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Adventist Church’s philanthropy promotion gaining more traction worldwide
Philanthropy conference is ‘eye-opener’ for international attendees

June 26, 2014 | Baltimore, Maryland, United States | Ansel Oliver/ANN

The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s world headquarters sponsored several international scholarships to a philanthropy conference in an effort to promote the profession’s best practices in more denominational institutions.

Headquarters contributed $15,000 for a dozen international attendees to participate in this year’s PSI Conference on Philanthropy, which is being held June 24 to 27 in Baltimore, Maryland. Nearly 350 fundraisers and nonprofit leaders are in attendance.

The conference, held every three years, is sponsored by Philanthropic Service for Institutions, a fundraising consulting agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s North American Division.

The headquarters’ sponsorship highlights the growing need for professional fundraisers in more Adventist churches, schools and hospitals worldwide. PSI leaders say the agency in recent years has fielded an increasing number of consulting requests from outside its territory.

“We’re designed to serve North America, but we answer questions from around the world. It’s definitely growing,” PSI director Lilya Wagner said on the sidelines of the conference on Thursday.

Several participants described their first such conference as “eye-opening” for education about the profession’s best practices.

“This conference is quite a good one. An eye-opener. When I get back to Africa I would like to see something like this start,” said Masamba Eliudie, director of financial administration for Rusangu University in Zambia. “Philanthropy introduced at the right time will yield great results.”

Eliudie said he was attending the conference because of Wagner’s trip to Southern Africa last year. Wagner presented a seminar at several universities, many of which have sent representatives to the conference.

“This [conference] is an eye-opener. It makes you want to go out and do it,” said Sophie Masuku, research coordinator at Solusi University in Zimbabwe.

Her favorite tip she learned in a seminar is being sure to inform donors of how recipients will benefit, not just focusing on the institution.

Masuku said she hoped more Adventist institutions would increase their professional philanthropy efforts. “That would really be beneficial for the institutions because they will know how they’re going to go about doing fundraising. Right now we’re not really doing it.”

“It should really be taken seriously because many institutions are languishing,” Masuku added.
An institution’s commitment to philanthropy often starts with the crucial first steps of hiring an expert and educating the organization’s leader on his or her role in charitable giving, said Wagner, PSI’s director.

“It’s equally important to educate both fundraisers and nonprofit leaders because that has to be a partnership,” Wagner said. “It’s deeply challenging when either one of those parties doesn’t have the education and information they need for an organization’s philanthropy program to flourish.”

PSI Associate Director Kristin Priest said the agency offers resources to Adventist institutions at no cost and promotes the industry’s professional accreditation: Certified Fund Raising Executive.

Priest said the Adventist Church can do more to promote philanthropy, including presenting it more often to college and university students as a career option.

“Fundraisers are sometimes seen as professional beggars, which unfortunately deeply misconstrues what the profession is about,” Priest said. Philanthropy, she said, is about relationships and inviting donors to be part of an institution’s mission. Sometimes it can benefit the donor in a big way.

For Lois E. Peters, philanthropy helped her realize she was capable greater accomplishments in her own life and career. The president of At Home Pediatric Nursing Team, Peters got into charitable giving after an Adventist institution’s fundraiser visited her and toured her growing business of nursing homes. The philanthropist asked for a donation greater than the amount she had, which motivated her to increase the size of her business.

“We need [philanthropists] to teach us to know what we’re able to give,” Peters said during the keynote address at the conference’s awards luncheon. “God’s wealth is bigger than you can imagine. All you philanthropists go out today and bless somebody.”

—For more information on Adventist philanthropy, visit PSI’s website at philanthropicservice.com.

Adventist Church ’encouraged’ by Supreme Court’s ‘Hobby Lobby’ decision

Top U.S. court affirms 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act

June 30, 2014 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | ANN Staff

Leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s North American Division said they are “encouraged” that today’s ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which safeguards broad religious liberty protections.
In a 5-4 decision, the court today ruled that “closely held” companies can opt out of federal healthcare mandates to provide contraceptive coverage to employees based on religious liberty.

In a statement, Church leaders said today’s decision in the case of Burwell v. Hobby Lobby was one of the most anticipated cases this term in which religious liberty and the right to healthcare collided.

The court’s ruling was the result of appeals by two family owned, for profit companies—Hobby Lobby Stores and Conestoga Woods Specialties—that objected to providing certain forms of birth control as required under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The question for the Court was whether these companies could claim an exemption from this requirement under the First Amendment and the RFRA.

The Adventist Church has long promoted health and religious liberty for people of all faiths, and Adventists were strong advocates for the passage of the RFRA in 1993.

The statement said that while “contraception is an important goal of the ACA, it is one the government can reach without forcing family-held companies from violating their sincerely held religious beliefs.”

Click [HERE](#) to see the full statement.

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**Adventist seminary appoints first woman as associate dean**

**At Andrews, Reeve to replace Jones, who will become president of Church’s Lake Region Conference**

*June 27, 2014 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Andrew McChesney/Adventist Review*

The Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary, the preeminent training ground for the Church’s religious leaders at Andrews University, has chosen its first woman to serve as associate dean, a development that comes the same month that the university named a woman as its lead chaplain.

Teresa Reeve, an associate professor of New Testament contexts, will fill a role vacated by Clifford Jones, who will become president of the Church’s Lake Region Conference on July 1.

“This is a historical nomination because for the first time a lady will hold this position!” seminary dean Jiří Moskala said in a letter to seminary faculty and students this week.
Moskala said the selection process had included consultations with the church’s North American Division and the General Conference, which oversees the world church, and he believed that the appointment would bring “unique diversity in our leadership.”

Addressing Reeve, he said, “I praise God for you, and I am glad that I can play a part in this historic moment. I am looking forward to an excellent collaboration with you.”

Reeve, who received her doctorate from the University of Notre Dame and has taught at Andrews for 11 years, said she would seek to promote greater learning and leadership in her new position, which she likened to the role of academic dean.

“I have to make sure that we are making the best leaders for the church,” she said Wednesday by telephone from Pittsburgh, where she was attending an Association of Theological Schools conference. “I believe we are in the last days and we are on the verge of great new things that God wants to do for us in the church.”

Reeve promised to spend a lot of time listening, especially to the faculty. “They are the center of the institution,” she said. “We have a super faculty.”

She conceded that some people in the Adventist church might find it “a new idea” to have a woman serve as associate dean. But she said that on a personal level she didn’t see her appointment as a gender issue.

“The seminary believes that God gives people gifts and gives them for a reason,” she said. “It’s about pursuing God’s calling and gifting.”

Reeve’s appointment comes weeks after Andrews announced that that June Price, associate dean of its Lamson women’s residence hall, would become lead chaplain on July 1. The university said it had invested a substantial amount of time in the search process before deciding that Price would replace Japhet De Oliveira, who left in January to pastor in the U.S. state of Colorado.

“We are delighted to provide an opportunity for June to share with our entire campus community the spiritual gifts and leadership she has so effectively honed and demonstrated over the last decade in her ministry to Lamson residents,” Frances Faehner, vice president of student life at Andrews and chair of the search committee, said in a statement on June 5.

Price said in the statement that she was “humbled and honored to serve the family of God as chaplain.”

Meanwhile, Moskala, the seminary dean, praised Jones for his 19 years of work at Andrews, including the past 10 years as associate dean. “We will greatly miss you as a person and [for] your expertise,” he said. “The only comfort is that you will still live in Berrien Springs and do contract teaching for us.”

The Lake Region Conference that Jones will lead oversees more than 100 churches and eight elementary and high schools in the U.S. states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. It is one of four conferences comprising the Lake Union Conference.

Reeve graduated with a doctorate in Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity from Notre Dame in 2000. Before that, she earned her bachelor’s at Pacific Union College and went on to receive two
master’s degrees from Andrews University, including one in educational and developmental psychology in 1990 and a second in divinity in 1997, according to her LinkedIn profile.

Her husband, John, is an assistant professor of church history at the theological seminary and also serves as editor of Andrews University Seminary Studies, the institution’s scholarly journal.

On LinkedIn, Reeve summarizes herself in one sentence: “Just a quiet servant of the King of the Universe—looking forward to welcoming Him back soon.”
June 30, 2014, Adventist Church Encouraged by Court's Hobby Lobby Decision

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is encouraged with today’s ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in the most anticipated case this term in which religious liberty and the right to healthcare intersected. Today’s decision, in what is referred to as the Hobby Lobby case, reaffirmed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which safeguards the broad religious liberty protections available to all people of faith.

The court’s ruling was the result of appeals by two family owned, for profit companies – Hobby Lobby Stores and Conestoga Woods Specialties – that objected to providing certain forms of birth control as required under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The question for the Court was whether these companies could claim an exemption from this requirement under the First Amendment and the RFRA.

The Hobby Lobby case presented a unique situation for some faith-based organizations, including family owned companies, as religious freedom and health issued intersected.

The Adventist Church’s commitment to religious freedom is well established and long standing. As one of many religious groups that advocated for the passage of the RFRA in 1993, the Church is concerned with any attempt to weaken or restrict the interpretation of the legislation, which protects religious freedom.

Additionally, the Adventist Church’s commitment to health has been clearly established since the Church’s founding. As the operator of one of the largest hospital systems in the U.S. and of hospitals and clinics around the world, the Church’s involvement in improving the health of all, including women, is similarly well established.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in its Fundamental Beliefs and teachings as based on the Bible, does not object to providing the methods of contraception at issue (see Official Seventh-day Adventist Church Statement on Birth Control), and has fully complied with this provision of the AHA for its U.S. based employees. However, the Adventist Church has a long history of defending religious freedom not just for itself but all people of faith. The balancing of interest will always be a difficult task. Further, the Church is concerned that the weakening of religious liberty rights for any group threatens the rights of all people of faith.

The Adventist Church believes that while the provision of contraception is an important goal of the ACA, it is one the government can reach without forcing family held companies to violate their sincerely held religious beliefs.