

Top News

NEWS FROM THE TOP END OF
THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

SEPTEMBER 2017



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Top News is the official magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Australia. All articles express the opinions of their authors and not necessarily those of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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“EXPERIENCING AND
SHARING HOPE
IN JESUS CHRIST”

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THE MARRIAGE DEBATE

Back around the time I was born, the Heritage Singers came out with their rendition of a catchy little song and I still remember the words of the chorus: “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me!” So when Jesus came along quoting the book of Genesis saying: “...a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matt 19:5,6), I took this as a bedrock definition for marriage. And I was not alone in this thinking. Until recent years, societies and cultures extending back to the earliest history of civilisation have understood that marriage is the union of a man and a woman. But today around the globe we are witnessing an unprecedented attack on the traditional definition of marriage, and now it has come to our country. Over the next few weeks each of us who is registered to vote will be given the opportunity to have our say on whether to keep or change this definition of marriage.

So the arguments are raging both for and against, and a great degree of unpleasantness surrounds the whole issue. And I have to tell you, there are several things I am uncomfortable with about this debate:

1. The prospect of redefining the term marriage troubles me – what I mean is that up until now marriage described the union of a man and a woman. If the definition is broadened to include same sex couples, what term do we have which then describes the original Biblical union? If same sex couples wish to enter into a union, that is their choice, but call it something else and leave marriage to describe the relationship God designed in the beginning.
2. It is untrue to say that broadening the term marriage to include same sex unions

will make it non-discriminatory – marriage will always be discriminatory because it is not broad enough to include all the possible combinations that some wish it did. So if the definition is changed for marriage to include same sex unions, then it still discriminates against other options, such as polygamous or polyamorous relationships. It is a designation that defines a specific category, and cannot be inclusive of everything, thus it cannot be non-discriminatory.

3. I am deeply concerned about the consequences of redefining marriage – the ongoing removal of rights to freedom of thought, conscience and speech and the knock on effects to freedom of religion are very sobering when you look at the impact of this issue in countries that have gone down this path already. Also the erosion of protections in regards to employment and workplace practices are incredibly alarming. I don’t believe for one moment that those on the rainbow side of the debate will be satisfied if the definition of marriage is changed. What recent history has shown is that there will be an ongoing relentless push for further ‘rights’ and ‘liberties’ and a complete erosion of protections for those who have a contrary opinion and wish to follow the dictates of their conscience. Sadly there is a real desire to remove the Christian voice from the public sphere.

4. Popular prejudice is creating some worrying trends – as we have seen in recent weeks and months, those who dare to speak up for the no campaign have been relentlessly attacked and accused of hate speech, intolerance, bigotry and being homophobic. These and other highly emotive and offensive terms are being hurled at anyone who wishes to respectfully (or otherwise) share their conviction that the definition of marriage should remain unchanged. I don’t believe I

fit any of these descriptions, and I certainly don’t dislike people whose sexuality is different to mine, but I have the right to voice my opinion, even if it is not agreeable to some. In other words, I should be afforded the same courtesy that those on the other side of the debate expect from me, and I in turn respect those who have a contrary opinion to mine.

5. As Seventh-day Adventists we should conduct ourselves with love and respect towards all people, whether we agree with them or not. This is particularly true when it comes to the definition of marriage. When I hear that some in our churches do not display love and respect, I am saddened. In fact, I get indignant at this Pharisaical attitude that ignores Jesus’ greatest command to love God and one another (Matt 22:36-39), which incidentally didn’t come with exceptions in the fine print. And Jesus modelled how comfortable He was mingling with people of all walks of life when the accusation was made that he “welcomes sinners and eats with them” (Luke 15:2). The question is how do we, like Jesus, welcome people regardless of their circumstances or situation? We should treat a person whose sexuality is different to ours in exactly the same way as we would those whose orientation is the same.

So as you come to cast your vote, please prayerfully consider the issues. Get online and have a read through some excellent material our church has published at <https://adventist.org.au/marriage/>. There are plenty of further resources available at www.coalitionformarriage.com.au. Most importantly, prayerfully go to the Word and see what it says because I’m sure those catchy words resonate with you also: “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me.”

Darren Slade
President
Northern Australian
Conference



SALT, LIGHT & THE MARRIAGE PLEBISCITE

Gary Webster ~ South Pacific Division evangelist and President of the Tasmanian Conference

On September 12 Australians will participate in a voluntary postal vote on whether the definition of marriage should be changed. A change to the definition of marriage will dramatically re-shape our nation and have consequences for children and freedom of religion.

Marriage is a God-ordained institution that came from Eden. It is clearly defined by the Father and Jesus as a mutual life-long commitment between a male and a female (Genesis 2:18,20-25; Matthew 19:4-6,9). As such marriage is also enshrined in, and protected by, the Ten Commandments that were written with God's own finger (Exodus 20:12,14; Exodus 31:18).

Thus God states that any sexual union, whether heterosexual or homosexual, that deviates from the marriage relationship set up by God, is not only expressly forbidden by God, but if wilfully continued will cause a person to forfeit eternal life (Leviticus 18; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

God is no kill-joy. It was out of love that He created us and therefore knows what is best for us, and so gave laws to help us get the most out of life (Isaiah 48:18). He withholds nothing that is good from His children (Psalms 84:11). Thus anything He forbids is out of love for us because He knows it will harm us in some way.

Thus His word informs us that "righteousness exalts a nation," but disobedience to God's will, as expressed in His commandments, brings personal and national ruin (Proverbs 14:34; Daniel 9:11,16). The ancient Egyptians and Canaanites participated in both heterosexual and homosexual sexual activities outside the God-ordained marriage relationship, and as a result brought suffering on themselves and their children (Leviticus 18:1-5, 24-30; Exodus 15:26). Therefore the issue of redefining marriage is, in the end, about the holistic health of our nation and the eternal destiny of its people.

Every person is God's child, whom He loves infinitely, and His laws were given to benefit all humanity. History reveals that the world owes much in numerous ways to true Christianity. For example, when the Wesley brothers experienced God's saving grace and His laws were written on their hearts, they impacted England for good, ultimately bringing about an end to slavery, poor working conditions and other societal ills.

Genuine Christians are still to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth today, which means we are here to help people both now and for eternity (Matthew 5:13-16). This plebiscite is our chance to help our fellow citizens. Seize the opportunity this plebiscite gives to make a difference for Australia and its future.

KNOWN, VALUED, LOVED, SENT

Local churches from the Cairns and Mareeba regions, in partnership with the NAC Youth Department, met in August to hear the call of God. Andre Afamasaga (Community Church Planter) was our speaker and refreshed our young people with the clear call of God on each of our lives. We do not have to hide who we are from God, He will never leave us, He values us, and He call us to make this known throughout the world. After each session Andre spent time reflecting with young people on the topics shared. Throughout the week, Christos Spero challenged everyone to have a more biblical understanding of the church and its role; specifically that it is people called by God for



mission not a building for people to attend. Thanks to Pastor Levi and Nive Mote for their ministry and commitment to young people and their kind hospitality.

DIRECTION NOT DISTANCE

The youth and young adults from the Darwin regions camped on the border of Litchfield National Park to fellowship with God



and man out in nature. We were excited to have Lachlan and Cathy Campbell come and share with us during camp. We learnt some amazing things about God, especially to know that it's the direction not the distance that matters to God. Sabbath was spent sharing the word, hanging out, cooking together and appreciating the beauty of God's creation as we checked out some of the local swimming and hiking spots of Litchfield National Park. Closing Sabbath from the Buley Rock Holes really brought to life the story of Peter walking on water. Thanks to Pastor Sean and Amia Tavai for your kind hospitality.

MAKING DISCIPLE-MAKING DISCIPLES

The Health, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Director of the Northern Australian Conference has taken initiatives to work with pastors and members in educating, empowering, and mobilizing them for the Total Member Involvement (TMI) which is an initiative of the global Adventist Church. Pastor Gration Perera reiterates the importance of not making TMI another program of the church. His emphasis is that the church's primary goal is to



make "disciple-making disciples." Using the discipleship loop, Pr. Perera explains, invites, and challenges the pastors and members to be intentionally engaged in fulfilling the gospel commission (Matthew 28: 18-20) through the in-reach and outreach work of the local church.

In a recent visit to Northern Territory, Pr. Perera met with pastors, department leaders of the congregations, and local church board members to instruct, facilitate, train and devise ministry plans for the remainder of 2017 and for 2018. From left: Darwin, Mt Isa board planning sessions, CHIP Facilitator training Alice Springs.

GIVING IN THE NAC

The story is told of a man, let's call him Peter, who received a new sports car as a gift from his brother. One day he drove it into the city and parked it on the street while he did some shopping. On returning to his car, loaded down with shopping bags, he saw a young homeless boy with wide eyes staring at the shiny, new vehicle. As Peter approached the car the boy shyly asked, "Excuse me sir, is this your car?" "Yes it is" Peter replied. "My brother gave it to me. It was a gift."

The boy's eyes lit up with surprise at the thought of such a generous and expensive gift. "Wow!" he said. "That's incredible! I wish ... I wish ..." but he didn't finish his sentence, so Peter finished it for him.

"Yes, I know son. You wish you had a brother like that."

"No, no, sir. That's not it." the boy quickly replied. "I wish ... I just wish I could BE a brother like that."

Just like Abraham of old, we are each blessed to be a blessing. Jesus said it perfectly, "There's a greater blessing in giving than in receiving." Amen.

MEGA MAGGIE CAMP

It is with a heavy heart that we regretfully have to inform you that Mega Maggie Teen and Junior Camp has been cancelled due to low registration numbers. Differing contexts at the local church level have a huge impact on Youth Ministry Events (lack of pathfinders and youth leaders in majority of our churches).

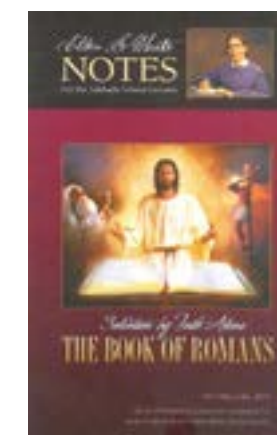
This is a huge loss for the Youth Department ministry on three levels:

- 1) Our kids miss out
- 2) Our older youth miss a great opportunity to serve Jesus
- 3) Youth Department misses out on one of the best opportunities to build relationships with our young people.

ADVENTIST BOOK CENTRE

Why not go deeper into your lesson study with the quarterly E G White Notes supplement? This pamphlet-sized publication contains hundreds of Spirit of Prophecy quotations arranged to augment the study for each day of the week. Each quotation is specifically related to the day's study topic and will increase your understanding of what the Bible is saying and how it applies to your life. Available now at the Adventist Book Centre for \$11 for the upcoming 4th quarter. Phone 07 4728 7097 to reserve your copy, or navigate to www.adventistbooks.com.au to buy online.

The Adventist Book Centre has started using new software which allows customers to easily and quickly self-enrol in its Loyalty Program. To enrol, point your browser to <https://goo.gl/KGrWdH> and provide the requested details. Once you are registered, simply identify yourself to ABC staff each time you purchase from us so the sale can be recorded against your name. This is a very simple process, and registration will allow you to accumulate points to be credited against later purchases. Many customers have already enrolled and enjoyed the benefits – why not you?



WHATS RIGHT? WHATS WRONG? ON SEXUAL MORALITY?

Pastor Daniel Matteo ~ Pastor for Edmonton, Mossman and Northern Beaches Churches

In a June 4 article in The Australian, the author declares, “Australia’s Christian churches are in crisis, on the brink of complete strategic irrelevance. It’s not clear they recognise the mortal depth of their problems...In Western Europe, on the east and west coasts of the US, and in Australia, the new religion of aggressive secularism is on the rise, more self-confident and fundamentalist than ever. Widespread, prolonged affluence has been more effective than oppression ever was in killing religious belief and practice. To take one figure almost at random, in 1954, 74 per cent of Australian Catholics attended mass each Sunday. Today the figure is substantially less than 10 per cent...The aggressive secularism of public culture has become increasingly a state religion in itself and will use the coercive powers of the state to enforce its new orthodoxy.”

Without God, where will Australia go to learn what is right and wrong? Particularly in the areas of sex and marriage, without the Bible, what will be the guide?

Recently Dr Franz De Waal has been studying the moral and social behaviour of chimpanzees. He has written a book called “Chimpanzee Politics”. Why, you ask? Well, he is really looking for a morality without religion. He believes that, since we have a common evolutionary ancestor, how chimpanzees behave can give us clues about how human beings should figure out their moral standards. These scientists believe that all moral standards are fundamentally based on the evolutionary instincts of reciprocity, including justice and fairness, and empathy which includes compassion. In other words we evolved to be moral because we either personally get something out of it, or because it makes us personally uncomfortable to imagine ourselves going through it. In the end, it’s the human mind that is the moral reference point. It’s all about me.

The problem with that I suppose is that our actions that are considered the most moral are those which we get nothing out of, and that don’t hurt anyone. Say when someone refuses to download a movie for free, and instead chooses to pay for it. She might do this because she knows stealing is wrong, not because she gets anything out of it, in fact it costs her something. She definitely does not do this from compassion for the big multi-national corporation selling the film. So morality really is something deeper than just an ultimately selfish instinct, isn’t it? And, to be honest, I feel very uncomfortable about the idea of a human being trying to learn how to be moral from a chimp. Is that really what we’ve come to?

So, how do we arrive at our morality? That is a bigger question

than you might think. For a start, if there were no God, one might ask if there is really any true morality at all. After all, it was the new atheist Richard Dawkins himself who famously wrote in his book The God Delusion that the universe “...has at bottom no evil and no good, just blind pitiless indifference.” Funny that he then turns around and calls Christianity immoral then isn’t it?

We are moral, there’s no denying it. Most people get their morality from the films, books and television shows they consume. Many people don’t realise that producers and screen-writers often have a particular moral lesson they are trying to teach through the stories they tell. You would not always agree with that lesson if it was stated plainly, but you quite happily take it into yourself when you are immersed in the story you are watching. Some people still get their morals from their family. Very few people actually think their morality through rationally and make conscious, reasoned decisions about it.

There is of course no doubt that non-believers in God can be supremely moral. However the fundamental question that atheist and agnostic philosophers still cannot answer is, “Where do we really get our morality?” Everyone agrees there is a real right and wrong, and that some behaviour is better and more moral than others, but why? If there is no objective moral standard, where does that come from? Is it just our culture which instils it in us, an imagined standard that happens to serve our needs and which can be changed when necessary, or is it something real that is outside of the human mind and that we are all seeking to discover? On what basis can I say my morality is better than someone else’s, or that one country’s laws are more moral than another’s? And if there is something in me that has a desire to behave in a way that is culturally considered to be outside the accepted norm, or immoral, why is it wrong?

“...where do we really get
our morality?”

What is wrong with me behaving how I like with whomever I like as long as it isn’t hurting anyone? This is the argument from pain avoidance. Epicurus of Samos arrived at his ethics by saying that we can derive a right system of behaviour by making sure we avoid pain and pursue pleasure. If something causes pain it is immoral and vice versa. However you can easily think of places where that reasoning collapses, can’t you? For example, why do we consider it the height of heroic morality for an Australian soldier to run out into heavy fire and rescue an Afghan national whom he barely knew and drag him to safety? We awarded Mark Donaldson a Victoria Cross for just such an action. If we truly considered pain avoidance the height of morality, we would just as well have

awarded a man who ran in the opposite direction.

But, if any behaviour makes a person feel loved and fulfilled, what is the problem with it really? Who is to say what I can and can’t do to make me happy? This is the emotional happiness argument, first put forward by Aristotle. It posits that human happiness is the supreme goal of the moral life, and for those of us who have sat with someone through the tears, loneliness and pain of desires that fall outside of what is culturally acceptable they hold a lot of weight. We want our loved ones to be happy, and who is the government or anyone else to stop them?

However, you can easily see where this rationale falls down also. There was nothing about the trenches of Gallipoli that made our World War 1 diggers happy, or added any joy or self-satisfaction to their lives. Yet we regard their actions as the height of Australian moral virtue, honouring them every year on ANZAC day. So it seems that the greatest moral value comes, not in making ourselves personally happy, but by sacrificing our own needs for the good of others. If we find happiness in that, then great! But personal happiness cannot be the standard.

However, the real problem with the happiness argument is that it is too subjective. Everyone’s needs are different, and not always in a good way. If there truly is a real right and wrong, where does it stop? Every idea must be effective not only in the immediate situation, but when it is reasoned through to the fullness of its philosophical implications. There are some in our society that claim they will only ever be truly emotionally happy in a polygamous marriage. If the ultimate standard for sexual morality is only personal feelings and emotions of happiness, you can ultimately make the emotional argument for any range of behaviours between consenting adults, including some incestuous relationships. Must we eventually accept them all as being moral?

Seeking an objective standard for morality apart from God then must not only consider the individuals feelings and emotions, but the moral consistency of the argument and the greater good of society. These must be held in both hands, with the good of society trumping personal happiness and pain avoidance. In fact, no one doubts that self-sacrifice for the good of others is actually crucial in true morality, which is a curiously anti-evolutionary instinct.

In seeking to solve this dilemma, Immanuel Kant was a philosopher who proposed a system of ethics based on the law of “universability”. In other words, for a behaviour to be considered moral or immoral, one must consider what the effect on society would be if 100% of people practiced that behaviour, or if 100% of people refrained from that behaviour. This makes sense because any society’s morality must be good for everyone all the time. If it is subject to change for the sake of certain individuals, by definition it would be a guideline only,

and not truly a moral standard. Let’s take murder for example. If 100% of people committed murder, what would the effect on society be? If 100% of people refrained from murder, what would the effect on society be? By reasoning through, we can rationally see that murder is immoral, and refraining from murder is moral. Easy one. But what about sexual morality? Well, there you begin to realise that what is best for society at large will at times be at odds with the individual’s feelings and emotions of happiness, as well as sometimes causing them emotional pain. Although some behaviours might be said to not hurt anyone and make people happy at an individual level, at a societal and corporate level they would cause irrevocable damage if universalised. In fact, for many behaviours this would mean the extinction of our species within a single generation. Therefore it can be reasoned that they are impacting society for the worse.



This is the philosophy, but particularly for agnostics and atheists who are attempting to reason through to their ethics from an evolutionary science point of view, sexual morality must revolve around those practices that will pass on useful genetic material to subsequent generations. Behaviour outside of this may of course be allowable legally, by all means. What is legal and what is moral are not always the same. However, a culture’s morality is the guide of its legal system, and these behaviours cannot truly and honestly be considered positive and moral, or advocated systemically and institutionally, by any agnostic or atheist who takes the time to think truly about the ramifications. The truly courageous know that they may not always be able to choose how they feel, but they can choose to act in line with what is ethically consistent for the greater good, despite their feelings. That is heroic morality.

For myself, I am lucky. I am not courageous, but I am a theist. I believe in an objective moral standard from Scripture: the ten commandments. Incidentally, at least the last 6 of the 10 commandments can actually be rationally reasoned through from the perspectives of De Waal, Kant, Epicurus and Aristotle, but I don’t need any of them. I serve a God of grace whose law is supreme but, whose mercy and grace is unfathomable. I have broken His commandments, but He has forgiven me and given me power to begin the lifelong process of change. I’m not there yet, but He is making me more moral each day. I can clearly see that thousands of years before the philosophers and scientists, my God had a law that was for the very best good of His creatures. That’s a God I can trust to be my Guide to morality. In John 14:15, Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” That’s what real love is all about.

NORTHERN BEACHES

FATHER'S DAY CELEBRATION

The Sabbath of August 27 was a very special one for the husbands and fathers of the Cairns Northern Beaches group thanks to the organisation and planning of Amanda Jerrard. The group decided to do something a little different and hosted a special family breakfast as an early Father's Day celebration. Instead of Sabbath school and church, they gathered around the breakfast table for songs and a short worship on the subject of what it means to be a man by Pr Daniel. The highlight of the morning was the dedication of little Ava Aler, the newest addition to the church family, of whom her mother, father and brothers are exceptionally proud. Please pray for the Cairns Northern Beaches group as they continue to walk in God's plan!



CHARTERS TOWERS

REWARDED AT LOCAL SHOW



Doris Crack, the 94 year old treasurer for the Charters Towers Church, has won top prizes in the halls competition at the Charters Towers Show for her knitting and crocheting entries. Doris had 15 entries in the August Show and received second prize for two of the submissions. She said that the show meant a lot to her and that she loved supporting it each year. "If someone my age can have a go and win prizes, it means anyone can," Doris said, "It is a great thing to be involved with and I like to keep busy with my knitting and crocheting and the show is a good way to display it."

A friend of Doris', who is also in her 90s, Mavis Weatley, won two first prizes and two second prizes. They have both been contributing to the show for more than a dozen years and their efforts are encouraging others to take up the craft.

The Charters Towers Church has a small membership and Ms Doris Crack has been serving as Church Treasurer there off and on for many, many years. She is pictured with her prize winning items.

MOA ISLAND

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

A children's church program has been started at Kubin village on Moa Island as of August 19. Our church kids were driven around Kubin, door knocking and inviting along their friends to attend the program. We had a few extra come along and they really enjoyed the event.

Our church members have a set program for each week so they can keep this going for the children of the community. The program consists of songs, Bible lesson, ice breakers, Bible story and activities and Sabbath craft. May God bless this endeavour.



THURINGOWA

BAPTISM

Mrs Omaohae Jackway who lives in an aged-care facility in Townsville gave her heart to Jesus in baptism on August 12. Pastor Bob Possingham, a retired minister, former Youth Director of Northern Australian Conference, and a close friend of Jackway family officiated the baptismal ceremony.



MOUNT ISA

CONFESSION OF FAITH

On May 13 Cloncurry Branch Sabbath School of Mt Isa Church celebrated their fifth anniversary. La'Kisha Dougles shared this confession of faith during the Sabbath worship which drew over 100 people from the region:

"Blessed, yeah, I've been blessed from the start, since the day I first walked in to the church. Life can be hard and challenging, but knowing I have the Lord on my side, I am ready for anything. It did take a while to understand this but I was heaps lucky. I got to experience how amazing He really is, and knowing He works in mysterious ways makes me stronger. He was there through my ups and downs. I still question where would I be? Who would I be? But I realize now that I don't need to because I am where I am. I was lost, but now I am found. At the start, I'll be honest, I didn't like church. I was getting forced to go, but now I can't wait for the week to finish so I can go worship our beautiful Father. Since I have been walking with Jesus I have been more confident and had more faith in myself. I wake up every morning with not a worry on my mind because I know God has a plan and He will guide and lead me to where He wants me to be. I can say no to peer pressure because I know it's the Devil trying to lead me away from our good Father. I don't pray for a good and easy life. I just



pray for God to give me the strength to get through the hard times in my life and for me to understand that life isn't easy. The Bible might just seem like a book with words, but to me the Bible is everything. Going to church and hearing all the beautiful stories might seem boring, but to me I enjoy every minute. Believing God loves you might be hard, but I know from the bottom of my heart He loves us all equally. Believing He cares might be hard but I know He cares more than words can explain. Life can be full of unexpected things but no matter what happens in life, I just keep praying for a loving heart, a wise mind, and a strong faith in God because I know He will always stay with me in my journey."

EDMONTON ADVENTURERS

FRIEND TO ANIMALS

On Saturday, August 19, the Adventurers went on an excursion to the Feed Shop in Gordonvale. Miss Jo from the Feed Shop spoke to the class about how to be a good friend to animals. She spoke about the 4 things that every animal needs: food, water, shelter and love. Jo bought 3 animals to show the kids: a snake, lizard and cockatoo. She talked about each animal and the things that she does to look after them. The Adventurers asked questions including what they do if they see an injured animal in the wild. Miss Jo explained the importance of contacting the wildlife carers to ensure that these animals are looked after. The Adventurers had a terrific time and each Adventurer had a turn at holding the animals. The students also played some animal



games at Norman Park on the way back from our excursion. Thank you to Virgil and Pastor Daniel for helping out with the games.

CAIRNS FAR NORTH QLD REGIONAL



The Far North Queensland Regional venue was almost at full capacity. Churches from as far south as Tully and north as Mossman and from across the Tablelands met to fellowship, worship and share God's blessings on Sabbath September 2nd. They were keen to hear from the Conference President about the direction of the Church during 2017 and plans for 2018 and beyond.

AITKENVALE MULTICULTURAL FOOD FEST

On August 12, Aitkenvale church held a fundraiser for the church building fund. This year a multicultural evening was planned, with food from 16 different countries as well as international performances. It was a thoroughly enjoyable night with a large number of church members attending, many dressed in traditional costumes. The night was one to be savoured with food extending from Greek honey puffs to crazy corn from El Salvador and a Peruvian black corn drink. There was also Indian curry, sapaui from the Cook Islands, maize and cassava leaves from Congo and Sri Lankan string hoppers, with delicacies from many more countries including Fiji, Malaysia, and the Solomon Islands. It was truly a fun-filled night with a highlight being the Cook Islander dancing in which church members were invited to the stage for their own chance at the traditional dance. Overall it was incredible to be a part of such unity amongst a rich display of diversity and at the same time raise \$1600.



ALICE SPRINGS CHURCH EXPANSION



Alice Springs Church has had a face lift! It's a very great blessing to actually have the problem of not having enough space to seat your congregation but that was the situation at the Alice Springs Church. Thanks to the generosity and talents of the fly-n-build team of Athol Grosse (Perth), Matt Andric (Brisbane), Oscar Kandakasi (Brisbane), and local church members, the back wall was demolished to open up our worship space. With the carpet replaced, walls painted and the construction of a cry room and pastor's anteroom, we now have a church with more useable space. Many unexpected blessings have been received during the renovation process. Just to name a few, the generosity from Pedersens Construction in loaning equipment and providing some services for free; Miroslav Milosavkjevic, a retired professional painter and a founding church member was visiting town and offered to paint, and several significant anonymous donations that stretched the budget out and enabled the works to be completed. In other news, there was an enthusiastic response to the CHIP Facilitator Course delivered by Dr Paul Rankin on September 3rd with 15 people successfully completing the training.

CAIRNS ADVENTIST COLLEGE BOOK WEEK

We had great fun at our Book Week in August. The students had to guess the staff's favourite book from a list of books. We also sold over \$1,400 worth of books. Our biggest fun though was when the students came dressed up in a jungle theme or as a character from a book. The outfits were judged and small prizes given to those judged best dressed in their category. Even the teachers dressed up.



We also recently held our sports afternoon and bonfire night. Our bonfire night has become an annual tradition and it was great to see so many of our school family, church family and former students playing, relaxing and eating together. We don't get a lot of cold weather up here but after the sun set there was quite a chilly breeze so some of us, who didn't have jackets, enjoyed the bonfire even more than usual.

RIVERSIDE ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ZOOMA NOOMA



Riverside held its annual Zooma Nooma festival on September 6. It is usually the highlight of the year and 2017 was no exception. It was an amazing opportunity to connect with the community. There were markets, games, and other family events, along with a concert featuring items from students and staff. All money raised goes towards school development. Thank you to all those who came and supported our school.



CARLISLE ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT



CACC has been blessed in moving forward very rapidly. Year 11 and 12 has been formally approved which is a great result for our school community. Staff are very busy planning to make the introduction as great as it can be.

The school is also in the process of employing seven staff for next year due to growth and staff movement. We have just appointed a builder to commence building 3 new classrooms which will mean a total of 7 new classrooms in the space of 12 months. We are also looking to build a new hospitality facility to cater for our community along with two classrooms at the start of next year. Not to mention the new chapel that has just been completed. With all the work that is going on it has been very nice to hear from the community that our reputation at CACC is very positive. With all the developments at CACC we do require the prayer and support of our local churches to continue developing our positive school community for students, staff and the wider community.

AITKENVALE

THREE BAPTISMS

August 12 was a memorable day for three young women as they devoted their lives to Christ through baptism. Family and friends of Kailee Drury, Kate Russell and Rebecca Umutoni met at Ross River where they praised God through song, and reflected on the journey of each of the women. It was a moving moment when the congregation pledged to support the young women as they commence on a new chapter of their spiritual lives. Pr Boris Jovinov, previous assistant pastor of Aitkenvale church, and Pr Alfredo Campos, current Aitkenvale pastor, led the baptisms.



KNOCKTOBER ~ ADRA APPEAL 1ST-14TH OCTOBER



CHANGING THE WORLD...ONE OP SHOP AT A TIME

An ADRA Op shop is an important part of the community. The friendly volunteers make shoppers feel welcome and cared for, and shops provide a much-needed service that benefits a wide range of people. They supply clean and affordable clothing and other goods to those in need, provide the pleasure of giving to those donating goods, give volunteers a sense of purpose and acknowledgement in making a difference, and link a community of people together. Possibly the best thing about ADRA Op Shops is that they also exist to provide funds to support a wide range of local ADRA community projects such as women's refuges, at-risk youth interventions, community food pantries and many more. ADRA Op Shops rely on donated goods and volunteer staff.

Wouldn't it be great if every church around the Northern Australian Conference had an Op Shop? Think of how many opportunities your church would have to engage with people from the community every week. Not only that, but it is a great way to involve people of all ages, not only from your church, but members of the community, as volunteers don't need to be church members. In fact, many volunteers are from other



churches, Work for the Dole, and neighboring retirees. It is a great way to have your church mixing and mingling, being the hands and feet of Jesus.

You don't need to know everything about business, or know how to set up an Op Shop. All we are looking for are willing hearts and working hands. The ADRA National Retail Manager is here to help you take the steps needed to get started, as is your local Conference ADRA director. Contact Charlene Luzuk at the NAC office for more information (07) 4779 3988.