she spoke of being rescued from a downward spiral and how she now rejoices in God's forgiveness.

Pr David Butcher baptised Ramona Jungwirth in November. Ramona is a mother of three children, and her testimony speaks of the Holy Spirit's work drawing her towards finding a church that taught Truth. Her children were also dedicated to God on this day, and her very supportive husband was there to witness and support his family in their decisions.

Also in November, Kate McKenna was baptised by Josh Wood at Jumping Creek Reserve. Kate is a beautiful young lady who readily confesses her love of Jesus.

The second Sabbath in December was an incredibly high day at Nunawading with a number of people joining the church family.

Christina Kao and Sophia Kato were baptised – a mother and daughter who were convicted of the Sabbath truth and keeping the Sabbath on their own in their home, thinking that "they were the only ones who knew." They learnt about the Seventh-day Adventist church through their exploration of healthy lifestyles, after reading Jethro Kloss's book, Back to Eden.

Shirley Roberts attended Road to Bethlehem for the first time in 2015. She came to church the following Sabbath and has not looked back since! She thanks God for directing her steps and bringing her into a faith that has brought her such joy and contentment. Shirley is grateful to Tarnya Garner, lay pastoral worker, who has been a true friend and has studied God's Word with her.

Married couple, Janine and Arno van Vuuren, shared their story of a search for a church that stood for uncompromising truth, but also had the love and testimony of Jesus Christ. Growing up in the Dutch Reform Church, they "shopped around" churches for many years, but their testimony told of the Holy Spirit directing their steps to the Adventist faith. Janine was baptised and Arno offered his Profession of Faith.

And finally, on a hot and sultry Sabbath in January this year, three young men who have grown up in our church were baptised by Josh Wood at Witton's Reserve with many public bathers witnessing the event. Alec Stanton and Ben and Jared Sparavec expressed their desire to follow Jesus and to be active members of the Adventist Church.

This is not really 'finally' – the Holy Spirit is truly active and utilising our Church for God's glory... We pray we will have many more such stories to share in the future as we continue to work for our Lord.

Karen Horsley

World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer is coming and this year the prayer focus is the Philippines. The theme, 'Am I Being Unfair to You', raises the question of can a good God be unfair to us? Often we feel He is...

World Day of Prayer is a unique opportunity to join together with Christians of all denominations to pray... to take part in prayer that unites us as Christians and blesses the country that receives this weight of prayer more than we can ever imagine.

You are invited to attend services in

your area or hold one of your own. So set aside Friday March 3 for a special day of prayer.

Resources, services times and locations can be found at www.worlddayofprayeraustralia.org.

Lyn Bolto



Operation Tin Can Macedon Ranges Church

One Sabbath in November, the Adventurers and Pathfinders from Macedon Ranges Church, together with members from North Fitzroy Church helped out with Operation Tin Can. They went door to door around the township of Sunbury, asking for donations of non-perishable food items to support Northpoint Church's Sunbury Foodbank.



The clubs would like to thank ADRA for their support in this venture.

Melissa Martin

Facebook Ministry

Burwood Adventist Community Church

Last edition IntraVic bought you a story on digital evangelism with cards that fold into USB's with Christian books and video recordings on them. This edition, we have another form of evangelism we would like to share... in the age we now live in, the possibilities are endless and Jodie's testimony here shows how God can bring people on opposite ends of the world together to achieve His purposes!

There have been many times on my journey where I have asked questions. Some of those questions were very complicated and I have had a number of mentors and pastors guiding me spiritually – I want the same for others.

One day, I was impressed to start a Facebook group. I was hesitant to, but the Holy Spirit did not let up on me. Though I had many doubts about my ability to manage it, I eventually did what the Lord was asking of me, and created a group.

It started with just 50 members, but in six months has reached well over 2000 and is growing by about 20 per day! We uphold the Adventist doctrines in this group but make it a safe place where people can ask their questions and discuss the Bible.

When the group started, Andy requested to join. With a desire for this group to be evangelistic, loving and Christ-like, I had prayed for a website where people could request books that lead them to Christ. Andy and his wife

live in Georgia, United States and not long after he had joined, Andy started posting links to his webpage, which gives away Ellen White books such as Steps to Christ and Desire of Ages.

Eventually I decided to give him top spot in the Facebook group, where he and his wife could promote the books that are free of charge. Once we did that, they started getting requests from many parts of the world. In November and December alone, 127 books were sent across the globe and the tally was already up to 50 by mid-January. Many of these requests are from people who have not heard about Christ and have many questions.

Even though Andy and his wife created the website, it has been a blessing from the Lord to be able to combine our skills and resources together to reach the world. God has turned what started out as something small for all of us, it into a global ministry!

My prayers now are that people will be led to Christ and be baptised into His true, remnant church through our combined resources and skills. I believe the Seventh Day Adventist church has been given a light from God. He has given us His truth by His grace to reach a hurting world. When we work together with Him and place Him at the centre of our lives and church, we can reach the world for His glory.

Jodie Murphy



Baptisms at the Beach

Glenhuntly

Two new members were welcomed into the family over the year end; two young adults who made a public stand for Jesus.

Cherrine was introduced to Jesus through a friend. She wanted to learn more about Christianity so began having Bible studies. Over the course of a year she learnt more about Jesus and how to follow Him. Convicted on the importance of the Sabbath, she decided to stop working on Saturdays in the family business. This wasn't an easy decision, coming from a Muslim family. But Cherrine was committed to following Jesus. Cherrine was going to put God first. So on November 26 she was baptised at Edithvale Beach and welcomed into the church family.

George grew up in the church and had seen his friends and relatives make decisions for Jesus. However he never felt ready. Through Bible studies, spiritual conversations and the youth group, George felt God drawing him in. But he still had unresolved problems and struggles in his life. Towards the end of 2016 George spent more time in Bible study and prayer and was convicted that he couldn't hold off on baptism any longer. On January 21, he was baptised at Mordialloc beach in front of family and friends.

Fraser Catton





On their backs read 'Doss saved 75. Jesus saved all. I'm an Adventist like Doss – ask me more'

Hackshaw Ridge

Poland

The release of the movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, in Central Europe opened unrepresented witnessing opportunities.

Recently baptised twins, Karolina and Monika, attended their local cinema in Poland, wearing t-shirts printed to look like the uniform Desmond Doss would have worn. On the back was written Desmond Doss saved 75. Jesus saved all. I'm an Adventist like Doss – ask me more" and they were not alone. Across Poland, over 100 youth spent November last year volunteering at cinemas, on the street, at a book fair and at local church screenings of the documentary, *The Conscientious Objector*.

The result? By early December, people were already having Bible studies, and at least 100 had attended an Adventist church for the first time.

"It's fantastic," states pastor Marek Rakowski, Executive Secretary of the Adventist Church in Poland. "A strange paradox is that in a country that is one of the most Catholic in Europe, to talk about spirituality and other religions is generally 'taboo'. This film has broken the taboo and given the church a voice."

Praise God.

IntraVic

RTB 2016

We wish to thank everyone involved in *Road to Bethlehem* last year, and praise our great God!

For our first year at the new location in Lilydale, we had around 13,500 attendees, not that far behind 2015's total of 16,000! This was amazing – given the new location added a further 30 minutes' drive to many of our returning visitors, and this was a new event in the local area. God surely blessed. The ladies at the welcome scene asked each group to indicate who had attended RtB previously. By the show of hands, they believe that 30 - 40% of attendees had never been before.

What an honour it is to share the Christmas story and to proclaim that salvation and life are freely available in Jesus.

Please continue to pray for those who travelled the road in 2016, that they will respond to God at work in their hearts and lives.

And be encouraged that God is moving powerfully through this ministry. Here is just one example, from a message to RTB on its facebook page.

"My soon-to-be eleven year old son was touched by your production last night, especially the last scene, and accepted Jesus into his life! Thank you!"

Meredith Allen



Pictured are CHIP participants Michael and Karena Watson with Dr Horatio Selagea at right.

Spectacular Results

Lilydale Church

Sixteen people are much healthier after following the three-month—September to November—Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) program in Lilydale.

"In some cases the results were spectacular," says CHIP leader Dr Horatio Selagea, "with huge drops in cholesterol and triglyceride levels. There was also a normalising of blood sugar levels in participants with pre-diabetes and significant reductions in blood pressure."

He reports that the average participant lost 4 kilograms in weight, but there were participants who lost 8 kilograms and one of them 10 kilograms.

CHIP is an international program with a proven record for improving well being, preventing and even reversing some medical conditions. It works by helping participants make good dietary choices, enhance daily exercise, increase support systems and decrease stress.

Why not consider joining the increasing number of churches hosting CHIP?

Bruce Manners

Ordaining Fraser

On Sabbath, January 21, Fraser Catton was ordained at Lilydale Church, in the presence of God, his family and church family. Congratulations Fraser.



Fraser is grateful to God for being brought up in a home where both his parents are devoted followers of Jesus. Their commitment to being His hands and feet is something that Fraser has always seen.

Born in Hong Kong where his parents were working at the mission hospital, Fraser's early community was the church. The family returned to Australia when Fraser was in mid primary school, soon fitting in with their church community in Brisbane.

Jesus was always a part of Fraser's life. He remembers telling one of his school friends that it would be amazing to be the person who led someone to Jesus. That being said, however, a pastor was not something that Fraser wanted to be!

Upon completing high school, Fraser studied business at the University of Queensland and there he had his eyes opened! For the first time rubbing shoulders with non-Christians on a regular basis, he discovered they were just like him - they weren't strange or weird but normal, everyday people who just didn't know Jesus yet. As simple and logical as that was, it was a key learning moment for Fraser and turned out to be a pivotal point in his life.

During his university years Fraser was invited to join a church plant down the road from where he was living. It was a new opportunity and something that looked interesting, so he jumped on board. Southpine, as the church-plant was called, quickly became a big part of life. And in the process, Fraser discovered Jesus for himself. He had always known about Jesus but it wasn't personal. As he studied the Bible, prayed and experienced life with Him, he felt his eyes opening to what church was really all about.

Integral to his experience were two pastors who took an interest in him, mentored him and encouraged him in his spiritual walk. They challenged Fraser and, along with others, suggested that he should consider ministry. It was not something he felt he could do and while humbled by the suggestion, did not think it was for him.

By this time Fraser was working in banking but felt a growing discontent with what he was doing. Looking back he can see that it was God awakening the desires of his heart. The more time Fraser spent with God and being involved in church, the stronger the discontent for his job grew. He was dating Julie and as they spoke about it, they felt God had plans for them to enter ministry.

As clear as it became, he was still reluctant.

Julie and Fraser were married and in that first year they talked a lot about ministry. Not surprisingly, God turned the handles of a series of doors, opening them all, providing somewhere to live in Cooranbong, a job for Julie and an opening to study.

In the last months of his time at Avondale, Fraser received the offer of a position with the Victorian Conference and gladly accepted. Since his arrival, he has served at a number of our churches and as a school chaplain. Currently, he is working with Glenhuntingly Church and The Oasis.

Fraser says, "We can clearly see God has led us to this point and we know He'll continue to lead us in the future."



Ministry on Wheels

AMM



You have probably heard of AMM – IntraVic has shared stories in the past, but we want to share that Adventist Motorcycle Ministry is more than a group of people who like to ride motorbikes. It really is a ministry!

"Over the past three years we have grown to around 40 on our list," says John Brereton, one of the founding members in Victoria. "With a solid core group of around eight members, we are a small but enthusiastic group of men and women who have passion for bikes but a greater passion to share Jesus."

AMM has been involved in a number of activities, such as preaching and Sabbath School programs across Victoria as well as fundraising for a number of projects.

"There is a vast number of motorcycle rides in Victoria – late last year, the Catholic Church had a blessing of Motorcycle Rides in Victoria and around 10,000 people turned up to receive the blessing – we need to reach them!"

On March 10-12 AMM is hosting an inaugural Motorcycle Camp at Jumbunna. "This is a first" says John, "and a bit scary! But God will bless as he always does."

Barry Gane will be the guest presenter, and Steve Piez and Helena Ring will provide music over the weekend. If you are interested, you are welcome to join them – book now. Cut off is March 1.

IntraVic



Welcome to Victoria

Yong Shin, or more commonly known now as Yoshi, was born in Malaysia. He moved to Melbourne to finish high school and attended Monash University where he studied Commerce and Business Systems. His IT career includes working for IBM, but God had been pursuing him to serve in full-time ministry.

He finally decided to stop running, and after graduating from Andrews University, pastored in Kingscliff and Forresters Beach (NSW) before coming to Wantirna.

"In my spare time," Yoshi says, "I love tinkering with technology, watching basketball, music and spending time with my beautiful girlfriend, Nadia."

All the best, Yoshi, as you work for



the Lord here in Victoria. May you experience His richest blessings.



JUST 4 KIDS

Seeing God...

Then they called them in . . . For we cannot help speaking about what we have **seen** and heard (Acts 4:18-20).

Prayer ...

Thank you God for the many ways you take care of me. Please help me see these ways and give me the courage to obey what ever you ask me to do.

Questions to discuss with your parents over dinner!

- What has God done for you today?
- What did God help you with today?
- HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY ANSWERS TO PRAYER TODAY?
- What have you seen God do for someone else today?
- What happened today that reminded you of God's character?
- How have you see God's faithfulness today?
- Did you notice anything amazing in God's creation today?

We can see God all around us in the things He has made. On a nice sunny day go on a nature treasure hunt.

See how many of these things you can find!!

- Something fuzzy
- Something straight
- * Something smooth
- Two different types of leaves
- A chewed leaf
- A pinecone
- A stick
- Something you think is beautiful
- Something you think is a treasure
- Two kinds of seeds
- Something round
- Something rough
- Something that makes noise
- A beautiful rock
- Something green

- When you see all the ways God takes care of you and all the things He gives you, doesn't it make you want to do whatever He asks?

You've probably said, "I'd give anything for a drink!" or "I'd die for an ice cream cone." What would YOU be willing to die for? Chocolate? To score a winning goal? For your beliefs?

Three young men were willing to die just to stand up for their God... Or were they?

Read the thrilling story of these brave men from Daniel 3 and verses 1, 6, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21, 26, 28.

Questions: • What was the most exciting part of the story? • What were they willing to die for?

• Do you think the three men knew they would not burn up? • Why or why not?

• What should we do when someone wants us to disobey God?

For the Mums and Dads...

Joshua Bell is a famous violinist who has an amazing talent. People pay hundreds of dollars to hear him play all over the world. The Washington Times conducted an experiment a number of years ago putting Joshua Bell in the Metro at the L'Enfant Plaza Station in Washington. He took his 3.5 million dollar violin, set himself up next to a rubbish bin and started to play his masterpieces for the mass of humans rushing to get to their various deadlines. The experiment was designed to see if in their busyness, people would be able to pause and experience the beauty of what he was playing.

Video footage of the experiment shows that out of the enormous number of people rushing past only eight stopped to listen. What was even more interesting though, was that all of the children who went past were desperate to stop and hear this man play. Kids could be seen pulled along by hurried parents as they were craning their necks trying to catch a last glimpse of Joshua before they were dragged away. Some parents had to position themselves between their child and the musician just to break concentration long enough to get them moving again.

We are all busy people. We all have deadlines and places to be. But this begs the question: In our rush are we missing out on the beauty that God has placed all around us? Kids don't miss it. They see the wonder of a butterfly passing by or a flower begging to be picked (from someone else's immaculate garden where you have to spend the next ten minutes explaining to a three year old why we can't pick other people's flowers). They experience God in the wriggly worms found in the dirt they are putting all over their new clothes. There is wonder and beauty in everything.

This story really spoke to me as a mum. I realised that I was spending too much time rushing my kids here and there. I've made a resolution to make sure that as much as I can to listen to when my kids experience God's beauty and wonder. I'm pretty sure they have a lot to teach me.



God still works on Hot Days!

Literature Evangelists

Yes it was warm the last couple of days. Yesterday (Mid Jan) being the hottest with the day peaking at 36 degrees, but we are so glad that our God also works on hot days too. Truly I sensed Him very near, moving hearts and orchestrating events. In fact yesterday was one of the best days of my career.

Just a few highlights....

I went to visit a lady by the name of Sue (name changed). Sue had emailed IntraVic and it was forwarded to me.

"Hi there my name is Sue and I am an old friend and customer of Joe, the book salesman. Do you know him or know someone able to give him my number, through your church by any chance?"

I've tried to look him up but can't remember his last name so makes it difficult. My number is -----. I know him because he was a good friend of my mother. He checked up on her often and I'm not sure if he's aware that mum passed away. It would be great to touch base."

I hadn't seen Sue for a number of years and it was so good to once again meet up with her. She shared the sad story of the passing away of her mother and I listened. God was very close as we talked and prayed together. It was a real joy to minister to this beautiful young woman. Sue purchased more of our resources and could not thank me enough for coming.

I had just left Sue's home and got into my car when I received a phone call from one of my contacts in Ballarat. I had knocked on Heather's door a year and a half ago. She did not purchase our books at the time but accepted to watch our Beyond DVDs. I remember how before leaving her home I prayed for her and how moved she was, "It's nice of you to pray for me. I don't have people come to my door and do that." Heather then shared how she is attending our Ballarat church regularly and thanked me for knocking on her door. She also encouraged me to continue to do what I am doing and ordered our Family Medical Care, Medicinal Plants and Family Bible. I was very humbled and moved by her phone call and I look forward to attending her baptism.

Visiting with Rose was exciting. I delivered to her the DVD set, The Seventh Day by Hal Holbrook and then presented the Prophecy Code DVDs by Doug Batchelor and the Keepers of the Flame. Once again God's Spirit was at work on her heart and Rose was happy to purchase them both.

Our God also blessed with further experiences and purchases and it is a joy to work in partnership with Him and His church. To see Him moving on hearts is truly special. Praise God for the lives that we are able to impact positively for Jesus. Yes our God works on hot days!!!

Joe Paola





ASVAC

Over 300 teachers and support staff attended Adventist Schools Victoria's annual conference, this year held at Edinburgh College, and it was the biggest conference to date.

Themed ConnectEd, because we are continuously connected to the world through various ICT devices and teachers are at the centre of a technology-rich and data-driven world. ICT devices are in the hands of our children, from toddlers up, so it is imperative that our teachers know how these devices can enhance learning in our classrooms.

ASV has taken the initiative to have a 'whole system' approach to using the 'G Suite' (google apps for education) and this year's conference's main focus was on technology in the classroom. EdTechTeam, a global network of educational technologists demonstrated the use of the Suite.

In between the sessions and presentations there was plenty of time for networking and connecting with other colleagues from across the system – especially during morning tea, lunch and dinner, which was held outside in the beautiful school grounds.

"Connection is obviously not just about devices," says ASV director, Brian Mercer. "Connection with students is possibly one of the most important aspects of teaching. In a recent Twitter posting, there was an article on how teachers create a welcoming environment in their classrooms to enhance learning. It is just one of a plethora of strategies used by teachers on a daily basis to enhance connectedness with their students."

And finally, as Adventist Christian teachers, being 'ConnectEd' with our God through authentic and visible Christianity is an absolute. Our students best learn about God through observing the actions of their teachers – and this will only be as effective as is the connection between each of us and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

So ASVAC kick-started the year with emphasis on all these spheres, to enrich, revitalise and energise staff, ready to meet the needs of their students in 2017.



Staff Feedback

"ASVAC 2017 provided an excellent opportunity for teachers to connect spiritually, socially and intellectually to improve their teaching practice and their opportunities to share the love of Jesus with their students."

"Inspirational day full of hands on sessions which boosted our technology abilities and ultimately help us to be more effective teachers. Can't wait to try all the new things learnt and show them to my students back at school."

"Ignite session at ASVAC was a fantastic session where four teachers inspired and reminded the team of our purpose driven ministry as teachers! Go team!"

"Fabulous time for sharing our vision for preparing our students for a world with IT and spiritual enrichment."

ASVAC Awards

A number of teachers received awards for years of service, from five years to twenty five years as well as the following annual awards:

Excellence in Teaching 2016
Durdica Kukolja

Excellence in Early Career Teaching
2016 – *Sarah Courtney*

Innovation Award – Heritage College –
Jody Lawson & Naomi Moss

Excellence in Leadership –
Administrator of the Year 2016
Mark Vodell



STAFFING CHANGES

Last year we said farewell to Malcolm Coulson (Principal Edinburgh College) and Rhonda Belson (Principal Heritage College) and Adrian Stiles (Principal Nunawading Christian College Secondary)



Malcolm Coulson



Rhonda Belson



Adrian Stiles

This year, Hanna Stekla takes up the role of Principal at Nunawading Christian College Secondary Campus and will be ably assisted by Meggan James as Deputy Principal.

Sonny Aiono is moving from the position of Primary Deputy Principal at Heritage College (Narre Warren South) to the role of Principal of Heritage College. Other changes include Naomi Moss moving from Deputy Principal Primary (Officer) to Learning & Teaching coordinator and Roger Sevenhuysen stepping into the

role vacated by Sonny and Naomi as Primary Deputy Principal across both campuses. Roger will be supported by Joanne Capon in the role of Primary Deputy Principal.

At Edinburgh College, Tim Borgas has been appointed to the position of Principal, and will be supported by Jason Smith as Head of Secondary and Tanya Pascoe as Head of Primary.

Also appointed to a leadership position is Margaret Andoh-Okai who is taking on the role of Early Learning Centre Director for Edinburgh College, Heritage College and Nunawading Christian College Primary.

Hanna Stekla



Tim Borgas



Meggan James



Jason Smith



Sonny Aiono



Tanya Pascoe



Roger Sevenhuysen



Margaret Andoh-Okai



Humanitarian Project

Each year attendees donate to a project and this year staff raised approximately \$10000 to assist with schools and a clinic in Ethiopia. Fifty years ago our church began health and education work as part of its mission in a remote part of Ethiopia with a small clinic and a school with eight students. Now there are thirteen churches in the area, and over 12000 members. We have two Adventist schools desperately in need of capital for upgrades and



developments and the clinic is severely hampered in the service it can provide with no electricity or refrigeration. Work will commence soon on this project.

New ELC

Heritage College is happy to announce their new Early Learning Centre is up and running.



Our Schools

Edinburgh College

Edinburgh Early Learning Centre
Phone: 03 9761 9991

Primary Campus
Phone: 03 9728 8833

Secondary Campus
Phone: 03 9728 2211

edinburghcollege.vic.edu.au

Gilson College

Taylor's Hill Campus
Phone: 03 9365 9365

Mernda Campus
Phone: 03 9717 7300

www.gilsoncollege.com

Henderson College

Phone: 03 5024 5192
henderson.adventist.edu.au

Heritage College

Narre Warren South Campus
Phone: 03 9796 0100

Officer Campus
Phone: 03 5943 2900

www.heritagecollege.com.au

Nunawading Christian College

Primary Campus
Phone: 03 9878 9927

Secondary Campus
Phone: 03 9877 3555

ncc2.vic.edu.au

ADRA's reconstruction project after the Nepal earthquakes



Local News - Christmas Dinner wrappers



Knitted Teddies



Croydon McDonald's was a big supporter

Vive Cafe Volunteers



ADRA Connections Overseas News - Nepal

It can be easy to forget that in April-May 2015, Nepal was devastated with earthquakes that brought communities to a standstill. Almost two years on, the aftermath of this natural disaster is still evident, particularly in education where teachers and students must adapt to a teaching environment of corrugated iron classrooms and extreme learning conditions to name a few.

Earlier in 2016, 23 volunteers came together and made a decision to be a part of something bigger than themselves. We didn't know what type of impact this project would have to the Shree Ganesh Bharati Secondary

School but God knew and continued to work on our hearts.

And work on us He did! From December 25 - January 11, we set out to partner with the school, rebuilding four classrooms and constructing new male and female toilets. The workload was intense but seeing the teachers and students every day, sharing in their stories and being accepted into their community, inspired us to leave nothing in reserve. Our combined efforts saw the successful completion of the school classroom and toilets, ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for current and future students.

There is still so much more to be done



Rebuilding Classrooms in Nepal

and we would encourage anyone who is willing to give up some of their time to see the impacts of positive change and sustainable relationships in Nepal and other developing countries. It is as simple as saying YES. And in doing so you are saying YES to the revitalization of disaster-ravaged medical clinics,

schools and families. More importantly, you're saying YES to supporting one more community, one more family, one more opportunity of lasting change for years to come.

Will Tai Tin
ADRA Connections Team Leader

Local News

We thank all the volunteers, schools and churches for their support of ADRA's Christmas dinners last year. A special mention to Longwarry Church members and Pam Hughes, who knitted teddy bears for the children's Christmas hampers, to Sarah Courtney and Edinburgh students for cards and to McDonalds Croydon for sponsoring Christmas breakfast for the guests from Vive Café.

If you would like to be involved in any of ADRA in Victoria's local programs from the Women and Families Project, Homeless Outreach, Settle Assist, Vive Café, Redwood Community Centre, ADRA Op shops and over twelve emergency relief outlets across Victoria - please email me.

Rebecca Auriant
ADRA Director

Stories From the Field

While on our ADRA Connections Trip in Nepal we met Santosh. He is a humble man whose name, in Nepalese, actually means "Always happy" and was a true reflection, as he always smiled and laughed at our "Aussie" antics. He is the Project Officer for ADRA Nepal, has been working there for twelve years and oversees the United For Education Project and ADRA Connection trips. He loves social work and painting and has studied Bachelor of Sociology in Kathmandu. His father, being a teacher, gave his family middle class status. Education has been the key to his success.

Santosh spoke about how child labour and child marriage is illegal but sadly still happens for poorer rural families, for their survival. Families with male children will benefit through marriage as the bride's father has to pay the husband's family all the costs associated with the union. He also explained that gender equality is a significant issue as boys have access to private boarding schools where as girls can only attend government schools.

We learnt that attending school is government policy and teachers visit the local villages to bring the children to school, but many poorer families' children have to work to support the household.



Also that rural families tended to have many children so some can work in the city, others on the land and some even going to countries such as Malaysia and Dubai as labourers.

During the earthquakes in 2015, Santosh witnessed families with ten members living together in one room due to the damage sustained. He mentioned how important our work was, so the children would be able to access toilets and a safe learning environment.

ADRA Nepal has been able to rebuild over 20 classrooms since the earthquakes in 2015.

Thank you Santosh for your hospitality, for teaching us about your culture and history and making our team feel so welcome in Nepal.

Rebecca Auriant

Australia Day

Mrs Nancy Piez was honoured on Australia Day for her work with ADRA and the City of Whittlesea, coordinating the emergency relief program at Plenty Valley Church. Congratulations, Nancy. You are truly allowing Christ to work through you.



“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35





With Sibilla and Pr Graeme Christian are (L-R) Charlotte Yue Ren, Nathan Tyler, Ryan Young, Jaime Rodgers (missing from photo – Sarah Ind, Monica Gallasch and Danica Tyler)

2016 CHEP Graduation Adventist Health Vic

Each year the Victorian Conference offers a nine-month training course for people who would like to be involved in sharing our Health Message that God has so graciously given to us with the community. This course is accredited with a Certificate IV in 'Presenting Community Health Education Programs', which is nationally recognised.

Food, nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle, play a very important role in our health and wellbeing, and is one of the most important ways of reducing the risk of chronic disease.

The course covers the spiritual principles on which our health message is based. As well as how to plan for a successful Community Health Education program, which includes implementation and evaluation. Also basic nutrition and the lifestyle connection in reducing our risk of disease. With practical subjects: How to plan and conduct a cooking demonstration, safe food handling principles, as well as effective communication.

Seven people graduated from this training course on the evening of December 13, 2016. Friends and family attended the graduation service for the students who were able to attend. A few students were not able to be there on that night.

This course not only teaches basic nutrition, planning and communication skills, but also encourages a closer walk with God, and how to share His love in a practical way with people in the community.

The next training course for the Victorian Conference will be in February 2018.

If you are interested in joining this course, contact the Health Department at the Victorian Conference Office for an information pack.

Sibilla Johnson

Conference News

Yarra Ranges Update

From the President

You may have heard by now of what could be described as the most significant decision made by the AdventCare Board in 2016. After careful, prayerful consideration, the AdventCare Board of Directors has decided to keep the Yarra Ranges facility open.

The decision is evidence based – with many reports, financial projections and new information being thoroughly scrutinized. While we care deeply about the people of Warburton, this decision was not a sympathy vote, nor a response to public pressure, but based on evidence of predicted future viability. As you're aware, Yarra Ranges was close to closing, but already there are new residents coming to the home.

Subject to council approval, the plan is to renovate the home to bring it up to current standards with 42 rooms. This decision represents the culmination of efforts by so many over the last few months and we thank those who have helped to make this possible.

Mission is the prime reason for AdventCare's involvement in Aged Care. There are also other factors in regard to on-going viability.

So why the turn around? Let me clarify that this decision was not because of public pressure – which only slowed negotiations. Public pressure doesn't change the viability of a facility. Nor does it change the bottom line on an operating statement. Rather, what made it possible was positive community buy-in from people from the Valley.

The most significant factor was the successful negotiation of a fixed price contract that addressed all specific concerns for the redevelopment works. This was pivotal in the decision to renovate and continue to operate the

home. A Warburton based committee was able to negotiate a fixed price contract with a commercial builder, ABE constructions. This is significant for two reasons. First, the cost is about half what the quantity surveyor had estimated should be allowed for such a significant refurbishment. That makes a big difference to the bottom line of the financial projections. Second, a fixed price contract eliminates risk of a cost blow out on the building works.

In the past, AdventCare had been working on modelling around extending the facility to 75 beds which required a very significant capital investment. Now that this has been reduced to 42 beds, the AdventCare Board has found that the ability for the facility to be viable has been enhanced. This, combined with ongoing Warburton community support gives confidence of being able achieve occupancy goals.

In addition, further information has become available indicating that the Federal Government's funding cuts to the sector have been varied. They will still have an impact, however, the variation is better for the Yarra Ranges home.

We recognise there's a lot of hard work ahead, but for the first time in more than eight years we now see a viable way forward for this important community facility. Please continue to pray that God will lead as we go forward.

Pr Graeme Christian



To Bring Back New

Paul says in, Colossians 1:18, that Jesus Christ is head of the body, the Church. We know that. But do we relate to Him that way? Imagine if He were the life-giving pulse of all we do in our churches. What would that look like?

This year, we are consolidating the three departments of Personal Ministries, Sabbath School and Health Ministries into a streamlined set of initiatives called **Rē**.

Rē is a prefix that indicates bringing something back to a new state. We are offering four unique programs designed to

- REVIVE YOUR CHURCH
- RECAPTURE YOUR MISSION
- REFRESH YOUR HEALTH
- REVITALIZE YOUR SABBATH SCHOOL

REVIVE YOUR CHURCH journeys through the parables to find new life in Christ. It is designed for churches in decline that may be in need of life support. It unpacks principle-based growth processes from the book Christ's Object Lessons. Simple, powerful and full of fresh life!

RECAPTURE YOUR MISSION is a God-breathed visioning initiative for both you and your local church. It incorporates a season of seeking God for his vision for your church with guided assignments and culminates in a Vision Quest Weekend where a shared direction emerges. The church then travels through Natural Church

Development and aligns its ministries to the Great Commission.

REFRESH YOUR HEALTH guides you toward a life of full engagement where you become physically energised, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned. This is designed to reboot your whole being.

REVITALIZE YOUR SABBATH SCHOOL introduces your classes to the "To Win, To Hold, To Train" model for developing caring, Bible-based small groups, challenging and equipping members for service.

If one of these programs would meet a need in your local church, call our office at (03) 9264 7715 and we'll start the journey together.

Remember, Christ is the head, so let's follow where He leads.

Andrew Jasper



Andrew Jasper, director Sabbath Schools, Personal Ministries and Adventist Health

Make your SS Class a Ministry

Earlier this year, Daniel woke up at midnight to his wife, Christie, thrashing in the sheets of their bed. He realized she was not feeling well and tried to get her to the local ambulance facility, but they were closed due to a freak winter ice-storm earlier in the night. While racing down the highway to the next place for help, she became unresponsive. After getting to the hospital and 45 minutes of acute intervention, she was pronounced dead. When I talked with him and his daughter a few days later you know

what he said?

"Well, you know Pastor Andrew, we just studied about Job last quarter and how we each go through struggles, and I just take a lot of comfort knowing I'm not alone but can rely on God during the storm."

Sabbath School is a great way for you and your church to help people ride the tough waves life throws our way. Rediscover what being a part of a caring, Bible study group can do for you.



Training and other Important Dates:

28 February
Tuesday Night Training (TNT) for Personal Ministries (4th Tuesday of each month)

29 April
FOODcents Training

12-20 May
Health Week emphasizing the new Forgive to Live resource

5-9 June
Open Home Initiative

15,16 July
Depression and Anxiety Recovery Program Training

19 August
Revitalize your Sabbath School (Metro-wide)

14 October
Complete health Improvement Program Training

Visit the Conference website for further information
Vic.adventist.org.au



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Photo credit: istock photo / C Fletcher

Did You Know...

...that persecution is rising faster in Asia than anywhere else?

North Korea, Pakistan, Syria and Iraq have all been named as some of the countries where Christians face the worst persecution in the world, in an annual report from Open Doors Australia. The report titled the 'World Watch List' ranks the top 50 countries where persecution is worst and this year a figure has also been placed on the number of Christians persecuted in these countries.

"Of the top fifty countries on the list, at least 215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution," says Mike Gore, CEO of Open Doors Australia. "While there are definitely more in other countries, of the 215 million noted in the report, over 100 million of these Christians live in Asia.

"Over the last few years we have seen consistently high levels of persecution in predominately Islamic countries. But this year we have also seen a major increase in the levels of persecution in India, Vietnam, Laos and Bangladesh. Overall it is becoming more difficult to be a Christian in more countries."

A complete version of the list is available on the Open Doors Australia website along with profiles of each of the 50 countries www.opendoors.org.au.

Tim Reid, Open Doors

Vietnamese girl with her new Bible



Hindu Festival

Changing the Guard Safe Places

In 2007, recognising a need within our local conference, church administration created the position of Safe Places Coordinator and appointed Sue Mercer, who commenced this role at the beginning of 2008. Her role was to supervise and facilitate the implementation, within our churches and schools, of the policies developed by the Australian Union Conference's Safe Place Services. The role also came to involve the provision of training opportunities, building up a collection of resources and assisting with risk assessment, in addition to having an advisory role, offering direction to the appropriate support services and reporting processes. It was no small ask!

Sue was highly equipped for the role with a wealth of knowledge and experience, having trained and taught as a teacher, as well as having a social work degree and a Masters in Health Counselling. She also had experience liaising with the Department of Human Services and other religious organisations. And she worked tirelessly, utilising these skills as she developed Victoria's Safe Place Services to help protect and advocate for the vulnerable.

From early in the role, churches were given opportunities to attend seminars where they learnt the importance of establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries, as well as advice on dealing with potential problems and the process of reporting. Sue worked hard at increasing awareness and sharing information in creative ways, as well as promoting the resources available.

The workload and pressure increased significantly, first due to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry in to the Sexual Abuse of Children, for which Sue was responsible for the Victorian Conference's submission, and more recently as the Royal Commission commenced. Both of these have continued to produce significant changes in legislation and the increased accountability required. Despite the workload, Sue still found the energy to invite you into her office and see how you were going, no matter how busy she was. Her compassion never faded, in spite of the demands of the job.

As external demands on our churches to be compliant increased, the training

sessions evolved further. Our Safe Place Services liaised with other denominations and organisations and Sue's expertise was appreciated by other Christian organisations, including the Baptist Church. Able assistance and support was provided in recent times by Katrina Campbell as the Safe Places PA.

With the January closing of Safe Place Services, making way for the new centralised service, AdSAFE, Sue will no longer be filling this role.

"Mrs Mercer has worked tirelessly in her role as Safe Places Coordinator for the Victorian Conference. We recognise the significant contribution she has made," says Pr Graeme Christian.

"Our Conference has been greatly benefited from her expertise in this crucial area of ministry," adds Pr Craig Gillis, "and we wish Mrs Mercer all the best for the future."

Sue, thank you for your tireless efforts in this difficult arena. For your commitment to protecting the vulnerable. And for you many years of hard work. We wish you God's richest blessings in the next chapter of your life.

IntraVic



Sue Mercer

Introducing AdSAFE

PROTECT | RESTORE | EMPOWER

AdSAFE Ltd is the new service for protecting children and vulnerable adults in Adventist organisations across the South Pacific Division.

AdSAFE's role

AdSAFE's role is to develop and implement prevention strategies to mitigate the risk of sexual and physical abuse against children and vulnerable persons, and to assist Adventist organisations respond to alleged incidences of sexual and physical abuse against children and vulnerable persons. This includes the coordination of training for all Seventh-day Adventist Church denominational employees and Church appointed volunteers who interact with children and vulnerable persons; providing psychological support and legal justice or restorative justice pathways for survivors of abuse and their

families; coordinating independent investigations into allegations received; and managing persons of concern and known offenders.

AdSAFE is available to provide advice to Adventists and Adventist organisations in relation to all the matters listed above.

From 31 January 2017 AdSAFE will replace Safe Place Services.

AdSAFE's contact details

Address: PO Box 966, Wahroonga NSW 2076, Australia

Email: info@adsafe.org.au

Ph AUS: 02 9847 3488 or 1800 220 468

Ph NZ: 09 250 2754 or 0800 442 458

Connect with Thousands Sanitarium

Each year the Seventh-day Adventist Church reaches more than 40,000 kids in Australia and New Zealand with a message of being healthy and active and giving things a try, thanks to the Sanitarium Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon. Considering those kids also have family members cheering them on, this represents a significant opportunity to connect with a large number of people from the community each year.

You and your local church family can be a part of this opportunity here in Victoria. Volunteers are critical to the success of each event and last year's Melbourne and Bendigo events attracted more than 3,500 participants combined, plus family members.

Running an event on that scale requires a large team of volunteers helping with everything from registration to assisting kids along the course. Volunteers receive free breakfast, lunch, snacks, shirt and hat. It is also a fundraising opportunity where each church group that registers receives \$27 per volunteer represented.



Is your local church family looking to have a greater presence in the community? Does your church have a youth group, ministry team or other group that would enjoy a fundraising and bonding opportunity?

Visit www.tryathlon.com.au/volunteer or contact Shivonne for more info on 1800 989 999.

Of course, there's still time to register your kids to participate in the Melbourne event at Catani Gardens, St. Kilda. Register online by 5 March at www.tryathlon.com.au. The first 100 applicants to enter the code SDA100 will receive a \$5 discount.

Darren Hagen



openhome.org.au

Open Home AUC

How did the Christian Church go from a small group of obscure peasants to the whole known world within a century?

"Christ first selected a few person and bade them follow Him. They then went in search of their relatives and acquaintances, and brought them to Christ. This is the way we are to labour. A few souls brought out and fully established on the truth will, like the first disciples, be labourers for others" (Welfare Ministry, p 60).

Open Home is a revolution in evangelistic thinking, so simple anyone can do it, so effective it has changed the world.

Next June 5-9, (pick a day, any day) thousands of Adventists around Australia will:

1. Invite their non-Adventist family, friends, neighbours or colleagues for a meal
2. Spend a few hours in social enjoyment, and
3. Share a free gift to inspire and encourage their guests in their spiritual journey

How can you join the movement? Visit openhome.org.au and discover the amazingly simple and easy way to impact lives for eternity from your very own home.

*Cristian Copaceanu
AUC*

Notices

Visit Vic.Adventist.org.au and click on News and Announcement tab

Concert of Beautiful Music ~ AMM inaugural camp ~ Weet-bix Tryathlon ~ World Day of Prayer...



CHRIST IS COMING... SOON

**THE EARLY
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH
HAD A
FAITH ON
FIRE...**

**WHAT DOES
A FAITH ON
FIRE LOOK
LIKE?**

**EARLY BIRD
PRICES
CLOSE
TUESDAY
28/2 AT 5PM**

**IS YOUR
FAITH ON
FIRE
ACTS 2**

**Big Camp
2017
April 13 - 17**

**MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT
VIC.ADVENTIST.ORG.AU**

**WE HOPE
TO SEE YOU
THERE...**