

AUSTRALASIAN GOOD TIDINGS

**E-NEWS – November/December
2016 #54**

In this Issue

AUC Spiritual Camp 2016	1
AUC Officers 2017-2019.....	4
Ministers and Elders	5
Baptism - Queensland	6
South Pacific Union Mission	7
Feeding the Homeless – Sydney, NSW.....	9
Condolences to the Family of Mervyn Southwell	11
Sabbath Nature Outings – Wentworthville Church	19
Queensland Youth Camp - Standing Against the Firefighters.....	21
Mannum Island, PNG – Thank you	23
Elim Heights Youth Camp Pre-Camp Preparations	25
RLPA News	26
Coming Events Calendar	27

AUC Spiritual Camp 2016

Elim Heights Youth Camp

28-31 December 2016

“Storm Anchors”



Families, friends and believers gathered to welcome the presence of the Lord for this very special gathering. The program was launched with the opening meeting by Paul Chapman (newly elected President of AUC) – “When the Storm Winds Blow”.



The topics dwelt upon were a little unusual at this conference, in the sense that the organisers didn't allocate them, but left it up to the speakers to share something that had been an "anchor" to their soul throughout the year. Amazingly the topics connected in a manner that perhaps could not have been better constructed. The titles of the meetings were:

- When the Storm Winds Blow – Paul Chapman
- Deliverance – Douglas Thirkettle
- Is Your Life Jacket On? – Ben Thiel
- Saved by Faith Alone – Luke Kneebone
- The Plan That Changed Everything – Csongor Matyas
- Heaven Begins Now – Nathan tyler
- Dwell in the House of the Lord – Larry Ah-ching
- The Patience of Job – Jacob De Souza
- Christ Our High Priest – Gerson Robles
- Evidences of Faith – Peter Lausevic
- A Perfect Heart – Domenic Polistina
- My Soul Anchor – Davi Paes Silva
- Storm Anchors (Young People's Meeting) – Csongor Matyas
- Only Two Options – Luke Kneebone

We felt the Lord was speaking to us through the subjects presented. There was ongoing discussion throughout the camp upon the topics. Especially did the subject of justification by faith stir up an exchange of dialogue that we felt challenged us to a deeper understanding of this vital truth.

Simultaneously, there were children's programs catering for children of different ages. Sisters Amy Gules and Lidia Voncina took the 0-3-year-olds, Sisters Diana Szabo and Catherine Robles took the 4-7-year-olds, and Brethren Gerson Robles and Luke Kneebone oversaw the 8-12-year-olds. It was wonderful to see such a large number of children present, about a quarter of the registrations were children under 12.

We are always very appreciative of our wonderful kitchen co-ordinators; this time being Sisters Esther Boje and Ecaterina Szabo, who have done a wonderful job in preparing delicious vegan meals. Also, Sister Esther Wiseman co-ordinated those with special dietary needs.

Many thanks is also extended to all those who had responsibilities and embraced them, doing such a wonderful job!



All meetings were recorded and are now available on DVD, including the Youth Meeting (2 DVD's). Alternatively, the sermons can be viewed on our sermons website: <http://raindrops.sdarm.org.au> The Youth Meeting can be obtained only by ordering the DVDs.

To order a set of DVDs of the meetings, please fill in an order form [here](#), or contact the RLPA office on info@rlpa.org.au or (02) 9627 7553.

For your information, below is a list of the new officers for the Australasian Union Conference, who will be serving during this three-year's term.

~ Reported by Gerson Robles & Lidia Voncina



For more photos: www.sdarm.org.au/?p=12670

AUC Officers 2017-2019

Australasian Union Conference Officers and Committees for 2017-2019

As elected by the Delegation Session (27 December 2016)
and appointed by the Council (1 January 2017)

Offices and Special Committees	
President	Paul Chapman
Vice President	Nathan Tyler
Secretary / Treasurer	Joe Voncina
Executive Committee	Paul Chapman Nathan Tyler Joe Voncina Ben Thiel Madalin Duna Jacques Payet Danko Ilic
Council	Executive Committee Department Directors Field Leaders
Finance	Harold Kraus (chair) Danko Ilic Martin Staudinger
Auditor	Mary Wiseman
General Conference Delegates	Nathan Tyler Csongor Matyas
General Conference Reserve Delegates	Joe Voncina Arnoldo Pedrosa Luke Kneebone
Ministerial Committee	P. Chapman (chair) B. Thiel, A Pedrosa, N. Tyler, [TBC]
Bylaws Committee	Paul Chapman (chair) Ben Thiel Gerson Robles

Departments and Institutions	Director	Committee members
Children's Department	Vesna Kraus	TBC
Education Department	TBC	TBC
EHMC	Robin Gordon	TBC
Elim Health Store	Elaine Weymark	
Elim Missionary College	Nathan Tyler	Paul Chapman, TBC
Health Department	Susan Lausevic	Catherine Robles, Amos Thiel, Domenic Polistina, Monica Balarezo

Missionary Department	Markus Staudinger	Luke Kneebone, Craig Cunningham
RLPA / Media Department	Gerson Robles	RLPA: Joseph Kim, Vesna Kraus Media: Adriana Stanciu, Nathan Wiseman
Sabbath School Department	Sam Batger	Luke Philips, Nathan Tyler
Welfare Department	John Lausevic	TBC
Young People's Department	Madalin Duna	Csongor Matyas, TBC

Publication & Media Teams		
Good Tidings eNews	Editor: Paul Chapman Associate Editor: Lidia Voncina	
Publications and Media Review Committee	TBC	
Proofreaders	TBC	

Workers by Unit

New South Wales Conference

- L. Ah-ching
- D. Balarezo
- D. Polistina

Queensland Conference

- J. De Souza
- H. Kang
- B. Thiel

Victoria-Tasmania Conference

- M. Mendoza
- D. Thirkettle
- N. Tyler

South Australia Mission Field

- C. Matyas

Western Australia Mission Field

- L. Kneebone
- G. Robles

New Zealand Mission Field

- A. Pedrosa

AUC & Office Workers

- P. Chapman
- L. Thiel
- J. Voncina
- L. Voncina

Ministers and Elders

Ministers	Elders
P. Chapman	L. Ah-ching
J. Ciric	A. Ilic (Snr)
R. Dumaguit	C. Matyas
B. Jaksic	G. McCutcheon
H. Kang	G. McMahon
A. Pedrosa	J. Newman
A. C. Sas	J. Payet
B. Thiel	G. Robles
N. Tyler	L. Kneebone

Baptism Queensland

Br Richard Kim – 17 December 2016



In the Sabbath of December 17, 2016, members and friends from the Clayfield Church and Brisbane Korean Group witnessed with joyful hearts the baptism of Richard Kim. The baptism took place at the North Pine River, Petrie, QLD. It was a beautiful but warm afternoon.

Bro. Richard was raised in a Christian family and is originally from Korea. He came to Australia after spending eight years living

with his family in New Zealand. He has been fellowshipping at the Clayfield church for the past two years. It has been really encouraging having him participate in our meetings. He was introduced to the Sabbath truth through Sr. Grace Huyn. They are now engaged to each other and planning on getting married in February 2017 in Korea.

We thank the Lord for the witness Br Richard has been, and wish for him God's richest blessings as he continues on in his walk with the Lord.



For more photos: www.sdarm.org.au/?p=12654

South Pacific Union Mission

South Pacific Union Mission 2nd Delegation Session, Youth Conference, Youth and Worker's Seminars



What a wonderful, yet busy time December 2016 proved to be for members and friends in the South Pacific. It was our very first South Pacific Youth Conference and our first delegation to be held in the Pacific islands, and the Fijian brethren went out of their way to make our stay very pleasant.

The venue was Sabeto, about 20 minutes from Nadi, close to the sleeping giant mountain and surrounded by the beauty of God's creation. It was a wonderful experience for delegates and youth from the seven Pacific countries of our union mission to be able to meet each other and spend time in Christian fellowship and get to know each other. As we came from the east and west to consider our conference theme "Gathered for Heaven" it was a small foretaste of heaven, where every nation tongue and kindred will gather throughout eternity. It was a great blessing to have three General Conference representatives, Br Davi Silva, Br Rolly Dumaguit and Br Radu Ionita, to help with our meetings, reorganisation, planning and seminars.

The youth considered various topics including, commitment to God, courtship, relationships, choices in music, how to study the Bible etc. while at the same time organisation, planning and workers and officers meetings took place where many doctrinal and practical challenges we face in spreading the gospel were covered.

An outing to see the Fiji highlands was planned, but our faith was tested as a tropical depression caused plenty of rain and wind and threatened to turn into a cyclone. Thankfully God heard our prayers, and we

were still able to include this outing later in our program. Our outing proved to be an adventure, and teamwork was needed to fill ruts in the road and push out the bus when it got bogged on numerous occasions. This made our trip all the more interesting, and thankfully we made it to our destination, the first point of our trip, Nabutautau village. It was here that we saw the very axe used to kill one of the early missionaries to Fiji, Thomas Baker. We then went on to Takoni village where we enjoyed horse riding, dinner and worship with our brethren there before leaving the mountains and returning to Sabeto.

All too soon the conference came to an end, and tears were shed as new friends parted to go back to their respective islands in the Pacific. We all left with a strong realisation of the great work before us. While we praise God for how the work has grown across the Pacific, we realise there are so many untouched areas.

If as you read these lines, you feel you have missed out on a wonderful and historical event for the Pacific islands you are right, but all is not lost. We hope to see you in Vanuatu in December 2019 for the next SPU Mission Conference.

Greetings and a big thank you to all the brethren in the AUC who have reached out and helped build the work in the Pacific and supported it in so many ways now and over the years.

The new officers of the of the South Pacific Union Mission are as follows:

President: Br John Dumambi

1st Vice-President: Br Ben Thiel

2nd Vice-President: Br Thomas Ngunts

Secretary: Br Lerry Van Bastelaere

Treasurer: Br Tevita Batiwale - Assistant: Br Charlie Roberts

Sabbath School Department: Sr Elsa Make

Youth Department: Br Rontexstar Mogerer - Assistant: Br Tony Gai

Missionary Department: Br Thomas Ngunts - Joseph Andrea

Welfare department: Br Terry Kui

Education Department: Br Andie Yaimas

Health Department: Br Charlie Robert

Auditor: Sr Rose Mek

Media: Sr Mere Batiwale, Br J Teel



From your brothers and sisters in the South Pacific Union Mission.

Left photo: South Pacific Union Mission Conference – Newly elected Officers

Feeding the Homeless – Sydney, NSW



The plan is to do this ministry once a month.

The organisers of 'Street Buffet' were very appreciative of the work we were able to do and the food donated; they posted a 'thank you' note on the Street Buffet Facebook page:

"A special thank you to the team from seventh-day Adventist in Schofield for coming along today and bringing a feast and plenty of smiles. Today we were in full swing serving 158 people in Woolloomooloo. It was beautiful seeing the entire team having hands on deck....as the old saying goes and the photos show 'many hands make light work'"

Street Buffet

Sunday, November 27 2016

At 12:00noon, on the 27th of November, a group of eager helpers met together at the Schofields church kitchen. They were all enthusiastic and ready to start preparing food which was to be served to the homeless that evening. Once the food was cooked, it was then transported to Woolloomooloo in the heart of the city of Sydney, where it would be given out.

The food had to be at Woolloomooloo by 6:00pm to have time for setting up; then the serving started at 6:30pm. There were approximately 158 very thankful people who benefited from the meal, and many made a comment that it was so lovely to have some veggies, as their normal meal has of lots of meat and not many vegetables.

The meal prepared consisted of company roast, mashed potatoes, baked carrots, baked sweet potato and pumpkin, peas, gravy and a tossed salad. The *Street Buffet* crew provided bread and other items.





Most Monday evenings, Br Larry Ah-ching and Sister Daniella Balarezo have been helping with the feeding of the homeless in Penrith. While there, they have been able to give hope to some of the people whom they met and were able to share Jesus with.

The prayers of those who could not be present were much appreciated. May we all be a comfort to those less fortunate, and may our work lighten their burden; this is true religion in action.

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” Isaiah 58:7

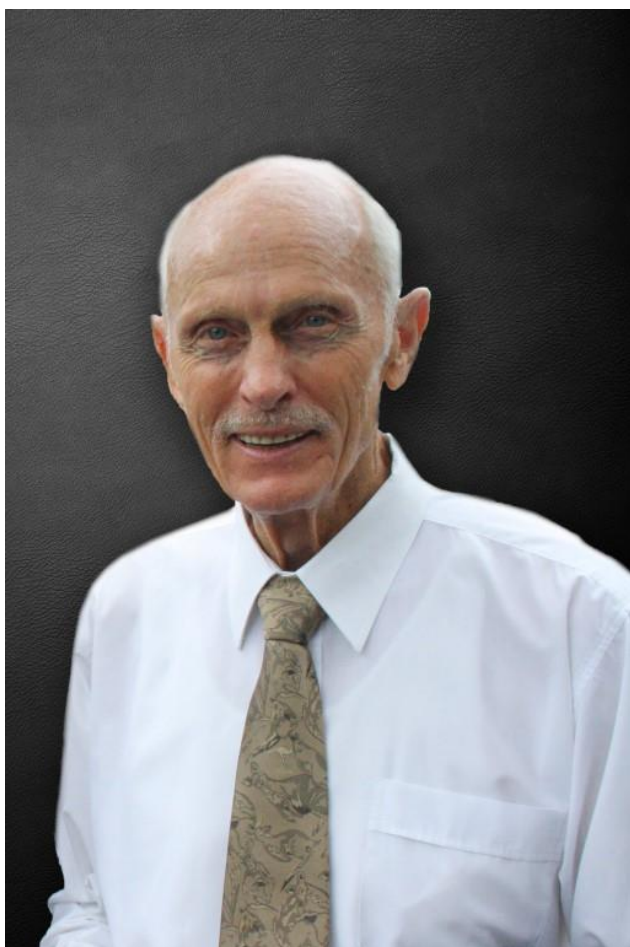
“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40.

~ Lidia Voncina

For more photos: www.sdarm.org.au/?p=12625

Condolences to the Family of Mervyn Southwell

Mervyn Bryce Southwell



We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Brother Mervyn Southwell, on the loss of their loved one, who fell asleep in Jesus on the 7th November, 2016 at 8:00pm. May God be your comfort during this sad time.

Life Sketches of Mervyn Bryce Southwell 26-5-1936 – 7-11-2016

Mervyn Bryce (Merv) was born in Bairnsdale, Victoria on 26th May 1936, the fifth child of Bryce and Myrtle Southwell. Sadly, the children never got to meet the firstborn child and their eldest brother, Norman, who was born with a serious heart condition and died at four months old. So Merv became the first little brother to older sisters Patricia (Pat), Elizabeth (Betty), and Eileen. Three years later they would have another little brother Gordon and then two and a half years later little Clyde was born, completing the family.

With their father being a fisherman, the family early developed a love and deep respect of the ocean and its beauty and power. They also learned a thing or two about boats and how to control them on the unpredictable seas, skills the boys would be called to

rely on later on in their adult lives.

During World War II their father delivered mail and other supplies to the lighthouse keepers at Gabo Island off the eastern tip of Victoria. Since he sometimes took the older children with him, they soon learned to trust their father's sea-faring skills as they often had to brave the rough seas and storms off the east coast during the over 70km trip from Eden to the island in their tough little fishing vessel. On one trip Bryce took six-year-old Betty and little three-year-old Merv with him so he could take them up to the top of the lighthouse, being the second tallest in Australia. They climbed up the winding staircase of the almost 50 metre structure and looked out from the windows at the top. When evening came, their father wanted to take them up again so they could see how the light worked, but little Merv said he was too tired. So, the little three-year-old waited at the bottom in the dark on his own, while Bryce and Betty made the second trip up and then back down the long spiral staircase.

Merv's first couple of years of life was spent at Lakes Entrance while his father was fishing, and then the family moved to Eden during the Gabo Island mail run contract. (This precluded his father from being called to serve in the war). The family, being Seventh Day Adventists, worshipped mainly in small home churches with others of the same faith. When Merv was six-years-old the family joined the SDA Reform Movement as his father did not believe in military participation. There were local moves to Greig's Flat and Pambula during this time.

Merv started his schooling in a little one-room school at Greig's Flat (between Pambula and Eden). There were about 12 students in all, three of them being his older sisters. Later Merv would attend Lochiel

Primary School, then Pambula High and for a short time Bega High School, before the family moved to the Sydney Region, where his father was called as preceptor of the Hebron Missionary College. Merv attended there as a student for a couple of years, but craving his independence and eager to work, he left home at fifteen years old to join his older cousin Stephen cutting and logging timber down at Nethercote.

Not long after he had left Sydney, however, tragedy struck the family. His elder sister Eileen, whom he was especially close to, was struck down suddenly with gastro-enteritis. Catching a chill, she quickly developed pneumonia, and within two days she had died. Her two older sisters were also almost unconscious with the same illness, and it was decided not to tell them of the death immediately, fearing the shock would be too much. The effect on young Merv was profound, and for a time he questioned how God could allow such a beautiful, young, popular girl to die. It was a test for his young faith; but even though shaken, he did not lose his hold on God. Many years later he would be once again tested when his beloved wife was struck down seemingly before her time. However, by then he had finally learnt to accept God's wisdom.

After his sister's funeral, Merv went back to work with Stephen. The two young men also did a stint of fruit picking in Victoria. Merv was strong and worked hard. Saving his money, he soon had a small fleet of cars and trucks. He eventually thought he had better get his licence so he stayed in Victoria for a while where a truck licence could be obtained at age 17, a year earlier than in NSW. Armed with his new Victorian licence, he ventured more into the truck driving side of things and upgrading his trucks.

For the next couple of years, Merv continued to work hard, building up his trucking business. Around this time, he started a friendship with a pretty girl named Esther McMahon. Merv and Esther were not unknown to each other, for they had in fact attended the same primary school together when they were children. But now Merv was 21 and Esther almost 20, and they were in love. With the blessing of their parents they wed on 4th December 1957 in the local Nethercote hall with the wedding reception held at the McMahon's residence. The marriage would continue for over 53 years.



Away they went on their honeymoon in their brand new Ford Zephyr and a small caravan – up the coast, before finally making home in Lake View Avenue, Merimbula, NSW. It was only a small two-bedroom house; but with views overlooking the lake and the ocean, and bush at the back of the property, it was a beautiful location, and Esther was keen to start a family. Their wish came true when on 21st October 1959 their oldest son Gary was born. Less than 14 months later a second child was born on 9th December 1960, their precious little baby daughter Susan. Just over a couple of years later the couple would have another son on 2nd April 1963 whom they named Paul. In this idyllic setting the children enjoyed a rich and outdoor lifestyle.

By this time Merv, as truck owner/driver/transport operator was running three trucks from Eden to Sydney, hauling sawn timber and other general loads. This meant that he would often be away from home on trips, whilst Esther cared for their three young children. However, Merv endeavoured to spend as much time with his family as he could and to engage in his other interest, boats and waterskiing. With in-laws and extended family involved, many fun-filled, sunny days were spent in and on the water.

Merv's trucking business, however, would soon experience rocky times. Mechanical breakdowns and a serious accident, in which the driver was lucky to escape with his life, left the business with debts to pay, trucks off the road and thus very little income. Merv could see the proverbial 'writing on the wall' and decided to quit before it got any worse. So, he sold up and paid his debts and began working for wages for

a boss, driving tippers with rubble for the Eden break wall. One day he injured his big toe (mangled by a lawnmower blade) and was unable to drive for a while.

It was at this time that through a friend he was introduced to the profession of abalone diving. Initially while his toe was healing he worked as the 'cat driver', operating a small aluminium runabout and collecting the bags of abalone and delivering scuba tanks to the divers. Soon he was having a go at diving himself, and it wasn't long before Merv and his friend decided to go out on their own. They borrowed money to buy a boat and some gear and went out to find their own 'abs', working out of Mallacoota in Victoria. Merv and Ray used a system known as hooker gear, where a compressor is used to pump compressed air through high pressure hoses to the diver below. Initially they tried to save money by using cheap garden hoses instead of the expensive high pressure ones; however, these were unreliable and would develop weak spots and expand like a balloon under the high pressure. This was potentially quite risky when diving in 30 metres of water. They eventually realised their lives were worth more than the savings and invested in the good gear.

Once when they were heading back to shore after a day of diving and a heavily laden boat, they nose-dived into a freak wave and the boat was swamped with water. Before they could recover and bail it out, another wave hit from the stern and in a matter of seconds the boat with everything on board had sunk out of sight. Ray's elderly father Charlie was with them and was in severe pain having broken some ribs on the first impact. The two younger men were wearing wetsuits, but the older man was shivering and cold in the water. Luckily two flippers floated to the surface; so these were donned, and then began the long swim of nearly 2 kms back to the shore towing the injured man. When they reached land, another danger awaited them - surf and a rocky coastline.

Fortunately, they were able to scramble up the rocks after being deposited by a big wave, and they made it to safety. Luckily the boat was insured and ultimately replaced, but it was a stark reminder of the dangers of a life working at sea.

Soon Merv decided he worked better alone, so bought his own boat and gear. He made friends with other ab divers and as boys will be boys they sometimes had a bit of fun when the seas were rough. Hitting the waves at speed they would launch the boats completely out of the water. At other times, they would try to scare each other with Port Jackson sharks. The Port Jackson shark was plentiful in some regions and although fearsome-looking at first sight was harmless. So, a diver wanting to play a joke would try to grab one by the tail and steer it up behind his unsuspecting friend, bumping into him and scaring the daylights out of him. Eventually they discussed the prospect of heading over to South Australia to search for abalone off the relatively unfished coastline of the Eyre Peninsula.

The weather was better and the water wasn't as cold, but another more serious danger awaited them - dangerous sharks! This was the home of the great white. They dismissed this fear, however, arguing that getting the bends was more likely than getting eaten by a shark. The bends was a serious potentially fatal condition caused by diving for too long in deep water. They had escaped that so far. So, undeterred, Merv took the long trip of nearly 2000 kilometres to try diving off the South Australian coastline. Along with another good friend, Darcy, they dived at various spots along the coast, finally deciding that the little seaside town of Streaky Bay suited them best. After a few trips back and forth from Merimbula, which sometimes involved the whole family, it was decided to make the big permanent move. The children were enrolled in school there, and so began another chapter in the Southwell family's life. Initially living in a big caravan for six months, they eventually bought a house and moved in.

These were adventurous years and the children were often entertained by Merv's diving stories. He sometimes encountered schools of friendly dolphins, and playful seals would amuse him with their antics until they tried to bite his air hose. He told of a time when he once swam into a dark underwater cave. Without light, he couldn't see well but could make out two large saucer sized eyes peering at him. Getting out of there quick smart, he thought he may have encountered a giant octopus but wasn't going to wait around to find out. Another time while collecting abalone off the bottom, he noticed that it suddenly got

very dark. Looking up, he could make out a huge manta ray swimming past above him. He often commented that he hoped that angels could swim. But the most-deadly encounters were with the great white sharks. He had spotted them on a number of occasions, some coming a little closer to take a look, but they mostly swam away without disturbing him. One time though he was quite worried. He noticed a great white was circling him. Backing up against a rock and holding his bag of abalone in front of him he watched it swim round and round, intending to push the bag into its mouth if it came for him. The shark eventually swam away. Merv waited for a while to make sure it was really gone, then he pulled in all the excess air hose so he knew exactly where the boat was, and then headed for the surface as quickly as he could safely. He went home early that day. Merv still went out diving the next day, but not at the same spot.

The boys were growing up, and sometimes Merv would take them out with him to be the 'sheller', scooping out the white flesh from the abalone shell, it being discarded over the side, and the flesh being put into a tub filled with salt water.

Merv upgraded his boats a number of times. One he had specially built by a marine boat builder in Port Lincoln. Built of marine ply with a planing hull, the 36-footer was the fastest fishing boat for its size in the area at the time. It generated quite a bit of interest and was featured in the local newspapers. Being of larger size and with room on board for more fuel and supplies, Merv could now make longer trips and stay out for days at a time.

Sometimes he would take the whole family on day trips, and once while on the way back to harbour they encountered such a severe storm that the younger members of family felt the boat was going to capsize. But Merv wasn't worried. He knew the seaworthiness of his vessel and was used to such events, having encountered them on many occasions.

Being from a large clan of sisters, brothers and cousins, the family felt quite isolated at times as most of the relatives resided on the east coast of Australia. It was an exciting time when relatives came to visit, and many happy family memories were made. Usually Merv made the effort to take the family over to Sydney at least every second-year end for the church conference, often towing a large caravan.

Sabbath days in Streaky Bay were kept in the family home and also at other close Adventist friends' homes. Afternoons were often a highlight, spending time in the natural surroundings such as: sand dunes, beaches, caves, rock pools and high cliffs, admiring the wildlife. On occasions on other days the family would spend time swimming with seals, water-skiing, 4-wheel driving in the white sand dunes, and visiting various places of interest with friends.

Merv endeavoured to share his beliefs where he could, and sometimes he would invite some local pastors and some townsfolk (Anglican, Methodist and Catholic) to investigate Scripture together, usually the 'Sabbath' or 'Law' question. On other occasions the family lounge room would be filled with people who had been invited over for a sing along of old favourite hymns, with Esther playing the organ.

In the mid '70's Merv gave up the dangerous job of Abalone diving and went to work with his older Adventist friend Alec Van Weenan with general building, trying his hand at all facets from plastering, painting, gyprocking, and carpentry to bricklaying and some concreting!

It was not long after he had given up the abalone diving when another local young diver and close friend Terry Manuel was attacked and killed by a great white shark. Up to this time there had been no attacks on abalone divers. The small township was in shock. At this time, not so much was known about the behaviour of the great white, and some divers felt that this shark might become a menace to other divers. Merv had not yet sold his boat, so with the help of friends they set up some baited hooks on steel traces attached to anchored drums in the area where the attack had occurred. The result was that two great



whites were caught. The stomach contents were examined and the jaws were removed. Merv gave one to his builder friend Alec who had helped him through the whole process. Once again, this event sparked interest with the press and stories and photos were published in the local and regional papers as well as the Australian Women's Weekly. Today more is known about sharks and they are now a protected species.

For a time Merv focused his whole attention on building a brand new solid brick home in town, but at the chance of obtaining a cheap

farm-house just out of the township, with 80 acres of land in an elevated position and a beautiful view of the bay, they jumped at it.

Through the '70s Merv and Esther renovated it inside and out, adding some farm accessories along the way; Old Tractor, Old Grader, milking cow, chooks, and at one stage a few sheep, though these suffered being ravaged one night by the pet dog, a German Shepherd, who was promptly returned to its former owners.

During this time a young family from the Reform church had moved from Sydney to Adelaide. At last there were some church members nearby. (albeit almost 700 kms away). Brian and Mary Jaksic had one small son Alex, and later Wilfrid and then Esther were born. Visits were regularly made, and a friendship between the families would develop which would last a lifetime. Brian had started a little church group, and a small hall was purchased and renovated as a place to worship in. Merv and family travelled to Adelaide to assist in the renovations, and Merv helped build the first pulpit. At one point Brian turned to Merv and said, 'Merv, we'll have to get you up here to preach one day.' To which Merv responded, 'Never!' Little would he realise the chain of events which would shape his life and vocation in the following years. Merv would one day live in Adelaide and preach many sermons from that very pulpit which he had built years before.

Merv's eldest son Gary had left home at 17 in 1977 to work in Adelaide. Merv and his only daughter Susan, who was now working as a bookkeeper, took on Voluntary Ambulance duty for a few years. During this time Merv worked part-time at the local school, while Paul obtained work as a clerk at the local Ford dealer. Around this time, Paul suffered Crohn's disease and so was checked numerous times into and out of hospital for the next 30 or so years.

During the end of the 70's and early '80's Merv was invited by the Church to help out with its NZ Health Shop. With some experience in the local church there he was eventually invited to become a Bible Worker and served for a few years based in Auckland; then he was posted to Adelaide (house in Clarendon) where the family was once again reunited as all three children were living there at this time. In October 1983 Merv walked his only daughter Susan down the aisle to give her away in marriage to Peter Lausevic. Susan and Peter would spend the next 20 years in the US where the first grandson Joshua was born in 1985. Merv was next transferred to Brisbane for a few years and then back to New Zealand. During this time, he travelled back to Sydney for the marriage of his youngest son Paul to Tania Kukrika in September 1993. The whole family was reunited again for this occasion. In 1995 Merv and Esther's second grandson, Seth, was born to Paul and Tania.

While posted in New Zealand, Merv made a number of missionary trips to Samoa and also Fiji, taking Esther with him on one occasion. In their honour the young believers named their newborn children after them - little Merv and little Esther. Merv also travelled to Papua New Guinea twice, the second time contracting

malaria which very nearly took his life. Other overseas trips for General Conference Sessions and church meetings included South America, USA and Germany.

Merv shifted three more times (Perth, Brisbane and back to Perth) before retiring in Bridgetown WA about 2004. (He had by then given 25 years of full-time service in the Lord's work.) They were happy to be close to Esther's sister Lil Gordon and their extended family and also to son-in-law Peter's relatives, John and Inneka Lausevic. Though retired, Merv would regularly preach at the little Stratham church and still travelled to Perth from time to time to preach there also.



Merv and Esther had a lovely retirement, driving around Australia via Perth, Broome, The Pilbara, Darwin, Kakadu, Brisbane, Coffs Harbour, Sydney and back to Perth with a 4wd and pop-top van and two-person kayak. Later they did a second trip which involved southwest WA and also central Australia including Uluru and Kings Canyon. Needless to say they had a ball, sharing tracts and the Gospel on their travels with various townsfolk and fellow travellers.

During his time as a gospel minister, Merv obtained his marriage celebrants licence and has performed ceremonies for quite a few young couples, and also one older couple (his last ceremony), namely, that of his oldest son Gary and daughter-in-law Janet in 2006. Merv and Esther had fun getting to know all their newly acquired relatives.



On a Friday evening as Sabbath drew on Esther suffered a major stroke in 2011 and passed away. Merv was devastated and never really fully recovered after losing the love of his life. He was dealt a double blow when his brother-in-law and great mate Bruce Gordon also passed away only a couple of months later. Merv decided to move over to the east coast to be closer to his children and purchased a little cabin (which he referred to as his shack) stationed at the Church's Conference Camp Ground (Elim Heights Youth Camp), near Colo Heights NSW. After packing up and selling much of the household goods, Merv was assisted to shift to his 'Shack' by his grandson Seth and eldest son, Gary, who had an adventurous trip from Bridgetown, then finally to Sydney or Elim Heights, where Merv resided for a couple of years. Initially helping his sister Betty and her husband Neville who were the caretakers at the time, Merv then took in his nephew Keith, to live with him during this time; and they were a great help to each other in various ways, always looking forward to their weekly visits to Windsor where they enjoyed a swim, sauna and subway. Merv was also pleased when his other nephew Robin Gordon came to take over as the permanent caretaker of the church property. He really appreciated the help of Robin and Keith, and they enjoyed their opening of Sabbaths together on Friday evenings.

One highlight during this period of time was a trip to Port Macquarie to visit his younger brother Gordon and wife Margaret. Accompanied by sister Betty and nephew Keith, they travelled up by train from Sydney. Son Paul also came down from Coffs Harbour, and a few lovely days were spent together. Merv was thrilled to be back on the ocean again when Gordon took them sailing in his yacht.

In late 2014 Merv suffered a major stroke, affecting his cognitive thinking, jumbling his speech (Dysphasia). Fortunately his limbs were not affected, but he was placed firstly in hospital at Windsor, followed by rehab in Nepean hospital before coming back home to be cared for by his children, Susan and Paul, for a time. Unfortunately, Merv was unable to continue living independently. The family decided to see if he would like to try living in the SDA nursing home (Kings Langley) where both his mother Myrtle and sister Pat had lived. His sister Betty was residing in the adjoining retirement village. Having had such an exciting and colourful life, he felt restless after a few weeks there and expressed his desire to live elsewhere where he could 'stretch his legs' as it were.

A phone call was placed to his oldest son Gary and Gary's wife Janet, who were professional Carers, to see if they were interested in looking after Merv. After a little deliberation, it was decided that Gary retire from work to look after Merv full time. Merv enjoyed nearly two years with Janet and Gary, walking to the local wetlands opposite Gary and Janet's home in Para Hills West SA; and, while his sight was reasonably functional, spent time push bike riding, travelling to local church people's homes and some beautiful parks such as the Gorge, and St Kilda walkway, and even recently, a 'Boat ride to Outer Harbour on the Port River' along with extended family.

The highlight of his final few months, in early April, would have to be the experience of attending the wedding of his niece's daughter Emily Newman, and her husband Jonathan Brown. He had just had another stroke and was recovering sufficiently to travel West by plane. Merv spent a most enjoyable holiday with Rosemary and John in Bunbury and at the wedding, held at Greenfield Tree Park, even though it rained and threatened to ruin the high spirits. An added bonus was time spent visiting his close next-door neighbours in Bridgetown, (Ray and Ros Samsa) with whom he has shared many good memories.

In July family and friends all gathered together again to celebrate a belated 80th birthday for Merv which he enjoyed immensely. For some, it would be the last time they would see him. A few days after this he suffered a third stroke and was back in hospital again. It took longer to recover this time, and when he did finally come back home he was noticeably weaker.



During the early part of November 2016, while lying in bed of the afternoon of Wednesday the 2nd, Merv suffered mild convulsions and another stroke. After some deliberation with other family members over the phone, it was decided to ring the ambulance and ask them for palliative assistance, realising this must be the end for Merv.

He was then taken by ambulance, to the Modbury Hospital, where, after top-class treatment, on the mildest of pain relief medication, he finally passed away peacefully, 5 days later on Monday the 7th of November, 2016.

We hope and pray to meet him at the Resurrection!

~ Compiled by Mervyn's family

The poem below was written by Susan Lausevic for the funeral of her father. It was read in Adelaide at a memorial service on the 25th November 2016 and was also read at the memorial service in WA on the 16th January 2017.

Tribute to Dad

Dear Dad, You've reached the garden where the sun will shine no more,
But when you will awaken skies are bright forever more.
You will hear the Trumpet sounding, you will see your heavenly King,
And Dad, we'll be beside you, we will all rejoice and sing.

Dear Dad, You've sheltered me through many storms
Shown me to love and respect the wonders of the 'deep'
Even your name means "man of the sea"
And the happy memories by the water I will always keep.

Your home is now so lonely, so empty and so bare,
I can almost see you sitting in your favourite arm chair.
I see you with your head bowed low, the Bible in your hand.
Reading all your favourite texts about the promised Land.

Dear Dad your favourite hymn was sung when you were laid to rest
And Dad someday again you'll be a very honoured guest.
You leave behind sweet memories of bright and happy days.
Once more we'll be together to sing again in praise.

Goodbye dear Dad, we're waiting
for God's resurrection Day



Sabbath Nature Outings – Wentworthville Church

The brethren of Wentworthville Church have designated every third Sabbath afternoon of each month to be spent out in nature.

Platypus track, Bidjigal Reserve has been a favourite this year, and a beautiful Sabbath afternoon lunch spot for the young and young in heart. There is a lot to see in the reserve with over 370 native plants, over 140 native animals and lots of birds, but sadly there are no platypus to be found in the creek anymore.



“Teach the children to see Christ in nature. Take them out into the open air, under the noble trees, into the garden; and in all the wonderful works of creation teach them to see an expression of His love. Teach them that He made the laws which govern all living things, that He has made laws for us, and that these laws are for our happiness and joy. Do not weary them with long prayers and tedious exhortations, but through nature's object lessons teach them obedience to the law of God.” Child Guidance p. 534.



For more photos: www.sdarm.org.au/?p=12604

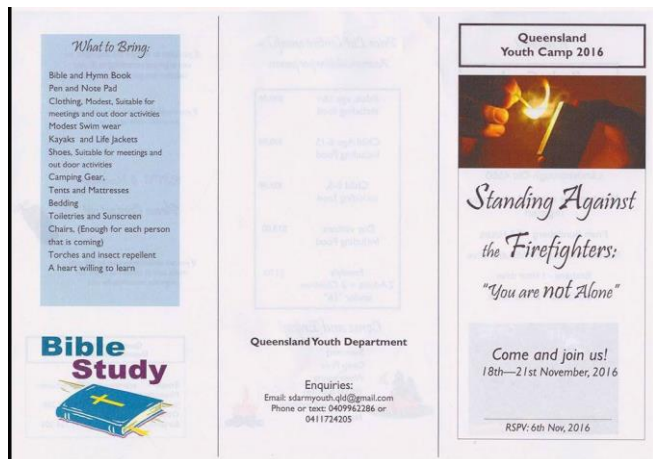
Queensland Youth Camp - Standing Against the Firefighters

Report from Jessica Brown

18-21 November 2016

On Friday 18th of November, all the churches, families and young people across Queensland gathered together for a field youth camp. Friday afternoon everyone started to arrive and set up their tents and the hall where the meetings would be held. As the sun set, we all drew together for the opening of Sabbath. Br Csongor Matyas, the AUC Youth Department Director, took a Bible study about faith and its importance.

After a delightful dinner, we once again came together for another Bible study taken by Br Jade Wales, on "Pyromaniacs", talking about us as youth and how important it is to let our lights shine.



After a good night's sleep, we had morning worship taken by Elisabeth Balarezo on: "Who are the Firefighters." She highlighted to the youth the thing in our lives which puts our fires out.

After breakfast, we had Sabbath School. The youth broke up into two groups, but at the end we came back together to see an illustration that the Sabbath School teachers had drawn on a white board showing the different levels of being on fire for God.

After a short break, we had the Divine Service which was taken by Br Csongor on: "Bush Fire Accomplished."

After a combined lunch, we came together again for Young People's meeting. This was taken by Melissa Chapman and Lachlan Reyes on: "Sharing Our Fires". During the meeting, there were many beautiful items rendered, and some of the youth were interviewed, asking about areas in their life they could see God working and talents He could use.

After a time in nature, we came together again, to close the Sabbath; this was taken by Br Sam Batger on "Playing With Fire". Dinner was served, and then a bonfire was lit and games were played. Everyone had a relaxed, fun evening.



After a good night's sleep, morning worship was taken by Jared Chapman on: "Keep Me Burning." After breakfast and cleanup, the daily activities started. Br Sam Batger, who was a fireman, came up and organised an activity with the local fire brigade and ran through some exercises and some facts about fire. After lunch, for the afternoon activity, we put some fresh air and sunshine on the agenda. Not far from the camping spot were the Glass House Mountains. So, for the afternoon we all went on a hike up the mountain. When we came back there were many bags of water balloons waiting for us along with cold watermelons to eat. After cleaning up, we had dinner and then evening worship and close of camp, taken by Br Ben Thiel on "Standing Against the Fire Fighters."

Monday morning came very fast. Morning worship was taken by Benji Fuenzalida, entitled, "You are not Alone."

After a quick breakfast and clean up, we all said our good byes and left. The camp was a blessing to me, and I hope it was a blessing to all the young people that attended.



~ Jessica Brown

For more photos:
www.sdarm.org.au/?p=12567

Mannum Island, PNG – Thank you

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Greetings in Jesus name!

“And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make.” Exodus 36:5



The Brethren of PNG would like to thank you for your overwhelming generosity in giving to the PNG Drought Appeal. PNG has been affected by one of the worst droughts on record in history. This drought affected the whole country causing difficulty for the population and our membership at large. Those most adversely affected in our church were 14 families who were displaced from their island home, an active Volcano called Mannum Island which erupted some time ago. These families were relocated to the mainland and are unable to return back to their island. During the drought, they could not grow crops on the land they were allocated and had nowhere else they could go. It was for the survival of these families and others in PNG who were struggling to obtain the basic necessities of life that this appeal was made.

It is a wonderful problem, as it was in the days of Moses with the donations for the tabernacle, that we now need to say it is time to stop giving for this cause, as we have fulfilled our target, and the needs have been supplied. We thank you all for your generosity in giving means that has enabled the brethren to be supplied with food and water through this difficult time. We praise God rain has now come; however, it will still take some time for crops to grow. The funds raised will get the brethren through the next weeks

while seed is being purchased and crops put in so our brethren will be able to go on with their lives as subsistence farmers.

Thank you all so much, and may God richly bless all who have helped so much.

Your Brothers & Sisters in PNG!



Elim Heights Youth Camp

Pre-Conference Preparations

Many come from all over Australia, also from overseas to enjoy the wonderful benefits that Elim Heights Youth Camp offers during camp times. Prior to camps being held, much work and preparation is done by a number of people who love this wonderful place.

Sister Elaine Weymark is one of these special people who love being at Elim Heights and wants to see that each one who comes to camp is comfortable and well catered for. Being 86-years-young does not deter her from any hard work. She spends many days each month in painting, cleaning, gardening and repairing the camp grounds. Elaine has a very special place in her heart for the youth and for the youth camp, thus running the Elim Health Store on a voluntary basis so that proceeds from the sales can benefit the youth camp, while also liberally donating finances herself towards the improvements made. All exercise equipment has been donated by a number of people.

Caretaker, Brother Robin Gordon, also works awfully hard each day, not only thinking of ways how to improve things around the campground, but working extremely hard with his hands in creating such a beautiful place we can all enjoy when we come to the campground.

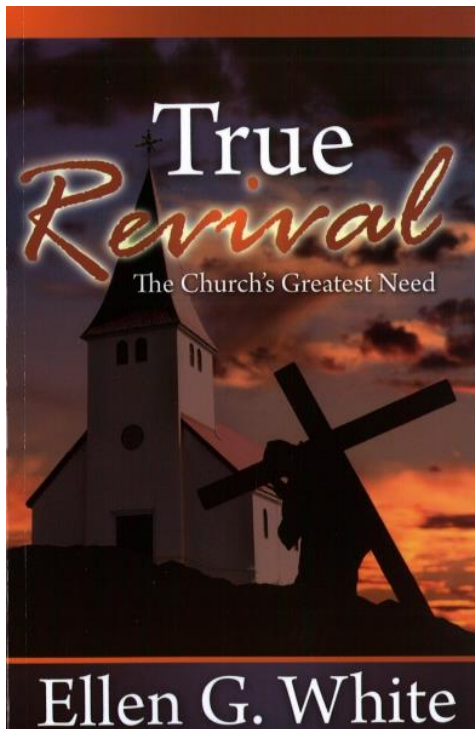


Many come from time to time, giving a helping hand when specific projects are being done; so thank you to all of you. If you cannot offer your hands in service or give of your finances, then you can pray that this will be a place where many souls will find their Saviour.

A huge thank you to Brother Robin Gordon and Sister Elaine Weymark for their faithfulness and the service they do. May God bless this wonderful place where each one of us can enjoy nature to its fullest!

~ Lidia Voncina

True Revival – The Church's Greatest Need



True Revival begins in the heart.

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs.” – Ellen G. White

Perhaps you’ve been praying to experience the power of the Holy Spirit and the latter rain. Your prayers may be answered sooner than you think, because Jesus is coming soon!

This volume collects Ellen White’s most important writings on revival. She helps us distinguish between true and false revival, and talks about how revival reveals itself in our Christian walk.

Can you picture how revival will change your church? Imagine being filled to overflowing with heavenly love and power. Could it be that you will be one through whom God will do something special? Why not give Him a chance?

Only \$3.50 – Special Price January/February

Order from RLPA:

Online Store: <http://www.rlpa.org.au/>

Email: info@rlpa.org.au

Phone: +61 2 9627 7553

Post: RLPA
PO Box 132,
Riverstone, NSW 2765
Australia

Coming Events Calendar

5 March, 2017

**NSW Conference Delegation Session
Schofields Centre**

For further information, email:

Craig Cunningham: craigcunningham62@gmail.com

Phone: +61 2 9627 7553

14-17 April, 2017

**Victoria Camp
Alexandra Adventure Resort**

43 Murrays Road, Whanregarwen, VIC, 3714

For further information, email:

Nathan Tyler: ntyler@sdarm.org.au

Phone: +61 433 239 956

9-12 June, 2017

**NSW Conference Spiritual Camp Meeting
Elim Heights Youth Camp**

For further information:

Email: nsw@sdarm.org.au

Phone: Larry Ah-ching +61 431 409 439 or

Domenic Polistina +61 421 011 372

GOOD TIDINGS E-NEWS

Electronic Newsletter of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement, Australasian Union Conference

PO Box 132, Riverstone NSW 2765, Australia

Tel: (02) 9627 7553

Email: goodtidings@sdarm.org.au

Web: www.sdarm.org.au

Editor: Paul Chapman

Associate Editor: Lidia Voncina

Design: Tabitha Hauptmann

If you no longer wish to receive the Good Tidings e-news, please click unsubscribe: [UNSUBSCRIBE](#)