

BOOK LAUNCHES

A triumphant trilogy: Launch of final story in David series reveals young adult's biggest decisions

David's Triumph (3rd in the Series)
Watson, B. (2018) Warburton, Vic: Signs. pp. 249.
ISBN 192504484X

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An Avondale lecturer's third and final book in a series telling the story of a boy and the challenge of adolescence launched recently.

Dr Brad Watson first introduced readers to David Matthews in *Finding David*, a schoolyard story dealing with bullying, romance and a mysterious family tragedy. The *David's Revenge* sequel tackled rescue, relationships and revenge in an action-packed adventure. Now *David's Triumph* completes the series with a story of shattered hope, love, loss and finding the strength to carry on.

"*David's Triumph* resolves some of the issues and questions that have existed throughout the series," says Signs Publishing Book Editor Nathan Brown, who launched the book with Watson at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in southern Queensland's annual camp meeting on September 23. "Some readers will be looking to complete the series, but as it's now nine years since the first book, we hope a new generation of readers get to know David and his friends."

David ages by a year in each book. As he grows, so do the issues confronting him. Will he give up on his best friend? Will he betray his girlfriend? Will he give his life to God when God is allowing someone he loves to die?

The questions might be familiar, particularly if you are a teacher of a young adult—momentum has been building, particularly among Seventh-day Adventist schools in Australia, for investment in the wellbeing of students. So, Watson believes the timing of the launch means *David's Triumph* could again be included—the church in Australia funded a chapter-by-chapter teacher resource for *Finding David*—as a wellbeing resource. "More and more research is

telling us young adults are becoming lonely and suffering from epidemic levels of depression and mental illness," he says. "Their relationships are breaking down and they lack community. Many struggle with feelings of isolation and anxiety. Social media seems to be part of the problem."

Sports such as surfing, mountain biking and triathlon are key parts of the David stories. "I've tried and liked all of them, even though I'm not good at any of them," says Watson, Senior Lecturer in International Poverty and Development Studies at Avondale College of Higher Education. "They're metaphors for life. We all have races to run. The point is finishing well and learning that the outcome is less important than our attitude."

A strong look-out-for-your-mates message is not only core to the series but also to one of the stories in *David's Triumph*, which comes from Watson's own life experience. "I fell into a 'hole' while canyoning with friends in the Blue Mountains," says Watson. "Somehow, I became pinned between the wall and a boulder. If I'd fallen further, I could easily have died on the rocks below. It was that close. I broke my shoulder, so it took several hours to get out of the canyon and back to the car, with a lot of help from mates. It made a big impact on me and I decided to include that story in the book."

Watson would become a mentoring advocate, running a RiskMEN group while teaching at high school. "Real men lead by living with resilience, integrity, self-control and knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses," he says. [TEACH](#)

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Editors Note

Website: <http://absentmindedprofessor.avondale.edu.au/books/davids-triumph/>

All books in the series are available from Adventist Book Centres in Australia and New Zealand, or Koorong at www.koorong.com/search/product/davids-triumph-03-in-finding-david-series-brad/9781925044843.jhtml

BOOK REVIEWS

Anzac Spirituality

Reynaud, D. (2018).
North Melbourne, Vic: Australian Scholarly. pp. 370
ISBN 978-1925588750

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This book by an Avondale academic revealing the Anzac's deep but concealed interest in spirituality is world-ranking research, says the historian who launched it.

Anzac Spirituality by Associate Professor Daniel Reynaud explores the spiritual beliefs and experiences of the Anzacs largely through their own words—Reynaud read the diaries and letters of more than 1000 soldiers of the First Australian Imperial Force. In light of Anzac becoming the spiritual core of what it means to be Australian, the book asks, “What of the spiritual core of the Anzacs themselves?”

This “capstone” of Reynaud’s research—including a doctorate in Australian war cinema, the recovery and reconstruction of Australia’s first Gallipoli movie and a biography of Anzac chaplain William “Fighting Mac” McKenzie—“supplements an expanding literature on the religion of World War I soldiers,” said Dr Geoff Treloar at the Sydney launch this past Tuesday (April 10). The book not only takes its place alongside seminal works such as Michael Snape’s *God and the British Soldier*, Jonathan Ebel’s *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War* and Richard Schweitzer’s *The Cross in the Trenches* but

“shows how to take the subject forward.”

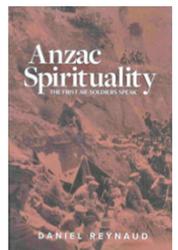
Treloar compared *Anzac Spirituality* with “outstanding” Australian contributions to the religious history of the Great War, namely Colin Bale’s *A Crowd of Witnesses: Epitaphs on First World War Australian War Graves* and Michael Gladwin’s *Captains of the Soul: A History of Australian Army Chaplains*. “I really appreciate it for its qualities as a work of history and its value as a resource for understanding a truly important aspect of our past and its meaning for the present.”

Reynaud invited Treloar to launch the book in the latter’s roles as Director of Learning and Teaching at Australian College of Theology, which hosted the launch, and as Editor of *Lucas*, the journal of the Evangelical History Association of Australia.

Treloar read the book’s thematic chapters in sequence “and they seemed to get better as I worked my way through. I do not mean to say that the quality of the writing and analysis improved with each successive chapter; I mean only that the subject became more and more gripping.” He noted a movement in Reynaud’s structuring of the book, “from the official to the unofficial, from the compulsory to the voluntary, from the outward to the inward, from the orthodox and defined to the heterodox and inchoate.” It seems, he said, “a method for establishing the truth, for getting at the reality, of the spirituality of the men.”

And it is the men we observe, he added. “This concentration on the rank and file is unusual in the literature on the religion of Great War soldiers. It is much more common to focus on the officers and the chaplains.” Treloar felt a sense of connectedness with the soldiers, particularly one of who is the brother of his grandfather. John Linton Treloar would become the foundation director of the Australian War Memorial. “I never met him,” he said, “but there is a certain familiarity in the words quoted extensively from his war diary. . . . I was glad of the opportunity to get to know him.”

Treloar described *Anzac Spirituality* as being “grounded in research that is enterprising and comprehensive” and Reynaud’s assessment of that evidence as “judicious, neither exaggerated nor triumphalist.” He commended Reynaud for not using “the historiographical obsessions of our times [gender, race and sex]” as “lenses through which to construe the data of the past in



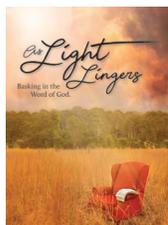
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the interests of present day preoccupations.”

Reynaud’s colleague Tony Martin, Head of the Discipline of Humanities and Creative Arts at Avondale College of Higher Education, trialled a new selling technique at the Lake Macquarie launch on Thursday (April 5). He asked all attendees to hold a copy of the book and to study the cover image—a photograph of members of the 4th Brigade attending a church service in Reserve Gully on Gallipoli. The “horrendous” conditions—“the almost vertical face of crumbling dirt and rock”—in which the men existed shocked him. “And yet hundreds of soldiers sit quietly through a church service, many seemingly lost in their own thoughts.” But even with the subject matter of the photograph being filled with such pathos, “it still seemed to me to be a century-old image of long-dead soldiers involved in an almost forgotten war. That was until I started reading Daniel’s book.”

Martin then read excerpts from the diaries and letters Reynaud includes in *Anzac Spirituality*. Look back at the photograph on the cover, Martin said. “Is it starting to change?” “The brilliance of this book is not simply its exploration of unexpected spirituality in the AIF. For me, it lies in the intimate and often raw honesty of the soldiers’ writings. I felt a profound sense of privilege to be included in their confidence.”

Martin said he now reads the cover image differently. “I no longer see an image of a bygone war. I see young Australians—brave, terrified, bewildered. I feel their fear and, unexpectedly, I hear their prayers.” **TEACH**



As Light Lingers: Basking in the Word of God

Atcheson, N. (2018).
Madrid, Spain: Safeliz,
ISBN 978-84-7208-669-2, pp. 105.

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In her recent book, aptly named *As Light Lingers: Basking in the Word of God*, Nina Atcheson follows many other Christian

authors in tackling the topic of how to study the Bible. Atcheson has written this book in a refreshingly honest and sensitive manner. There are many books on how to study the Bible, but I found a number of features set this book apart.

Rather than just being another ‘how-to’ book about Bible study, Atcheson deals with real issues people face when committing to a habit of Bible study, and guides the reader with a gentle urgency that compelled me to keep reading to the end of her book. I found it to be compact and readable with an additional bonus of push out Bible study bookmarks and *Purpose of Passage* cards on the final pages, along with instructions on how to use them. The tone of the book is both inspirational and encouraging. I resonated with the concepts in this book, and found myself accepting the challenge to deepen my relationship with God by basking in the Word of God.

The book commences with issues of motivation, roadblocks to Bible reading, and the power of studying the Word of God. The following chapters present a selection of practical ideas to assist the reader in developing sustainable habits of daily Bible study. In these chapters, Atcheson draws on her personal life, sharing examples and anecdotes from her own experience. She also broadens her audience by including ideas for whole family Bible study and devotes several pages to ideas for helping children develop age appropriate Bible study skills. The book concludes with a challenge to renew a relationship with God through meaningful Bible study.

If you want a book to help refresh your relationship with God or engage your family in Bible study together, this book is for you. If you are looking for ways to help young children and teenagers develop authentic Bible study skills, then this book is essential.

I put books into three categories: books that I don’t finish, books that I read once and books that I read, keep and refer to or re-read regularly. Nina Atcheson’s book fits into the latter category and will be an invaluable addition to a home or school library. **TEACH**

As Light Lingers can be purchased from any Adventist Book Centre, including from Better Books and Food, Cooranbong, NSW, and on Amazon Kindle. Further information and opportunity to contact the book author is available at www.aslightlingers.com.