

Celebrating New Life in Jesus through Baptism

What a wonderful month March has been for baptisms at Royal Oak Church.

On Sabbath 12th of March, Peter and Mili McGoon were baptised into the body of Christ.

The following Sabbath, 19th of March, Kristine & Brian Miller, Twin & Toni Tonitana and Glen Chadwick were also baptised into the body of Christ.

All gave public notice that they were dying to their former lives, and rising anew in the resurrection of Christ, at least symbolically for now, but in faith they will also rise again when Jesus returns. Praise the Lord!



Above Left & Centre - Mili and then Peter being baptised by Pastor Daniel, testifying in a very public way, their death to sin and their rebirth into new lives in Jesus.

Above Right - Peter and Mili being welcomed into membership of our church family after their baptisms.



Above - Kristine (left) and Brian (right) joyfully enter the waters of baptism witnessing to their wish to be buried in Jesus, and to rise again in Him. Kristine and Brian gave wonderful testimonies before they were baptised.



Above - Glen gave a wonderful testimony about how he came to find God through coincidence and Doug Batchelor.



Twin (left) and Toni (right) came to discover the Sabbath truth while serving as ministers in another Christian congregation. Their baptism culminates their search for the congregation that taught the truth they sought, finding it in the Adventist church, and their new family at Royal Oak Seventh-day Adventist Church. Welcome home!



Above - Brian, Kristine, Twin, Toni and Glen affirming their baptismal vows prior to being baptised by Pastor Daniel. A wonderful, glorious day to the glory and honour of God.

Church Family Updates

Staying Connected & Celebrating our Fellowship

Our Children, Welcomed Participants in Our Divine Service



Above - The beginners and kindergarten aged children singing "I'm Going Let my Little Light Shine.", conducted by aunty Kaye.



Above - Jared Govender welcomed everyone and called us all to worship.

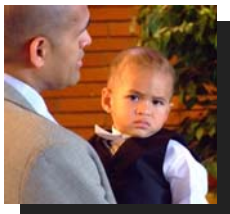


Above (L-R) Jessica, Ethan, Joy and Dahlia lead out in congregational singing.

Sabbath 5th of March saw our children participating in our Divine Service, leading out with the Welcome and Call to Worship, the Congregational Singing and even delivering a Special Item. Like the extended family we are, we enjoy having all members of our family taking part in our worship of, and service to, our God. We look forward in anticipation to our children and young people taking more and more responsibility and leadership roles in our church family.

Isai'ah's Dedication

On Sabbath 5th of March, Mario and Naomi Steven brought their son Isai'ah to be dedicated to the Lord.



Above - Isai'ah is clearly unimpressed at being woken for his dedication.

Some may not be familiar with this practice, but it is Biblical. It's not a Bible imperative but it acknowledges the need for parents and the extended church family to recognise their importance in raising our children in the ways of the Lord. Adventists do not believe or practise infant baptism. Baptism is a cognitive and willing choice to follow Jesus through the waters of baptism, and an infant or child cannot knowingly make that choice. Nor is a child dedication about an infant or child choosing to be dedicated to God, but more about the parents and wider community dedicating and committing themselves to the care,

nurture, instruction, protection and spiritual welfare of the child. As such, the dedicatory prayer is foremost for God's blessing on Isai'ah, and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the commitment and promise of his parents and supporting church family to his wellbeing.



Above - Pastor Daniel prays a prayer of dedication over Mario, Naomi and their son Isai'ah.



If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you; that is the principal difference between a dog and a man. - Mark Twain

I have known war as few men now living know it. It's very destructiveness on both friend and foe has rendered it useless as a means of settling international disputes.

- General Douglas MacArthur

Adventist Youth Conference, Australia

From February 17-20th, around 400 young people from around Australia and New Zealand gathered in Melbourne, Australia for the Adventist Youth Conference. This four day event brought together young people for spiritual instruction and networking, with the theme for the long weekend drawn from Nehemiah 2:19,20 "Rise and Build". Along with guest speakers and group activities, the conference also visited the community, going door-to-door offering Bible studies and introducing God to the people of Melbourne.

Attendees from Royal Oak were Susie, Charlene, Matthew and Catherine, Daniel, Elvis and Paul.

Matthew testified to being anxious when visiting door-to-door, and being apprehensive that something untoward might happen. In the end he simply trusted that God would look after him and he eventually enjoyed witnessing for, and trusting in, the Lord.

Catherine, being a musical person, said she thoroughly enjoyed the congregational singing, and especially leading out before 400 young people singing their praises to their God.

The AYC weekend is an annual event and all young Adventist youth are invited to attend. Look out for next year's event and save up to attend.



Above - Elvis and Susie sharing their experiences at AYC in Melbourne.



Above - Catherine and Matthew re-telling their wonderful experiences at AYC, watched on by Charlene.

Special Music for Baptisms

We're blessed to have such musical people in our church family.

Right - Ruthy, and two friends sang special items for Peter and Mili's baptism and,

Below - All regular CareGroup attendees sang for Kristine, Brian, Glen, Twin and Toni's baptisms.



PRAYER CORNER

A call to all our church family members and prayer warriors, to please pray for...

... **the people of Christchurch**, as they recover from recent devastating earthquake.

... **the people of Japan**, who are recovering from the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters that have recently befallen their country.

... **Jopio Fourie**, Dion's dad, who is home from hospital but is severely incapacitated and needs constant attention. Please pray for the Fourie family and especially those who will be caring for Mr Fourie senior.

... **Kellie Afa**, Melive's sister who is ill in Australia. Please also pray for Melive and the Fautua family as this time.

...**for all our new church members** who have joined recently, either as new baptised members or regular attendees considering baptism. Please remind them that they are part of our family, our extended church family, and we love and care for them. Pray for God's unity to be our unity—one in spirit and purpose.

... **for our CAREGroups**, and our leaders; that God's Holy Spirit will lead and teach, and bless each and everyone that attends.

... **for our church leaders**, both in our church, Conference, Union, Division and our global church, particularly that they might receive divine wisdom and discernment, to guide and direct our church, the body of Jesus, in the straight and narrow way until Jesus comes again.

Several church members have asked for intercessory prayers for their friends and families. Their names and situations are too numerous to mention here, and some also wish to remain anonymous for personal reasons, but our Lord knows their needs and we invite your prayers for God's will to be done in their lives, and for their best.

Genevieve's Dedication

Sabbath the 19th of March was special not just because our elder Dion Fourie preached, but also because his niece Genevieve was dedicated to the Lord. Proud parents Etienne and Christine wished to dedicate their daughter and themselves, and to have grandpa conduct the dedication made it an all-family affair, and a very special occasion.

As with Isai'ah's dedication, Genevieve's parents and their supporting church family are committing and promising to raise and nurture her in the knowledge, love and service of our Lord.

Please continue to pray for all our parents of young families as they raise their children.



Above - Proud parents Etienne (holding Genevieve), and Christine, and prouder uncle Dion.

New Members Participating - Wonderful to See



Jürgens Wolfardt and his wife have now become members of Royal Oak Church, but even before being voted into membership (on Sabbath 2nd April), Jürgens enthralled his young listeners with the tale about his wife's pet rat. An interesting object for teaching love for God's creation.

OAK Club Visit the Stone fields Quarry in Mangere

Once a month, Sabbath afternoons are enjoyed by our OAK club members who venture out to the great outdoors to appreciate God's creative power. Last month, OAK visited the Stone fields Quarry in Mangere. The afternoon was spent walking through the paddocks down to the seashore, and following stone walls built around the time the country was colonised. Some even ventured to climb the boulder that jutted out of the paddock, something that caused some debate as to its wisdom but in the end wasn't too onerous or overly dangerous.

Although OAK is referred to as a club, anyone can join. The initials O-A-K stand for Outdoor Activities Klub, taking some poetic licence with the last word.

In any case, several folk from other churches joined us for the afternoon and we didn't just enjoy each others company, but we also came to know and enjoy the company of others that joined us. Organised by Ian and Kaye McKean, it's something we should all enjoy once a month. Watch out for the next outing, coming soon.



Above - Ian McKean taking a short worship and giving directions before setting out on our walk.

Below - Some of the more hardy OAK members who climbed the boulder to have their picture taken at the top.



An Offering of Talents - Through Service

She's shy and often quiet, but Hannah gave her talents to God through service as a keyboard player during our recent church service where our children were involved. It's great to see our children get involved; and feel an intricate and vital part of our church family.



Above - After the walk, we sat under the avocado trees, which we were allowed to pick, and enjoyed some cool water melon.

PATHFINDERS & ADVENTURERS - SERVANTS OF GOD AND FRIENDS TO MEN

For some years, our church has been without a Pathfinder Club because of low numbers of children of the right ages. But in recent years, Jeanette Smith and Diane Fraser have revived our Adventurers' Club and have been successful in developing this into a new look Pathfinder Club late last year. As children from Adventurers reach the age of 10, they progress on to Pathfinders. As part of the honours they do both in Adventurers and Pathfinders, our children are called to serve their community in some way. Recently, they chose to serve by presenting an afternoon program for the elderly residents at our Bethesda Retirement Village and Hospital in Manukau. The children sang songs and read readings and texts, then afterwards handed out small tokens of their love which they made during their Sabbath afternoon classes. Many parents brought their children to the service and stayed to help sing and fill the chapel with song. A big thank you goes to Jeanette and Diane, and their willing helpers, for their dedication and commitment to our young people, Adventurers and Pathfinders. If you have children aged between 7 and 15, and would like you child to be a part of the Adventurers or Pathfinders, don't hesitate to contact either Jeanette or Diane to enrol them in the club.



Left and above right - The Pathfinders leading out with an animated song and poem presentation.

Right - the Adventurers in their formal uniforms, presenting a song for the elderly residents of Bethesda.

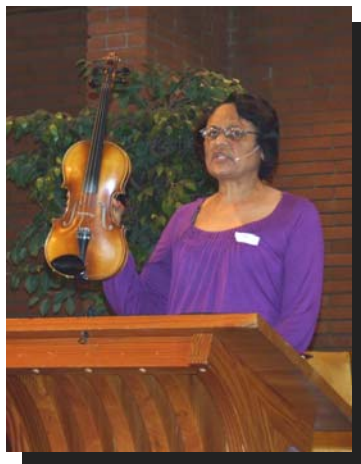


Women Take the Lead

Wonderful to see more of our sisters, mothers and daughters participating in our church services.

Ella Babbage took our sermon on Sabbath 2nd of April, and Giselle and two of her friends from the Spanish Church, sang a special item in both Spanish and English in tight three-part harmony.

Ella's message opened with a poem about the touch of the master's hand, that turned an unwanted violin at auction, into the most desirable and treasured item on the lot.



Above - Ella Babbage with the lesson about the master's touch.



Above - Giselle and her two friends, knitted beautiful three-part harmony.



Wishing, will never be a substitute - for prayer.
- Ed Cole

Update on Natalie

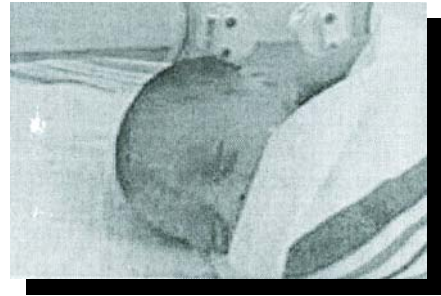
Some will remember Natalie, who was a regular attender at Royal Oak Church until she returned to the United States earlier this year.

We have received news that Natalie has given birth to twin boys that she's named John Louis Nicholas (2 lb., 6 oz. and 161 in long), and James Julian Brennan (3 lb., 8 oz. and 162 in long). Natalie gave birth on Monday February 7th and her twins were delivered by C-section. The boys were premature and although they are expected to remain in the Neonatal ICU until mid-April, all are doing well.

We congratulate Natalie and wish them all God's richest blessings and love. Please continue to pray for Natalie, John and James.



Above - Natalie with one of her sons.



Right - John (top) and James (bottom) getting to know their world for the first time.

HAPPY 21ST BIRTHDAY LILY

Last month Lily turned 21, and we celebrate her coming of age and want to wish her all of God's richest blessings and love.

We love you Lily, and hope you'll forgive our Editor for raiding your Facebook account (we're friends after all), to get this photo of your special day. Like many of our young people, Lily is studying at university (engineering), and only recently returned from a six week internship for Beca Consulting in Singapore.

We know that with her commitment to her studies and her Lord, that God has great plans for Lily's future.

Once again, Happy Birthday Lily!



- Happy 21st Lily -



Funny Quotes

A two year-old child is kind of like having a blender, but you don't have a top for it.

- Jerry Seinfeld

Anyone who says they can see through a woman, is missing a lot.

- Groucho Marx

As a child, my family's menu consisted of two choices, take it or leave it.

- Buddy Hackett

Reminder - Benefits of Drinking Enough Water

- One glass of water shuts down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a University study.
- Lack of water is the number 1 trigger of daytime fatigue.
- Preliminary research indicates that 8-10 glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers.
- A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen.
- Drinking 5 glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer.

So are you drinking the amount of water you should every day?

Like a Thief - Unexpectedly

Submitted by Catherine Bloomfield

We're only into month 3 of 2011 but here are some major natural disasters that have taken place so far this year.

- Magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Argentina
- Magnitude 5.2 earthquake in Southern XinJiang, China
- Magnitude 7.1 earthquake in Chile
- Land slides in Brazil
- Flooding and Hurricanes in Australia
- Magnitude 6.9 earthquake in New Zealand
- Magnitude 9 earthquake in Japan, followed by a tsunami and nuclear disaster.

There are countless more we can mention.

Is this a coincidence? Is it just global warming?

Matt 24: "There will be famines and earthquakes in various places"

We've also seen 5 major revolts take place across the Arabian/ Middle East Nations (Tunisia, Yemen , Egypt , Bahrain, Libya). Did I mention that all of these Arabian/ Middle East Nations hate and want to see the destruction of the nation of Israel? The Arab nations are undergoing a natural and spiritual shifting.

What's happening? Is Bible prophecy coming to pass, or is it just a coincidence?

I'm saying all of this to say that all of these events have been foretold!

Christ warned us. He told us the signs to look out for, that when we see these things coming to pass, know that He's coming soon. To everyone who is sleeping, I'm here to tell you that the countdown is nearing its final phase. Wake up while there is still time. Not necessarily sleeping in the literal sense but dulling and dumping the work of the Master, which is living a holy and exemplary life and witnessing of Him to the Gentiles. Don't forget He will come like a thief in the night. Unexpectedly.. !

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

- C. S. Lewis



POINT OF VIEW

Mark Ryan

There's a video clip doing the email rounds that talks about the changing world demographic.

Here's a summary of what it says; "The global culture our children inherit will be vastly different than what it is today."

Research shows in order for a culture to maintain itself for more than 25 years, the fertility rate must be at least 2.11 children per family.

Historically, no culture has reversed a 1.9 fertility rate, and at 1.3, the rate is critical and the culture will not survive.

For instance, if two sets of parents have only one child, there are half as many children as parents. If those children go on to have only one child, there are a fourth as many grandchildren as there are grandparents. If only 2 million babies are born in 2006, it's hard to have 2 million adults enter the workforce by 2026.

As the population shrinks, so does the culture.

In 2007, the fertility rates for the main European countries were;

France - 1.8, England - 1.6, Greece - 1.3, Germany - 1.3, Italy - 1.2 and Spain - 1.1.

Across all European Union countries, the fertility rate is 1.38.

In a few years, Europe as we know it will cease to exist, and yet the population of Europe is not declining. Why?

Immigration, specifically Islamic immigration.

90% of Europe's population growth since 1990 is from Islamic immigration.

In France where the fertility rate is 1.8, the Muslim fertility rate is 8.1. In the South of France, there are now more mosques than churches, many of

the mosques are former churches. 30% of under 30's are Muslim. In the larger cities such as Nice, Marseilles and Paris, it's 45%. By 2027, one in five Frenchman will be Muslim, and in 39 years, France will be a Islamic republic.

In the last 30 years, the Muslim population of England swelled from 82,000 to 2.5 million. There are over 1,000 mosques. Many are former churches. In the Netherlands, 50% of new-borns are to Muslim families. In 15 years, half the population will be Muslim. In Russia, 25% of the population are Muslim.

"The fall in the (German) population can no longer be stopped. It's downward spiral is no longer reversible... it will be a Muslim state by the year 2050." - German Federal Statistics Office.

Muslim is the fastest growing religion in Canada. Canada's population increased by 1.6 million between 2001 and 2006; 1.2 million by immigration. In 1970, there were 100,000 Muslims in America. In 2008, there are over 9 million.

In 2005, 24 Islamic organisations met in Chicago to make plans to evangelise America through journalism, politics, education and more.

"We must prepare ourselves for the reality that in 30 years, there will be 50 million Muslims living in America." - Islamic Strategic Conference, Chicago.

The Catholic Church recently reported that Islam has surpassed their membership in numbers. Some studies show that at its current growth rate, in 5 to 7 years, Islam will be the dominant world religion."

This presentation was apparently created by a Christian organisation in America calling for Christians to do more to witness and build the body of Christ. Admirable goals, and one we all should aspire to.

But it also creates a sense of fear, perhaps even hatred and resentment, towards Muslims. I hope this was not their goal, but I'm sure some who watch this will read it that way.

Firstly, the Bible calls us to love our neighbours. That's all neighbours; Muslims, Buddhists, Atheists, Scientologists, Christians, the lot. We are also instructed not to fear or be anxious, but to trust and obey. Paul says we are in all matters to live peacefully with others.

So what if Muslim will be the dominant religion? So what if our children inherit a different world to the one we're in? (Personally, I would argue that Evolutionism is the dominant world religion now!)

It's not for us to change the course of history, particularly the course God has foretold. It's only for us to do what God has assigned for us to do in our corner of the world, and to trust that He will care for us.

Finally, it is presumptuous to make such predictions when the Bible tells us in the last days many will turn to God. Who's to say that before the end, Christianity won't be the dominant world religion? And does it really matter?

Whatever the case may be, we should not buy in to the scare tactics. We should not participate in the 'hate speech', using as an excuse statistical data to justify our prejudices. It's not Christian, it's not right, it's not what Jesus would do.



HE SEEMED TO HAVE FAILED TO RETAIN THEIR FULL ATTENTION, BUT AT LEAST HIS SERMON WOULD BE AVAILABLE LATER ON THEIR YOUTUBE. FLICKR. TWITTER. AND FACEBOOK

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