



Cedarvale is a recognized independent supportive ministry in the South Pacific Division.

Photo courtesy of Cedarvale.

# Independent Adventist Organizations in the South Pacific Since 1985

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## MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian*, *Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

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Since approximately 1985, a number of organizations initiated by lay persons in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church have been set up. These organizations are supportive of the mission of the SDA Church. They respect each other's methods of evangelism, whether it be by preaching or teaching how to live healthier lives or simply offering charity to the poor.

## Acacia Health Retreat

The private enterprise is located at Hervey Range, a remote community west of Townsville, Queensland. It opened in 2003 and offers clients a week of rest and relaxation together with learning how to cook healthy vegetarian meals. The same type of meals are served daily from their kitchen. Many of the ingredients are grown on site in organic gardens. A holistic approach to health is taught.<sup>1</sup>

## Asian Aid

In December/January 1965/1966 Dennis and Maisie Fook made a tour from Sydney to Tokyo, Hong Kong, Taipei, and Manila. They witnessed extreme poverty and returned to Australia determined to help Asian people in need, especially orphaned children. In 1967 they learned of an SDA layman, Shin Chung Sup, who was conducting an orphanage for 150 children in Pusan, Korea.<sup>2</sup> It was the beginning of their drive to enlist sponsors in Australia for the education, feeding, and clothing of the orphans. They freely advertised through the pages of the *Australasian Record*. Their slogan, "Support an orphan for \$10 a month," became well-known in the SDA community, and many members responded generously. Later, assistance was sent to orphans in Vietnam, using Adventist Welfare Service (SAWS) as the vehicle to distribute aid.<sup>3</sup> In 1988 relief assistance was given for the calamitous floods in Bangladesh.<sup>4</sup> By 1995 it was reported the organization was raising \$1 million annually with 4,250 children and youth receiving assistance.<sup>5</sup> Another report spoke of Sabbath Schools being formed at the orphanages and sixty young people baptised.<sup>6</sup> Despite the passing of Maisie Fook in 2002 the organization continues to provide aid to many countries in Asia. In 2005 an elementary school in Bangladesh was named the Maisie Fook Memorial School.<sup>7</sup>

## Cedarvale Health Retreat

Situated inland from Nowra, NSW, the health retreat is nestled in the Kangaroo Valley. Geoffrey Richardson, a Sydney SDA church member, generated the enterprise, organizing the construction of an access road and bridge with plans in 1989 to establish a youth center and health resort.<sup>8</sup> In the same year fifteen health seminars were held in a lodge on site that had live-in accommodations for sixteen people. It was first named the Cedarvale Christian Faith Centre.<sup>9</sup> As the enterprise developed it became known as a health retreat rather than a youth camp. Today it specializes in treatment for chronic depression, obesity, high blood pressure, stress, and arthritis. It offers a stop-smoking program, hands-on vegetarian cooking classes, exercise regimes, massage, and hydrotherapy.<sup>10</sup>

## Good News Unlimited

In 1980 a group in California, including couples Zane and Sharon Kime and Don and Vesta Muth, persuaded Dr. Desmond Ford to join them in the establishment of Good News Unlimited. With this title a periodical was quickly

begun with the organization's manifesto clearly displayed in its masthead: "Sola Christus, Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia." Under this banner Ford engaged in almost four decades of preaching the gospel in sermons and seminars throughout America and around the world. His style and clarity attracted thousands who declared their assurance of salvation.<sup>11</sup> Ford insisted the organization should be a faith-based entity, existing for as long as funds continued to be freely donated. When he retired to Australia in 2000 he continued the seminars for as long as his health permitted. Prior to the death of Ford, March 2019, plans were made for the continuation of the gospel ministry with the selection of Dr. Eliezer Gonzalez to manage the enterprise. He has concentrated on modern media for evangelizing. The Web site offers Ford's E-Books and some YouTube videos, in addition to a Facebook community and devotionals in the English and Spanish languages. Short devotionals are aired on the radio in Australia, New Zealand, India, and America.<sup>12</sup>

## La Mancha Health Centre

The first advertisement carried by *Australasian Record* for this enterprise appeared in November 1986.<sup>13</sup> The health facility was located at rural Wollongbar, NSW, near Lismore.<sup>14</sup> It offered remedial treatments for obesity, cholesterol problems, high blood pressure, and low energy levels. Vegetarian meals and massage treatments were provided for live-in clients. Regular advertisements continued to be published for fifteen years until the business closed in 2000.<sup>15</sup>

## Steps to Life (Australia) Ltd.

In 1996 Colin and Cheryl Martens established Steps to Life with a head office and recording studio in Lilydale, suburban Melbourne. The enterprise produces and distributes DVDs of Bible studies and sermons by many preachers such as Doug Batchelor, Walter Veith, Dennis Priebe, and Austin Cooke. A small selection of tracts on biblical and health subjects are made available. Topics range from the health benefits of activated charcoal to an essay about America as the superpower of prophecy. A regular newsletter is published. They conduct natural health remedy seminars, vegan cooking classes, and a depression recovery program.<sup>16</sup>

## Sydney Adventist Forum

This organization is dedicated to offering a hearing for topical issues that impact the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is modeled on the Association of Adventist Forums that arose in America in the 1960s. Guest speakers are selected from various faiths, and meetings are held at different venues in Sydney and the environs of Avondale University College. It is funded solely from offerings collected at the meetings that generally occur on a quarterly basis. The initial meetings were held in 1980 under the presidency of academy teacher John Eager. Subsequent presidents have been John Pye, Barbara Wilkinson, and Drs. Trevor Lloyd, Milton Hook, Geoffrey

Madigan, and Lynden Rogers. Speakers and topics have included Dr. Raymond Cottrell, "The Story of the SDA Commentary," Drs. Ervin Taylor and Eric Magnusson, "The Age of Life," Clifton Maberly, "A Radical Approach to Islam," Dr. David Trim, "Making Room for Two Creationist Positions," and a panel discussion titled "Homosexuality: Seeking an Adequate Adventist Response."<sup>7</sup>

## Supportive Independent Organizations and the South Pacific Division

The South Pacific Division has set up a process whereby it can offer support to independent bona fide organizations while at the same time affirming their status in the church and protecting the church from unscrupulous organizations and/or individuals. The executive committee of the Division has voted a series of guidelines for recognizing such organizations.

Guidelines for the Recognition of Supportive Independent Organizations in the South Pacific Division<sup>18</sup>

The South Pacific Division (SPD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church defines "Recognized Supportive Ministries" as those organizations that comply with the following criteria:

### A. Leaders and Representatives

The leaders and representatives of the ministry or organisation shall be members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing. The leader must be a Seventh-day Adventist member who does not receive remuneration from any Seventh-day Adventist denominational entity in recognition of his/her leadership of the supporting ministry.

### B. Compliance to Solicit Donations and Offerings

The organization will be a compliant member of the Government Register for Charities in their country if they solicit donations and offerings.

A ministry that does not solicit donations and offerings will not need to be registered by the Government Register but will need to submit annual documents.

Organizations based in Australia will have a member of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au) and in New Zealand they will have a member of the Charities Register New Zealand [www.register.charities.govt.nz](http://www.register.charities.govt.nz)

Applicants who are based outside of these countries will need to also comply with government processes and may be required to provide additional information by the local conference or mission, union, and the South Pacific Division.

C. Supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division Documentation such as the statement of mission, plans, objectives, and governance will demonstrate how the ministry is supportive of and complements the operations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division.

## Application Process

### A. Application to the Local Conference or Mission

The organization shall make initial application for approval, and registration of their supportive ministry to the conference or mission of the SDA Church in which they are located.

The application for Recognized Supportive Ministry status is available from the local conference or mission, Union, or SPD. The application will require the following details:

The certificate or membership of compliance by the government charities regulator,

Confirmation that the organization has been in operation for at least one year and corresponding financial statements that meet industry standards,

An external auditor has been engaged to review and audit financials,

Details of the governing board for the organisation that represents the majority of members as lay Seventh-day Adventists,

Mission statement,

Code of Conduct or equivalent document setting out the organization's objectives, legal status, and mode of operation,

Constitution whether incorporated or unincorporated,

Current and effective liability insurance policies,

Any other documents as requested by the conference, union, or Division.

### B. Conference, Mission, and Union Considerations

The local conference or mission that receives an application for Recognized Supportive Ministry status shall decide whether it is appropriate to proceed with a review of that application. Where the operations of an applicant for Recognized Supportive Ministry status reach beyond the territory of the local conference or mission in which they are based, the review process will include consultation with the union of that region.

The organization seeking Recognised Supportive Ministry status shall be invited to dialogue with the conference or mission. This should be done with a spirit of cooperation and with the objective to expand the ministry of the church in a direction that is most helpful to the church. The church entity is to advise how it would like the applicant ministry to be supportive and invite them to explain how they plan to be supportive.

### C. Approval

The approval process involves three stages of review and signatures. Final approval is granted by the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Limited. Approved applications are to be held in the register for Recognized Supportive Ministries at the SPD and also forwarded to the General Conference Secretariat for listing in line with General Conference *Policy K.05 Criteria for Defining Supportive Ministries*.

### D. Review

It will be the responsibility of the Recognized Supportive Ministry that they comply with legislation including obtaining licenses for fundraising in the areas they operate.

Full review: Every three years a full review shall be conducted by the local administration in which the ministry resides at the request of the South Pacific Division. A report and recommendation concerning the continued status of the ministry shall be forwarded through the union to the division.

## Recognized Supportive Independent Ministries of the South Pacific Division as of March 2020<sup>19</sup>

Asian Aid

Cedarvale Health and Lifestyle Retreat Ltd.

Medical Missionary Training Inc.

Mission Serenity Ltd.

Sonship Inc.

The Christian Trust of New Zealand

The New Zealand Christian Foundation

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## NOTES

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2. Maisie Fook, "Instant Family," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, January 24, 1972, 6.
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4. "Relief Needed After Bangladesh Floods," *Record*, October 29, 1988, 10.
5. Norm[an] Long, "\$30 Difference," *Record*, April 15, 1995, 9.
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7. "Memorial School Opens in Bangladesh," *Record*, April 23, 2005, 6.

8. "Cedarvale Resort," *Record*, March 18, 1989, 12.
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10. "Health Retreats in NSW Australia: Cedarvale Retreat," Cedarvale Health and Lifestyle Retreat, 2014-2020, accessed March 2, 2020, <https://www.cedarvaleretreat.com.au>.
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18. Held in the files of the Division Secretary, South Pacific Division of the General Conference, 148 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.
19. Ibid.

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