

Urijah's on a mission: Lifestyle Medicine Graduannd Responds to Health Crisis at Home

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Abstract

The influence of his father and an advertisement for a scholarship encouraged Urijah Liligeto to begin his journey as a healthcare professional who is now helping his country make choices to improve its quality of life.

That country is the Solomon Islands, where non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and those related to the heart and lungs are the leading cause of death. Urijah is well-placed to respond. Completing a Graduate Diploma in Lifestyle Medicine from Avondale led to a role with the World Health Organization as a Public Health Officer for Non-Communicable Diseases. "I provide technical expertise to ensure activities for reducing or preventing NCDs in the Solomons are effectively implemented and monitored." Urijah works with donor partners and the government's Ministry of Health and Medical Services. He also brings contacts with faith-based organisations, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Despite the church's position on health, which is a point of difference with other denominations, Urijah sees a gap between what is preached and practised. The ease of access to fast food and the limited access to vegetarian food in urban areas could be part of the problem. As could the lack of health education experience and training among church leaders. "They should be health educators as much as gospel preachers."

So, Urijah enrolled at Avondale after his father, alumnus Pr Wilfred Liligeto, showed him an advertisement in *Adventist Record* for the Pacific Partnership Scholarship. "Dad and I saw this as an opportunity to be a qualified health worker, which would equip me for service to my church and my community."



Photograph: Urijah Liligeto

Avondale planned to offer only one scholarship, but a record response to an offering collected in Adventist churches across the South Pacific in 2016 enabled it to offer three. Urijah and the other recipients received a full-fee waiver to complete the graduate certificate. Four years later, Urijah's now completed the graduate diploma and is already enrolled in the new Master of Lifestyle Medicine. He describes the scholarship as a blessing. "I wouldn't have been able to complete the degree without it," he says. "The aim of the scholarship is to educate leaders in the South Pacific so they can become champions for and advocates of a healthy lifestyle. Well, that's me. I want to help my people fight this NCD crisis."

Integrating lifestyle medicine principles into his

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BOOK REVIEW

lectures and lessons helped students in Urijah's nursing, public health, and nutrition and dietetic classes at Solomon Islands National University understand the root causes of non-communicable diseases. "These future frontline healthcare workers will be the ones encouraging the patients who'll visit them at clinics or in hospitals to make healthy lifestyle choices." With a bachelor's degree in biomedical science and a master's in clinical immunology, Urijah dreams of developing postgraduate courses in lifestyle medicine at the university and establishing a research-based wellness centre offering lifestyle interventions to prevent or manage chronic illness.

Urijah will receive the John Ballard Trim Health Ministry Prize for outstanding achievement in the study of wholistic health and wellbeing and its application in the community when he graduates in April. "Dad passed away before I could complete my studies in lifestyle medicine, but I'm sure he'll be proud of me. I'm driven to carry on his wish for me to become a health leader in the church." **TEACH**

Author information

Brenton Stacey is the Public Relations and Philanthropy Officer at Avondale University, where he is also completing a master's degree in theology.

The Call to Follow: Hearing Jesus in a Culture Obsessed with Leadership

Richard Langer and Joanne J. Jung. (2022).
Crossway, 132 pages
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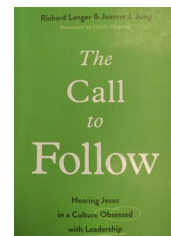
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Richard Langer and Joanne J. Jung have written a compelling book sure to garner attention in a leadership saturated world. Richard is professor of biblical and theological studies and director of the Office for the Integration of Faith and Learning at Biola University. He is an ordained minister with over twenty years of pastoral experience. Joanne is professor of biblical and theological studies and the associate dean of online education and faculty development at the Talbot School of Theology, Biola University.

In *The Call to Follow: Hearing Jesus in Culture Obsessed with Leadership*, Langer and Jung present a strong case for the necessity of "followership" in the everyday life of a Christian (p. 15). While not intending to diminish the need for quality leadership, the authors aim "to increase the effectiveness of both followers and leaders by promoting common ownership of the vision, deepening our appreciation of one another's contributions, and seeing more clearly where our organizational and vocational tasks fit within our spiritual lives" (p. 21). Langer and Jung's audience consists of several groups of people, including those: faithful in everyday work activities, working with a sense of mission (p. 18), or part of an entity, church, or business pursuing a mission (p. 20).

The book is constructed with eight chapters which fall into four loose divisions. Chapters 1-3 introduce the book's appeal by comparing leadership and followership and then presents a biblical basis for the reality of followership as a Christlike characteristic. Chapters 4-5 reveal the crisis associated with being a follower compared to testimonies of those who have proven themselves faithful followers. Chapter 6 presents an endearing example of one historic follower who provides a helpful example relevant within every generation. Chapters 7-8 offer examples for readers, describing how to begin applying the principles



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