



Sydney University, 2009.
Photo courtesy of Barry Oliver.

Adventist Tertiary Students Associations, South Pacific Division

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Nick Kross, D.Min. (Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, the United States) currently serving as the youth specialist for of the South Pacific division of Seventh-day Adventist, Sydney Australia. Dr Kross has served as a pastor, evangelist, seminary teacher, and departmental director. He as authored many articles in church magazines and initiated the World Changers Bibles Project distributing almost 400,000 Bibles throughout the Pacific. He is married to Andrea with three adult children all engaged in ministry.

The Adventist Student associations in the South Pacific Division give opportunity for Adventist students to support one other through conventions, camp meetings, and outreach events. Approximately 20,000 students across the Division are involved.

Seventh-day Adventist tertiary students in the South Pacific region have often faced perplexing difficulties because of their Sabbath observance, lifestyle choices, and biblically based belief system. In most cases these challenges are faced away from their traditional family and church networks. In earlier years there was little support for these

students. So they began informal friendship networks that soon grew into ministry-centered groups, based on a common faith that often saw their friends embrace Christ as Savior.¹

Over time these groups forged an identity for themselves, which is now recognized as the Adventist Students Association (ASA). Through events such as conventions, recovery camps, monthly meetings, and outreach programs, ASA has grown into an international ministry involving approximately 20,000 students spread across the South Pacific.²

The first recorded convention was hosted at Crosslands Youth Camp near Sydney from May 19 to 28, 1967. Seventy-five students attended from Australia and New Zealand. It was attended by the Australian Division president, L. C. Naden, and the Missionary Volunteer (MV) secretary C. V. Christian. During this convention, speakers presented papers on education and mission.³

From this groundbreaking event, annual conventions have become a part of the program of ASA, with students meeting together for spiritual renewal, community, and outreach.⁴ There was also a need for specific events where theological topics could be discussed and dialogued, which led to the initiation of the theological symposiums, which have also become a regular feature of the Australian ASA chapters.⁵

In Pacific Island nations, tertiary students have been very active in conducting outreach events, which include concerts, Voice of Youth evangelistic programs, health seminars, musical concerts, choir performances, as well as service projects. The purpose of ASA has always been twofold, to provide support for students attending secular tertiary campuses, and to promote the mission of the Adventist Church in reaching souls for Christ.

In 1968 the General Conference president, Robert H. Pierson, addressing the annual dinner of the SDA Student Society of the University of New South Wales acknowledged the invaluable role that student societies were having on the campuses of universities in the South Pacific region. It was reported that he said: "The Seventh-day Adventist student societies, organized as they were in the Australian universities, were unique in their sphere, and ahead of any such scheme in America."⁶

The long-standing societies are:

SDA Students Society, University of NSW.⁷

Sydney University SDA Students' Society, formed in 1956⁸

SASS (Sydney Adventist Students Association)⁹

University of Adelaide SDA Students' Society formed in 1961.¹⁰

QUSDAS (Queensland University Seventh-day Adventist Students), formed in March 1962.¹¹

MUSDASS (Melbourne University SDA Students' Society), formed in 1962.¹²

PNGATSA (Papua New Guinea Adventist Tertiary Students Association)¹³

NASA (Newcastle Adventist Students Association), founded in 1963.¹⁴

WASA (West-Australian Adventist Students Association)¹⁵

VICASA (Victorian Adventist Students Association)

AUASA (Auckland University Adventist Students' Society), founded by 1981.¹⁶

More recently, the following societies have been formed:

2005: ASANZ (Adventist Students Association New Zealand)¹⁷

2007: FIJIASA (Fiji Adventist Student Association)

2007: Vanuatu Adventist Students Association

2008: Samoan Adventist Students Association

In 2004 Gilbert Cangy initiated the ASA Round Table discussion, which resulted in the move to appoint a part-time chaplain at the South Pacific Division.¹⁸ This position was accepted by Nick Kross, who has been working with ASA since that time.

There have been many people who have helped to provide guidance and leadership to ASA during the past 45 years. Philip Rodionoff began his tertiary studies in Sydney and became associated with ASA in the 1980s.¹⁹ Since that time, Rodionoff has provided guidance and assistance to many student societies and continues to be a source of information and guidance in establishing new societies. Cedric Taylor in Brisbane has also been a supporter of ASA, QUSDAS in particular, and has offered advice and guidance to many students. His quiet leadership has been invaluable in the building of QUSDAS and the broader ASA ministry.

These associations have maintained a strong sense of mission over the years and have grown into mature ministries in many parts of Australia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, New Zealand, and other countries in the South Pacific.²⁰ The Adventist Students Association is one of the grassroot ministries that express the courageous attitudes of Adventist youth who want to make a difference for Jesus.

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NOTES

1. This article is written largely from the personal knowledge of the author, who is currently the youth director of the South Pacific Division and has had an association with Adventist Tertiary Student Associations in the division for more than thirty years.?
2. Personal knowledge of the author as the youth director of the South Pacific Division.?
3. W. J. Gilson, "Annual Convention at Crosslands," *Australasian Record*, September 25, 1967, 14.?
4. "Students Unite," *Record*, March 2, 2019, 9.?
5. Andrew Cox, "Students in Churches Day," *Australasian Record*, May 1, 1993, 6.?
6. N. C. Burns, "General Conference President Addresses N.S.W. University Students," *Australasian Record*, February 26, 1968, 3.?
7. Gilson, 14.?
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 14. L. A. Lansdown, "Advent Youth to the Top," *Australasian Record*, March 30, 1964, 6.?
 15. Alana Etwell, Lachlan Rodgers, Cassie Lawton, and James Etwell, "Link with ASA," *Record*, March 1, 2008, 9.?
 16. Sharon Jackson, "Christian Hot Spot," *Australasian Record*, August 17, 1981, 1.?
 17. "Wellington Hosts ASANZ Convention," *Record*, August 23, 2008, 1, 4.?
 18. "PNG Student Leaders Plan for the Future," *Record*, October 8, 2005, 1, 3.?
 19. "R & R at Forster," *Record*, November 17, 1990, 9; "Student Visits," *Record*, December 1, 1990, 12.?
 20. Ian Wilson, "Report of the National Association of S.D.A. Tertiary Student Societies," *Australasian Record*, November 27, 1978, 10; "PNG Student Leaders Plan for the Future."?

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