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FOCUS

SOUTH QUEENSLAND CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

12,000 INDIVIDUALS, ONE CONFERENCE

It's quite difficult to be able to encapsulate in only a few short words the reality of life for our Conference.

So we try to do this in numbers, as effective or ineffective as that may be. We have more than 12,000 Seventh-day Adventists here in South Queensland across 106 worshipping churches, companies, and groups. We have seven schools, four Aged Care facilities, and two campgrounds that we administer, as well as two locations for our Adventist Book Centres. And just this year, we were blessed to move into a brand-new Admin and Resource Centre in the heart of the Brisbane CBD.

Those numbers don't happen by chance. God is building an organisation and a movement, and it is a tribute to every individual who contributes voluntarily to the life of their Adventist community. All of those people who invest so much of their time, energy, thought, welfare and wealth give so much, and the South Queensland Conference would not be what it is without those individuals.

So, as 2015 draws to a close, I'd like to pay tribute to every single member of our church who gives their life in helping others to be ready for the return of Jesus. This also extends to our pastors and teachers who have heard the call of God, have said, "Yes, we want to follow what God has called us to do," and who choose to give their gifts and talents back to God.

In the end, it's not about bricks and mortar and timber and buildings. It's about the lives of individuals, and how each one of us can have an impact on the person we work next to, or the neighbour we live next door to. It's about the opportunities God gives us daily to share His love, and to share our experience of His love with others. Ultimately, we serve a risen God who is coming again soon, and we are excited to be a part of that overall dynamic.

Wishing you and your family a blessed and safe Christmas, as we look forward to seeing what God has in store for our South Queensland family in 2016.

PASTOR COLIN RENFREW
GENERAL SECRETARY

ADVENTIST CHURCH *in South Queensland*
LEARN MORE. LIVE MORE. LOVE MORE.™

Running the Race —Christia Willcocks

In search for the big secret to completing the 88-kilometres Comrades Marathon from Durban to Pietermaritzburg in South Africa, I quizzed a variety of experienced runners and athletes. It was my dad who imparted the big secret to me. Unlocking the mystery stood me in good stead on June 3, 2012 and more recently on May 31, 2015.

It was 33 years ago that my father Costas, and his best friend, Trevor, lined up for their first Comrades Marathon, rather unprepared and naive as to what they would face that race day. From that day onward, they participated for many years in this race that is engrained in the culture of South Africa and has drawn thousands from around the world to its rich heritage, electric atmosphere, exceptional camaraderie and incredible volunteer service. Volunteers look after stations loaded with refreshments every 2 kilometres of the route. Add to that the spectators who line the course from start to finish with locals cheering, barbecuing, and offering their hospitality to the runners, and you have a race that is unlike any other race in the world. It is no wonder it has become the world's largest and most popular running event.

Without the strong legacy imparted by Dad and Trevor, I probably wouldn't have been inclined to enter an ultramarathon. But the memories of standing on the sidelines as a little girl excitedly supporting them with painful tummy cramps that come with childhood excitement and super early wake-ups obviously left indelible, positive memories!

Those who know will relate to the turmoil and paralysing fear that grips one in the days leading up to an event: the phantom pains, the self-doubt and fear of failure. Two days before Comrades, my throat was a bit thick and scratchy. My brother, Ruan, and my dad had spent all week coughing and spluttering near me. We were all dosing up on Vitamin C to ward away illness but it appeared their bug was finally getting to me. The day before the May 31 race, I felt quite out of sorts, particularly in the guts and glands and I knew it was more than race nerves. My biggest fear was fever. I knew fever would exclude me from the race, as I wouldn't risk my health. Race morning arrived and I felt much the same.

To perform your best on race day, everyone tells you to remain calm, but the full romance and experience of the event, along with the butterflies and adrenaline sweep you off your feet, and your heart can't help but respond enthusiastically!

As Ruan and I arrived at the start with the other 18,000 runners, we said farewell to each other and headed off to our respective seeding batches, based on our qualifying marathon time. We had agreed from the outset that we would each run our own race given the time, resource and effort that had been invested into training for and getting to this event. It would be a bonus to bump into each other on the course. This was Ruan's first Comrades as a runner, and my dad's first as a spectator. nineteen years ago we emigrated from South Africa to New Zealand as a family, so today was a historical day for Ruan and me, together attempting this race that our dad had completed 13 times, looking forward to proudly greeting him at the finish line.



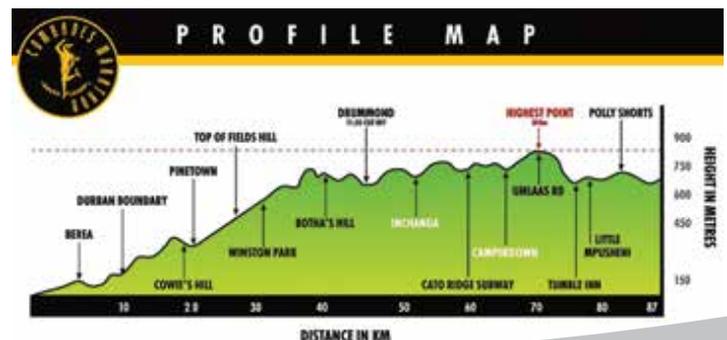
The atmosphere at the start in Durban was electric. With about 15 minutes to go, all of us were tightly packed. It was chilly at 5am, but there was a deep heat from the almost 20,000 people there.

Eventually it was time to sing the national anthem and South Africa's favourite folk song, "Shozolozza". It was the most moving few minutes, tears streaming down our faces, singing with gusto in unity—all nations, ages and sizes, all united together. After "Chariots of Fire" boomed through the loud speakers, the cock crowed and we were off!

Christopher McDougall, author of *Born to Run*, says you have to relax into a long run like easing your body into a hot bath, until it no longer resists the shock and begins to enjoy it. After countless long training runs in the months leading up to the race, I was ready for this usual feeling, but with the added pressure of finishing the race within the strict 12-hour cutoff time. At the 12-hour cutoff the race marshal fires the finish gun, the finish line is barricaded and runners that don't make it are diverted from the finish with no medal.

As the balmy, rather humid 5.30 am air sat on our shoulders, I felt as if I were home in Brisbane. It didn't take long for me to discard my outer layer and settle in. However, as the first few kilometers progressed, I became very aware of a unsettled tummy. The perpetual hills from the start were broken up with brief descents, which were a welcome relief.

As Cowies Hill—the first of the "Big Five" hills of Comrades —approached, I was really concerned about how I was feeling, as nausea had settled in. I decided to seek medical attention to make sure all was normal. I spent the next 8 kilometres asking the hundreds of spectators lining the streets where the next medic was—to no avail. Eventually, at around the 35-kilometres mark, I found a medic van and they took my blood pressure and pulse. It was all fairly normal but I felt awful. It was one of those big decision moments: to quit or keep going. At that moment, a flood of all the outstanding support I had received from my family and friends rushed through my head. It was the clear, defining moment in my



race, one where I also remembered my last Comrades experience and its tough finish, even though it was a horrendous “day at the office”. I stepped out of the medic van, deciding to overrule the ill feeling and soldier on.

My legs felt good as Fields Hill, then Bothas Hill were conquered, numbers 2 and 3 of the Big 5 Hills. Signs of fatigue were becoming apparent, with pain and a sore lower back as I descended after each rise. I used the descents to make up time for the walk/run strategy up the average 2.1-kilometres hill climbs. I was thankful for Mt Coot-tha and other similar runs through the training period that had prepared me for this day.

I stuck to my race nutrition plan alternating gels, Endurolytes and chewable protein tablets at various time segments. As time progressed, the thick, sweet gels became a bit ordinary and the chalky protein tablets started becoming an exercise in willpower to take. But I knew they were the difference between hitting a wall or not, and cramping or not. Thankfully, the plan worked perfectly with neither wall nor cramp hindering my journey. I just had to battle this strange nausea and the head game, and keep reminding myself of Dad’s secret to finishing the race.

There seemed to be an endless number of unnamed hills, and by the 65-kilometres mark, I was starting to count down in 5-kilometres increments. It was getting miserable. I wondered how Ruan must be going and where on the course he might be. There wasn’t much talking at all by any of us runners, just the odd encouragement as we passed those pulled over on the side of the road with cramps or legs seizing, their faces flinched in pain. The crowds willed us all on, calling us by name from our race numbers; lots of cute little African kids begging for high fives as we ran past.

It was a great day to be one of 250 other Australians in the race. We received loud cheers and chants from the sidelines. As the road wound on and on, past scenic countryside all the way to Polly Shortts—the last of the Big Five hills—we were greeted by the hill of all heartbreak hills. On its own, it is a challenge, but having already done 76 kilometres, it is a nightmare. You are exhausted, feet in agony, your mind on the edge of giving up, and the sun continues to shine directly into your face, the way it has since you started climbing the second Big Hill. It was half way up Polly that I started feeling really dizzy and had to concentrate so hard, hoping I wouldn’t faint. There was no way I was able to run much and my power walk had to pull back to normal walk to conserve energy. Eventually, after what seemed like an eternity, I crested this nasty hill, with 7 kilometres to go. I pulled together what I could and shuffled as I could down the moderate descent toward Pietermaritzburg city centre.

In a standard marathon, 7-kilometres-to-go feels like forever, and this day felt no different. My bladder was feeling full, and the 26°C warm, sunny day was taking its toll. I didn’t want to stop for fear of seizing up, but I also realised that if I could just keep hanging on, I had every chance of finishing under 10.5 hours, which was within my goal time. There were only a few nasty little hills on the way to the finish.

With about 2.5 kilometres to go, I looked ahead and the formidable stature of my tall brother was in front of me! It was the most welcome sight; a speechless moment. I had so many questions, and so did he, but neither of us had much energy to talk. It was such a memorable and delightful moment, finding my own, dear brother! Our spirits were buoyed. We took a couple of short walk breaks, but now our pace was quickening as we turned left into the street running alongside the stadium.

As we turned right into the stadium access road and then left into the arena, we were ecstatic, yelling and cheering, keeping a keen eye out for our parents and my husband, Russ, with our three boys. Among the thousands of stadium spectators, it was no surprise not to see them at first. After almost a full lap of the track, we rounded the corner, legs taking us on the approach to that beckoning finish line. With a roar, we lurched across that finish line together, hand in hand, to finish in 10 hours and 27 minutes.

What we didn’t know was our family had been stuck in a car park of traffic on the highway from Durban to Pietermaritzburg for more than five hours with the traffic jam barely moving. About 4 kilometres from the stadium, Russ ran down the highway to the stadium in the hope he might see us finish. He didn’t. And neither did my boys, and neither did our mum or our dad.

But Ruan and I had each other. I believe it was Divine providence that we found each other on the racecourse when we did.

Race day means hours of solitude spent on the road in training while most are sleeping, celebrating, relaxing, and picnicking by the beach. But every so often, committing to a goal that demands self-denial and discipline produces benefits that outweigh the sacrifice. Comrades taught me the value of perseverance—not giving up when things seem or feel hopeless.

A favourite verse of mine is Hebrews 12:1–3: “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” This race was as much a spiritual journey as a physical one. I am thankful for a God who loves us and enjoys being part of our lives.

It was as I crossed the finish lined that I confirmed again Dad’s secret to finishing this event was true. And the secret? On race day you wake up and you say to yourself, “Christia, today you are running to Pietermaritzburg.”





Missions to Mongolia

Caboolture church (with some Gold Coast Central members as well) this year again sent a team of eight to the birthplace of Ghengis (Chiggis) Kahn. Last year, our church in Chiggis consisted of two members and the pastoral family, who were very thankful to the Queensland-led team that built a new church there under the leadership of Peter Koolik with the support of the General Conference. This year, however, the mission was to work alongside this little church—which has now grown to around 12 regular attenders—to deepen its engagement with the community around it. Our mission was simply to pray and work for doors to open that will bring avenues for community development and gospel encounters.

The team arrived with stories of God’s provision in making their travel possible, and miraculously raising enough funds to buy sewing machines and equipment for the mission. Through sewing classes, healthy food cooking demonstrations, health talks and health checks, the Chiggis team witnessed many answers to prayer. As the community attended, including many officials, strong relationships were forged with prison staff, kindy staff and government leaders. A secondary aim was to begin raising up local Mongolian church members to lead the ongoing work. Leaders from the Health Department have asked our team to return next year to pro-

vide annual training for their staff across the entire province of Khentii—19 medical centres in total! The fortnight finished with a gospel concert that was packed out by 160 of the people we had come to know in that time.

The entire team returned home greatly challenged, stretched, exhausted and blessed! We encourage everyone to get involved in mission—anywhere, anytime!

PASTOR RUSS WILLCOCKS, CABOOLTURE





A team from Ipswich church went to Mongolia for two weeks to assist the local Adventist church in Nalaikh City, just 45 minutes out of the capital, Ulaanbatar. The team enjoyed a fruitful fortnight of ministry helping the church build connections with the community through English lessons in the local high school, guitar lessons and games. Each night featured a special evangelistic presentation and many community visitations, often to very poor families. Some exciting sightseeing outings to the Gobi Desert and other temples gave the team a great understanding of the diversity and culture of Mongolia. The team was blessed to see God's hand in many aspects of the trip, and this experience has given the team a special insight into Ipswich Church's vision of "Multiplying Disciples who Connect, Grow, Serve and Share Jesus."

LACHLAN CAMPBELL, IPSWICH

In the last two weeks of October, Gold Coast Central Church sent a delegation of five missionaries to Mongolia to complete mission activities. Some of these activities included commu-

nity support work, health lectures and evangelistic series. When we arrived, we visited the local town governor who explained to us that he was very supportive of the Adventist mission in his town and was looking forward to seeing how the mission would benefit the local people. We visited the local people every day we were there and brought them gifts of flour and mills, which were very much appreciated. The local people were very warm and friendly, welcomed us into their homes and were also very keen to visit the local church to see what was going on there. Every night we ran programs including guitar lessons, English lessons, art and craft classes, health lectures and an evangelistic presentation. On the last day we rejoiced with four baptisms and 15 people from the community raised their hands for baptismal studies. Praise the Lord that He was by our side all the way and His Holy Spirit was at work in the hearts of the local people. The team loved Mongolia and we look forward to returning there soon!

WAYNE HUMPHRIES, GOLD COAST CENTRAL



Once in a Lifetime Adventure

ATSIM Bible Lands Tour

As the title indicates, recently my wife Beryl and I had the opportunity to travel overseas on an incredible adventure. We enjoyed a trip to the Bible lands and then on to the General Conference constituency meeting held in San Antonio, Texas. We also had the opportunity to travel with colleagues and friends from around Australia.

Not having travelled overseas before, there was an excitement mixed with nervousness about the unknown. We wondered if we would get caught up in the possible dangers of what was happening in the Middle East. As it turns out, God blessed our travelling party and we only had a few incidents that caused the heart to tick a little faster.

Our trip started with four amazing days in Dubai with our local host Colin, whom we met for the first time at the Dubai airport and immediately built a great rapport with. Having lived in Dubai for several years and Saudi Arabia for 16 years, he took us to places only locals know about, explained Arab culture and the Muslim ways of life, and treated us as if we were his own family. New Dubai is a very clean precinct filled with amazing architecture like the Burj Khalifa—the world’s tallest building—and huge shopping malls. However, old Dubai is home to many Souks, pronounced “sooks”. These are market places selling all types of spices and miscellaneous wares, often shipped in from Iran across the Persian Gulf. The air was filled with wonderful aromas for all to smell. If you wish to buy gold at bargain prices, they even have an area catering for that. I was amazed to see shop after shop filled with gold jewellery in all shapes and sizes just sitting on display tables guarded by one merchant, maybe two. No one worries about theft over there due to very harsh penalties for those who get caught. It was incredible to see a kilometre of all kinds of white goods, electrical equipment and other expensive items just sitting by the side of the road waiting to be loaded onto primitive rickety trading boats. Articles for sale remain out in the open and uncovered, no security cameras, no security fences and no security guards.

Leaving Dubai, we headed for Amman, Jordan’s capital. What a culture shock! Immediately we could see the lack of financial structure compared with their southern neighbours. No big flashy buildings or mansions, rubbish all over the place, beaten up old cars, and Bedouins living by the side of the road in their worn-out tents and tarps with their flocks of goats, sheep and a few camels. It was like stepping back in time to the days of Jesus. This was a great experience: ancient culture in its raw form. After a visit to the ancient Jordanian city of Jerash, we then headed toward Israel.

Crossing the Jordan-Israeli border for the first time was yet again another amazing experience for me. The ongoing unrest between the two countries means that the military are always on guard. The tension can be felt at every border cross-

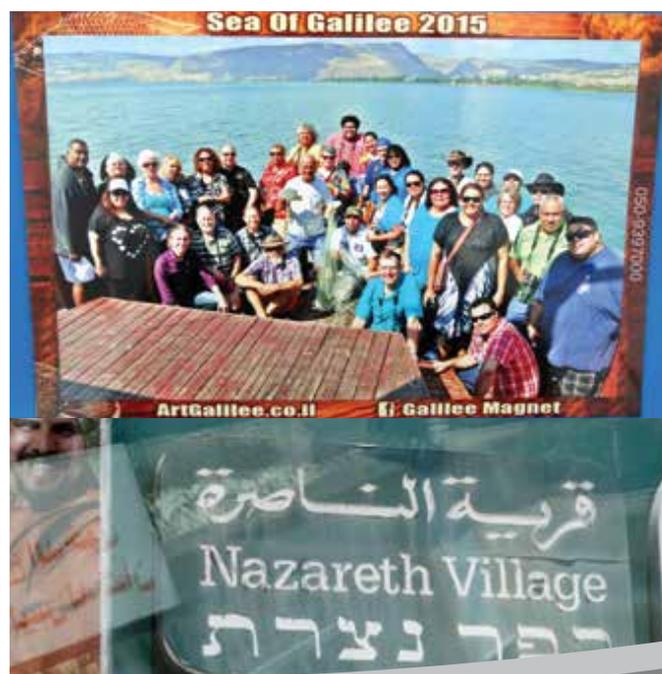
ing, and you are never really sure what’s going to happen. I am still amazed at seeing Israeli soldiers, some as young as 18 years old, strapped with high-powered automatic weapons not only at border checkpoints but in the streets of Jerusalem. We had an unsettling feeling each time we came across them.

However, there were moments of beauty. I remember the first glimpse of the Sea of Galilee, its stillness and captivating rich blue hue. How beautiful it looked with the afternoon sun shimmering over the water and the layers of ancient bordering mountains. I couldn’t help but think, “Wow! I’m actually in the land where Jesus lived and ministered and healed.” I felt an immediate connection with Jesus, and was so eager to begin exploring. The recent glamour of Dubai was immediately pushed to the back of my mind, because walking in the footsteps of Jesus—that is what it’s all about.

In stark contrast to dry and barren Jordan, Israel was lush green with vineyards, crops and fruit plantations around every windy bend as we headed north to our first stop, Tiberius. Over the next few days, we sailed the Sea of Galilee, scaled the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus delivered His most famous sermon, and spent time in Capernaum where Jesus set up headquarters during His ministry years. Other places we visited or spotted from the road were Magdala, Mt Tabor (Transfiguration), and where the Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee.

Entering into Nazareth where Jesus grew up was especially meaningful. He was rejected by His own here in this town. I really enjoyed visiting the walk through model village of Nazareth in Jesus’ time: winepresses, tools, ladies spinning wool and weaving, and a simple Middle Eastern lunch with the best lentil soup I’ve ever tasted.

Moving south, we arrived in Jerusalem. I couldn’t help but think that this was where my Lord died for me. It was a time



of mixed emotions, to think I was actually standing in the city of crucifixion. Those thoughts were interrupted by the hustle and bustle of a very busy city, a city that seemed to have no time for their King. I sat and reflected at the Wailing Wall as I witnessed many, pious Jews praying for Messiah to come and the restoration of Israel. If only they could understand He's already come and finished His mission, and is about to return soon to claim those who believe.

Jerusalem had highs and lows for me. I was annoyed by the amount of commercialism connected with Jesus and His ministry. People who probably don't even believe in Jesus sold all types of Christian trinkets to make a living. There was also an overwhelming number of shrines and churches built in honour of Jesus, Mary and the Apostles, but only seem to be maintained for tourists, not for congregations to worship.

One of the highlights of my trip, however, was walking through Hezekiah's Tunnel—this was authentic! Several meters underground in pitch darkness, sometimes in knee-high water, we made our way through the 530 metres of narrow hand-dug tunnel dating back to 7-8 century BC. Another highlight was the Garden Tomb. It is suggested this was the site where Jesus was buried, as it is right beside a natural cliff face that did have some resemblance to a skull. As a group we all sat silently, reflecting on our risen Saviour.

It was good to leave Jerusalem and head south to the Dead Sea. Included in this part of the trip was a visit to Qumran, home of the famous Dead Sea scrolls. Places such as these are filled with amazing history and wonderful views out over the Dead Sea. Of course, we had to take the opportunity to go for a float in the Dead Sea, which was a wonderful experience. Even if you're over 100 kilograms you can't sink! After our float, we made a quick trip to Jericho and then headed to Petra, which I had been so excited to visit. But then one hour before we were to start our trek, the unbelievable happened: I had a massive lower back muscle spasm, causing excruciating pain. I was determined not to miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so I swallowed a few painkillers and bravely joined the group, knowing this day would be filled with agony.

Petra is an amazing place, hidden for centuries among the mountains in southern Jordan. To get there, you first need to weave your way through a long, magnificent, multi-coloured gorge filled with carved religious sculptures to pagan gods, tombs and dwelling places. While these carvings captured our attention, we also needed to keep an eye out for horse-

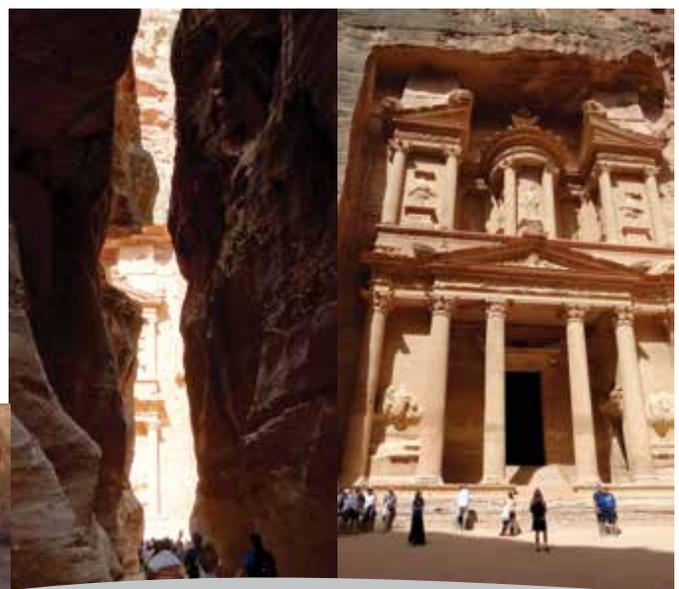
drawn sulkies and donkey taxis transporting people in and out of the main tourist site. There is no such thing as "Give way to pedestrians" in Petra!

Petra was all that I thought it would be and more. It is hard to explain how remarkable it is to see this once-thriving city of trade that has been carved out of rock. Homes, worship centres, tombs, shops—everything was carved, nothing was built. Some of our group climbed a narrow goat track to a mountain peak that was the High Place of Sacrifice. A little further from there and we had our feet dangling over the edge of the mountain looking down over the breathtaking view of Petra and surrounding villages. Our guide for the Jordan trips was Mohamed; his family lived in one of those villages and could trace their heritage back 700 years. What a blessing it was to sit there with our guide and listen to him sharing stories and folk tales about the Petra region. It was such a rich experience I'll never forget it as long as I live. I thank God for giving me strength to endure that day!

As I look back on my once-in-a-lifetime adventure, I'm very grateful for the whole experience. There were many laughs, stunning views, long hard days of walking, great Middle Eastern food and interesting cultural experiences. But did the trip help me spiritually? Undoubtedly. I now read the Gospels with a much clearer view of what the writer is talking about. It has certainly done much to strengthen my faith by walking where Jesus walked, sailing where He sailed, eating what He ate and being in the place where He paid the ultimate price for my sins.

I am so grateful that I had that experience and be moved in my spirit with a greater sense of oneness with God.

**PASTOR DAVID GARRARD,
DIRECTOR OF ATSIM & DREAMTRACK**





A TRIP TO CHINA

A group of 88 Adventists enjoyed Christian fellowship on a 15-day tour of China during October. The organiser, Pastor David Lawson, described the journey as “a fantastic, fabulous, fascinating and exhausting cultural experience.”

Each day started with morning worship, followed by a packed day experiencing the sights and sounds of modern China. Streets were crowded with cars, millions of them travelling bumper to bumper in multiple lanes. These bustling urban centres are massive with populations larger than the whole of Australia. The largest city, Chongqing, has a population of 33 million with Beijing and Shanghai not far behind. In contrast, the tranquil countryside offered spectacular natural scenery, evidence of God’s hand in creation.

The tour commenced in Beijing where reminders of China’s ancient history and the modern nation are side by side. Sights visited included the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, pandas at the Beijing Zoo and the Olympic Village. From Beijing, the group flew to Xian where Sabbath services took place

in the hotel conference room. Highlights included visits to Mt Huashan, famous for its steepness, and the Terra Cotta Warriors. From Xian, the group travelled on the bullet train to Yichang to join a five-day cruise on the Yangtze River, which ended in Chongqing.

Shanghai was the final destination, fascinating during both the day and night. The group took a night cruise along with Huangpu River with its unceasing river traffic, glittering skyscrapers on the Pudong side and the colonial-era buildings on the Bund side. One of the highlights in Shanghai was the visit to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the business centre, where about 2000 people worship each Sabbath.

The group flew back to Australia together with a new understanding of China. It was also an opportunity to travel with like-minded Christians, make new friendships and renew old ones.

For more information on next year’s tour, see the Notice Board page 14.

PASTOR DAVID LAWSON



PINE RIVERS

HONOURING CHARLES RUSSELL



Charles Russell, a member of Pine Rivers church, recently retired from the Queensland Ambulance Service after 38 years. He worked as a paramedic in Brisbane, as well as several years in a country station. More recently, he had been involved in managing training for paramedics at state headquarters. Charles says he had the tremendous privilege of holding new-born babies in his arms as they breathed their first breath and caring for elderly patients as they breathed their last, and tending to a range of human pain, grief and suffering in between. He has been pleased to serve the people of Queensland and is looking forward to retiring to the Sunshine Coast.

ARTICLE & PHOTO: CHRISTINA RUSSELL

CAPALABA

INTERESTED IN CHIP?



LIFESTYLE
MEDICINE
INSTITUTE

After 22 people successfully completed CHIP in July, 2015, Capalaba church is excited to be offering another program in 2016. This will be running from February 2 to March 20, 2016. Our 2015 program showed great results, with dramatic reduction in cholesterol levels and also weight loss. The participants were excited about having increased energy, better digestion, improved mood and less joint pain! All within a supportive non-judgmental environment, that is conducive to making positive choices!

To find out more about how you can turn your health around, come and at-

tend our free Information Session on Sunday, January 17, 2016, from 6-7 pm.

Location: Lifestyle Community Centre, 450 Mount Cotton Road, Capalaba. Further details: Julie on 0413 251 865

ARTICLE: JENNIFER LUDWIG
PALANGEANU

COOROY CAKES FOR CHARITY

On November 28, the Cooroy church held a sausage sizzle and cake auction to raise additional funds for the drought relief charity "Buy a Bale". The church had already been collecting 50-cent pieces in a special offering each week, and had accumulated quite a hefty sum. But in order to really drive up the total donation, members of the church were asked to bake a cake to be auctioned off at the church social. An impressive variety of cakes, slices and cupcakes were assembled on the evening and our auctioneer Ross Reid was able to get some lively bidding going for some of the larger cakes and beautifully decorated items. Social Coordinators Clacy Fatnowna and Jack Presecan declared the evening a huge success—which brought the total raised (so far) for the charity to more than \$870. Their prayer is that the money will make a difference in the lives of our fellow Australians who are struggling in difficult circumstances.

ARTICLE & PHOTO: GEORGINA HOBSON



MAROOCHYDORE HELP WITH HEALTH

2015 has been a "Health Outreach" year at Maroochydore church. Programs progressively presented have included CHIP (3 graduates), Depression Recovery (6 graduates), Dr. Posture and Vegetarian Cooking. A number of people also attend our continuing cooking demonstrations and our Dr. Posture program has been videoed and handed out to many who couldn't attend. It has been a successful year promoting the health programs and we look forward to another year in 2016.

ARTICLE & PHOTO: KEN DOVE

KINGAROY WHEN JESUS CALLS, THE BEST THING TO DO IS FOLLOW!

This is what five young people chose to do on November 21 at Kingaroy church, when they were baptised.

Lex and Daniel Tasker are brothers. Both of them made their decision to be baptised at Big Camp in the Young Adults tent. Lex doesn't like shoes, he has grown a lot in his faith and he has learnt to put down his iPad during Bible studies. He has also learned to trust in Jesus for everything. Daniel is a perfectionist when it comes to keeping his notes in good order, but he has a very strong belief that living for Jesus is the best path for his life.

Antoinette and Georgia Nassif are sisters. Last year, a Year 7 girl in my Religious Instruction class at Kingaroy State School came up to me and said, "Sir,

you are my pastor." I didn't recognise her, so I said, "Are you sure?" It turns out that she had visited our church but I had not met her yet, so she was right and I was wrong. Later that year, her sister Georgia requested Bible studies, and Antoinette also came along. Georgia is a prayer warrior who loves to sing and play sports and is a great role model at school. She also loves smiling. Both of them have learned that Jesus is the one who can help them out with everything they are going through.

Giovannah is my only daughter. She has wanted to jump in the baptismal font since she first saw a baptism. Curiosity leads her to ask many questions in our Bible-study time, and she has known from a young age that life with Jesus is not only the best way to live, but the only way to live. On Sabbath, she was baptised at her request by her grandfather Pastor Sioutu Okesene. Pastor Sioutu said that he was privileged to baptise his granddaughter, and that he was also happy that at his age, he was still strong enough to lift her back out of the water.

Praise God! It was a joyful day of celebration for everyone in attendance, including the many guests and family who had travelled from faraway to be there.

ARTICLE & PHOTO: GIDEON OKESENE



NOOSA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR YEAR 12S

Noosa Christian College (NCC), Cooroy is pleased to congratulate the class of 2015 on their graduation from Year 12. They celebrated with a formal dinner at Sheraton Noosa Resort on November 19. The seven ladies and two gentlemen looked wonderful in their formal attire and were happy to share such an exciting occasion with their families and friends.



A special milestone for the College was reached with two of our Prep students from the first year of NCC's operation in 2003 graduating from Year 12. Hannah Martin and Donna Christensen were pleased to share a photo with their former principal Ross Reid, who led the College from its inception in 2003 until his retirement in 2012.

Congratulations to each one of our graduating students—they are such a great bunch of people and we wish them God's blessings for a bright future!

Editor's Note: Congratulations to all our Year 12s on finishing school! As a Conference family, we are proud of you, and know God will bless you wherever you go. For more Year 12 formal photos, see page 12.

ARTICLE & PHOTO: GEORGINA HOBSON

IPSWICH ADVENTIST SCHOOL

WORLD FOOD DAY

IAS students participated in World Food Day on October 16 by getting into action! They brought in non-perishable items of food to support a local Ipswich Foodbarn who, in turn, help families in need.

It was great to watch the children adding their contribution to the collection and they were excited to be able to help in such a way. As you can see by the photo, when we all work together and do our little bit, we can make a BIG difference.

Thank you for your generous contributions to our community service project.

ARTICLE & PHOTO: NADIA GOLTZ



DARLING DOWNS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MAKING GOOD LIFE CHOICES

In November we were privileged to have Peter Janetzki come to our school and speak to the Year 10, 11 and 12s about emotional resiliency and how to cope with the pressures of life. Peter is a counsellor, educator, author and talk back radio host on Christian radio in Brisbane. He focused on five key areas: Healthy Diet, Healthy Activity, Healthy Sleep, Healthy Relationship with Myself and finally, Healthy Relationships with God and Others. The students really engaged with this talk and asked many great questions.

Later that evening, Peter took a seminar for parents: 'How to Cope with Children's Anxiety and Depression.' This seminar was advertised in the community and we had over 100 people attend. We had a lot of positive feedback from parents, staff and other community members about the information and strategies provided by Peter's presentation.

The chaplaincy team also made a commitment to personally visit all of the year 12 students and their families in their homes in term four and gave each student a farewell gift. They talked about the goals and aspirations for the future of each student and also prayed a prayer of blessing over them. The parents of the students really appreciated the effort the chaplains made to make a personal connection with their child and the time given in visiting and talking with them. Many of these students were still unsure of what next year held but after discussing this with the chaplains were able to identify their plans more clearly. Three students have made a decision to go to Avondale College.

ARTICLE & PHOTO: ARLAGENE GROVES

GOLD COAST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

SERVICE TO OTHERS REALLY DOES MATTER!

A group of twelve Year 11 and 12 students and two teachers from Gold Coast Christian College laid aside their time to contribute to the inaugural Texas STORM Co trip. STORM Co is coupled with an apt acronym: "Service To Others Really Matters corporation." The trip took place from November 20 to 27. The idea behind the trip (and many others throughout Australia) is to travel to a





smaller remote town and spend a week lending a hand in any way possible. This may be through simple chores at a community member's home or taking on larger projects to benefit the community. Four Year 12 students even decided to participate in the trip instead of spending their time at "Schoolies".

During the week the STORM Co team resided in Texas, two key projects were completed. New pavers were laid at the Heritage Society Museum for easy access. Second, the STORM Co team recreated a series of small gardens at the All Abilities Playground, replacing the masses of mint plants with numerous other herbs. The end result was a beautiful new sensory garden, completed with paving and plenty of delectable and vibrant aromas.

However, the STORM Co team also spent plenty of the time integrating with the community. The team spent a couple of hours at the hospital in the Aged Care department, socialising with and amusing the elderly folk staying there. The teachers in the team also surprised the students with a line dance lesson, where they learned to dance with aid from others who regularly attend the lessons.

A few lucky members of the community even received house visits from the team. These visits entailed gardening, washing, paving, gravelling and even some afternoon tea. Despite the week being scorching and dry, the STORM Co team were blessed and surely enjoyed their stay in Texas.

ARTICLE: KIERAN RENFREW, YEAR 11

NORTHPINE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

CARING FOR STUDENTS IN NEW WAYS

An academic peer-mentoring program and a midday soup kitchen implemented over the past year seem to have made the caring Christian atmosphere of Northpine Christian College rise to new heights.

The Academic Student Peer Mentoring (ASPM) program is the brainchild of Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Gabriela Davies, while the soup kitchen is a "Bible-in-Practice" concept of teacher Ian Baskin. Both initiatives are free to all students who wish to access them.

The ASPM program is particularly designed to align competent senior students with those who are finding the journey challenging or a little more difficult. While one might tend to think the benefit is purely one directional, it goes both ways. "I find that helping others has really helped me consolidate my own learning," says student team leader Tiffanie Turnbull.

Just walking past the room on an ASPM afternoon gives one enough exposure to know that the relaxed atmosphere—including nibbles, drinks and the odd cup of soup—is the type of learning environment most of us only dream about! In fact, the smiles and laughter often mask the reality that deep effectual learning is taking place. Recent educational research finds that genuine learning is facilitated in an environment where quality relationships also grow and flourish.

The soup kitchen idea grew out of a class that attempted to share in a fun and palatable way the diet that the biblical Daniel and his friends chose to eat while prisoners in Babylon. Discovering two teens who were doing it tough due to a lack of food, Mr Baskin implemented the "Daniel's Kitchen" concept the next day.

The Year 12s, however, chose to call it a "Matt 14 Kitchen" in honour of the biblical story in which Jesus feeds more than 5000 from one boy's lunch. And it fits! While the Matt 14 Kitchen makes breakfast available, the demand for lunch is much greater at Northpine.

But "surely parents aren't sending children to school without lunch," some have suggested. Of the approximately 100 students who visit the kitchen on a daily basis, most could survive quite well without soup.

"That's the beauty of the concept," principal Graham Baird says. "Those who choose to access the kitchen, who have no pressing need, normalise the activity for those whose afternoon study is really assisted by having had a decent healthy lunch."

Coupled with the freely available bread, spreads and buns, the Matt 14 Kitchen may offer the healthiest meal some get to eat.

And, who knows, the idea of linking food and community with quality learning practices, may well provide students with the atmosphere that makes them—like Daniel and his friends—10 times wiser!

ARTICLE & PHOTO: IAN BASKIN



Congratulations Year 12s

Brisbane Adventist College



Gold Coast Christian College



Noosa Christian College



Darling Downs Christian School



Northpine Christian College





DISCOVERY

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Website: www.lawsondiscovery.com Email: david@lawsondiscovery.com

Outdoor Instructors Camp Somerset

Camp Somerset is committed to delivering Outdoor Programs "with the Spirit of Adventure".

Camp Somerset has positions available in 2016—Outdoor Instructors and Assistant Outdoor Instructors. These are casual positions to be a part of a great team of casual Outdoor Instructors located at Camp Somerset. Duties include assisting the Program Director with the delivery and development of outdoor-education activities, sharing Jesus through outdoor adventure programs such as Centre-based camps and Journey-based expeditions.

If you have a passion for and have qualifications with previous experience in outdoor education (minimum of Cert 3 in Outdoor Recreation), we would love to hear from you.

Contact us on 07 5426 0126 or email info@campsomerset.com for a position description.

If you are a committed Christian and do not have outdoor qualifications and would like to have information about obtaining outdoor qualifications, please contact Peter Goltz on the number above or email peterg@campsomerset.com.

THANK YOU

The South Queensland Conference would like to acknowledge and thank our members for the following anonymous donations.

May 22, 2015	\$4600
May 28, 2015	\$340
July 31, 2015	\$2100
August 31, 2015	\$125

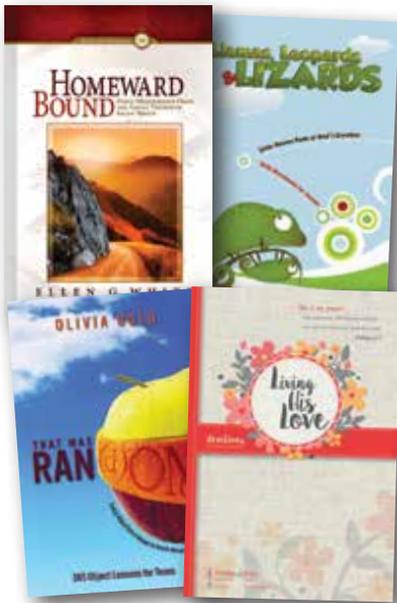
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The store will be closed on Friday, December 25, 2015,
and reopen Monday, January 4, 2016.





EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following are some of the highlights and decisions that were made by the Executive Committee and the Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church (South Queensland Conference) Limited at recent meetings.

The Executive Committee:

- Welcomed Pastor Brett Townend our new Conference President as chair
- Appointed Pastor Brett Townend and Pastor Greg Pratt as members of the three companies (Aged Care; Conference Ltd; Schools).
- Approved Paynter Dixon (Qld) Ltd to project manage to the Design Development and Documentation to BA stage (Stage 1) for the proposed Independent Living Unit Development at Capricorn Adventist Retirement Village (CARV).
- Approved an amendment to the current air-conditioning policy for churches to include retrospective installation costs for rural churches of up to 50 members.
- Approved a range of membership transfers to and from the conference roll.

The Board of Seventh-day Adventist Church (South Queensland Conference) Limited:

- Received a report from the Australian Union Conference (AUC) Administrators Council in relation to protection of children and vulnerable people and the possible

restructuring of how such is administered across the AUC and local conferences.

- Received an update on the SQC sponsorship program of Avondale College theology students.
- Recorded the various ministerial calls to and from the conference.
- Approved the latest Staffing Committee update report.
- Approved the progression of Ministerial intern development from stage 1 to stage 2 and the completion of stage 2 for the respective interns within our conference.
- Received an interim title analysis report for the nine months to September 30, 2015.
- Approved the financial report for the 12 months to December 31, 2014.
- Approved the projected budget increase for 2016 in relation to appointing the following treasury roles: Clerical (1.0 FTE); Senior Accountant L5 (1.0 FTE).

The Appointments Committee:

- To appoint Pastor Sean Berkeley as SQC Youth Director.
- To appoint Ms Alina Coccetti as SQC Tertiary and Young Adult Ministry Director.
- To appoint Mr Eric Anderson as Aged Care Director.

PASTOR COLIN RENFREW, GENERAL SECRETARY

Attention FOCUS Contributors

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