

Go into all the world and preach the
Good News to everyone. NLT
Mark 16:15

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Lets Go!



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

Victoria



a publication of
Victorian Adventist
COMMUNICATIONS

#HarvestVictoria
#VictorianAdventists

From the President

You're Invited

"Who are you?" The question formed in his mind as he saw a young lady he didn't know.

He thought he knew everyone who would attend the gathering; they were there by personal invitation. The email had been sent to a select group – but still he didn't know who she was!

At an appropriate moment, he figured he'd get to know her.

The busy-ness of facilitating the reunion of those who had attended the Joining Christ in the Harvest training in February this year made that impossible – at least for a while.

So, when he had the opportunity, Pr Andrew introduced himself and was astonished, with the young lady's response.

By then she understood what the program was – a training event for those involved in outreach and she'd listened to reports of what people had been doing since February.

As she identified herself to Pr Andrew she said, "I'm one of the one you're looking for."

She explained that she'd been looking for an Adventist church because she was interested in being a vegan – she was enjoying the training event and was supportive... and so the story went.

How did she get the email inviting



her to the event? Did God bring her along?

You've probably heard by now – we have a five year plan to reach Victorians for Christ. A thriving disciple-making movement across Victoria – that's our vision. Sharing the Gospel in the context of the Three Angel's messages of Revelation 14 – that's our mission. Connecting and engaging with community people – that's our strategy. Training people to share their faith – that's a big part of our strategy. Inviting friends, neighbours and work colleagues to the Revelation Today meetings in May 2019 – that's our strategy. Planting new churches – that's our strategy.

Adventists all agree with Jesus when

He said, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world..." Jesus said we should go into all the world, make disciples, teach them, baptise them – and remember Jesus is with us right through until the end of the world.

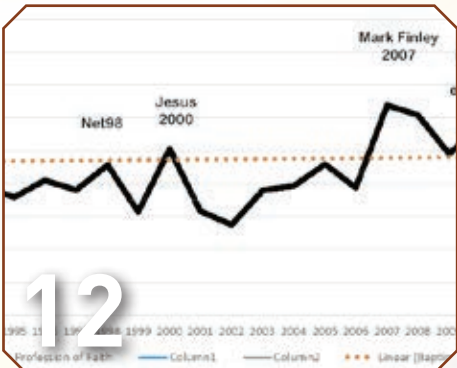
So, as a Church, our job description is clear. But will our method work? Only with much prayer. Only as people intentionally connect with people and give them opportunities to know Jesus. Our history tells us that the most effective growth years have been when there's been public proclamation of God's word. The Victorian Conference statistics tell the story.

So let me give you a personal invitation to be involved – to pray, to attend the training in January, and to help others to be ready for Jesus return.

Graeme Hunter

Harvest Victoria OCTOBER 2018

In this issue...



06 Sharing a story...

Harvest Victoria is a five year journey of discipleship. Instead of telling you what discipleship is, we share a personal story – one of discipleship in action. And at the end of the five years, we pray that discipleship will have become your way of life. This is just the beginning...

09 Preparation...

Joining Christ in the Harvest training... This crucially important Australia day long weekend training will be dealing with all aspects of the evangelism cycle, from preparing sowing and cultivating to harvesting. The training will, however, be more than just theoretical knowledge as it will provide opportunities for hands on training in diverse aspects of evangelism. For those who attended last February, with the *It is Written* team, you know that the coming January training will be very inspiring... We will be covering even more material, with an additional three presenters joining the team.

12 So much more than numbers...

Evangelistic campaigns are effective. There is no doubt. And while they do bring more people into our churches, they are about so much more than that. This side of Christ's second coming, we won't realise their full impact. Response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit takes longer for some than others, and don't forget the impact on our church members themselves, as they put their faith into action during the campaign...

15 Now what about you?

As you read this edition, prayerfully consider how you personally, can be involved in this journey. Pg 15 lists a few areas of involvement both personally and as a church, but the list is incomplete... We are all different and what resonates with some will be awkward for others... but all together we make up the body of Christ. Let Harvest Victoria become absorbed into your very DNA.

“ We pray that, from reading this special edition, you will take home three key points...

- You can engage with your community in bridge building initiatives
- You can be proactive in your witnessing by undergoing training – prayerfully consider attending the January training
- You can involve yourself in every stage of evangelism through prayer – prayer for your church's efforts, prayer for the major program in May and prayer for God to put people in your way whom you can love into a relationship with Him...

The Harvest Victoria Team

If you would like to contact one of the Harvest Victoria Team, see some of the resources available or find out more, go to vic.adventist.org.au and click on Harvest Victoria

A Five Year Journey... to Start With

Harvest Victoria – it is here and now... And it is not an event it is a lifestyle!

It starts with each one of us, and the people we know. It spreads into our local churches. It grows to become a Conference run evangelism program. And then expands further in the local churches as members continue reaching out to their new friends and growing spiritually, themselves...

It cycles on and on, until the good news of the Gospel has gone to the ends of the earth and the Lord of the Harvest returns in His glory.

Why the 'Harvest'?

The concept of the harvest is a metaphor often used by Jesus in teaching His disciples. Jesus told many parables using it: the parable of the Sower (Matt 13; Mark 4:1-9); of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:29); and the Wheat and the Weeds in Matthew 13. In John 4:35-38, while instructing His disciples Jesus again used the harvest metaphor.

Within Adventist history, Ellen White uses an agricultural metaphor to describe the work of the Holy Spirit. She says, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain... He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain. In the East, the former rain falls at the sowing-time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain, and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit."¹

Harvest Victoria borrows its title from Jesus' own words because, at its core, Harvest Victoria is a disciple-making process designed to multiply disciples across Victoria. It uses the fivefold discipleship process used by Jesus. As Jesus worked with his disciples, we can identify five distinct phases: Prepare (Come and See – John 1:43-49, John 4:29), Sow (Come and Follow me Matt 4:18-22, Matt 9:9), Cultivate (Be with me – Mark 3:14), Harvest (Remain in me – Acts 1:8, John 20:22), Multiply the Harvest (Go and make disciples – Matt 28:18-20).²

The Five Year Strategy

The beginning of 2018 saw the commencement of a five year strategy designed to revolutionise the way we grow churches, through revitalisation and church planting. Built and developed on a number of conceptual models using Christ's harvest metaphor, the initiative commenced with an emphasis on encouraging members to come to Christ and refresh their relationship with Him, so they could then go with Him, out into the 'harvest field' of their friends, family and community.

Personal work was (and is) a key focus and a training program was offered at the beginning of this year, empowering trainees with the knowledge that they were to scatter the seeds for the Holy Spirit to nurture and grow. Concepts were discussed helping give them the confidence needed to openly share their faith and they were encouraged to do so, simply, with the people they associate with daily. Look for God-directed windows of opportunity. As well, they were taught skills to be more intentional in searching for seekers.

Recognising that we now live in a technology-saturated world and people are using technology for a wide variety of reasons (news, sports and entertainment, the team explored and is currently engaging people in this environment through social media and an App will be tailored to our needs and aspirations in the lead up to May 2019. Every day our Facebook pages (Harvest Victoria and Victorian Adventists) share a one-minute devotional from John Bradshaw, along with other interesting church news and inspirational posts, and you are invited to share these with your friends.

Our City Regionals inspired members to be involved. We also took this opportunity to explore the livestream option as a way of furthering our reach and enabling our more remote



churches to be a part of city events. Some of these churches are also exploring other possibilities, such as presenting the same material as will be presented at the major campaign, locally by their own pastors.

2019 will begin with another training event for church members at the end of January and we strongly encourage you to attend, or support other members in your church so they can.

Again using the harvest metaphor, the 'reaping' campaign will take place in May 2019.

As already mentioned, the Harvest Victoria plan is bigger than the training programs and the meetings in May. Hensley Gungadoo was privileged enough in April this year to attend a *Revelation Today* campaign

the journey," he says," the young man would still be part of a Samoan gang (or worse)."

The outcome of such campaigns is not determined by the number of baptisms, but by contacts the campaign generates. Interests which are followed up, befriended and genuinely cared for by the local churches that were a part of the journey, long after the *It Is Written* team has moved on.

And so Harvest Victoria does not solely focused on the reaping campaign in 2019.

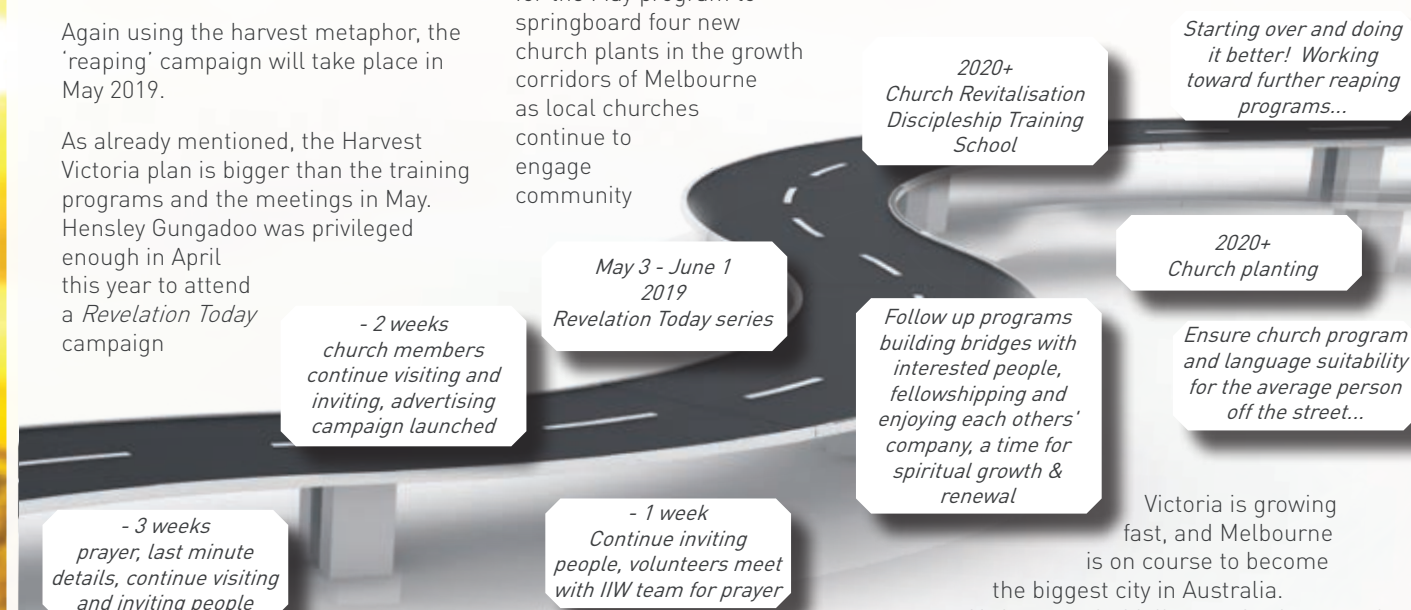
By the end of 2019 we are praying for the May program to springboard four new church plants in the growth corridors of Melbourne as local churches continue to engage community

The fourth and fifth years will see 20 more churches coached through revitalisation and twelve new plants, with continued training of a further 1500 members through the Discipleship School.

A Journey of a Lifetime

Harvest Victoria is about much more than a five year strategy... it will go on and on... We want to see discipleship, soul winning and church planting become a part of our Church's very DNA. We want sharing Christ to be as natural as breathing is for our church members.

Never before have the words of Jesus Christ, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few" been so true.



in Kansas City. He noticed the *It Is Written* team did a tremendous job engaging the attendees and linking them to local churches throughout the campaign. And he loved hearing the stories shared as people were baptised. The story of one young Samoan boy touched him deeply. The boy was part of a Samoan gang. When the *It Is Written* team started the journey in Kansas City the Samoan churches took an active part. Church members reached out to the boy and one night he was baptised with his mother. Hensley still remember the tears running down her cheeks. "Had the churches not engaged in

contacts with follow up programs that meet their needs and build bridges between the two communities.

Harvest Victoria is also more personal than just a reaping campaign. We acknowledge the vital role small groups and authentic friendships play in leading people to Christ.

In the third of the five years of the strategy, we will see five established churches revitalised in the way they do mission, and offer further training for at least 350 members through a newly developed Discipleship Training School. We are praying and planning for six new church plants that year.

Victoria is growing fast, and Melbourne is on course to become the biggest city in Australia. Unfortunately, Melbourne is also one of the least religious cities in the world. Our task in sharing the Three Angels' Message is great but the Lord of the Harvest is greater, and He reminds us that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given" to Him.³

With this promise in mind, we invite you to come along on the journey.

The Harvest Victoria Team

Endnotes:

¹ Testimonies to Ministers 506-509

² The five phases of discipleship were shared by Glenn Townend in IntraVic during 2016 and can be found in the blog at vic.adventist.org.au

³ Matt 28:18

A Disciple's Story

At it's core, Harvest Victoria is a discipleship journey for everyone whose hearts have been touched by Christ. It is only as we come to Christ, that we can then go with Him, fulfilling the commission to be His disciples. We talk about discipleship and the cycle one goes through; there are many models illustrating the different stages. Each of us cycle through these stages at different rates, sometimes lingering in one, sometimes another - it is a part of our own personal spiritual journey as we grow in Christ...



So what actually is a disciple, you may ask? How do you live as one? It is all through God's grace. Let us share how, with a story...

Prepare: Be Authentic – Befriend those around you, show Jesus love through your genuine care of others and service to their needs – God will reach others through your authenticity...

I wasn't born into a Christian home. My home was a broken one, and I had a difficult and troubled childhood. By the time I was fifteen I was desperate. I constantly yearned for hope and peace, often wondering what was the point of living, with such anxiety about what came next. I first found God in my late adolescent years when I became a Pentecostal Christian, and whilst I believed in Him, I experienced an eight-year struggle of surrender to be brought to a place where, back in 2015 I was whole-heartedly seeking God's truth.

Daryl and I work together as doctors at Monash Children's Hospital. During that time, I noticed things about his character that stood out. Within the workplace there are often intense or stressful moments - it was nice to

see someone who was happy, easily approachable and willing to help others. It is so easy to be selfish – to simply do your job and leave it at that. But he'd go above and beyond to help others, for no gain of his own. And his commitment and dedication to God and his church were impressive.

There was something about Daryl that was different, there was a tangible practicality to his faith that made me curious.

Sow: Be Intentional – don't be afraid to state what you believe – know how you will answer questions and pray for opportunities to speak your faith – to let those seeds fall...

We were studying intensely for our specialty exams. For over a year you literally give up your life as you prepare. To help us, the hospital ran Saturday morning exam preparation sessions. These were immensely

valuable and you went out of your way to be there.

Daryl, however, didn't attend. I'd been surprised. Diligent and hard-working, it'd seemed out of character. I challenged him on it and he told me he had church on Saturdays. That because of that, he wouldn't attend. I subsequently watched him stand firm on his conviction as the weeks went by and not once did he come.

The reality of his faith challenged me, so I asked him what the difference was between Adventists and other Christians. He shared with me about Sabbath. That night I went home, and instead of doing my exam study, I spent six hours studying my Bible. I had to know the truth.

Cultivate: Go for It – nurture a desire to know and experience Jesus – both for yourself and through your conversations and interactions with others – be willing

to tell your story and to offer further study if the opportunity arises. Draw those interested into your community.

As part of the exam, we did short cases where we'd analyse, diagnose and manage cases. Daryl and I frequently did practice cases together and often, after we'd finished and for as long as he would let me, I would ask him questions. One day, after I had spent almost three hours interrogating him, he turned and asked whether I wanted to do Bible studies.

I had googled Adventists and come across Ellen White. I was a unsure, but the desire to understand was too great, and I agreed to it, so long as I was free to ask my challenging questions.

So I started studies with two of the girls at Daryl's church. At first, I was guarded. In my mind, the biggest objection I had about Adventists was that they seemed legalistic – that everything was about a set of rules. But as we studied together, it stood out to me how much these girls really knew God. The way they talked about His character and grace as we studied different stories from the Bible was real – you could see that they'd experienced actual relationship with Him.

They invited me to their Care Group and again I was wary, but I went, and was so taken aback by how caring and friendly they were, so easily approachable. I simply fitted right in. The study that first night, was about the Prodigal Son and was exactly what God had been speaking to me about in my personal devotions. I could see the hand of God, and I knew what I had to do.

Harvest: Each of us reaches a point where we must choose... to begin our journey, or to continue it... to take a stand.

As my questions were answered one by one, I knew God was leading me and I could see His presence in this church.

The last questions holding me back, about Ellen White, were resolved when God, in His providence, bought Pastor Torres to visit and we were able to study this topic together, providing answers to the remaining questions that were bothering me.

For the first time I was in a position where there was nothing I disagreed with and I identified with Adventist beliefs. I chose to be baptised and become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The experience was a blessed one.

Nothing changed that day, but it was an outward expression of what God had done inside me. And it was really nice to be able to express that and testify to my friends and family.

I was excited to call myself an Adventist... but this was just the beginning.

Connect: Don't do it alone – Being a part of a community of fellow believers is essential for the full faith 'experience' as it empowers growth and provides opportunities for worship, serving and sharing. It is essential for both those new to faith and for those who have journeyed a while...

Now those in my Care Group are not simply my friends... they are my church family. It is a safe place for us to come together and share the struggles and burdens of our individual journeys. We do life together as we study the word of God and challenge each other.

When you study with others the Holy Spirit reveals different things to different people. It is such a blessing in terms of your own personal Bible study, but also a blessing in terms of the church family and the sense of community and belonging it provides.

Coming into the Church has also offered me such a sense of belonging to something global – a worldwide community... a global family! I know that I could go almost anywhere and

would be able to find fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. That if in need, there'd be someone who'd be there for me, and vice versa.

My spiritual family was a blessing. But there was so much more to experience in my walk with God.

Grow: Don't choose less – Know that as long as there is life, there is growth. Discover God through prayer and Bible study. That is how we abide in Him and help others do so too.

Having a spiritual guardian has been a new and amazing concept for me. I love that it is based on a genuine and authentic friendship. If I have a struggle I can go to her, if she has one, I know she can talk to me too. We help each other, and together we grow.

My devotionals are the most important part of my day. I know that there is such a difference in the way I interact with others, and how I carry myself, if I do not, as the very first thing each morning, seek God. I pray and dedicate the day to God. From there I read my Bible and journal the points I am wrestling through. Then I go back to prayer again. I see my career as more than just a job, it is my mission field and so I pray for divine appointments every day in my work place.

I think that's been a big part of my spiritual growth. When I was first convicted to pray for my patients I remember protesting "God I can't do that! I work in a secular environment..." But I got convicted that if I don't offer prayer for my patients, then I had already made the decision for them. When I first asked the mother of a patient if I could pray for them, she was so grateful, she hugged me and cried... and then came that still small voice "See, now it wasn't that bad!" I was deeply convicted by how my unbelief had held me back. I have found that I grow more when I pray for others, than I do when I am simply

living a 'comfortable' Christian life.

God has done so much for me in my life... How can I ever show my gratitude?



Worship: Give it your all – learn to relate to God in spirit and in truth, authentically, in your home, in your church and in your community – every day – no, every hour and minute of your life.

I worship God because I love Him, because He first loved me.

Worship is throwing myself at the foot of the cross and showing Him my gratitude for what He has done for me. I wouldn't be where I am if it were not for Him. He saved my life both figuratively and literally – both here and for eternity. And He has never given up on me.

For me the most powerful time of worship is united prayer – I feel so blessed doing this because I know God wills it – He promised where two or three are gathered in His name, He would be there too. Worship also involves singing praises to Him.

I believe, though, that I worship God by the way I live my life. The way I conduct myself. To truly being His hands and feet.

I have received so much from Him. How can I share it with others?



Serve: Don't just sit there – Loving and

practical service to each other within our church communities, but also to everyone we come in contact with, shares our Lord, in many and often small ways, with large impact.

As a small group we regularly give back to the broader community through service projects. And by serving on

Sabbath, helping with the smaller and simple things that just have to be done. Every hand is important – it all helps build God's community, the body of Christ.

Within our Care Group environment, we share meals, opening our homes to each other, share and carry each other's burdens – if I am having a busy week, then others will lift up to help out, and likewise when others are in need I will meet them where they're at. We are always on the lookout for ways to help each other in small things, even if it is just a mid week catch up to share life.

God has given me so much that I want others to experience this same hope that I find in Him.

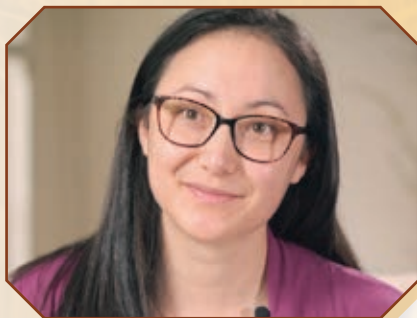
Share: It is integral – how can you hang onto something this good, without wanting to share it around?



The thing in my life that stands out the most is the change in my mind set. Before, I lived constantly worried about me. However, my life now is no longer about me. I've come to realise that everything in this life is temporal, there is nothing that I can bring to eternity other than people! And so, my life mission is to bring as many people with me as I can.

How can I spread the gospel? In my words, my actions, in the very life that I live – and I pray that those who come in contact with me will become... curious.

My name is Tash... and I am a disciple of Jesus.



Training... Why?

If discipleship is all about living our faith out loud, authentic relationships and discriminate scattering of seed (to continue with the harvest analogy), why have training? Is that not counterproductive, being the opposite of authenticity? Does it not imply a 'hidden' agenda?

By no means. Being a disciple of Christ does not necessarily equate with going to the world with no idea of what you are doing! Sometimes preparation is necessary; didn't Jesus spend time preparing His first disciples?

Intentionality does not remove authenticity. Take your personal testimony for example. Your story of your personal experience of God in your life is one of your most powerful tools. No one can sit there and argue with you that no, that is not how you experienced... or felt... or understood... No one but you can know what you have experienced.

So have you ever sat down and actually thought about what it looks like, your personal testimony, or are you planning to just spontaneously wing it, if anyone asks you what God means to you?

Harvest Victoria training is about discipleship. Living as Jesus taught. Talking and walking in His footsteps. And getting together with like-minded people, sharing stories of different experiences and what you have tried and what really resonated with your friends... it is encouraging and inspiring and you come home with just a few more ideas. Once the disciples were all on Christ's page, don't you think they got together from time to time to do just that?

Training enables you to be more confident in wearing Christ on your sleeve and talking about your own personal experience, with out fear of being stumped if someone should ask a question!

Joining Christ in the Harvest Training - January 25-28, 2019

Vic.Adventist.org.au to register

Enough with the theories. It's time for the practical and hands-on. That's exactly what you'll get at the January Harvest Victoria training. Relying on years of evangelism work, the training team will provide you with tried and proven ways to turn your church upside down for the Lord, increase church attendance, and revitalise your present membership. With the Holy Spirit directing the whole weekend, every participant will personally experience the joy of connecting with people seeking and searching for something better in life.

Eric Flickinger,

associate speaker for *It Is Written* has a passion for teaching the Bible. His unique ability to unlock complex Bible topics in a fun and dynamic way has made him a highly sought-after speaker at churches and conferences around the world.



Eric will be presenting three topics.

- **Setting up a Bible school & finding Bible study interests** – Jesus said the harvest is plentiful, but WHERE ARE THEY? Discover how to sort through the masses to find people who are searching for Jesus and learn effective ways to lead them, step by step, through a series of Bible studies that will leave them asking you for more.
- **Gaining decisions** – Giving a Bible study? That's the easy part. Helping people to actually make positive decisions about what they've learnt? That takes some practice. Discover how the human mind makes decisions and learn the best (and worst) times to ask someone to choose to follow Jesus.
- **The harvest** – Nobody plants a garden intending for the produce to go to waste. And if that's how we treat our earthly gardens, what about God's heavenly harvest? Discover the immense importance of the reaping series and see how it fits in with all the other elements of a healthy cycle of evangelism.

Yves Monnier has

been the director of evangelism for *It Is Written* since 2011. As such, he oversees and coordinates all of *It Is Written's* evangelistic projects around the globe. In addition, Yves is passionate about training people in becoming effective



labourers in the Lord's vineyard.

Yves will also be presenting on three topics:

- **Evangelism Teams** – The work of evangelism is not meant to be done alone. Jesus worked with a team: His disciples. He instructed them to go two-by-two. And in the book of Acts Paul travelled with companions. There's something to be said about working side by side with others, and there's no reason to approach evangelism today any differently.
 - **How to give a Gospel presentation** (note: NOT Bible presentation) When connecting with people, it's important to have the right tools. One of those tools is the Gospel Presentation – the ability to lead a person to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. This dialogue can be a powerful turning point in a person's life.
- Preparing for the Harvest, part 1**– Once the field has been cultivated, it's time for the harvest. Learn how to have a successful and bountiful harvest.

Hensley Gungadoo

has served the Lord as a pastor, both in Mauritius and Australia. He is committed to studying the New Testament and to evangelism and has been involved in a number of campaigns including Voice of Prophecy (Zambia) and with the Mark Finley (Melbourne). Hensley is part of the Harvest Victoria Team, serving as Project Manager.



He will be giving three presentations.

- **Dealing with objections** – One of the scariest thing about giving Bible Studies is dealing with objections. This seminar is tailored at how to best deal with different kinds of objections.
- **My personal testimony** – The

single most important tool in leading someone to Christ is our own testimony – it is not anything anyone can argue with! Using Bible tools, we explore how to we can give our own personal testimony.

• **Preparing for the Harvest, part 2**

Jack Phillips has

served God from coast to coast in the United States. He has been coordinating the Bible work with *It Is Written* for three years. He has been described as a very passionate speaker who always keeps the attention of those listening. He brings a unique perspective to his presentations, drawing from his own experience of coming to Jesus and working with many others through the years.



"Finding those interested in Bible Studies is only part of the fun. How do we transition to opening up the Bible with our new friend? We are going to look at some tools to help us experience success. Having come into the Seventh Day Adventist church, I know that it can be difficult at times for those who are new. What can we do to help our friends become part of our Church family? Through my experience we will see a clear path to be the most effective."

Andrew Jasper is

the Conference's multi departmental director. He works with Sabbath Schools, Personal Ministries, Health, Stewardship and is the Harvest Victoria Coordinator. A dynamic presenter, he has an obvious care for our church work and mission.



Andrew is presenting two topics:

- **Evangelism Cycle – The Discipleship Journey**. Are you running in circles trying to share Christ with others? Learn Christ's own fail proof method that will doubtless bring sound returns to your faithful labour.
- **Bridge-building events/making friends for Jesus** – Bridging Them to Him. Discover how genuine care meets evangelistic focus. Bridging events pave a way for people to discover eternal life.

Personal Stories

There has already been one training intensive held earlier this year. Here are the stories from some of the people who were involved. The first story is particularly poignant... not all experiences end with a positive outcome that we can see. And that is perhaps where it takes more faith to continue, knowing that this side of Heaven, we wont see the full picture, the full result of our heart felt efforts...

Peter Hodgkin

Lilydale Church had a good contingent of attendees at the Harvest Training held in February. Since then, the group has met regularly to discuss and prayerfully consider how best to reach their local community, utilising what they learnt at the training. After examining their options, they decided to initiate contact by conducting a survey and if there is a hint of interest, promote Gary Kent's 'Incredible Journey'. Team member Peter Hodgkin, shares one of his experiences...

I introduced myself to Sandra, explaining who I was and asking her if she would be willing to take a survey.

"How long will it take?" she asked. Reassured that it was just a few minutes, she agreed and as I read each of the survey questions, Sandra discussed topics close to her heart, sharing her concerns about the state of the world. A few minutes became 45, during which time she proudly showed me her grandmother's well-worn and tattered Bible. Carefully turning the first few pages I discovered it was published by the Signs Publishing Company, New York and San Francisco.

"The church I belong to has a Signs Publishing Company in Warburton," I told her. With that Sandra shared that her other grandmother had been an Adventist and the family had grown up in Warburton.

Later in the conversation, Sandra said, "I don't believe in coincidence - you were meant to call on me today!"

Humbled by that thought, I invited her to join us for church the following Saturday. My wife and I visited her again. She invited us in and proudly displayed the old Bible while recounting her search for a local church to fellowship in, having tried a number of denominations over the years.

Sandra did come to church and

seemed to enjoy it. But the following week, I received an unexpected call from her. Among the things she said to me was a resounding "I won't be coming back to church, I thought it was, but it is NOT for me." No other explanation.

A disappointing set back? Definitely. But I remind myself that this is God's work and He is in control. It is up to the Holy Spirit to convict Sandra, NOT me. This story has not ended, it never will this side of heaven, but knowing Sandra and the Holy Spirit I believe there are more surprises install for me.

Yes I am disappointed - but I am NOT discouraged. I was back out calling on doors the next Sabbath. In my car, I have four Bible verses taped to the dashboard. One is Galatians 6:9, 'Let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.'

If you are slightly interested in sharing the good news of salvation with others I would encourage you to read the book by John Ortberg, *If You want To Walk On Water You've Got To Get Out Of The Boat*. It might inspire you but if nothing else it will challenge you.

I would like to finish by quoting the first part of Ecc 9:10 NIV 'Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...'

May you prayerfully seek and find God's place for you in His Harvest.



Leah Smith

Leah learnt how to have a spiritual and personal walk with God and how to better reach others for Jesus.

"I really enjoyed the practical work we did. The training helped me better explain Jesus and what He can do for us in a concise way,

"Training will give you courage - every day lay people in every walk of life can share Jesus just as trained pastors do!"



Donna Pascoe

"First thing I learnt is it is all about relationships. If I don't tell my friends, who will? It is not about me. It's God's challenge. He will convert... I just sow the seeds."

Since the training, Donna spends more time with her gym and work friends, going out for lunch and getting to know them, building their relationships and looking for a hint of God in the conversations...

Like the time trains were down and she got a 90 minute lift home with a colleague. They had the most awesome chat - involving laughter and tears.

"God so clearly takes bad situations, puts Himself in the picture and makes them good."



Coral Camps

The training in February helped Coral realise how important it was to make friends with people everywhere, giving the Holy Spirit more opportunity to use us.

She found the training was an answer to her prayers. She came to the training as a life long Adventist, knowing she needed to make better contact with others to be able to witness for God, and was praying God would teach her how to do this...

"If you have a desire to connect with others, you need to come to training - It helped me better explain Jesus to others in a concise way - explain what He can do for each person.

"Training will give you courage - every day lay people can share Jesus just as well, what ever your walk in life. And training helps you to be a part of ... well... Harvest Victoria I guess!"



Irene Chee

The main take home message for Irene, after attending the training in February, was the need for workers - as Jesus said, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. She realised that there is no difference between ages and gender. Anyone can get involved.

"I took what I learnt and presented it to my church. Half of our members have taken it onboard! They are delivering Bible tracts, and are happy and excited to be doing it.

"We have prayer walks and are doing letter boxing. We hosted a community breakfast.

"Right now, we have four students who have accepted Bible studies, and three of them have come to church.

"I encourage everyone able to come to the January training next year, to take Christ to their communities."



Kate Swift

For Kate, the biggest message was the need for relationship with people.

She took the information she learnt back to her church personal ministries team which then presented it to their church, using a brochure outlining what activities the church is involved in. They plan to use this brochure - showing it to people within the community saying 'Are you interested in anything we are doing? You are more than welcome!'

Kate's church is small, but they are trying to put into practice the things she learnt.

She recommends the February 2019 training to all church members.



Join Christ in the harvest and sign up for the January training session...

Training Program Schedule

(Subject to change)

Five groups will rotate through different presentations throughout the sessions

Friday January 25

8.30 Keynote message and Prayer time

10.10 and 11.20 Rotation Groups

12.30 Lunch

1.30, 2.40 & 3.50 Rotation Groups

5.00 Small Group meeting

Saturday January 26

9.30 Sabbath Message and Prayer time

11.15 Rotation Groups

12.30 Lunch

1.30 Practical Experience

4.30 Testimonials

5.00 Small Group meeting

Sunday January 27

8.30 Devotional and Prayer time

9.00, 10.10 & 11.20 Rotation Groups

12.30 Lunch

1.30 Practical Experience

4.30 Testimonials

5.00 Small Group meeting

Monday January 28

8.30 Devotional and Prayer time

10.10 and 11.20 Rotational Groups

12.30 Lunch

1.30 and 2.40 Rotational Groups

3.50 Wrap up



Reaping Events - part of the journey...

Remember that old hymn... "Bringing in the sheaves, Bringing in the sheaves...." If we persist with the harvest analogy, every crop has a time for bringing in those sheaves - a time of reaping.

Reaping comes in all shapes and sizes: it happens on a small scale, each time one of our children ask to be baptised, new church friends commit or when your small group friend wants to join church. It happens on a larger scale too - when local churches reach out, building relationship by offering something their community needs. Sometimes this makes people curious. And those searching respond to invitations to reaping events - maybe a small series of presentations by a

local evangelist. Or maybe a larger city wide event.

We are all part of the body of Christ, and each of us responds to Him, and serves Him in different ways. Thus reaping events, where people are called to make a decision for Christ, are important parts of the discipleship journey for some - whether it be as their service for Christ, or in response to His call.

As part of our five year plan for

discipleship and evangelism, we have a major reaping event taking place. It will be City wide, taking place in three locations and streamed to more. More remote churches will also be taking part simultaneously.

This is an opportunity for church members to work together, to plan and implement, to analyse church life and see what is lacking, what its strengths are, how members can improve their church health.

To work together to reach the community, to volunteer, to pray, to contribute financially. There are a multitude of ways you can become involved in working for God's Kingdom. Just ask your pastor how...



track our church growth over the years. Evangelistic events are associated with larger peaks. But we are determined that Harvest Victoria will not become a statistic that causes simply another peak. We want it to become a way of life for our church members.

A way of living that sees a ready supply of harvesters and a steady growth of our church... a steady growth of a people scattering seeds for the Holy Spirit to nurture... a steady growth of people on fire for the Lord, building His kingdom.

We want to see Harvest Victoria imprinted in our DNA...

Evangelistic Campaigns... How effective are they?

A lot of effort and resource goes into the organising of a city wide evangelistic effort. We thought we would have a look at how effective they have been...

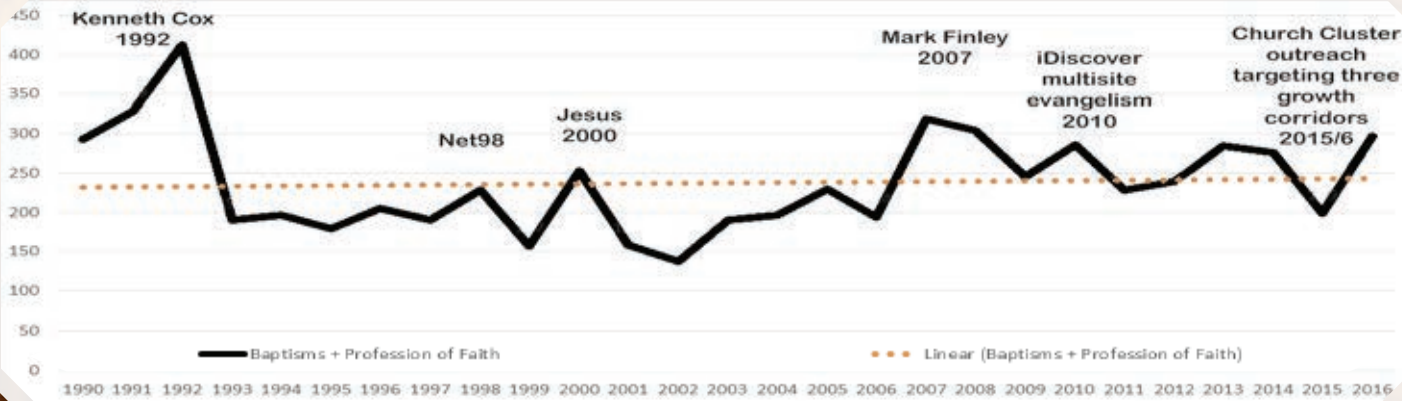
Over the years, we have hosted a number of city-wide evangelistic events here in Melbourne. Pre 1990's peaks in baptism numbers often corresponded to evangelistic efforts. City wide missions in the late 1960's and early 1970's resulted in kingdom growth, but one in the early 1980's saw no such discernible result. The reason for this is unclear - it could have been a reflection of the tumultuous time the church was going through or a deficiency in the approach.

Kenneth Cox came to Melbourne in the early 1990's. The Conference appointed a coordinator more than twelve months in advance, and with such a generously allocated lead up, there was well thought out and thorough preparation. Perhaps as a

result of this, there was marked and widespread support from churches across the city. **It is interesting to note that the number of baptisms in the year prior to the program, during the lead up, was as significant as the year of the program, strongly suggestive that the commitment and involvement of local churches during this time had an impact. Could it be that they were on fire for the Lord, and it showed?**

The most recent city-wide evangelistic program was conducted in 2007 with Mark Finley. While Kenneth Cox's programs were held centrally in Melbourne City, the Finley series was hosted in three venues. Again we saw a sustainable growth in accessions.

There are peaks and troughs when you



Personal Stories

What better way to show the importance of an evangelistic campaign, than to share the personal testimonies of people directly affected by one?

Sylvia Mendez: When we look back over our Christian journey, we can often identify defining moments. One for me was during Mark Finley's visit to Melbourne. I had started attending church mid 2006 when invited by a friend. Bit by bit I became absorbed into the various aspects of church life, ultimately asking for Bible studies.

My friend invited me to attend Mark Finley's presentations and I can still remember the words that changed everything for me.

"What kind of a loving God would allow the dead to watch their loved ones suffer on earth?"

That was my moment. The point in time where I let go of everything and start again with God. But the truth is that most of the work to bring me to that moment was done beforehand. Through the committed friendships of the people who embraced me and welcomed me into their church community.



Amanda Taylor: As I look back on the large and small events of my life, I can see that God has been patiently calling me into the Adventist church since I was a child.

Following the failure of my marriage and subsequent emotional breakdown, I reconnected with Christ and began attending the local Baptist church.

I peppered my patient pastor with many questions, but often felt his response lacked Biblical evidence.

Some church friends and I received a flyer about a Bible seminar that would be held by a man we had not heard of, Mark Finley. We decided to go but after the first few presentations my

friends felt the information offered was in error, though every claim had been clearly backed by Biblical evidence.

God had opened my heart and my eyes to the truths being presented by Pastor Finlay. I kept attending on my own and felt God was speaking directly to me with each presentation answering yet another of my questions.

The night we studied the state of the dead, I was convicted. The Bible revealed the truth of the matter to me.

I was most thankful that the Finley seminar had been offered free of charge as at this point in my life I was struggling financially. I continue to admire the way our church supports the work of evangelistic seminars to give other searchers a way to find God's truth.



Max Beach: I was born in East Malvern, and my Dad died six years later. We moved to my aunt's family home in Glen Iris and attended church every Sunday. My wife's family had a mixed background of Anglican and Catholic. But after she sadly passed away, I went to a different denomination that was closer to my home.

One day, a friend told me about a Revelation Seminar that was being run in Diamond Creek, by Pr Anderson. My friend and I attended the whole series and it culminated in me joining Greensborough Church. Before that the only thing I knew about Adventists, was Lindy and Michael Chamberlain!

I now attend The Orchard Melbourne Church as it is easier to get by public transport from my Retirement Village.

There I am called the Patriarch, and I try not to miss a Sabbath. It is such a blessing.



Eu-Jin Teo: I gave my heart to our Lord at thirteen. Growing up in a Christian home, there were numerous Christian books on the shelves but somehow I was always drawn to the ones on eschatology - I often hoped that Jesus would come back before I had to sit for school exams! This, however, was not a subject addressed in any meaningful way during sermons at my church.

The sign 'Revelation Seminars' caught my attention. My interest piqued, my Emmaus road experience began. Archaeologist-turned-theologian Pastor Gary Webster took me on a tour de force through Revelation, Daniel and other associated Bible books, opening my eyes to truths that I was familiar with but had yet to appreciate fully. I saw that this Church's stand on matters such as the Sabbath, clean and unclean food, baptism and the state of the dead was more soundly Bible-based than other denominations - being a lawyer, I know a bit about resolving controversies of interpretation! I studied under Pastor Copaceanu and was baptised a few months later.



REVELATION TODAY

An exciting part of the Harvest Victoria journey is a reaping program in May 2019, presented by *It Is Written* speakers John Bradshaw and Eric Flickinger, called *Revelation Today*. Both John and Eric are seasoned campaigners and have a God-given talent to encourage and empower their audience to come to a decision.

The name *Revelation Today* resonates with our desire to proclaim the message of the Three Angels. The greatest revelation of all times is Jesus Christ - this is why John opens the final book of the Bible with the words 'The revelation of Jesus Christ.'

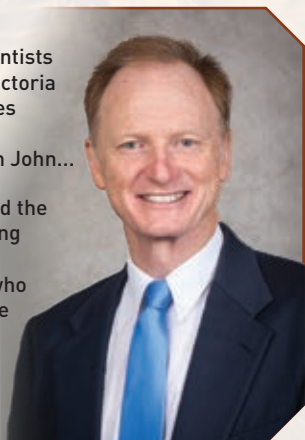
Revealing Jesus was also at the centre of every message from Paul. In Eph 1:9 he describes salvation in Jesus Christ as a mystery. Once it was hidden, but for us, living after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the mystery has now been revealed.

Thus, *Revelation Today* resonates with our faith in the salvation that comes from Jesus Christ.

The name *Revelation Today* also bears a special understanding of God's leading in history. Our prophetic understanding allows us to proclaim with confidence that Biblical prophecies have successfully allowed God's people to see His purpose for our world. This is not unique to Adventism. Luke, while writing his Gospel and the book of Acts, continuously refers back to prophecy to interpret the events in the life of Jesus and the progression of the gospel in the early

Victorian Adventists and Harvest Victoria facebook pages share a daily message from John...

Help us spread the word by sharing his messages with friends who will appreciate these thoughts for the day



Church, in the light of the prophecies of the Old Testament. This prophetic interpretation allowed his readers to see and understand the unfolding of prophecies. *Revelation Today* sees prophecies as a revelation of God's plan.

The name *Revelation Today* reminds us that the message is relevant for our present world... for today.

People view the world with some uncertainty. I was looking for a tripod for my camera at a store in the heart of Melbourne. The sales person started talking about the future and revealed his uncertainty about the world we live in. It was difficult for me to understand why his outlook on the future was so grim. Perhaps it is because of the current affairs of Australian politics or because of world affairs. One thing is sure, many of our friends and neighbours feel that insecurity. In this world of uncertainty, the *Revelation Today* series can help people to see the unfolding of prophecies. The *Revelation of Jesus Christ* through our prophetic understanding will show to the world that God is still in control and ultimately his plan will be revealed.

In May 2019 *Revelation Today* will run in the growth corridors of Melbourne. The West will meet at Gilson College, the South East at the Drum theatre, the North at Plenty Rangers Arts and Convention centre and the East at the Box Hill Pavilion. The core of the presentations is the discovery of Jesus Christ, leading attendees to make

decisions to follow Jesus.

During the meeting, we will have a couple of services available. We will stream the program from an app that is currently being built by the *It Is Written* team. The streaming facility will allow people who are unable to attend the event on the night to follow the program online. Translation facilities will also be available at some venues so migrants with English as their second language can understand the messages in their mother tongues.

To prepare for the presentations of the *Revelation Today* series in May, churches are now encouraged to do bridge-building events. Churches can be involved in various sorts of bridge-building activities. Some churches have organised Multicultural food nights or tutoring. A great bridge-building activity is a concept called 'Dinners With'. It is an easy way to connect with the community. At a 'Dinner with' a sit-down dinner is organised by a church and someone like a doctor or an archaeologist gives a short presentation. 'Dinners with' is an opportunity for the church to reach out to members of the public and churches can tailor-make that outreach program to the needs of the community.

Revelation Today is an exciting part of the five-year journey that our Conference has undertaken. It helps our churches to focus on evangelism and has the potential to revitalise our churches.

Hensley Gungadoo

What Can YOU Do?

There are many ways you can be involved as an individual and in your local church... Both in the lead up to the May campaign, and afterwards.

Pray about it, discuss it with your friends, church family, pastor... and step out in faith. The rewards can not be expressed in mere numbers...

Sprucing up the Church building dinners with...

PRAYER Training Church revitalising

Food Recipe Clubs

Distribution CARE GROUPS

MUSIC EVENTS

Letter Boxing

Creation EVOLUTION TALKS

Health Programs revising the hospitality of your church

BIBLE STUDIES

Door Knocking

YPW AND YOUTH Uni events

OUTREACH Church & Community

Church planting Invite your friends

SPIRITUAL REVIVAL KIDS PROGRAMS

Harvest Evangelism

As you should realise by now, having read this far, the Victorian Conference has identified Evangelism as a major focus for the Conference over the next five years. As such we have linked the Harvest Victoria Evangelism programs with the Conference Strategic Plan to revolutionize the way in which churches are grown through the discipleship journey of revitalisation and church planting.

It includes a city-wide reaping process, as well as country churches outreach, with resources being made available to our country churches to enable them to participate in this evangelistic opportunity.

Harvest Victoria will focus on the city of Melbourne and its growth areas, with a specific emphasis in each of the five years

- Yr. 1 - Revival and empowering for ministry
- Yr. 2 - Cultivate, Harvest, and connecting
- Yr. 3 - Multiplying church plants and revitalising churches with mission potential
- Yr. 4 - Planting & revitalising churches, establishing centres of influence
- Yr. 5 - Planting & revitalising churches, establishing centres of influence

The Adventist church in Victoria is thinking BIG... Big investment but with a big expected return. As a snapshot here are the returns the Conference is looking for: -

- Member Training and empowering for ministry - 850 members
- Training of employees in four disciplines of execution - 60 personnel
- Health training - equip 40 health champions & 15 health teams
- Discipleship - members trained to engage in social interaction as a tool to build bridges with friends and community members - 4000 members involved in social interactions
- Harvest - 1200 new seekers to the evangelistic meetings
- Church plants - minimum of four church plants in Year 2 and to build on this in Yrs. 3, 4, & 5

An annual budget has been set for each of the five years. The budgets have been set with the desired outcomes in mind, and is investing in the various major cost areas of training, personal renewal & revitalisation, prepare/sow/cultivate, harvest, follow up, church planting, advertising, technology, and administration.

The Vic Conference, along with AUC, SPD and IIW International have committed \$2.377 Million to these evangelistic efforts

and church plants over the five year period but we need the support of our members getting involved in the many different areas to make this happen.

Many of our members have already committed with payments and pledges and I am pleased to advise that to date the Conference has received \$78,103 from member donations and offerings for 2018 with a further \$23,750 pledged. That certainly has exceeded our fundraising budget for 2018 and I praise God for the faithfulness of our members in financially supporting the Evangelism efforts this year. Funds raised that are excess to this years requirement will be allocated to the member support target in 2019.

2019 is the year where we will incur the most expenditure and need the most financial support from all entities, especially our members, with an ambitious fundraising target of \$416,000. With just over 11,000 members in our conference that is just \$38 per member to reach that member target for 2019. Broken down further that is just 0.73cents per member per week. Suddenly this fundraising target does not seem so ambitious. Investing in the opportunity to bring others to Jesus, plant new churches and to grow in your own spiritual life through training and discipleship does not need to be a big personal financial commitment. God wants you to use your time, talents, and wealth for His service.

1 Timothy 6:17 tells us that: Everything we have is a gift from God, and the parable of the talents teaches that our gifts must be used wisely (Matthew 25:14-30). Each of us has unique talents and abilities. Most of us are not dynamic preachers or wealthy philanthropists but our contribution is just as important. Big city public evangelism may not be your thing. It is however still an effective form of outreach, and one that even in our Australian culture can draw people who are seeking and searching for something more spiritually. It is my prayer that you will see value in investing into this intentional evangelistic focus for the Conference.

God Promises in Luke 6:38 that if you give it will be given to you, A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Graeme Moffitt

eGIVING



Joining Christ in the Harvest Training

When: January 25-28, 2019

Where: Nunawading Christian College

Cost: \$75 pp

Register: Vic.Adventist.org.au

Fully scheduled program running

from 8.30 each morning until 6 pm (4pm Monday)

Lunch will be provided.

**REVELATION
TODAY**