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Mentoring agreement with Charles Sturt University

Avondale College of Higher Education and Charles Sturt University have signed an agreement for the University to mentor Avondale's ongoing progress as a higher education institution.

The memorandum of understanding, signed at a ceremony at Avondale in July, establishes a relationship in which both institutions agree to protect each other's autonomy and to respect each other's mission and ethos.

The agreement brings considerable benefits for Avondale. Charles Sturt University will assess and benchmark Avondale's governance, and the quality and standards of its teaching and research. The graduation testamurs of Avondale students should in time be dual-badged as both Avondale and Charles Sturt University degrees. Avondale students will be able to enrol in Charles Sturt units of study that are not available at Avondale, and vice versa. Charles Sturt's students may also participate in Avondale-based service learning opportunities and projects.

Avondale's President, Professor Ray Roennfeldt, said staff from both institutions will benefit from increased collaboration in teaching, research and research training. The agreement may also lead to research relationships with other Adventist institutions such as overseas universities, Sydney Adventist Hospital, and Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing. Clinical placements at Sydney Adventist Hospital could also become available for Charles Sturt's allied health students.

Charles Sturt University has demonstrated its commitment to the relationship by nominating its Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic), Professor Garry Marchant, to sit as an external member of Avondale's academic board.

At the signing ceremony, Professor Roennfeldt noted that both institutions share similar undergraduate and postgraduate profiles. The Vice-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University, Professor Andrew Vann, remarked on the extent to which "Avondale's mission and activities resonate with the University's values and priorities", noting, for example, the similarity in ethos between Avondale's motto, "For a greater vision of world needs," and Charles Sturt's motto, "For the public good". Referring to Avondale's holistic philosophy of education, Professor Vann observed that his university also values the spiritual, wisdom in how to live well, and the desire to make the world a better place.

The Mayor of the City of Lake Macquarie, Councillor Jodie Harrison, spoke of the Council's esteem for Avondale as a higher education provider contributing to the cultural, economic and civic life of the city. "The Council strongly backs Avondale's quest for university status," she said.

A previous agreement with Charles Sturt allows Avondale graduates with a major in biological science (biomedical) to articulate into Charles Sturt's Bachelor of Biomedical Science (Pathology), which can then be completed in one year.

In addition to the Charles Sturt relationship, an agreement with the University of Newcastle allows Avondale science graduates with appropriate majors to proceed to postgraduate studies at the University in a range of science disciplines. And an agreement with the University of New England (UNE) enables Avondale arts or science students to include in their degree a major in psychology by distance education through UNE.



Signing the memorandum of understanding: (L to R) Professor Garry Marchant, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Charles Sturt University; Professor Andrew Vann, Vice Chancellor, Charles Sturt University; Professor Ray Roennfeldt, President, Avondale College of Higher Education; Dr Barry Oliver, Chairperson, Avondale Council. Photo: Colin Chuang

Alumni Association's 25th birthday



Joan Patrick cutting the 25th anniversary birthday cake, surrounded by former Alumni Association presidents: (L-R) Dr Owen Hughes, Lyn Ashby, Dr Barry Hill, Dr Glynn Litster, Pr Calvyn Townend, Pr Roger Nixon, Jenny Laredo Hilder (former vice-president), Pr Desmond Hills, Cornelius Szeszeran. Photo: Ann Stafford.

The Avondale Alumni Association celebrated its 25th birthday at the August Homecoming, with all but two former Association presidents participating. Joan Patrick, wife of the founding president of the Association, the late Dr Arthur Patrick, cut the commemorative cake. Joan also received a citation honouring Arthur for his services to Adventist education and his scholarship in Adventist studies.

The Murdoch Lecture was reinstated at this year's Homecoming. Speaker Dr John Skrzypaszek, director of the Ellen G White / Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Avondale, argued the importance of heritage in shaping a community's identity and its sense of meaning and purpose. Heritage is not just information about the past, he said, but a source of inspiration and passion for the present.

Helen Hall received the Alumna of the Year Award in recognition of her 32-year dedication as founder and principal of the Eden Valley Academy for Karen refugees in northwestern Thailand.

This year's citations gave special prominence to service for indigenous Australians. Pastor Eric Davey received the Alumnus of the Year Award for his 26 years in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Ministries, during which he helped establish the Karalundi Aboriginal Education Centre and Mamarapha College. Pastor Gordon Stafford was honoured for his 17 years as principal of Mamarapha. Duane Vickery, a student of 1993, was honoured for his service to indigenous people, including leadership roles for the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Australian National Training Authority.

Homecoming is not just for graduates; it is for all who attended Avondale in the honour years. Former students from other years are also welcome.



Students of 2003 renew their friendship at the 2013 Homecoming: Lindsay Morton, Keira Bullock, Kara Dale. Photo: Ann Stafford.



Dr John Skrzypaszek delivers the Murdoch Lecture. Photo: Ann Stafford



A festive market day on Homecoming Sunday brought together community members, staff, students and Homecoming guests. Photo: Ann Stafford

Avondale Conservatorium launched at Homecoming

The Homecoming concert in August saw Avondale's music program re-launched as the Avondale Conservatorium, in recognition of the maturity and breadth of the program's academic and performance achievements.

The launch showcased the Conservatorium's accomplishments with an emotionally intense performance of Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man: a Mass for Peace*, a major work dramatising the catastrophe of war and the promise of a new earth with no death, sorrow or pain. Directed by Aleta King, head of the Avondale Conservatorium, the performance brought together the Avondale Singers, The Promise (a specialised group of highly trained vocalists), the Avondale Chamber Orchestra and the Institute of Worship Orchestra. Visual imagery heightened the impact of the music, with the 1916 documentary *The Battle of the Somme* screened overhead during the performance while artist Andy Collis painted representations of war and peace. At the serene finale, white dove-shaped balloons floated heavenwards.

The Avondale Conservatorium has greatly diversified its choral and instrumental range, initiating brass, jazz and guitar groups in addition to the ensembles listed above. The Promise singers were finalists in ABC Classic FM's 2012 classic vocal competition staged in association with Musica Viva Australia; and in May 2013 The Promise launched its third recorded album, *Give Thanks*.

The Avondale Conservatorium offers majors in music in the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching degrees, and a Master of Arts (Research) in music. In 2012 Avondale graduated its first higher degree research student in music, Melissa Rogers.

A long-standing music tradition

The launch of the Avondale Conservatorium crowns a long and significant history. Since the founding of Avondale in 1897, music has had a very significant place in its cultural,

academic and spiritual life.

A key figure in the early growth of the music program was **Charles Schowe**, a gifted educator with a large vision for Avondale's academic development. Schowe headed the music program from 1911 to 1918, teaching violin, piano and voice, directing a choir and orchestra, staging Avondale's first performance of the *Messiah* – and also teaching Greek and history. He developed a four-year academic program in music, and at a time when few at Avondale shared his vision for external recognition, he encouraged his students to take the exams of the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) and Trinity College London.

In 1925 the Music Hall was completed under principal **Lynn Wood**, who knew the value of the arts. **Robert Johnson**, a talented musician, steered the music program through the challenging 1930s.

In mid-century, music at Avondale achieved new heights under **George Greer**, music director from 1947 to 1952. Greer, already known for outstanding choral work in the United States, established the 60-voice Avondale Symphonic Choir, which performed sacred music *a capella*, gaining a national reputation for its eight-part blended harmonies and technical precision. The choir toured to most states of Australia and was broadcast on ABC radio. Greer introduced annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, along with mid-year oratorios such as Haydn's *Creation* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. By the end of his tenure some 200 students were taking music lessons at Avondale. **Dr Noel Clapham**, who followed Greer as music director, sustained similar high standards of choral performance.

One of the most notable chapters in the history of music at Avondale commenced with **Alan Thrift's** appointment in 1957, a tenure that was to span 41 years. Thrift expanded the choral repertoire into a broader range of styles and genres, producing highly accomplished performances of music that



Homecoming performance of Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man: a Mass for Peace*. Photo: Ann Stafford.



The Promise singers in full voice. Photo: Ann Stafford

was often technically challenging. His choirs were broadcast on radio and television, toured to every state of Australia, and to New Zealand and the United States.

He was ably assisted by **David Clark**, who taught music at Avondale for 25 years, including 8 years as music coordinator. Clark established the Avondale Chamber Orchestra, founded the Suzuki Piano School at Avondale, hosted annual Suzuki professional conferences, and initiated European study tours for music majors. His organ students now enrich wor-

ship in churches far and wide.

Dr Robb Dennis, appointed in 2004, established The Promise ensemble, further refined Avondale's degree programs in music, established a computer lab for music composition, and expanded the music program into the Greer building, named in honour of George Greer.

Over the years Avondale has hosted recitals by numerous leading musicians, including the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the multi award-winning Yorkshire Building Society Band directed by Professor David King, a former graduate of Avondale's music program.

The present director of music, **Aleta King**, has taken music at Avondale to further levels of academic and performance excellence. Like many others before her, she is motivated by the desire to employ music to the glory of God.



Conservatorium director Aleta King. Photo: Ann Stafford.

Publication ratio compares well with universities

Professor Anthony Williams, Vice President (Research)

In 2012 Avondale achieved a ratio of 1.2 research publications per staff member, equivalent to the mean in Australian universities. This success is a tribute to the strong growth in Avondale's research output in recent years.

The ratio of publications per staff member includes books, book chapters, refereed journal publications and refereed conference publications. The quality of these publications is measured against highly specific criteria before they are considered of appropriate standard for inclusion in the ratio calculation. In 2011 the most research-intensive university in Australia achieved a ratio of 2 publications per staff member.

Quality teaching and quality research are essential to Avondale's goal of becoming a university college and subsequently a university. Research and publication are also necessary for Avondale to maintain its standing as a higher education provider. There is an expectation that quality teaching in higher education should be informed by research and scholarship, including the teacher's own original research.

Avondale will always maintain its focus on quality teaching; but it is also committed to the development of a sustained culture of scholarship and research to support its teaching program and its mission of service to community and church. Avondale has the capacity to move quickly up the ranks of university scores to be a leader nationally, producing research that is relevant, distinctive, and of international standing.

To achieve these goals, Avondale intends to

- Empower staff to engage more fully in research and publication.
- Focus research and research training in strategic areas

important to Avondale's and the church's mission, and of benefit to the wider community.

- Develop strength in themed and multi-disciplinary research, alongside discipline-based research.
- Facilitate cross-disciplinary teaching and research by bringing discipline areas more closely together.

Avondale has chosen to concentrate its main research effort in three areas: spirituality and worship, healthy lifestyle, and Christian education. These areas correspond to core aspects of Avondale's educational philosophy and to its mission of "fostering a Christian higher education learning community that is dedicated to serving world needs". The focal areas are also central to the church's mission.

Avondale has structured its academic programs into three faculties to parallel its research focus and to facilitate interdisciplinary teaching and research: Faculty of Arts and Theology; Faculty of Nursing and Health; and Faculty of Education, Science and Business. Within these faculties are six schools, each teaching a range of academic disciplines.

Three research centres have also been established, corresponding to the three main areas of research focus: Spirituality and Worship Research Centre; Lifestyle Research Centre; and Centre for Christian Education Research.

Staff are encouraged to submit their research to journals of international standing. Publication in quality journals strengthens Avondale's research status, validates the College's research findings in the academic literature, and upholds to a wide academic readership the values and beliefs of Avondale and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

New Clinical Education Centre



The new Clinical Education Centre.

The new Clinical Education Centre on the Sydney campus was officially opened on November 1 by the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir. Also present were the Premier of NSW (in his capacity as local member of parliament), the Commonwealth and State Ministers for Health, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, representatives of philanthropic organisations contributing to the project, and many other dignitaries and guests.

The Centre is the new home for Avondale's Faculty of Nursing and Health, and will also contribute to the clinical education of medical, nursing and allied health students of the University of Sydney who are assigned to the Sydney Adventist Hospital for clinical training. The Centre will provide side-by-side training for medical, nursing and allied health students, maximising communication between the healthcare professions, to deliver better patient care. Dr Leon Clark, Chief Executive Officer of Adventist HealthCare, said the resulting interaction should improve students' understanding of the different health service roles, making it easier for nurses, doctors and allied health professionals to work as a team.

The new building is large, with a floor area of 3500 square metres on three levels. The state-of-the-art facility contains a clinical lab replicating hospital wards, a simulated operating theatre, and a simulated critical care unit. A 380-seat lecture theatre can be separated into two venues by a movable dividing wall. There are offices for teaching and support staff, clinical skills classrooms, and rooms for tutorials and problem-based learning.

A high-tech mannequin in the simulation centre replicates human responses, including breathing, bleeding, sweating and talking. 'Real-life' features such as heart, breath and bowel sounds, blood pressure, tears, drug reactions and convulsions familiarise students with situations they will encounter on the wards. The mannequin also enables students to practise technical skills such as taking blood, setting up intravenous lines and resuscitation. Tutors direct the mannequin's responses from a control room. The simulations can be

beamed via video to students in other learning spaces.

The Clinical Education Centre houses Avondale's Sydney Campus Library, a specialist nursing, medical and allied health collection of approximately 20,000 books and 400 current print journal titles, with extensive access to electronic journals, online databases and other electronic resources. The library is linked electronically with Avondale's Lake Macquarie Campus and the University of Sydney, enabling users to access documents via computer from both institutions. The Library also has electronic catalogue access to numerous libraries in Australia and overseas.

The Clinical Education Centre will cater for Avondale's growing enrolment of nursing students – 353 in first semester 2013, including postgraduate students. By 2016 Avondale College of Higher Education expects to graduate around 120 nurses a year, helping to alleviate the national shortage of health professionals.

The new building was made possible by funding from Health Workforce Australia, the NSW government, Adventist HealthCare and private philanthropy. Health Workforce Australia provided a capital grant of \$10 million.



Visitors at the official opening practise cardiac resuscitation in the simulation unit. Photo: John Cox

High profile health professional joins Faculty of Nursing and Health

A high profile health professional and researcher, Dr Brett Mitchell, joined Avondale's Faculty of Nursing and Health in July 2013.

Dr Mitchell came from a senior position in the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services, where he was responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of infection control interventions for the state. In this role he established infection control governance, safety and quality systems; developed and implemented infection surveillance programs; introduced state-wide education programs in infection prevention and control; and initiated a range of activities to reduce healthcare-associated infection, including an innovative method of evaluating environmental cleanliness. He was a key member of a public health emergency committee during a recent pandemic. While in Tasmania, he also worked with the University of Tasmania.

Dr Mitchell has been actively involved in national and international work in the control of healthcare-associated infections. He played a key role in the establishment of the Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control, launched in 2012, and is also an active member the Society of Healthcare Epidemiology of America. He has recently served on several national committees, including a National Health and Medical Research Council committee that developed national infection control guidelines; and a committee overseeing the national hand hygiene initiative. He has also contributed to national surveillance work into healthcare-related infections.

Dr Mitchell is a prolific researcher, with a particular interest in infection control, healthcare-associated infections, and infectious diseases. He is editor-in-chief of the international peer-reviewed journal *Healthcare Infection*, is a peer reviewer for several journals, and is involved in the review of grant applications for the Australian College of Nursing. He has an impressive publication record, including lead authorship of



Dr Brett Mitchell

over 20 government reports for the Department of Health and Human Services of Tasmania. He has frequently presented papers at state, national and international conferences, most recently at an Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases meeting on antibiotic resistance. He has been made an honorary fellow of an Australian university in recognition of his professional and scholarly achievements.

Research will form a major part of his responsibilities in Avondale's Faculty of Nursing and Health. His recent and current projects include research into *Clostridium* and *Staphylococcus* infections, research on bacterial resistance, evaluation of the national hand hygiene initiative, assessment of the efficacy of a disinfectant in reducing infections and patient room contamination, healthcare-associated urinary tract infections, and an investigation of nursing graduates' knowledge of infection control. He is also involved in projects relating to lifestyle medicine in association with Avondale's recently launched Lifestyle Research Centre.

He is a registered nurse with a Doctor of Philosophy degree, a Master of Advanced Practice degree, and a number of other specialised qualifications in nursing and health.

His appointment to Avondale will make a significant contribution to the research profile of the Faculty of Nursing and Health.

Plans to expand chaplaincy program

Having introduced a chaplaincy major in 2012, Avondale now aims to become the first tertiary institution in Australia to develop a Centre for Clinical Pastoral Education. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a program of education and formation for pastoral care that includes attention to life's spiritual and faith dimensions. The CPE program uses an action-reflection learning model in which participants reflect on their supervised practice in pastoral care ministry. Avondale currently offers the basic CPE unit via St Vincent's Hospital.

Pr Mike Parker, a lecturer in Avondale's School of Ministry and Theology, recently became the first Avondale staff member to complete the basic CPE unit, receiving his certificate from the Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir. Avondale expects to graduate its first cohort of chaplaincy majors in December this year.



Pr Mike Parker receiving his CPE certificate from the Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir.

Students inspired by service opportunities

Avondale students continue to be inspired by the service learning opportunities available to them. Participation benefits the students as much as the recipients of their service. Many return from mission trips saying, "The experience has made me a different person – committed to serving others' needs."

Ministry of Teaching Overseas - India

One of the most innovative programs of Avondale's School of Education is the Ministry of Teaching Overseas. Groups of teacher education students undertake teaching practicums in developing countries, accompanied by an Avondale lecturer who provides in-service professional development for the local teachers.



Tamara Milojkovic teaches a class at AoZora, India. Photo: Andrew Matthes.

In July 2013 eight students participated in a 3-week teaching practicum at the AoZora Adventist Academy in the poverty-stricken Bihar province of India, north-west of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). AoZora is near the town of Bodh Gaya, the reputed birthplace of Buddhism in India, where Gautama Buddha is said to have received his enlightenment. There is hardly any Christian presence in this area.

The AoZora school has about 150 students, including orphans who board at the establishment, sleeping on the classroom floors. Avondale students have undertaken teaching practicums at the school for the past seven years. They

and their friends have also raised funds to purchase land and construct a new school building. The first level with six classrooms has been completed, and funds are now being raised to construct levels 2 and 3. A number of Avondale staff, alumni and friends regularly donate a percentage of their wages to assist the school.

The visiting Avondale groups have shared their belief in God with the local people. This year senior lecturer Dr Andrew Matthes invited his church pastor, Pr Peter Watts, to accompany the group to run an evangelistic program in the evenings. One hundred and sixty people made decisions to follow Jesus and five were baptised. Many others are receiving Bible studies. A church company was established in the area for the first time, led by a person whose schooling had been sponsored by the Christian organisation Asian Aid.

Readers wishing to contribute to the next stage of development at AoZora school can make a tax deductible donation to Avondale College at Westpac Morisset BSB: 032-524 Account number 14-7536 marked with the descriptor MOTO_INDIA. If you would like a tax deductible receipt please email your name, postal address and the amount donated to: aozora.building.fund@gmail.com



Avondale students feed community children at AoZora. Photo: Andrew Matthes.

One Mission - Bangladesh

The student organisation One Mission partners with ADRA to provide opportunities for groups of students to engage in overseas service projects in developing countries. In July 2013 eleven students and former students, including seven nursing students from the Sydney campus, travelled to Bangladesh to run programs in association with ADRA-supported schools in the capital, Dhaka.

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty prevents large numbers of children from receiving an education, as a great many have to work to help support their families. Many children as young as 9 years work in factories, and many families cannot afford to send more than one of their children to school.

The Avondale students on the Bangladesh mission trip raised almost \$18,000 to sponsor 36 children to attend ADRA schools in Dhaka. They ran a kids' club for children at the



Baptism at AoZora. Pr Peter Watts (L), Dr Andrew Matthes (R).

schools. The nursing students from the Sydney campus ran a health program for adults.

One Avondale student in the group, from a non-Christian background, told how his life had been changed by the trip. He is now raising additional funds to help children in Bangladesh. Another participant is already planning another trip to Bangladesh with her church.

“Service in a developing country inspires and motivates participants to help others,” says ministry and theology student Odailson (Dada) Fialho, who co-led the team with his wife Leticia Marquardt, an Avondale nursing student. “The experience also develops service leaders for the future,” he said.



13-year old child labourer working in Bangladesh for 80 cents per day. Photo: Odailson Fialho

One Mission and Restore One - Cambodia

An Avondale One Mission team partnered with the Cooranbong-based organisation Restore One to undertake a community development project in Cambodia during July.

The team, led by two Avondale teacher education students, built a house and toilet for a family in a village near Phnom Penh, constructed two toilets in a second village, presented a hygiene class at a school, and visited hospitals and orphanages. The students raised enough money to cover the costs of the building supplies and hygiene products.

Restore One aims to improve health, education, housing and employment in villages in developing countries. “We are supporting communities for their own long-term prosperity and to prevent people from falling into the cycle of human trafficking and sex slavery,” says managing director Tanya Lawrence.

One Mission – Brazil and Philippines

This summer students will undertake One Mission trips to Brazil and the Philippines. The Brazil group will work with ADRA to construct 50 toilets in villages in the Amazon. The Philippines team will fund a program for orphans. Avondale’s director of student services, Kevin Judge, recently cycled from Brisbane to Avondale to raise funds for these projects, averaging 194 kilometres per day over four days, battling temperatures up to 37 degrees Celsius.

International Poverty and Development Studies – Laos

Avondale’s Bachelor of Arts program in International Poverty and Development Studies (IDPS) prepares graduates to become future administrators of development and aid programs in needy areas of the world. As part of this program, students have opportunities for professional placements in overseas development projects.

IDPS student Chelsea Mitchell recently undertook a placement with ADRA in the Mok Mai district of north-central Laos, where ADRA has been working with remote villagers to build toilets, install water systems, and teach basic hygiene. ADRA has initiated a “cow bank” to enhance people’s income: a cow is lent to a family who, when a calf is born, gives the calf to another family, which then repeats the process. The villagers have now been inspired to build a school. Chelsea observed how ADRA involves the local people in decision making, witnessing a 4-hour meeting in which ADRA staff, government officials and village leaders discussed the activities of the past year and planned further projects consistent with the needs, skills and interests of each village.

Service to the Cooranbong community

Avondale teacher education students volunteer each semester to give weekly Scripture lessons to primary school children at the Cooranbong Public School. The lessons are based on Bible stories exemplifying the love of God, the gospel message, and the ethical principles of Scripture. This is the only opportunity many of the children will ever have to hear the gospel.



One Mission and Restore One built this home for a family in Cambodia. Photo: Elise Graf

Avondale scholars engage with the community

Scholarship is not just for the scholars. Avondale lecturers also engage with the wider community in fields of their academic and professional expertise, bringing significant benefits to community and church.

SCIENCE

Dr Jason Morton, senior lecturer in biology, is a leading member of the NSW Central Coast Community Environment Network, an organisation promoting community understanding of the local environment, environmental protection and sustainable development. In September Dr Morton was chosen as lead scientist for an investigation of rocky shores in a 'Biodiversity Blitz' coordinated by the Community Environment Network and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.



Rocky shore study: Avondale student Stephanie Hernandez finds a brittle star. Photo: Jason Morton

The event aimed to document within a 24-hour period as many species of flora and fauna as possible in the Bouddi National Park at the mouth of the Hawkesbury River. The survey included vegetation, mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, water quality, water bugs, and life on the rocky shores. Morton's group used his photographic identification guide to rocky shore species (available free on request). Dr Morton

leads rocky shore study walks for school, church and community groups. He also leads a program of bush regeneration and weed eradication on Avondale's Lake Macquarie campus, including propagation of over 1500 plants for bush regeneration.

In 2012 **Dr Morton, Associate Professor Kevin de Berg** and **Dr Ewan Ward** produced a consultancy report for Lake Macquarie City Council on the effects of beach cleaning and off-road vehicles on species in the sandy beaches of the region. The report made recommendations on the management of current and future impacts on these beaches.

Carmen Booyens, associate lecturer in biology, collaborates with the Lake Macquarie City Council's ecosystem monitoring program. Her collaboration with the Rural Fire Service gives students the opportunity to understand the place of fire in the conservation and management of Australian native flora.

LIFESTYLE EDUCATION

Dr Darren Morton, senior lecturer in health and exercise science at Avondale, was the leading presenter at a Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) run recently at Avondale with around 40 participants. Morton has had a key role in revising and updating the CHIP program, originally developed in the United States by Dr Hans Diehl. Morton and Diehl are

co-presenters of the new CHIP DVD series, and Morton has authored seven chapters in the new CHIP textbook. The South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has purchased the global rights to the CHIP program (not Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing, as incorrectly reported in our last issue). Sanitarium provides the managing and marketing expertise for the program.

In September Dr Morton won first place in the Gloucester Mountain Man Tri-Challenge, consisting of a 20-kilometre mountain bike ride, an 11-kilometre kayak paddle, and a 9-kilometre run. He completed the course in 2 hours 40 minutes.

Insight Organisation, which assists in Sanitarium's Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon events, engaged **Dr Wayne Miller**, senior lecturer in education, as a consultant to help prepare a survey administered at two events in Queensland to gauge the impact of using high profile sporting identities to encourage participants in TRYathlon events to join a local sporting club.

HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE ARTS

Previous issues of *Reflections* have highlighted the therapeutic value of writing workshops for seriously ill patients conducted at the Sydney Adventist Hospital by **Dr Carolyn Rickett**, senior lecturer in communication at Avondale, and Judith Beveridge of the University of Sydney. Dr Rickett still meets with a writing group in the cancer support unit of the Sydney Adventist Hospital, including some participants from the original writing project. Participants say that the group experience of reading, writing and sharing poetry brings them a sense of solace, joy and encouragement.

In 2011 Dr Rickett, Dr Cedric Greive (School of Education, Avondale) and Dr Jill Gordon (general practitioner, Lindfield, Sydney) published an article in the journal *Australasian Psychiatry* analysing the positive influence of these writing experiences on the wellbeing of participants. Participants in the study moved on average from medium to low risk on the Kessler-10, a measure of psychological wellbeing. Rickett's work is one of a growing number of studies of writing as an "adjunctive therapy" for people with organic illnesses.

Associate Professor Daniel Reynaud's research on chaplains in the First World War has created significant media interest. Last year he co-presented a half-hour television program on the Seven Network entitled *Fighting Mac: the story of William McKenzie*, a notable Anzac army chaplain. "Mac became the most famous Anzac by the end of the war," says Daniel. "He never carried a gun or fired a shot. Through their selfless deeds and heroic ministering, the Anzac chaplains gained the respect and admiration of the soldiers – not by taking life, but by saving it." The program was one of six Anzac episodes produced in association with It Is Written Oceania/Adventist Media Network. Reynaud wrote and co-presented all six episodes. He is currently writing a book on the McKenzie story.

Reynaud recently received an Australasian Associated Religious Press award for his 2012 article "Fighting Mac: the Anzac Chaplain" in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's South Pacific news magazine *Record*. The judge of the relevant sec-



Anzac hero William Mackenzie ("Fighting Mac")

tion described the entries as "equal to the best in our national press".

Reynaud has a special interest in the representation of the Anzac legend in early Australian films, and has written two books on the subject: *Celluloid Anzacs: The Great War Through Australian Cinema*, and *The Hero of the Dardanelles and Other World War One Silent Dramas*. Last year he was invited to present a lecture on the representation of the Great War in Australian cinema at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance Public Talks and Events series. He also featured in a panel discussion on Radio National's "Drive Time" program, exploring how our understanding of history is shaped by the movies. The other participants were Dr Lauren Rosewarne (lecturer in public policy, University of Melbourne), Julie Rigg (presenter of Radio National's "Movie Time") and program host Waleed Aly.

Visual arts lecturer **Andrew Collis's** work as a portrait painter has also attracted media attention. Collis has been interviewed on ABC 92.5 radio and Rhema FM radio, and his work has featured on NBN television news. Following the exhibition of a selection of his portraits at the Gosford Regional Gallery in May 2013, the *Central Coast Express Advocate* ran a front page and inside article on his work. The Central Coast Grammar School selected Collis as featured artist for its annual art show in September.

In August, visual arts lecturers **Dr Richard Morris** and **Aaron Bellette** exhibited Bellette's photography and Morris's wood-assemblage paintings at Art System Wickham, Newcastle.

Lynette Lounsbury, lecturer in history and communication, participates twice a year in an AusAid program in conjunction with Fulton College Fiji, to help teachers in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands achieve a teaching certificate. Lounsbury mentors participants in the teaching of reading, writing, drama and communication. She has also developed in Australia a website on volunteer and ethical travel (the fastest growing travel field), giving new young writers a chance to be published.

MINISTRY AND THEOLOGY

Dr John Skrzypaszek, director of the Ellen G White/ Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Avondale, has prepared for the Education Department of the Atlantic Union Conference of the Church, USA, a series of teachers' resources on Ellen White's spiritual journey and its application to life today. The first four modules in the series have been published in the Atlantic Union Conference Teacher Bulletin (Volumes 10 and 11), and are available online at <http://teacherbulletin.org/volumes/>.

Last year Dr Skrzypaszek gave 24 presentations on Seventh-day Adventist heritage and identity at the New Zealand Centre for Discipleship and Ministry, and 11 presentations on Ellen White at ministers' meetings in Fiji and Samoa. He also presented at ministers' meetings in the Solomon Islands and at leadership workshops in Sydney, and taught an intensive unit on the prophetic gift at Mamarapha indigenous college in Perth.

Dr Barry Gane has made numerous presentations to meetings of church leaders, pastors and teachers in Australia, the South Pacific, and the USA, discussing the results of his research on attitudes and values of high-school age students in Seventh-day Adventist schools. A report of his research was published in the Winter 2013 issue of *Reflections*.



Exhibition of portraits by Andrew Collis, Gosford Regional Gallery. Photo: Andrew Collis

EDUCATION

Barbara Fisher, senior lecturer in education with a special interest in reading and literacy, has conducted pilot research on the effectiveness of an unusual canine-assisted literacy program offered in four Lake Macquarie City libraries to help school children who have become disengaged readers. In this program the child reads to a trained and friendly therapy dog, with the trainer present to prompt discreetly if the child has difficulty with a word. Children tend to relax and read more easily in this novel, non-threatening environment. The project is appropriately entitled BaRK – Building Reading Confidence for Kids. The first canine-assisted reading program was developed in the United States in 1999. Its success has led to variants in different parts of the world.

The Year-5 child participating in Fisher's study showed dramatic gains in reading accuracy and comprehension over the 8 weeks of the program. Fisher reported her findings in a paper co-authored with Dr Merle Cozens, an Avondale honorary senior research fellow. The paper was presented at the Australian Literacy Educators Conference, Brisbane, 2013, and is to be published in the Association's *Middle Years* periodical. The Lake Macquarie City Council has requested the paper for distribution to its libraries, and the Delta Society that supplies the dogs has requested a copy for its website. Fisher has been invited to write a story about the BaRK program for a book of stories about Delta's therapy dogs to be published by Penguin Australia in 2014.

Associate Professor Maria Northcote (School of Education) is an external evaluator for a collaborative project involving the University of South Australia, the University of Newcastle, and the University of Technology Sydney. The project aims to develop a curriculum framework for flexible and online teaching of degrees in architecture, engineering and construction.

In 2012 Dr Northcote was a mentor in the Community Mentoring Program of ASCILITE – the Australian Society of Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education. She mentored colleagues at Edith Cowan University, Tabor College and Curtin University in online course design and teaching. In 2012 she and her husband provided professional development in online teaching and course design to staff at Newbold College, the Adventist higher education institution in Britain.

At the international Asia Pacific Autism Conference, Adelaide, 2013, **Dr Marion Shields** and **Dr Lynden Rogers** presented a case study of an Avondale student with severe



Canine assisted reading program.

Asperger's syndrome and ADHD who, quite remarkably, is completing a Bachelor of Science degree – an achievement significantly assisted by the support strategies of Avondale staff.

During 2012 **Bev Christian**, senior lecturer in education, gave presentations on faith and learning to teachers in the Adventist school system in Victoria, South Australia and Greater Sydney.

BUSINESS

The Avondale Business School offers consultancy and professional development services in business, finance, governance, human resource management and marketing. The School has developed an assessment program for local church treasurers in the North NSW Conference of the Adventist Church. The School is also working with the Greater Sydney Conference on the development and delivery of a short course in accounting for non-accountants, and is assisting other church entities in projects in finance and administration.

NURSING AND HEALTH

For the past three years nursing lecturer **Sonja Dawson** has led groups of students for clinical practicums at the Atoifi Hospital in the Solomon Islands. The experience introduces students to the rewards and challenges of medical mission work and assists Atoifi's nurse education program. A number of participating students report being drawn closer to God and inspired with the possibilities of mission service.

Sonja Dawson recently gave a presentation on humanitarian service at the nurses' seminar of the Australian Red Cross Blood Bank, Sydney. The presentation, which included experiences from her 12 years on mercy ships on the west coast of Africa, gave opportunity to promote Avondale's postgraduate courses in nursing. Dawson has also spoken at Christian schools about the profession of nursing, opportunities for mission, and Avondale's nursing program.

Nursing lecturer **Linda Pope** is the NSW education officer for the Australian Pain Society's Pain Interest Group – Nursing Issues. This group educates nurses in the principles and practice of pain management, facilitates networking of health professionals concerned with this issue, promotes clinical research in pain management, and encourages members to present their research findings at the annual scientific meeting of the Australian Pain Society.

Associate Professor Paul Race, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Health, recently presented a paper at a conference organised by Loma Linda University on "The Future of Nursing: Global Adventist Perspectives".

Nursing lecturer **Linda Cloete** organises a Neal Nedley depression recovery program in Gosford each year, and has also assisted in CHIP programs.

Staff of all faculties contribute significantly to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, presenting at church conventions, leading in weeks of spiritual emphasis in Adventist schools, contributing to administrative committees, and preaching and teaching in local churches.

Church roof fails, ceiling collapses

Torrents of rain flooded through the roof of the Avondale College Church earlier this year, causing sections of the ceiling to collapse to the floor. The church was declared unsafe and was closed for several weeks while damaged sections of ceiling were removed.

Over the years the flat concrete roof has undergone numerous repairs for water leaks. An adhesive membrane installed over the roof in 2008 kept the building dry for some time, but failed comprehensively this year. The consensus from two different architects is that the only satisfactory solution is to build a pitched roof over the entire central structure.

The ventilation plant on the existing roof has not been working for some years, and will be replaced at the same time. The new pitched roof, insulated to prevent a build-up of moisture on the inside, will protect the ventilation machinery, and will also keep the sun off the concrete roof, reducing heat inside the building.

Work on the new roof is expected to commence in



College Church interior, showing holes in ceiling after removal of collapsed and water-damaged sections. Photo: Ann Stafford, taken at the August Homecoming.



Church façade by evening light. Photo: Ann Stafford

December and is estimated to take 2-3 months, subject to weather.

Avondale appeals to its alumni and friends to help raise the \$650,000 required for the project. Avondale staff and College Church members have already donated more than \$81,000, many giving \$1000 or more. Donations are tax deductible.

Avondale is most grateful for your gifts for the now completed restoration of the Music and Greer Halls. A photo of the restored Music Hall was published in the Winter 2013 issue of *Reflections*. We now appeal for your urgent support for the construction of the new church roof.

While insurance will cover the restoration of the damaged ceiling, we depend on your donations for most of the funding needed for the project. It is critical to ensure that the church is protected from flooding from the now seriously damaged roof.

HOW TO DONATE TO THE CHURCH ROOF APPEAL

Credit card online

http://www.avondale.edu.au/support_avondale::Donations/

Credit card by phone

Call reception on 02 4980 2222.

Deposit to Avondale's bank account

Account name: Avondale College Ltd
BSB 032-524, Account 147 536
Reference: Church roof donation

For a tax deductible receipt, email reception@avondale.edu.au, stating name of donor, amount of donation, and date of deposit.

Cheque

Payable to Avondale College Ltd.
Mail to Financial Controller, Avondale College Ltd, PO Box 19, Cooranbong NSW 2265.

Scholarly society honours Avondale staff member

Associate Professor Maria Northcote, a senior member of Avondale's School of Education, has been appointed a fellow of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) in recognition of her service to higher education and her commitment to ongoing professional development to enhance teaching and learning. The fellowship was conferred in July at HERDSA's 36th international conference, at Auckland University of Technology. HERDSA Fellowships are awarded to persons who have made a sustained contribution to improved educational practice in their institutions and across the higher education community.

The fellowship scheme facilitates national and international collaboration among higher education teachers and researchers. HERDSA fellows become part of a network of scholars disseminating knowledge about research and best practice in higher education teaching and learning. Interaction with other fellows benefits their own teaching as well as the institution where they are employed.

Becoming a HERDSA fellow involves preparing under a



Associate Professor Maria Northcote. Photo: Aaron Bellette.

mentor's guidance a portfolio reflecting critically on the significance of the applicant's scholarly and professional experience. The portfolio must demonstrate educational practice showing a concern for learning; assessment practice that encourages and supports learning; support for the varying learning and development needs of students; contribution to the improvement of educational practice in the applicant's institution; curriculum planning and innovation to enhance learning; critical reflection to improve educational practice in the light of evidence from different types of evaluation; and research and scholarship used to enhance student learning.

"Interaction with the fellowship network will enhance my own teaching," says Dr Northcote, "enriching the learning experience of my students."

Professor Jane Fernandez, Avondale's Vice President (Learning and Teaching), commented that Northcote's interaction with university personnel as a HERDSA fellow "will assist in the continuous improvement of Avondale's quality assurance processes, and will also raise Avondale's profile in the higher education community."

Dr Northcote coordinates Avondale's Master of Education by research, teaches curriculum studies to pre-service teachers, and assists academic staff to develop online teaching skills. Her research interests include teacher education, assessment, academic staff development, and online learning and teaching. She has previously received teaching awards reflecting her innovative approaches to blended learning, on-campus and online courses.

Library exhibits model of Solomon's Temple

During September and October 2013 the Avondale Library on the Lake Macquarie Campus displayed an imposing architectural model of Solomon's temple and 24 associated digital prints. Dr Tessa Morrison, a senior lecturer in the School of Architecture and Built Environment at the University of Newcastle, built the model based on a manuscript composed around the 1680s by the famous physicist and mathematician Sir Isaac Newton. Written mainly in Latin, with some Greek and Hebrew, the manuscript describes in detail Newton's understanding of the architecture of Solomon's temple. Morrison discovered the manuscript in the Horn Library of Babson College, Massachusetts, USA.

After translating the manuscript, Morrison used the 3D architectural modelling program Archicad to create visual representations of Newton's concept. From these she constructed a physical model over 2 metres square. The model, which took 6 months to build, features 1000 columns and 1200 window grids, all of which had to be sanded and painted. Commenting on the significance of the work, Morrison said it "brings together one of the greatest scientists that has ever lived and the biblical figure of Solomon – both associated with wisdom." The project was funded by an Australian Research Council Post-Doctoral Fellowship. Morrison has published her translation, a commentary, and the temple reconstruction in a

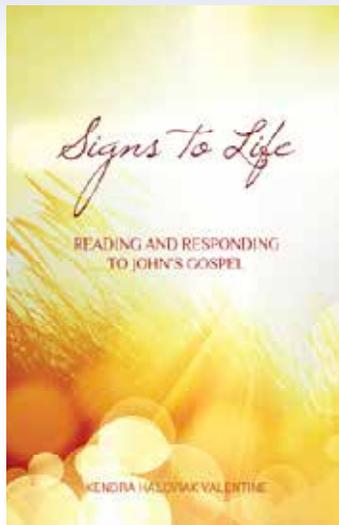


Morrison's reconstruction of Solomon's temple displayed in the Avondale Library

book entitled *Isaac Newton's Temple of Solomon and his Reconstruction of Sacred Architecture* (Birkhauser, Basel, 2011).

Fresh insights illumine the Gospel of John

Three Avondale staff members have contributed chapters to a book presenting studies in the Gospel of John by Dr Kendra Haloviak Valentine, chair of the Department of New Testament Studies at La Sierra University, California. Dr Haloviak Valentine taught at Avondale in 2009, and the book was made possible by an Avondale research grant. Signs Publishing Company book editor Nathan Brown also contributed a chapter. The book comes with a CD of seven sermons by Kendra Haloviak Valentine on the “signs” in the Gospel of John.



Signs to Life, co-authored by Kendra Haloviak Valentine in association with three Avondale staff members and book editor Nathan Brown.

Signs to Life. Reading and Responding to John's Gospel was launched at a symposium at Avondale in August 2013, with Dr Haloviak Valentine as the principal presenter. Contributors to the book offer insights into John's Gospel from a variety of perspectives. Dr Haloviak Valentine explores the “signs” (mainly miracles) in John's Gospel, showing how each narrative foreshadows the closing events of Jesus' life.

Dr Carolyn Rickett, senior lecturer in communication at Avondale, contributes a chapter from the perspective of her experience in the field of medical humanities, reflecting on Mary and Martha's grief at the death of Lazarus. Their grief, she writes, is a poignant reminder that the promise of eternal life does not at once protect us from the impact of present loss, which Jesus also felt deeply. The story assures us that human reactions to loss are valid.

Associate Professor Daniel Reynaud, dean of Avondale's Faculty of Arts and Theology, writes on the ironies in the Gospel of John, noting that many of Jesus' actions and statements in the book are enigmatic – puzzling to his disciples and others. It is ironic that the Jesus who “offers himself as the answer to the great questions of life . . . presents himself as so mysterious that many people – even his closest followers – fail to understand him.” Only with the hindsight of the cross and resurrection do many of his statements and actions begin to make sense to his disciples. It seems that Jesus' revelations, like much prophecy, were intended less to give a map of the future than to confirm belief after the event. “I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them”, and “you may believe that I am he” (John 16:4; 13:19).

Professor Jane Fernandez, Vice President (Learning and Teaching), provides a chapter contrasting Jewish scapegoating of the Samaritans with the divine inclusivity of Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well (John 4). The chapter appeals for community building in our encounters with the

“other”, in accordance with Christ's gospel of love and peace.

Nathan Brown's chapter, “The God who stoops” suggests that Jesus' stooping to wash his disciples' feet (John 13) points back to the “dramatic stooping” by which God became human, and forward to his ultimate act of love and humility – his descent into death. “As disciples of the God who stooped,” Brown writes, “Christian believers should be people who stoop in service to their fellow human beings, particularly those in need.”

In the symposium accompanying the book launch, Dr Haloviak Valentine outlined three complementary ways of reading and responding to biblical texts. We may ask how a book is illuminated by the historical and cultural matrix from which it emerged. We may consider how its literary features (e.g. structure, narrative technique, recurring themes and images, contrasts and ironies) illuminate its meaning. We may also benefit from other readers' insights. People with different backgrounds and experiences respond to the text in different ways, and the meanings they see can enlarge our sense of its significance.



Photos: Dr Kendra Haloviak Valentine speaking at the *Signs to Life* symposium. Photo: Barry Hill

International study tours enlarge student experience

This year a Bible lands tour and a European history of art tour added depth to students' study experience. All overseas study tours for academic credit at Avondale involve pre-tour lectures and study assignments, and additional assignments following the tour.

Bible lands tour

Forty-six students and others, led by student chaplain Dr Wayne French, visited Italy, Greece, Turkey, Israel and Jordan, walking in the footsteps of Jesus, Paul and other biblical figures. The planned Egyptian section of the tour had to be cancelled due to political violence in that country.

Highlights of the tour included Rome, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, most of the seven churches of Revelation, Jerusalem, Galilee and other biblical sites in Israel, Mt Nebo and Petra in Jordan, and famous sites of Greek and Roman civilization. The tour also visited Venice, Florence, Istanbul and the Cappadocia region of Turkey. One of the supreme moments was the baptism of four students in the River Jordan.

Third-year theology and ministry student David Maxwell described the tour as "transformational". "It made the stories

of the Bible come alive," he said, "opening up whole new perspectives on the biblical text and challenging my preconceptions. It has given my studies so much more depth."

He spoke of the "incredibly moving" experience of standing where Jesus stood in the cells under Caiaphas' house in Jerusalem. The biblical stories came to life as he picked up stones from the stream in the Valley of Elah where David defeated Goliath, or raised his voice like Paul to speak in the wind on Mars Hill.

Bachelor of Arts student Emma Stilinovic said, "The tour made the Bible feel more tangible. I kept reminding myself, 'This is not a documentary, it's real.' The experience definitely strengthened my belief in the Bible."

History of art tour

Twenty-one students led by staff members Andy Collis and Donna Pinter studied art masterpieces in Italy, the south of France and Barcelona. In Italy the group viewed art treasures in Rome, Florence, Milan and Venice. In the south of France they visited the Matisse and Chagall Museums in Nice, Cezanne's studio in Aix-en-Provence, Van Gogh's environment at



Bible lands tour participants at the entrance to Hezekiah's tunnel in Jerusalem. Photo: Wayne French



Art tour group at Aix-en-Provence, France. The view in the background was often painted by Cezanne. Photo: Andrew Collis

Arles, and the Fabre Museum in Montpellier. In Figueres in the north of Spain they viewed the Salvador Dali Theatre-Museum, and in Barcelona they visited the Picasso Museum, the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, and studied Antoni Gaudi's masterpieces, including the Sagrada Familia Cathedral.

"Seeing the works in real life that we had studied as students had a huge impact," said Krystal Lord.

In preparation for the tour, each participant was required to write on a topic area relevant to the tour. The resultant pieces were printed in the tour guidebook. On returning to Avondale, each student was required to present five photographs of art works taken on location during the tour, with a commentary on the significance of each work as seen through the student's eyes. Students also had to create either a video or a collection of their own photographic images illustrating a chosen artistic theme, with written reflections on the theme.

Retired lecturer runs internationally acclaimed organ school

John Cox and David Clark

David Clark, who retired in 2003 as head of Avondale's music program, now runs an organ school at the Avondale Memorial Church with 27 young organ students aged between 5 and 18 – one of the largest groups of young organ students anywhere in Australia. The high quality of their performances has won international acclaim, drawing interested enquiries from the USA, Canada, South Africa and Russia.

A European study tour last year gave Clark's students opportunity to play some of the greatest organs in the world, including a master class in Westminster Abbey. In London the students gave an organ recital for teachers from the prestigious Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Organists. Anne Marsden Thomas, director of the Royal College of Organists St Giles International Organ School, wrote: "We are immensely grateful to you for the magnificent presentation at St Giles. We teachers were enormously impressed by the skills, both of music-making and memorising, demonstrated by these young people."

In 2011 Dr Philip Matthias, Senior Lecturer, School of Creative Arts, University of Newcastle, invited Clark to initiate a Young Suzuki Organist's Program at the Conservatorium, the first such program in Australia.

Clark's students have performed many times at the Sydney Opera House. Last December they were invited for



Students on the European organ study tour after their recital at St Giles, Cripplegate, London, October 2012. Back row L-R: Shavaunne Newman, Damian Wigglesworth, Joshua Walker, Stephen Walker. Front row L-R: Emily Thompson, Stephen Aveling-Rowe, Kristan Wigglesworth, Ryan Wigglesworth. Photo: David Newman



Emily Thompson, aged 11, performing at a master class at Westminster Abbey in 2012 for the Abbey's sub-organist, Robert Quinney. Photo: David Newman

the second time to play at the Young Organists' Day on the world-famous grand organ at the Sydney Town Hall. In January 2013 they gave an entire recital as part of the Rising Stars series at St Andrews Cathedral, Sydney. The Cathedral organist invited them back to do two more concerts.

The Avondale Memorial Church provides a nurturing and supportive home for these aspiring organists, enabling them to develop their skills in the worship programs. Many of the students have performed in worship services and recitals in the Avondale College Church and in churches further afield.

Last July the students presented three concerts in Melbourne, playing at churches of different faiths. A similar venture has already been planned for Hobart in September 2014. The Third National Suzuki Organ Summer School will be held at the Geelong College in January 2014, including a Rising Stars organ recital at the Ballarat Goldfields Organ Festival, where twelve of Clark's students will perform at the Central Uniting Church. A concert tour of the USA in September 2015 is also planned, with eleven students already volunteering their talents to perform on major instruments across the country.

"It often seems miraculous," Clark says, "how playing the 'king of instruments' opens doors to witness to the King of Kings in churches, concert halls and cathedrals around the world."

Guest presenters enrich Avondale community

A number of guest presenters in recent months have enriched the intellectual, spiritual and cultural life of the Avondale community.

Christianity in China

Pastor Rebekah Liu, senior minister of the largest Seventh-day Adventist Church in China, in the city of Chengdu, Sichuan Province, spoke at Avondale in September on the progress of Adventist and other Christian churches in her country.

In 1946 the Adventist Church in China had almost 22,000 members, but after the Communist takeover in 1949, the government confiscated the church's institutions, expelled the foreign missionaries, imprisoned church leaders and closed all the churches. However, the Christian Church in China has experienced spectacular growth since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. There are now 70-100 million Christians in China, including 400,000 Seventh-day Adventists. There have been 10,000 Adventist baptisms this year alone. Newly established churches are filled within 2-3 years.

One of the most striking features of the Christian church in China is the prominence of women in positions of leadership. Over 30 per cent of ordained Christian clergy in China are women, and one-third of all seminary teachers are female. Two-thirds of Adventist church elders are women, and in the largest Adventist church in China the church board is entirely composed of women. Eighteen per cent of ordained Adventist ministers in China are women, and female pastors lead churches in all the major cities. Pastor Liu is currently working on a PhD in New Testament via Andrews University, Michigan, USA.



Dr Wendy Jackson and Pr Lyell Heise introduce Pr Rebekah Liu in the Avondale College Church

Adventist-Jewish relations

Dr Richard Elofer, director of the World Jewish-Adventist Friendship Centre, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, spoke at Avondale about initiatives to foster understanding between Jews and Christians, including engagement of Jewish and Adventist leaders and scholars in inter-faith dialogue at the highest level.

Dr Elofer grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family in Morocco, was befriended as a teenager by an Adventist family in France, became a Seventh-day Adventist minister, and for 23 years has been working to reach Jews. Jews and Seventh-day Adventists have much in common, including the Sabbath, lifestyle, and belief in the coming Messiah. Many Jews now

recognise that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, look forward to his second coming, and have embraced Seventh-day Adventist beliefs while maintaining Jewish worship styles and practices. Twenty-six Jewish-Adventist synagogues are operating in various parts of the world, as well as other Jewish-Adventist congregations. There are now between 4000 and 5000 Jewish Adventists, including several congregations in Israel.

Origins, creativity and Adventists

The discussion of origins issues in the Adventist Church has generally been conducted from theological and scientific perspectives. Architect David Stafford took a fresh approach, exploring how an understanding of design processes might offer new lenses through which to view origins. He also proposed some consequences of this investigation that could have a bearing on Adventist design and stewardship of the built environment.

David Stafford, a member of the Avondale College Church, has worked on award-winning civic and institutional projects, including the new Parliament House in Canberra. His 23 years as a senior lecturer at the University of Newcastle included positions as Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Design, and then as head of the discipline of architecture within the School of Architecture and Built Environment. He has held several visiting professorships in the United States. Until his recent retirement, he was a Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

Christians and creation care

Rev. Dr Graham Buxton, head of postgraduate studies in the School of Ministry, Tabor College Adelaide, spoke at Avondale on the Christian responsibility to care for God's creation. Dr Buxton is an Australian liaison person for the worldwide Seminary Stewardship Alliance, a consortium of education institutions dedicated to reconnect Christians with the biblical call to care for God's creation (Genesis 2:15). He argued that the world is more than a physical environment; it is God's creation, and we are called to respect it. He noted that care for creation is also an issue of social justice: we have an ethical responsibility to the poor of the earth, whose subsistence is threatened by the degradation of creation. Our treatment of God's creation, like all other aspects of our being, should, he said, be a foretaste of life in the earth made new.

Media ethics and the Leveson Inquiry

Professor Richard Keeble, Professor of Journalism at the University of Lincoln, UK, spoke at Avondale on the limitations of the Leveson Inquiry into phone hacking by journalists. The inquiry, he said, ignored the extent to which media values and ethics are shaped by monopolistic structures and economic pressures. It ignored the role of media such as Google and Facebook as "news" providers, and failed to investigate the surveillance and hacking activities of national intelligence services and large corporations. It also failed to consider the extent to which evidence was silenced or suppressed in media reporting of the inquiry. Professor Keeble argued that

the power of big media organisations should be reduced by broader media ownership, by giving journalists power to elect editors, and by developing a regulatory culture in which alternative media can flourish.

Human trafficking

Anita Kanaiua, executive director of Oasis India, spoke on urban poverty and human trafficking in India. She pointed out that in India, human trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour is a concealed, lucrative and pervasive business. While illegal under Indian law, it remains a significant

problem affecting millions of people. More than 40,000 children go missing in India every year. Many end up in the sex trade, some earning as little as \$2.50 an hour.

The brain and human behaviour

Christian psychiatrist Dr Tim Jennings, secretary of the Tennessee Psychiatric Association and an adjunct faculty member of the University of Tennessee College of Medicine, presented two guest lectures at Avondale: "Depression: the brain-body connections", and "The God-shaped brain: how changing your view of God transforms your life."

Transformed by God's grace

This is the story of an Avondale student transformed by God's grace. The story is told in her own words, without disclosing her identity.

I grew up as a pastor's kid and went to Christian schools; but although I believed in God, I never gave my life to him or had a personal relationship with him. I left home at 17 in rebellion, bent on fun and freedom. Over the next few years I made many wrong decisions that I deeply regret. I found myself so far down the path of rebellion that I no longer recognised who I was, and had no idea how to get back. I feared for my life on a few occasions and began to sink into depression. At one point I had completely given up on getting out of the world that I was in. I felt I had gone past the point of return, and in desperation asked God to end my life.

Soon after that I heard that Big Camp was coming up, and decided to go. I went to all the nightly meetings throughout the week and enjoyed the programs, but felt guilty being there, knowing the life I was living. On one of the last days the speaker made an appeal for people to come to the front and give their lives to God. Someone was singing "Amazing Grace", and suddenly an overwhelming knot of emotion welled up inside me. I now know that God was trying to take the burdens off me that had weighed me down so long. He was drawing me to the front to hand the burdens to him. I desperately wanted to respond, but resisted out of shame and shyness. I didn't want people to see me, and was afraid

of what they would think. As people were standing to leave, the preacher made a final appeal. I felt God drawing me again and that this was my second chance; so as people were leaving the tent I went down to the front. Almost immediately the heavy chains started lifting off my shoulders and I felt renewed hope of life. God not only ended my old life, the one that was making me die inside, but he replaced it with a brand new life that was so much more beautiful.

Things didn't go smoothly at first. In order to change my life I had to leave the place where I was living. I had no job, nowhere to go, no transport, and five dollars in my pocket. It had to be a complete leap of faith, and it was now or never. So I took the jump, having no idea what my next step would be. And I have never looked back. God paved the way; all I had to do was put my complete trust in Him. As someone once told me, "He didn't bring you this far, just to let go of you now." Those words have stuck in my mind to this day and are a constant reminder that God is in control of my life.

I am now at Avondale studying ministry and theology. I have a part time job, and live in a safe and secure home. I realise now that my search for freedom through a path of rebellion wasn't freedom at all. I was walking myself into a prison. What I have now is true freedom! I thank God every day for reaching down His hand and pulling me out of the life I was in. I know that God is right by my side, so I don't need to be afraid any more.

Alumnotes

Lance Tyler

We congratulate Lance Tyler, Avondale theology graduate of 1980, who received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University, Michigan, USA in August 2013. The degree "adds the capstone to the excellent educational foundation that I received from Avondale," he



Lance Tyler DMin

writes. "I cannot overestimate the quality and content of my BA from Avondale." Lance also has a Master of Arts in Clinical Ministry (Loma Linda University, California, 2001).

Trudy Adams

Trudy Adams, Avondale graduate of 2007, released her third book, Broken Melody, in June 2013, the story of a young girl torn between a dysfunctional past and a promising future. Trudy began her first award-winning novel at the age of 17. She is employed as coordinator of the Kurri Youth Centre.

A HOLEY PLACE

ANNUAL APPEAL TO REPAIR CHURCH ROOF

Churches are holy places, but flooding through the flat concrete roof of Avondale College Seventh-day Adventist Church has seen the building become a holey place—it even closed after sections of the ceiling collapsed to the floor.

The solution to this problem: the building of a pitched roof.

The new roof, insulated to prevent a build-up of moisture on the inside, will also protect ventilation machinery and keep the sun off the concrete roof, reducing heat inside the building.

Avondale College of Higher Education seeks your support to raise the \$650,000 required to build the roof.

We're depending on your donations—they're tax deductible. Members of the church and staff members at Avondale are already leading the way.

Thank you for considering this appeal to restore and protect our holy place.

ANNUAL APPEAL

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