Adventist university to assist Zambian government in developing teachers
In visit to Adventist Church HQ, ambassador commends church’s contributions

Church Chat: Carson handles spotlight ‘prayerfully, humbly’
The renowned neurosurgeon speaks with his church amid media attention

In Remembrance: Andrew Kuntaraf used technology to bolster Adventist ministry, mission
Young director was at forefront of church technology
Palan Mulonda, Zambia’s Ambassador to the United States, commends the Adventist Church’s humanitarian work and educational development at a reception at the denomination’s world headquarters on April 1 while Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson, right, listens. There are more than 800,000 Adventists in Zambia. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Graphic by Amber Sarno.

Zambia’s ambassador to the United States commended the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s humanitarian work and educational development during his visit to the denomination’s headquarters this week.

Palan Mulonda, himself an Adventist Church member, also said that the government has requested Adventist-operated Rusangu University to assist in the development of teachers for public schools.

The visit to headquarters was Mulonda’s first since his appointment in Washington, D.C. in December. He also serves as his nation’s ambassador to several countries in Central America.

Zambia is home to some 13 million people, about 6 percent of whom identify themselves as Adventists in government census data, Mulonda said. The Adventist Church’s Zambia Union Conference reports a membership of more than 800,000, making it the largest union by population in the denomination.

The Adventist Church in Zambia has experienced tremendous growth in recent decades. There were only 20,000 members in 1972, said Zambia Union President Harrington S. Akombwa in a phone interview. Today, roughly 45,000 people join the Adventist Church each year, many through public evangelism campaigns and the work of Adventist literature evangelists. A majority of the population is Christian.

Ambassador Mulonda said “consistency” is likely what has attracted many people to the Adventist Church. “The message has not changed,” he said to a group of church leaders in the headquarters’ executive dining room on Monday.

Zambia, formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, gained independence from the UK in 1964. Since then, it is the only country in the region to have avoided major political unrest and civil war.

At Monday’s welcoming event, Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson commended Mulonda and the people of Zambia for helping to maintain peace in the region.

“While we don’t corporately become involved in politics, we try in whatever way we can to assist sharing in the load of building up society,” Wilson told Mulonda and other church leaders.

Adventists in Zambia are well represented in politics. About 15 percent of the legislature is Adventist, including the chief executive of parliament.
The church in Zambia also operates the “Dorcas Mothers Movement,” an Adventist women’s organization in Zambia. “No other group can draw such a large crowd to events,” said Pardon Mwansa, a general vice president of the Adventist world church, and a native of Zambia. He spoke in a separate interview.

The women’s group can sometimes draw 30,000 people to events, which last year led the president to request from the minister of culture affairs a budget for the group’s humanitarian work and caring of HIV/AIDS patients.

“They are strong and their objectives are noble for the country,” Mwansa said.

Church Chat: Carson handles spotlight ‘prayerfully, humbly’

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Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

When Dr. Ben Carson spoke at February’s National Prayer Breakfast in front of United States President Barack Obama, his critical views on national healthcare legislation and the country’s increasing debt set the media abuzz.

His comments have since led to appearances and features in top news agencies, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, CNN and Fox News.

Carson, 61, is no stranger to the spotlight. He first gained international recognition in 1987 for successfully separating cranially conjoined twins. He has served as director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, since he was 33 years old.

A lifelong Seventh-day Adventist, he is a member of the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Spencerville, Maryland.

Carson is the author of four books. His first, “Gifted Hands,” tells the story of his rise from a single-parent home in the inner city to a renowned medical career. Actor Cuba Gooding Jr. portrayed Carson in an HBO movie of the same title. Carson and his wife, Candy, launched the Carson Scholar’s Fund in 1994 to promote reading and scholastic achievement, offering trophies as big as those awarded to high school athletes.

He spoke to ANN briefly by telephone earlier this week, after having completed four surgeries in the
morning and waiting for a team to call him to a fifth.

While the Seventh-day Adventist Church doesn’t corporately become involved in politics, ANN interviewed Carson about how he as an Adventist shoulders responsibility of media attention. He also discussed how his views stemming from his faith shape his beliefs about the earth’s origins, as well as his promotion of reading and educational opportunities in underprivileged communities.

The unedited interview in its entirety:

**Adventist News Network**: Do you feel a special sense of responsibility and stewardship for the attention you get?

**Dr. Ben Carson**: There’s no question God sets these things up. My whole life I feel has been orchestrated by him. When you’re placed on a platform, you have a definite responsibility to remember who put you there and why.

**ANN**: How do you handle the spotlight?

**Carson**: Prayerfully, humbly, recognizing that you always have to make sure you keep yourself in the background. It’s very easy when all the spotlights are on you to think, “Oh, wow, I’m a great person.” You have to make sure to resist the urge to think that, and always remember that whatever you do, God is first.

**ANN**: What do you want people to understand about the Seventh-day Adventist Church by looking at your life?

**Carson**: I want them to understand that we’re very reasonable people and kind people, but we do have values and principles that we live by, and those are the things God has set forth in his word.

**ANN**: Are there ever any times when you feel it’s best to distinguish yourself from the Seventh-day Adventist Church and what it teaches?

**Carson**: No, I don’t. You know, I’ve seen a lot of articles that say, “Carson is a Seventh-day Adventist, and that means he believes in the six-day creation. Ha ha ha.” You know, I’m proud of the fact that I believe what God has said, and I’ve said many times that I’ll defend it before anyone. If they want to criticize the fact that I believe in a literal, six-day creation, let’s have at it because I will poke all kinds of holes in what they believe. In the end it depends on where you want to place your faith – do you want to place your faith in what God’s word says, or do you want to place your faith in an invention of man. You’re perfectly welcome to choose. I’ve chosen the one I want.

**ANN**: Are there any other things you think Seventh-day Adventists should speak out on?

**Carson**: Yeah, I think we should be the people who truly advocate for life. Abortions that are done on-demand are not within the purview of God’s will. We sit around and criticize ancient pagans for sacrificing babies and saying what heathens they were. But are we really any different if we go around killing babies because they’re inconvenient? I feel very strongly that we should be speaking out on those issues and don’t just go along to get along.

**ANN**: Some have said your message at the prayer breakfast was overly political in a setting that was supposed to focus on God. How do you respond?
Carson: I think a prayer breakfast is an excellent place to talk about the spiritual state of the nation, which unfortunately is critical at this state because people are afraid to talk about what they believe. One of the founding tenants of our nation was freedom of speech. So if you’re not going to be able to talk about that at a prayer breakfast, it’s pretty ironic that we can’t have freedom of speech at a prayer breakfast. And then some people have been critical of the fact that I brought up tithing, the Bible, God – it’s a prayer breakfast. Give me a break.

ANN: With the increased media attention, do you keep Sabbath any differently than you did before?

Carson: Not really. Sabbath is still a precious day for us. We go to church as often as we can. Even if we’re on the road we treat it as a different day than all the others.

ANN: How would you want to change the world?

Carson: Well, there are a number of things. First of all, particularly focusing on our nation, I want us to remember that we are one nation under God. And I want everyone to be able to say it and to say it with pride, not to say it shamefully. I also would like to bring back a real definition of fairness. Fairness means treating everybody the same, not just your special group or those special interest groups who contribute to your well-being.

ANN: Are there any biblical characters that offer you an example or encouragement?

Carson: Joseph, because he had a pretty difficult life. He was sold into slavery by his own brothers, decided to make the best of it and became the head of Potiphar’s household. And then living up to high moral standards caused him to be thrown in jail. He wasn’t resentful about that. He became a model prisoner. He gained position of authority there and started interpreting dreams and became governor of the most powerful nation in the world. That said a lot to me about not griping and complaining about where you are, but using the situation, trusting in God and making the best of it.

ANN: What does retirement look like for you in June?

Carson: It looks very busy. I may have to come back to work to get a break. I’ve got 10 international trips scheduled already and multiple engagements around the country – too numerous to count. Our scholarship fund is in all 50 states and we’re penetrating different counties. We’re putting in our reading rooms all over the country to try to increase the interest in reading, particularly in Title I school districts because the people who founded this nation said it is dependent on a well-educated and informed populace, and without that it cannot survive.

ANN: Anything else as we end?

Carson: We always have to remember that no matter what’s going on, no matter how much of a spotlight we have, that all of that comes from God and everything we do should reflect glory on his name.

In Remembrance: Andrew Kuntaraf used technology to bolster Adventist ministry, mission
Andrew Kuntaraf, an advocate of using technology to empower better and more effective ministry, died on April 6 from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident near Charles Town, West Virginia. He was 33.

Kuntaraf was director of the Seventh-day Adventist world church’s office of Adventist Church Membership Software, where he oversaw the development of standardized membership accounting software for church use worldwide. The software, now in its pilot implementation stage, is streamlining how the church maintains its membership database.

Kuntaraf told ANN last year that he expected the software to address discrepancies in accounting for the global denomination’s estimated 17 million members, lending greater accuracy and transparency to the process.

Kuntaraf grew concerned by church membership records when a colleague pointed out that the church was “keeping better track of its money than its members.” At the time, Kuntaraf was serving as associate director of the office of Seventh-day Adventist Accounting Software. There, he had worked to help the church implement a global standard for accounting software. Shortly afterward, he was hired under the church’s office of Secretariat to standardize membership records worldwide.

“Andrew had a heart for mission and viewed his work as a service to God,” said John Beckett, director of the Adventist world church’s Office of Global Software and Internet. The two church technology directors worked together closely on projects.

“His ability to make friends complemented his excellent information technology skills in a way that made him a great leader and colleague,” Beckett said.

Colleagues in the office of Secretariat echoed Beckett’s sentiment and added that Kuntaraf brought a spiritual tone to a job that could have been seen as purely technical.

“The passing of Andrew was a huge loss, not only to his family, but to God’s family worldwide,” said G. T. Ng, Adventist world church secretary. “Not only was Andrew technically qualified, but he was spiritually qualified. He was driven by the mission of the church.”

Andrew Oey Kuntaraf was born in Loma Linda, California on September 10, 1979, while his parents were pursuing higher education in the U.S. In 1987, the family moved to Singapore, where they worked for the church’s Southern Asia-Pacific Division, then called the Far Eastern Division. Andrew later returned to the U.S. to complete high school and college.

In 2001, he earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration at the church’s Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, adding a master’s degree in business administration in 2008.
In addition to his interest in technology, Kuntaraf was also a skilled musician, often embellishing hymns on the piano during song service at the Capital Chinese Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, where his parents are members.

"I used to joke with him and say, 'Andrew, you are adding extra notes, I can't keep up!'" said Norma Hendrixson, a family friend who watched Kuntaraf grow up and often led song service with him. At one point, Kuntaraf considered a career in music, Hendrixson said.

Kuntaraf was also an avid motorcyclist. He had borrowed a friend's motorcycle for a ride in town on the day of the traffic accident, family members said.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of Andrew, and the Adventist Church will greatly miss his contributions at a time when more and more of the church's mission relies on the Internet and technology," said Williams Costa Jr., Communication director for the Adventist world church.

"Andrew was one of our cornerstones of technology for the world church," he added. Costa had worked closely with Kuntaraf to prepare for the church's upcoming Global Adventist Internet Network (GAiN) conference, scheduled for May in Dubai.

Peter Landless, an associate director for the Adventist world church's Health Ministries department and colleague of Andrew’s mother, Kathleen, said Andrew was “like a son to my wife, Ros, and I in the kind deference he always showed us.”

"I was always impressed by his smile, his energy and his talents. It was an absolute blessing to know him. He epitomized the vibrancy that young people can bring to the church," Landless said.

Kuntaraf is survived by his wife, Alysia; his parents, Jonathan and Kathleen, both employees at Seventh-day Adventist Church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland; and his sister, Andrea.

A funeral service is planned for Sunday, April 14, at 4 p.m. at the Southern Asian Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland.

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The ANN news bulletin is a weekly recap of news and information from the Communication department of the Seventh-day Adventist world church headquarters and is distributed by Adventist News Network.

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