

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

It Starts

*Here...*

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Victorian Adventist  
COMMUNICATIONS

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Victorian Adventists



SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST<sup>®</sup>  
CHURCH

*Victoria*

# A note from the Editor's Office



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<u>DEADLINE</u>	<u>IN CHURCHES</u>
Jan 15	Feb 25
Big Camp Edition	April 1
April 15	May 27
June 15	July 22
Aug 15	Sept 23
Oct 15	Nov 25

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## Cover Photo

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## VITAL STATISTICS...

### What's the Story?

Someone said once statistics could tell us that if your head is in the oven and your feet are in the fridge, on average, you'd be quite comfortable.

The reality is, though, that statistics DO tell a story – they tell us where we're doing OK and where we need to improve.

In this issue of IntraVic we have a report on the survey conducted earlier this year and the story tells me there's room for improvement.

Did I ever tell you about my Sabbath School class?

We meet in the back corner of the church. Before the study of the lesson, we share what's happened that week, then pray accordingly. The teaching of the lesson is shared around those in the class who are willing.

My Sabbath School class gets together for social events – usually Friday night, Sabbath lunch, or Saturday night. There are invitations and reminders by email, phone and social media. It's good to get together, because my class has a group life of its own and it's good.

Did I mention that I like my Sabbath School class – a lot? The people are friendly, the sharing is open and honest and the Bible based discussion is very good. I feel like I belong there even though, as part of my work, I'm visiting a different church pretty much every Sabbath.

I know others who enjoy worshipping together on Sabbath just like I do – but the numbers tell a story and we know there are more who could be in Sabbath School and Church on any given Sabbath.

Attendance figures are, according to a number of experts, vital statistics for any church and help evaluate the following questions...

Who attends our church? Why do they come? Who stays away? Why? What would it take to get them back? What type of person does our worship service appeal to? What age groups are largely missing in our church? What can we do about that?

So, what would it take to have every member attending church each Sabbath? What would it take to have new people coming along?

What would it take for your church to have a vibrant Sabbath School that's just too good to miss?

## In this issue...



### 04 Sitting at Jesus' Feet

In the midst of all our doing... nothing can take the place of sitting...

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### 08 Multiplying Disciples

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### 10 Church News

Exciting things are happening. We have a number of new churches establishing and this edition, are sharing their stories. As well as some testimonies from some of the many baptisms that have taken place

### 15 Kids Spot

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We look at the results of the church members survey, as well as news from ADRA, VicYouth and More. a highlight is the report on the Nunawading Estate

**For other news, including reports from our LE's and notices, go to...**

[Vic.adventist.org.au](http://Vic.adventist.org.au) and click on the News and Announcements tab

Conference Office Closure over the Christmas period will be from Thursday December 22 at 5pm through until January 3 at 9am. Emergency contact number - 0408 417 785

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed and safe holiday period. May you be refreshed, renew relationships with friends and family, and be drawn closer to your Lord as you dwell on what He did for us.





The story of Martha reminds us that in the midst of all our “doing,” nothing can take the place of the one thing that is needed...

*Sitting  
at Jesus' feet...*  
**Devotional**

Written by Sherrie Courtney  
INTRAVic ASSISTANT EDITOR

“Our Relationship with God is what it is all about. The point of following Jesus is not to ‘get to heaven,’ but to spend eternity in relationship with God.”

“

Time with God will transform your life,  
your ministry and your church – This is the  
truth and this truth will set you free.<sup>2</sup> ”

”

*This edition of IntraVic looks at discipleship and church planting. Endeavouring to do so without first coming to the Source of power is like committing to going 'out' as Jesus' hands and feet, but with our hands tied behind our backs. We need to sit at His feet first. Put our plans and actions under His control, learn from Him. So let's first take a look at what sitting with Mary looks like.*

Jesus' words in the first part of John 15 evokes similar imagery when He talks of abiding. Sitting at Jesus feet, absorbing what He says, abiding in His word. "He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing.<sup>3</sup>" Doing and abiding (or sitting) – they are essential to each other.

It is at Jesus' feet, abiding in Him, that we grow.

But what does sitting at Jesus feet, look like?

In Steps to Christ, Ellen White answers the 'how' of abiding. "In the same way as you received Him at first... by faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow in Him.<sup>4</sup>"

Luke 11 records Jesus using the word 'ask' repeatedly. The last time, when He states how much more the Father is willing to give the Spirit to those who ask Him, this 'ask' is different; this time the Greek usage is in the continuous sense. Asking for the Spirit is to be ongoing and continual<sup>5</sup>.

*Abiding in Christ is a daily ongoing process – a decision made to invite the Spirit to fill us, and by faith believing that He will do so.*

Sitting at Jesus feet also evokes a sense of getting away from our busyness: taking a break from the noise of life and spending time in quiet stillness, with Jesus being our focus.

Jesus knew the importance of quiet time. Matthew told us how He made the disciples get into the boat and leave, and then He dismissed the crowd<sup>6</sup>. It had been an emotion-charged day and the situation was

becoming volatile. Once everyone had been dispersed, Jesus didn't re-join the Twelve immediately, but instead went up the mountain to be by Himself and pray.

*And if the Son of God needed alone time with just His Father, in a world without the many distractions of radio, tv, internet and all things electronic, how much more so do we!*

Mary sat at Jesus feet, listening to Him. No doubt, she spoke to Him too. That is how you build a relationship.

*So when we spend time reading God's Word and in prayer, we are sitting at His feet. The Bible is full of images of God. It is where we get to know Him.*

The book of Ezra illustrates two important principles when studying the Bible. In the seventh chapter, the prophet was seeking God's law. The first thing he did was prepare his heart. Author, P. Gregory, believes the best way to do that is with prayer for the Holy Spirit's presence as we read.

Ezra sought the Law... to do it. This illustrates a second essential component to studying God's Word. "Therefore before we study the Bible we really have to pray that we will be humble and meek enough to obey what we learn.<sup>7</sup>"

*Asking for help, humility and meekness fit well with sitting at someone's feet.*

Daily time spent pursuing God is a spiritual discipline that we learn over time, as we seek to know Him more. It requires the sacrifice of time you could spend elsewhere. But persevere. You will come to find it is something you cannot do without.

Commit to it; plan your day to fit around your appointment with God.<sup>8</sup>

According to Mark 3, Jesus appointed the Twelve so that they might spend time with Him... and then He sent them out. Being with Him preceded their mission<sup>9</sup>. And while Jesus gave the discipleship commission to 'go into the world' in Matthew 28, don't forget it was earlier, in Matthew 11, that He invited those burdened to come to Him. How much more effective will we be if we have first rested at His feet, relieved of our burdens. And for some, maybe the 'going' seems like a burden, because we have not spent the time 'coming' first...<sup>10</sup>

Unless we learn to sit at Jesus feet first, to spend time with Him... to hang on His every word and find rest for our souls and help for our battles, we cannot be effective in the commission. It will be a burden. We will become powerful witnesses, only as we wait at His feet, seeking Him with our whole heart<sup>10</sup>.

*So what does sitting at Jesus feet look like? We have only skimmed the surface, but it does involve a choice of faith, a decision to abide, an attitude of continually inviting the Holy Spirit to fill us. It includes following Christ's example and intentionally setting aside quiet time with Him, where with humility and meekness we seek Him, willing to learn from Him.*

And then we can 'do', having sat at His feet...

*Sherrie Courtney*



<sup>1</sup>Quiet Times: Discipleshipdefined.com

<sup>2</sup>From burned out to on fire for God, Chongho Peter Yang, July/August 2010 Ministrymagazine.org

<sup>3</sup>John 15:5

<sup>4</sup>Steps to Christ p 69,70

<sup>5</sup>Steps to Personal Revival by Helmut Haubeil, p 11

<sup>6</sup>Matthew 14:22-23

<sup>7</sup>How to study the Bible, Peter Gregory, p 8

<sup>8</sup>DiscipleshipDefined.com

<sup>9</sup>From burned out to on fire for God, Chongho Peter Yang, July/August 2010 Ministrymagazine.org

<sup>10</sup>At Jesus Feet, Warren Kay, Feb 2008 MinistryMagazine.org



# What Needs to Change?

Dr Leigh Rice

DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY  
SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION

Imagine the Adventist Church in Victoria planting new churches as rapidly as first century Christians did, or as the Advent Movement pioneers did in the late 1800's.

What would that look like today?

*John prophesied, "I saw another angel come from heaven. This one had great power, and the earth was bright because of His glory (Revelation 18:1 CEV)."*

Ellen White confirms this: "The great work of the Gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close (GC 611.3)."

What would need to change in the church today, and in our personal lives, for us to see this promise come to fruition and realise the exciting and Spirit-led growth of the early Church?

Within 60 years of the death and resurrection of Jesus, thousands of churches were planted in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the 'ends of the earth'. In 1870, the fledgling Adventist Movement planted 1822 new

churches in North America, when the membership was just 5440 and the US population was under 40 million. By 1890 the church was still planting 768 churches a year in North America.

But the disciple making movement stalled. In 1990, only 30 churches were planted in North America.

I was part of a Discipleship Study Tour in early 2015, travelling with pastors from across the Pacific island nations. We visited churches and church offices in Australia, New Zealand, Philippines and Laos. Yes, we visited churches in Melbourne as well. We met with pastors and administrators and talked with involved church members. We visited large established churches and small church plants, in countries where people were passionate about Christian



# “ IT IS IN OUR HANDS. WILL WE LOOK TO JESUS AND ALLOW HIS SPIRIT TO USE US? ”

His command to make disciples of all nations was what motivated their lives.

## People with confidence that God will grow His kingdom

Whether these churches were in secular Australia or religious Philippines, in CBDs or outer suburban public housing estates, on university campuses or in rural villages, the leaders and members of these churches took Jesus at His word: “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mat 16:18 ESV).”

They believed the promise and knew God it was God who would grow His kingdom.

Joseph Kidder from Andrews University says in his book *The Big Four* that “the most important ingredient in church growth is faith-based optimism.” Faith based optimism is confidence in Jesus’ promise to build His Church.

## People involved in small groups

Fellowship in small groups was a part of each of the churches that we visited. The groups had different names in different churches: small groups; home groups; or care groups. There was, however, a commonality in their characteristics as they provided fellowship, care and support, as well as Bible reading that applied the Word of God to everyday life. And often, food. Members enjoyed the groups so much they were inviting friends and neighbours to come. It is not surprising that one of the Natural Church Development characteristics of a healthy growing church is ‘holistic small groups.’

## Members being friends of unsaved people

Friendships with unsaved people were a natural part of everyday life. They were friendships with other students at university or other moms with children at the same school. They were work associates in the CBD or other families in the same rural village. They were

not doing evangelism. They were living it. They saw every relationship in life as a God given opportunity to live their Christian faith and share naturally as the occasion presents.

## Ministries that met the needs of people in the community

These ministries were as varied as the places we visited. In one area in rural Laos, they were teaching sewing skills to produce items that the community sold at the tourist market, while in another area it was sports activities for the community youth. Many churches were engaged in community health programs while others provided tutoring... Food pantries... housing for disadvantaged... life skill training and support...

They were following Jesus example of mingling with people, desiring their good and ministering to their needs (MH 143).

Imagine the Adventist Church in Victoria planting new churches as rapidly as our early (or more recent) predecessors did.

It is in your hands. Look to Jesus again. Recommit to personal time with Him. Begin to read a part of the story of His life and ministry every day. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you a passion to obey His command to make disciples. Become a friend to an unsaved person and pray that God will give you opportunities to talk about your faith. Watch as The Spirit grows faith in their lives.

Does this picture excite and challenge you? Maybe God is calling you to be part of planting a church in Victoria.

*Dr Leigh Rice*



faith and in countries where people were indifferent.

We saw the Church growing in Communist Laos, where Buddhism is the official religion and evangelising forbidden. What we saw reminded us of the growth of the first century Christian church and the early Advent Movement churches.

What characterised these growing, disciple-making churches?

## People with passionate faith in Jesus

Jesus was paramount in the lives of the people we visited. They manifest a trust in Jesus. The joy of salvation was very real to them and were sharing it with others. As Jesus said, ‘When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself (John 12:32 ESV),’ and they were living for Jesus; obedience to

# *Multiplying Disciples:*

## **Multiplication - is it really possible?**

Pr Glenn Townend  
PRESIDENT, SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION

**This is the final part in our series on personal application of the Mark 4:3-32 model of discipleship. This edition we are looking at multiplying the crop.**

No one wanted to go on the Nominating Committee and few were willing to serve in leadership. The new pastor was completely frustrated. The Nominating Committee had met at least five times and for up to three hours at a time over a period of three months, trying to fill the needed positions - even with a membership of 250. It seemed that many people who finally accepted roles did it because no one else was willing, taking on the role with little enthusiasm or purpose.

The year did not go well for the church or its pastor - it functioned with little spiritual life and everyone noticed the lack of enthusiasm.

Before the next Nominating Committee period, the pastor suggested to the church board that, rather than just fill positions, the Nominating Committee would engage with the members to discover their passions (Psalm 20:4, 37:4) and gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and see where God may be asking them to serve.

Sermons on spiritual gifts preceded the Nominating Committee and the Committee paid attention to each person, going through the church roll and Sabbath school roll and suggesting roles to each person based in part, on the results of a spiritual gifts survey.

While not a perfect process, within two years the church had renewed life. Not all roles were filled because no one had been found with the particular passion or giftedness, but the church managed - in fact, it began to grow. Most people were involved in ministries and departments they liked or wanted to try.

A people approach, rather than a position approach to Nominating Committee had made the difference.



“

## “FOLLOW ME” LITERALLY MEANT FOLLOWING CHRIST AROUND AND OBSERVING HOW HE LIVED - THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DISCIPLE...

”

If we are to be serious about multiplying disciples who make new disciples, the church needs to become more people-focused at every level. The Nominating Committee can review how people are going in their roles and intentionally focus people on a path of development – much like Human Resource departments are supposed to do in businesses. Newly baptised people could be prayed over, asking God to reveal to them their heart’s passion and spiritual gifts. The church could suggest pathways for development and training, so that the new disciples can, in turn, become disciple-makers.

After all, God has all the human resources He needs in the Church (1 Corinthians 1:4-7) and it is “God who arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose (1 Corinthians 12:18 ESV).”

My grandfather believed in me. Even though I was a typical teenager at times and did my own thing (not telling what I got up to either!), he would often sit me down and listen, asking how I was going and for my thoughts on various issues in the church or the world. He listened as if my opinion mattered to him.

He let me drive his car (even after I crashed it twice in one day – no significant damage either time), and paint and repair his house instead of using a tradesman. He took me to hear him preach and teach and came to listen to me preach. He was always extremely encouraging and would tell lots of stories of past experiences that made you think and grow. He even arranged at one time for me to teach his classes at Avondale College when he was away taking workshops.

This was more than belief in me. It

was real mentoring, developing me as a disciple of Jesus. As a teenager and young adult, I was blessed to have a number of people like Grandpa who mentored me. I value each one of them – they significantly shaped me as a disciple of Jesus.

Jesus valued everyone and wanted each to find fulfilment in following Him. That is why He healed them, taught them, fed them and asked them to repent and follow. Jesus knew, however, He would only be in ministry for three and a half years, after which He would leave His earthly work to mankind. He had to be strategic and chose the right leaders to continue what He started. He spent all night praying before He chose the apostles (Luke 6:12-16) - trades people, zealots who despised the Romans, tax collectors who worked with the Romans, Pharisee types, fisherman, angry young men, opinionated loud-mouths, courageous and emotionally unstable.

Jesus can use anybody, if the person is willing (Mark 3:15-19). This privileged group were ‘to be with Him’ and accompany Him in His ministry (Mark 3:13,14). Jesus called the disciples to follow and learn from Him. They would watch, eat and sleep Jesus, be overwhelmed by the needs of the people for healing and direction, feel the antagonism from the religious leaders, the mix with the ‘least of these’ (Matthew 25:40), experience the dinners, the healings and teaching.

“Follow me” literally meant following Him around and observing how He lived – this is what it means to be a disciple. Once these disciples knew the Jesus way, Jesus sent them to do the same things He was doing

(Matthew 10, Luke 10:1-12). When they came back from their own ministry He debriefed them (Luke 10:17-24). As they grew in their understanding, they knew Jesus was the Messiah (Matthew 16:13-20, Mark 8:27-30). Then Jesus was able to tell them about His death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21, 17:1-2, Mark 8:31, 9:1-3).

He led them step-by-step in their understanding and development and gave them opportunity to participate and grow in disciple-making ministry. When He left the earth, Jesus knew that with the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) His disciples were ready to make a multiplying movement of disciple making disciples (John 14:16).

Every seed-bearing plant has the opportunity to reproduce itself thousands of times within a few generations. An orange can be an orange grove, a tomato has the potential to be a whole greenhouse of tomatoes, a coconut can be a copra plantation... There is multiplying potential in every disciple of Jesus. We can be disciple-making disciples who make more and better disciple-making disciples...

...Until Jesus returns.

*Pr Glenn Townend*



# Church News...

## ...Planting Churches

*The Bible has many passages addressing the importance of worshipping together. Hebrews 10:25 encourages us not to give up this practice. Acts 2 tells how the early followers devoted themselves to meeting together. Colossians 3:16 talks about Christ's message being found in us as we join together in worship. And in Matthew 18 we are promised that when we do worship together, God will meet us there. There are many more.*

*A natural part of discipleship then, is that of church growth and the need for bigger, or more churches. Equally important though, is the need to practice discipleship in areas of our city where there may not be a church presence but there is still a need...*

*Did you know that across Victoria throughout the last year, a new church plant has begun on average nearly every six weeks? As we are looking at discipleship this edition, we want to share with you some of the stories of these new church plants.*

The plans for a church to meet on the campus of **La Trobe University in Bundoora** are well underway. Vikram Panchal has been meeting with members from Gateway and Preston churches, where they have been praying and planning. "It is exciting to pray toward a church plant," says Vikram, who's been praying for a mission field to plant a church in for some time.

Sensing God's leading to La Trobe Uni, he and his wife began praying for a team of committed workers.

Soon Shadow Toke, a first-yr student, crossed paths with Vikram. She had been praying to use her time on campus to win souls. Together they ran their first program and encountered more Adventists with the same passion.

As a means of reaching out to the student population of over 20,000, two health seminars were presented over two semesters, called 'Optimise your Brain' and 'The Lost Art of Thinking', focusing on teaching students practical ways, based on science and the Bible, of enhancing IQ and EQ.

Additionally, God raised up members from both Gateway and Preston Churches to start a new student club called Advent Health.



"Despite experiencing many challenges and difficulties, we have seen God open door after door, assuring us of His leading in this," Vikram says. "If you want to know more, you can find us on Facebook: Advent-Health La Trobe Uni.

Core members from the **Mornington Fellowship** (which had ceased to meet a few years back when leading members had passed away) wanted to re-establish a presence on the Peninsula. After studying the demographics, they felt that **Rosebud**, the second largest population centre, was the best location for making a difference in their community. Since January, they have been meeting weekly a hall next to the Soundshell on the foreshore.



Membership has doubled since starting to meet in Rosebud – thanks in part, to a number of widowed and elderly Adventists who, unable to travel far, had not attended church for some time.

The Fellowship's mission is to increase Adventist presence on the Peninsula. Given the huge holiday influx the area experiences, this will have effects reaching far beyond their local area.

To date, members have run several

programs but getting the message out to residents is hit and miss because of the number of holiday homes and the transient population. They have tried door knocking and handbills in liaison with the Literature Evangelists, and also run ads in the local news sheet "Coffee News" that goes to milk bars and food outlets.

There have been setbacks, but the members are even more determined to find something that will work. They have plans to establish a social networking presence for the spiritually challenged and seekers on the Peninsula. They are also applying for Global Mission funding to support a suitable person to canvas the community to identify needs that the Fellowship can then try and meet.

They are also working toward Christmas 2017, reaching out to the 270K holiday makers who flood the area from around Australia. Utilising the Soundshell on the foreshore, they are planning a tent-style campaign, with a young evangelist and other supporting programs.

If your church is interested in being involved in any aspects of this program (such as morning kids activities, cooking demos, women's ministry issues and Bible study follow-up), helping get the Rosebud group on the map, please contact PeterHughes@adventist.org.au for more information.

The beginning of **Westpoint Church Plant** is proof that God is in the business of turning difficulties to good – if we let Him. The challenges facing the mother church, Spotswood, included personal and cultural

differences in worship style as well as demographic changes in the local community leading a loss of connection between the church and its neighbours. The premises themselves were old, worn and overcrowded – a tired, sad witness to increasingly affluent surrounds. Add to that, more than 50% of the membership lived further west.

Church membership agreed that a healthy church is outreach-focused, and fold-up chairs in the aisles each week does not encourage church growth.

A number of options were explored, including a reconciliation process, as the challenges facing the church were not without conflict, and after significant research and discussion, both on a local level and with the Conference, members decided to keep the Spotswood church, and plant a new church further west.



The old building, with its spiritual history, would be kept. Those staying at Spotswood refreshed the premises. Research had revealed a community need for a child-care ministry. Soon God provided new members with gifts in this area and a Happy Hands Ministry and an Adventurers Club now engages an unprecedented 30+ community families. And while reaching out to others, Spotswood's remaining members are more involved within the church as well – those who had previously stayed in the background are now in leadership, outreach and having a voice in what is happening within the church.

The plant group went on to establish home group meetings each Friday night. People invited their friends, and soon there were 20 non-Adventists worshipping with the group each week. Since May this year, the group has been

meeting every Sabbath morning in the Auditorium of a school in St Albans for Sabbath School, Church and lunch, with around 70 people in attendance. Baptisms and professions of faith are planned in the latter part of this year, and the group continues to grow in grace with a passion for reaching their community.

Sadness and misunderstandings aside, both church communities are now experiencing renewed empowerment and opportunities to serve their Lord, and continue to extend Jesus' ministry to their wider communities. They are both excited about God's continued leading, looking up and across to where He will lead next.

**W**e all know that a lot can happen in twelve months. Rosanna Laredo shares how this has been the case with the **Sunshine church plant in West Melbourne.**

Up and running since September 2015, God has faithfully delivered blessing upon blessing, as the support and awareness of this new fellowship continues to ripple across the Melbourne's west. September marked the first anniversary and was celebrated with welcoming another new community contact into God's family through baptism. Maria Oblati is the third person to be baptised at this budding church plant.

It was a 'high-time' of worship and celebration and to add to the many highlights of the day, we were approached by a visiting community member expressing their desire to be baptised - Praise God.

Sunshine church plant is very strongly connected with the local community, with regular and abundant food parcels being distributed, Beyond DVD deliveries shared, weekly prayer meetings and community visitations, letterboxing, Bible studies and three small groups meeting regularly.

This active little plant is thriving under the grace of God, being rooted and grounded in dependence upon the



Holy Spirit. Jehovah Jireh continues to abundantly provide, and it is a thrilling and promising ministry to be involved in.

Church Services are held in the Glengala Hotel Function Room in Sunshine at 2:00pm every Saturday, followed by the Last Empire Prophecy Seminar Series, held at 3:30pm (with a repeat session held every Wednesday evening at 3.30pm). All are welcome to come to this wonderful place where 'The Son is always shining' at Sunshine!

**R**obert Bryson lives in **Point Cook**, a vast expanse of land that only a few years ago had very few residents, and now, more than 30,000 souls live there and it is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia: a 'dormitory' suburb with most commuting over the Westgate Bridge to the CBD for work.

He tells us how Werribee Adventist church heeded the Holy Spirit's prompting to plant a church in this area. To be visible, rooms in the Point Cook Community Centre, which also houses the library, were hired. They meet right in the middle of the community in an area with a high degree of pedestrian traffic.

On Tuesday evenings and Sabbath

*Continued  
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## What the Lord has Done

*As we bring the year to a close, we thought we would share a number of testimonies with you – people who have this year decided for Christ...*



The Karen Church, meeting at Werribee, have recently seen seven people baptised as part of their evangelistic program. Than Than Htay, was born a Buddhist. While Tasmania is home, she flew to Melbourne for her baptism. For the last year, her mother, Ma Towl, has been studying the Bible with Nan via Skype. Ma Towl was unwell, and the Holy Spirit was moving on Than Than Htay's heart. She

became interested in Bible study too, so much so that when her Skype failed, she resorted to Facebook to continue.

Another Buddhist couple attributed their interest to the testimony of their youngest daughter, Moo Pwe. She had studied at Helen Hall's school in the borderlands for several years and was baptised two years ago. But Moo Pwe's parents tried to discourage her in many ways, even testing her by putting pork in her food. But she bore it patiently.

Eventually her parents became sympathetic. Then they told each other that if Moo Pwe is so adamant, there must be some truth in her religion and began asking questions. Moo Pwe shared the story of Jesus Christ. The Spirit was clearly working on her parents hearts.

Together the family moved to Australia and settled in Melbourne and Htoo Paw and Mu Thu decided to be baptised.

*Mervin Myat Kyaw*

At the end of a convicting message last Big Camp, I was left broken and ready to surrender to Jesus. He finally reached my heart. A friend took me to the front and I fell to my knees. I was prayed over by several people including the speaker. Jesus rescued me from over two decades feeling socially isolated and emotionally shut down. God had been calling me to come back to church for several years but I'd resisted His numerous promptings. I felt my childhood church had betrayed me.

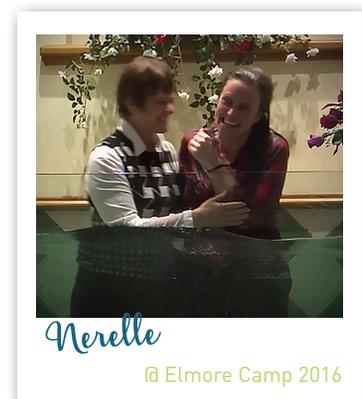
My journey into this very dark place began when I was a naive 19-year-old and fell victim to a man who sexually abused, manipulated and deceived me.

When Jesus finally got my attention and my heart this year, I was unable to forgive, full of fear, anger, sadness and shame. I longed for freedom from my internal misery. I didn't want to live and I didn't want to die. I almost ran away from Big Camp when God confronted me with His powerful love. I felt so unworthy and couldn't handle the Creator of the universe wanting to

dwell inside me.

But Jesus won. 25 years of my own efforts to heal had failed, then He entered my heart and over the next three months, transformed me. I am now depression free and no longer emotionally shut down. I was baptised in June and I became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church. I still get down sometimes but I know who to run to and who sustains me, who is my Hope and my Rock. He gives me a reason to leave my house and a reason to love and a reason to forgive those who I once could not forgive. My chains are gone, I've been set free.

*Nerelle*



Terry, an A-grade motor mechanic who has been involved in motorsports for over 50 years, began his love affair with cars when he started his first job fixing them, at the age of 14. Even now, in his 70's, Terry is still fixing cars and go-karts... but not during the Sabbath hours.

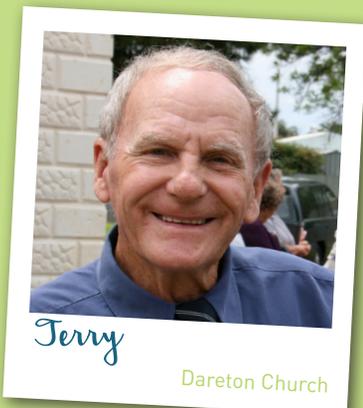
Terry takes Sabbath keeping seriously. But that has not always been the case.

As a child, he attended Mildura Church with his family but by the time he was 18, he had no time for that sort of thing – weekend cricket and motor sports took priority. Nevertheless, the principles he learnt stayed with him. He didn't drink. He didn't smoke. He didn't attend wild parties and he didn't work on Sabbath until he started his own business.

Upon his marriage, Terry attended a small Baptist church meeting at a school. He gave his heart to Christ for the first time, and was baptised. Eventually the pastor moved and the small community disbanded. He decided to visit his old Adventist family, and found that many of them were actually his customers over the last 40 years! They didn't criticise him when he left back then, and they didn't criticise him now. He felt welcome. He joined the choir and began keeping Sabbath again.

Terry re-joined the church by profession of faith, and now attends regularly at Dareton. He still has his passion for cars, but for him, it is an opportunity to share his passion for Jesus. His go-kart team have noticed he doesn't stay for the full race on Fridays, and doesn't show up until Saturday after sunset. And this is his chance to share his faith and tell them about his 'special day' and the Lord of the Sabbath.

*Matthew Vrancic*



God is the author of my story. My grandma, who lived with us, was an Adventist and as a child, I would often sit by her side while my mum read her the Bible.

When I started school, my cousin Daniela lived with us and showed me a remarkable picture of God - she knew and loved Him and that amazed me.

When I was in fourth grade, the war started and our families separated until it was over. Then we returned home and my grandma continued to preach God's love. As I married and went on to Uni, I carried the seeds sown in my childhood.

In 2008, we came to Australia for a three-month visit. For the first time, my husband and I began to attend an Adventist church regularly. This was a huge step for us because my brother-in-law is an orthodox priest residing at a monastery.

While in Australia, we studied God's word with my cousin Boriss Soldat. We were moved by the way he experienced and shared God's love with us.

When we returned home, I continued attending church regularly and decided to surrender my life to the Lord by publicly making a stand for Him.

God orchestrated events in such a way that my cousin Boriss Soldat, who was visiting for a mission trip, was able to baptise me in Banju Luka Church in August.



*Iliana Radumilo*

Bosnia

God works in mysterious ways. My husband, who was once resistant, had tears in his eyes that day as he expressed a desire to also be baptised.

*Iliana Radumilo*



*Eliza Mayer*

Month Albert Church

I grew up in a Christian home, attending church on Sundays, praying, singing hymns and having Bible study as a family. I was taught from a young age that the Bible was designed to be applied to my life and so I developed a deep respect for Scripture.

My father taught us about our heavenly Father by his own experience. After hearing, and seeing first-hand the ways in which he had to fight for his allegiance to Scripture; I expected the same for my life. I also saw God's blessings on my father for his faithfulness to the Word; I expected the same.

At the age of ten, God convicted me that I had neglected a relationship with Him. He furthered my journey as He taught me the difference between knowing about Him, and actually knowing Him. I saw God speaking to me through Scripture as He answered my questions through the Bible and I became hungry for an ever-closer relationship with Him.

It was through this living relationship that God brought to mind my brother's involvement in Gateway Church at Monash University. Like my father, my brother experienced Satan's attacks because he followed God's Word. God prompted me to ask my brother more questions and I found that I could never refute his answers without ignoring the plain teaching of Scripture.

I have been proclaiming the messages of the three angels for the past four years and I now rejoice in the opportunity to be baptised.

My testimony belongs to God, because He is working out His plans in me.

*Eliza Maher*



*Mark & Katie*

Bendigo Church

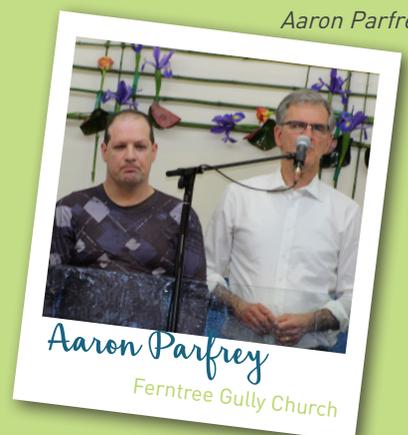
After studying to disprove the message of Christianity, Mark came to realise that he was in need of salvation. At the same time, Katie was also experiencing a change in her life. After they met and Mark shared with Katie the truth he was learning, Katie contacted the local Bendigo church. Studies with the pastor led to their baptism on the 28th of June. Life since then has not been easy, with the enemy attacking on all fronts, however their faith remains strong and they are continuing to find their strength in Jesus.

*Chrissie Cooper*

I first came in contact with the Adventist church about two and a half years ago, through a work friend. Our conversations about the Bible and his church spiked my curiosity and I wanted to investigate further. Turning to the internet, I found the church closest to where I live. After a few visits, the pastor, Trevor Rowe, asked if I would like to read scripture with him. He lent me a church Bible and a DVD series narrated by Geoff Youlden. We have been reading together weekly since then, and have become good friends.

God put me on this road, that led from casual work conversations to being baptised in October this year. As I walk with God, growing closer to Him, I want to lay down my life for Him and follow Him wherever He leads. And I pray that He will send His love through me, so that I can touch other people with it.

*Aaron Parfrey*



*Aaron Parfrey*

Ferntree Gully Church



## High-tech Witnessing Hamilton Church

*The young man glanced at our Sunday market stall with its give-away DVDs, Bibles and devotional books. He was poised to move on, finding nothing of interest.*

"Have you seen one of these?" What looked like a playing card was offered him for inspection. "Just fold it like this, and presto, it becomes a USB flash drive!"

He was interested now! As he took it in his hand, he exclaimed, "Did you know they've made a 1-terabyte USB in China now?"

"This is the world's first paper USB drive. It's yours to keep. Just put in your computer at home and you can download a book!"

More small talk about the wonders of technology and he left, now with the link to an online edition of The Great Hope (An abridged version of The Great Controversy).

This is just one encouraging encounter at the newest outreach effort by Hamilton Church; a table at the fortnightly local Sunday market.

The paper USB is the brain-child of Andrew DePaula, an Adventist in Washington, USA. Costing under US\$1 to manufacture, it will revolutionise the business card industry by packaging any amount of information in high-tech give-away form. But for Andrew DePaula, it is also a vehicle for placing books like The Great Hope and Steps to Christ in the hands of people who would not accept conventional literature or even DVDs. Other cards link to the movie Tell the World; to Heroes (a game app); or to a creation movie - Dare to Believe.

Currently, these cards are available by direct order from the USA, through the website Adventist.cards

We at Hamilton are hoping to introduce God to many more people through our market stall with this world-first technology.

*Peter Tung*

## Where we Belong Nunawading Church

*God invites us to belong to His family and the theme, "You belong here..." welcomed more than 400 members and visitors to official opening of the new Nunawading Church facility on Sabbath, 10th September 2016.*



"We are just one small branch of God's family, and we welcome you to join us as we do life and discover the heart of Jesus... together."

Local Federal Member, Michael Sukkar, and Pr Graeme Christian both officiated in a spiritual and relaxed service marking the long awaited opening.

The Nunawading Church, established in July 1950, first meet in an old kitchen built on our campground to serve the American troops stationed there during World War II. From that small beginning of 30 members, the church community has grown to 300+ now worshipping in the new church on Central Road, Nunawading.

Meeting in temporary accommodation for the first seven years, the members opened their new church in June 1959. In the fifties and sixties the church established a kindergarten/pre-school centre on the campground, which was appreciated by local families. Then in

'63 it contributed to the establishment of the Nunawading Adventist Primary School (now with over 400 students from Early Learning to VCE). Another major impact on the local community and beyond began in 1995 and continues to this day, with the first presentation of Road to Bethlehem.

As a faith community, Nunawading Church has undergone many changes. The building has been added to and renovated to meet the changing needs of both congregation and community, but to continue doing so effectively, a major overhaul has been needed for some time.

In the eyes of the church members, the new building is just that, a building, but one that will be used to support the ministries of the church and needs of the community.

We pray that God will use this facility and His people who worship here, to reach others with the Gospel story.

*Geoff Jones &  
Karen Horsley*

## A Trip of a Lifetime Echuca Church

*"I've done it. I've finally done it!" Peter exclaimed. "I'm overwhelmed by the support, both along this journey and today."*

Those were the words of a 90 year-old as he climbed the last six steps up to Melbourne GPO, completing a lap around Australia - on foot!

Peter Tripovich and his family and friends walked the last five emotion-filled kilometres together, on Sunday October 9. Upon finishing Peter shed a tear. The enormity of what he had accomplished had finally set in as he gazed over the crowd of media and public cheering him on.

As Peter's campaign manager, I have been truly blessed to witness this. I see no better story of a man of faith



with a will to overcome. Peter's story is such a great message for us all. He undertook this final leg of his around-Australia walk for two reasons: one to finish what he had started ten years earlier, the other to raise \$200,000 for ICC Australia.

He has accomplished the first and is halfway toward the other. He is a national hero.

*Luke Shepherd*  
*International Children's Care*  
To donate and support this heroic effort, head over to [www.iccau.org](http://www.iccau.org) and follow the links.

# JUST4KIDS

## SHARING JESUS

Recently Joshua's family moved from their country home into a new home in town.

Joshua wondered how he could tell the children in his new neighborhood about his friend Jesus. When he heard that some children would be going from house to house collecting treats to celebrate Halloween, he wondered what he could do to turn this holiday that didn't honor God into a chance to share God's Love. Then he had an idea.

"my brother, Stephen, and I decided that we could make cookies and put a Bible verse with each cookie," said Joshua. The boys knew that Halloween can be scary with its emphasis on witches and ghosts. So the boys chose Bible verses that talked about peace. They printed the Bible verses on the family computer and tied one to each cookie bag.

As darkness fell on October 31, children began arriving at the family's door dressed as princesses, witches, dinosaurs, and super heroes. Joshua and Stephen greeted each child and dropped a bagged cookie into the waiting sacks. "There's something special for you with your cookie," they told each child. The children seemed happy to receive the home-baked cookies.

Joshua and Stephen decided to expand their cookie-giving to other times of the year. As Valentine's Day approached, the boys baked more cookies and gave them to people in a nursing home and to shut-ins and neighbors who lived alone. "It was great to see the smiles on people's faces when we stopped to visit them," Joshua said.

But Joshua doesn't limit his sharing God's love to cookie-making. He helps people with their yard work, picks up trash, and rakes leaves. "We go to the nursing home to visit people who don't get visitors," he says. "That can be very lonely."

Joshua has found many ways to tell others about Jesus. Sharing God's love is more than quoting Bible verses to people," he says. "Others should see Jesus in our kind acts and words. I want to be sure that others see Jesus in me."

Sharing God's love and supporting world mission with our offerings are important ways to spread God's message to a love-starved world.

Joshua Wade lives in the United States. He loves to share God's love with others and has found many ways to do it.

I can tell my friends about Jesus.



### A PRAYER

I'm so thankful that you gave me \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm so glad that you helped me with \_\_\_\_\_ today.

I love you God because you \_\_\_\_\_.

Please help me tomorrow as I \_\_\_\_\_.

Please watch over  
(person) \_\_\_\_\_.



Julie Catton  
Director of  
Childrens Ministries  
03 9264 7777



# Conference News

*Every two years the Australian Union Conference facilitates a Union-wide Membership Survey. Any survey will only have value, however, as we take the time to evaluate and decipher the data gathered, then applying the lessons learnt. The last survey undertaken highlighted some challenges for the Victorian Conference. With only four months until the next one, it is important that we take note of what has been gleaned.*

Of those attending church on the Sabbath the Survey was undertaken:

- **54% were female, and 46% male.**

A higher percentage of female worshippers is a commonality throughout the developed world.

**Challenge:** How do we attract/hold the male populace?

- **10% of those present (15 years and older) were non-baptised members.**

**Challenge:** How can we create an environment during Sabbath worship that would attract more "seekers"?

**Opportunity:** What are we doing to lead the 10% to a decision for baptism?

- **82% of children present (under 15 years of age) were unbaptised.**

**Challenge:** What ministries are we providing for this group of young people who are yet to make a decision for baptism?

**Opportunity:** There is a harvest ready to be reaped amongst our children.

- **25% of attenders are 14 years or younger.**

**Challenge:** Given ¼ of our worshippers are children, is the way we do worship on a Sabbath morning appropriate?

- **There is a significant drop off (approximately 40%) in church attendance between the 5-14 age group and the 15-24, and 25 to 34 age groups.**

**Challenge:** What can we do stem the flow of young people out the back doors of our churches?

- **Over 30% of people present on a given Sabbath do not have membership in the church that they are worshipping in.** The mobility of today's society, allows for non-commitment to ministry in one's local church.

**Challenge:** What changes need to

brought about to strengthen and promote commitment to ministry and mission, taking into account today's mobile society?

- **54% of those worshipping indicated that they also attended Sabbath School on a weekly basis.** The trend shows this is a declining number. The opportunity to study the Bible together, plan for mission, and build community is being missed by nearly half of all worship attendees.

**Challenge:** What can we do to revitalise Sabbath Schools?

- **Worship and Sabbath School attendance on the day of the survey, as a percentage of actual membership in Victorian Conference was significantly lower than that experienced throughout the rest of the AUC.**

**Challenge:** How do we re-engage our non-attending membership in mission and worship?

- **Of Victoria's 10,700 members, just 63% were at worship**, with only 48% at Sabbath School, as compared to the rest of the AUC who had 78% at worship, with 61% at Sabbath School. This must become a focus area.

**Challenge:** Why is Victorian Conference attendance so much less than the rest of the AUC? What can we learn from our neighbouring Conferences in this regard?

- **Over 90% of those present indicated that they either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they had the assurance of salvation through their faith in Jesus Christ. A similar percentage of worshippers indicated that being a Seventh-day Adventist was important to them.** This is a very positive picture of our membership's true understanding of the everlasting gospel of grace in Jesus Christ.

**Opportunity:** What can we do to transform this positive understanding of our membership into mission-driven

sharing and witnessing?

- **The question relating to the "satisfaction of church life" indicated that 93% of those present were either 'very positive', 'positive' or 'OK' with church life.**

**Challenge:** If we are generally so satisfied with church life, why are we not inviting more of our friends and neighbours to be a part of it.? Only 10% over 15 years old were non-baptised.

**Challenge:** Is our satisfaction with the 'norm' leading to complacency when it comes to the urgency that should be associated with the proclamation of the everlasting gospel?

- **The returning of tithe has remained static over the past five surveys, with about 60% indicating that they return tithe regularly, 18% returning tithe irregularly, and 22% not returning tithe or not responding to the question.** Tithe is the Church's income source for those in full-time Gospel ministry. Increase in the regular return of tithe would see a parallel increase in the number of field workers serving our local churches and their communities – furthering the mission of the Church.

**Challenge:** What measures can we take to encourage commitment to the discipline of tithing?

*It is important we take note of what is revealed in the survey. But that alone is not enough... we must apply it in a constructive manner so that as a Church, we can become more proficient in fulfilling the Great Commission - that of going and making disciples of all nations...*

*...Starting right here, right now, in the fastest growing state of the Australian Union Conference, Victoria.*

*Craig Gillis  
Conference Secretary*

# From the President

*As the year draws to a close, I would like to share a final update on the work of the Conference Committee. A lot is happening and there is good news to share.*

## Victorian Adventist Communications

As well as IntraVic, this department produces videos, making them available on Youtube, Vimeo and VictorianAdventist.tv. By mid 2016 the number of views had exceeded the total of 2015. That is good news! Subsequent discussion recognised the need for short clips quickly capturing attention and the open door to effective use of social media. So we have an exciting direction for the future.

## Camp Howqua

We have a new assistant for our camp facilities. Mr Edwin Beard has been appointed to this position and comes to us from North NSW. We welcome you and your family to the Conference. This appointment has become necessary as previous assistants, Matthew and Vicki Goltz are moving to Queensland. Matthew and Vicki, thank you for your good work and may God bless your future plans.

## Operating Report

The most recent report was presented, revealing the good news: evangelism expense has increased indicating we are focusing on core business. But not so good, was a tithe return lower than budgeted for. We thank God for all who faithfully return tithe through the regular channels, making mission possible. And mission is needed in Victoria: Melbourne has the lowest percentage of Adventists per head of population of any major city

in the South Pacific Division. Tithing helps support ministry in Australia's greatest mission field. Please consider it prayerfully if you haven't already.

## AdventCare Yarra Ranges

As you're aware, the AdventCare Board had come to the point where it was considered unviable to continue the operation of the Yarra Ranges facility and this was announced in August this year. A Warburton based consortium has now presented a proposal to the AdventCare Board of Directors. The proposal is for the redevelopment and continued operation of the Yarra Ranges facility, with some funds being provided as bridging finance. While the AdventCare Board has not seen its way clear to accept the proposal at this point, it has given the board a lot to think about – and very carefully. More work is being done to fully evaluate any potential redevelopment and operation of the facility.

## Congratulations

For a number of years, a group of Oromo people from Ethiopia have been worshipping together, running evangelistic initiatives and growing. This group have now been formally recognised as a church. Congratulations.

So that is it for now. Please pray that God will continue to guide His church.

*Graeme Christian*



# Powered by Tithe

When Mary bathed Jesus feet with perfume at Lazarus' home in John 12:3, a good number of us read along with interest and wondered why that was such intelligent use of her money and attention.

I've only recently made the connection between the body of Christ referred to in 1st Cor 12:27 and Mary's example, and the way we can engage with our church in 2016.

Paul reminds us that post-ascension, the church became the body of Christ and that we all play our part in influencing our body's vitality, function and capability.

Back to John 12:3. The outcome of Mary's great gesture of generosity was that the perfume from the automatic oils filled the entire house. A man called Judas who was there that night criticised Mary, alleging that she was wasting resources through her act of selflessness. Jesus response to that is on the record.

It's biblical to build and reinvigorate the body of Christ through our generosity. The results of this are plain to see: the appointment of intern ministers rather than none, evangelism projects rising up rather than none and the accelerated achievement of our discipleship goals rather than delays and disappointment.

Paul's counsel again holds true on this... we must never forget it.

*Nic Bolto*



# Welcome to the Conference

2017 will see a new staff member joining our Departmental team at the Conference Office. Simon Gigliotti will be joining us as Assistant Youth Director, replacing Trent Martin who is returning to local church work.

As many of you may be aware, David Butcher will be leaving us, having accepted a call to the South Australian Conference as President. Stepping

into his shoes as Sabbath Schools and Personal Ministries Director is Andrew Jasper, adding these to his current role as Health Director.

Thank you to both David Butcher and Trent Martin, for your work and dedication to your departments. We wish you all the best in your new roles.

*Craig Gillis*

# Beautiful Music at AdventCare

When the auditorium at AdventCare Whitehorse was built in 2011, a new grand piano was purchased. After trade-in of the old and smaller one, a further \$8,000 was needed. Romney King offered to help raise funds, and here he shares the story of "Coronella"'s beautiful music concerts:

AdventCare offered to pay for half of the Bernstein grand, so we planned to raise the remainder by holding concerts in the new auditorium. There were many musicians from around our churches willing to participate: string, piano, woodwind, brass and voice. The first concert was a big success - by the fourth we had paid off the piano. We are now up to the 20th and still enjoying them!

The concerts have raised an additional \$3700 for the facilities, providing a protective cover for the piano, eight outdoor chairs and a satellite dish for delivery of the Discovery Christian Channel to each room.

One of the great joys we have experienced is seeing the growth and development of the young people who have performed over the years.

A venture like this does not happen without help and I would like to acknowledge those who have helped make it happen; the young people and their families who supported them; the other musicians, whether as regular performers or one off; Fred Caldwell, who has consistently provided help with arranging the seating, collecting and counting the donations, and anything else he saw needing doing; the Conference and its help in advertising the concerts...

Thank you. Without such valuable and appreciated support, this could not have happened.

We look forward to many more afternoons of beautiful music in 2017.



# PAVILIONS

## BLACKBURN LAKE Nunawading Estate

*The Victorian Conference is excited to share news about this important major Church project.*

Following last year's VCAT approval for the Nunawading Estate Retirement Village development, the Conference has actively worked to turn the vision into reality. Assembling some of the best project consultants in their fields, the team is working to deliver a project that stays true to the intentions of the 2009 Session Action, remembers the heritage of the campground and affection church members have for it, and will be a development the Victorian Adventist community will be proud of into the future.

The name and logo of the development pays homage to the many meeting tents used during the annual Big Camp in times past. In keeping with the legacy of bringing the community together, the beautiful woodland areas that once served as camp sites will now serve as communal gardens for the village and there have been significant efforts to preserve the history and environmental aspects of the site through an eco-friendly development.

This iconic retirement village will become home to over 200 retirees, housed in seven beautiful glass panelled buildings providing uninterrupted views to the surrounding natural landscape. The village has been designed to support a healthy, holistic lifestyle, encompassing a wellness centre, lap pool and gym.

But more than just infrastructure, this development is an excellent opportunity to promote our Adventist health ethos. Engagement with community is critical for combating depression and loneliness and a range of social activities will be designed for residents to participate in. These include walking clubs, social outings, food, sport and cultural excursions.

The development also brings positives to the Adventist community, including a worship facility located appropriately at the old "Big Tent" site, accommodation and services for our seniors.



Pavilions will be a community for independent, active retirees, with pathways for ageing in place as circumstances change, through the support and care network of AdventCare Whitehorse.

A healthy-living focused café that would not be out of place in Fitzroy or Richmond will front the development on Central Road where locals walking at Blackburn Lake can stop by. The café will also encompass a provedore and bookstore, providing wellness resources on cooking, fitness and spiritual development.

Marketing has been designed to appeal to seniors seeking a preventative, holistic approach to life, balancing physical, mental and spiritual needs. Those who enquire about living at Pavilions will receive a Wellness Guide as part of the information pack, covering walking trails of the area, healthy recipes and strength maintenance.

Apartments at Pavilions will be released for sale to the public in early 2017, however interested Adventist members will be invited to a priority release with reservation. Construction is planned to start in the second half of 2017.

To register your interest, please email [Adventist@pavilionsblackburnlake.com.au](mailto:Adventist@pavilionsblackburnlake.com.au)

Please pray for the smooth delivery of this important project.

*Galen Gan*



# Focus on the One

## VicYouth

*Who are we, why are we here and where are we going?*

Questions of purpose and identity are imprinted in the minds of people from all walks of life, and these questions especially plague young people. The recent Public Campus Ministries (PCM) weekend was targeted towards university students and inspired us to find our identity in Christ, to be bold in our faith, not shying away from displaying radical grace to a world filled with pride, anger and hurt.

The weekend caused me to reflect upon my own journey. I have been at a secular university for five years, but never had the courage or desire to attend the Christian fellowship club, and rarely did I express my faith to those around me. If I had the chance to go back in time and rewrite my university years, I would want to be more open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

God has placed specific people in our lives to show them Christ-like love and to share with them our

testimony. Looking back I have missed opportunities because I allowed fear, shame and rejection take over. The harsh reality is... if we are not representing Christ in our daily lives, can we truly call ourselves Christian?

I hid my identity in Christ because I was fearful of being an outcast. Yet Jesus was "despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Christ displayed radical grace that we may live and He commissions us to live this message wherever He calls us to go. This is a daunting task but a battle worth fighting for.

The FOCUS (Fellowship Of Christian University Students) team is a ministry to encourage university students to connect with each other and be real about their faith. FOCUS invites students to be involved, empowered and equipped in ministry through: community, small groups, media, vespers and on campus ministries.



If any of these ministries interest you and you would like to be involved or if you would like to find out more information and be plugged into upcoming events, please visit our website: <http://focusontheone.com.au>

I completed my last year of university last week and sadly this chapter of my life has come to an end. My university years were filled with missed opportunities and a fear of expressing my true identity in Christ. To those who are still at university, you are able to write a new chapter and be led by the Holy Spirit, to be a vessel and reach an age group that is searching for belonging, identity and purpose.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind [2Timothy 1:7]."

*Janelle Chilton*

# Latin Youth Congress

## VicYouth

*As Spanish Adventist Youth, we are always excited when activities such as the Latin Youth Congress come about because it means that we will be spiritually blessed and we will be able to grow closer in communion with other youth of the same faith. It was great to have come together and engage with other Spanish-speaking youth from around Australia, held here in Melbourne this year.*

Youth Director, Phil Hyland gave it a kick-start around the whole meaning to our theme – Homecoming: Jesus' second coming and what it truly means for us as Seventh-day Adventist Youth. The workshops were run by Gerrard Price, Trent Martin and Luis Bermudez and were tailored in a way that we could explore the importance of having a Christ centred life, and further develop a personal and meaningful relationship with Him. Pr Juan Quiroga's messages were very engaging and filled with the Holy Spirit. His personal testimony definitely touched our hearts and challenged us

to trust in God fully with our lives, as God always has a plan.

Acts 2:42 "All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals, and to prayer."

During the camp we did all of this: we grew closer to God through the Bible, fellowship, sharing in meals and prayer. We grew together and shared our own Christian walk with each other; some showing vulnerability as we shared about things holding us back from God.



Overall we felt blessed to be in such a heart-warming and welcoming environment with amazing youth and wise pastors.

We thank God for the opportunity and the initiative He gave those from the Melbourne Latin Youth Congress Committee, to organise the event. God truly used this congress to speak to our hearts. We are excited to see what the next Latin Youth Congress will bring... Can't wait!

*Gabrielle Rivera (NSW)  
and Caroline Salfate (VIC)*

# ADRA

...in a *Practical Way*

Building Bridges between ADRA, Community and Church

## ADRA Appeal 2106

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who supported the 2016 ADRA Appeal!

As I was collecting in Lilydale, I saw a man waiting to cross the road and, as you do, I called out "G'day!"

Unfortunately, he hadn't seen me coming up behind him, turned around and swore. I apologized for surprising him and we said our goodbyes.

He returned ten minutes later with a \$2 donation, apologised for swearing and we began chatting. During the conversation, I invited him to come to Vive Café as I just felt he might be in need of food and friendship. He was so happy to be invited, said he would come and kept waving while going up the

road. This made my day.

My experience reminds me of all the little things that I see or hear whilst working for ADRA. I praise God every day for His working in my own life so that I can share this joy with others through service. I thank Him for our wonderful volunteers who every week give their heart and soul to relieving someone's pain. ADRA wouldn't exist without God's leading and governance.

Thank you for being part of the journey this year to bring hope to people suffering.

*Rebecca Auriant  
ADRA Director*

## ADRA Project Volunteers tell their stories

### Nancy Piez - Plenty Valley Adventist Church Emergency Relief:

We were able to look after a lass who was fleeing family violence and living with her primary school-aged daughter in her car. We provided food and an extra blanket and when I delivered them, I asked after the daughter. "She is at school," her mum answered. "At least that is one part of her life that is normal."

Sometime this year a home was found for them and we were again able to deliver a food hamper. When Donna arrived with her hamper they were indeed happy, and the little daughter exclaimed "Wow Mum! REAL FRESH BREAD!"

How long is it since YOUR children got excited over a loaf of fresh bread? Family violence is very real and far more prevalent than most of us would like to think. This young mother was a lovely gentle personality - problems can happen to anyone, and we wish we

were able to be more helpful."

### Anna Schlegel - Cardinia Adventist Food Parcels:

Earlier this year we provided food to a lovely Iranian refugee family referred to us by a social worker. They had two teenage sons who were keen to get a laptop to communicate with their family back home and to use at school. They were not entitled to it under government assistance and had no other way of affording it, so my sister put me in touch with Engineers Without Borders, which has a limited capacity to assist refugees with IT needs.

In the meantime, I gave our old laptop to my brother-in-law to recondition.

As our old laptop was ready before the family were moved to the other side of town, I presented it to them. They welcomed it with open arms and gratitude. In turn, I linked the EWB rep with the social worker and in this way, the giving could go on beyond just one family.



Burwood



Carrum Downs Samoan



Casey

Oasis



Cranbourne



Packenham



Ringwood

Warburton

*In Victoria, ADRA volunteers support over 800 people facing hardship every week through women's refuges, settlement programs for refugees and community meals for families and individuals in crisis. Overseas, ADRA creates opportunities and access to resources for thousands of people in Asia, Africa and the South Pacific through education, water and sanitation, micro-finance, food security and disaster relief.*

All praise to God who enables our work to reach people in need.

**Michaela Jones – ADRA Settle Assist:**

A few weeks ago I was speaking with a woman from Uganda who was sharing stories of her childhood. She said that in her village, "It's not only about the family, it's about the community." She was shocked with the realization that in Australia, we seem to live quiet lives - keeping to ourselves and keeping contact with the community to a minimum.

So I suppose, Settle Assist to me, means creating an opportunity to unite as a whole. We are relational creatures with the desire to be around others -Settle Assist is about bringing that sense of community. It is not just about assisting newly settled refugees and migrants, it's about integrating people and giving everyone the opportunity to get to know one another and to learn and grow with a community of people there to support you. Settle Assist does this by ensuring that the programs we run - such as cooking classes and conversational English classes - are focused on interacting with one another, and establishing relationships with the community.

And that's the vision for Settle Assist; for people from all different ethnic groups and walks of life to unite together and learn to live as one. People are awesome, we are all so unique and fearfully and wonderfully made, so why not embrace our uniqueness, and learn from each other?

**Marina Wirenski - ADRA Op Shop:**

2016 is coming to an end and what an exciting year it has been so far here at the Op Shop in Mitcham. With new exterior shop signage and flags attracting traffic along Mitcham Road and Enterprise Way we have seen an increase in new customers visiting our

shop. The flags sway in the breeze, attracting people from all walks of life to our shop. Having introduced myself to many locals and businesses in the area, I have found that 'word of mouth' has seen many visit our shop, complimenting on the new look and its friendly and welcoming atmosphere, the quality and price of stock and our vision of assisting the less fortunate in the community.

One moment which comes to mind is when an elderly lady, in only light clothing and bare legs, peeked into our shop on a cold winter's morning, only to have my son and husband, who volunteer at the shop, clothe her with a warm coat and a beanie... With limited understanding, her only sign of appreciation were tears of joy and hugs with her frail arms. This is what we stand for.

God has blessed this shop immensely and we have been able to support ADRA's Vive Cafe, Settle Assist and women escaping family violence. With many hardworking volunteers who give of their time and work at the shop, I am delighted to see the shop doing extremely well and the positive comments we regularly receive makes my job more worthwhile and rewarding. I am looking forward to many more plans I have for this shop, which, with God's guidance, will let ADRA Op Shop flourish for many years to come.

**Margo Mitchell – Vive and ADRA Op Shop Croydon:**

When I first came to Vive Cafe I worked in Kids' Corner doing various crafts. They loved it and took their things home or hung them up with pride. It was such a delight to see their little faces light up. Then I took on the ADRA Op Shop where each guest could choose three things for free. Many would share their personal hardships and you had the wonderful opportunity to comfort or help in times of personal need. I consider it a blessing and a very fulfilling community service.



Marina (right), Magda and Jason



Michaela Jones



Dona Pascoe (below) & Nancy Piez (right)



Margo Mitchell (right)

# Road to Bethlehem

It's fast approaching!

December 12-15, at Edinburgh College, Lilydale.

October 9 saw an incredible 80 people volunteer their Sunday to move all sets, props and dressings from the Nunawading Campground to Edinburgh College. At least ten truck loads and fifteen car and trailer loads battled gale-force winds to tackle this mammoth task. The fantastic energy and positive spirit amongst the volunteers made the day a blessing for everyone. The RTB Committee would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who gave up their precious time and helped out with such willing attitudes!

Please mark the next big events for RTB in your calendars and plan to attend, even for just an hour or two.

## Set up Days: December 4th and 11th.

Behind the scenes work is so important and this year we need all hands on deck as we bring the Good News to a brand new community.

In the meantime, flyers for RTB will be ready for distribution in November so think about who you would like to invite. And if you would like to get involved in RTB in a particular area please visit [vic.adventist.org.au](http://vic.adventist.org.au) where you can indicate how you want to be involved under Events Registration.

You can also contribute financially through the eGiving website or by using the following details: Acc Name - Road to Bethlehem; BSB - 013- 017; Acc No - 1974-39585.

Please keep this wonderful ministry in your prayers as we lead up to the Christmas season. Do not underestimate the awesome ways in which our God can work. How lucky we are to be a part of His plans.

*Allanah Howard-Bath*



# Church Planting...

...continued



afternoons, Revelation seminars are held, with a church service preceding the seminar on the first Sabbath of every month. Werribee members have been active in supporting and seeding the new church, with flyers distributed to shoppers in the township, through surveying the needs of the locals and letterboxing.



If you were to attend the seminars or come to the monthly church service, you would see through the windowed doors a panorama of humanity making its way to and from the library. You would also notice that our singing attracts the attention of these passers by. Yes, it is true, that some, after a brief interlude, continue on their way.

But others loiter, browsing the literature and flyers on the registration desk, or even venturing in to find out more. One resident said that over the past three weeks he had noticed us and read our banners in the library's foyer. On the fourth week, he had the courage to stay for the seminar. Praise God.

And that's where you will find Werribee church members, along with Pastor Danijela and Pastor Nick, every Sabbath afternoon and Tuesday evening, at Point Cook, planting seeds, spreading the good news, for there **is**

fertile ground at Point Cook.

Kanela Alefaio takes 1 Cor 3:6 to heart. All we do is plant and water – it is God's part to grow and give increase. He saw a need, with a number of Samoan church members who were no longer attending. With prayer and devotion, he invited them to join him to dig deeper into God's Word on Sabbath. Just an hour of worship together, followed by lunch was an opportunity for these people, isolated from their church family for whatever reason, to again be a part of a loving caring group. They meet in a community hall, and from the small beginning of just seven people, the attendance has now grown to over sixty in just less than a year.

The group has spent prayerful hours discussing their existence and purpose. They decided they wanted to be involved on all levels of church mission, evangelism and outreach and are planning a public evangelistic program in the Springvale region.

In late August, this group of believers celebrated becoming the **Endeavour Hills Church Company**. When people choose to stop attending their church, there is often contention behind their reasoning, but Kanela firmly believes that, like we are shown in Acts 15, where contention was so sharp, Paul and Barnabas agreed to disagree and part ways. But God was, and is, able to bring blessing out of the disagreement, enhancing the spread of the Gospel. It is Kanela's prayer that this group of recommitted followers of Christ will glorify God and prepare even more people for Jesus' return.





# Education Testimony of Our Schools

*Our school system is a powerful tool for God to use, reaching out to the students as they 'rub shoulders' on a daily basis, with staff, parents and peers committed to Christ. This edition of IntraVic, we are sharing with you some of the stories of God at work.*

*As you are aware, each year, students from our schools gather for a combined day of worship. Three Mernda students shared testimonies at this event.*

'I moved to Mernda last year... I used to go to a public school and they weren't against religions; they just never taught them. Since coming to Gilson College, I have learnt so much about Jesus and how He sacrificed Himself so that our sins would be removed from our lives. All He asks from us is that we ask for forgiveness in the word of prayer. So I hope that everyone here can have Jesus in their life.' - Amy Yr 6

'The verse John 3.16 really helps me in my daily life - "For God so loved the world that he sent His one and only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." This text makes me feel like I have a purpose, and that somebody died for me so that my sins could be washed away.' - Hannah Yr 7

'I had grown up in a non-Christian home. I did not really know about God and did not care either. Then I came to Gilson College. I learnt about Jesus and what He did for other people and what He could do for me. I was in a bad place - being scared of bad things like hostage taking and planes being lost, and probably not doing the things I should be doing. Then I learnt about choosing the right path and how Jesus can help you, and that was a turning point.' - Regan Yr 7

*Two students from Nunawading also shared their testimonies.*

'As long as I can remember, I have gone to church, have sung Christian songs and read Bible stories. I can't remember a time when I didn't know about Jesus. I thought everyone was the same and that it was just totally normal to go to church and pray. I didn't know any different. Now I have seen that not all people go to

church. Not all are Christians. And I understand that I don't have to be a Christian either. I have a choice.

I have thought about what it must be like for people who don't have faith in Jesus and I feel scared thinking about it... I would be frightened all the time.

Without Jesus, I don't know how people cope with death and losing someone they love. I don't know how they cope with sadness or when things go wrong. Jesus gives me hope and keeps me positive... I want everyone to have the hope and happiness that living with Jesus gives.' - Lucy Yr 6

'A few years back, my Nana died of cancer and I knew that sin had to do its thing, and everyone won't live forever in this world. But I had doubts about why God would let her go.

I understand now that this naturally happens and Satan put evil, disease and death in the world... there are bad times but we have to move on with life. There is no point going nowhere - it will ruin your relationship with God. I think the hardest thing about being a Christian is that we know that the world is going to get worse because of sin, but the question is, can you see past the temptation and sin to a better future in Heaven with a God who loves us?

For me, that wait is worthwhile and full of promise.' - Stewart Yr 6

*Here is a moving story from an Edinburgh College high school student.*

As a child, I had a very basic understanding of God and my mother, who had been raised Adventist,

although never losing her belief in God, no longer attended church. When it was time to choose a high school, the family looked at Lilydale Academy (now Edinburgh College) as an option. I liked the look and atmosphere, and also the fact that my mother and grandfather had gone there. But I had no idea how much attending the college would change my life.

I started going to the chapel programs at school and attending Bible classes and I began to learn about this magnificent God who loved each and every one of us. The sermons at school were what changed my life. They introduced me to a life with God and the eternal love He has for us. Every day, I could see God working in my life and I had so many questions answered. Everything made sense and I found God.

I started sharing what I was learning at school with my mother, rekindling her desire to know more, and we began attending church together. I continued studying the Bible with the school chaplain, and then with friends from church, learning to apply the teachings of God to my life.

My journey with God has been wonderful with many blessings as well as trials. With God by my side, I was able to face those times. He has abundantly blessed me and I am so thankful that I have God in my life now, and I hope that more people will find Him too.

- Grace Yr10

*Use the QR code for more stories from NCC Secondary Campus.*



"God has all the authority, and He says 'I'm giving all the authority that I have in Heaven, I'm giving it to My children.'  
But the devil don't want you to believe that.

**YOU ARE**  
*more powerful*  
**THAN YOU KNOW.**

There is nothing that can stop you.  
All you gotta do is say 'Yes, Lord.'"  
—Jeremy Anderson, Converge 2016

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