

April 27
2013

IntraVic

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 (Clear Word)



Relevance





Grass-Roots Relevance

~ from the Editor

Does the Conference sometimes seem to you, at the local church level, to be quite distant and not all that relevant?

Many of you who have been involved in various programs offered by the departments in the Conference will be shaking your heads at this, however I am sure there are many of you who have pondered this very question, or who have not even given the Conference a thought. For you, its relevance, at grass-roots level, may be questionable.

We have all been given a commission from our Lord - it is His last recorded personal directive to His disciples as found in Matthew 28 - that being to share Christ's love with others. Christians the world over have taken it on as their own mission and our conference departments exist to enable our church members to fulfil this mission, whether it be through developing healthy churches, nurturing and protecting individuals, strengthening relationships or providing evangelistic assistance, just to mention a few.



So yes, the various departments in the Victorian Conference ARE relevant at the local church level. To help you understand what the departments do and how they contribute to the mission of the Church - to your own personal mission - we have asked each leader to share with you over the next few issues of IntraVic what their department does for our local churches - what it does for you.

For without you, these departments would not exist.

Pr Wayne Stanley
Conference President

VictorianAdventist.TV

Visit the Victorian Adventist Communication department's new website, where you can view presentations by guest speakers to the Victorian Conference, brief messages and more. Missed out on some of the Elmore Camp programs? Visit VictorianAdventist.TV



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Where Are You?

ADAPTED FROM TROY FITZGERALD'S BOOK
20 QUESTIONS GOD WANTS TO ASK YOU

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man "Where are you?"
Genesis 3:8-10

Has fear or shame ever pushed you into hiding? Has God ever asked this question of you?

Jonah – the dog – was an engagement gift I mistakenly presented to my wife after she said 'yes' and was an addition I came to regret, often! On one such occasion, we had left him in our apartment while we went to school, in our final year at college. Upon my return I found the contents of our cupboards scattered all over the house. Cereal on the floor, partially eaten fruit on the sofa and an empty tomato soup can lay nestled on my pillow, its contents smeared over the bed.

The intensity of my rage frightened me, let alone Jonah, and when I bellowed to him to come, he hid. I tried various tones to lure him out of hiding, to no avail. Thinking my tirade had given him a heart attack, I finally found him cowering under the bed and as I looked into his tomato stained face, I saw two things. Fear and shame. I wanted to wring his neck, but I sensed he knew he had done something wrong and had no idea what to do about it, other than hide.

Have fear and shame ever pushed you into hiding? Hiding, where all you can think about is what you did and why you did it and what is going to happen next. I often wonder why it is easier to hide instead of facing up to God when

we sin. Maybe the truth is too hard to admit or too easy to avoid. Maybe facing God in the moment of failure is frightening.

A friend of mine, wrestling with alcohol addiction, admitted to me that he avoided the AA meetings because he had heard horror stories of how they made you face the truth about yourself. If racing away from God allows us a reprieve from the truth, it is difficult not to run away. If you can avoid the shame for a moment, maybe you can avoid it forever.

Try to imagine what it must have been like for Adam and Eve when they heard their God calling to them that evening. Picture the life they led, and the momentous events of that day. As the realisation of what they have done sinks in, they are overcome by the horror of their betrayal and disobedience, and when they hear God walking through the garden, they hide.

God, of course, is keenly aware of the day's events and choices, yet still He comes. To be with them.

And here we have God's first question to humanity. "Where are you?"

Why do we hide from an all-seeing Father and run from the only One who can help us? When we have not prayed honestly for a while, why do we resist a conversation with God? When we have sinned,

perhaps only in the inner recesses of our minds, we still hide, even though we know that God knows. Why?

In the deepest part of our human experience, the thing that causes us to sin – selfishness – still reigns and tries to protect self from God's presence. But isn't this just a little like refusing to see the doctor when we are injured? Not only does sin sever our relationship with God, it discourages us into believing it's impossible to fix the problem.

The question God asked Adam and Eve is the same question that convicts the hearts of sinners all over the world. "Where are you?" Behind the bushes of fear and shame, Adam and Eve wrestled with one of the deepest human conundrums: Do I admit my sin and ask for help or 'save' face and try to solve the problem on my own?

In Proverbs 14:12 it says "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." At the end of his life, Solomon realised how our minds can play tricks on us and how we should trust in the Lord with all our heart, not leaning on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). The sneakiest trick in the playbook of sin is to convince us that we can solve our own sin problems.

Well, the truth is we can, but the solution is less than ideal! "For the wages of sin is death," Paul tells us in Romans 6:23. Sin costs, and there is no way around it, other than paying the price. So, do you pay for it, or do you let Someone pay it for you? Either way, someone has to die for your sin. The only question is... Who?

Do you face the One who knows your shame, or hide from Him as Adam and Eve did initially, resolving to fix the problem yourself somehow, someday. What does it look like when you finally come out from behind the bushes?

Do you pray the long-awaited, honest prayer and pour it all out in detail? Step forward at the altar call? Do you ask a trusted friend to help you find help for your secret addiction? Or write the person you hate a letter of forgiveness? Does it involve inviting a faithful believer to pray with you? Or admitting to your spouse, child or parent that you were wrong?

While admitting your sin is a point of total exposure and no return, it is

also liberating to come clean. But what does it look like when you keep hiding? Incessantly working or distracting yourself with a hectic social life? Focusing on the failures of those around you to ignore your own? Having superficial relationships, never spending enough time to dig too deep or encourage a connection, and immersing yourself in temporary feel-good exercises and prolonged escapisms?

When Adam and Eve were in hiding, they were only fooling themselves – God knew where they were. As His warnings echoed through their minds and the implications of their disobedience began to dawn on them, He knew where they were - and how lost; eternally separated from a life that was beyond their relatively innocent comprehension.

The reason He called to them, asking where they were, is that the question then, and today, is monumental – a matter of life and death. The answer can be either "I am here – hiding and in need of help" or it can be "I'm fine – don't worry about me, I'll be all right on my own." It is when you realise that you are in need of a Saviour that salvation can come. How hard is it though, to be saved when you see no need for help.

When Adam and Eve stepped out of the bushes, God asked questions – He already knew the answers, but they needed to say them. He had the redemptive plan already mapped out – but right before their eyes and with their own hands, they needed to make the sacrifice, to see blood spill on the ground for the first time in the history of the universe, only hinting at the true cost of sin. And they needed to choose – they could ultimately pay for their sin, or they could let Someone else do so for them. But either way, someone had to pay.

"Consequently just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man the many will be made righteous." Romans 5:18-19

Where are you? God calls to each heart hiding behind whatever bushes we take cover in. Will you resist God's call or will you step out of the bushes and lay hold of the Father, who has already made a better way for you to deal with your sin?

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened" Christ pleads in Matthew 11:28, "I will give you rest."

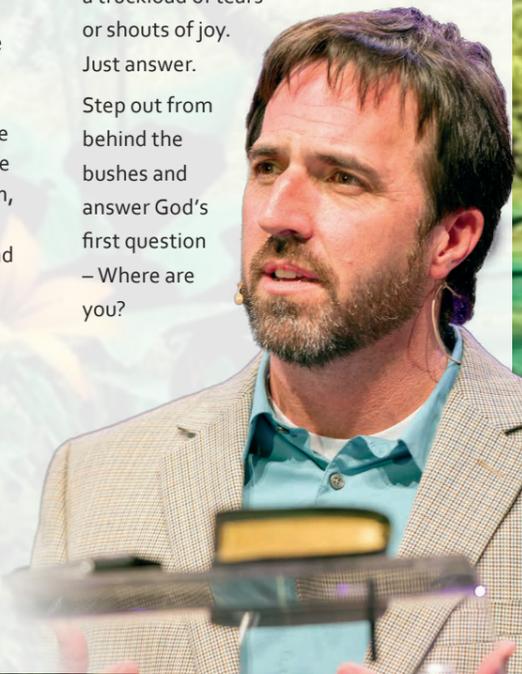
Don't be afraid of how the Father will react to your admission of guilt. At least 17 times in the Gospels, Christ implored people to come to Him, and in John 6 He says "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away... for my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life..." (vs 37-40).

Where are you? This question conveys to us the almost unbelievable love God has displayed in His willingness to embrace us as He did Adam and Eve, looking for them even though He knew of their shame. And we all know how He dealt with it.

Where are you? What does this question say about God's will for your life? It says that He wants to re-establish the intimacy of the Garden again. But you have to respond. From wherever you are and from wherever you have been, answer Him. Answer with a prayer, a song, a thought, letter, heartfelt confession. Answer Him with a truckload of tears or shouts of joy. Just answer.

Step out from behind the bushes and answer God's first question – Where are you?

HAS FEAR OR SHAME EVER PUSHED YOU INTO HIDING?



Memories Matter

SAFE PLACE SERVICES VICTORIA

Remember the 'good old days'? As kids we rode on bikes without helmets, in cars without seat belts and played on the beach without an ounce of 50+ sunscreen. We didn't brush our teeth often, fluoride was absent from the water, and the library was the biggest collection of information we had ever seen (we are talking way before Google here).

Nostalgia is a rarely a bad thing. Memories sustain us and help build character and wisdom in our lives. However, for many people, the 'good old days' represent memories of sadness, abuse and a time in their lives they wish they could just erase.

Safe Place Services is in the 'Memory Matters' business. Safe Places was established to give voice to those difficult memories, to heal and support those with scarred lives and to prevent past hurts being repeated. Safe Places recognizes that we are all 'Children of God' – as our Father is the King of Kings. As His

I want you to be part of my family - I will be your father, and you will be my sons and daughters. This invitation is extended to you by the Almighty God himself! 2 Cor 6:18

Princes and Princesses, we deserve 'Royal' attention, care and education to maximise our potential in life.

SAFE PLACES BEGINNINGS

In 2008 the South Pacific Division (SPD) recognised the need to keep children and vulnerable church members safe and recommended the appointment of Safe Places Coordinators in all Conferences. The Victorian Conference has readily adopted this recommendation in the strong belief that we have a spiritual imperative to protect children and vulnerable people, so that they can thrive in a world where hurtful memories cannot harm them.

The Safe Places program in Victoria endeavours to not only nurture our children, to help ensure that they are able to thrive in a safe environment, it also supports and encourages those who are or who have been victims of abuse in our church. Since its establishment in Victoria, Safe Places has succeeded in rolling out a Local Church Child Safe Policy and a Code of Conduct across our churches in the Conference. It is gratifying to note that 98% of local churches, companies, and groups have now adopted these documents and are committed to following through with the inherent processes, procedures and protocols.

The policy involves mandatory reporting of abuse, early intervention practices, and promoting the wellbeing and safety of children. Each of the participating churches has a Safe Places representative to co-ordinate, mentor and model protective behaviours for the children and youth of their church.

Additionally, Safe Places Victoria is working closely together with other church-based protection groups through the Victorian Professional Standards Network. More particularly, the Victorian Conference has collaborated with the Baptist Union of Victoria and the Uniting Church under the National Council of Churches Australia's 'Safe Church Training Agreement', to provide training, delivery and adoption of programs to all three of these faith organisations. This collaboration aims to replicate the work and Code that Safe Places has implemented into the Seventh-day Adventist Church¹.

The 'Safe Church Awareness Workshops' are designed for pastors, elders, deacons, leadership team members, all ministry leaders, children & youth leaders & CRE teachers. It is highly recommended that Leadership Teams attend as a group if possible. Topics covered include:

- Duty of care, codes of conduct, positional power, transparency and

accountability

- Protecting vulnerable people including children at risk of harm – definitions, indicators and response procedures
- Information about training, recruiting and supervising leaders
- How to establish and run safe church ministry programs (risk management)

In having a proactive culture that encourages prevention, intervention, and ongoing support of victims, the Victorian Conference is demonstrating its commitment to cultural change and spiritual growth of the children and young people within its churches.

Our maxim is; 'Safe Places... Safe People'. In moving forward as a church organisation, it is important we remember the words of the safest place and person – Jesus...

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them. For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Mark 10:14

THE FUTURE

The birth of the digital age has meant the need to protect, support, and minimise risk to church members has grown exponentially. Studies conducted on behalf of the Australian Federal Government² show primary school children aged 8-11 use the internet on average 4.1 days, for just over an hour a day. High school children aged 12-17 do so on an average of 6.3 days of the week, with their average usage hitting close to three hours per day. In response to this data, Safe Places has introduced social media accounts across

Twitter and Facebook platforms and is currently progressing work on a new website, blog, and email newsletter, to better support the church community online.

To be an effective agency in the digital age, Safe Places continues to develop its digital arm to build an interactive, connected, and proactive online community that both supports and mentors its members in a constructive way. Off-line, Safe Places is also developing an Adventurers honour in protective behaviour skills and understanding, as well as a number of educational and interactive programs as part of church visitations and lectures.

Safe Places participated in the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations and completed a response to the Inquiry as of 21 September 2012. Following this Inquiry, the Federal Government launched its own Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as of January 2013. Safe Places continues to take a serious approach in reaffirming and extending the Seventh-day Adventist Church's cooperation with the Royal Commission and its own long-standing efforts to nurture and safeguard the children and youth of its churches.

As part of our desire to nurture, encourage, and protect our children, we hope to further promote our commitment to 'breaking the silence' often associated with child abuse and violence. We pray that our endeavour and drive to build 'Safe Places... Safe

You know how troubled I am because you have collected all my tears in a bottle and counted each of them. Psalm 56:8

People' continues, so that the emotional and spiritual recovery of 'victim survivors' can progress unabated.

FIVE WAYS YOU CAN HELP PROMOTE 'SAFER PLACES SAFER PEOPLE'

- Remember the Golden Rule - treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect – as you would have them treat you.
- Lead by example - build ethical models and integrity through maintaining confidentiality, truth telling, and assisting in eliminating offensive language and behaviour.
- Listen!
- Be an 'active bystander' - if you see someone being inappropriate towards a child/young person, act!
- Follow the child safe policy procedures and protocols including: volunteer screening, mandatory reporting, two-person rule, adhering to supervision ratios and sign-in sign-out sheets.

Safe Places is all about building 'Castles of Care' for the Princes and Princesses in our church community. In striving to do so, we wish to pay tribute to the people who inspire us – the 'victim survivors' of abuse. Safe Places needs you to actively participate in making 'safe memories' that matter.

To learn more about Safe Places, follow us on Twitter or Facebook, or to make a report:

PH:1800 220 468 (Adventist Safe Places)

PH: 0400 433 345 (Sue Mercer, Safe Places Victoria Coordinator)

Email: smercer@adventist.org.au

Website: www.safeplaceservices.org.au
www.vic.adventist.org.au

¹[HTTP://WWW.BUV.COM.AU/ABOUT-US/CHURCH-HEALTH-CAPACITY-BUILDING/SAFE-CHURCH-AWARENESS](http://www.buv.com.au/about-us/church-health-capacity-building/safe-church-awareness)

²COMMUNITY RESEARCH INTO ONLINE SAFETY AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 8-17 YEARS – QUALITATIVE REPORT (2008). GFK BLUE MOON

Castles
of Care

Castle of Care

REMEMBER THE 'GOOD OLD DAYS?'

BIKES WITHOUT HELMETS,
CARS WITH NO SEAT BELTS,
BEACHES AND NO SUNSCREEN...



A Healthy Church

SABBATH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

We have a global Sabbath School crisis which revolves around a loss of identity and purpose. Over the past few years, as Sabbath School Director for the Victoria Conference, I have been running Sabbath School workshops at many churches to explain this crisis and help each local church begin the process of healing Sabbath School. Here is what I've been saying.

Many people no longer attend adult Sabbath School. This is not because the people don't need Sabbath School but because most Sabbath School leaders don't know the felt-needs which Sabbath School is meant to meet. Sabbath School started 150 years ago with a distinct purpose and mission. It boomed for 100 years or so.

But as it became an enmeshed part of Adventism, people stopped talking about why they needed it and Sabbath School became "just" a tradition.

STEVE'S FIRST SABBATH

Last year I wrote a story called "Steve's First Sabbath." It was published in the IntraVic and online in September (you can find Issue 8, 2012 at Vic.Adventist.org.au and click on the IntraVic tab). The purpose of the story was to demonstrate what a healthy Sabbath School class looks like. The version I posted online quickly became and remains the most viewed page on my blog and the story has been republished in church magazines and websites right around the world.

Adventists the world round can sense Sabbath School crumbling, and this story has offered some hope. When, earlier this year,

the story was republished on spectrummagazine.org, it's interesting to note that Spectrum retitled the story 'The Perfect Sabbath School', which tells you something about even the editor's view of Sabbath School!

I didn't intend the story to be about the "perfect" Sabbath School class, but simply about one that was working.

THE NEW WORLD

This story is not a new idea for Sabbath School. It is built on the four aspects of Sabbath School that are being taught in workshops by Sabbath School Directors from the General Conference right down to each local Conference.

These four aspects of Sabbath School have been the core purpose of Sabbath School since its inception in the 1800's. They are Fellowship, Outreach, Bible Study, and Mission. There are many ways to word these four things. I call them Nurture, Evangelism, Worship, and World Mission - the "NEW World Sabbath School."

The reason people are no longer coming to Sabbath School is not because they are losing their commitment to God, faith or doctrine. They are staying away

because Sabbath School is like a ship without a rudder and they can feel it - no one likes feeling seasick. The four aspects of Sabbath School have been forgotten by many.

LET'S NOT FORGET

Depending on the leadership and history of each particular church, different parts of Sabbath School are given less attention. When Sabbath School leaders forget that Sabbath School is meant to be a place of Nurture they avoid personal discussion because it "wastes time." They don't ask about people's lives because the "people just talk about themselves instead of God's Word!"

When Sabbath School leaders forget that Sabbath School is meant to be a launching pad for Local Evangelism they stop asking "What acts of service have we done this week?" And when they stop asking, the people understand that those outreach activities are no longer important to Sabbath School. It's not that people stop doing outreach, they just don't talk about it. And the power of their testimony, both for them and Sabbath School, is lost.

When Sabbath School teachers forget that Sabbath School is meant to be a time of Holistic Worship, they abandon the preliminaries. Singing together is gone. Reports of various kinds (drawing people together as a church) are gone. So far, I have not seen a Sabbath School that has abandoned Bible Study. This, as Adventists, is the one thing we hold on to with gusto. But without the rest of Sabbath School, it can be just another sermon.

When Sabbath School leaders forget that Sabbath School is meant to be about World Mission they stop showing Adventist Mission Videos (Mission Spotlight) and stop reading the mission story, again because it "wastes time." If a missionary comes to town (or comes home) they give them a sermon slot instead of asking them to report during Sabbath School.

REDISCOVERING SABBATH SCHOOL

But all praise to God, many Sabbath Schools around the globe are rediscovering the power of being a

holistic Sabbath School class. They are valuing fellowship, outreach, Bible study and mission equally. They are becoming NEW World Sabbath School classes. And they are finding that people are coming back to Sabbath School because they hear what Sabbath School has become and they want to be part of it.

SO STEP UP TO THE MARK...

Blaming "the people" for the crumbling edifices around us is rarely useful. As John Maxwell says, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." It is time for Sabbath School leaders to lead with the purpose provided by a clear vision of what Sabbath School is meant to be. It is time for church boards to realise that Sabbath School is the backbone of the church - and to invest in the strengthening of that backbone. And it is time for pastors to recognise that their job is only effective when their people are actively involved in the four aspects of spiritual maturity that a holistic Sabbath School provides.

So there y' go... you've been workshopped!

Now go make a difference to your church by making Sabbath School all it can be.

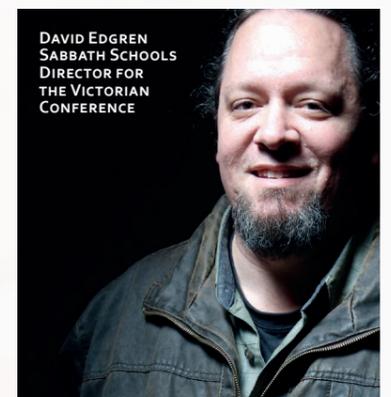
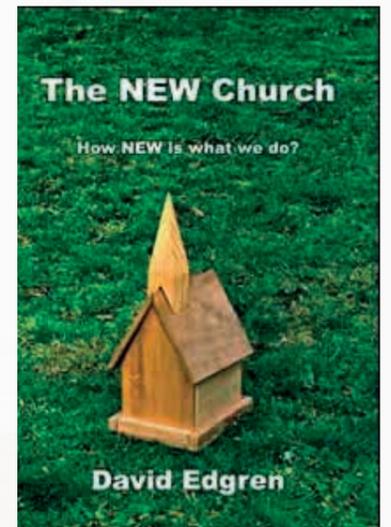
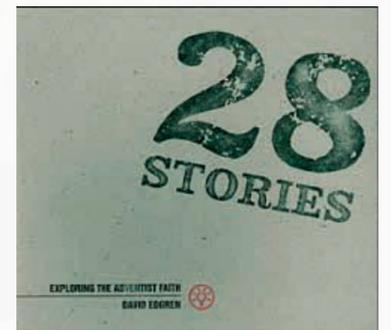
And if you want a visit from someone sold on the power of Sabbath School, invite me to do a Sabbath School workshop at your church.

Contact Pr Dave on

Davedgren@gmail.com

Or visit Vic.Adventist.org.au and click on the Sabbath School link

or prdaveonline.blogspot.com.au for resources.



LOSS OF IDENTITY... GLOBAL CRISIS ...WHAT PURPOSE?

Why Do We Bother?

ADVENTIST HEALTH MINISTRIES

WHY IS THE
HEALTH
MESSAGE SO
IMPORTANT
TO US?

The practical reason we promote a healthy lifestyle is that those with clear minds and healthy bodies are better able to understand the will of God and in turn, better serve those around them.

Our motives for healthy eating and living should relate to our relationship with God:

- I want to assist God in His effort to restore His image in me.
- I need a healthy body to support a clear mind, to be better able to discern between good and evil.
- I recognise that worshipping God includes serving others, especially the most needy. To succeed in this work requires a strong courageous body and mind.

HEALTH PROVIDES A SENSE OF PURPOSE...

...There is a reason for being here. Living with hope is not just a future expectation, but a present necessity particularly when faced with difficult circumstances.

YOU ARE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE, YOU ARE THE HEALTH MESSAGE!

This is how our health programs share Christ's love and contribute to the mission of our Church. The scientific data (as important as that is) is not what finally convinces the public we may have something they want, it is the spirit in which we conduct the programs and the lives we live, and it is as God works on their hearts, that our Saviour becomes attractive to our friends and neighbours.

Sibilla Johnson

Do you realise that when you became a Christian, your body became a temple for the Holy Spirit to live in? His presence in you is a gift to you from God! so your body belongs to Him. You've been bought with a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:18-19



Wanting to mobilise church members to contribute to their communities using our healthy living message, the Victorian Conference's Health Ministries Director, Sibilla Johnson spent over a decade developing an accredited presenters course.

In October's edition of IntraVic in 2009, we shared with you how, while at a global conference on health and lifestyle, held at WHO in Geneva, the Chair of the Nutrition and Dietetics Department at Loma Linda University, Dr Bert Connell, requested an outline of this Community Health Education Presenters training course from Sibilla and subsequently recommended it to other conferences, including the British Union Conference.

There are now two training programs which are nationally accredited with a Certificate IV and Diploma level qualifications in Presenting Community Health Education Programs available for church members, and anyone else who is interested in promoting the benefits of healthy eating and living.

The Certificate IV is a ten month training program and is offered each year, although this year, it will be offered twice in Victoria - in Melbourne and in Ballarat. The Diploma is offered every second year and because the enrolments come from all over the Division, is held at the South Pacific Division offices in New South Wales.

A third program has also been developed for the people of the Pacific Islands. It is a two week face-to-face training program. Each mission selects people who would benefit from this type of training and would share the information with their families, church members and the wider community.

While Sibilla is now the National Trainer for these programs and

travels extensively throughout the South Pacific Division in this role, when asked what else, if anything, her department could offer our churches at the local level, the list was extensive.

Keen to promote the importance of a balanced lifestyle, including healthy eating and living, to our church members as well as the wider community, Sibilla makes herself available to conduct church services whenever possible.

She also provides an answer service for individuals with health related questions and will assist with the conduction of health education programs for primary and secondary schools in both the private and public sectors.

As well as running health seminars at special Conference events, conventions and training days, Sibilla will help plan and conduct four-week food and nutrition programs for local community groups, usually held in our church halls, which often go on to become recipe clubs.

She is also able to provide Level 1 Safe Food Handling training programs, something VicYouth has utilised for its Pathfinder clubs, as well as Red Cross, Vision Australia and other church and community groups. And where possible, Sibilla provides a service to the International Diabetes Institute of Australia, with food and nutrition programs suitable for their clients.

In recent years, the Department has developed a Nutrition workbook for Indigenous people, and worked with a team to implement a seven-day health education program in South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia. Through a contact of one of our local ministers, Peter Hughes, work was commenced with a group called 'Close the Gap' which is working with indigenous communities in the Gippsland region. The group is

going to use the training material to help these communities understand the importance of healthy eating and living in reducing the risk of major lifestyle diseases.

Just before the Elmore Camp, Sibilla was involved in conduction of a 'Train the Trainers' seminar and the group will use the Good Food manual and powerpoint slides for their presentations. Peter Hughes will keep in contact, and work with them.

Sibilla clearly has a passion for sharing the health message and enabling our local church members to do so too, reaching out to the wider community. She has a standing appointment with the Kilsyth Baptist Church each year (this is the twelfth consecutive year they have invited her) to present a Healthy Lifestyle program that includes cooking demonstrations - something from which she gains as much as she gives.

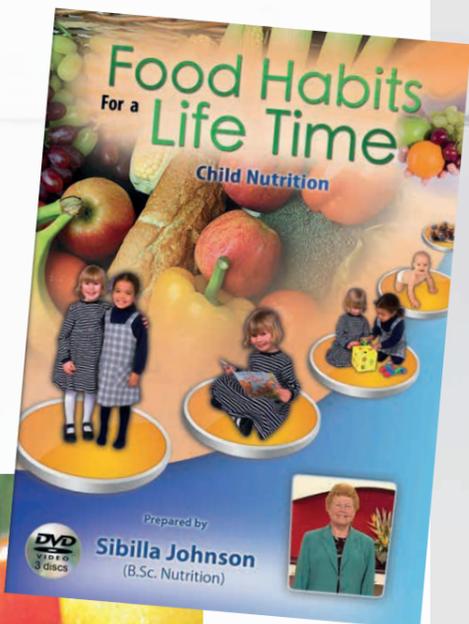
"I have been blessed through my association with this lovely group of people. At the end of each program, they pray for my ministry!"

Feel free to contact Sibilla to discuss further how your church can become involved.

SibillaJohnson@adventist.org.au

03 9264 7715/77

0418 104 059



Cooking with
Sibilla

Creative Vegetarian Cooking

CHURCH NEWS

A DECISION NEVER REGRETTED

BURWOOD ADVENTIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

Being given the honour of attending any baptism is nothing short of a privilege. Witnessing someone publicly devote their lives to Christ, telling the world that they choose to accept Jesus as their Saviour, is a moment too precious to describe. Members and visitors alike were able to witness something truly special in October last year, when we celebrated with not one, but two brothers in our church family as they declared their love for God and their determination to follow Him, through their baptism.

Joel Bennetts prepared a powerpoint presentation displaying photos all the way from his birth to the present, including words he had written himself about how he had come to the decision to be baptised. His beautifully made presentation allowed the congregation to see how a young boy had grown and matured, not only in a physical sense, but spiritually as well.

Adrian Hill shared with the Church his touching and moving testimony as he spoke of how baptism is a choice to follow Christ and a decision never to be regretted. That it involves not just commitment to a new life and a chance to start over, but also a commitment to serve and to intentionally grow spiritually.

He told of how he grew up in a Christian home, but lost interest in his teens as his peers drifted and even bullied him for continuing to believe. While he continued to believe, his life choices did not reflect that belief and he entered a very dark period of his life. Looking back, however, he can see that God was there with him even then in spite of his decisions, constantly bringing people into his life who helped him reconnect, little by little.

When he first began attending Burwood, he felt included. A newcomer, he was encouraged to participate and while feeling a mere spiritual babe, appreciated that his thoughts and contributions were accepted. This helped rekindle his desire to know God more. Participation in small groups and Bible study, as well as service activities and the resultant fellowship

with other believers, all played important roles in developing his relationship with God and bringing him to this point in his life.

"It is not just about coming to church each Sabbath," he said. "God is infiltrating every aspect of my life."

I am sure I am not alone in wishing both Joel and Adrian the warmest of blessings and big, heartfelt congratulations for publicly declaring yourselves disciples of Jesus. As common as it is to hear, making this decision will be the single greatest decision you will have made in your life, because it's implications far outlive your earthly existence.

For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. Galatians 3:27

Mariah Reed

Adding to the excitement and membership at BACC, Bianca Maggs was joined by friends, family & her church family as she was baptised on March 16th.

As her big sister, witnessing Bianca publicly declare to give her life to Jesus was a proud moment. Over the past few years Bianca has been blessed with school, church & pathfinder chaplains and pastors, who have prepared her for this decision through Bible studies. It was an honour to have Moe Ioane Stiles share a powerful and engaging message, reflecting upon the importance of having a place we can call "home" and baptise Bianca. As a church community & family, we are overjoyed that Bianca has chosen to call Burwood home.

Over the past 16 years Bianca shared how Burwood has been a place where people have invested time in her - an investment that has shaped her into the beautiful Godly woman she is today. It is our prayer that Bianca will always remember that Jesus is all she needs and trust His plans for her life.

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

Philippians 1:6

Kelly Maggs

ROAD to BETHLEHEM

MANIFEST HONOURS INTERACTIVE, OUTDOOR DRAMA

Not a person, but an event is the recipient of the Manifest Creative Arts Festival's most prestigious award this year. This festival, held at Avondale College, explores, encourages and celebrates faithful creativity, particularly through the arts.

The interactive, outdoor drama, Road to Bethlehem, received the Gabe Reynaud Award during a ceremony also named in honour of the pioneering Seventh-day Adventist filmmaker. The award recognises excellence in using the creative arts for ministry.

"Road to Bethlehem isn't about any one amazing actor, fantastic sound technician, wonderful greeter or stunning musician," said representative, Crystal Taylor, during her acceptance speech at the festival. The ceremony, held at the Lake Macquarie campus of Avondale College on March 23, concluded the Manifest festival.

"Road to Bethlehem is about the collective creative contribution of a group of people, manifested for God's glory for their community."

Road to Bethlehem encompasses many aspects of creativity, from acting, costuming and staging, to script writing, sound and lighting. "And it shows Adventists that creatives can make an impact in the community," says Manifest co-convenor, Nathan Brown.

Road to Bethlehem is now in its 19th year.

It began in 1995 as a ministry of

Nunawading Seventh-day Adventist Church. Twenty people volunteered to stage the event, which attracted a crowd of 700 over two nights. Now, with the support of the conference and a number of local churches, 400 people volunteer to stage the event, which attracts a crowd of 15,000 over four nights.

"If you mention Seventh-day Adventists, so many people know about Road to Bethlehem," says Carolyn Dunne, a member of the steering committee since 1996. The goodwill costs about \$70,000 each year, but Road to Bethlehem does not charge for entry—the event is a gift to the community.

The City of Whitehorse recognised Road to Bethlehem's role in building community by nominating it for an Australia Day Community Achievement Award in 2003 and it was featured last year on theage.com.au. Despite this extra attention, Carolyn and the other members of the committee have resisted turning the event into a "carnival."

"We've always maintained it has to be spiritual – so there is no Santa Claus. Everything about Road to Bethlehem is biblical."

Road to Bethlehem has spawned four other Road to Bethlehems—in Dakabin Park, Queensland; Erina in New South Wales; Livingston in Perth; and in Tauranga, New Zealand.

Brenton Stacey

THE NATIVITY SCENE, COMPLETE WITH A REAL BABY, ENDS YOUR WALK ON THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM. CREDIT ORMOND HOWARD



PR ANDREW BAPTISING JOEL & ADRIAN AT BURWOOD CHURCH



JOEL & ADRIAN RECEIVING THEIR CERTIFICATES



BIANCA MAGGS WAS BAPTISED BY PR MOE IOANE STILES AT BURWOOD

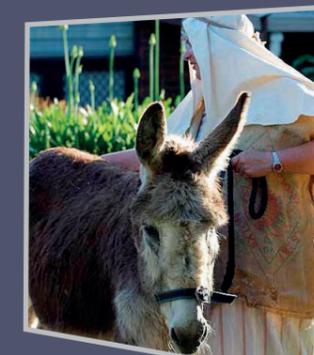
CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL manifest



CRYSTAL TAYLOR RECEIVED THE GABE REYNAUD AWARD ON BEHALF OF ROAD TO BETHLEHEM, "THE COLLECTIVE CREATIVE CONTRIBUTION OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE, MANIFESTED FOR GOD'S GLORY FOR THEIR COMMUNITY."

CREDIT BEN BEADEN

VOLUNTEERS IN COSTUME FROM SCENES AT RTB





RECLAIMING YOUNG ADULTS

GATEWAY ADVENTIST CENTRE

Statistics show that numerous Adventist young people leave the church, even when brought up in Adventist homes and schools. Reaching out to these youth is arguably the most challenging ministry facing our church.

Over the last nine years, Gateway Adventist Centre has seen over 130 baptisms, 38 of which are from this group of young adults. Praise God, we have seen many reclaimed back to the church.

What lessons have we learnt from this experience? Each of these young people has returned to the fold because Jesus our Good Shepherd went looking for missing sheep.

We have made a case study of each of five young adults who were recently baptised. They all shared their personal testimony during the baptism service, communicating several common issues that as a church we must heed and this article highlights the key factors in their journey.

LACK OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST IDENTITY

All five were born in Australia and brought up in Adventist families, attending our schools and churches. Sarah shared how her parents meant well and worked hard to impart their beliefs, but this put her off going to church. Simon and Tamara grew up in country Victoria and related how as teenager siblings they began to "switch off" from church, finding it boring. There was a lack of strong Biblical teaching on the uniqueness of the Church message during their early years and church, school and home became a routine that eventually faded into an act of "playing church." As teenagers, while physically there, they had mentally checked out and couldn't wait to leave. Andrew told of avoiding family members who were trying to get him "involved in church," as he preferred drinking and partying with non-church friends.

Many young people have never discovered why they are Seventh-day Adventist when they keep the Sabbath and not Seventh-day Baptist. Do they know the difference? "Teaching them the prophetic rise of the Advent movement is essential," said John Kitevski, who studied with some of these young people before their baptism.

LEFT... BECAUSE OF PEOPLE

A common thread in their testimony is that they left the church because of "people." Tamara said "Some in the

church, not all, let me down and I left because of their hypocrisy." What disappoints young people in our church are leaders whose lives are not consistent with their words.

Tamara said during her baptism testimony that "For 12 years I was separated from God, living a life of partying and drinking, and feeling depressed and subdued with medication and bad relationships. I came back not because of people but because of Jesus." *We need to keep redirecting our and our young people's focus from people and back to Christ.*

WATCH AND PRAY

Jesus used the phrase "watch and pray" often in His ministry. We are to watch for the working of the Holy Spirit and pray intercessory prayers for our loved ones.

Andrew was caught up with his love for motocross bike-riding. One day he lost control and fell off a four metre embankment, breaking his spine in three places. Miraculously he survived and began to ponder, and God took advantage of this wake up call.

Tamara was very shaken saw her grandfather pass away But what she noticed was his peace in his belief that he would awake seeing Jesus' face! She wanted to know about this peace.

When accidents occur, when tragedies strike, when relationships break up, these are opportunities for the Holy Spirit to call God's children home. We are to watch and be there for them when this happens. Our eyesight will be sharpened to this if we are in constant communication with the Lord, so parents, keep on praying!

We need to be ready when these young adults are facing life changes.

REVIVED BY THE WORD

Both Andrew and Lidija attended the AYC conference in 2011, organised by Gateway. When Pr Randy Skeete made an appeal, Andrew "knew God was speaking to me, and I made a decision to return to Him." Lidija said "When Pastor Skeete read Phil 2:1-3, I learnt for the first time how I could have the mind of Christ. And I wanted to stop having one foot in the world and one foot in the church." Both started attending a care group at Gateway and were blessed by the friendship and Christian support they

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Romans 10:17

received.

Simon recalled his encounter with God through the iDiscover 2010 meetings at Victoria University. Sarah Ind remembered her experience with God at Gateway's evangelistic series at Melbourne University presented by Pr Gary Webster. Both recounted how the Bible truth came to life in the preaching of the word. It was not some fancy gimmick or entertainment that brought them back. It was the solid preaching of Christ-centred messages that touched their hearts.

For the Word of God is alive and active... it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart

Hebrews 4:12

Tamara attended Pr Geoff Youlden's meetings in 2011 and responded to the appeal. She ticked the appeal card for Bible studies and baptism.

"It is so critical to follow up evangelistic programs with both visitation and Care Groups," said Johnny Wong. He added that "at Gateway, we go back to the basics as found in Jeremiah 6:16, "Ask where the good way is and walk in it", and our method is based on Paul's model of Acts 20:20.

You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

Acts 20:20

Public evangelism – sharing God's living Word is an effective way to reach and reclaim our young people who have gone astray.

LIVING OUT THE WORD

A young adult working in the city of Melbourne was given a brochure to Mark Finley's evangelistic meetings in 2007, and because a member of Gateway befriended her and invited her to her care group afterwards, she saw something she had not seen before. She saw young adults that were serious about their love for Jesus and in turn shared that love with others.

Care groups provide a setting where young adults can see authentic Christian fellowship. Young adults do not like pretence: they left the church because they saw too much hypocrisy. They want something that is real. Gateway's care groups work closely with public evangelism and successfully help reaching and reclaiming young adults. It

A new command I give you - love one another... by this everyone will know that you are my disciples

Jn 13:34-35

is here, in the personal level, that these returning young adults assess whether Adventist Christians are the real "fair dinkum" variety.

Tamara, recollecting her experience said, "I went to Care Group initially to check it out, not wanting to give up my Friday night partying lifestyle. But when I saw the love in the Care Group, I kept coming and have not missed out even once." Another second generation Adventist young adult said, "I am so glad for Care Group, it takes me away from the temptation to party with my worldly friends and it helps me develop my love for Christ". After she was baptised she became a Bible worker bringing others to the Lord.

DEEPENING YOUR WALK WITH JESUS

Baptism or rebaptism is merely the start. There is a need for more intentional discipleship to deepen their walk and relationship with Jesus. Lidija said, "My regular Bible studies with Remila, my Care Group leader, helped me understand that God loves me no matter what. God gave me strength to leave the past behind." Forgiveness of the past and having assurance that Jesus cleanses from all unrighteousness is an important lesson for these young people. At Gateway, each newly baptised Christian is paired with a spiritual guardian to help them solidify their relationship with Jesus.

Many will only remain in the church if they develop the habits of daily devotion, prayer life, Bible reading and witnessing. Jesus needs to be personal and real. They need practical skills to help them grow each day. Bible prophecies taught in a Christ-centred manner, deepens their faith because "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Both robust Biblical truth and practical application of the word is required.

"I believe there are another 50 or more lukewarm Adventist young people in Melbourne City that we have yet to meet. Their parents are praying for them. Do not lose hope – keep praying. At God's timing, as the Spirit moves, we plan to be there for them. Gateway has seen 34% of its baptisms from the young adult age group. This is a winnable group! Let's have faith in the power of God. If your children work in the city and if you would like us to pray with you, please contact us."

Johnny Wong, Head Elder



GATEWAY CITY WORSHIP



TAMARA JAKOVAC WITH PR CRAIG GILLIS



SIMON JAKOVAC



RESOURCES

www.adventistyouthforchrist.org

www.rightlytrained.com

www.gatewaynda.org



ANDREW LESIC



SARAH IND



LIDIJA GAJIC



THE GATEWAY WEST FAMILY







CONFERENCE NEWS

ESTATE UPDATE

NUNAWADING ESTATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Following the Constituency Meeting decision in 2009, the Executive Committee voted to create this committee to progress works toward achieving a developmental planning permit for the Nunawading Estate.

Since then it has met over 20 times and has considered many complex matters while ensuring the estate is utilised in a way that benefits all Church members in Victoria and promotes the Mission of our Church.

THE VISION

In accordance with the action taken in 2009, the vision for the Nunawading Estate is to develop a sustainable, environmentally focused retirement village.

This project is one of the most significant undertaken by the Church in Victoria, so understandably a great deal of care and consideration has been given into ensuring it has longevity in all aspects of its makeup - including aesthetics, function, costs (present and on-going), community need and marketability.

BENEFITS

We believe that this project will yield a great many benefits:

- Retirement Service to the Community - Through this development, and in conjunction with our existing facility at AdventCare Whitehorse, this proposed retirement village will make our facility a one-stop aged care provider that covers the whole retirement life-cycle.
- Productive Use of Land - We believe this venture creates a valuable win-win opportunity for both the land owner and the wider community. Internally, the development will provide AdventCare greater economies-of-scale and scope for retirement service and add significantly to the capital improved value of the Nunawading Estate. Externally the development will create jobs within the local community, provide much needed amenity for the City of Whitehorse's aging population and protect an area of environmental significance for the State.
- Benefit back to the Seventh-day Adventist Church - In addition to keeping the Nunawading Estate wholly owned and operated by the Church, proceeds from the development will be channelled to directly benefit all of our

local churches in Victoria, empowering the mission of our Church.

• Mission - We believe this proposed development unites all the competing objectives of interested parties, in a mutually beneficial arrangement, while complying with local and state government, zoning usage laws. But more importantly, this project puts forward a clear thought-out plan to deliver real value to the Estate and Denomination for the benefit of the Church in Victoria.

Work on the Project is continuing and I look forward to providing more updates in due course.

We thank the Lord for blessing us with this valuable property and we earnestly work to be good stewards of all that the Lord has given us. I kindly ask that all members unite in prayer for a positive outcome for this important project.
Galen Gan
Infrastructure Coordinator

A CHANGE OF PLAN

LITERATURE EVANGELISTS

In our morning devotional Pr Michael Mohanu shared some verses from the book of Acts chapter 16, "On reaching Mysia they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them, so by-passing Mysia, they came down to Troas." As the Spirit moves, so to are we to move with His leading.

We had only worked the Hampton Park area not long ago and our plans were to do our next day's work for another one of our churches, but that was not to be - God wanted us back doing another day for the Casey church. The reading of those verses confirmed in my mind that it was God's Spirit that changed our plans.

Armed with the word of God, a stack of Great Controversy volumes, and the Beyond DVDs, out to the doors we went. Regina was very pleased with our visit. Coming from Sudan, she'd witnessed much pain and suffering. "Without God I would not have been able to go on," she said as she accepted our Beyond DVD.

Noel also wanted a copy. He explained that his sister-in-law, having not long ago lost her mother, was grieving. "She would be happy to watch it," he said.

Then there was Clare. A lovely Catholic lady that lives on her own. For a while she cared for her brother who had cancer. They were very close and when he died

she found it extremely hard to keep going. The DVD on pain was just perfect for her.

We thank our God for His leading and for the eight homes that have accepted the Beyond DVDs.

Please pray as these folk are followed up by the members of the Casey church. Joe Paola

A MEMORY OF ELEPHANTS

SMALL GROUPS

My son and I went to the Melbourne Zoo to see the baby Elephant soon after it was born. When we arrived at "The Trail of the Elephants" we found the baby curiously exploring the area around an empty concrete wading pool. The larger elephants milled around in the shade but were quite some distance from the baby.

As we watched the little guy exploring his terrain, we were in for a surprise. Normally there is an electrified wire surrounding the empty pool area, to keep the adult elephants out but because of the presence of the little elephant, the electric wire had been replaced with string. The elephants, of course, did not know this.

Clumsily the baby climbed and wobbled toward the string. As he got closer his head bumped it and he let out a panicked squeal as he lurched, trying to get away from the string but in fact ending up rushing underneath it into the roped off area. He clearly knew this was a bad thing and roared his distress - repeatedly.

The other elephants reacted instantly, rushing to the string. The mother waved her trunk under the string and scuffed her feet in the dust while the others gathered around her, clearly wanting to help the distressed pair.

A handler appeared at a gate and hurried into the enclosure, navigating around the herd to reach the empty pool. He called to the baby elephant and lifted the string up. The baby rushed underneath and on to his mother.

The other elephants then did something amazing - they formed a massive group around the mother and baby and quickly shuffled away from the pool area. Reaching a safe distance, they scuffed their feet and blew their trunks into the dirt to create a dust cloud and the baby disappeared in the protective huddle.

The elephants stayed huddled as the handlers opened a huge gate at the far end of the enclosure. Once the herd could see an exit from this stressful, dangerous environment, one elephant lead the way and the others followed to 'greener' pastures.

.....

What if our church community was as caring as an elephant herd? What if every one of us responded to the stress the world brings our young and gathered around struggling parents to provide strength in numbers? What if our church was the safe environment where at risk youth were shepherded and nurture came as naturally to us as to elephants?

But it can - we just need three things: big ears, quick feet and small groups. We need to listen carefully - the cries will rarely be as loud as that baby - it made the lions proud! We need to react to what we hear, running to offer support. And we need to gather together regularly in groups small enough that we know, love and care for each other.

During the two years we lived in Tasmania, my wife was part of a small group that met weekly. We recently received a card and a gift from the small group. They had heard that my wife was going through a tough time as she dealt with both her father and myself each having a tumour. Her small group heard, ran to the need and huddled together, signing the card and wrapping the gift - even though we left Tasmania seven years ago.

When we spend time together nurture comes naturally.

You know this already, if you have a small group that you call home. If you don't, perhaps it's time to start one!

Your Sabbath School class, or your kid's, is a great place to start. Think through the families you know and enjoy. Invite two or three over for a meal (or to the park or a restaurant) and see how the first "meeting" goes. If you get on well as a group, ask the others if they'd like to "do this again sometime". You'll be surprised. People are looking for community. Your small group is only a meal away!

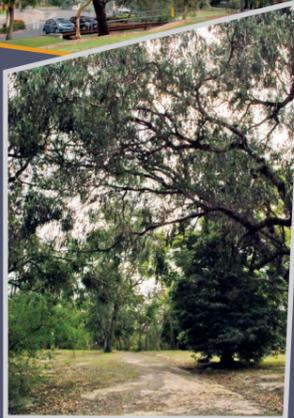
It is impossible to quantify the gift you are giving the children in your family or church family by being part of a small group. Their cries will be heard. Their needs for community will be met. You will have a group of people ready to care when a young one encounters his first string barrier or a not-so-young one has a life crisis that takes them beyond their depth. It may seem small to you but rushing to their aid, or just gathering around them, could make all the difference.

Did you know that a herd of elephants is also called a memory of elephants? Why? We've been told an elephant never forgets. Perhaps this is why... One thing is sure, a small group of people can be a lot like a memory of elephants - never forgetting its own.

David Edgren



PARTS OF THE NUNAWADING ESTATE TO UNDERGO DEVELOPMENT



JOHN SHEERMEIJER, JOE PAOLA, PR JOHN MOHANU



PHOTO CREDIT N GRAF



PR DAVID EDGREN, SABBATH SCHOOLS DIRECTOR, FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO GET A POINT ACROSS IS THROUGH A STORY...

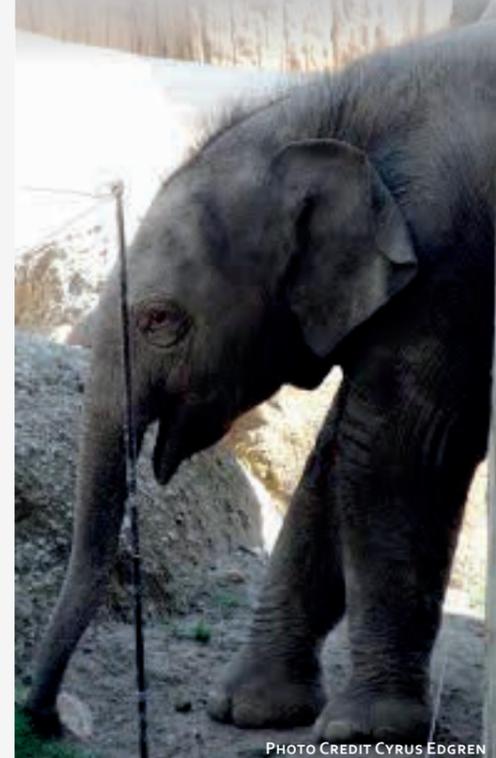


PHOTO CREDIT CYRUS EDGREN

A LOOK AT THE NEW ASV WEBSITE THAT WAS RELEASED IN MARCH



FACE-PAINTING, RIDES AND FAIRY-FLOSS WERE MUCH ENJOYED AT THE NCC OPEN DAY



PHOTO-BOOTH MADNESS AND FACE PAINTING AT HERITAGE'S FETE



ADVENTIST SCHOOLS VICTORIA STRUCTURE

The Board of Directors for the Education company have agreed to restructure the school company into two key focus areas, that being Learning and Teaching and Commercial Enterprise.

The position of Commercial Director has been created, and this role will support and work alongside the current Education Director. Additionally, other necessary resources will be sourced to better support the schools professional network.

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Vic) Ltd has increased its asset base in 2012 and will continue to do so in 2013. It is expected that this initiative will have a flow on effect at all levels of school administration by providing efficient and effective management of school resources.

Our clear mission is to provide a quality education in a safe, inclusive environment, and to share the gospel message with each student and their family, and this initiative will help us fulfil it.

ASV WEBSITE

In late March, ASV unveiled our new website in alignment with the corporate branding style across all their schools within the system.

The new website features information on who Seventh-day Adventists are, our values and beliefs as well as information on all of our schools and research to support why Adventist Education works. The website also includes the ASV system structure, our governance and how we support our schools in providing the best school experience for students, parents and staff.

With the technical and design expertise of Jason Bradshaw at Tracktion, the new ASV website also includes a members area where all staff will have access to curriculum, marketing and HR resources as well as employment opportunities, policies and procedures.

Dianne Cotter, ASV Marketing Officer explains, "The new website is critical to our goal of providing continued and up to date information to potential parents who are researching Adventist Education and what we can offer to their children. This website is also a key element in our communication to our staff - the people who make Adventist Education possible."

Check out the new website at: www.asv.adventist.edu.au

NUNAWADING CHRISTIAN COLLEGE MAKING GREAT DECISIONS

It is always exciting to report when our students make great spiritual decisions.

We would like to congratulate Craig Bonnington for taking his first Holy Communion, which took place at the end of last year at St Paul's Lutheran Church, Box Hill. Great decision Craig! Sophia McKeon not only had her 12th Birthday recently but she also chose to express her faith through baptism at the Nunawading Seventh-day Adventist Church, as did Bianca Maggs and Joel Bennetts at Burwood Adventist Community Church. Congratulations on a wonderful decision. NCC is very blessed to be part of your spiritual journeys and may God continue to bless you all and your families.

OPEN DAYS AND FETES AT ASV SCHOOLS

The Narre Warren South campus of Heritage College held its fete on a cold windy Sunday morning in mid-March. The rain from the day before made us think that nobody would come to share in our fun but, as the sun started rising and the morning got going, we soon realised it was actually going to be a very nice day. We were so excited to see everyone at the fete. Visitors commented on the friendly smiles and happy faces running around and having fun.

We were extremely proud to show off our school and our students to the many families who came to see what we had to offer. Thank you to everyone who came and helped make the day a very special and memorable one.

NCC and Gilson College Mernda both had Sunday Open Days the following week. There was plenty of exciting activities at both schools with school tours for new parents to come and see the school and learn more about what we offer with Adventist Education.

At Nunawading, there was plenty to celebrate with Sunday Funday activities for all ages. Face painting and jumping castles were a huge hit with the youngest and the brave ones tackled the zip line and pinnacle of terror. There were tours of the school operating every half hour, providing new and current parents the opportunity to see first hand the school upgrades and facilities for students.

The staff at both primary and secondary campuses are always thrilled with the day as it is a great community event for residents in the Whitehorse area. The day ended with many tired but very happy (painted) faces!

At Gilson College Mernda, manned by Sheri Gray, the BBQ & its enticing aroma and delicious burgers were welcoming and satisfying. It was a busy day for all who were involved in Open Day and the 33 new families who came to explore and visit our college were not disappointed. Six students from Taylors Hill supported our six primary guides from Mernda and families were impressed with their warm and friendly manner. We really appreciate their involvement and it is a noted sacrifice, (especially for the VCE students) on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Once again a huge thank you to parents, students and staff for their efforts and support.

EDINBURGH - YEAR 5 CAMP TO SOVEREIGN HILL

Mid-March our Year 5 Class went to Sovereign Hill for a three day camp. Read about it through one of the students, Matthias', eyes:

"We had no television or any type of communication to the outside world for three days! On the first day of going to the Ragged School, five people including me, got chosen to go to the saddlery to learn about what they do. We learnt that leather is stretchier than its normal form when it is wet. As we were apprentices, we got our names stamped onto a leather bookmark.

"Everyday at one thirty in the afternoon, there were redcoats who marched for five minutes before they fired their muskets and it was a loud bang that you could hear all the way to the other side of the main road.

"Overall, I think Sovereign Hill is awesome and I would want to go there again. I think you would too. You could be the tour guide of your family."

STEPHANIE ALEXANDER KITCHEN GARDEN PROGRAM

Henderson College is the first Independent School in Victoria to be part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program for schools.

Created with the fundamental philosophy that by setting good examples and engaging children's curiosity, as well as their energy and their taste buds, the program can provide positive and memorable food

experiences that will carry a child through their life long eating habits. With the rise of childhood obesity throughout Australia, this program has come at a vital time for families looking to make the right eating choices.

With over 10 acres of land, Henderson College in Mildura was an ideal location for this program. Looking out from the Kitchen Garden classroom, there is a garden with a year-long supply of fruit and vegetables that the children learn about and then cook with. After the meal is prepared, the program also teaches students how to present the meal and then enjoy it!

The garden is even host to hens who provide the cooking class with eggs.

Principal of Henderson College, Sanda Ferry, says "The students come to the program full of enthusiasm and a sense of ownership for what they produce. As a teacher, it is very exciting to watch!."

There are over 295 schools across Australia that have introduced the program and the students, parents and staff at Henderson are thrilled to be part of this growing initiative.

For more information on the program, go to <http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/about-the-program>

IT'S ALL H-APP-ENING AT LAA

Lilydale Adventist Academy will be the first Adventist school in Victoria to unveil a new smart phone APP that will take communication between home and school.

Parents and students will now be able to access newsletters, the calendar, school information, canteen menus, email in absences and much more all conveniently on their smart phone.

The school will also be able to send notifications of special events and other reminders to parents and students.

Scan the barcode with your smartphone to get the app, or visit: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/lilydale-adventist-schools/id620842152?mt=8>



SHERI GRAY MANNING THE BBQ AT THE GILSON COLLEGE MERNDA OPEN DAY



YEAR 5 STUDENTS FROM EDINBURGH EXPERIENCING SOVEREIGN HILL



HENDERSON COLLEGE IS NOW PART OF THE STEPHANIE ALEXANDER KITCHEN GARDEN PROGRAM





PENESE FALETASI JOINS THE PASTORAL TEAM AT NORTHPOINT ROCKBANK ALONG WITH HIS WIFE ANGELA AND DAUGHTERS



INTRODUCING...

PENESE FALETASI

Three years ago before I graduated from Avondale College, the idea of working in the field as a minister scared me. Had I learnt over the last four years to prepare me for the field work? Moreover, I felt unworthy to be a spiritual leader. Thus, in my mind, the idea of being a minister was questionable and possibly unrealistic.

I can still remember a conversation that I had with one of my lecturers before I left Avondale. I asked him if there was a possibility of my getting called to any conference. I knew his judgement would be based on my academic records, and his reply was essentially telling me that to rise above them I would need to perform well – but I was left felling even more discouraged, unworthy to be a servant for God.

'Something' however, changed the way I thought. When God proved me (and perhaps even my lecturer) wrong, I was shocked! Right from the beginning, before my family and I had even left Avondale, He taught me something I will never forget. Something that was promised to Abraham in Genesis 12.

When God called Abraham, he still went, even though he did not know where God was sending him. Moreover, the book of Hebrew adds "Without faith it is impossible to please God, whosoever comes to Him must believe that He exists and He will reward those who diligently seek Him..." (11:6) I guess faith was the starting point of my ministry and my relationship with my Lord. When God granted me Jesus' faith then I was able to recall and to remember most discussions and teachings that I had at Avondale College with my lecturers. Along the way God taught me more lessons when I was

able to work with His experienced and faithful servants, Pastors Loren Pratt and Zoran Gajic in the Victorian Conference.

I now know is better for us not to let anyone else determine who we are and what we are capable of - God alone has that right.

I first thank God for the privilege to work for Him because without Him nothing is possible. I also thank my wife Angela and my daughters Clemencia, Prisila, Moana-Marie and Leilani for their support and being there when I needed them. I thank Dr Murray House for what he had taught me and Pastors Loren Pratt and Zoran Gajic for the support they have given me. I would also like to acknowledge the opportunity that was given by the Victorian Conference to work in Victoria. And lastly, I will never forget the love that Northpoint Rockbank plant has given to me and my family since we began working together. May God continue to lead and guide us until the day we see Him return.

MATIJ VRANCIC

After five years of study on two different continents and in two different languages, I'm glad to finally begin what I wanted to do since childhood. And in what an amazing place too – Mildura!

I can't wait to share this 'Garden of Eden' with my beautiful wife Sanja when she arrives from Europe later this year. I Praise God for his leading in our life and I thank my Church family both in Salisbury (QLD) and Erina (NSW) for their prayers and support throughout my education.

May we all work together in sharing our hope in Jesus Christ.

MATIJ AND SANJA VRANCIC JOIN OUR CONGREGATION AT MILDURA



The father of Aaron Vaughn a US soldier who died in action in Afghanistan gave an interview about him. I was interested in the following section of it: "And he felt, and so did the other members of his team, that the very existence of our Republic is at stake. And because of that, Aaron was willing to give his life... [he saw it] clearly, and so many don't."

There is another Republic at stake – God's Kingdom – and the contest is event greater. The apostle Paul described it: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12, NIV)

Most people tend to occupy their lives with the trivial and mundane things. Even when we throw ourselves into church work, it can be reduced to staff budgets, campaigns, buildings, new sites, marketing, processes, structures, music and tech.

This soldier's story, as well as Paul's words, remind us of what should be front and centre in our thinking, what should be seen, and felt, so clearly – driving our life and motivating every step. We are at war. And all that matters is whether we see it clearly enough to make the necessary sacrifices.

Stenio Gungadoo
Pastor at Large

Trust & Love

"No. I didn't sign up this year," Tim mumbled as he and Josh stacked the chairs after their Junior Sabbath School class. "I tried to read it every day last year, but it just didn't work... I kept forgetting... especially when its nice outside and I just want to be out as long as I can. And then there is homework and music practice and chores and..."

"But Tim," Josh stopped stacking and looked at his friend. "Didn't it help you?" "Boys," the class teacher called, "Church is about to begin and I'm on the welcome. Can you just wheel the white board over here and pull the door shut as you leave?" She and her helper rushed out as Josh and Tim stacked the last of the chairs and went to the white board, the Bible reading team forgotten.

Josh stopped in front of the board and read "Loving the Lord Jesus and trusting Him to help me..." The teacher had asked them to think about this, and the three words underlined - loving, trusting and Him - and to share with everyone next week, what they thought they meant. Josh nudged Tim - don't forget to think about that this week, he said, "she might ask you first!"

As Tim sat down next to his parents at church, he found himself saying the words on the white board over and over to himself.

When church finished, Tim left his family to find his friends and have a drink, so he didn't see the class teacher come up to his mum and talk with her, or notice the glances they threw in his direction.

Tim loved making things with wood. And several days later, when his neighbour asked him to build something for him, he was excited.

"Dad! Guess what!" Tim exclaimed at dinner that night. "Mister Mason wants me to make a magazine rack like the one you made for me, and he is going to pay me for it!"

"Hmm," smiled Dad. "That is great, but you know, Tim, it is much harder than anything you have tried before... how about..."

"Oh, I told him that!" interrupted Tim excitedly, "but I said I would try and that you would help me. You will help me... wont you?"

Dad laughed. Of course I will help you, especially when you want to use that chisel!" Tim, though, was much too excited about the project to take note of Dad's warning.

Over the next few days, the magazine rack progressed nicely. Dad was an expert cabinet maker and had taught Tim a lot. And so careful plans were made and the wood was prepared and put together accurately.

"There now!" Tim said to himself Thursday afternoon as he looked at his work. "So far so good. Now for the groove. He picked up the chisel. He had never used it

before. Dad had always insisted on using it and showing him how. Dad wouldn't be home for a while, he didn't think, but he knew what to do.

So he carefully placed the sharp end of the chisel where the groove was to go and... Slap, bang!

He looked in horror at the ugly jagged hole made by the sharp tool. He felt sick. The hole was too big to fix - all that hard work on the board wasted. His shoulders slumped.

"Tim, do you love me?" He spun around to the door, to see his Dad standing there. "Love you?" he asked, puzzled. "Of course I do, you know that! Why?"

"Well, one way to show love is by trusting. I told you I would help you with the chisel work. I knew it was harder than it looked but you didn't trust me." Dad sounded a bit hurt, and Tim felt terrible that he hadn't waited. "I didn't mean it that way... I..."

"Love always shows itself by trusting" Tim said later, as he and Dad looked for another piece of wood to work with. "Hey!" He looked over at Dad. "Those are two of the words we are going to talk about at Sabbath School this week!" He was pretty pleased with himself for remembering. "Now, I wonder..." his voice trailed off.

Later that night, Tim did some thinking. He wondered if, even though he loved Jesus, did he really trust Him? Like the Bible reading team. He had tried two years already. Each time he had really wanted to do it. But when it got hard, he gave up. And he realised he had never even asked Jesus to help him.

"Pretty poor kind of loving Him I've been doing," he said.

On Sabbath, when it was Tim's turn to talk (and Josh was wrong - Tim hadn't been picked first - Josh had!) he shared what he had learnt.

"Unless I trust Jesus to help me with stuff, I am not showing Him that I love Him."



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SUNSET TIMES: MAY 2013



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May 3,4	5.31	5.30
May 10,11	5.24	5.23
May 17,18	5.18	5.17
May 24,25	5.12	5.12
May 31,Jun1	5.10	5.09

Bairnsdale time is 10 minutes EARLIER & at Hamilton the time is 12 minutes Later

OFFERING SCHEDULE: MAY 2013



May 4	Local Church Budget
May 11	Disaster & Famine Relief
May 18	Education/Camping Ministry
May 25	Health



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Contact Steve on 03 9264 7777 or 0423 784 000 for further information, or to make an appointment. Weekend and evening time slots are also available for your convenience.

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Located at the Victorian Conference Office, Central Road Nunawading, the Book Centre is open from 9-5 Monday to Thursday, and until Midday Friday.

Call 03 9264 7760/61 or visit vic.adventist.org.au and follow menu link to the Book Centre website



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