

AUSTRALASIAN
GOOD
TIDINGS

E-NEWS

15 MARCH 2011

In this Issue

SDA Leadership Talks.....	1
Some History	1
Baptisms	2
Japanese Earthquake Update	3
Christchurch Earthquake Update	3
Reflections on Nature's Catastrophes.....	3
Obituaries.....	4
Coming Events Calendar.....	5

SDA Leadership Talks

Recently, two leaders within the Seventh-day Adventist church in Australia contacted our office in Sydney. They expressed a desire to meet with us as we had not had contact for some years. They wished to discuss the issues concerning our origin and existence as a separate organisation from the SDA Conference. Our brethren sensed a genuine interest from these leaders in understanding the reasons for the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement and so agreed. The meeting was held on February 15, 2011. From all reports, the discussions were very cordial and mutually beneficial.

Our brethren report being encouraged by the warm and congenial spirit of the meeting and all agreed to continue the discussions at a future date. We would ask you to please pray for any ongoing meetings that may take place.

Some History

Since hearing of the February 15 meeting of our brethren with some SDA leaders, I was reminded of some notable discussions that occurred some 30 years ago in the USA. At that time, Elder Robert H. Pierson, the then most recently retired SDA General Conference President, approached our General Conference leadership for talks. I understand Elder Pierson had a burden to see the various groups of 'separated' Adventists reconciled to 'the church'.

Together with a like-minded SDA minister and elder, Elder Pierson met with our General Conference president, Brother Francisco Devai and some of our other leading brethren for a few days of discussions. Reports have it that the meetings were both encouraging and profitable, however I was informed that they broke down over one main issue:

How do we keep the Sabbath?

At the time, Christians in communist lands were facing many trials for their faith. The requirement by authorities that all children must attend public school on Saturday (Sabbath) was a major stumbling block for many Adventists. While the mainline SDA church in many communist lands permitted members to send children to the public school on Sabbath, members of the SDA Reform Movement did not believe they could do this and remain consistent with keeping the Sabbath day holy.

Sadly, Elder Pierson's company responded to this dilemma by adopting the position that we cannot judge our brethren in those persecuted lands--we have to leave them to make their own decisions. We would agree with him that as individual Christians we should all be left free to make our own decisions. However, we also need to keep in mind that the Church does have a responsibility for its membership, to bring to account those who persist in open sin. This duty is neglected only at the peril of the Church as a whole.

It is our sincere desire and prayer that should the Lord open the way for future discussions with the Seventh-Day Adventist leadership they will result in a more promising outcome than those of former years.

--Editor

Baptism of Matthew Boje – Brimbank, Keilor, Victoria

On Sabbath, the 5th of March, 2011, the Lord blessed us with wonderful weather as we rejoiced to see another soul make their covenant with the Lord.

Members and friends from the local Melbourne churches and from around Australia and abroad gathered to witness the baptism of Matthew Boje.

The Lord's presence was felt by all who attended. Our prayers are with Bro. Matthew as he begins his new life in Christ.



We especially remember him as he has just undergone a major heart surgery. Latest reports are that the operation was successful. We wish him well and a speedy recovery.

--in conjunction with N Tyler

Japanese Tsunami and Earthquake Update

No doubt many are in a state of distress as a result of the Friday, Mar 11, Japan earthquake and subsequent Tsunami. We are greatly saddened by the terrible loss of life—the large majority a result of the Tsunami. Following so soon on from the Christchurch earthquake, no one can but wonder, in the words of one Facebook member, “Unbelievable.....what is going on?”

Bro. John Ciric, Pacific Regional Secretary, contacted our representative in Japan and he has confirmed that so far none of our brethren have been affected.

Time is short, dear readers. Let us be ready. Please see accompanying article, “Reflections on Nature’s Catastrophes.”

Latest Japan Quake Updates: <http://www.news.com.au/world/magnitude-quake-strikes-japan/story-e6frfkyi-1226019903430>

Japan Earthquake on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/JapanEarthquake>

Christchurch Earthquake Update

On the afternoon of February 22nd, 2011, Bro. Matthias Thiel, New Zealand Field Leader, reported that we have two members and one regular church visitor living in the area of Christchurch. All are safe. We are told that the church visitor was staying in a two storey building, and as the earthquake struck, rushed down outside, only to see the SDA Independent Samoan church next door come crashing down right before his eyes.

Two days after the earthquake, Bro. Mathias Thiel reported "We thank the Lord, we have been in touch with our other Sister this morning and she and her children are safe and well. The aftershocks are still regular and unnerving for them; they are quite emotional over the whole experience but are praising God for His love and protection over them. The whole of NZ seems in a state of shock and are thankful for the support and help that is coming in from other parts of the world in rescue missions."

Bro. Thiel reports today (Friday 11 March, 2011) that thousands are leaving Christchurch, with whole suburbs abandoned, more than likely never to be rebuilt.

Dynamic Map of Christchurch Earthquake as it happened: <http://www.christchurchquakemap.co.nz>

Reflections on Nature's Catastrophes

No doubt the events of recent months have been a cause for all of us to take stock of our spiritual life. The floods in Queensland and Victoria, Cyclone Yasi, the Christchurch earthquake, and just this past weekend the Japanese earthquake, subsequent tsunami and exploding nuclear power station are strong signals that time is short. The devastation of thousands of people's homes and lives must touch all of us. Repairs to homes and infrastructure will take time. But nothing could be worse than the distressing loss of lives suffered in these terrible catastrophes. Our prayers are with all those who have lost their loved ones.

During the middle of Cyclone Yasi, I came across a Twitter feed dedicated to the event. One individual 'tweeted' that the Salvation Army had asked for everyone to pray to God for those about to face the fury of the cyclone. He went on to ask, "What kind of God would send the cyclone in the first place?"

This has been a dilemma that Christians have wrestled with for centuries. How can a loving God allow evil to take place, where thousands perish seemingly indiscriminately in such terrible catastrophes? The reality is that we do have a loving Father in heaven who is not willing that any should perish. That same loving Father has also allowed this world to suffer the consequences of their sin. Not because of any vindictiveness on His part, but because of a burning desire He has that we all may come to repentance. I recall the words of Christ in this regard:

Luke 13:1-5 (KJV) "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and

slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

It is not always because of any greater sins than the rest of their fellow humanity that people perish in such events. We know there is an enemy hard at work to destroy the lives of all in the hope that all will be lost eternally. We also know that that enemy's time is almost up. Jesus is coming again to finally bring an end to the terrible calamities and disasters our sin-sick world has suffered at Satan's hand. Let us not give up the faith in view of these terrible events, but rather let us all be found ready and waiting.

Obituaries

We have been saddened in recent weeks with the death of three of our beloved brethren: Sis. Esther Southwell and Sis. Maria Korchynsky, both in January and then last week (Mar 2, 2011) Bro. Bruce Gordon.

They were all dearly loved by their families and friends. While we will miss them greatly, we take comfort in the promise that they now rest in Christ awaiting the blessed hope of the resurrection. Over the next few issues a eulogy will be dedicated to each one. This issue we remember Sis. Esther Southwell (nee McMahan).

"Esther Myrtle McMahan was born in Sale, Victoria, on 7 January, 1938 to Rob and Doll McMahan. She was the 9th child of 12 children and the 7th girl. At the age of 5 years her parents moved to Orbost. From there the family moved to Lochiel where Esther completed her schooling. Esther found employment at the Pambula hospital, where she saved up and bought her first car. On December 4, 1957, she married Merv Southwell, her companion for 53 years. They made their home in Merimbula, NSW.

"Gary, Susan and Paul were all added to the family in time. The children attended the Merimbula Primary School, when Merv found employment at Streaky Bay in South Australia. Esther was involved in a laundry business with her sister, Eunice. During school holidays Esther would drive a Holden ute with the 3 children, a cat and a dog all the way to Streaky Bay, which took her 3 days each way. Never once did she break down and usually it was in the hot summer school holidays.

"Eventually they moved to Streaky Bay and spent many happy years there. All the children completed their High School there. Paul became very sick and Esther spent time treating him with natural treatments. All three children are married and between them they have two healthy grandsons.

"From Streaky Bay, Sr. Esther and Br. Merv went to New Zealand and from there were invited into the Bible work. They remained in the Bible Ministry up till their retirement a few years ago. They worked in the Queensland Field twice, as well as ministering to New Zealand, South Australia and Western Australia where they remained after retirement. They have lived in Bridgetown for 7 years. Sr. Esther loved her garden and grew many delicious vegetables, fruit, and flowers. Sis. Esther celebrated her 73rd birthday with her two nieces on January 7.

"One week later Sis. Esther and Bro. Merv went for a lovely bike ride on Friday morning. Just prior to sunset she went to her garden and brought in a few tomatoes, then suffered a massive stroke. She passed away peacefully Sabbath morning at 6am on 15 January, 2011. Sis. Esther is resting now and awaits her Loving Saviour's return. Wherever Sis. Esther went, she left encouraging words of comfort and hope to all. We remember her as a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister, sister-in-law, aunt and friend." *Reproduced from "Sunshine News" (SDARM QLD Field Youth News Letter).*

Coming Events Calendar

11-26 March 2011

Elim Missionary College Evening Course

VENUE: Schofields & Wentworthville Churches, NSW

For information and application forms, please contact nsw@sdarm.org.au

22-24 April 2011

South Australian Spiritual Conference

VENUE: Mt Gambier Golf Club

For additional information, contact cmatyas@sdarm.org.au. Alternatively,

see this webpage for details: <http://www.sdarm.org.au/events/sa/>

or download the invitation brochure in PDF format at

<http://www.sdarm.org.au/events/sa/SA-Camp-Invite-2011-Web.pdf>

22-25 April 2011

New Zealand Spiritual Conference

For details please contact nzfield@sdarm.org.au

10-13 June 2011

New South Wales Spiritual Conference

VENUE: Elim Heights Youth Camp

Additional details will be available on the website soon; for further information contact nsw@sdarm.org.au

5-7 August 2011

Queensland Spiritual Conference

VENUE: Ewen Maddock Dam Recreation Centre – Sunshine Coast

Additional details will be available on the website soon; for further information contact pchapman@sdarm.org.au

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

Editor: Paul Chapman

Associate Editor: Ben Thiel

Design: Tabitha Hauptmann

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