



Reflections

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Hypotheticals

Rebecca Lyngdoh Reye

Avondale College Alumni Association Young Alumni of the Year

I love hypothetical questions as my husband can wearily attest. I have even considered buying the domain for the website, www.hypothetical.com.

Here are a couple of interesting questions I found when I searched Google:

1. Would you rather have three arms or one leg?
2. Would you rather lie to a stranger and get caught or lie to a friend and get away with it?

I thought I came up with a good question when my husband and I were dining with a few friends. If I had a solution to worldwide poverty but didn't give it to you until



you lowered your standard of living by 75 per cent, would you accept it?

One lesson I am learning is that I do not live in

the present. I occasionally reminisce about the past, but I am an expert at living in the future. At Avondale, I kept telling myself, *When I graduate, I can get a job and then I'll be useful*. Recently, it has been, *When I'm 30, people will take me seriously and then I'll be useful* or, *When I'm 50, people will really take me seriously because I'll have 30 years' experience*. Yes, we should have aspirations but guard against these becoming so consuming. I'm learning to plan and to look forward to possibilities without holding off my happiness until the plans and possibilities eventuate.

Downplaying my usefulness led me to question my abilities. My employer recently sent me to help review a program. I was the so-called "methodological expert." Not only do I find it difficult to say, "methodological," but "expert?" Me? Hardly. I was freaking out early in the assignment. *I can't do this. What am I doing here?* So, I lay down and breathed slowly. My mind, which had

been racing at what seemed a million words a minute, stopped. Finally, I could hear God through the noise. He said (inaudibly but in that voice that comes clearly in your head), "Rebecca, your employer sent you here because someone thought you were the best person for the job. I didn't send you here to embarrass you."

All this worrying about the future, about my abilities, is futile and not what God intends for me. The Bible makes it clear what God intends. His plan for us is to see us prosper in safety and to give us hope and a future (see Jeremiah 29:11). He tells us not to worry about tomorrow "for tomorrow will worry about itself" (Matthew 6:34, NIV). He wants us to experience the fullness of life (see John 10:10).

Rob Bell, the founding minister of Mars Hill Bible Church (Grandville, Michigan, USA), presents the *Nooma* DVD series. One of the episodes in the series, called "Trees," addresses what I sometimes feel we were doing as Christians. In the episode, Rob talks about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden and the tree of life in heaven. He is planting two trees while talking. Then he asks the question, "Do we live between the trees?" "Are we just hanging around until some future date when something great happens and then we kind of get on from there? . . . Essentially, this life is like a waiting room for the next place, and there becomes no point except getting people to believe like I do and convincing them they need to be like me and we'll all go to the same place. But what good is a faith that doesn't have anything to do with how we live today?"

So, I leave you with some not-so-hypothetical questions. Do you spend most of your time living in the past, the future or the present? Do you fill your mind with noise or do you leave space for beauty and peace? Do you believe God when He says not to worry about tomorrow because He has amazing plans for you, plans you couldn't even fathom? And are you experiencing an amazing relationship with God and those He has placed around you, now?

This is an edited version of a speech Rebecca presented during a graduation-themed forum on Avondale College's Lake Macquarie campus on May 20, 2009.



Students benefit from big business partnership

Brenton Stacey

Physical and technological improvements worth more than \$900,000 are adding value to Avondale's business courses thanks to a partnership between a consultancy and the college.

The five-year partnership between Professional Advantage (PA) and the Faculty of Business and Information Technology incorporates the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance, giving staff members and students in the faculty access to software worth \$695,000. PA will also provide staff members for guest lectures, technical support and training. This is in addition to offering employment for graduating students and vocation placement for others.

"By incorporating Microsoft software into the curriculum, students will complete their degree with a broader range of skills and, as a result, broaden their employment opportunities," says Philip Stanton, the learning and professional development product manager in PA's Microsoft Division. He notes PA's strong Avondale link—employing 29 former Avondale students, including Philip, since alumni Derek and Jenny Ripplingale formed the company in 1990. "The closeness of the connection is a win for both PA and Avondale—we get to know the students, they get to know us."

Bill Truscott, a lecturer in the faculty who served as the project manager, says the partnership adds credibility to the business courses. "Students see we're connected with real people in the real world."

The partnership also has wider benefits. The Australian Universities Quality Agency, in a January 2009 report of its audit of the institution, commends Avondale for seeking external partnerships in teaching and research. "Partnerships are essential," says vice-president (administration and research) Dr Vivienne Watts. "They help prevent us, as a higher education institution, from becoming an ivory tower. We still want to graduate students who are capable of critical thinking and who have developed generic problem-solving skills, but we also want these students to be prepared to operate in their future workplace, to apply their knowledge

to specific, work-related situations. Partnerships with professional organisations help us achieve this balance."

Of the physical improvement, the first of a five-stage refurbishment of the faculty's building is complete. It includes the building of a larger reception, the acquisition of new furnishings, the addition of corporate signage on windows, the installation of handrails in the stairwell and suspended ceilings in two classrooms, the laying of new carpet, and the painting of classrooms and hallways. Five members of the faculty helped provide labour. One, senior lecturer Lyn Daff, even donated three of her paintings. "We're a small group," says dean Dr Keith Howson. "We get things done together."

Most of the money for the refurbishment came from a \$30,000 PA donation matched as capital expenditure by Avondale—both organisations have committed \$100,000 over the five years. However, an additional \$8160 came from an anonymous donor who visited Keith in his office during the refurbishment. "The changes impressed him, so I jokingly said, 'You should support us.' I didn't know he already had a cheque in his pocket. His generosity embarrassed me."

The refurbishment is already creating goodwill. "The feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive and our staff members have received a boost seeing their building transform from a museum piece to a showpiece," says Keith.



Professional Advantage founder and joint managing director Derek Ripplingale (left) and Avondale College Faculty of Business and Information Technology dean Dr Keith Howson (right) shake hands at the launch of the partnership between both organisations.

Ann Stafford



Avondale to sell aviation school; staff keep jobs

Brenton Stacey

Avondale College is selling its School of Aviation but the sale will ensure staff members keep their jobs and students complete their study.

The buyer of the school is Illawarra Technology Corporation (ITC), the commercial arm of the University of Wollongong. ITC will employ the school's staff members—Leona Clifford, Joshua Ferry, Garry Fraser, Reg Litster and Anthony Moore—on terms and conditions that are similar to those the five have at Avondale. This includes an agreement not to ask staff members who are Seventh-day Adventists to work on Saturdays. ITC also plans to continue operating the school at Cessnock Airport, which means little if any disruption to the 13 students studying aviation this year.

“While the sale will mean a sustainable future for the school, it will be a sad day for Avondale,” says president Dr Ray Roenfeldt. “The school will no longer be part of Avondale College and the staff won't be college staff.

These are our friends and colleagues and the parting is painful for all of us.”

Avondale has registered a shelf company to hold the school's assets until final settlement, which is provisional on the company obtaining an Air Operators Certificate from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

Avondale established the school in 1977 to train pilots for employment in the predominately Papua New Guinea-based missions of the Adventist Church in the South Pacific. The school has earned the respect of those within the industry since then—pass rates in theory examinations are above national averages and more than 100 former staff members and students now work as pilots.

The school moved from Cooranbong when the local airport closed in December 2006. It has since operated at Cessnock, although enrolment closed this past year because of concerns over the school's long-term financial sustainability.

New walking track a gift to community

Christel Price

Public relations editorial intern

A new 1.5-kilometre walking track on the Avondale Estate will promote physical activity and protect biological diversity, say the brothers responsible for its opening.



Ann Stafford

Dr Jason Morton (right) leads at the opening of the new Sandy Creek Walk on the Avondale Estate.

Sandy Creek Walk, opened by Drs Darren and Jason Morton in May, begins at the Swing Bridge on the north bank of Dora Creek and ends behind women's residence Ella Boyd Hall on the west bank of Jigadee Creek.

Darren, a senior lecturer in health and exercise science in the Faculty of Education, enjoyed running around the track, but the track did not exist in a formal way and few people used it. “I love to run, and when I first came to Avondale 15 years ago, I thought, *What a great resource we have here,*” he says.

Jason, a lecturer in the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, wanted to fence and weed it to protect and regenerate the native riparian and wetland vegetation. He and Darren used a \$20,000 grant from the Hunter–Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority to build almost three kilometres of fencing and to clear lantana.

The Mortons will now begin improving Boys and Girls Walks as part of a new seven-kilometre loop of the estate.



It's official: record enrolment at Avondale

A record number of students are choosing to complete their higher education in a Christian context according to the latest enrolment figures from Avondale College.

Enrolment for semester one this year is 1309, 34 more than the previous semester one record. The increase is in non-postgraduate courses, thanks in part to Helping Hands. Seventy-four new students enrolled because 52 current students registered to recruit them as part of the new mentoring and recruitment initiative.

The Bachelor of Nursing (259) remains the most popular course at Avondale, despite the size of classrooms on the Sydney campus limiting the number of students enrolled. Avondale has now set up a waiting list for the course.

Enrolment in postgraduate courses decreased, despite the number of Doctor of Philosophy students increasing from three this past year to a record nine this year. Enrolment in the Vocational Education and Training sector also decreased, predominately because of the closure of the business certificate courses.

The number of students studying off campus (excluding postgraduates and those studying by distance education) continues to increase, to a record 535. However, the number on campus decreases, to 338, which is about the number who studied on campus in 2000. The Sydney campus is enrolling a record number of students (227) for semester one, though.

Rent returned for campus makeover

Brenton Stacey

Avondale College is spending about \$500,000 on capital works this year under an agreement that sees its owner, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, return money paid as rent.

Avondale first made use of the agreement this past year, funding capital works including: the building of the Fitlife Health Club; and the refurbishing of the Enquiry and Enrolment Centre, Information Technology Services, Out of the Box Café and rooms in women's and men's residences Andre and Watson Halls.

Capital works already completed this year include: the building of an awning on the Chan Shun Auditorium (\$30,000 with \$6000 coming from a friend of Avondale); the extending of Fitlife (\$110,000); the roofing of the atrium in the Administration Building; and the refurbishing of the foyer in the same building (\$80,000 total for both projects).

Other projects will include:

- a new amphitheatre on the site of the former baptimal font opposite the Chan Shun Auditorium (\$60,000 matched dollar-for-dollar by a donor)
- Completing stages two to five of the refurbishment of the Faculty of Business and Information Technology building (\$50,000 matched dollar-for-dollar by Professional Advantage)

- Extending and refurbishing the bathroom on the first floor of Andre Hall (\$100,000)
- Refurbishing the sheds on the site of the former dairy to house maintenance services (\$100,000)
- Refurbishing an additional 10 rooms in Watson Hall (\$60,000)

"The agreement works well, especially in difficult economic times, because the first thing we often sacrifice is maintenance," says vice-president (finance) Francois Keet. "And as we have seen over the past few years, it's difficult to catch up."

Avondale will build an amphitheatre on the site of the former baptimal font opposite the Chan Shun Auditorium using the return of money paid as rent to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Design by David Stafford

Top teacher: lecturer receives \$10,000

Kirsten Bolinger

Another Avondale College lecturer has received a \$10,000 citation from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council in recognition of their contribution to student learning.

Dr Daniel Reynaud's citation is for "enthusiastic and creative teaching, especially evidenced through the innovative use of wargaming scenarios, that have inspired students to a better understanding of history."



"I put the students in the position of commanders who can use only the information available at the time," says Daniel, a senior lecturer in history in the Faculty of Arts. "They get a much better understanding of why the commanders did what they did, particularly those in World War I whom we perceive as being poor leaders. Invariably, the students fail. Then I give them more information and they fail again. I'm replicating the process by which the generals discovered what they

needed to know to succeed. It works much better than me saying it in a lecture, and it's more fun."

Daniel received his citation during a ceremony at the New South Wales Art Gallery in Sydney on August 11. He is one of 206 recipients, each receiving \$10,000 for making

a significant contribution to the quality of student learning in a specific area of responsibility over a sustained period, whether they serve as academic staff, general staff, sessional staff or institutional associates. They must receive wide recognition within their institution for their achievements and receive strong institutional endorsement.

The vice-president (learning and teaching) at Avondale, Dr Philip Brown, says the citation is reward for Daniel's "diverse contribution to the quality of student learning at Avondale since he began teaching here in 1992." It is also a significant achievement, he adds, noting how Avondale is one of only two higher education providers apart from the universities selected for a citation.

Professor Richard Johnstone, the council's executive director, says the quality and quantity of applications received "represent the incredible effort made by university staff Australia-wide to contribute to a positive learning experience for every student."

Dr Darren Morton, a senior lecturer in health and exercise science in the Faculty of Education, received a similar citation from the council this past year, becoming the first Avondale staff member to do so.

Educator honoured as fellow

New Avondale College vice-president (learning and teaching) Dr Philip Brown has been awarded a Fellowship of the Australian College of Educators (ACE).

The president of ACE in New South Wales, Dr John De-Courcy, says the award is one of the highest honours the college presents. It "[recognises] the individual's contribution both in the workplace and in the education community," he says.

Philip's contribution includes innovative leadership in establishing teaching as a profession through roles as author, consultant, teacher and president of a professional association—he serves as president of ACE's The Hills/Parramatta region in Sydney.

Cheryl O'Conner, the former chief executive officer of ACE, says Philip's educational leadership role is characterised

by "great thinking, great attention to the people factor and great attention to detail."

A higher level of academic and pastoral care among staff members and students encouraged Philip to accept Avondale's call—he served previously as executive principal at the University of Western Sydney College. "I've come from a secular workplace where there's no overarching ethos, a Christian worldview, that unites such a diverse staff," he says.

The Avondale alumnus—he graduated with a Bachelor of Education in 1986—replaces Dr Malcolm Coulson, now principal of Darling Downs Christian School in Toowoomba, Queensland.



Lecturer shows healing power of poetry

Kristin Thiele

Public relations assistant

Writing poetry is a form of therapy for those suffering a life-threatening illness, research by an Avondale College communication lecturer shows.

Carolyn Rickett is completing doctoral research in trauma, writing and healing at the University of Sydney. She is coordinator for the New Leaves creative writing project, an Australasian Research Institute funded initiative for people, or carers, who have experienced or are experiencing the

trauma of a life-threatening illness. The other members of the team are award-winning Australian poet Judith Beveridge and academic and medical doctor Dr Jill Gordon.

As part of the project, Judith taught creative writing classes to about 25 people, many from Sydney Adventist Hospital's Cancer Support Centre. The poems from

these classes are now part of an anthology called *New Leaves*, which Judith and Carolyn edited.

Reflections asked Carolyn:

What does the title of the anthology say about its contents?

New Leaves takes its title from Richard Aldington's poem "New love." The poem depicts the resilience and recovery of the human heart. Aldington likens the healing experience to an almond tree that now has new leaves after being initially damaged by frost.

Author, media personality and former Australian rugby union international Peter FitzSimons writes in the foreword that one of the core themes of the poems is "a determination to do everything possible to get well again." Did every participant recover from their illness?

No. Judith and I dedicated the anthology to John Hunt, a participant who has since died from prostate cancer. Another, Michelle Witt, has since died from uterine cancer. She described the process of writing as giving herself permission to untangle her emotions. Michelle confronted her illness with such grace, courage, dignity and compassion, leaving us not only the legacy of her beautiful writing, but also the motivation to live more purposefully, more generously.

You've also spoken at an international conference on responses through art and media to collective suffering. Your paper explored the "therapeutic dimension of autobiographical acts where an author responds to real-life illness and 'psychic rupture' through storytelling." What did you say?

I'm not so much interested in "fictionalised" accounts of pain but the "factual" trauma experienced by literary writers in their material or lived circumstance. So, my immediate concern is not how autobiography functions and defines itself as a genre but what the performance of life-writing might enable an author to enact in terms of "controlling," "recuperating" and "making meaning" for both themselves and potentially their readers."

Your doctoral thesis seems practical and theoretical.

I'm in a privileged position. Accompanying people on a soul journey is incredibly sacred.



Ann Stafford

Carolyn Rickett (left) with Michelle Witt at the launch of *New Leaves*.

Feature

Words still matter

Dr Bernard Taylor

Scholar in residence, Loma Linda University Seventh-day Adventist Church



An Avondale College alumnus reflects on how he helped produce a modern English version of an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament

I still remember with fondness the picture painted by Merrill C Tenney in his *New Testament Survey*, one of the textbooks for Life and Teachings back in 1964. Taking as his starting point Paul's observation in Galatians 4:4 (KJV), "But when the fullness of the time was come . . .," Tenney recounted factors such as politics, philosophy, language and religion that combined to create a world favourable to the introduction and spread of Christianity. Two key

elements were the widespread use of Greek as the literary language throughout the Roman Empire and the translation (now known as the Septuagint) of the Hebrew Bible into Koine Greek in Alexandria in the Nile Delta, which began around 250 BCE.

The second year of my Hebrew major at the University of Sydney included a one-hour unit in textual criticism, the study of the history of the biblical text. Of the three choices offered for the required paper,

the second, the history of the Septuagint, was the only one that caught my interest. And what a fascinating world it has turned out to be.

Alexander the Great was very deliberate in his planning and his preparation, beginning his study of Greek philosophy under Aristotle at the age of 13. Appointed leader at the death of his father, Philip II of Macedonia, Alexander set out to spread Hellenism throughout the then-known world. Since many in his army were foreign mercenaries, he had to adopt the vernacular Koine (“common”) Greek for communication, rather than the literary Attic dialect of Athens and the philosophers.

Wherever he went, Alexander established semi-independent Greek city-states that in turn became centres for the new modernity: Hellenism. In Palestine, reactions to

Translation has been described as an act of hubris. While that is hopefully an overstatement, translation is certainly an arduous undertaking.

Hellenism were strong—both for and against. In time, those who adopted it found themselves citizens without a country, regarded as unpatriotic traitors. The only remedy was to move out, a movement known as the Diaspora, which also saw subsequent waves of emigration, particularly at the time of the Maccabees in the second/first centuries BCE.

A variety of destinations were available, but a popular one was in Alexandria in the Nile Delta, the largest centre of Greek life and learning outside of Athens. Contrary to the dire predictions of apostasy from Jerusalem, these Jews settled in suburban Alexandria and built a synagogue to worship the God of their ancestors in the new context.

When within a generation or two they realised they were losing facility with the Hebrew of their sacred scriptures,

they came up with a solution never attempted before: to translate it. The target language was not classical Attic Greek but the common Koine Greek spread by Alexander. At first, they translated only the five books of Moses, but over the next century, they included the rest of the Hebrew Bible along with the 14 books or additions to books in what we call the Apocrypha.

The rabbis in Jerusalem were not happy to have a rival text in another language and for at least four centuries continued to discuss the pros and cons. To allay the concerns, a document known as The Letter of Aristeas circulated in Alexandria. It claimed six translators from the 12 tribes brought from Jerusalem had been sequestered individually on the island of Pharos in the Mediterranean, and 72 days later, each had produced an identical text, thus clearly divinely inspired. Since the number, 70, is significant in Jewish and Christian circles, it was rounded down, and Septuaginta is the Latin numeral, 70, abbreviated LXX.

Meanwhile, back in Jerusalem and Judea, a different linguistic revolution was under way: Aramaic, another Semitic language, was replacing Hebrew most everywhere except for the sacred writings. As Greek spread and Hebrew receded, readers turned to the Septuagint and by the time of Christianity, it was their equivalent of our Old Testament. For this and related reasons, until modern times the Septuagint has been preserved within Christianity, and is the Old Testament text for the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

A careful reading of the LXX makes it abundantly clear many translators were involved over the years, and by the mid-20th century, it was concluded that overall it amounted to little more than an inadequate paraphrase. Then came the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. The Great Isaiah Scroll did much to restore confidence in the accuracy of the text of the Hebrew Bible. Less well known is the discovery of a second Isaiah scroll, and its Hebrew text was significantly closer to the Hebrew text underlying the Greek LXX translation. When other manuscripts were discovered both at Qumran and in the surrounding area

that also were closer to the underlying Hebrew text, the LXX began to be taken seriously and viewed with respect.

Charles Thomson made the first translation of the LXX into English. He also served as secretary of the Continental Congress (the provisional United States government between the American Revolution and independence) from 1774 to 1789. He finished his translation of both the LXX and the Greek New Testament in 1792 but did not have it published until 1808 (in four volumes). The second translation was that of Sir Lancelot C L Brenton in England, published in 1851, and is still readily available from several different publishers.

The third and latest translation is *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford University Press, 2007), a work I have been involved with since the initial proposal in November 1991. Thirty-two scholars from around the world were recruited. Since my doctoral dissertation at Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati, Ohio, USA), the home of Reform Judaism, was on the Greek text of 1 Samuel, I was invited to translate the Old Greek text portions of Samuel and Kings, a total of 61 chapters (the rest are from a different, later translator). An editorial board reviewed all of the translations.

Next to accuracy of translation was the desire to convey in English how the translation would have sounded to a native Greek speaker, since Hebrew syntax, word order, and idioms were mostly retained in the LXX, often resulting in less than felicitous Greek. This is important because the LXX is in effect a one-volume commentary on the Hebrew text, revealing to the careful reader how the language and text of the Hebrew Bible were understood at that time.

Translation has been described as an act of hubris. While that is hopefully an overstatement, translation is certainly an arduous undertaking. After completing each chapter, my Sabbath school class at Loma Linda University Seventh-day Adventist Church discussed it. First Samuel opens with Elkana and his two wives, Hanna and Phenana (*A New English Translation of the Septuagint* uses the Greek forms), and what they say is recorded. Further, their words make a difference. Then we found the unexpected key after Samouel's well-known first encounter with the Lord: "And Samouel became great, and the Lord was with him, and none of his words fell to the ground" (1 Reigns 3:19, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*). Words still matter.



Dr Bernard Taylor is a member of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, which produced *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*. He graduated from Avondale College's theology course in 1966 and subsequently earned master's degrees in biblical languages and philosophy and a PhD in Old Testament—Harvard University published his dissertation in two volumes. Bernard is a former editor of the "Septuagint and Cognate Studies" Series for the Society of Biblical Literature and author of *The Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*.

Letters from the Asylum: “searing;” “memorable;” “humane”

Kirsten Bolinger

Dr John Knight (1958) is an artist whose pallet is a blank page. His verse and haiku appear in anthologies and journals in Australia and overseas. He is founding editor of *Paper Wasp, An Australian Journal of Haiku* and a former poetry editor of *Scope* and *Social Alternatives*. And his published verse includes *Wattle Winds: An Australian*



Haiku Sequence, From Der-rida to Sara Lee, Extracts from the Jerusalem Archives and *big man catching a small wave*. But now comes *Letters from the Asylum*, which John will launch at the Queensland Poetry Festival this month (August).

Staring back at you from the cover of *Letters* is an adaptation of Edvard Munch’s “The scream,” giving you a glimpse of what is inside the book.

Letters is a compilation of the

poetry John wrote during a period in which he suffered severe depression. He would regularly visit a psychiatrist during this time and she used art as a form of therapy. John chose “to construct images from language, and to rework and edit the result as verse, a form to which I was long accustomed,” he writes in the “Inside the text” section of the book.

John speaks openly of his depression. “It demystifies it,” he says. “People should talk about it.” While he alternates between depression and shorter periods of exhilaration, “it is in the shift from one state to the other (either manic or depressive) that creativity finds purchase,” he writes in *Letters*. However, in periods of severe depression, any form of sustained activity is “excruciatingly painful or impossible.” And it is this point that makes the poetry in *Letters* even more interesting.

The book represents not only John’s experiences but also the experiences of others. “In many cases, I am presenting a voice other than myself to speak,” he says. “A commen-

tary and a critique calling into question humans as we are and as we act.”

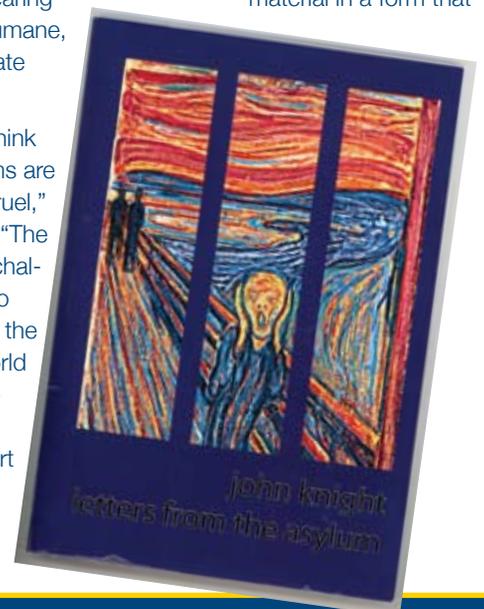
“Land’s end” is one of the more tranquil in *Letters*, but that does not make it any less passionate. The poem draws on traditional Maori beliefs about the path the spirit takes after death. The first verse explains the journey the spirit takes; the second describes John’s connection to the journey. “This verse echoes regret, it’s melancholy, minor keyed. I’m pakeha, white, and though my mother’s people farmed the Waikato Plains, it was land taken from the Waikato tribes,” he says. “I have no whakapapa, no tribal genealogy tracing back to one of the seven canoes, and so I cannot fully enter into or share that final journey.”

John says the images in the poem evoke the scene but also convey a sense of passage, loss, mourning and moving on. Hence the dying sun, the calling terns, the turning tide and the cold wind that does not blow.

Friend Dr Arthur Patrick, a senior honorary research fellow at Avondale, describes John’s poetry as “stark, disturbing and memorable.” John O’Connor from Sudden Valley Press, the publisher of *Letters*, says the poems speak for John’s character and spirit. “That John is able to present such searing material in a form that

is clearly humane, is the ultimate tribute.”

“You may think these poems are hard and cruel,” says John. “The point is to challenge you to think about the way the world is; to shake you out of your comfort zone.”



“Mimi” year's top citizen for service to students

Brenton Stacey

Sharing her gift of hospitality with students from Avondale College has earned a Cooranbong retiree the title, Southlake Citizen of the Year.

However, Nell Veitch feels embarrassed about receiving a reward “for doing things that please me.” “If I’ve helped anyone, praise the Lord, don’t praise Nell,” she says.

Nell’s interest in the welfare of students began in 1939, the year she became a member of Avondale College Church. Richard Anderson remembers accepting a meal invitation from her. “She made us feel like we were part of a family,” he says. Richard studied at Avondale between 1957 and 1960 and now works as assistant librarian there.

Students from overseas, many of who arrived at Avondale with only what they could fit in their suitcase, became a focus of Nell’s attention. “She’d celebrate our birthday by sending a card and cake,” says Lyndelle Lawrence, a final-year Bachelor of Arts stu-

dent from Malaysia. “She was genuinely concerned about our wellbeing.”

Lyndelle, like most other students, calls Nell by her nickname, “Mimi.” Many former students, such as Kristin Thiele, still keep in contact. “She’s family,” says Kristin, who came to study at Avondale from the United States in 2002 and now lives with her husband in Cooranbong. “She probably should be slowing down, but she isn’t. She’s just amazing; so big hearted.”

Southlake Community Services announced Nell as its Citizen of the Year during an afternoon tea at Morisset Multi Purpose Centre on May 12. Previous Citizen of the Year, Peter Gambrell, presented Nell with her award. Dr Vivienne Watts, vice-president (administration and research) at Avondale, spoke about Nell’s contribution to the college. “We’re grateful for the difference she has made in supporting and caring for our students,” said Vivienne. She described Nell as “intensely interested in people,” noting how, at 91, she continues to worship with the students at Avondale.

“I’ve always been fond of young people; they’re so exciting,” says Nell, who is willing to speak more about her students than the recognition of her relationship with them. “Asking people home for meals is nothing special; I’ve done it all my life. Besides, I get far more out of it than I give.”



Ann Stafford

Nell Veitch holds the Southlake Citizen of the Year medal, which she received for her care of Avondale College students.

Alumni notes



Ali Heise (2006) has won second prize in the “Gospel/Christian” category of the Unisong International Songwriting Contest. “I submitted ‘Beyond my plans’ for fun,” she says. The song is about “God being so much bigger than anything of which we can dream or imagine.” Ali and husband

Leighton (2001) have been juggling family and work commitments while recording their debut album, which they plan to launch in September this year.

Neil Richmund (1988) has recently become chair of *Rainmakers AM Southport Hub*, the fastest-growing business networking publication in Indiana, USA. Neil will provide direction for and coordination of the activities of the Southport group as well as providing advice and feedback to the Rainmaker management team. Neil also serves as a youth minister in his local church and as a member of the local chamber of commerce.

Young alumni a published author at first attempt

Brenton Stacey/Kirsten Bolinger

An Avondale College young alumni has become a published author at her first attempt.

Trudy Adams (2007) remembers receiving the letter from Christian book publisher Ark House in April this past year confirming acceptance of her manuscript, "Desolate Beauty." "I was sure it would be another rejection letter, and then when it wasn't, I couldn't even read past the first line I was so dumbfounded," she says. Ark House published the book in May this year. "It's been a long process," says Trudy, "but it's also been enjoyable and fulfilling."

Desolate Beauty is an Australian-based fictional story about a young girl who finds the place of God in her life. The mediocre nature of young adult Christian literature served as Trudy's muse. "The books frustrated me because they were mostly American and they always seemed to dance around hard issues," says Trudy. "As a student at a Christian school, I saw and knew being a Christian teenager didn't make things perfect. So, this story began to brew in my mind—it was as if I had to set it free, like Michelangelo carving away the stone to let the person inside out."

Trudy began writing the story at age 17, completing the first 105,000-word draft a year later. "I didn't see any point in waiting to be a writer," says Trudy. "I have been a storyteller ever since I can remember, and my kindergarten report says so, too, but not in the sense that I was a liar, of course!"

"Published author" may become Trudy's job title. She is pitching her second book, *Armoured Butterfly*, for

publication—the book is a Dark Age adventure based loosely on Revelation—is 40,000 words into her third, and has formed a freelance writing and editing business called Concise Text. "I've always loved the way stories inspire, comfort and educate," says Trudy. "Relationships, experiences and faith are the most complicated things, and sometimes the only way to appreciate, understand or heal them is to see them on paper, on something tangible. It's the process of trying to capture imagery and feeling in words, and then letting others adapt it to something that they can relate."

Trudy launched *Desolate Beauty* at St Phillips Christian College in Gosford, where she completed her High School Certificate in 2004. Assistant principal Michelle Kelly says

the school is proud of Trudy's achievement. "To have a former student become a published author is an inspiration to all of us."



Ron Thomas graduated in 1958 with a Bachelor of Arts in theology and as president of his class. Since leaving Seventh-day Adventist employment in 1983, Ron obtained a Diploma in Health Education from Monash University and a Diploma in Business Studies and Public Relations from the then RMIT. He has served as a public relations officer for Box Hill Hospital, as a grief counsellor and staff trainer for a funeral company and as manager of a Salvation Army hostel for homeless men. Ron retired on September 11, 2003, his 71st birthday. He is now a civil marriage and funeral celebrant and a foundation member and former secretary of the Australian Federation of Civil Celebrants. He sings with the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir and voluntarily maintains a high school garden adjacent to his house. Wife **Noreen**, who graduated 1957 from the secretarial and Bible workers course, enjoys line dancing, quilting and tapestry. "Our three children, Owen, Corinne and Ron, are leading lives that give them and us great pleasure," says Ron, "so all is well in the 'Tomoski' world."



Singers at Sydney Opera House

Lyndelle Lawrence

Public relations editorial assistant

Avondale Singers' performance at Sydney Opera House in June this year is the vocal ensemble's most significant in 30 years, says conductor Dr Robb Dennis.

The singers joined the Albuquerque Youth Symphony from New Mexico, USA, and three other ensembles in the Concert Hall performance. United World Concert Tours, a Pasadena, USA-based company that organises performance tours for student musicians, invited the singers to join the bill as a replacement for another Australian-based

vocal ensemble. About 2000 people attended despite the concert being on a Monday evening in winter and on the first day of examinations on Avondale's Lake Macquarie campus. "We did the impossible with the unlikely at a difficult time," says Robb.

It is a big year for Robb and the ensemble, which will also perform at the Lake Macquarie Choral Festival and in two concerts with the Wesley Institute, one at St Joseph's Cathedral in Sydney (November 15).



Read journals for free; online library for alumni

A database purchased by Avondale Library now gives Avondale alumni free online access to more than 100 religion and theology journals.

ATLASerials for Alum features the full text of more than 210,000 articles and book reviews in archaeology, the Bible, ecumenism, ethics, missions, pastoral ministry, philosophy, religion, society and theology. The articles date back to 1924.

Feedback from alumni using the database is positive. "I have just spent the past two hours looking through ATLASerials and reading articles relevant to my teaching," says an alumna from the Philippines. "It's been great." Another alumna, a minister in Victoria, writes he wished he had

access to the database when he graduated. "I'm excited to once again be able to read these journals."

Access to ATLASerials for Alum is available on and off campus but requires a username and a password supplied by Avondale Library.

Head librarian Marilyn Gane reminds alumni they and others have free access to the library. "Our resources and services and those of the Ellen G White/SDA Research Centre and the Adventist Heritage Centre are primarily for staff members and students, but you, as alumni, can also benefit from their use," she says.

Visit the Avondale Library website at <http://library.avondale.edu.au> and click on "Services For" then "Alumni" for more information.



David King



Alan Thrift

Avondale alumni star at homecoming concert

Denis Charlton

Review

Alumni David King and Alan Thrift's return to Coorabong for a concert drew a crowd of 500 to Avondale College Church on July 25.

Brass and Voices, presented by Brass Down Under, featured National Australia Brass and the Sydney Male Choir. David, a professor at the University of Salford where he is chair of music—performance, conducted the band; Alan the choir, of which he has served as musical director since 1990.

David took his European champion Yorkshire Building Society Brass Band on a tour of Australia and New Zealand four years ago. The itinerary included a sell-out concert at Avondale. David's return with some of the best brass players in Australia resulted in a textually wide-ranging performance. With unerring and sustained musicality, the band moved

instantly from the softest pianissimo to an immense, full sound, complete with a marvellous range of percussion. The highlight: the first performance of *The Son of Felin: Symphonic Episodes for Brass and Percussion*, a technically demanding and emotionally compelling work commissioned especially for the band.

Alan's Sydney Male Choir sang an entertaining and inspiring mix of popular and traditional songs including "When the saints go marching in," "You raise me up," "L'il Liza Jane" and "Bui doi" from the musical, *Miss Saigon*. The band accompanied the choir on three of its songs.

The final, combined brass and choir song, "For all the saints," provided a fitting, triumphant finale, with an appreciative audience singing along to the music.



Graham Wilson

ALUMNI HERITAGE WALK

ENGRAVE YOUR NAME IN STONE; HELP PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE

THE WALK

The Avondale College Alumni Association launched its heritage walk at Homecoming in 1999 to raise money to preserve and restore the heritage features of Avondale's Lake Macquarie campus. The walk between Bethel and College Halls features black granite pavers etched with the names of Avondale alumni or Friends of Avondale.

The first paver bears the name of Laura Kent, at 108, Avondale's oldest living alumni until her death in February 2008.

THE COST

The Avondale College Alumni Association invites Avondale alumni or Friends of Avondale to make a \$175 tax-deductible donation to have their names etched on the pavers.

THE HOW-TO

Contact the Advancement Office (see details below) to add your name to the Alumni Heritage Walk. Avondale will etch your name in stone and place a paver in the walk as a permanent reminder of your donation.



Inspired for Life.

the advancement office

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