Avondale
COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Reflections

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Homecoming 2011
Avondale stars again
Alumni win international acclaim
Scholarship and the arts flourish

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Cover picture: Homecoming 2011: Dr Marion Shields, presenter of the Alumni Lecture, and Dr John Hammond, honoured for outstanding service to Adventist education. Photo credit: Ann Stafford

Avondale stars again

The 2012 *Good Universities Guide* has once again given Avondale top 5-star ratings for key indicators of quality education:

- staff qualifications
- student-staff ratio
- teaching quality (all graduates)
- teaching quality (domestic graduates)
- generic skills (all graduates)
- generic skills (domestic graduates)
- overall student satisfaction (all graduates)
- overall student satisfaction (domestic graduates)

For more than ten years Avondale has repeatedly scored 5-star ratings for quality teaching, generic skills and student satisfaction. With the addition this year of separate ratings for domestic graduates, Avondale received more 5-star ratings than ever before – eight altogether. Only one other institution matched this score.

The Good Universities Guide compares universities and leading private higher education providers Australia-wide. Its ratings for teaching quality, generic skills and student satisfaction are derived from surveys of recent graduates conducted by Graduate Careers Australia, the leading Australian authority on graduate outcomes, educational experience and career opportunities, which it researches in association with government, the higher education sector and business. The ratings for staff qualifications and student-staff ratio are derived from data collected by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Avondale's president, Dr Ray Roennfeldt, described Avondale's ratings as "extremely gratifying." "While we're working hard to increase our research intensity," he said, "the 5-star ratings for students' educational experience show that we also remain focused on our core strengths in quality teaching. Our staff members are totally committed – they're the best."

Dr Jane Fernandez-Goldborough appointed Vice President (Learning and Teaching)

Dr Jane Fernandez-Goldborough has been appointed as Avondale's new Vice President (Learning and Teaching), replacing Dr Philip Brown, who has accepted a position as Principal of Newbold College, England. Jane was previously senior lecturer in English in Avondale's School of Humanities and Creative Arts.

Jane's love for teaching and working with young people was shaped through her early career as teacher and principal in a school for underprivileged children in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Impressed with Avondale's Christian ethos, she came to Avondale in 1985 to study secondary education with a major in English, graduating in 1988. She subsequently completed a Bachelor of Arts with honours and a Doctor of Philosophy with Macquarie University.

Jane joined Avondale's staff in 2001. Since then she has authored a book on K.S. Maniam, a writer of the Indian diaspora. She has edited books and contributed chapters and articles to academic journals and inter-disciplinary publications. She has presented scholarly papers at international conferences, led out in research initiatives and is involved in collaborative projects with several networks.

Her teaching is inspiring, and she has provided strong leadership in developing at Avondale the nexus between quality teaching and research. Jane is committed to Avondale's vision to become a premier Christian institution.



Dr Jane Fernandez-Goldborough

Avondale's vocational training 'a model of best practice' Wayne Miller

Dr Wayne Miller is the coordinator of vocational education and training at Avondale. He also instructs in sea kayaking in the Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation.

Avondale is both a higher education provider and a provider of vocational education and training (VET). State regulatory authorities recently conducted audits of all private Registered Training Organisations in Australia. After a comprehensive review of Avondale's VET sector, the senior member of the audit team stated that Avondale presented as "a model of best practice." There were no non-compliance issues.



Min Gorring begins her descent

Avondale passed another significant milestone in 2010, gaining Commonwealth approval to offer VET FEE-HELP to students in the Diploma of Outdoor Recreation. VET FEE-HELP is a Commonwealth loan scheme assisting eligible students with all or part of their tuition costs. Eligible students in Avondale's Diploma of Outdoor Recreation do not need to pay tuition fees up front. The fees can be deferred and repaid to the Commonwealth via the tax system over a period of years after the student graduates and begins earning above a specified level.

A third milestone in 2010 was Avondale's re-registration for a further five years as a Registered Training Organisation. Re-registration was granted without the usual re-registration site audit, a further acknowledgement of the quality of Avondale's vocational education and training sector.

Outdoor Recreation

Avondale offers two training package-based programs in Outdoor Recreation, the Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation and the Diploma of Outdoor Recreation. We were delighted with a record enrolment this year with 11 in Certificate III and 19 in the Diploma. We believe the record enrolment in 2011 is a result of VET FEE-HELP approval.



Kahleb Radford mastering the white water

If you were to visit the Outdoor Recreation Department on the ground floor of the Chan Shun Auditorium, you would meet the brightest-eyed students you could hope to see. Some might rattle as they walk with an assortment of hardware as they prepare to hone their roping skills in the nearby Watagan Mountains. Some may be loading sea kayaks in anticipation of a day trip to Broken Bay, Port Stephens or Port Jackson, where emerging guiding skills can be put to the test.

A highlight for diploma students this year was a four-day skill development adventure hosted by the New Zealand Kayak School on pristine big-flowing rivers on the west coast of the South Island. When I asked three participants why the trip stands out, they described the experience as "a hard-hitting white water experience. We learnt *so much* in four days," they said. "We not only learnt to paddle well but to instruct well."

Outdoor Recreation also supplies services to Avondale's higher education sector, enabling students in selected degree units in teacher education courses to gain skills and qualifications (dual-badging), as recommended by the outdoor recreation industry for persons who will work in outdoor adventure programs.



Dean Conacher abseiling in the Watagan Mountains

The Outdoor Recreation Department is also expanding its partnership arrangements with Adventist Schools Australia, offering web-based support to school principals, outdoor education coordinators and camping program supervisors with resources such as Standard Operating Procedures, notification forms and links to industry-based bodies. Through a partnership with Gilson College, Macquarie College and Avondale School, we train their teachers through short courses and then these teachers in turn mentor our Outdoor Recreation students in the field during work placements.

While rock climbing, abseiling, sea kayaking, white water kayaking and bushwalking are fun and provide the endorphin kick some of us enjoy, they also foster personal growth and development in our adventure activity leaders-in-training.

While we integrate faith and learning in all Outdoor Recreation units, certain units are specifically designed to enhance students' understanding and experience of Christian spirituality. In these units, aptly called Visionary Leadership in the Outdoors I and II, Adrian Ellison mentors students in the religious, ethical and social values of Avondale's philosophy of outdoor recreation. What a blessing that our students are beneficiaries of Adrian's fifty years of experience in adventure-based learning from a Christian perspective!



Sea kayaking. Photo: Wayne Miller

New Director of Marketing and Advancement

Colin Crabtree became Director of Marketing and Advancement at Avondale in August 2011, replacing Lorin Bradford, who held the position from 2006 to 2010. Colin was previously Marketing Manager (Cataract and Refractive Surgery, Australia and New Zealand) with Abbott Medical Optics.

He brings to Avondale almost 25 years of sales and marketing experience in the medical field, including seventeen years at marketing manager and product manager level, and one-and-a-half years in national sales management. He has won an impressive array of awards in sales and marketing.

Colin commenced a Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing) at Avondale in 1981. After further work experience in medical device sales and as an anesthetic technician, he graduated from the Diploma in 1990 and upgraded to a Bachelor of Nursing in 1992.

When asked what motivated him to be a part of Avondale's mission, Colin said, "While I attained a high level of career 'success' as measured by the world at large, the more I gained, the more empty the rewards became – never capturing what is really important in life. I believe life experiences have been given to all of us by God to meet a greater overall purpose or mission, and it's always only a matter of time before that mission is presented to us in clarity. My new role as Avondale's Director of Marketing and Advancement is an opportunity to use the skills and experience I've gained elsewhere to help others 'find their inspiration'. It is also an opportunity to give back to the God-centered organisation that has inspired so much in me."



Colin Crabtree at the Avondale Alumni Association's Annual General Meeting. Photo: Ann Stafford

Strong enrolment in 2011

Avondale attracted strong enrolment in 2011, the first-semester intake of 1347 students almost equalling the 2009 record. There were healthy increases in Early Childhood Education, Nursing and Outdoor Recreation. The Bachelor of Nursing program, with a first-year intake of almost 160 students in 2011, has experienced particularly good growth in recent years. Nursing students may choose to study the first year of their course on either the Sydney or the Lake Macquarie campus. In 2011 all eligible nursing and teacher education students received Commonwealth Supported Places, giving substantially discounted tuition and the option of deferring all tuition payments until annual earnings exceed the threshold set by the Commonwealth (currently $44,912 p.a.).

Homecoming climaxes in praise to God



Dr Lyell Heise conducts The Promise and the Institute of Worship Orchestra in Hymns and Songs of Praise. Photo: Ann Stafford

The 2011 Avondale Homecoming weekend climaxed with a program entitled Hymns and Songs of Praise, featuring The Promise vocalists, a 50-piece orchestra and extensive audience participation. The conductor was Dr Lyell Heise, director of the South Pacific Division Institute of Worship at Avondale. Many thought it one of the most impressive and spiritually focused Saturday-evening Homecoming events for some years.

Dr Lloyd Willis, Professor of Religion at Southwestern Adventist University, Texas, presented the Homecoming Sabbath sermon. This was a special occasion for Lloyd and his wife Edith (Bradbury). After serving overseas for most of their careers, they were returning to Australia on the fiftieth anniversary of Lloyd's graduation from Avondale in 1961. Lloyd and Edith taught in India for 25 years, mainly at Spicer Memorial College, where Lloyd became Chair of Theology and Edith taught English and music. They have been at Southwestern Adventist University, Texas, for the past 23 years, where Lloyd was Chair of Religion for nineteen years, and still teaches full-time in the fields of Old Testament, biblical backgrounds and archaeology. For a number of years he was also involved in an archaeological project in Jordan with significant implications for the date of the Exodus. Until her retirement, Edith directed Southwestern's program in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. Lloyd was honoured at Homecoming with the Alumni Association citation for a graduate of 1961.

The Alumnus of the Year Award went to Alan Thrift, who received a standing ovation in recognition of his devotion to musical excellence and his gifts as an educator and mentor. Alan's 41 years on the Avondale staff makes him one of the longest-serving former staff members of the College. Alan graduated from Avondale in 1951 and was appointed head of music in 1957. The excellence of his choral work was



Alan Thrift receives the Alumnus of the Year Award from Jenny Laredo Hilder, Vice President of the Alumni Association. Photo: Ann Stafford



Mel Duffy receives the 1951 honour citation from Veronica Baird. Photo: Ann Stafford

widely acclaimed. He conducted the Avondale Symphonic Choir in the first television broadcast of a choral program in Sydney, and his choirs toured in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. He retired in 1990, but returned to direct the Avondale Singers from 1998 to 2004. In retirement he directed the Sydney Male Choir for twenty years, with concert tours in Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Ireland. He also directed the Lake Macquarie City Ladies Choir and the Avondale Memorial Chorale.

During the mission segment on Sabbath morning, **Iris Landa** (1961), for many years Director of Academic Advising and Orientation at La Sierra University, California, told of her retirement project to brighten with happy murals the surroundings of people in depressed international environments. She had recently returned from a project transforming the walls of a dour women's prison in Moldova. **Pastor John Chan** (1961) spoke as a representative of past students who embraced the Seventh-day Adventist faith while at Avondale. Student leaders of 2011 told of current students' dedication to mission.



Iris Landa (1961) tells of her "Happy Rooms" project in Moldova. Photo: Ann Stafford



1961 theology graduates: Pr Ross Goldstone, Pr John Chan, Dr Lloyd Willis, Dr John Cox, Dr Alex Currie. Photo: Ann Stafford



A group at the 1991 reunion: (L to R) Amanda Hepworth (Toepfer), Natalie McMahon (Davey), Beverley Doubikin (Govett), Annalea Bishop (daughter of Kerrie and Phil), Sharon Harrington (Bazley), Louise Ginn (Conduit). Photo: Ann Stafford

Avondale alumnus awarded top professional honour



Associate Professor John Williams

Associate Professor John Williams, an Avondale graduate of 1974, was admitted in 2011 to the Academy of Fellows of the International Technology and Engineering Education Association, based in the USA. The citation commences: "This is the highest recognition that the International Technology and Engineering Education Association (ITEEA) can bestow upon any person." Only one non-American has ever before received the award. The honour is conferred in recognition of prominence in and service to the profession.

John Williams began his tertiary education at Avondale, graduating in secondary teaching with a major in industrial arts. "I remember Brian Houliston, Trevor Lloyd and Alan Lindsay as key people in ensuring that learning was a pleasure," he says. He met Susan (Parker) in his final year at college, and they married the next year. After graduating John worked as a builder for a few years, but then "bit the bullet" and decided to teach, and for the next three years taught industrial arts in Adelaide. He wanted to do postgraduate work, but because this was not available in technology education in Australia, he and Sue went to Andrews University, Michigan, where he gained a master's degree and a doctorate.

He then returned to Australia and worked at Avondale in 1985. He and Sue had not returned to Australia during the five years they were in the US, and did not anticipate the reverse culture shock felt in settling back in Cooranbong. An opportunity arose to work in Zimbabwe as part of an Australian aid scheme to develop education in that country, and he and Sue subsequently spent five years there, John training technical teachers and Sue working at the Australian High Commission.

On returning to Australia in 1991 John taught initially in a secondary school in Sydney, then accepted a position at the University of Newcastle training technology teachers. He later moved to Edith Cowan University in Perth as coordinator of technology education, did a stint as Associate Dean for International Relations, and became the director of the university's secondary teacher training program. He maintained his African connections during this time, which led to the supervision of teacher training programs in Botswana, Seychelles and Mauritius, and of postgraduate students from South Africa and Zimbabwe. While in Perth he became a chief examiner for the International Baccalaureate Organisation and external examiner for the Mauritius and Hong Kong Institutes of Education.

In 2010 John took up a position in the Centre for Science and Technology Education Research at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, subsequently becoming the director. He has published fifty articles and authored and co-authored eleven books. He regularly presents at international and national conferences, consults on technology education in a number of countries, is a longstanding member of eight professional associations and is on the editorial board of four professional journals.

"I feel God has richly blessed me throughout my journey," he said. "Avondale's strong foundation of scholarship and inspirational leadership has led me to a lifelong love of learning."

Avondale alumnus achieves international eminence in music

Avondale alumnus Professor David King has forged an astonishing international career as a university professor, award-winning brass performer, and one of the world's most exciting and dynamic conductors of band music.

David King graduated from Avondale with a BA in Education in 1978, studying music under Alan Thrift.

After winning the Australian Cornet Championship in 1982, he gained a scholarship to study in Britain. There he won the North of England Solo Championship three years in a row (1983-1985), and became five-times winner of the British Open B-flat Cornet Solo Championship (1987-1991). In 1992 he won the title International Brass Musician of the Year.



Professor David King: distinguished conductor

From 1982 to 1989 David King conducted the Swinton Concert Band, achieving 36 first prizes out of 48 competitions. In 1990 he became the principal conductor of the Black Dyke Mills Band, then the most famous band in the world. For thirteen years from 1993 he led the Yorkshire Building Society Band to even greater heights, scoring astonishing achievements in concerts, competitions and recordings.

He and his bands won the European Brass Band Championships an unprecedented ten times, the Norwegian National Championships seven times, the coveted British Open Championships on four occasions, and the National Championships of Great Britain in 2010.

He has worked closely with many of the world's internationally acclaimed composers, commissioning, choreographing, directing and premiering their work. He has made many highly acclaimed recordings, in 2003 winning the British Band World CD of the Year award.

His musical output has won superlative accolades from music commentators. Composer Martin Ellerby described "the electrifying intensity" of King's performances. Chris Earl, editor of Australia's *Band World*, wrote: "His enthusiasm to explore has seen him at the forefront of performance and compositional innovation." Peter Wilson, editor of *British Bandsman*, wrote: "David King's penetrating observation of the music's meaning . . . produces performances that . . . his audiences will probably never hear bettered."[1]

Avondale audiences have been privileged to hear three of these performances, one in 2005 when David King toured Australia with his legendary Yorkshire Building Society Band, and the other two in 2009 and 2011 when he brought to Avondale the National Australia Brass, comprised of leading brass players from all over Australia. David King has a warm regard for Avondale.

In 2000 David King gained the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Salford, Manchester, England, becoming the first recipient of a performance research doctorate in a British university. The university subsequently appointed him Chair of Music Performance. In this role he has been at the forefront of music education, attracting to the university students from all over the world.

In 2002 he was appointed music director of the massed bands for the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. In 2006 he was appointed conductor laureate to The Band of the Coldstream Guards, London, the first civilian musician to be linked with the Ministry of Defence in this capacity. In 2008 he became music adviser of the Federation of Australasian Brass Bands.

In September 2009 Professor King took early retirement from the University of Salford, where he has been awarded emeritus professorship. The Worshipful Company of Musicians, London, awarded him the prestigious Iles Medal in recognition of his services to British music.

He is presently working across two hemispheres, as principal conductor of the world famous Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band (UK), as guest conductor of Eikanger Bjorsvik (Norway) and as artistic director of National Australia Brass (Australia).

Professor King is founder and director of Qdos Institute of Musical Arts, an independent musical arts educational advisory service. He is also an artist and advisory consultant for Yamaha Music in Europe and Australia.

[1] Comments cited in *The British Bandsman*, 28 June 2003.

Avondale musicians acclaimed on US concert tour

Avondale's premier vocal ensemble, The Promise, impressed audiences on its three-week concert tour of California in September-October 2011. The tour included performances at Loma Linda University, Pacific Union College, Grace Cathedral San Francisco, Moreno Valley United Methodist Church, The Carter Report and four Adventist academies.

The Promise is a group of nine accomplished singers, mainly students in Avondale's degree programs in music. One is a former winner of the Australian Songwriting Contest; two are studying for postgraduate research degrees at Avondale.

Founded in 2005, The Promise has established a reputation for excellence, with a repertoire ranging from the classics to contemporary gospel. The group has toured in several Australian states and New Zealand. Major performances have included a televised worship service in St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne during the 2006 Commonwealth Games; a Sydney Opera House appearance as part of the Sydney Youth Musicale; and an *It is Written Oceania* program aired on Christmas Day 2010 on the Seven Television Network. The Promise gives more than sixty performances each year.

In September 2011 the group launched its second album, *Faithful*, produced for Psalter Music at Adventist Media Network. The quality of the performances impressed Psalter manager Tim Burcham: "The Promise is polished," he says, "and is contributing to ministry." The group's name is inspired by the passage in 2 Peter 3 that says the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise to return, but is patient to give people time to accept his offered salvation.

The director of The Promise and senior lecturer in music, Dr Robb Dennis, brings to Avondale over twenty years of experience as a tenor soloist, voice teacher, musicologist, and conductor of bands, choirs and orchestras. He is a former conductor of the Cantobello Chorale and the Moreno Valley Master Chorale in California, and has performed as a tenor soloist with the Repertory Opera Company of Los Angeles, the Utah Symphony, and the Oratorio Society of Utah. He regularly performs at the Newcastle University Conservatorium of Music and as a soloist for the Newcastle Festival's Opera in the Park. In July 2010 he presented a recital of Schubert's *Winterreise* (Part 1) at the University of Newcastle Conservatorium of Music. The recital was broadcast on ABC affiliate 2NUR-FM as part of the Harold Lobb Recital Series. Dr Dennis prefaced the recital with a pre-concert talk based on his research on the collaboration between Schubert and the poet Wilhelm Müller in the creation of the work.

Other Avondale ensembles

The sixty-voice **Avondale Singers** performed at the Sydney Opera House in 2009 and 2010 in concerts that director Dr Robb Dennis described as the choir's most significant engagements in thirty years. In these programs the Singers combined with visiting youth orchestras from the United States. Engagements in 2011 have included local ANZAC services and a performance at the United Nations Commemorative Celebration in Newcastle. In November the Singers will perform Handel's *Messiah*, televised in the Avondale College



The Promise vocalists in the Avondale College Church. Photo: Ann Stafford

Church. The **Avondale Chamber Orchestra**, conducted by sessional lecturer Dr Sohyun Eastham, has a repertoire ranging from Bach to contemporary music. Its engagements include church and concert performances as well as accompaniments for larger choral works. A **Piano Trio** was formed in 2010 featuring sessional lecturer Christina An (piano), Dr Sohyun Eastham (violin), and cellist Gavin Clark. The **Watagan Brass Quintet** is a community-based ensemble with two trumpets, French horn, trombone and tuba. The **Contemporary Choir** is a student ensemble functioning under the umbrella of Avondale's Student Services Department.

Fine Arts Series

The Fine Arts Series is a schedule of free artistic events under the auspices of Avondale's School of Humanities and Creative Arts. It includes masterworks concerts and other music recitals, as well as exhibitions of fine arts and graphic design.

A highlight of the 2011 **Masterworks concerts** was a major recital by the National Australia Brass under the baton of Professor David King. This program included three world premier performances, with two of the composers present for the occasion. The concert also featured the Sydney Male Choir directed by Dr Houston Dunleavy.

Evensong is a series of meditative Sabbath afternoon recitals presented mainly in the Avondale College Church. Recent Evensong programs have included a piano trio recital of works by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and other composers; and a recital by The Promise in the Brandstater Amphitheatre. This program also included items by the Blue Hills College Octet, an accomplished ensemble conducted by Melissa Rogers, a 2009 Avondale graduate and former member of The Promise.

Other music events in the Fine Arts Series include **Chamber Artists**, a series of solo or small-group recitals, often presented in the Avondale Library; and **Masterclass**, a series of free professional development seminars for musicians. In 2011 these included a masterclass for The Promise with Australian Recording Industry Association Award-winning quartet, The Idea of North.

Studying music at Avondale

Avondale offers music as a major study in the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching degrees. The academic program in music includes performance studies in the student's principal instrument or voice, studies in the music culture of different periods, and studies in harmony, composition, and the music of different ethnic groups. An optional highlight is a European Study Tour. Currently thirty-five students are majoring in music in Avondale's undergraduate degrees. Two other students are studying for research master's degrees in music and two for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in music.

International study tours enhance student learning

Avondale enhances learning opportunities by offering international study tour electives as credit towards students' degree programs. Study tours are available in history, visual communication, music, business and biblical studies. Preparation includes lectures, discussions, research, tutorial presentations and a written assignment. A post-tour assignment brings together the insights acquired on the trip. Study tours enrich theoretical learning with first-hand experience, generate an enthusiasm for learning that has no equal in the classroom, and develop global perspectives of value in subsequent professional life.

Bible lands study tour

In July 2011 Dr Wayne French, Lake Macquarie campus chaplain with a keen interest in archaeology, led sixty-two students on a study tour of Bible lands: Egypt, the Sinai peninsula, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Greece and Italy. The tour gave special attention to sites associated with Israel's exodus from Egypt, the footsteps of Christ in the gospels, Paul's missionary journeys, and the seven churches of Revelation. Highlights included climbing Mount Sinai, a communion service at the garden tomb in Jerusalem, a baptism in the River Jordan, and scripture readings at key locations. The tour also included historic sites at Petra, Jerash (Jordan), Gallipoli and Pompeii. Students said the tour made the Bible live as they saw the places where the events occurred. It also gave many their first experience of cultures outside Australia.



Bible lands tour: Josh Hamilton chats with an Egyptian at the pyramids of Giza. Photo: Colin Chuang



Dr Lyell Heise baptising Avondale student William Moala in the River Jordan. Photo: Colin Chuang

History study tours

This year's history tour studied aspects of French history associated with sites in the south of France and in and around Paris. The previous tour (2008) focused on the history of ancient Greece and Rome. The tours enhanced students' skills of historical investigation as they analysed and interpreted the source materials available at the various sites and museums. Students experienced at first hand the geography, locations and cultures relevant to the history they had studied, gaining clearer understandings of the political, social and ethical issues facing people in history.

"Actually seeing the buildings, sites and ruins in person . . . has made the people in history . . . more real to me," one student wrote. Another said, "History has quite literally been brought to life. It has freshly re-dawned on me that the history I study was the reality of people, communities and humanity." Students commented that the experience of operating in alien cultures and language environments also enriched their personal and spiritual development.

"It was clear that on-site experiences made a massive difference to the students," said Associate Professor Daniel Reynaud. "The level of visible connection to the past and the immediacy with which they connected was evident in levels of excitement and verbal feedback."

Following the tour, Associate Professor Reynaud and Dr Maria Northcote delivered a refereed paper on the educational value of international history tours, which they presented at the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia Conference, Griffith University, Queensland (2011).



Miming Pharaoh: Brett Carlsen, Josh Hamilton and Colin Chuang at the temple of Rameses II, Abu Simbel, Egypt. Photo: Kristin Hankins



The 2011 history tour: Sav Ratu (R) in Les Invalides military museum, Paris. Photo: Daniel Reynaud

Visual Arts/Visual Communication

The 2011 tour studied art and architecture in Chicago and New York, cities whose museums and galleries exhibit an astonishing wealth of art from ancient times to the present. Highlights in Chicago included the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Museum of Contemporary Art; and in New York the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art. The 2009 Visual Arts tour went to Paris, Amsterdam and London.



An architecture guide briefs Avondale students on buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park, Chicago. Photo: Andrew Collis

Business

The 2011 business tour studied selected industries and corporations in Singapore, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Italy, Monaco, France, Switzerland and England. Locations included the Lego factory in Denmark; Airbus, Volkswagen and BMW in Germany; Swarovski Crystal in Austria; Nestlé-Calliers in France; and the London Stock Exchange in England. The tour supplemented the theoretical base of students' studies with practical applications in "real world" situations. Students were able to observe best practice in a range of international businesses, improving their understanding of the internal workings of organisations and enhancing their awareness of the broader social, cultural and environmental factors that influence business processes.



Music students departing for their 2010 international study tour. Photo: Corinne Knopper

Music

The 2010 music tour studied the music, composers and performers associated with Vienna, Salzburg, Venice, Paris and London. Highlights included concerts at tour locations.

Avondale conferences foster scholarship and the arts

Since 2009 Avondale has hosted a number of conferences and symposia exploring issues of significance to the church and the wider community.

A major conference entitled **Understanding Islam from a Christian Perspective** (2009) featured high-profile scholarly presenters, most of whom have lived and worked in Islamic countries, and all of whom have engaged in faith dialogue with Islamic leaders. The conference, chaired by Dr William Johnsson, former editor of *Adventist Review*, examined common ground and differences between Islam and Christianity, exploring ways of relating to Islamic peoples.

A 2011 conference entitled **Church and Adventist Identity in the 21st Century** explored issues of identity in relation to the question of how the church might relate relevantly to the contemporary world. Pastor Rudy Dingjan, Church Growth Director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Netherlands, and Pastor Peter Roennfeldt, who has cultivated church planting movements in up to fifty countries, shared their experience of fresh approaches to planting new churches in sophisticated cultural environments. Dr Reinder Bruinsma, an academic, author and retired church administrator from the Netherlands, spoke of the cultural legacy of postmodernism. "This is not a matter of thinking differently about a few things but a completely different way of looking at life," he said. "Innovative approaches are needed to interface with contemporary culture and society."

The **Manifest Creative Arts Festival** (2011), organised by the Adventist Church in the South Pacific through Avondale College of Higher Education and the Adventist Media Network, highlighted the importance of the creative arts in communicating the gospel; fostered creativity in writing, film making and music; and provided opportunity for creative artists to connect with one another and showcase their work. "Too often we underestimate the importance of the arts, but these are integral to communicating our message of hope," said Neale Schofield, chief executive officer of Adventist Media Network. "Creative artists need to be recognised and we need to create a space for them to flourish in the church." The event climaxed with the Gabe Reynaud Awards, named in honour of the talented film maker and former senior producer at Adventist Media Network whose life was cut tragically short. Visiting presenters included Kay Rizzo, author of over fifty books and one of the most prolific Adventist writers, and Stacia Wright, co-founder of the annual SONscreen film festival organised by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.



Prolific writer Kay Rizzo

Symposium on origins issues

In 2011 Avondale hosted a weekend symposium on origins issues, sponsored by the Faith and Science Council of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Dr Ross Grant, a biochemical pharmacologist at the University of New South Wales and chief executive officer of the Australasian Research Institute, argued that an adequate



Presenters at the Church and Adventist Identity conference: (L to R) Pr Rudy Dingjan, Pr Peter Roennfeldt, Dr Richard Rice, Dr Reinder Bruinsma.

theory of origins requires an explanation for the origin of the precise physical and chemical laws that govern space, time and matter. It also requires explanations for the origin of life, the development of increasing genomic complexity, and the simultaneous development of the symbiotic environment (ecosystem) needed to sustain the forms developed. With reference to genomic complexity, Dr Grant noted that while natural selection can produce variations, there is no evidence that it can add to the complexity of the genome.


Dr Ross Grant. Photo: Timothy Standish

Dr Timothy Standish, a biologist in the Geoscience Research Institute at Loma Linda University, California, noted that many of the earliest fossils exhibit biochemical complexity such as photosynthesis at their first appearance in the fossil record. Many early fossils also show anatomical complexity at their first appearance. Trilobite eyes, for example, appear in full complexity with no prior evidence of having gradually evolved.

Dr Raul Esperante, a palaeontologist in the Geoscience Research Institute, reported research by an Institute team at a site in southern Peru where over five hundred well-preserved fossil whales, together with other large marine animals, were found in an area of three square kilometres of mountaintop. The evidence indicates rapid and catastrophic burial. The fossils are typically in pristine condition, with no marks of scavenging or erosion of the skeleton. When whales die naturally in the ocean, the baleen tends to detach from the upper mandible within hours or days of death; but in the Peruvian fossils, more than seventy-five whales were found with the baleen still intact. Dr Esperante noted that a majority of palaeontologists now believe that the geological record shows evidence not of uniform change, but of gradual depositions interspersed with repeated local catastrophes.


Dr Raul Esperante. Photo: Timothy Standish

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CHRISTIANITY CONFERENCES

Avondale hosted two New Perspectives on Christianity conferences (2009, 2011), each of which developed a stimulating range of Christian viewpoints on contemporary issues, including presentations on Christian witness, indigenous issues, biblical scholarship, organisational leadership, education, health and the visual arts. Selected papers from the New Perspectives conferences are published in *The International Journal of New Perspectives on Christianity*, a refereed journal published by Avondale College of Higher Education. The Journal is also available on the Avondale website at ResearchOnline@Avondale (http://research.avondale.edu.au). The editorial outlines the objectives of the journal. Information for authors is also available in the journal and articles are invited at any time in addition to the papers presented at the conferences.

Christianity's potential contribution to contemporary society

In a keynote address to the 2009 conference, **Dr Vivienne Watts**, Avondale's Vice President (Administration and Research), proposed community engagement as a way forward for Christianity in the context of declining religious affiliation in Australia. Christianity, she said, can demonstrate its relevance to contemporary society by addressing community challenges, needs, issues and problems. Just as they did in the past, Christians can become advocates for transformational societal change by working together in the community and for the good of the community under a framework of factors that will sustain Christianity's survival. These factors include maintaining relevance, holding common beliefs, having a common purpose, and feeling that their Christian faith is both worthwhile and will provide strength in times of trial.

Nathan Brown (Adventist Media Network) argued (2011) that credible Christian witness is relational (communicated via friendships), authentic (Christians living their principles), committed to social justice (righting the wrongs in the world), local and contextual in operation, and characterised by the beauty of the new creation unfolding in people's lives.

Associate Professor David Tacey (LaTrobe University) proposed (2009) that one way Christianity can increase its relevance in Australia is by showing leadership in the debate about the ecological crisis.

Early Christian witness

At the 2009 conference **Professor Alanna Nobbs**, head of Macquarie University's Department of Ancient History, discussed the impact on the lives of ordinary Christians in the reign of the emperor Decius (AD 249-251) of the Roman government's attempts to enforce traditional rites and sacrifices which the authorities regarded as important in holding the state together. Christians typically resisted these requirements, their stand in general attracting admirers and support.

Dr Bruce Manners, pastor of the Avondale College Church, argued (2011) that factors contributing to the rapid growth of early Christianity suggest effective ways for Christians to influence the post-Christian world. The beliefs of early Christianity were attractive because they gave meaning to life and hope for the future. Christians also lived ethically. They cared for those around them, even risking their lives to help people suffering in epidemics. They exemplified principles of social justice, valuing women and children, caring for widows, and holding slave and noble of equal value in God's sight. In all these ways they bore witness to a loving God. An important factor in the rapid growth of early Christianity was its dissemination via personal friendship and example.

Indigenous issues and Christianity

At the 2009 conference **Graham Fletcher**, Queensland member of the National Native Title Tribunal, proposed some

implications for Christian faith and practice drawn from his experience in mediating native title issues. The importance of place and belonging for all cultures and peoples gives special significance to God's promises assuring believers of their right to a position in His family and His place. Fletcher argued that because reconciliation is offered by God and has been given to us as a ministry (2 Cor 5:17-20), Christians have an obligation to support and be among the leaders of reconciliation in our nation. Fletcher also pointed out that in Australian law native title is a pre-existing right, subject to continuous use of the land for traditional cultural activities. In a similar way, practising Christians may confidently plead a right to a place in God's kingdom, achieved for them by Christ.

Biblical scholarship

Dr Sook-Young Kim, author of *The Warrior Messiah* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), showed (2011) that phrases in verses 1 and 12 of Isaiah 53 denote a royal Messiah figure who has won victory in battle and is apportioning the spoils. The victory has been won not by military means, but by suffering and dying as a sin-bearing sacrifice, by means of which many are made righteous (verses 11, 12). Dr Sook-Young Kim is also a conjoint lecturer of Avondale College of Higher Education.

Organisational leadership


Dr James Osterhaus

Dr James Osterhaus, a senior partner in TAG Consulting USA, explored (2011) some of the tensions confronting leaders of organisations, noting that authentic leaders are committed to the values of their organisations and make decisions consistent with those values despite the competing pressures. Dr Osterhaus is a clinical psychologist experienced in helping individuals and organisations work through change, conflict and reorganisation. He has authored eight books on these and related subjects.

Education

Associate Professor Phil Fitzsimmons (School of Education, Avondale) presented the results of a year-long study of a class of twenty-two adolescents in a secular "progressive" school where students had the freedom and openness to explore issues of interest to them. Despite the students' apparently secular orientation, it emerged that they were deeply interested in spiritual matters. They continually initiated discussions that were spiritually focused, exploring the meaning of life and their place in it in a quest for spiritual, emotional and social understanding. In the process they became aware of markers of identity that they believed should characterise how they should live their lives. The study tended to support the researcher's view that the secular focus of young people is a façade and that they are in fact more spiritually oriented than previous generations. The findings raise important questions of how future generations might view and understand Christianity, and of how the Christian church should change to interface with a spiritual generation that is largely non-religious.

Dr Don Roy, long-time Adventist educator, developed a model of the values and special character of Christian schools as communities of faith, which he proposed as a useful frame of reference to facilitate critical evaluation, strategic planning and renewal in Christian schools.

Health


Dianne Sika-Paotonu

Dianne Sika-Paotonu presented a paper based on her PhD research on designing cancer vaccines, carried out at the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research in New Zealand. These cancer vaccines are dendritic-cell based and work by stimulating the immune system to destroy cancer tissue. It has been found that the dendritic cells of cancer patients are often not working properly, which means that signals needed by the immune system to generate cancer-killing cells are not produced. When dendritic cells work well, they are capable of converting resting T-cells into cancer-killer T-cells. Dianne's work showed that dendritic cells were able to work harder and produce more cancer-killer T-cells when the dendritic-cell based vaccine preparation contained a sea sponge extract. This groundbreaking research won for Dianne the 2008 Health Research Council of New Zealand MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year Award in the category Advancing Human Health and Wellbeing. Dianne is currently a lecturer in pharmacology at the Graduate School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Dr Ross Grant, a pharmacologist, neuroscientist and specialist in degenerative diseases in the School of Medical Sciences, University of New South Wales, presented a paper identifying lifestyle choices that can greatly reduce the incidence of the degenerative diseases that account for 95 per cent of the causes of death in Australia. Among the lifestyle factors associated with degenerative disease he noted inadequate intake of nutrient-rich foods, excessive intake of high kilojoule foods, inadequate exercise, high stress levels, and smoking. He also showed that vigorous exercise of at least thirty minutes per day not only benefits the cardiovascular system, but also switches off the HPA axis involving the hypothalamus, pituitary and adrenals, reducing the craving for food and the liability to degenerative diseases associated with obesity.

Visual arts

Dr Richard Morris, a senior lecturer in Avondale's School of Humanities and Creative Arts, observed that Protestants have tended to privilege the printed and spoken word above the visual arts and to prefer realism in art above abstraction, which many have seen as mysterious and by extension, threatening to concepts of truth. In contrast to such views, Morris examined the impact of abstraction in Colin McCahon's religious painting *Victory Over Death 2*. On the surface, the painting appears to consist merely of painted words. Morris showed how the opposition of light and darkness in the painting creates a bridge between its verbal symbolism and abstraction, providing the viewer with an enriched appreciation of the cross of Christ and its significance.

Library expands services for research and scholarship

The digital revolution has transformed the way Avondale Library services are delivered, vastly increasing the resources available via the Library to support scholarship and research. No longer are the Library's resources limited to the 120,000 or more items in its physical collections.

Students and staff now have access to more than 120 **online databases** containing huge repositories of periodical articles, book chapters, theses, dissertations, reports and reference works across an extensive array of subject fields. Databases also provide periodical indexes (including indexes to Seventh-day Adventist periodicals), and archives of Australian newspapers.

The Library is constantly expanding its database collection, with three **new databases** currently on trial: Oxford Medicine Online (medical textbooks and handbooks); Nursing Education in Video (online videos for the education and training of nurses and other healthcare workers); and the ScienceDirect Social and Behavioural Sciences module (the Library already subscribes to the Health and Life Science module).

The Library's **Journal Titles A-Z** List gives access to over 39,000 full-text journals, which can be searched by subject or journal title. Thousands of **electronic books** are also available to Library users online.

The Library's electronic resources can be accessed online from students' rooms, from off-campus, and from computers in the Library itself. Online access has huge advantages for Avondale students studying and researching from distant locations. Distance education students may also borrow items by mail.

Students and staff have **online access to the catalogues** of the Avondale Library, libraries in the UNILINC consortium (a network of university, school, government and special libraries), and Libraries Australia (a resource providing bibliographic details and locations of over 45 million items held in Australian academic, research, national, state, public and special libraries, and access to the catalogues of the British Library, the Library of Congress, and other major overseas collections).

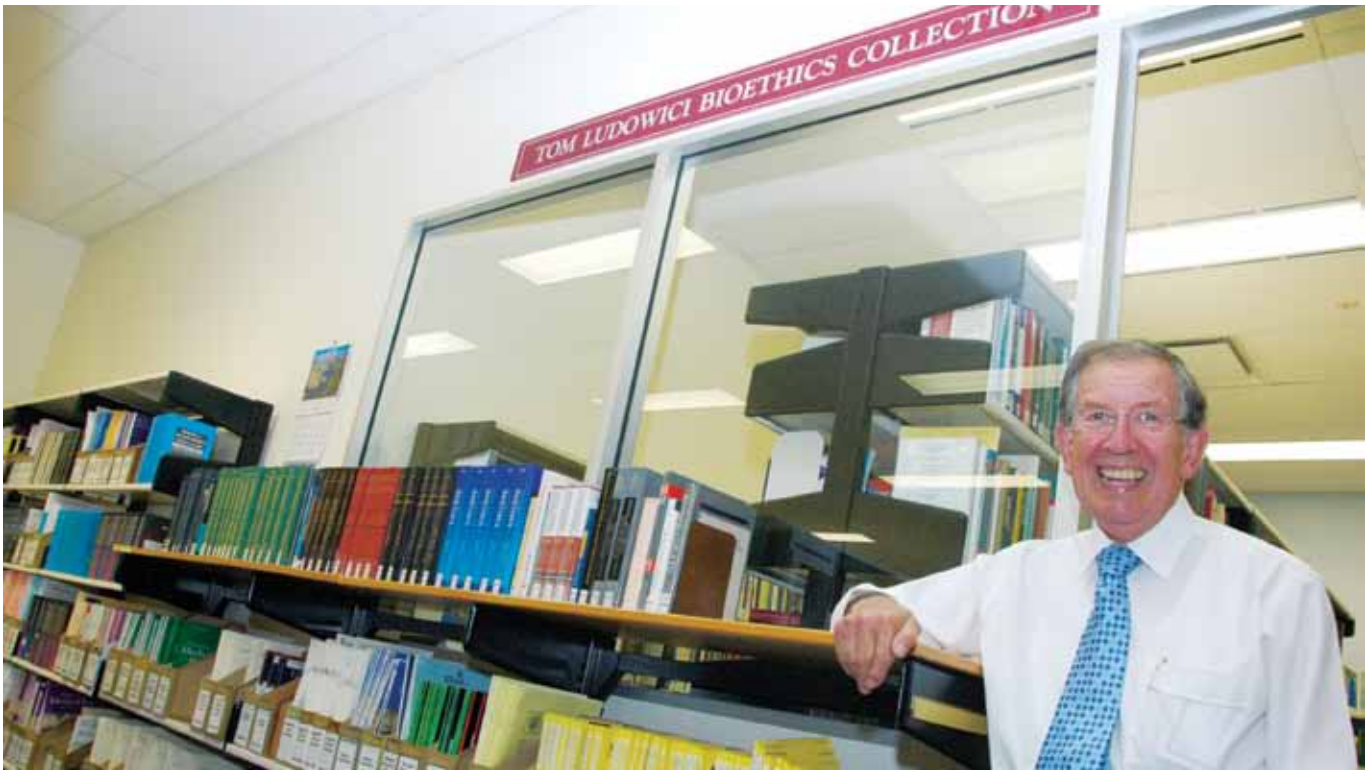
Students and staff may access **resources from other libraries** via the document delivery and interlibrary loan systems, and may also borrow items directly from the University of Newcastle Library and from libraries in the UNILINC consortium.

Online access to Avondale's research

Some *Reflections* readers have asked how to access research by Avondale personnel. Library staff established and now manage an electronic repository giving open access worldwide to the research and scholarly output of Avondale staff and postgraduate students, as well as access to two of Avondale's journals: *The International Journal of New Perspectives on Christianity* and *Christian Spirituality and Science*.

Entitled **ResearchOnline@Avondale**, the repository provides publication data and, where copyright allows, the associated full text of articles. All content is indexed in Google and other search engines.The site can be accessed at http://research.avondale.edu.au. Since its launch in May 2010 the site has generated over 6,100 downloads for the 155 full-text items currently available online.

ResearchOnline@Avondale contributes to the growing trend for open access to scholarly literature. "As an academic institution we saw both an opportunity and a responsibility to



The Sydney campus library contains the Ludowici Bioethics Collection, named in honour of Dr Tom Ludowici (pictured), former Director of Mission at the Sydney Adventist Hospital. Photo: Ann Stafford

provide open access to our scholarly output," says Marilyn Gane, Avondale's Head Librarian. The advantages for authors include increased citation rates via improved discoverability and access and the opportunity to connect with scholars around the world with similar research interests.

Scholars' Centre

The Lake Macquarie Campus Library recently established a Scholars' Centre containing study and research facilities for higher degree research students.

There is also a computer lab for training students in the use of the Library's electronic resources, and in the use of scholarly software such as Endnote, which stores bibliographic details of sources read for assignments and theses, and creates the necessary citations, references and bibliographies.



Land of the Pharaohs exhibition: replica of the funerary mask of Tutankhamen.

Integration of libraries on two campuses

A significant development has been the integration of the libraries on the Sydney campus and the Lake Macquarie campus. The former Sydney Adventist Hospital Library has now merged with the Avondale Library, though its mission remains the same – to support the learning and teaching of nursing students and the professional development of hospital staff.

With student nurses located on both campuses, the advantages of merging are numerous. Integration provides a unified library catalogue, greater variety of print resources for each campus, access to a wide range of electronic resources, seamless library services for students and staff moving between campuses, and reduced costs in managing one library service instead of two discrete services. There are also savings from centralised purchasing and management of electronic resources, copyright licences and collection of statistics. The final stage of the merger was completed in 2010 with the installation of new computers, multifunction print/copy/scan machines, and the addition of the Sydney campus to the Avondale computer network.



Replica of a gold statue of Anubis, Egyptian god of the dead. The statue stood guard at the treasury entrance in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The library on the Sydney campus has a specialist nursing, medical and allied health collection of approximately 20,000 books and 400 current print journal titles. Of particular value to researchers is the **Tom Ludowici Bioethics Collection**, containing more than 5000 books and 25 journal titles, making it one of the most significant bioethics collections in Australia.

Services to alumni

Avondale alumni may borrow in person from either of the Avondale Libraries, and may apply for access from off campus to the following online databases:

- *ATLASerials for Alumni*. An online collection of over 100 major religion and theology journals. Users can read the full text of current articles or research the history of a topic from as early as 1924 to the present through more than 210,000 articles and book reviews.
- *ERIC Education*. The world's premier database of literature in the field of education, with access to over a million citations and over 100,000 full-text items.
- *EDNA Education*. The leading Australian online resource collection in education.

Services to the community

The Library provides a school uplink program called Lobster Shells for Higher School Certificate students in the local community, who may borrow books from the Avondale Library for a small fee. Other community members may also borrow in person from the Library for a small fee.

Land of the Pharaohs exhibition

From time to time the Library mounts special exhibitions of scholarly and general interest. In August 2011 Dr Wayne French presented an impressive Land of the Pharaohs exhibition displaying exact replicas of major items from the tomb of Tutankhamen and replicas of many other notable items from Egypt and the Middle East, including busts of the Egyptian queens Nefertiti and Hatshepsut; a tablet recording Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 BCE; and a winged bull from the palace of Xerxes in Susa. The exhibition attracted many hundreds of visitors to Avondale, including tour groups guided by Dr French, who also demonstrated the manufacture of papyrus paper.



Replica bust of Queen Nefertiti of Egypt.

Ongoing developments

The Avondale Library continues to develop its services and resources. It is expected that by December 2011 a one-stop (or federated) search facility will enable students and staff to search simultaneously the Library's catalogues, online databases and ResearchOnline@Avondale.

Avondale alumnus advised allied forces in World War II Solomon Islands campaign

In 1942 the South-West Pacific high command co-opted Adventist missionary Pastor Norman Ferris to provide navigational advice and pilotage for the allied fleet in the Solomon Islands campaign of the Second World War.

Norman Ferris had studied at Avondale from 1921 to 1923, after which he was appointed to ministerial work in Sydney. In 1925 he married Ruby Chatman, a 1923 graduate of Avondale's Business Course. In 1927 he and Ruby were called to pioneering missionary work in the Solomon Islands, where they served for the next fifteen years. They conducted medical missionary work among the islands and coastal villages, teaching the people about the love of Jesus, and in 1933 established a training school for national teachers on the island of Guadalcanal. Travelling from place to place by boat, Norman Ferris gained an intimate knowledge of the coastlines, reefs, channels, currents and anchorages of the treacherous Solomon Island waters.

During the Second World War the Japanese occupied the Solomons with the objective of cutting supply and communication between Australia and the US forces in the Pacific, and establishing a protective flank for the Japanese offensive in New Guinea. As the Japanese pushed southwards through the Pacific islands, Australian civilians were ordered to leave the Solomons in January 1942. Ferris took with him his valuable navigational charts, which showed the safe routes through the dangerous reefs and atolls of the Solomons.[1]



Norman Ferris (third from left) reports to the commander of allied forces in the Solomons that he has successfully piloted the allied invasion fleet through the treacherous waters of the islands. With him are senior officers of the allied forces in the Solomons.

When Ferris arrived in Australia, customs officers confiscated these charts and delivered them to defence high command, for whom they had special interest. The allied Pacific forces were at that time planning a major counter-offensive to push the Japanese from the Solomons, with a view to establish bases there to support operations against the Japanese occupying islands further to the north. The charts came to the attention of General Douglas MacArthur, supreme commander of allied forces in the south-west Pacific, who was then based in Australia. He noticed on one of the charts a pencilled mark identifying a previously uncharted reef, and inquired who had made that mark. On learning that the charts had been the property of Norman Ferris, he ordered one of his officers who knew Ferris to search him out and bring him to high command.[2]

Ferris was now living in Adelaide as youth director of the South Australian Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While shopping one day with his daughter Marilyn in Adelaide, he was accosted by the officer who had been sent to find him. The officer instructed Ferris to pack his bags, say good-bye to his family, make arrangements with his employer, and accompany him to Sydney forthwith.

For the next three weeks in Sydney Ferris briefed the Allied Geographical Section of defence high command with detailed information about navigation in the waters surrounding the Solomon Islands. Senior defence personnel subsequently consulted Ferris in Adelaide.[3] He also met with General MacArthur.[4]

When the allied forces landed in the Solomons on August 7 and 8, 1942, Macarthur appointed Ferris to pilot the ships in, which he did successfully. Ferris remained with the allied fleet in the Solomons for some weeks. The accompanying photograph, taken in a bunker in the Solomons, and supplied by Ferris's daughter Marilyn, shows Ferris (third from left) reporting to the commander of the allied forces in the Solomons that he had successfully accomplished his mission. Ferris is wearing General Macarthur's personal ring, given to him to signify the authority vested in him as pilot of the fleet. Ferris's navigational charts of Solomon Island waters are now in the University of Tasmania.[5]

Norman and Ruby Ferris's fifteen years of mission service in the Solomons transformed the lives of an incalculable number of people, many of whom themselves became missionaries to their own people and to other Pacific nations. The rigours of pioneer mission life might have daunted people less committed and intrepid than Norman and Ruby Fer-

ris. They endured isolation, malaria and, in the early years of their mission service, primitive living conditions in houses that they built of native materials with no protection from flies and mosquitoes. They would try to smoke out the mosquitoes by burning wet chips. At one mission station the only facility for bathing and washing clothes was a lice-infested stream. There were also the hazards of the sea. One night the boat on which they were travelling lurched as it ran aground on an uncharted reef, hurling their baby into the sea. One of the nationals on board saved the baby, but only after diving three times to locate it under water. Ferris was an excellent carpenter and diesel mechanic; he had to be. At the training school that he established on the island of Guadalcanal, he worked with the nationals to construct the school building, church and dormitories. He also built the furniture.[6]

When entering new areas, the Ferrises were typically able to win the confidence of the people through their medical work; but in a few places they encountered fierce opposition. An enraged warrior rushed to kill Ferris as he landed on the island of Bellona, but was immobilised by divine power. A devil priest on Guadalcanal also tried to kill him, but was similarly restrained. The devil priest later came to accept the love of Christ and became a missionary to his people. Constant trust in God strengthened the Ferrises to persevere despite many hardships.[7]

The enduring impact of their work may be gauged from the faithfulness during the war years of the nationals who had embraced Christianity as a result of their witness. Kata Ragoso (pronounced Rangoso), who gave inspired leadership in the Solomons during the war years, reported that on the island of New Georgia, the site of the mission headquarters, "not one teacher left his post or let down the standard of the Advent movement during this whole period."[8] Despite suffering great hardships, the national workers constructed and dedicated sixteen new churches and baptised over a hundred persons during the war years.[9] Defence personnel highly praised the Adventist nationals who rescued and gave first aid to wounded servicemen during the war.[10]

Several months before the end of the war in the Pacific, the British Solomon Islands administration granted Norman Ferris and two other missionaries permission to return to the Solomons. In June 1945 Ferris travelled by troop ship to Bougainville, then by American military transport plane to Guadalcanal in the Solomons. He described his joy on arriving aboard an American naval vessel at the mission headquarters at Batuna on the Marovo Lagoon, New Georgia, and meeting again the nationals who had carried on the work of the mission in his absence.[11] He reported that the church's property there was in surprisingly good condition.[12] Ferris stayed several months in the Solomons with a brief to re-establish contact with mission stations, ensure that their programs were operating, assess the condition of the local churches, report on the state of property and equipment, evaluate needs, and liaise with the Solomon Islands administration concerning the Adventist mission program.[13] During this time he was able to provide much encouragement and pastoral support to church members and national teachers and ministers.

While at Batuna, Ferris restored the mission ship *Portal*. Shortly after the Adventist missionaries had left the Solomons in 1942, an army officer had tried to burn the *Portal* to prevent it being used by the Japanese. The ship, however, did not burn. The local Adventist nationals hid it in a creek and distributed the engine parts among the villagers for safe keeping. When Ferris returned, the people retrieved all the parts for re-assembling.

On his return to Australia, Ferris was appointed director of the men's residence at Avondale College (1945-1951). Then in 1952 the governor of Fiji, Sir Ronald Garvey, requested Ferris to become the administrator on the island of Pitcairn. Many years before, the Ferrises had befriended Ronald Garvey when he was a young colonial officer in the Solomon Islands. Garvey admired Norman Ferris's tact, kindness and administrative ability in his relations with the national people. Pitcairn was now under Garvey's administration, and he invited Ferris to be his official representative on the island. During their three-year residence on Pitcairn the Ferrises led the people in spiritual revival, helped resolve animosities between families, and led in the building of a new church.[14]

In recognition of his service for Christianity, government and the people of the Pacific, Ferris was awarded the honour of Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). Sir Ronald Garvey, Governor of Fiji, conferred the honour on behalf of the Queen.[15]

1 Eileen E. Lantry, *Broken Stick. Mission to the Forbidden Islands*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010, pp. 70-71.

2 Information in this and subsequent paragraphs about Ferris's involvement with the defence forces was provided by his daughter, Marilyn Peatey (an Avondale graduate of 1953).

3 Notes prepared by S.V. Stratford, Secretary, Australasian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to brief L.V. Wilkinson, President of the Fiji Mission, in seeking assistance from the British High Commissioner in Fiji to obtain approval for Norman Ferris and two other expatriates to return to the Solomons (1943). Adventist Heritage Centre, Cooranbong, Box 757.

4 Interview with Marilyn Peatey, 24 August 2010.

5 Interview with Marilyn Peatey, 24 August 2010.

6 Lantry, *Broken Stick*, chapters 2-4, 7.

7 Ibid., chapters 1, 5.

8 Kata Ragoso, "War years in the Solomons," *Australasian Record*, 6 May 1946, pp. 4-5.

9 Ibid.; Ragoso, "They remained true to God," *Australasian Record*, 28 October 1946, pp. 4-5.

10 Norman Ferris, Report to the Australasian Union Conference. Adventist Heritage Centre, Box 757.

11 Letter from Norman Ferris to S.V. Stratford, 11 June 1945. Adventist Heritage Centre, Box 757.

12 Norman Ferris, Report to the Australasian Union Conference. Adventist Heritage Centre, Box 757.

13 Arnold Reye, "They did return! The resumption of the Adventist mission in the Solomon Islands after World War II – Part II," *Journal of Pacific Adventist History*, Vol. 7, No. 1, June 2007, pp. 6-7.

14 Norman Ferris, *The Story of Pitcairn Island*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957, pp. 117-122.

15 Lantry, *Broken Stick*, pp. 92-93.

Staff member gains prestigious teaching award



Carolyn Rickett. Photo: Aaron Bellette

Carolyn Rickett, Senior Lecturer in Communication in Avondale's School of Humanities and Creative Arts, has been awarded an Australian Learning and Teaching Council citation for outstanding contribution to student learning. The award, presented at the Sydney Opera House in August 2011, includes a prize of $10,000 to be used to advance Carolyn's career, provide resources for her teaching, and assist her to disseminate good practice in learning and teaching.

One example of Carolyn Rickett's innovative work was her collaboration with Sydney University lecturer Judith Beveridge to publish a poetry anthology, *Wording the World*, combining poems by Carolyn's creative writing students with poems by leading Australian writers. The book was published by Puncher and Wattmann with a cover designed by students in Avondale's design studio class. Students in the print journalism class reported the launch.

Two other Avondale staff members, Dr Darren Morton and Associate Professor Daniel Reynaud, have previously been awarded Australian Learning and Teaching Council citations for outstanding contributions to learning and teaching.

Released from hell

This is the remarkable story of a person at Avondale who grew up in one of the many countries of the world racked by violence and terror. Identities are withheld.

I was born into a well-to-do family, but never ever knew love or affection from my parents. They said I was ugly, that the hospital must have given them the wrong baby, and that I was not one of theirs. They disowned me and treated me as a house servant. I was excluded from the family photos, beaten, and when the rest of the family went for outings, I would be left at home and told to clean up the mess. I became bitter, confused and angry. In my darkest times I would retreat to my room where I found consolation by absorbing myself in my favourite school subject. This was my way out of anger. I also had a vague awareness that there was a God who loved and cared for me, and I believe this saved me from turning to violence like many other youth in my country. I often cried out to God in my desperation.

When I was fourteen my father said I didn't belong in the family and expelled me from home. For two weeks I slept on the streets at night while attending school by day. When a school friend discovered I had nowhere to live, he arranged with his parents for me to stay in their home in the country. I lived there for the next four years until I finished high school. We belonged to an ethnic minority that was often harassed by the military, so we rode our bikes to school by devious byways to avoid the army patrolling the main routes. Soldiers killed my friend a couple of years later, after which his family treated me as their son.

One day during my first year at university I was riding my bike along a country road when a military helicopter flew overhead and started firing in my direction. I leapt from my bike and took refuge behind a tree, but the helicopter began to circle the tree firing at me. The soldiers evidently enjoyed using me as target practice, because they kept circling and firing at me for over an hour. I could hear the bullets thudding against the tree and ripping through the foliage as I dodged in terror around the trunk, praying "God save me!" Finally they flew off, leaving me shaking and traumatised.

Soldiers beat me up several times while I was at university. Once a group of soldiers mistook me for a terrorist, took my ID (which they later returned), and attacked me with their batons and rifle butts.

One day I was standing with my best friend at the university gates when an army truck stopped and a soldier jumped out and accused us of being anti-government partisans. We showed our ID, explaining that we were law abiding university students. The soldier responded by shooting my friend dead on the spot. The soldier then thrust his pistol into my mouth and started questioning me. I was speechless with fear. Just as I thought my last moment had come, the soldier unaccountably took the gun out of my mouth and returned to his truck, which drove off. I firmly believe God saved me from these situations for a purpose – though at times the memory of these experiences still gives me trauma.

I graduated with first class honours and was appointed to a teaching position at the university. But the violence everywhere and the continuing danger to my life were such that I longed for a more stable environment. I prayed earnestly and applied to several countries for a scholarship to enable me to study in safety; and I was blessed with a scholarship offer from a very desirable country.

I now faced a dangerous journey to a city with an international airport. I travelled secretly, by devious routes, my modes of transport including a bicycle, a farm tractor, a bus and a boat. An unexpected delay saved me from travelling part of the way on transport that was shot up by the military.

To get a visa for my new country I had to obtain police clearance in my home country. For this I was subjected to a three-hour police cross-examination while two other police kept hitting me from behind. The interviewing officer refused to give me clearance without a bribe equivalent to a year's

wages. I didn't have that much money. In the end I was able to find someone who knew a person who had a contact who knew a very senior officer who was able to give me a reference enabling me to obtain police clearance and a visa.

At last I was on my way to the airport. As I walked with the other passengers across the tarmac to board the aircraft a security officer recognised me as a member of an ethnic minority, pulled me from the line and demanded a very large sum of money, almost all I had, as a condition for boarding the plane. I handed over the money and was waved on, with only a few coins left and a small amount of foreign currency to start life in a new country. I cannot describe the relief and gratitude I felt as the plane took off.

I completed a postgraduate degree in my new country and took a job as a high school teacher. I was so grateful to God for looking after me and bringing me to a safe country where I could live in peace and relative comfort. How different from my student days in my home country, where my only clothes for the whole time I was studying at university were two shirts and two pairs of trousers, and my bed was a bare plank.

My gratitude to God was such that I now felt a desire to go to church. One day as I was driving I passed a small church and felt impressed to stop. The sign advertised services on Saturday, which surprised me. That weekend I returned for the 11 am service.

The deacon welcomed me warmly and came to sit with me in church. He explained that the church was celebrating the Lord's supper that day and invited me to observe the foot-washing service. He then asked if I would like him to wash my feet, as Jesus washed his disciples' feet. Here was I, who had been disowned by my family and threatened as a member of a despised ethnic group, being accepted by a total stranger who was kneeling to wash my feet. It brought tears to my eyes. The other church members also received me warmly, and I continued to attend. Not long after this I migrated to Australia, where I had Bible studies and was baptised.

Today I rejoice that I have experienced such a loving, generous God, who says, "When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble" (Psalm 91:15 NRSV). "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7 NRSV). My favourite text is Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (NKJV).

I found God at Avondale **Josh Brown**

Josh Brown graduated from Avondale in 2007 with a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching degree. He teaches English and History at Macquarie College, Newcastle, NSW, and is currently studying for a master's degree via Deakin University.

I grew up in a nominally Christian home with a very limited church experience. When I finished high school Avondale offered me a one-year scholarship which I accepted, intending to transfer to university after that year. But in my first year at Avondale God came into my life in a real and tangible way. I found myself journeying with other Christians, many of them also encountering the power of God for the first time.

It was the power of the Word that really changed my life. I began reading the Bible in a new way. Like putting on 3D glasses, God's Spirit brought the Word to life in a way I had never imagined. Paul's words echoed in my ears: "I am crucified with Christ." I was so empowered by the thought that it was no longer I who lived, but "Christ who lives in me."

As I experienced this new freedom in Christ, what had been a dead manuscript became a living, breathing love letter that changed my life. A light bulb had come on in my life and one year at Avondale became four. I took the step of baptism to publicly display my new commitment to Jesus. I learned what it was like to be part of a church family and graduated with memories that will last me a lifetime.



Josh Brown in his office at Macquarie College. Photo: Brad Cox

CORRECTIONS

We apologise for two inaccuracies in the Autumn 2011 issue. The photo of Barbara and Colin Fisher (p. 8) was by Trent McCrow. The baptismal font (p.2) was transferred to the College Church in 1986.



FIVE IN EIGHT!

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