

*Union conferences vote to dissolve*

# RECORD

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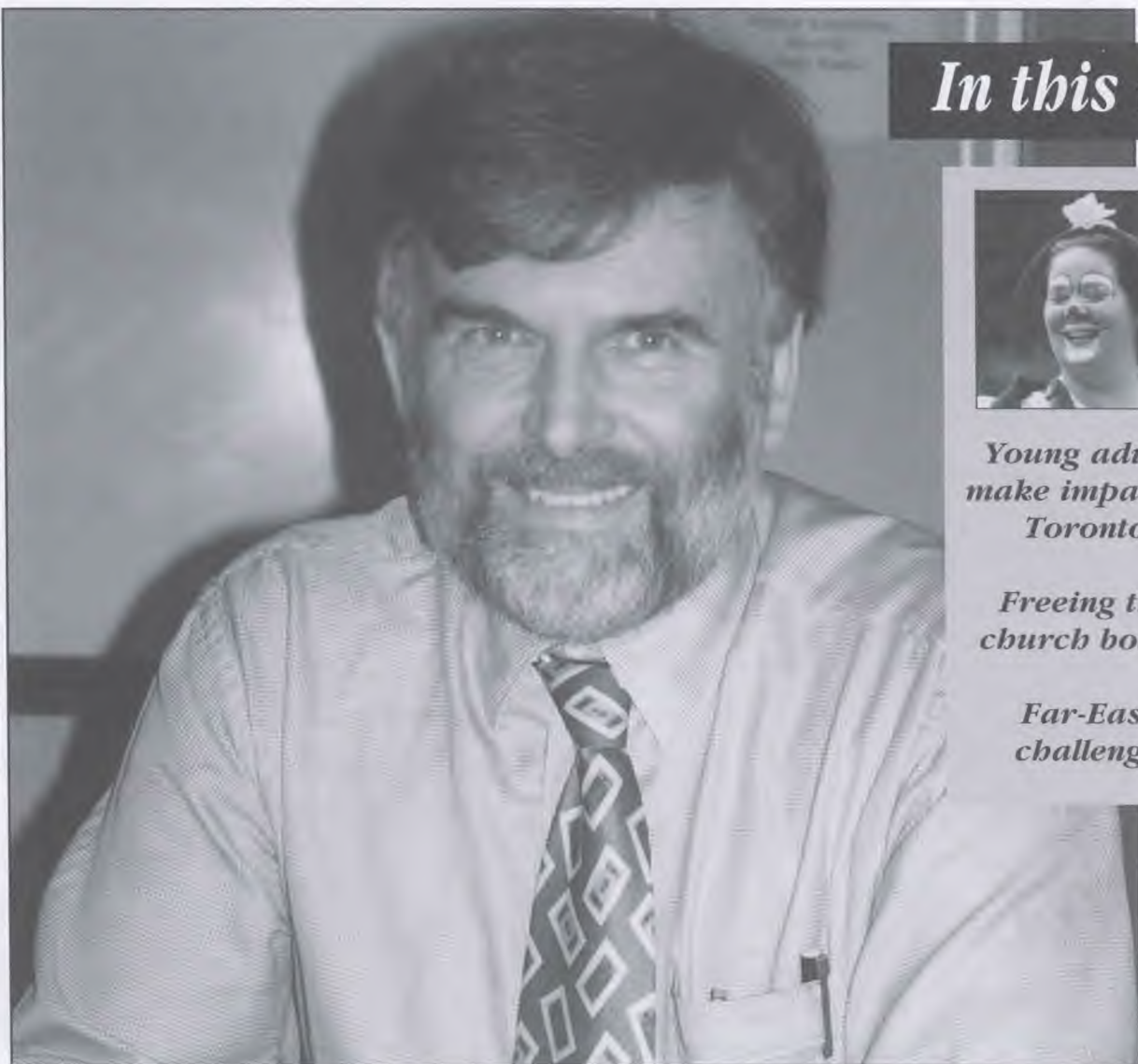
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# THE SPIRIT OF MALLORY

During the past eight years working with *RECORD*, many letters to the editor have called for a greater economy of administration in the church. It reflects the general feeling among we antipodeans, but especially in Australia, that we are overgoverned.

Various attempts have been made to reform church structure (three in the past 13 years to amalgamate local conferences), but each failed to get up. That's probably because they

*Mallory would have given his life to accomplish his goal rather than live without having tried.*

were "too bold," says South Pacific Division president Pastor Laurie Evans. But recent union conference sessions voted to accept the recommendations of the Division Restructure Committee (see report, page 5) to cut the number of unions in this division from five to four.

The principal aim of the restructuring is to allow the mission of the church to be accomplished more expeditiously. All other goals, and there are many, are secondary.

In addition to a redistribution of division and union personnel, is a redistribution of dollars—an estimated \$A1.7 million to local conferences, to do with it as they see fit. This might mean you will see your church pastor twice a month instead of only once if you worship in a smaller country church or, if you're

in a large city one, you might get that youth pastor you need.

"We say the most valuable person [in the church] is the pastor," says Pastor Evans, commenting at one of the sessions, "but our [present] policies support a hierarchy of administration." It is this that the church is wishing to change. But, as with most things in life, there are dollars on the bottom line, and ultimately it's the affordability of more pastors at local church level that's the point.

Money. The church isn't about money, but matters of finance impose themselves on it. Statutory requirements concerning superannuation payments to its employees, for example, can't be ignored. The church needs money from somewhere in order to fulfil its mission in the 21st century.

I suggested to one administrator that declining per capita offerings apparent in division reports and a lack of commitment to the tithing principle might be a part of the problem. There was agreement.

I ran the thought by the pastor of a largish country church in an area where broadacre farming is practised. He lamented (without judgment) that, to his knowledge, a number of his church's apparently prosperous farmers didn't tithe. He's in a struggling conference with high overheads because of its great size. That extra tithe could make a difference.

Have we lost the spirit of giving and sacrifice? Would restructure be necessary if all were more faithful and generous in giving?

I listen to talkback radio. But I'm wearied by the stream of complaints about minor offences perpetrated against listeners by the likes of

Telstra, the utilities, the unions, employers, John Howard *et al.* It's apparent that self-interest rules.

I recently watched a documentary on the search for George Mallory, the legendary British mountaineer who perished in a pre-Hillary attempt to conquer Mount Everest. His body was discovered at the bottom of a slope that fell away just a few hundred metres below the summit. Was he still going up or descending from the summit when he slipped to his death?

In determining this, a member of the expedition to recover Mallory's body suggested he would have made it all the way. Even though light was fading (Mallory had taken his sun goggles off), he would have pushed to the summit knowing that it could prove fatal. Mallory lived in an age of self-sacrifice and altruism, the expeditioner argued. He said that, because of this, Mallory would have given his life to accomplish his goal rather than live without having tried.

That's sacrifice. The church has an enviable program for systematic giving, and given the massive and disproportionate growth in some quarters of this division, this is necessary to accomplish the mission of the church. The church, including some of its personnel, is about to undergo extraordinary reform in order to accommodate a mission-inhibiting fiscal situation.

In order to attain this summit, it will probably need more members with the spirit of Mallory.



Lee Dunstan

## Next week

*GST and its impact on the church.*

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# AVONDALE'S ACTIVE ROLE IN RURAL CHURCHES

Lecturers at Avondale College are hitting the road on Sabbaths to participate in the worship services of small and rural churches in New South Wales.

The response from the churches, including Forster-Tuncurry, Narrabri, Muswellbrook, Singleton,

Wingate and Wingham, has been enthusiastic, reports one of the lecturers, Dr Norm Carlsen.

Fourteen college staff are to preach at Narrabri this year.

"If it weren't for Avondale we wouldn't enjoy the variety of speakers we now hear,"

says volunteer minister Graeme Kent.

The experience has been a good one for college staff as well, with Dr Carlsen describing it as "refreshing."

The program is, he says, designed to vary small and rural church

worship services, give local ministers a break and create a sense of belonging and inclusiveness.

For more information about the program, contact Dr Carlsen by phoning (02) 4980 2171 or emailing norm.carlsen@avondale.edu.au—*Bruna Tawake*



## RECORD and Signs win religious press awards

RECORD and Signs of the Times were again winners of Australasian Religious Press Association Awards, announced at the Grand Mercure Hotel in Broadbeach, Queensland, on August 12. Signs was awarded best feature for Pastor Grenville Kent's 16-page "Apocalypse When?" liftout (pictured). The magazine was also highly commended for best story by a new or non-professional writer (Dr Jill

the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)—Australia in 1999 supported programs within the South Pacific Division (SPD).



ADRA expects to maintain that level of funding despite recent ethnic tension in the Pacific islands, reports executive director Pastor David Syme. Helping will be an ADRA-SPD Education Department 10-year TEACH South Pacific program that will bring greater self-reliance to the church's educational systems in the islands through the training and upgrading of local teachers.

## SDA encourages PNG criminal gang to surrender

A Seventh-day Adventist has encouraged the leader of a criminal gang in Papua New Guinea to surrender to police. Jefhet Hevare of Kainantu in the Eastern Highlands Province first ministered to members of the Barola Hill gang in 1997. Two hundred surrendered; some are now leaders in local Seventh-day Adventist churches. He then asked members of the churches to pray

## These two cricketers have had their Weet-Bix!



The Sanitarium Health Food Company is one of the latest sponsors of the Australian cricket team after signing for three years with the Australian Cricket Board (ACB).

The agreement sees Sanitarium supplying all the team's breakfast cereals and bars and using "official breakfast of the world champions" on Weet-Bix packets.

"Sanitarium produces Australia's number one selling breakfast cereal, so an association with the world's number one cricket team is completely natural," says ACB chief executive Malcolm Speed.

Pictured are Australian cricketers Brett and Shane Lee.

Genobaga's "How to talk to your kids about sex") and best original artwork (Shane Johnson's "Everybody worships something sometime," pictured).

RECORD was highly commended for most original item (Judith A Green's "I wish that I could write

a poem," July 17, 1999).

## ADRA support solid despite tension in Pacific

More than half (\$A5 million) of all funds raised by

before he ministered to gang leader Nime Miefia and 15 others. At the end of an evangelistic program a year later, Mr Miefia, who received a personal invitation from Mr Hevare, said he and the others wanted to attend church. The police authorised the

leader to move freely so he could confiscate weapons. Each of the 16 received a Bible when they surrendered; two are being sponsored by the provincial governor to attend the Omapura School of Ministry next year.—*Wilson Stephen*



# ADRA AMBASSADORS FLY FREE

## Youth rewarded for their promotion.



**ADRA**

**T**wo Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) youth ambassadors have flown free to Thailand in recognition of their efforts to promote the organisation in their local church.

Gold-level achievers Luke Robinson (Landsborough, Qld) and Clarissa Falcke (Para Vista, SA) joined students from Avondale College on their annual fly'n'learn. A third achiever, Tiani Christian (Hillview, NSW), also qualified but could not fly because of other commitments. She will be awarded her prize at a later date.

Youth ambassadors promote the work of ADRA at their local church and in their community.

Program coordinator Rachel Gray reports Luke arranged for ADRA's Kick the Cycle poverty-awareness program to be included in a local high school. Clarissa produced a newsletter then distributed it in her church and arranged speaking appointments at Apex and Rotary clubs. Tiani organised an ADRA fundraising dinner at her church

for the Southlakes Women's Refuge.

Jill Cormack (Darwin, NT) was also a gold-level achiever. She was involved in activities organised for the Timorese refugees brought to Darwin.

Twenty-three youth ambassadors from around Australia promoted the work of ADRA during the past year,

including: Kelly Adams (Qld), Shannon Batten (NSW), David Bird (NSW), Emille Butler (NSW), Jade Cherry (Qld), Tiani Christian (NSW), Brenden Cooke (NSW), Jill Cormack (NT), Johte Earl (NSW), Clarissa Falcke (SA), Samuel Foo (NSW), Murray Harvey (Qld), Georgina Hodges (Qld), Ayeshah Khan (NSW),

Gabriela Popa (Vic), Rebecca Kingston (NSW), Ellen O'Malley (Qld), Luke Robinson (Qld), Michael Sheridan (NSW), Siegfried Stahl (SA), Jamie Thomson (Vic), Daniella

Walton (Vic) and Brad Watson (NSW).

"I'm proud of the all the ambassadors," says Ms Gray. "They made big commitments to God and their church. I'm grateful for the time and effort they gave and for helping this new program have a successful first year."

Ms Gray says she is looking for more ambassadors between 15 and 30 years of age.

"If you'd like to do something practical for God in your church and community, I'd encourage you to join the program. It's a great way to find out how ADRA is helping around the world, and to make your Christianity come alive by living it."



*Avondale College student Peter Maxwell shares the joy of water in the village with the local minister and his wife.*

*For more information about ADRA's youth ambassador program, contact Rachel Gray by phoning (02) 4977 2886 or emailing [aya@adra.org.au](mailto:aya@adra.org.au)*

## Avondale students experience real poverty

**S**everal Avondale College students spent their most recent holidays on fly'n'learns to developing countries—a required component of their international development studies course.

Two volunteered with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)—Mongolia in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, and visited projects in the famine-devastated country. Another volunteered with ADRA—Cambodia in the capital,

Siem Reap, writing proposals for projects.

Three helped install a permanent water supply in the Huay Ya Sai village in northern Thailand (see photo above).

The 10th annual Avondale—ADRA project has changed from fly'n'builds to fly'n'repairs to fly'n'learns because of fears earlier visits did not build local capacities or sustainability.

"We felt the communities were

becoming dependent on our visits," says organiser Harwood Lockton.

"The Avondale—ADRA fly'n'learns help students experience what it's like living and working in developing countries. They learn from locals of their struggle to survive.

"Each has returned to their studies enthused about the potentials of developing countries and challenged by the realities of poverty in the world."



# UNION CONFERENCES VOTE TO DISSOLVE

In two separate special sessions, the Trans-Australian and Trans-Tasman Union Conferences voted to dissolve (from January 1, 2001) in favour of the proposed realignment of union boundaries, as published in RECORD.

The proposal will see the number of unions in the South Pacific Division reduced from five to four, and union staffing reduced by 30 per cent. The four unions will be called the Australian Union Conference (AUC), New Zealand Pacific Union Conference (NZPUC), Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM), and Western Pacific Union Mission (WPUM).

The inaugural session of the proposed AUC will be held in Canberra immediately after the division session. It will be followed in Auckland by the inaugural session of the proposed NZPUC, then the sessions of the WPUM and PNGUM.

Delegates at the AUC, NZPUC and WPUM sessions will, among other things: adopt a constitution; elect administrators, departmental personnel and an executive committee; and determine the location of the union offices. Delegates at the PNGUM session will not adopt a constitution nor determine the location of the union office because its boundaries do not change.

Division leaders urged delegates at the TAUC and TTUC sessions to remember the mission of the church. President Pastor Laurie Evans told delegates at the TAUC session there had been three attempts to reduce the number of church administrators over the past 13 years. He said the proposal to realign union boundaries and reduce the number of unions in the division from five to four is an attempt to give more discretionary funds to conferences, which, in turn, would then be better able to address the needs of their constituencies.

Delegates at both sessions discussed the implications of the proposal, including the balance of departmental personnel between division and unions, financial equity for small-



Secretary-treasurer Barbara Reynolds and president Pastor David Currie answer questions during the Trans-Australian Union Conference's special session at Lilydale (Vic) Adventist Academy.

er conferences and financial arrangements of the unions' capital assets.

The proposal to dissolve in favour of the proposed realignment of union boundaries was carried by numbers considerably in excess of the two-thirds majority required for

constitutional change.

The South Pacific Division Restructure Committee anticipates a redistribution of \$A1.7 million per year to local conferences.

However, division secretary Dr Barry Oliver says the realignment is about more than money. He says it must also improve the services offered by administrators and departmental personnel to help the church better accomplish its mission, and should diminish the duplication of roles and functions at different church administrative levels.

He also says it will provide a single, national voice within each country of the division when the church interacts with governments or national bodies.

One acknowledged disadvantage of the reduction in unions is that the division's representation on the General Conference Executive Committee falls by one, from 12 to 11.—Lee Dunstan

Lee Dunstan

## Australian Union Conference session

Notice is hereby given that the inaugural session of the proposed Australian Union Conference will convene from 2 pm Sunday, November 5, to 12 pm Tuesday, November 7, in the Main Convention Hall of the Rydges Hotel, London Circuit, Canberra, Australia.

The session will: adopt a constitution; elect administrators, departmental personnel and an executive committee; determine the location of the union conference office; and conduct the business of the session as provided for in the adopted constitution of the Australian Union Conference.—Barry Oliver, secretary, South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

## New Zealand Pacific Union Conference session

Notice is hereby given that the inaugural session of the proposed New Zealand Pacific Union Conference will convene from 7 pm Friday, November 10, to 12 pm Monday, November 13, in the Papatoetoe Seventh-day Adventist church in Auckland, New Zealand.

The session will: adopt a constitution; elect administrators, departmental personnel and an executive committee; determine the location of the union conference office; and conduct the business of the session as provided for in the adopted constitution of the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference.—Barry Oliver, secretary, South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church



# YOUNG ADULTS MAKE IMPACT IN TORONTO



**S**ome 250 young adults from 35 countries trained to reach out to the community and then put their training into practice as part of Impact Toronto 2000 during the recent General Conference session.

Each morning for 10 days they trained in 17 ministries, then served in the community in the afternoon.

They volunteered at a food bank on the first Sabbath of the event, sorting 11,000 kilograms of reclaimed food, enough for 6000 meals, some of which they distributed to housing project tenants in the city during the week.

Each evening they participated in two evangelistic programs, receiving more than 90 requests for Bible study and baptism.

## Heroin addict healed

"God brought 250 young adults here just for me. I know that's why you came here," a heroin addict, David, told a group he met on the streets on the first Monday of the event. He was returning from one of the street ministries. When he found out the group were Christians, he asked if they would pray with him. Confessing his love for God and sorrow for his sins, David prayed with the group, and the group asked for God's power in his life.

When they met David the next day, he shared the difference the prayer had made. That morning he had overslept, past when he usually wakes up for his heroin fix. Yet he had no craving. Every other time he has missed heroin for a day, he said, his body had become numb and shaky and he had become homicidal, yet this morning he had no symptoms at all.

When the group met him again two days later, he was still elated at being heroin-free. "None of my family would know me now," he said.

The outreach proved of benefit to all. Drama ministry member Saron Mulitalo, a teacher from

Nunawading (Vic) Adventist College, says she enjoyed sharing her gifts with children at one of the street ministries.

"There's no way we could draw kids in with just Bible study, but with the use of drama and art, we can draw many more," she says. "It's exciting for me to see how many young adults realise the importance of creative arts."

## Impact continues

Impact Toronto 2000 ended with a youth rally where more than \$A5000 was given to retain two

young adults to follow up requests for Bible study and baptism.

Eleven from the South Pacific

Division participated in the event. Former division youth director Dr Barry Gane organised the youth rally, while Wes Tolhurst, associate youth director for the North New South Wales Conference, and his wife,

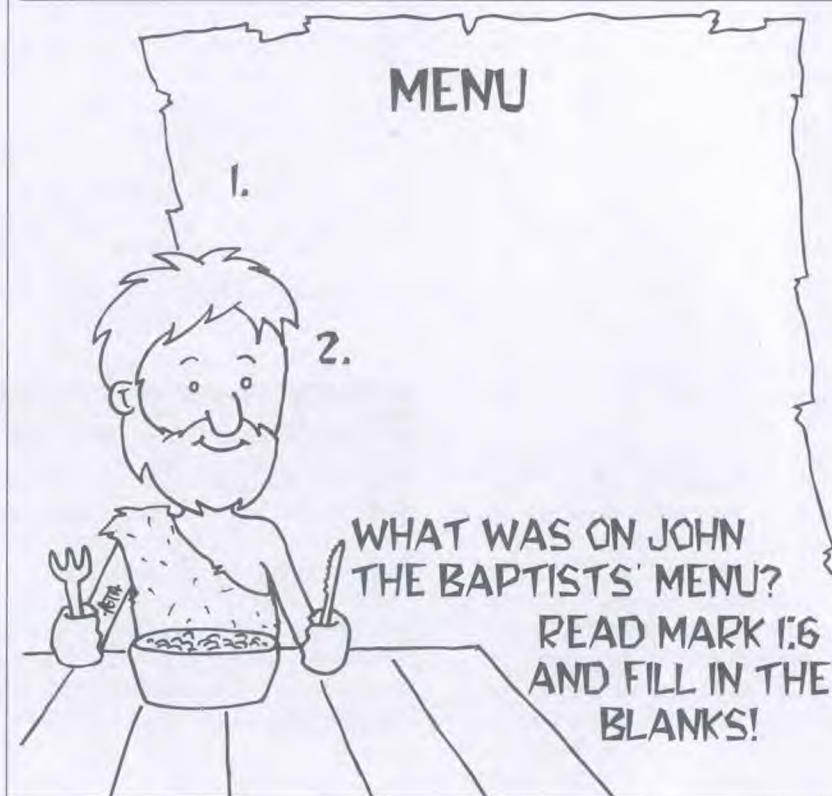
Melissa, trained youth directors how to run Service To Others Really Matters (STORM Co) trips.—

*Marklynn Bazzzy/Preston Smith/Tompaul Wheeler/Lynn McDowell*



*Kyle-Jo Beaumont from the South Pacific Division puts smiles on people's faces during Impact Toronto 2000.*

## children





## PAU names education wing in recognition of former lecturer

Pacific Adventist University (Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea) has named its education wing "Barnett Haus" in recognition of former faculty head Graham Barnett. Mr Barnett died in October 1998 from burns sustained in a petrol explosion on the campus.—*John Waters*

## Is this school for sale?



A newly erected sign at Macquarie Fields (NSW) Adventist Primary School would initially indicate the property is for sale. Rather, Christian education is being advertised. The Century 21 real estate agent provided the sign, which says the school offers a caring, nurturing learning environment for children in the community who seek Christian values and quality instruction. On August 1, the school became Macarthur Adventist School. "We are often confused with Macquarie College in Wallsend," says principal Jenny Gibbons.—*David G Gibbons*

## This is embarrassing

Emails for the ATSIM Indigenous Health Conference before August 16 did not get through. Dr Percy Harrold from the Adventist Health Department says he is extremely embarrassed by this problem. Already people from every part of Australia are booked for the conference on October 11-13. Those wishing to register should contact Claire Ashby at ATSIMHealth2000@adventist.org.au (it is working now) or phone (02) 9498 8822 or by mail to PO Box 14, Gordon NSW 2072.

## 600 at origins seminar

Take half-a-dozen scientists, assign speaking topics such as creation, evolution, archaeology and history, let them loose in a public hall and invite the public to ask questions. A recipe for mayhem? Or an opportunity to reach out? Six hundred people attended the opening sessions of "The Origins Seminar" at the Hornsby (NSW) War Memorial Hall on July 7 and 8. Presenters included Drs Kevin DeBerg, John Rankin, Tim Standish and Tas Walker and Pastor David Down.—*John Silver*

## Sportsman's Sabbath stand

Way to go, Caleb! Sydney Adventist College

# Aerobics instructor at 81



Gold Coast Publications

**M**et Eunice Turner, 81, one of the fittest residents at the Melody Park Adventist Retirement Village in Nerang, Queensland. She has walked the Gold Coast marathon for the past three years, raising \$A1000 for the village, and taught aerobics for more than 20.

"Eunice is a wonderful advertisement for the Seventh-day Adventist health message," says Southport church communication secretary Bridget Gunn, referring, in part, to a front-page article and picture in the local newspaper of Mrs Turner teaching aerobics to residents at the village.

"She's a testimony to the peace and joy the apostle Paul tells us is the essence of life in the kingdom of God."

captain Caleb Wegener chose not to run in the recent all-schools national cross-country championship because it was held on Saturday. The Galston church member, who runs 80 kilometres a week, qualified by finishing fourth in the New South Wales championship.

## Oops file

The Sydney Adventist Hospital Cancer Prevention Pack should be called the San Cancer Prevention Pack ("Give me five for cancer," August 26). It is not being available through Adventist Book Centres, but by phoning 1300 786 105 or at [www.oztrek2000.com.au](http://www.oztrek2000.com.au)

## Newswatch

## PNG government calls on Seventh-day Adventist Church for help

**T**he government of Papua New Guinea has appealed to the Seventh-day Adventist and other churches to help with social ills.

Home affairs and churches minister Andrew

Kumbakor said besides providing spiritual development, churches should put more emphasis on social issues such as polygamy.

He challenged the Seventh-day Adventist

Church to make its views known on the issue and take the lead in speaking out without fear or favour on major social issues.

Mr Kumbakor thanked the church for helping bring the country to what

it is today.

"Churches have some of the best mechanisms for delivery of goods and services to our people and the government will not hesitate to use these mechanisms," he said.—*Post-Courier/Adventists in the News* ([www.tagnet.org/adventistsinthenews](http://www.tagnet.org/adventistsinthenews))



# FREEING THE BOARD

by Danny Bell

You're walking past a Seventh-day Adventist church. It's late at night; 11 pm. There in the dimly lit foyer, a light streams from an adjacent room. You move a little closer, curious about what kind of church this is with its doors still open at this hour.

"This is an active church," you say to yourself, as the temptation to peep through the crack in the door draws you into the foyer.

You hear voices coming from the room and, yes, you peep through a crack in the door. To your surprise, however, you don't find a group of Christians praying, or a late-night counselling session with the pastor.

Welcome to the late-night business or board meeting. You walk away somewhat bemused, but how many of us have found ourselves on the opposite side of that door, engaged in the business of the church until unearthly hours?

Business meetings were never meant to keep us up so late, yet we still labour on into the night with huge agendas. This comes mainly from a lack of understanding concerning the proper relationship between the board and the business meeting.

When we look at our church board and business meetings, we should see a comparison with what happens at the conference level with the executive committee (it could be called the conference board) and its relationship to the sessions (the conference business meetings.) The church board is really an executive committee, appointed to oversee the business of the church.

The business meeting is where reports from various departments are heard with perhaps a few major issues on the agenda. The name

"business meeting" seems to imply for some that this is the meeting where all the business done or about to be done by the church is discussed. This is where many churches make a mistake and end up having meetings that last up to three and four hours or more.

Meetings that last this long tend to weary those involved. Worse, hasty decisions are often made because everybody wants to go home before it gets too late. There has to be a better way.

## The work of the board

The church board has two functions: its major function is the spiritual direction of the church; its minor function is overseeing the business of the church.<sup>1</sup>

Spiritual direction can be summarised as:

- Spiritual nurture
- Evangelism in all its phases
- Maintenance of doctrines
- Upholding Christian standards

Overseeing church business includes:

- Recommending changes in church membership
- Church finances
- Protection and care of church properties
- Coordination of church departments

A board should devote most of its energies and time to the spiritual direction of the church.<sup>2</sup> It also has to somehow oversee the business matters of the church with the time that remains.<sup>3</sup> Usually, however, business is made a priority and can take up all the time of the meeting, allowing no discussion of a spiritual nature at all. This is one extreme.

The other extreme is to cast all the business matters at the feet of the business meeting, which, already overloaded, has to then discuss

executive matters, dragging the meeting on into all hours of the night.

How then can we find a balance between the work of the board and business meeting, so that both meetings share the load proportionately and effectively?

## Trust

The answer to this question lies in a single word: *trust*. What is not seen in many churches is the trust that will help streamline the operation of the church board and business meetings. More trust is needed in those appointed to do the work of these meetings.

A good example of this trust is shown at the conference level. The executive committee, usually operating over a period of three years, is basically unhindered by the churches during its time of occupancy. Then comes the session, in which the executive committee and departments report on what they've been doing and what is planned for the future running of the conference.

The delegates from the churches sit and hear these reports, having the authority to change or accept reports and recommendations. Despite their size, the meetings are over in a day or a little more—incredible!

They can do this because the large volume of business transactions, operational procedures, costing and building projects have been dealt with by the executive committee during the previous three years. They were trusted to do the job. The only thing needed at the session was for the delegates to listen to the reports and, perhaps, discuss a few major agenda items that needed ratification by the session.

This situation at a conference level gives us a guide when coming



to church board and business meetings. The members of the board show a lack of trust when everybody wants to have their opinion heard concerning finer points of church business. This can delay the board from addressing more important issues of the church.

The *Church Manual* stresses that subcommittees should be formed to carry out menial business when there's a danger of overcrowding the board meeting.<sup>1</sup> Yet these subcommittees are already in place; they're our church departments.

Since most leaders of departments are members of the board, it follows that communication of the board's wishes to these departments will be streamlined.

And, if the departments are given more autonomy, they're able to make more decisions. For instance,

church boards have been known to spend hours discussing the type of vacuum cleaner they need to buy. They could hand the responsibility to, say, the head deacon or deaconess and have their deacons or deaconesses decide among themselves. There's no need to involve the church board if we trust the others to make the right choice.

The overcrowding of board meetings with business matters can largely be accounted for in this way. By giving more responsibility and trust, the church departments have the freedom to go ahead with projects without being babied along.

Trust is absent when the business meeting doesn't give the board enough executive authority to run the church. Members on such business meetings, for example, may demand that all monetary transac-

tions be brought back to the business meeting for approval.

They may also demand that trivial matters be discussed and clutter up the business meeting and divert it from its main purpose. That purpose is primarily the opportunity of hearing various reports from the different departments.<sup>5</sup>

Of course there will be occasions when agenda items of major significance will be brought before the business meeting. However, a business meeting is not the place to discuss the trivial or the executive running matters of the church.

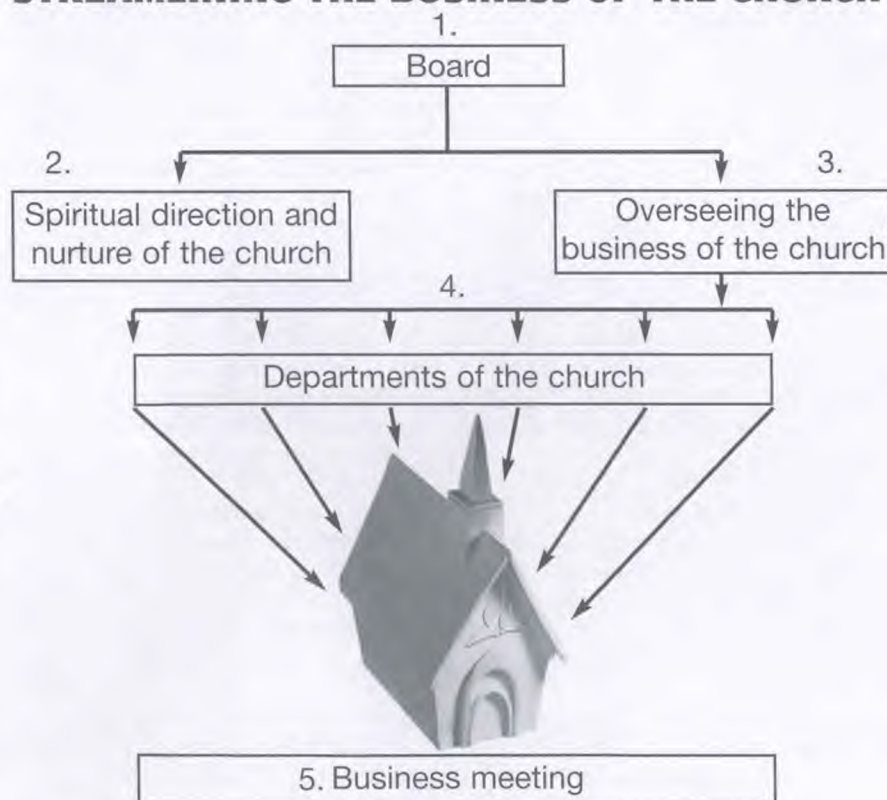
A way to prevent the business meeting from being cluttered with, say, financial decisions, is to provide the board and church departments with an operating budget. A business meeting could approve operating budgets for its board and departments, and that gives them the freedom to spend within this range without bothering the business meeting at all.

Costs that go over this amount could be brought for discussion to the next business meeting.

The basic principle is trust. This is something that will bring tremendous time-saving advantages to the churches. Business meetings won't be cluttered with time-wasting non-essentials, but will conclude earlier. The board will run more smoothly, and the morale of church departments will be lifted when they see a greater confidence placed in them by the church.

To those who are working to make the church more effective for Christ, "Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17, NKJV). **R**

## STREAMLINING THE BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH



1. The board is the executive nerve centre of the church.
2. The main focus of the board is the spiritual direction of the church.
3. The secondary function of the board is the business oversight of the church.
4. Subcommittees that free the board to focus its energies on its main assignment.
5. The "power base" where reports from departments are heard and assessed.

1. Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 1990, page 87.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*, page 89.

4. *ibid.*, page 90.

5. *ibid.*, pages 90, 91.

Danny Bell is the pastor of the Lithgow, Oberon and Mudjee churches in New South Wales.



# MAKING OF MINISTERS AT AVONDALE—1

by Bruce Manners

*i* expected more books lining the walls of Dr Stephen Thompson's office. The dean of the theology faculty at Avondale College is either a minimalist, or he isn't afraid to show the walls. (Note to those restoring the college auditorium: Other places need attention, too.)

Yes, there are some books, in a low bookcase partly hidden behind the desk, with a few more on the desk. The bookcase sits below the lone window, and that's at the other end of the long, narrow room.

The furniture is basic. A chair behind the desk. A small table with a few chairs to one side. Uncomplicated. Functional. Straightforward.

Perhaps there's a signal here about Dr Thompson's understanding of theology.

He has a ready smile, listens well and often pauses before responding.

Teaching theology has been his life for the past 23 years. The first of those were at Newbold College in the United Kingdom and, since 1991, as dean of the theology faculty at Avondale.

He knows what he wants from theology students.

"We're looking at the whole person," he says. "We like to see their growing ability to interact with others. We like to see them get to know themselves better. We like to see them develop skills across a range of ministries. And, of course, we're helping them form their ability to think, reflect and analyse."

"This is one of the primary differences between the experience students can have in their home church and here at Avondale."

## Practical emphasis

The emphasis on balance may

have remained constant over the years, but Dr Thompson notes a change from the academic to the practical. Students are assigned to churches around the college and fitted into a "sculptured program" under an experienced minister.

From the beginning of their course, theology students are expected to average five hours a week at the church they've been assigned to. They are also expected to attend that church three Sabbaths a month, or work on some equivalent assignment.

"In one sense we haven't kept things in balance," says Dr Thompson. "We've tilted towards busyness. That's why, on average, our students take four-and-a-half years to complete a four-year course. They need to for financial and work-pressure reasons—to slow the pace a little bit."

But, he adds, there is another element. In Australia and New Zealand, unlike the ministerial training programs in the rest of the developed Seventh-day Adventist world, there is no expectation ministers will do further study.

"We pack everything into the bachelor's level. If our students don't get it here, there's no guarantee they'll ever get it in ministry. They're studying things American or European students don't study until the graduate segment of their ministerial training."

To complete a master's program, an Avondale theology student would need to take another 12 months full-time study. Currently, Avondale only offers a part-time master's degree so ministers can continue to work while studying (although the study involves a few weeks intensive residential sessions).

## Criticism is down

One of the things Dr Thompson finds pleasing about the past few years is the decrease in criticism of the theology faculty.

"Theology is taught by lecturers who show their commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its message. And I'm encouraged conference administrators employ almost all our graduates."

"That doesn't mean every graduate will become a successful minister, but when I arrived nine years ago, the administrators were more inclined to employ someone with no formal training and send them here for a year. That has stopped, not only because of changed financial situations, but because there's a decrease in the apprehensions about what is being taught here. We have a good rapport with administrators across Australia and New Zealand."

That rapport means placement for most theology students. Dr Thompson notes the church employs more than 90 per cent of graduates who apply for ministry within 12 months of graduating.

"One of the presidents was saying recently that with just 15 graduating this year, he may have to look elsewhere. In other years the presidents have said, 'I don't know where we'll put them all.' But, within six months of graduation, that has almost always ceased to be a problem."

## Women who study theology

One of the problems facing the theology faculty is that of women who graduate from the course.

"We encourage people to study theology regardless of their gender. If they have a calling to ministry, we're here to help them realise that calling. We're not into the issue of ordina-



tion. Various members of the faculty may have their own opinions, but it isn't anything we're campaigning on. That detracts from recognising God can use people's talents and skills for ministry regardless of their gender.

"Until this year, about 10 per cent of students were women. Unfortunately, that percentage has slipped because, of those who have graduated, not enough have been employed. Other women see this and don't apply for ministry.

"This concerns us. The church cannot ignore this issue. We regularly receive inquiries from women who are sincerely convicted God has called them to ministry."

He stresses—again—ordination is not the issue. It is recognising in many of our churches 65 per cent of members are women.

"How much longer can they be locked out of ministerial opportunities?" he asks.

This is a theological problem for some. If women are not meant to be ministers, why should they be trained for these roles?

"Perhaps the church needs to think of ways around the structural options. Currently, it's an all-or-nothing option. However, not too many years back, we had women who were Bible workers within the church."

He reflects on the Bible Instructor Course offered in the

past—before his time as a theology lecturer.

He understands they were reduced versions of ministerial training.

"There's no long-established opposition in

the church to women in ministry. But currently, within ministry, either you're an ordained minister or you're nothing. Maybe we need some fresh options.

"One of the conferences in California recently took unilateral steps to get around that by issuing ordination/commissioning credentials. The General Conference president has chided them and, whether or not you agree with the procedure, it's always unwise for a segment of the church to march too far behind or too far ahead. But their action is, I believe, a sincere attempt to address structural limitations."

Only one woman has been offered a ministerial role in the past five years. Dr Thompson sees more opportunities for them in chaplaincy, particularly in Seventh-day Adventist schools.

#### Students of primary importance

The chemistry between staff and students in the theology faculty is good, says Dr Thompson. "There tends to be stability in the staff. But we're only one part of the equation—the students are the most important part.

"We're dependent on local churches and ministers and church administrators to encourage the right sort of people to come here. They're the ones who have the drive, who have the commitment and sense of calling—or who at least show an inclination.

"Young people don't gain their independence nearly as rapidly as they used to. They're smarter than my generation because they live cheaply—at home—and don't attempt to gain independence at the rate we did. So maybe the sense of being called to ministry will not develop as quickly as it used to." **R**



*Bruce Mannings is editor of RECORD. Next week, Dr Thompson speaks of the spiritual change he has seen on campus, the loss of interest in biblical theology and his optimism for the church.*



# FAR-EAST CHALLENGE

by Bruce Manners

**t**he least penetrated part of the world, as far as Christianity is concerned, falls within the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. Covering China, Japan, the Koreas, Mongolia and Taiwan, this is also the largest populated of all the divisions.

The challenges are there, says division president Pastor Pyng Duk Chun. He tells of 600 "population segments" in China of 1 million people where there is no Seventh-day Adventist. And there are 465 cities of half-a-million without a Seventh-day Adventist presence.

When in Australia earlier this year, Pastor Chun said Communism in China may have helped Christianity.

"China, for the past 50 years, tried to eradicate all kinds of beliefs, not only Christianity, but Buddhism and Taoism," he says. Christianity had been considered an imported, Western religion; the local religions were thought to be superior.

"Through 50 years of Communism, the country broke down such barriers. It created a religious vacuum, and when the government lifted restrictions, Christians were aggressive in witnessing and grew quickly. When Communism took over China in 1949 it was reported there were only 800,000 Christians. Now a conservative figure is 30 million."

Some say 50 million of the 1.3 billion in China are Christians. Of these, 253,000 are baptised Seventh-day Adventists, a figure Pastor Chun believes is close to reality.

Operation Silk Road is a Global Mission project to train pioneers to enter those cities without a Seventh-day Adventist presence. "We send them in two-by-two," says Pastor Chun. "And we plan to keep sending them in for a long time."

The 10-40 Window Offering will help fund this kind of project in China. With most of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division in the 10-40

window, where the impact of Christianity is minimal, Pastor Chun understands the challenges. Only in his home country, South Korea, does Christianity have a strong base.

After 100 years of Seventh-day Adventist mission in Japan, there are only 13,000 Seventh-day Adventists. Shintoism and Buddhism are the main religions.

"They're mixed together," says Pastor Chun. "People don't care what part is from Shintoism and what part is from Buddhism. Religion isn't for the future life, but for present reality; for prosperity, health, welfare of their children. If they pray to Buddha or go to a Shinto shrine, they're willing to bow a few times and pay a few dollars in exchange for benefits."

"Christianity is not well received by the Japanese. It was introduced 400 years ago, but never prospered. Only 1 per cent of the population is Christian. And Seventh-day Adventists make up 1 per cent of those Christians."

North Korea is a closed country. Pastor Chun tells of an elderly woman who escaped from the north to the south recently. She had, he says, kept the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs in her heart. That's the only North Korean Seventh-day Adventist he knows.

"I met and interviewed her; her faith is genuine. According to the constitution, North Koreans are allowed to hold a religious belief, but not follow it. But the woman said she knew 53 others who kept the Seventh-day Adventist faith in their heart."



The major challenges change in different countries in this part of the 10-40 window. In Japan, the Koreas and Taiwan it's secularism.

"Most Japanese are not devoted to religion, even if they have their own. It's just for blessing and prosperity. They worship, but after turning from their shrine, they don't care."

In China, it's the restrictions. "People are receptive to Christianity because they yearn for religion. But we can't organise anything for our people because Seventh-day Adventist distinctives aren't allowed. We can't run a seminary. We can't train our teachers. How do we provide the leaders for those congregations?"

Even if the church takes people out of the country to train them, only those with a licence from a semi-government entity can minister to a congregation.

"We've trained several men," says Pastor Chun, "but they're not allowed to work. It's frustrating."

The challenges of the 10-40 window are great, but the goal of establishing 1040 churches in the 10-40 window is within reach. Today's offering will help achieve that goal. **R**

*Bruce Manners is editor of RECORD.*



***Rather than seeking gender balance or equality, shouldn't we bow down in prayer and fasting?***

**Gender-ations**

ELAYNE STANFORD, VIC

I feel that if Christ were the focal point and centrepiece of the young, gifted, professional women leaving our church ("Gender imbalance," Letters, July 29), they would not be "walking away."

CLYTIE McCUTCHEON, WA

I trust the women's ministries director's assessment of RECORD was performed tongue in cheek, for I do not believe this kind of reporting helps the cause of women in the church. And let's hope the gifted women in the church don't count the authors of the books of the Bible, or the Editor of the Bible could be in big trouble too!

KAY VERNON, WA

If gifted, young professional women are leaving the church because they aren't being recognised, it would seem there is a problem. Surely they would not leave for that reason alone. There must be some other reasons.

STEFAN WITT, VIC

I was saddened to read that talented young women are leaving the church because they are not being offered positions of importance, and of the gender imbalance in RECORD. In Moses' time there were many Hebrew women, but God chose males to be the leaders. One would think that if He made a mistake, He had time to rectify it.

Malachi 3:6 says, "God changes not." Who are we to delegate to God what gender could be used?

Rather than seeking gender balance or equality, shouldn't we bow down in prayer and fasting? God used consecrated instruments throughout history—men and women—appointed by Him, not by men.

GERALD BEADEN, QLD

If young professional women are

leaving the church then, surely, they must be attending for the wrong reasons. Ellen White had no qualm in endorsing Paul's gender imbalance in church leadership (see 1 Timothy 2, 3), when she said, "He claimed no wisdom of his own; but divine power, uniting with his human efforts, had enabled him to present the truth in a manner pleasing to God. He was a co-labourer with Christ, a diligent worker in bringing spiritual knowledge from the word of God and the works of Christ, to all whose hearts were open to evidence. . . . In doing so, the apostle took no glory to himself, as a humble instrument in the hands of God" (*Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 154).

**Task force needed?**

BRIDGET GUNN, QLD

Do we really need a task force, with all the accompanying expense, to "discover new and creative ways of including women in the church and its leadership structure" ("Initiative for women," July 29)?

Surely it's more a question of changing entrenched attitudes, which simply do not see women in leadership unless in a traditional role.

While we are not all mothers in Israel, many of us were leaders in the community, professions and homes well before we became Seventh-day Adventists. If these skills were to be recognised and utilised, we would not read such sad facts as those outlined by the writer of "Gender imbalance."

Nor do I think the answer lies in Lynnetta Hamstra's suggestion (reported in "Initiative for women") of sending women to denominational colleges, "so they can serve in our church."

Many of us have "served" for 20 years or more and never seen the inside of an Adventist college. We may have had equally excellent training in other institutions and experience in positions of responsibility, such as institutional heads or in the professions. There are also those without educational opportunities, but who still make wonderful leaders—Ellen G White, for example.

***Just a coincidence***



**Note:** Views in Letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Letters should be less than 250 words, and writers must include their name, address and phone number. All letters are edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's original meaning will not be changed. Not all letters received are published. See masthead (page 2) for contact details.



**Almost Home**

Jan Paulsen calls for a redemptive church at the General Conference session in Toronto following 12 days of colour, worship and exciting reports of God's leading.

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## Positions vacant

▲ **Assistant Accountant—Sanitarium Health Food Company (Head Office, Berkeley Vale, NSW)** is seeking a professional Assistant Accountant for the Beverages and Meals Business Unit. The successful applicant will have relevant tertiary qualifications; be familiar with computerised accounting systems and have proficiency with Microsoft Excel. **Applications** (including a current CV) should be forwarded to The Human Resources Department, Sanitarium Health Food Company, Locked Bag 7, Central Coast Mail Centre NSW 2252; fax (02) 4348 7787 or email <amanda.hawken@sanitarium.com.au> no later than Friday, September 22, 2000.

▲ **Medical Practitioner—Sopas Adventist Hospital**, near Wabag, in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, requires a doctor in January 2001 for a satisfying and interesting position as one of its medical officers. **Applications** and details of this position are available at the South Pacific Division web site Employment section <www.adventist.org.au> or phone Dr Percy Harrold, Director, Adventist Health, South Pacific Division (02) 9847 3304; email <pcharrold@adventist.org.au>

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**Solicitor, NNZ.** John Anderson, formerly of Te Awamutu, is now practising in Katikati. For farm, home and business transactions, leases, family trusts, wills, deceased estates and general legal work phone (07) 549 3446 (anytime); fax (07) 549 3454; email <andersonlaw@clear.net.nz> John can accept instructions from anywhere in New Zealand.

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**South Queensland sustentees camp luncheon.** All sustentees are invited to the southern Queensland sustentees annual luncheon in the dining room at the Watson Park Convention Centre, 12.30 pm, Wednesday, September 20. We will be having a sit-down dinner this year, so you will not need to bring your plates. The luncheon will cost \$7 per person, and this is payable at the door. Sustentees visiting from other conferences are welcome to attend, too. For more information phone Beryl on (07) 5546 3015 or Bob on (07) 3286 2637.

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**Hydrotherapy course** at Cedarvale Health and Lifestyle Centre. Hands-on experience in learning simple treatments for common ailments. Limited space only. October 22–29. Phone (02) 4465 1362 for details.

## Weddings

**Dackner—Brown.** Johan Dackner, son of Bjorn and Anita Dackner (Sweden), and Lynette Brown, daughter of Ewan and Wiladelle Brown (Kings Langley, NSW), were married on 16.4.00 at St Andrews Church, Wentworth Falls.

David Robertson

**Greenfield—McDonald.** Ernest Graham Greenfield, son of Alfred and Sarah Greenfield, and Gloria Joy McDonald, daughter of James and Elizabeth McDonald, were married on 24.4.00 at Wanganui Function Centre, Wanganui, NNZ.

Richard Felkel

**Hopper—Kang.** Graeme Paul Hopper, son of Neville and Beverley Hopper (Sydney, NSW), and Lisa Leah Kang, daughter of George and Yvonne Kang (Lake Macquarie), were married on 25.6.00 at the Morisset Hospital Chapel, Morisset.

Rex Moe

**Paiti—Hollands.** Kotiau "Mac" Paiti, son of Bill and Tapaeru Paiti (Glenroy, Vic), and Daisy Hollands, daughter of Bill (Invercargill, SNZ) and Lili Hollands (Collingwood, Vic), were married on 2.8.00 at Collingwood.

Morrie Krieg

**Simonds—Cruickshanks.** Peter George Simonds and Margaret Murray Cruickshanks, both of the Gold Coast, Qld, were married on 2.7.00 in the Southport Adventist church.

Heino Vysma

## Obituaries

**Clarke,** Sylvia Clarice (nee Gray), born 9.9.17 at Lismore, NSW; died 21.5.00 at home in Wishart, Qld. She was predeceased by her son, Ivan, in 1979. She is survived by her husband, Norman (Wishart); her children, Lindsay (Ipswich), Neal and Kay (both of Brisbane). She will be sadly missed by her husband and children.

Ray Fraser

**Kaczmarek,** Teodor, born 8.9.26 in the Ukraine; died 16.6.00 at Albury, NSW. He is survived by his wife, Lyn; his daughter and son-in-law, Anna and Geoff; and his two grandchildren. Teodor was a remarkable survivor who demonstrated incredible fortitude and a positive attitude in the face of great difficulties. He was a quiet, hard worker and devoted to his family.

Wolfgang Stefani

**Lodge,** Edward George, born 18.1.52 at Taumaranui, NNZ; died 4.7.00 at Hillstone, NSW. He is survived by his sister, Merle (Minyama, Qld); his brother, Rex; and his sisters, Bev, Ruth and Inez (NZ).

Mark Pearce

**McHaffie,** John (Jack) Orr, born 29.8.03 at Stranraer, Scotland; died 12.6.00 in Sydney, NSW. He was predeceased by his wife, Mary, on 23.1.94. Jack was 92 when he was baptised by Pastor Bruce Price at Waitara church on 28.1.95. He loved to be with people and was affectionately known as "Uncle Jack" by the children.

Colin Tyler, Kevin Brown

## South Pacific Division Session.

Notice is hereby given that a regular session of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists will be convened during the period Monday evening, October 30, to Saturday night, November 4, in the Main Convention Hall of the Rydges Hotel, London Circuit, Canberra City, ACT. The business of the session will be as provided for in the constitution of the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and will include a proposal to realign the boundaries of unions in the South Pacific Division and amendments to the constitution. The first meeting will commence at 7 pm on Monday, October 30.

B D Oliver, Secretary  
South Pacific Division

**For sale—Wahroonga, NSW.** 3 BR home next to Sydney Adventist Hospital, SDA primary school. Granny flat. Triple garage (or workshop and boat or caravan undercover parking). Phone owner (02) 9487 4152. \$A420,000 ono. Some owner finance available.

## Missing members—Papanui church.

The Papanui Seventh-day Adventist church is needing to make contact with the following people: Mrs Heather Topp, Mr Kevin Jones, Mr Brian Proudley, Mrs Val Proudley, Miss Maxine Taumafai. If you are able to help, please contact Ivor Petrie, 23 Swift Street, Christchurch, NZ 8005 or email <sdapapanui@xtra.co.nz> or fax +64 3 323 6074 or phone +64 3 323 6054.



## Volunteers needed

**Health Education Assistant—ADRA—PNG.** Provide technical and management support to the health-education program as required. Assisting volunteer health trainers as they work with communities to improve health. Term: 12 months, commencing November 1, 2000, to October 31, 2001.

**Literacy Program Assistant—ADRA—PNG.** Support the Literacy Program Coordinator with the overall management and implementation of the ADRA—PNG Literacy Program. Term: 12 months, commencing November 2, 2000, to October 31, 2001.

**HIV/AIDS Program Assistant—ADRA—PNG.** Support the HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator with the overall management and implementation of the ADRA—PNG HIV/AIDS program in Morobe. Term 12 months, commencing November 1, 2000, to October 31, 2001.

**Regional Office Manager, Port Moresby—ADRA—PNG.** The challenge and satisfaction of assisting people who live in the urban settlements with literacy, income generation and easier access to food will also be mixed with networking and representing ADRA—PNG to national government authorities, foreign embassies and other large NGOs in Port Moresby. Term: 12 months, commencing February 2, 2000, to January 31, 2001.

**Fly'n'build Project—Rabaul, PNG.** Tradespeople needed (carpenters, concreters, blocklayers) to build a new church. When: Middle of October, early November 2000 for approx 2-3 weeks (dates to be confirmed). Those in Australia contact Eric White (02) 9847 3333 or <ewhite@adventist.org.au> Those in New Zealand contact Robbie Ereeg, phone/fax NZ (09) 403 8460.

*For further information contact Pastor Eric White, Coordinator, Volunteer Services, South Pacific Division, Locked Bag 2014, Wahroonga NSW 2076. Phone (02) 9847 3333; fax (02) 9489 0943; email <ewhite@adventist.org.au> website <volunteers.gc.adventist.org>*

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Adventist Theological Society



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Director - Institute of Archeology

12th September (Tues) - Gosford SDA Church at 7.30pm  
13th September (Wed) - Avondale Memorial Church at 7.30pm  
15th September (Fri) - Wahroonga SDA Church at 7.30pm

16th September (Sabbath) - NSW Conference  
Regional Day, Newcastle

17th September - 23rd September (daily) -  
Sth QLD Conference Camp Meeting, Kallangur

## ALL WELCOME

All enquiries regarding Adventist Theological Society -  
PO Box 876, Pennant Hills NSW 1715

ATS is not an official church organisation, but is supportive of the church



## Director of Men's Residence

Avondale College is seeking to appoint a Director of Men's Residence for the Cooranbong campus, for a four-year term commencing January 2001.

The successful applicant will be required to oversee the operation of the Men's Residence. Administration, pastoral care and counselling are significant aspects of the role. The applicant should provide evidence of pastoral and/or teaching experience with a special emphasis in youth ministry.

Further information and selection criteria may be obtained from Pastor Trafford Fischer, Director of Student Services, phone (02) 4980 2146 or from the web site: <www.avondale.edu.au>

Applications should address the selection criteria, include a curriculum vitae, the names of two referees and should be addressed to the President, Dr G A Madigan, PO Box 19, Cooranbong NSW 2265 by 5.00 pm, September 26, 2000.

Avondale College reserves the right to invite applications.



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*by Alexander Ponomarov*

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