

Good Tidings

Australasian Good Tidings News

December 1, 2023 – No. 80

Upcoming Events

SPUM Youth Conference

Dates: 22-27 December, 2023

Location: Vanuatu

AUC Youth Conference

Dates: 26 Dec 2023 - 1 Jan 2024

Venue: Elim Heights Youth Camp

Elim Missionary College

Dates: 4 February - 10 June 2024

Location: NSW

NZ Camp Meeting

Dates: 24-27 April 2024

Location: Mangawhai, NZ

East Timor Mission Trip

Dates: 12 June to 7 July, 2024

Location: East Timor

GC Delegation Session

Dates: 20 January - 3 February, 2025

Location: Bogota, Colombia

GC Session Public Meetings

Dates: 6-9 February, 2025

Location: Medellin, Colombia

Not By Might Nor By Power

This article appeared in the June 1952 issue of Good Tidings. Read more about its author, who was 20 years old at the time, on page 6.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves.... Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Today we know these words are true, because from prophecy and present-day world conditions we are now living in the time of the end, in the time of preparation which the Lord has so graciously extended that we may be ready to meet Jesus when He comes to gather His own. In the world today there are two great and powerful forces which are leading humanity along two paths. There is our great adversary the devil who contests every inch of the way of progress, and leads men and women in the path which leads to destruction. On the other hand we have our Saviour Jesus Christ who leads men and women in the path leading to eternal life of peace and happiness.

I sometimes wonder if we as Christians realise just how particular God is and that even one cherished sin, seemingly small to us will keep us outside the gates of heaven. The question today is, “are we willing to submit our wills to that of Christ, laying ourselves humbly at His feet inquiring ‘What will thou have me do?’” The secret of success I believe is to implicitly obey God in all things.

Satan knows that his time is short and is fighting hard. He is as a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour, seeking those who are off guard. Thus he brings many perplexities, discouragements, disappointments, and doubts. But let us not be hindered by such. Let us rather be like Nehemiah the faithful and true worker for God, who, when asked by the enemy to go and meet them and thus leave his God-appointed duty, refused because he knew they sought to do him mischief. He said, “And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

How strong and true to principle this worker for God was, and what a wonderful example for us today as we have been given a special work in a special time. The enemy knows we have a work to do in this world and endeavours in a thousand ways to hinder us, but let us be like

Something to share?

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Nehemiah and stand firm to our heaven-appointed duty of warning a perishing world of Christ's soon return.

Today the tempter comes with the question, "Where are your institutions, your schools, publishing houses, etc?" and "How can such a small body of people like you do any good among the millions in the world?" As this question comes to me I can praise the Lord that the work is not to be finished by institutions or the power of man but by the Spirit of God.

In the experience of Nehemiah again we read, "Amidst great discouragement, Nehemiah made God his trust, his sure defense.... However craftily the plots of Satan and his agents may be laid, God can detect them, and bring to nought all their counsels. The response of faith today will be the response made by Nehemiah, 'Our God shall fight for us;' for God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success." *Prophets and Kings*, p. 645.

It is a beautiful thought and one of encouragement to know that just as Christ worked with the disciples, and the Holy Spirit as the promised Comforter worked through them, so the same power is to work through human instruments in the closing work. Why should we fear for the future? We need not, except we forget the way the Lord has led in the past.

Psalms 124 has been of great help to me in my recent Christian experience and has encouraged me to press on in the Reformation work. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us" (Psalms 124:1-3). How true this is of the Reformation work, but let us praise the Lord at this time that "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Verse 8).

Although the outlook sometimes appears hopeless to our human eyes, let us look beyond the perplexities and catch a glimpse of the power of God who has promised to help us.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6). This is the promise for us today, that power is already working today in some degree and is impressing men and women everywhere with the desire to do right and please God.

I had a very interesting and encouraging experience some months ago which proved to me that the promised power is working even in our day. One day as I was canvassing from house to house I met a lady who seemed very interested in what I had to say. I talked to her for some time and asked if she would like me to call again and have a talk with her. She replied that it would not be convenient to do that, so I left her some of our literature and went on my way. However, I had not gone far when I felt impressed to go back and have prayer with this lady and her family but I did not. Anyway it so happened that at about the same time this lady was also impressed and sent her daughter looking for me to tell me to come back and have a talk regarding our message. In the evening I planned to go along and visit this family and right up till the time I was ready to leave I planned that way,

but then felt impressed not to go that night but leave it till the next afternoon.

Next day I went along and was greatly encouraged to see the joy of this soul when she saw that I had returned. That afternoon was one of happiness to me and one for which I still praise and thank the Lord. This soul had thought over what I had said the previous day, had studied our literature and had given herself to the leading of the Holy Spirit. For two hours we studied together, and as a result of our study and of the working of Christ's agency on earth she is praising God for the change the message has made in her life, and now desires to walk with God's people and become a worker for Christ. This is only one of the many experiences which are taking place in the world today. Then let us go forward and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

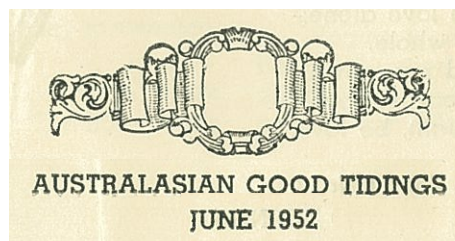
May the Lord help us to "Set [our] affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). Let us realise that our success depends on our willingness to do God's will and obey Him implicitly. Let us at this time draw nigh to God, forsake our cherished idols, our ideas, our worldly ways and consecrate ourselves fully to Christ, and in humbleness sit at His feet to learn of Him, to do His will. Then with Christ working in and through us we can have a successful Christian experience and prove a blessing to others. There are thousands today to be warned and the Lord has given us a solemn responsibility in this work. Christ is calling for earnest, sincere workers for Him. Let us, dear friends, heed the call to "Follow Me."

There is a chorus which says, "What the world needs is Jesus." I believe that what we as Christians need today in these times of tumult and distress is Jesus and His constant companionship. We need to know Jesus as a personal Saviour and give ourselves fully to Him. May the Lord help us do just this that we may be found in the right place at the right time, and one day have a place in those glorious Heavenly mansions, is my prayer.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 24, 25.

~ Arnold K. Matthies

At 92 years of age, Arnold Matthies lives in eastern Melbourne. He lived in Sydney in 1952 at the time he wrote this article.



SA Programs

The *Optimize Your Brain* six-week program was held in SA from 10th June to 15th July, 2023. The series was followed by cooking classes. It was a real blessing for those who attended the program. During this series we covered different topics, such as:

- Improve and manage relationships successfully
- Increase your capacity to learn, retain, and apply knowledge
- Develop originality that is useful to others
- Set and achieve your goals
- Enhance creativity
- Increase motivation and self-control
- Boost overall life satisfaction
- Rediscover a sense of purpose



The Optimize Your Brain program was created to maximise intellectual and emotional intelligence. We praise God for the opportunity and privilege He gives us to learn how to improve our health and brain function to better serve Him. We believe it was a blessing for those who attended the six-week series.

On Sunday, 16th July a cooking class was held.

We began the evening with a short presentation from Dr. Matthew Bourke “Autophagy and its benefits.” The talk was then followed by the demonstration of very simple and delicious recipes such as Vegetable Noodles Recipe, Asparagus Pine Nuts Salad, and Japanese Style Silky Tofu. The dishes presented by Dr. Matthew Bourke were enjoyed by our audience. We also had some recipes presented by Sr. Sandra De Souza: a very tasty menu that consisted of a Mango Pudding, Tofu Gluten-Free Patties and Vegan Flan Pudding. Again, these were very much enjoyed by all.

On the following Sunday, 23rd July, Br. Jacob De Souza shared a short presentation on “Nutrition and Temperance.” The health presentation was followed by a cooking presentation by Sandra and Jess. About five delicious dishes were demonstrated: a very delicious Vegan Chickpea Curry Dish, Mango Sago, Vegan Coconut Macaroons, Walnut Fruit Roll and Vegan Brazilian Cheese Bread. It was a very enjoyable time for members and visitors. As always, a great ‘thank you’ to those who gave presentations and all those who helped in various ways.

~ Sr. Sandra De Souza



NSW Camp

With the theme “Share Hope and Health,” the NSW Camp for 2023 commemorated 160 years since the great Health Reform Vision introduced the subject of health and temperance to the Adventist people. The camp was well attended by brethren from all of the eastern states.





Canvassing in Auckland

From April 22-24, about 40 people attended a canvassing weekend held at our church in Auckland, New Zealand. The following Monday, some of the brethren spent their time canvassing in New Lynn around the church. Most of the participants had never been canvassing before and found it to be a blessed experience.

First, they attended some presentations and a missionary training class. They were sent out in pairs to put canvassing into action, where book packs, pamphlets and magazine-style books were distributed; some sold and some given away. As a result, souls interested in learning more about the Bible signed up for Bible studies by correspondence.

May the Lord bless our Brethren in NZ as they continue dedicating their time and lives in service to the Master.

~Jacob De Souza

SA Asylum Seeker Family Update

After many earnest prayers, our Sri Lankan asylum seeker family have been reunited after their husband and father was released from detention.

They are grateful for all the support you have given through the years to help with the case. Even when it looked like all hope was lost, your prayers and gifts to their legal fund made the difference.

The eight long years of battling along without her husband were difficult for the wife and mother, but she persevered through it all and is very grateful now that this chapter is behind them.

Please continue to keep them in your prayers as they now move on with their lives.



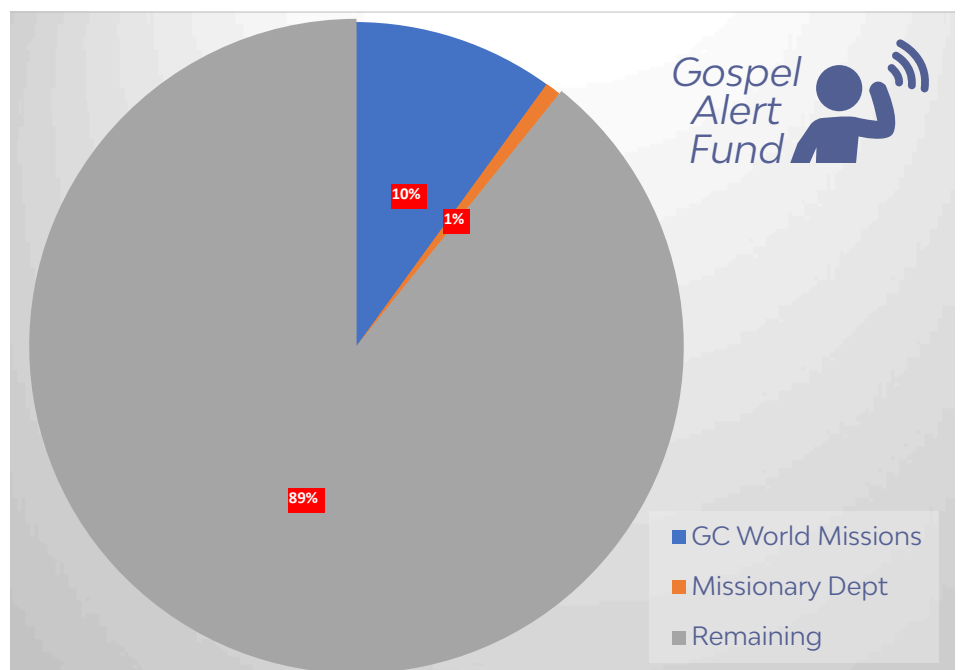
Gospel Alert Fund

A missionary-minded donor has helped to set up a fund of \$50,000 to be used in support of projects that proclaim the gospel to those who have not heard it and to educate people on healthful living.

Some funds have already been allocated. We invite departments and units within our Union to submit further requests for projects in line with this fund's purpose.

Funds Allocated:

GC World Missions:	5,000.00
AUC Missionary Dept:	386.28
Funds Remaining:	\$ 44,613.72



In Loving Memory - John and Sandra Gibbons

Harold John Gibbons was born on the 3rd of December, 1936, in Lake Cargelligo, NSW. John grew up on the family farm, living through droughts, floods, dust storms and mouse plagues. He learned resilience and resourcefulness, which meant he always loved fixing things and making things.

At age 21, while working in Papua New Guinea, John became ill with polio and had to return to Australia to recover. Although doctors said he would never walk again, John was determined to do so. In 1959 he walked down the aisle on crutches to marry his first wife Suzanne.

Sue and John had two children, Peter and Julie. After some time living in Sydney, they moved to Wagga Wagga, where John started a small engine sales and repair business.

Sue passed away in 1990, and John married Sandra and they made a new family together with Angela, who was still at home at the time.

Sandra Gai Podmore was born on the 12th of February, 1942 in Milton, NSW. She grew up in the northern suburbs of Sydney, attending school in Dee Why and North Sydney.

Sandra went on to pursue business studies and secured a job at the Bank of NSW Superannuation Fund.

In 1966, Sandra married Doug and had three children, Jeffrey, Peter and Angela.

Sandra experienced a number of trials, including a serious horseback riding incident, the loss of both her parents within six months of each other, and the end of her first marriage in the mid-1980s.

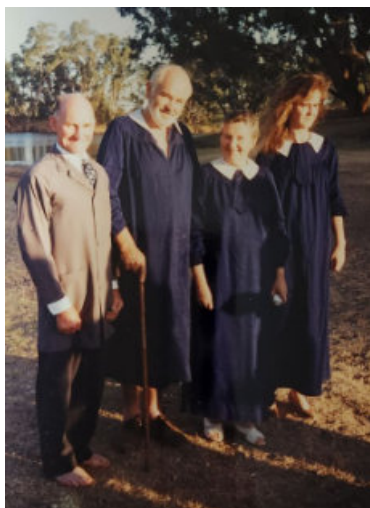
Then, Sandra met John and they were married, and together made their home in Belfrayden, south of Wagga Wagga, in 1992.

John and Sandra were known for their friendliness and hospitality, with many visitors stopping in at their Belfrayden home.

When the Uranquinty SDARM church was officially opened in September 1994, John and Sandra were among those present. They decided to make it their church home and became members in March, 1995.

Some people referred to John as the "Mayor of Belfrayden," a title that brought a smile to John's face. Although he needed walking sticks for support, he was active and could often be found working on some project.

Sandra was also busy, and could be seen at many church camps. She would often ring a Bible worker in one of the states around Australia with a contact she had made, and she gave away many pieces of Christian literature.



Several years ago, after finding that John's health required more care, it was decided that John and Sandra would move to Cooranbong, NSW. John would find a place in the Avondale House nursing home, where he could receive care as needed, and Sandra would take up residence a very short distance away in one of the village cottages.

Both Sandra and John still enjoyed receiving visits and were active in speaking of their faith to anyone who would listen. The pandemic restrictions in 2020 and beyond made this more difficult, but that didn't deter them.

Sandra's health began to decline and in 2021 she suffered a stroke. After this she also found a room in Avondale House, and she and John would spend time together every day. Then in 2023 Sandra suffered a heart attack, which left her bedridden.

John also had a few health issues and spent time in and out of hospital. He once confided in a friend that he worried about what Sandra would do after he was gone.

Sandra's health continued to decline, and on Tuesday the 19th of September, 2023, she went quietly to rest.

On Thursday one of our ministers visited John to speak with him after Sandra's death. John's son and daughter were there and John was having a few grapes for dinner. The minister prayed with them before leaving.

The next day, Friday the 22nd of September, we were shocked to learn that John had passed away overnight—only three days after his beloved Sandra.

John and Sandra Gibbons were laid to rest on the 28th of September, in the Avondale Cemetery, Central Rd, Cooranbong. Their family and friends gathered to share tributes and memories. They will be missed by all who knew them, and we await the blessed reunion of the Resurrection Day.

Uncle Arnold Comes Home

On Sabbath the 25th of November, it was our privilege and delight to welcome Br. Arnold Matthies back into church membership, after nearly 60 years.

Br. Arnold was a church worker in the 1950s and 60s. Originally from Christchurch, NZ, Arnold's family moved to Australia. He attended Hebron Missionary College and entered the work. The minutes of the Victorian Field in 1955 record the anticipation of the brethren for him and his wife Gwenda to move to Melbourne. There he served as the leader of the Victorian Field, and his wife Gwenda helped to run the health clinic.

After a number of years of service, Br. Arnold and his wife left the church. He told us the story in his own words:

"As far as I was concerned, the SDARM was the church. And yet I walked. I don't know why I did. But for almost 40 years I walked.

"There was so much that I couldn't do. I couldn't party on. I couldn't go and drink. That wasn't me.

"I remember once, coming home from somewhere in the car. Something irritated me, and I used a swear word. God spoke to me, 'You need to read your Bible, man. You really need to read the Bible.' That was the start of my coming back to God.

"I was working on Saturdays in those days. One day I saw an invitation next to an Adventist church, 'Why don't you share Sabbath with us?' From that time I frequented Adventist churches."

In 2020, in the midst of pandemic lockdowns, Br. Arnold made contact with Br. Miguel in Melbourne. Thus began his reconnection with the church.

Sadly, Arnold's wife Gwen passed away in August of 2022. Since that time we have kept visiting his home in Melbourne's east.

It was on one of these visits that Br. Arnold announced that he wished to be rebaptised. We did offer to refellowship him but he insisted that he wished to make a full recommitment including rebaptism.

And so on Sabbath afternoon the 25th of November, family and friends gathered at a church near his home to witness the renewal of his covenant with God. A few days prior, Br. Arnold had celebrated his ninety-second birthday. And so after a long journey he returned to the faith of his youth and was baptised.



Greetings were passed from many old friends such as Elaine Weymark, John Kraus, Trafford and Valda Hughes, Ruth Peisley, Lizzy Thiel, Rebecca Allen, and Katerina Risko and her children Jacob, Helen, Brenda and Rosetta.

Arnold's niece, Jodie Matthies Brown and her husband Murray were delighted to join on the day. And Dorothy Kelley, Ben Barat and Esther Boje were all able to be present in person representing the families that knew him many years in the past.

We thank the Lord for His mercy and the inspiring story of Brother Arnold Matthies and his recommitment to God.

~Nathan Tyler and Miguel Mendoza



2025 General Conference Session Information

The 24th General Conference Session will be held in Colombia, the first time for a GC session to be held in that country. The brethren are eager to welcome the worldwide church for this special occasion!

Dates have changed from the original announcement, so please take note of the following information.

General Conference Delegation Session

- Dates: January 20 to February 3, 2025
- Location: Colombian Union Headquarters
Barboza Santander, Colombia
- Information: For delegates only. Delegates will arrive on or before the 19th of January via Bogotá El Dorado International Airport (BOG).

General Conference Public Meetings

- Dates: February 6-9, 2025
- Location: Plaza Mayor Conventions and Exhibitions Centre
Carrera 57 #41-81, La Candelaria, Medellín Colombia

Travel Information

- When purchasing airline tickets for this event, please be mindful that for the GC Session, delegates must purchase tickets to arrive at Bogotá El Dorado International Airport (BOG) but depart from José María Córdova (Medellín) International Airport (MED) after the end of the Spiritual Meetings.
- It is a 9 hour drive from Bogotá to Medellín. Delegates will be bussed from Bogotá to Medellín after the Delegation Session has concluded.
- If you are not a delegate, but planning to attend the GC Public Meetings, you should consider flying to Medellín (many flight options involve connecting in Bogotá).

Further Information

- Delegates will be informed of further details regarding the Delegation Session as they are available.
- GC Council members will be attending a meeting earlier than the dates above.
- The special GC Session website has not yet been put up. This will be put online some time in 2024.
- For any other information, please see the General Conference website www.sdarm.org



Medellín, Colombia



Plaza Mayor Conventions and Exhibitions Centre in Medellín, Colombia, has 21 meeting rooms and space for 3000 people



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