Gary Webster, M.A. Religion (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States) is currently the director of the South Pacific Division Institute of Public Evangelism and president of the Tasmanian Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. An Australian by birth, Webster has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a literature evangelist, pastor, evangelist, college teacher and administrator. He was editor of *Archaeological Diggings* magazine (2012-2016), a publication of the Adventist Media Network, Sydney, Australia. Webster is married to Merilyn with two adult daughters.
The Institute of Public Evangelism was established in 1998 by the South Pacific Division to enhance the effectiveness of public evangelism throughout the division. It has operated effectively and continuously since that time.

In 1998, the South Pacific Division set up a “Public Evangelism Evaluation Committee” for the purpose of fostering and nurturing public evangelism throughout the division.¹ This committee recommended that an Institute of Public Evangelism (IPE) be established.² The primary aims of the institute continue to be the recruitment of new public evangelists from the ministerial workforce and the support of employed ministers who are experienced public evangelists.³

The IPE has established four membership categories: 1. Associate Membership is for new members and is generally for a period of five years; 2. Membership is generally for a three year period for those ministers who have had five years as Associate Members; 3. Conference, Mission, Union or Division Evangelist Category is for those ministers who are appointed by their employees to these roles. Membership in this category ceases when their role ends; and 4. Honorary Membership is for all who were once members in one of the previous three IPE categories.⁴

IPE provides its members with funding for conducting evangelistic campaigns and purchasing evangelistic equipment. It holds professional development workshops for evangelists. Every five years, IPE conducts field schools of evangelism for associate members for each union. It also conducts field schools of evangelism for all IPE evangelists in the island fields every five years. IPE conducts study tours, primarily to the Bible Lands, every five years for associate members and every five years for members and conference, mission, union and division evangelists.⁵

The institute has facilitated the conversion of many people through public evangelistic programs since it began in 1999. For example, IPE evangelistic campaigns in Honiara, Solomon Islands, saw 549 baptized in 2008, and in Port Vila, Vanuatu, 600 people were baptized in 2009.⁶ IPE live-streamed campaigns saw over 500 people baptized in Fiji in 2012, 1,065 in Apia, Samoa, in 2013, over 3,500 in Port Vila, Vanuatu, in 2014, and 1900 in PNG in 2016.⁷ IPE Field Schools for Associate Members, during which they all conducted evangelistic campaigns, saw 103 baptized in Adelaide, Australia, in 2011—the largest number baptized for many years in that conference, and 121 baptized in Auckland, New Zealand, 121 were baptized in 2017.⁸

The Institute’s first Director was Anthony Kent from 2000 to 2005. Its director since 2006 has been Gary Webster.

**SOURCES**

IPE Baptismal & Funding Register. Held in the files of the Director of the Institute of Public Evangelism, South Pacific Division.


South Pacific Division Executive Committee Minutes. Held in the files of the Director of the Institute of Public Evangelism, South Pacific Division.

**NOTES**

1. South Pacific Division Executive Committee Minutes, Meeting 47, February 18, 1998, Action 47.5?

2. Public Evangelism Evaluation Committee Report, November 16, 1998, held in the files of the Director of the Institute of Public Evangelism, South Pacific Division?

3. Public Evangelism Evaluation Committee Report, November 16, 1998, held in the files of the Director of the Institute of Public Evangelism, South Pacific Division?

4. SPD Institute of Public Evangelism Committee Minutes, Meeting 1, March 18, 1999, Action 1.1; SPD Institute of Public Evangelism Committee Minutes, Meeting 2, June 20, 1999, Action 3.2; SPD Institute of Public Evangelism Committee Meeting Minutes, Meeting 35, May 6, 2008, Action 35.4; SPD Institute of Public Evangelism Committee Minutes, Meeting 51, August 16, 2013, Action 51.3; SPD Institute of Public Evangelism Committee Minutes, Meeting 52, December 11, 2013, Action 52.4; all held in the files of the Director of the Institute of Public Evangelism, South Pacific Division.

5. SPD Institute of Public Evangelism Committee Meeting 51, August 16, 2013, Action 51.3, held in the files of the Director of the Institute of Public Evangelism, South Pacific Division.

6. IPE Baptismal & Funding Register, held in the files of the Director of the Institute of Public Evangelism, South Pacific Division.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.