

AVONDALE

REFLECTIONS

Magazine for alumni and friends of Avondale College of Higher Education

Summer 2017 Vol 29 No 2

NASA SENT ME TO SPACE CAMP

Alumnus wins national award
for innovative science teaching

SHE YET SPEAKS

Stories from Sunnyside shows how Adventist
pioneer connected with those in her community

OUR FIRST HOMEGROWN PROFESSOR



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COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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ALUMNI

2008 | 1998 | 1988 | 1978 | 1968 | 1958 | 1948

HOMECOMING 2018

DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP

I grew up feeling a bit lost in the middle—the third of six children, left-handed and with a hearing impairment. Even though I wondered what God could do with me, I remember as a seven-year-old telling Him, “Here I am, use me.” And He is.

I’m a balloon-twisting children’s pastor with a soapbox on Facebook—a digital disciple. My mother, the best disciple maker, is partly to thank. She’d read with each of us for at least 20 minutes a day. I’ve loved it ever since—I complete a chapter of a book and a devotional each day before work. Much of the content I post on Facebook comes from this reading.

I discovered the social media and social networking service the year its Sydney office opened, and another obsession was born. Facebook is my personal pulpit. I use it to speak for those—children, in particular—whose voices are muted.

Being an advocate isn’t easy—I’ve copped flak—but often I get told, “I can’t like or comment on what you say on Facebook but you spoke into my sphere of influence, you spoke to me, you spoke to my church.” I like what Wess Stafford says. He’s the former President and Chief Executive Officer of Compassion International and the author of *Too Small to Ignore: Why Children Are the Next Big Thing*. “I spend half my time comforting the afflicted and the other half afflicting the comfortable.”

The Bible verse Micah 6:8—“And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (NIV)—inspires me. Other creatives do, too. English Anglican cleric and theologian John Wesley had a so-called “rule of life.” It went something like this: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

This is why I do what I do, this is why I am who I am. To be honest, to be authentic, to be real, to lie straight in bed at night and know I’ve done all I can to make a difference.

Time to get off my soapbox and get on with it, again.

Pr Daron Pratt (1993 and 2002)

Director, Family and Children’s Ministries
Seventh-day Adventist Church in northern New South Wales

Daron received Manifest’s Gabe Reynaud Award this year for excellence in faithful creativity. Manifest is a movement celebrating faithful creativity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

www.avondale.edu.au/manifest



HEALTH GURU’S NEW TITLE

Nursing academic first to be appointed professor by Avondale



An academic whose prolific publications and competitive grants have given his infection control research a national profile is the first to receive a professorship from Avondale.

Professor Brett Mitchell’s promotion from associate professor reflects: the quantity and quality of the papers he has had published—more than 50 since moving to Avondale three-and-a-half years ago; the quantity and the size of the competitive research grants he has received—eight as a chief investigator, equating to \$1.2 million; and recognition for his contribution to infection prevention and control—Mitchell is chair of a National Health and Medical Research Council committee revising national infection control guidelines.

The promotion is “personal recognition for much hard work,” says Mitchell, Director of the Lifestyle Research Centre. More importantly, he adds, it is professional recognition by peers, “and not just by those in the Discipline of Nursing but by others inside and outside of Avondale. That means a lot.”

BELONGING, BEING AND BECOMING

Avondale creates community for Christian early childhood educators in Australia

Avondale has helped establish the first association for Christian early childhood educators in Australia at an inaugural conference organised and hosted by its Discipline of Education.



The Australian Christian Early Childhood Educators Association will encourage academics and practitioners to network, collaborate on research and promote informed practice. The vote to form the association came at the eponymous conference (September 7-9). Lecturer Kaye Judge and colleagues Beverley Christian and Sandra Ludlow used the arts in general and music in particular to build a sense of community among the 40 delegates—and to nurture their creative spirit—before the vote.

The three also introduced a methodology called communities of practice. They hope this learning as social participation will help maintain a sense of unity of purpose as academics and practitioners “develop and implement pedagogical approaches where love is central to our belonging, being and becoming in community with children.” Four recurring themes—leading, exploring, creating and flourishing—provided not only the framework for the conference but also ideas for communities of practice.

A WELCOME BACK, A WELCOME HOME

Alumnus returns 75 years after graduating

A nonagenarian educator prompted by a younger colleague has returned for Homecoming at Avondale 75 years after his graduation from the college of higher education.

Dr Lyndon Thrift received warm applause from the congregation on his introduction during the worship service in Avondale College Seventh-day Adventist Church on August 26. He graduated from the Theological-Normal course in 1942 and returned to Homecoming this year at the invitation of Mike Dye, a fellow regular at the Taree Seventh-day Adventist Church and Principal of Manning Adventist School. "I sat next to him during vespers on Friday. He got a real buzz when speaker Athol Grosse, who's also a teacher, mentioned him as a mentor."

Homecoming 2017 is only the second reunion Thrift has attended. Daughter Dr Merlene Thrift joked the 97-year-old would not experience much peer pressure on his return, although Elma Coombe, who is also 97, attended, too. Coombe graduated in 1939 but has attended many more Homecomings because of her proximity to Avondale—she is a resident in the Avondale Lifestyle Community.

Thrift is a former director of education for the Adventist Church in Trans-Australia and in the Trans-Tasman. He served at what is now Batuna Adventist Vocational School and helped establish what is now Betikama Adventist College in the Solomon Islands. His experience includes stints at Omaura School of Ministry and Kabiufa Adventist Secondary School in Papua New Guinea and at the Adventist schools in Wahroonga, at Avondale and in Hawthorn. He joined host Audrey Jackson and her classmates at the 1947 honour year reunion on Saturday.

Avondale Alumni acknowledged the service of other former students by announcing the recipients of its annual awards.

Esther Lane received Alumna of the Year for her lifelong commitment—more than 40 years—to the ministry of teaching. Lane taught at almost all levels of education. The then Division of Preschool Education in Queensland selected her and other teachers to establish the first state preschools in 1973. She would also teach students with disabilities as part of a role



Photo: Colin Chuang

with the Endeavour Foundation and English as a second language to tertiary students. In retirement, Lane served as a volunteer in applied linguistics—she and husband Warren taught English in Korea.

Alumnus of the Year Dr Wilf Pinchin's tenure as an academic at Avondale: also 40 years. The mathematician and musician received his award for lifelong commitment to quality education and infrastructure at Avondale and for selfless devotion to wife Colleen, for whom he now cares. Pinchin formed the Avondale College Concert Band and served as president of the Avondale Brass Band. An interest in acoustics and in sound engineering saw Pinchin design, install and operate the sound systems in the Auditorium and chapels on the Lake Macquarie campus and in local churches. He also rebuilt the sound system in Avondale College Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Young Alumnus of the Year is the Adventist Church's first Director of Young Adult Ministries in Australia. Pr Alina van Rensburg seeks to build the church in southern Queensland by encouraging people to "see themselves as the living, breathing expression of Jesus." Her role: to inspire, equip and empower a movement of young adult leaders. One of the initiatives she and husband Martin have introduced is #wethechurch, a call for 18-to-30-year-olds to own their faith and their role in the church. A commissioning earlier this year means Alina is now one of two Pr A van Rensburgs—her father-in-law is minister Pr André van Rensburg, who received the honour year citation from the class of 1977.

Seven other alumni, at least one from each of the honour years, received citations from their classmates: retired nurse Audrey Jackson (1947); retired clinical educator Dr Norene Clouten and retired minister and director of trust services Pr Alan White (both 1957); retired educator Athol Grosse (1967); teacher Graeme Harris (1987); academic administrator Professor Jeff Crocombe (1997); and author Trudy Adams (2007).

Paul Woodward and the Gospel Big Band from Melbourne anchored the Homecoming concert, which also featured vocal ensemble The Promise and Avondale Jazz Ensemble. The concert celebrated a potted history of gospel music, with all artists performing songs highlighting different eras and styles.

The Gospel Big Band is Woodward's retirement project. Former students, current and former staff members of Edinburgh College, where Woodward served as Head of Music and Performing Arts for almost 30 years, and members of the community have joined him. The band is like a family, he told Avondale Conservatorium Director Aleta King during an interview as part of the concert. Many are related by birth or marriage—there are husband and wives, a father and sons, siblings and cousins. To illustrate, he introduced the members by their relationship with each other, almost making it through the whole band before breaking any bonds.



HUMAN LIBRARY'S LIVING BOOKS

Borrowers kept architect, artist and alumnus Dr Neville Clouten (pictured) and 13 local living books busy at Avondale Libraries first Human Library in October.

The living books included Liesl Tesch, a seven-time Paralympian and Member for Gosford in the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of New South Wales.

Readers such as 13-year-old Aleisha enjoyed the interactivity. "I liked holding Liesl's medals and sitting in her wheelchair." Her father, Matt Thompson, stayed longer than he had intended because "my kids begged to hear 'just one more story.' I left all the more richer."

Readers, who could borrow over five 20-minute sessions, chose books from a catalogue featuring titles such as "Law enforcement: it's not like Hollywood" and "The woman who quit her job to empower others." They listened to stories of drug addiction and homelessness and of nursing at isolated mission stations in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. They met a lion cuddler who rode with the Hells Angels and a former refugee who survived a raid by Sinhalese rebels in Sri Lanka.

Avondale Libraries presented the Human Library to reduce stereotypes and prejudice and to promote respect for human rights and dignity. "Everyone has a story to tell, a reason for why they act as they do," says Library Services Director Michelle Down. She describes these stories as interesting and inspiring—memorable. They remind us "you should never judge a book by its cover."



STORIES FROM SUNNYSIDE

Finding the authenticity of the prophetic voice in not just speech but acts of God's love

Ellen White's connection with Australia commenced with a vision she received on April 1, 1874. She referred to it as an "impressive dream in which the messenger said, 'You are entertaining too limited ideas of the work for this time. . . . You must take broader views. The message will go in power to all parts of the world, to Oregon, to Europe, to Australia, to the islands of the sea.'"¹ Fifteen years later, at the age of 64, she arrived in Sydney in December, 1891.

Politically orchestrated circumstances brought Ellen White to this distant land. Reflecting on the purpose of her journey, she said, "This morning my mind is anxious and troubled in regard to my duty, can it be the will of God that I go to Australia? This involves a great deal for me. I have not special light to leave America for this far-off country. Nevertheless, if I knew it was the voice of God, I would go."² The depth of her personal experience with God and confidence in His leading prevailed. She wrote, "I am presenting the case before the Lord, and I believe He will guide me."³

In 1894, providential guidance brought her to Cooranbong, a village near Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, with a timber-cutting industry, a Catholic church, a school, a police station and a courthouse, where during the 1880s the population reached about 700 residents. In the context of the "impressive dream," Cooranbong was a speck in the vast ocean of human life. Following the Seventh-day Adventists' acquisition of the 1500 acres (600 hectares) to set up the Avondale School for Christian Workers, as it was originally known, Ellen White built her home—named "Sunnyside"—where she resided from 1896 to 1900.

About five years ago, I noticed a lack of stories relating to Ellen White's experiences of these years written from an Australian perspective. I envisioned stories and images from this past that transmitted the emotions of a life lived in all its fullness—stories that shaped a legacy. With this in mind, I asked my administrative assistant Marian de Berg to commence the research and collection of data.

Marian's 29-year experience and love for details equipped her with an in-depth knowledge of the subject. For the past 12 years, she has offered excellent support and assistance to my work as Director of the Ellen G White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre. During this time, I have also observed her flair as a writer, so I challenged her to write a book. From my office desk, I often watched her unreserved passion and commitment to the task, and it is my pleasure to see the final product.

Stories from Sunnyside does not provide an explanatory framework of Ellen White's prophetic role, nor a theological charter for argumentative debates. It recalls the narratives in the life of a person engrossed in the depth of God's love. It recalls the memories, the colours and the sounds highlighting qualities such as personal uniqueness, giftedness and value. Perhaps it's in the places where the rubber meets the road that one finds the authenticity of the prophetic voice—a voice that does not only speak but acts the part of God's extended hands in the community.

The depth and simplicity of these stories touch my heart. The selected stories link with human experience, the story of our heritage. They recall the images of a person who translated God's love into practical Christian experience. Perhaps here one finds the heart of the "impressive dream." I suggest it's not just another book, but a set of life-inspiring narratives challenging us to take a decisive step not only to read the story but to make those images ours.

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2. Manuscript 44, 1891.
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Dr John Skrzypaszek (1987 and 1999) is Director of the Ellen G White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Avondale College of Higher Education.



Photo: Brenton Stacey

A NEW AUTHOR INTRODUCES HER NEW BOOK

As an administrative assistant working at the Ellen G White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre for the past two decades, I've been privileged to read Ellen White's correspondence and manuscripts. She wrote a large portion of her writings, particularly those on the life of Jesus, while living in Australia. I've been encouraged and moved by her life's journey while she lived in Cooranbong. Her correspondence during this time reveals Ellen White as a caring Christian woman giving her all to the work of the gospel.

She had a broad vision for the Adventist Church's work in Australia and was instrumental in helping establish Avondale. The purchase of the bush land for the school came when Seventh-day Adventist membership in Australia had not yet reached 1000.

For the past six years, I've also been actively involved with her Australian home—"Sunnyside." I lead group tours for those ranging from Year 1 students to retirees. I train volunteers and organise a roster each month. Visitors come from all around the world to see the home Ellen White built and lived in for six years in the 1890s.

This is the background to my book *Stories from Sunnyside*. It's not a scholarly work, but it draws significantly on letters and other materials she wrote while in Australia. To this extent, the stories draw on primary source materials, which will be of interest to scholars of Adventist history in particular, and religious history in general.

Ellen White was born in Gorham, Maine, USA, on November 26, 1827, and died peacefully at her "Elmshaven" home in California, on July 16, 1915, at 87 years of age. During her lifetime, she ministered to many people in homes, churches and camp-meetings around the world. She lived in Basel, Switzerland, for two years in the mid-1880s and in November, 1891, set sail for Australia, intending to spend a similar amount of time assisting the newly developing church in the South Pacific. However, her stay—in Australia and in

New Zealand—lasted nine years, from 1891 to 1900. The stories in *Stories from Sunnyside* come from this period, with particular emphasis on Ellen White's everyday activities at "Sunnyside" from 1895 to August, 1900, and her travels to various camp-meetings and speaking appointments. From the time she arrived in Australia, she travelled extensively along the east coast, from Rockhampton in Queensland to Hobart in Tasmania. She also ventured as far west as Adelaide in South Australia and spent 10 months on the North Island of New Zealand.

Seventh-day Adventism reached Australia in 1885, only six years before Ellen White arrived. There was a six-day working week, with Sunday considered sacred and a financial depression had hit hard with banks foreclosing many properties. Most working converts to Adventism lost their jobs for refusing to work on Sabbaths. Many of these had large families to support and wanted to build churches so they could worship on the seventh day. Young men and husbands were also being sent from Australia to South Africa to fight in the Boer War.

Transportation around the country was rough. Roads needed attention after rain and carriage wheels created deep ruts. Boats reeked of cigar smoke, and train engines spat out smoke and cinders onto people and clothing through the open carriage windows.

Times have changed dramatically over the past 100 years, from the horse and buggy era of Ellen White's time in Australia, to motorised vehicles, airplanes and ships. In *Stories from Sunnyside*, I invite you to come back with me and re-live Ellen White's life "down under" and the blessings she brought to this fledgling group of believers.

Her correspondence during this time reveals Ellen White as a caring Christian woman giving her all to the work of the gospel.

Truly, we can say her life here in Australia was a living example of Matthew 25: "I was hungry . . . I was thirsty . . . I was a stranger . . . I was naked . . . I was sick . . . Jesus replied: 'You gave me something to eat . . . you gave me drink . . . you invited me in . . . you clothed me . . . you visited me.'"

Stories from Sunnyside is available from Adventist Book Centres.

www.adventistbookcentre.com.au

Marian de Berg (1965) is Administrative Assistant at the Ellen G White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Avondale College of Higher Education and author of *Stories from Sunnyside*.

NASA SENT ME TO SPACE CAMP

Alumnus wins national award for mission to make science fun

It's an invitation no child can refuse. "Let's blow something up, let's break something." No wonder Jacob Windle's students enjoy learning about science. "You talk to kids," says the Avondale College of Higher Education alumnus, a Bachelor of Education (Primary) graduate of 2007. "What's your favourite subject?" "Love sport." Not at the school where I teach."

Jacob is a specialist at St Paul's Primary School in Karratha, Western Australia, whose mission is to "encourage students to be the captain of their own learning journey." Motivated by the misconception that "science is for the academically gifted," Jacob challenges students to believe "everyone is a scientist."

His classes are practical. The students rarely work from textbooks because English is often a second or third language and "many can't write their own name. But they can listen, they can problem solve, they can work with their hands and in groups. There's more they can do than they can't."

Assessments and some lesson plans, which might take a traditional form one week and role playing the next, are open-ended. Homework is out but hands-on experiments are in—it's all about discovery and intrigue.

For a lesson on flight, Jacob's Year 5 and 6 students threw boomerangs and spears. Jacob has organised an astronomy night and a solar eclipse observation station for his students. A connection with local television media for which students measured, recorded and reported the weather from Karratha generated interest and support from the wider school

community. An online forum where Jacob discusses a student's progress keeps carers and parents involved. And a website Jacob created gives his students access to resources and an opportunity to provide feedback. His future plans include integrating robotics and coding into every class.

Jacob has made St Paul's "a school of scientists," says Allen Blewitt, chair of the Australian Scholarships Group National Excellence in Teaching Awards. "He's transformed traditional and stereotypical mindsets where his philosophy was first scoffed at, to getting students to discuss and share their ideas and develop a keen interest in classical sciences."

Jacob is one of only 13 educators—from 1350 nominated—to receive a National Excellence in Teaching Award this past year. He also received an invitation to Space Camp in Alabama, USA, and is now a NASA Australian Education Ambassador.

At the camp, Jacob and other educators completed specific missions. One saw Jacob working as an engineer on a model of the International Space Station, which had been hit by debris. He and a colleague suited up for a virtual space walk to repair the damage. Another mission required the educators to safely pilot a lander to Mars. "I'm surprised I'm alive," says Jacob. "The commander made sure we were all on task otherwise the mission would have failed."

The experience encouraged Jacob to give his students more problem-solving activities. And he expects them to make mistakes, which help as they consider the issues for which they must deal as part of finding a solution.

POWER TO THE STUDENTS, RIGHT ON

How this lecturer is using biscuits, The Beatles and bold colours to make art history more memorable



making my History and Theory of Art unit more memorable (for them and me). Attending a workshop by psychologist Dr Stewart Hase, an Adjunct Fellow at Southern Cross University, inspired me. Hase spoke about heutagogy, in which students examine the processes of learning as well as the actual content of the teaching. This is what happened next.

I stripped out filler slides from my PowerPoints then, using open source video platform Kaltura, posted to our online learning management system Moodle short self-narrated videos summarising the content of each class. This freed more time in class for discussion. I recorded a 30-minute narration over the simplified PowerPoint after each class, which helped absentee students with catch up and attending students with revision.

Two-and-a-half hours of art history and theory is a long stretch, so I provided an in-class refreshment break, which led naturally to conversations about the artworks we were studying. This helped break down perceived hierarchical barriers. Those reluctant to speak in the formal class setting were more willing to speak in the informal refreshment setting. Fostering a sense of inclusivity could be the difference between a student attending class or not. The value of the learning experience more than offset the cost of the refreshments.

Collaboration the key

I also introduced more collaborative activities. For example, to learn about the term "modernism," I asked the students to use their mobile phones to search for an image or a video representing modernity. We placed the phones together on the floor and listened as the students explained the reasons for their choices. Comparing the reasons with those of the artists in the period of history we were studying gave the students a reference point. Similarly, when studying Richard Hamilton's

A disempowering of my PowerPoint presentations is empowering my students and



Photo: Brenton Stacey

His advice for other teachers is similarly challenging. “Don’t pretend you know everything. Learn something new so you can pass it on to the kids.” New for Jacob is a programming language called Python. “I’m struggling with it, so when I see my kids struggling with their coding, I can say, ‘Don’t worry. I know what it’s like.’” He’s also mastering a fidget spinner, which he’s encouraging his students to use while they’re

studying in class. “Don’t hold back the tide. The kids are going to like what they’re going to like, the kids are going to do what they’re going to do, every single trend. You might as well take that trend and use it to your advantage.”

Brenton Stacey (2007) is Public Relations Officer at Avondale College of Higher Education.

1956 pop art collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, I asked the students to collaboratively construct a collage from magazine images that resonated with them.

For the class on European avant-garde movement Dada, I pre-empted Marcel Duchamp's 1917 exhibition of an upturned urinal by asking, “When an artist simply selects an item and calls it art, does that make it art?”. The students formed a line with those on the right answering “No” and those on the left “Yes.” At the end of class, I repeated the activity to see if opinions had changed.

Controlled chaos and live music

In a related activity, each student chose an envelope containing a secret directive. On “Go,” one recited the Dada manifesto, one read a piece of Dada poetry, one ripped paper and threw the pieces in the air, one repeated the sound “da” in quickfire succession while another sang random words to the national anthem. Then I shouted, “Change.” This re-

creation of the cacophony and disrespect for authority and rationality akin to the Dada meetings of 1916 segued into Surrealist activities and to the songwriting of later pop icons such as The Beatles (“I Am the Walrus”) and David Bowie (“Ziggy Stardust”) who extended Surrealist practices. I performed the songs live on guitar. I thought the students might see this as a dumbing down of content but in their evaluation of the class they identified the songs as making a lasting impression on their recall and enjoyment of the class.

A meeting in spirit with Jack the Dripper

The class on les Fauves, a group of early 20th-century modern artists whose works emphasised painterly qualities and strong colour, saw me drawing on canvas outlines of works from earlier times—*The Hay Wain* by John Constable, *Mona Lisa* by Da Vinci and *Liberty Leading the People* by Delacroix. The students then painted reversed but complementary colour values of the originals. We discussed the original works by comparison to what happened with the destruction of

illusionism and the onus on expressive colour.

With reference to Jackson Pollock's action painting, I covered the floor with a canvas and asked the students to take turns throwing, dribbling and pouring paint from old tins of house paint. They discussed what colour, where to throw, dribble or pour and what technique to use to cover the preceding colours. This meeting-in-spirit with Jack the Dripper was, as it should be, a visceral experience.

Yes, these classes require more preparation than updating PowerPoints. Yes, these classes require developing skills in improvisation as you respond to unpredictable developments. But they're more enjoyable classes and that's better for students. Before next year's classes, I'll be re-visiting my pared-down PowerPoints to see what else I don't need to show.

Dr Andy Collis is Senior Lecturer in Visual Communication in the Discipline of Humanities and Creative Arts at Avondale College of Higher Education.



Photo: Cybèle Craig

THE JESUS, JUSTICE MUSICAL

How Handel's *Messiah* transcends the sacred and the secular

I vividly remember my mother waking me and tugging me up off the floor to stand with 5600 other people. It was well past my bedtime, but I shuffled to my feet. I was overwhelmed by the sound of the choir and the orchestra. "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

We had the cheapest seats in the Sydney Opera House, perched at the back of the stage high above the choir stalls. I found them the best seats because I could see the conductor. He was expressing the music through his arms and face and hair and coat tails. I felt in the middle of it all. In that moment I thought, *I want to do that.*

George Frideric Handel said of writing the "Hallelujah" chorus, "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself."¹ The controversial and wealthy theologian Charles Jennens had commissioned the celebrated composer to set the story of Jesus in the new oratorio style.

Handel took Jennens' libretto and in just 24 days in the summer of 1741 wrote 259 pages of music score, working day and night, barely touching the meals his servant brought

him and not leaving his house. A friend who visited found him sobbing with the intensity of his task. Quoting the apostle Paul, he later remarked, "Whether I was in the body or out of my body when I wrote it I know not."²

At the end of his manuscript, Handel wrote the initials "S.D.G.". Handel's Lutheran family had taught him the great Reformation tenets of *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fide*, *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Christus* and *Soli Deo Gloria* (hence the initials). As we commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation this year, these truths still capture the essence of the everlasting gospel. Scripture alone. Faith alone. Grace alone. Christ alone. For the glory of God alone.

But many criticised *Messiah* from its first performance. The new oratorio form had descended from popular opera minus the colourful costumes and dramatic acting. Some found the new genre altogether too secular and frivolous for sacred truths.

Yet Handel and Jennens were careful to avoid the possible sacrilege of depicting Christ on stage and were especially respectful of the cross. Rather than having Jesus speak in scenes from the Gospels, they described His death

using predictions from the Old Testament and John the Baptist. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn" (Psalm 22:7). "Thy rebuke hath broken His heart" (Psalm 69:20). "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow" (Lamentation 1:12). "For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of His people was He stricken" (Isaiah 53:8).

Handel performed *Messiah* in entertainment venues rather than in churches to reach a wider audience, but many were horrified the Holy Bible in the authorised version would be cheapened by performance in a common music hall or theatre with secular vocalists and instrumentalists.

London newspapers criticised Handel, as did many preachers including John Newton, composer of "Amazing Grace." In no less than 50 sermons, Newton expressed the fear that Handel's ornamental music would distract people from the sacred word, and that audiences came for only "fashionable amusement,"³ yet Newton took the opportunity to thoroughly explain all the texts used in *Messiah*.

Martin Luther would probably have understood Handel better than most, sensing popular music enhanced worship, even if its use required a certain fluidity in one's understanding of sacred and secular. In Handel's view, *Messiah* clearly transcended the sacred and the secular realms. After one attack from an archbishop, Handel replied, "I have read my Bible very well and will choose for myself."⁴ He had clearly understood Luther on the authority of Scripture and the priesthood of all believers.

Messiah was first performed for charity. Handel's father, a surgeon, told Handel to study law, fearing a career in music would not provide financial reliability. This seemed an accurate prediction, as Handel often teetered on the edge of bankruptcy early in life. After *Messiah*, however, Handel had great success. He donated the proceeds from the oratorio to hospitals and charities that freed people from debtors' prisons, in which Handel had almost found himself.

What a practical depiction of the gospel. One biographer observed, "*Messiah* has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan . . . more than any other single musical production."⁵

Avondale Conservatorium performed The People's Messiah in the time-honoured Avondale tradition just three days before the October 31 anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. If there were any tired children in our audience, I hope your carers or parents woke you to enjoy the "Hallelujah" chorus as much as I did.

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Aleta King is Director of the Conservatorium of Music at Avondale College of Higher Education.

A CAPPELLA RETURN REVEALS VOCAL ENSEMBLE'S MISSION

The Promise Songbook The Promise

A first commissioning and six original compositions mark the musical maturity of an Avondale vocal ensemble as it celebrates the launch of a fifth album.

Each song on *The Promise Songbook* has a personal connection to The Promise and its Artistic Director Aleta King. Some come from friendship, others from professional association; one, composed particularly for the album and placed at its centre, provided comfort at a time of loss.

The Promise Songbook follows *Jesus: HIStory*, a recording with Avondale Jazz Ensemble of David Pudney's original compositions that reimagine the stories of the Gospels, *Give Thanks*, also recorded at Morisset Hospital Memorial Chapel, *Faithful* and a self-titled debut recorded in 2006.

King feels the album is the ensemble's most complete work.

Clansi Rogers (2006) is a musician and an alumna of Avondale College of Higher Education who has reviewed each of the previous albums. This is her review of *The Promise Songbook*.

***The Promise Songbook* is well named. In listening to the latest release from this ever-evolving Avondale College of Higher Education vocal ensemble, one feels granted an opening into the true heart of The Promise's mission: a pursuit of musical excellence and a deep commitment to share the message of Jesus. The album is also a return to the style of the ensemble's earlier releases following a collaboration with Avondale Jazz Ensemble in 2014.**

While *Jesus: HIStory* featured full instrumental backing and a single composer and arranger (Avondale Jazz Ensemble Director David Pudney), *The Promise Songbook* is almost entirely unaccompanied. The sole exception: the second part of Pudney's musical arrangement of 2 Peter 3:8-9, the Bible passage from which The Promise takes its name and mission. Finding a setting of this passage at the heart of the album is a fine touch.

Recorded again in the Morisset Hospital Memorial Chapel, the live acoustics suit *The Promise Songbook*.

The album opens with the lovely "Ego Sum Panis." Arranged especially for The Promise, this is the first in a set of musically complex tracks that are perhaps more technical than on previous albums. This highlights not only the



growing maturity of the ensemble but also its personal connection to each song.

Even though these songs range from a 300-year-old Bach chorale to freshly premiered works, the album is cohesive. The highlights: two songs by Keith Kirk, "Saints, Are You Ready To Go?" and "Surely The Lord Has Been Here." Both are sung with the conviction and the competence The Promise has been showcasing for the past 12 years.

The Promise Songbook is available from the Avondale Online Store and from Apple's iTunes Store.

www.avondale.edu.au/onlinestore



ADVENTIST SCHOOLS GET TEEN HEALTH TICK

Students report better body mass index than other adolescents in Australia

If your child is likely to experience weight problems, and if you have the financial means, send them to a Seventh-day Adventist school. Students at these schools are less heavy than and less likely to become as heavy as other adolescents in Australia.

Rates of overweight and obesity are between five and 18 per cent lower among students in Adventist schools than among other adolescents and those in other Australian schools, finds a study published in the August issue of the *Journal of School Health*. And despite a national increase in the prevalence of overweight and obese adolescents over the past 30 years, the study found no increase in Adventist schools.

It appears adolescents attending Adventist schools in Australia are “trending some 20 years behind the wider population,” write the researchers in their paper.

Findings from the study come from a health and lifestyle survey commissioned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific. The survey is the first Australia-wide evaluation of body mass index for adolescents attending Adventist schools. Almost 2000

students—788 in 2001 and 1098 in 2012—from 21 schools participated.

Researchers from the Lifestyle Research Centre at Avondale College of Higher Education analysed the data. They found a higher number of the students compared to adolescents in other studies ate the recommended daily servings of fruit, vegetables and whole grains. A lower number—only four per cent of the students in 2012—regularly drank soft drinks. With one in three claiming to be vegetarian, the researchers thought diet may in part explain the students’ lower body mass index. But they found no significant difference in the body mass index of the vegetarians and those who ate meat.

Three-quarters of the students in the study grew up in a family that had at least one Adventist parent. With the church’s wholistic health emphasis, the researchers suggest the students may be copying the good health behaviours of their parents—which the researchers observed in other studies.

The influence of the Adventist schools themselves may also be a contributing factor. All of the schools in the study serve only

vegetarian food in their canteens. Some enforce the eating of fruit or vegetable snacks during recess. And some implement needs-based health interventions. The researchers suggest, based on their reading of other studies, that the emphasis on spirituality may also exert a positive influence on health attitudes and behaviours.

The study identified the keys to keeping a lower weight, and they apply as much to adults as adolescents: regularly eat breakfast and exercise; and consume less sugar, particularly soft drinks, and more fruit, vegetables and whole grains.

The researchers suggest schools can play a leading role in addressing concerns over rising rates of overweight and obesity. Their recommendations include:

- Expanding health education and physical education teaching in and out of the classroom, supported by classes on cooking and nutrition
- Enforcing the eating of fruit or vegetable snacks during recess
- Reducing the availability of unhealthy food and drink in canteens
- Offering a breakfast program
- Increasing opportunities for physical activity with, for example, organised sports during recess and lunch; and
- Collaborating with families to offer active transport such as a bike or walking bus.

Brenton Stacey (2007) is Public Relations Officer at Avondale College of Higher Education.

THINK&DO

Funding update for project giving

Thank you for supporting research that improves lives by giving to Think&Do, Avondale College of Higher Education's rebranded annual appeal. The campaign's tagline, "A journey through giving

with Avondale," is an invitation to join us as we accept the challenge of learning and discovery, of educating leaders, of developing quality infrastructure and of fostering creativity.

This funding update shows the status of the research projects to which you have been giving in 2017.

Visit www.avondale.edu.au/giving to choose other projects or scholarships. Donations above \$2 are tax deductible in Australia.

Centre for Advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning



Giving helps train supervisors of and supports undergraduate and postgraduate research students, expanding an online tool called the Avondale Research Training Support Framework.

Donations for 2017: \$4673

Christian Education Research Centre



Giving benefits, informs Seventh-day Adventist schools in the South Pacific by supporting projects such as STEM integration and correlation of 21st century education with the model espoused by pioneer Ellen White.

Donations for 2017: \$5214

Lifestyle Research Centre



Giving supports the study of wholistic health and wellbeing, infection prevention, lifestyle medicine and the Seventh-day Adventist Church's comprehensive health strategy through CHIP projects and those studying hospital infections.

Donations for 2017: \$36,724

Spirituality and Worship Research Centre



Giving supports research with practical applications for church and community. Projects include those studying: spirituality of university students; biblical dimensions of worship; and understanding of church mission.

Donations for 2017: \$4975

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The Original Cast Recording of Jericho Road is now available on iTunes.

When you purchase the album you will receive 16 tracks including 'Altar,' 'Faithful' and 'Dare to Dream' as well as a free digital booklet with lyrics and the story of the musical. Featuring the soaring vocals of Kristy Maletin and Fomai Mohr supported by a 16-piece orchestra, this album is the perfect way to remember Leila and Jacob's journey down Jericho Road.

TAKE FIVE WITH BETHANY CHAPMAN

The Chapmans are a ministry family. Michael and Bethany met at Avondale. Both studied theology and ministry, with Bethany graduating a year before Michael in 2008. The couple are now ordained/commissioned ministers, with Bethany serving as Director of Women's Ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in northern New South Wales and Michael pastoring the Central Coast Community Church. They are also parents of daughters Charlotte, Zoe and Letty.



Photo: Hayley Munday Photography

From where or whom did your call to ministry come?

God! Since the age of 16, I felt convicted to dedicate my life to His kingdom. I spent a lot of time fighting this conviction, but He has closed doors and opened windows and continually called me back to a life of service.

As a young woman, I prayed a radical prayer. It went like this: "I'll say yes to everything I'm asked to do for God but I'm not going to put my hand up or ask to do anything." In that year, I went from never having stood on my own up the front of church to praying the congregational prayer, singing solos, preaching and leading Bible studies and a small group. Some of the things I was asked to do I didn't enjoy doing but the experiences helped me discover my spiritual gifts.

My heart always feels fullest when I lean into what God is asking me to do for His kingdom.

How do you find living and working with a husband who's a minister, too?

Not for the faint-hearted. I never thought I'd marry another minister, but I love being a part of each other's worlds. It's great to see the other being used by God. When we get the chance, it's also great to work together complementing one another's giftedness. We have to communicate clearly about our schedules to juggle parenting—we want our ministry to bless not burden our children.

You're a woman in ministry. I imagine that's sometimes an additional challenge. Yes?

It's not easy being a female in a male-dominated profession but the line for the women's toilet is always shorter at ministers' meetings. Like any minister, Michael and I have our critics. I'm my harshest critic—the loudest "no" comes from within. But God restores me, challenges me, calls me, equips me and throws me in the deep end. He knows what I can do and where I should be doing it. With a resounding "yes," He sets me back on the path He's placed before me.

Ministry has highs and lows. Tell me about the biggest highs.

I'm always overwhelmed witnessing lives changed for Christ. Bible studies, baptisms and personal spiritual growth are a delight for me in my ministry. I've been blessed to watch the work of the Holy Spirit. That's a pretty special privilege.

Part of your role is to inspire other women to be active in their churches and communities. What do you find works best?

Being honest. Nobody has it all together and everybody is busy. I don't want serving God to be another burden in the lives of women who are already juggling so much. When we're connected with our Creator and Redeemer, service flows from a place of gratitude rather than resentment. It's also vital women see genuine examples of other women—everyday women—who model life lived in service to Christ.

Adele Nash (2004) is Communication Coordinator for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in northern New South Wales.

BARBARA'S TOPS WITH TEACHERS

Do you see Avondale College of Higher Education alumna **Barbara Fisher** (middle, front row) in this photograph of teachers? Impressed with her textbook, *Developing a Faith-based Education: A Teacher's Manual*, Director of Education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Euro-Asia Vladimir Tkachuk invited the former lecturer to speak to more than 250 teachers in Ukraine. Most did not graduate from Adventist institutions and only a few read a translation of the book before the conference. The church is using resources from Adventist educators in Australia to help develop its curriculum "because it thinks we're more reflective in our approach to education and more open to ideas," says Fisher. A former Director of Education for the worldwide church, Dr Humberto Rasi, says Fisher's book is one of the best for Adventist teachers.



QUEENS OF TEENS

Two Avondale arts graduates from 2007 are establishing themselves as queens of young adult and new adult fiction. **Trudy Adams** and **Danielle Weiler**, who majored and minored in English, have now written nine novels between them.



Adams, from Lake Macquarie, NSW, began her first novel, *Desolate Beauty* (Ark House Press) at age 17. It would win third prize in the 2010 Australian Christian Book of the Year Awards. Adams has since signed

a contract with Uptone Pictures and Damascus Road Productions for *Desolate Beauty* to become a movie—filming began in the USA in October. Her second novel, *Judging Meghan*, followed that same year and *Broken Melody* (both Wombat Books) in 2013. The latest, *The Sunshine List* (Onwards & Upwards Publishing, 2017), won second prize in the 2015 Australian Christian Young Writers Awards.

Weiler, from Perth, the class president and the editor of the student magazine, has published *Friendship on Fire* (2011) and a sequel (2015), *Reckless* (2013) and *Assembly of Shapes* (2014). Her latest, *The Pastor's Kid* (Ark House Press, 2017), tells of two young adults from different upbringings who help bridge the gap

of perceived normality.

Inspired by teenagers wrestling with identity formation, Weiler writes to give readers "hope in whatever situation they find themselves."

Adams writes and works for teenagers from difficult backgrounds "who, through no fault of their own, are forced to make adult decisions without adult experience or support."

The classmates draw from different experiences: Weiler as a teacher and parent; Adams as a youth worker.



Think&DO

A JOURNEY THROUGH GIVING WITH AVONDALE

Power to think and do: it's a gift from the Creator. Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneer Ellen White makes the statement to encourage exploration and engagement (Education, p. 17). Giving to Avondale through its Think&Do campaign demonstrates your support for her philosophy.

Journey with us as we accept the challenge of learning and discovery, of educating leaders and of developing quality infrastructure. And as we use this knowledge and these resources to improve lives. Your donation will help our research centres as they seek to give us a better understanding of Christian education, health and lifestyle, teaching and learning and spirituality and worship.

Donations above \$2 are tax deductible in Australia.

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