



FOCUS

SOUTH QUEENSLAND CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

Discover Hope at Logan

BY GREG PRATT

The first time Tameka came to the ADRA Centre in Logan, Brisbane, she had no choice—it was a requirement of her Work for the Dole program.

But it didn't take long for her to realise that ADRA was more than just a 'tick box'. This place, and its people, would soon help Tameka transform her life.

Crippling anxiety had followed Tameka since high school, making it hard for her to find suitable employment. It also made it difficult for her to imagine a more hopeful future.

After six months on the Work for the Dole program, Tameka was forced to give up job-seeking in order to care for her unwell mother. But having enjoyed her time at ADRA so much, she continued to volunteer in food preparation for the centre's community meal programs and catering social-enterprise.

She also completed a Certificate II in Hospitality at the centre and launched a small cake-making business.

The training, support and friendship gave Tameka reason to hope again.

"When mum started to improve, I decided to start looking for more work," Tameka says. "But I quickly discovered that a lot of places don't want people with anxiety working for them."

Once again, she found hope at ADRA. Tameka recently received a call from the team at the ADRA Centre, asking if she would be willing to be the Supervisor for new

Hospitality trainees. It was a paid position at a place that she loved.

"It's a pretty awesome feeling. I didn't expect things to end up like this," she says. "It's a great community and great team to belong to."



This October you can help others like Tameka hang on to hope. Support the ADRA Appeal to ensure projects like the ADRA Community Centre at Logan receive the support they need.

Visit adra.org.au/hangon for more.



Unity for Mission

BY BRETT TOWNEND, PRESIDENT

I'm constantly challenged by the words we find in scripture addressing the concept of unity in the church. Topping my list are the words of Jesus himself who prays, "That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" John 17:21.

Is unity in the church an elusive dream, or is it a real possibility that we pursue? In some places I find it very elusive, but in others I take courage as I see it in action in very tangible ways.

One thing seems certain to me: we will never have unity if that means everyone seeing things the same way! It doesn't matter whether it's about doctrine, lifestyle, or church function and practice, the reality is there are numerous opinions. So, something must transcend that if we are to stay together, and it must be that 'something' that we all agree is the central hub of who we are and why we're here. Something we won't compromise.

Some, says Paul, "Devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith." (1 Timothy 1:4) It won't be the idle speculation—taking scripture beyond what it actually says. Conspiracy theories abound on this topic or that, from the old KJV bible debate, to COVID-19 and what the Papacy is up to, to date setting for the Second Coming of Jesus—they all fit the category of idle speculation.

Let's abandon this 'controversial speculation' for things that the Apostle Paul says are of "first importance." This is the 'something' that we won't compromise. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). His resurrection gives us hope, that, "The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15:42). That's the gospel, our hope, and our primary and unifying theme!

Jesus didn't just want unity for the sake of His people, He wanted it for a purpose. He states the purpose twice in John 17: "So that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21,23). Unity for the purpose of mission to the world!

What a powerful concept, and it makes you realise why Satan tries so hard to destroy unity amongst us. Let's not fall for his cunning, divisive, and speculative traps, but let's focus on the gospel and the unity it brings. Perhaps then we'll find ourselves better placed to accomplish our God-given mission here in South Queensland.



I trust you enjoy this edition of Focus, as we celebrate what God is doing in and through us.



Regional Youth Camps

BY CHRISTOS SPERO

As COVID-19 restrictions began to ease we have been able to grow together in community through Regional Youth Camps. So far, we have been able to hold camps with the Coral Coast (Lake Monduran), North Brisbane, and Sunshine Coast (Camp Somerset), and Capricornia youth (Callide Dam).

“In my biased opinion there is no ministry comparable to camping ministries as we seek to grow together. At these camps we have been able to experience the Big 3—(1) Community in (2) Natural Revelation, Seeking (3) Special Revelation,” reports Christos Spero. “We’d like to thank all involved in making these camps a success.”



Capricorn Retirement Village

BY JULIE MARTIN, CARE MANAGER

During the lock down of Aged Care homes, Relationship's Australia co-ordinator Maddi Rhodes approached Capricorn Adventist Retirement Village (CARV) Care Manager, Julie Martin, about a Pen Pal system from one of our local schools.



Capricorn Adventist Retirement received a file full of letters from a local Rockhampton school addressed to the residents. The lifestyle team are now working with the Residents here at CARV to reply to them and engage/foster a new relationship. This brings joy and smiles to the residents. It is planned that the program will continue over the next few months, in the hope that the letters and drawings will bring some much-needed joy to seniors who may be missing out on interacting with the younger generation due to COVID-19 restrictions, and also help foster a stronger community connection.



Baptism with a Difference

BY HEINRICH RUSTERHOLZ



On Sabbath the 19th September Bribie, Nundah and Albion were joined together for a baptism. There were a number of people present on the day. It was done Sabbath morning after the church service, but because of COVID restrictions people watched it on Zoom as it happened.

The candidate Trevor Rohde lost his wife a number of years ago to cancer. From there on, his life spiralled downward with alcohol and even suicidal thoughts. While his life was spiralling downward, one day he knelt down and prayed to God, saying, "I cannot do this! You need to take care of this for me." God answered his prayer and from that time he had no desire to drink. An Adventist person who he had known for a number of years encouraged him to go to church. He started to go to Bribie Island church and people there welcomed him and gave him DVD's to watch. His Adventist friend gave him some Bible studies and then asked the pastor, Heinrich Rusterholz, to continue Bible studies with him which culminated in this special baptism. The members are praising God for His grace and goodness as they see the change in Trevor's life, and enjoy his fellowship as part of the body of Christ.

How COVID-19 Has Affected The Toowoomba Central SDA Church

BY EDWARD CRAIG



Pastor Andrew Feavai and three 'Care Team' members, Toowoomba Central

Like most churches during COVID-19, Toowoomba Central members had to spend many Sabbaths at home viewing live-streamed Sabbath School and church Services. It was challenging to keep children actively engaged to replace the regular Sabbath School activities. The challenge of engaging children was met with weekly children stories live-streamed with the Divine Service. On Sabbath Mornings, parents spent time with their children, and created "new" Sabbath activities, such as spiritual games reflecting on spiritual values.

Church leadership reflected on the positives learnt during the experience:

- The Care Team, made up of about 20 people (elders, deacons, deaconesses) divided into groups to take care of

about 28 people per group. Each week every team contacted the people on their list to check for needs or problems, to give encouragement, and to make sure that church mail was received.

- Zoom Meetings became the norm for everyone. The prayer meetings, elders' meetings, and other church meetings continued in this new format and found to be effective in staying connected. Pathfinders were able to have meetings and do class work via zoom.

- Members experience the Ordinance Service online for the first time. The bread and wine were eaten at home during a live-streaming of the service taken at the church by pastor Andrew Feavai and a limited number of participants. While Bible readings and Scripture were read, a couple at church washed one another's feet. Many expressed that the experience of "ordinances at home" was very special.

- A new way of giving Tithes and Offerings will remain for many. E-giving and internet banking have been seen as an easy and effective way of supporting the work of the church financially. Initially the tithes and offerings decreased, so the treasury team prayed (and continue to pray) at 7:00pm every night for God's blessing over the finances of the church. The recent increase in tithes and offerings has been seen as an answer to prayer.

Thanks to a large generous anonymous donation of \$20000, and the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment, live-streaming can take place for many years to come.

The Little Vege Patch at Springwood —Working Together

BY ROGER HENLEY

Most of the good things I experience happen when I am collaborating with other people. This is about one of those experiences...

About 10 years ago a good friend of mine (we studied together at Avondale) told me about one of his initiatives in the southern Californian Conference where he was working in the Trust Services Department. Being highly innovative, he was also doing other things, one of which was encouraging churches to establish community gardens. The idea stuck in my mind like a farmer's friend seed-in-a-sock, and not long afterward I suggested to the Leadership Committee at Springwood Church that we might consider creating a community garden down the back of the property.

After a slow start, another friend of mine, Henk La Dru (centre manager at ADRA Logan), got involved and the garden received a great boost. I decided to become involved in a 'getting my hands dirty' sort of way and began supervising groups of Work for the Dole participants in building a rotunda, a propagation house and a shade house, and setting up the garden beds. A network was growing.

One of these participants, who just loves gardening told me on her first day that she was in "Work for the Dole Heaven." It happens that she is the coordinator of another community garden in a neighbouring suburb. She asked if she might ask the secretary of their group to come also. Now, 18 months after her participation in work for the dole is finished, she is still coming, as is her secretary. They both come because they "just love coming here." From them I have been learning a lot about soil improvement and many other aspects of gardening, and I have two new friends.

Various Springwood church members have been able to help the other garden group in a variety of ways, and friendships are developing between our members and these two regulars at our garden.



Henk La Dru, Councilor Jon Raven (Deputy Mayor) and Roger Henley

These two new friends have had to work closely with the local council to get their garden established. About a year ago the Community Development Officer at the council, who is very keen to help the community gardening groups to network, held a networking meeting at the council, and my friends from the other garden invited me to come. They have also introduced me to other councillors who have since come to see what we are doing. One of the things that both Councillors and the Community Development Officer have most appreciated is that our garden groups are working together for a common cause—to do what we can to build a healthy community in Logan.

So many of the stories of Jesus' ministry are about restoring community and restoring people to community. I believe that this is what He is continuing to do even now, and it is so good to be working with Him as He does it.

South Brisbane Church's Challenge to COVID-19

BY SHIRLEY GLOVER

What a challenge it has been doing children's programs during this COVID-19 pandemic. Even so God has opened many avenues for us to support our children and parents.

Here are some things we've been doing during this time:

Our kindy children enjoy a weekly program with songs, craft, lesson and activities. This program is also sent to some children who don't attend our church and are not from Adventist families. We wouldn't have had this outreach opportunity under normal circumstances.



Our primaries have an amazing program organised by their dedicated leaders who actually post out the worksheets and activities they require.

Our Teens enjoy their zoom meetings, and some have invited their neighbours to join also. Outreach to others in difficult times has been quite successful in many areas.

Our Adventurers and Pathfinders enjoy their programs and we find they are really responding to what is provided and take an active part when asked.

Our Pathfinders have been encouraged to reach out to others in various activities and all are enjoying doing their honours. We give praise and thank God for the parents who encourage their young people to attend these meetings. We have pathfinders from community families who are always keen to attend.

We thank God for the opportunity to think outside the box and use this opportunity not only to serve our own children but also to reach out to others. It is because of our dedicated leaders and assistants that we can make things happen.

South Brisbane Baptism

BY SHIRLEY GLOVER—COMMUNICATION SECRETARY SOUTH BRISBANE

Despite limited numbers due to COVID-19 restrictions, Sabbath 22nd August was a High Day at South Brisbane Church. Approximately 30 people were able to attend live, however, many more members attended via Zoom to witness the baptism of Andrew Hassall and Cameron Pithie. Andrew had been studying the Bible with church elder, Doug Friend, and Cameron with church pastor, Gideon Okesene.

Pr. Gideon's message compared baptism with marriage, reminding listeners that it is a public statement of entering

into a committed relationship with Jesus Christ, and choosing to live a new life under a new authority—the Holy Spirit. This commitment results in maturity (becoming more like Jesus), ministry (using the Spirit's gifts to build the community), and mission (sharing the gospel with others).

Andrew and Cameron shared inspiring testimonies, and Andrew's son Jahan, played a harp solo. Here is part of their testimonies:

Andrew: "I was born into a nominal Christian family and learnt about the Bible from books given to me by aunts, great aunts, and many other relatives concerned with my eternal destiny. I was an avid reader and absorbed lots of history, biography and science. Part of this was the Theory of Evolution which I added to my worldview. Evolution and Christianity sat comfortably in my belief system until I got a job and left home at age 18.

I was a searcher in my teens and early twenties. I visited the teaching of many weird and wonderful religions. I came to a point where I decided that a God of love and evolution could not coexist in my soul. It was one or the other—Christianity or evolution—no more compromise or marrying these two for this human!

So, I prayed my last prayer—"Please God show me how your creation and scriptures fit in with the 'truth' of science and evolution?" As an avid searcher, I scoured the horizons for new, interesting philosophies, beliefs and experiences. I rang up about an ad for Creation Science and they sent me a pack of literature. I was stunned at what I read. There were scientists who believed the Genesis account of the creation of life, the universe and everything. There were reasonable explanations. Evolution was a lie. God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.

So, 33 years after I asked to be baptised, and I'm here to be baptised. I'm here to follow Jesus, to simply know Him more clearly, love Him more dearly, and follow Him more nearly, day by day."

Cameron: "I used to be an atheist and even used to argue with religious people sometimes, big bang, evolution and all that, looking back I didn't really understand what I was preaching but scientists are smart so I trusted in what I was taught at school.

This all changed when I ran into Christians online who were exposing darkness in the world. It opened my mind to the possibility of a battle of good versus evil, and I wondered if there was a God if powerful people were taking the devil seriously. (And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them—Ephesians 5:11)

Today I have decided to give my life to Christ and am willing to die for Him. I pray that I can find God's will in my life as I feel like I've wasted a lot of time in the world and wish I could go back and redo a lot of things. I pray that I will continue to grow with Christ and become more like the Christian I should be. Thank you for being a welcoming church and providing the fellowship I needed on my walk with Christ.

Feed My Sheep

BY LYN ASHBY

Compassion for the Poor of Chennai

The Lord inspired Horace D'Costa, a Caboolture church member, to start a ministry called Feed My Sheep for very poor people of Chennai, India. He shares a little of his vision with us.

Horace, why have you chosen to locate the Feed My Sheep project in Chennai?

Chennai is the city of my birth and I worked as a banker there for many years before moving to Australia in 1987. While living and visiting in Chennai I was saddened to observe the plight of poor people living in slums, struggling to find shelter and food without any knowledge of the God who loves them.

Tell us a little about the city of Chennai?

Chennai, the capital of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu lies on the south eastern coast of the continent of India. The 2020 World Population Review estimates that almost 11 million live in the total urban area which makes it the 4th most populous metropolitan area in India. It is also the most densely populated city in Tamil Nadu. Sadly, 19% of the population is unemployed and there are 850,000 slum-dwellers in Chennai which makes it the fourth largest slum in India.

What is the aim of Feed My Sheep?

We want to feed the hungry people living in the slums, to



Siobhon, Horace and Sean D'Costa, Chennai Adventist Church

introduce them to the love of Jesus, to minister to people in aged care homes in Chennai and eventually to minister to the homeless in Australian cities such as Melbourne.

What has happened so far?

In early February, 2020, I went to Chennai with my son Sean and my granddaughter Siobhon. I preached on two Sabbaths at the Chennai Seventh-day Adventist church. On the first Sabbath I introduced the Feed My Sheep program. The second Sabbath I preached and invited them to participate

in the distribution of food packs. That afternoon teams went to the slum areas and distributed 500 food packs. We had engaged caterers who prepared these packs of rice and spicy vegetables at the cost of \$1 each. Each pack was substantial enough to provide several meals.

What has been the reaction of the poor people to this initial outreach?

As you can imagine the food packs were gratefully received. Siobhon was asked by one young girl, “Are you a Christian?” When Siobhon answered in the affirmative, the young girl replied, “I thought you were.” Our team is praying that these

food packs will open the way for spiritual conversations and many of these slum dwellers will come to know the love of Jesus.

How has COVID-19 impacted on this project?

Unfortunately, the project had only just begun when COVID-19 arrived. The lockdowns and restrictions on international travel brought the project to a standstill except for the distribution of some food packs by the local church on Easter Sunday. However, I do have contact with a Christian charity worker in Chennai who is distributing food on our behalf to poor families in the city. The restricted shopping hours and curfews make it difficult and dangerous for him to secure the supplies.

Robert’s Baptism

BY ELDJIE COJOCARU

October 3rd was a high Sabbath at Logan Reserve Church—Robert Parsad committed his life to God and showed that commitment through the waters of baptism! Robert shared that he was born and raised in Fiji and as he was growing up he knew of God, but didn’t know God. Church was a routine for him until he left Fiji and things started to go downhill. Robert had convinced himself that there was no God, because the people he was around told him there was no God. But deep down something told him to not let go of what his grandmother had taught him when he was younger.

As he grew older, people told him that he was a good person and good hearted, but deep down, Robert knew that he wasn’t—he felt filthy and sinful. One night, out of nowhere he felt a conviction of guilt and shame. He knew that he had to stop living the way he was. Since then, slowly God has been working on his heart. After a back injury, he found himself in a place where he was depressed and angry and he knew things had to change. He was searching, and one day as he was listening to Billy Graham, he felt that he had to find out what the true Sabbath was. He started studying and looking into it and learnt that Saturday was the true Sabbath! After learning this truth, Robert tried his best to keep Sabbath—it wasn’t easy but God encouraged him every day.

One day, he got an email about ‘The End’ online series that he had registered for—only, Robert didn’t remember ever registering for it! But he was curious and wanted find out more and learn more about the prophecies they were talking about. He started listening to the series by Lyle Southwell and Charissa Torossian and everything became clear to him and started making sense. Charissa made an appeal if anyone wanted to be baptised and Robert made contact with her and arranged for



Robert Parsad and Harley Southwell, Logan Reserve Church

Robert to have bible studies with someone closer to home. Charissa gave him the name of Harley Southwell (who happened to be Lyle’s son!) who had recently moved up to Brisbane to be the Associate Pastor at Logan Reserve Church. The two made contact and were able to commence bible studies together. As COVID-19 restrictions were in place, it was a little difficult for Robert to start attending church, however once he was able to, he started attending Logan Reserve Church and made the commitment for baptism, which finally happened in front of his family and friends. It was also a high day for Harley too, as it was his first baptism as well! Roberts shared that he wants to be an example for the people that he loves and hopes that through him, they will see the love Jesus has for them as well, and want to experience that love for themselves.

Caboolture Teen Builds Connections

BY LYN ASHBY

During the lockdown restrictions implemented to fight COVID-19, technology and social media have become our lifelines. Virtual gatherings have minimised social isolation in creative ways.

Soon after the lockdown began, 15 year-old Findlay Meighan, a member of the Caboolture Teen Sabbath School, wanted to do something to bring his community together. He organised the *Community Build Project*.

Each week Findlay would post a different Lego challenge on the Church (CABSDA) Facebook page. Teens and adults from his own and other churches prepared builds to meet the challenge. Much to Findlay's excitement, even the pastor of the Caboolture church, Joe Webb joined in the fun.

The Lego builds were shared on the Facebook page and Findlay also posted weekly videos showing the previous week's builds. The project ran for 7 weeks and each week there were approximately 10 builds submitted to the page.

Looking back over the project, Findlay says, "Many of my friends joined in and really enjoyed it. They were asking me over our virtual Sabbath School meetings about the next challenge. I was really surprised by the number of people who



Findlay Meighan, Caboolture Teen Sabbath School

wanted to participate. It was great to see so many people from the community having a good time during lockdown."

Findlay feels that the *Community Build Project* definitely connected people together in a fun way and he recommends this project to others.

IPSWICH ADVENTIST SCHOOL

WEEK OF WORSHIP



It had been long awaited after a postponement, but students at Ipswich Adventist School were super excited to celebrate their Week of Worship. After starting the week with our

famous pancake breakfast, our guest speaker Pr David Peñate shared with IAS on the theme 'Grow in Me'.

Students, staff and families could listen and learn more about Jesus and how to grow in him in a practical way each day. With our COVID Safe plan in place, families were able to join in with the program each day via Zoom.

Throughout the week, IAS collected their spare 'silver coins' each day for ADRA to purchase seeds and chickens to help a developing country GROW food and GROW a chicken business. It was a fantastic week and such a blessing to witness students make a personal commitment to GROW in Jesus.

ARTICLE BY REECE WOODLAND AND JACOB UGLJESA

HOPE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FROM BUNDABERG WITH LOVE

Staff and students at Hope Adventist School in Bundaberg are making the world a kinder, brighter, more caring place through their thoughtful actions. Under the initiative called Hands of Hope, the school community has opportunity to participate in projects where they can put the values they learn into action.



When staff and students heard of schools in Victoria returning to remote learning due to the lockdown, they couldn't wait to help. As Bundaberg is renowned for its products and produce, it wasn't long before staff at Heritage College, an Adventist school located 50 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, were enjoying a cold Bundaberg brewed drink with a note to let them know they had support. Students got busy creating cards attaching them to individual packs of local dried mango, generously supplied by Gin Gin & Dry! Heritage College staff were in for a delicious sweet treat.

Then, because HOPE school had a uniform change this year, leftover new and much-loved previous uniforms were packed and sent to Kivori Learning Centre, Papua New Guinea. When

Hope students realised the students at Kivori didn't have much needed sports equipment they got busy raising funds to help fill the need.



But the giving doesn't stop there, students have brightened the day of a much-loved volunteer, Mrs Clayton, singing songs via zoom and have written letters for residents in a local aged care facility. These letters were a bright spot in the resident's day.

HOPE may be a small school but the staff and school families certainly have a big heart. Whether it is raising money for Australian farmers, or restoring one more person's sight through the Fred Hollow's foundation, the Hope community is there to lend a hand.

Principal, Mrs Kristy Norman, is very proud of the students who put their values into action. "It is heartening to see the school community be the hands and feet of Jesus, they are hands of Hope, blessing others with His love, and care and offering hope in these extraordinary times."

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY LEANNE JENSEN



Developing, Resourcing, & Connecting Church Leaders together

"Do not follow where the path may lead.
Go instead where there is no path and
leave a trail."—Ralph Waldo Emerson



Save the date

Brisbane Leadership Conference

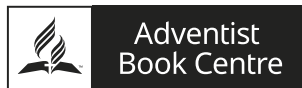
January 30, 2021

In 2021 Leadership Development will be shared regionally beginning with the Brisbane region. All Other regions will be scheduled on your regional day weekends.

More information coming soon...

END OF YEAR GREAT SPECIALS

Calendars, Journals, Daily Planners, Gifts ... and much more!



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Wednesday – Thursday
8.45am – 5.00pm

Christian Life Resources
Monday – Thursday
9.00am – 5.00pm
Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm

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Seventh-day
Adventist Church

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