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Adventists ‘Shake Africa for Christ’ with 2,309 baptisms in Indian Ocean

Church President Wilson attends major evangelistic series

February 11, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Andrew McChesney/Adventist Review

Thousands of people have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church across East Africa, including 2,309 in a mass baptism in the Indian Ocean following three weeks of evangelistic meetings.

The baptisms, held on Saturday, February 7, capped the evangelistic meetings at scores of sites, including about 100 in Tanzania’s capital, Dar es Salaam.

To celebrate, 40,000 people from the 11 countries of the Adventist Church’s East-Central Africa Division packed a stadium in Dar es Salaam for a grand finale under the banner “Mission Extravaganza.” Two hundred buses from Kenya alone brought church members to the event.

It was not immediately clear how many people were baptized across the division, which made extensive use of television and radio in its January 10-31 evangelistic campaign. Geoffrey Mbwana, a general vice president of the General Conference and a native of Tanzania, led major meetings that were broadcast on television.

Adventist Church leader Ted N. C. Wilson, who is on a seven-country tour, spoke on the final day of the series with a call for church members “to shake Africa for Christ.”

Wilson, who would later meet with the president and other senior government officials in Tanzania, expressed awe at the mass baptism early Sabbath morning.

“A beautiful sight! A wonderful blessing from God!” he said by email.

The newly baptized members headed straight from the beach to the National Stadium for worship services.

Wilson, who took the platform to preach, urged the audience to share the news of Jesus’ soon coming in their own communities.

“God calls you to shake Africa for Christ!” Wilson said. “Be in connection and communion with Him every day, being revived and reformed in Him every moment of your life.”

Many of the 40,000 attendees accepted the challenge, and they divided into small groups at the end of the sermon to pray for the Holy Spirit’s power to proclaim the Advent message back at home.

Later, Wilson was joined on the stage by Foreign Minister Bernard Membe and Agriculture Minister Stephen Wasira, who is an Adventist.
Membe, who gave strong affirmation to the Adventist Church in his speech, tweeted two photos of himself on the stage and wrote that he had felt “humbled” to address the crowd.

President Jakaya Kikwete welcomed Wilson and an Adventist delegation to his official residence, the State House, for an evening meal.

Wilson, who called the meeting “very helpful,” noted that Kikwete has been instrumental in preserving peace in Tanzania and helping to resolve conflicts in Cote d’Ivoire, Burundi, and Kenya.

“He is very knowledgeable about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and very complimentary,” Wilson said.

The Mission Extravaganza event officially opened on Friday at the National Stadium with a parade of thousands of people, including Pathfinders, Women’s Ministries members, health workers, pastors, and literature evangelists.

Blasious Ruguri, president of the East-Central African Division, gave a keynote address, followed by presentations from a host of General Conference officers, including Linda Koh, children’s department director; Heather-Dawn Small, Women’s Ministries director; Howard Faigao, Publishing department director; and Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Education department director.

The guest of honor, Tanzania’s vice president, Mohammed Gharib Bilal, told the gathering that the government would guarantee the right to worship but people must also respect one another’s right to worship.

“The doors are open, so we may consult and encourage one another,” he said, according to Tanzania’s The Guardian newspaper.

In conversations with Adventist leaders, the vice president and other government representatives voiced amazement with Mission Extravaganza, saying they had never attended a meeting where people showed such respect and good decorum.

The event was a “great witness for the Adventist message and Christ’s power to bring order to our lives through the Holy Spirit,” Wilson said.

Rwanda’s prime minister commends Adventist education
Church president Wilson also attends opening of university science building

February 11, 2015 | Kigali, Rwanda | Steven Bina/ECD/ANN

Rwanda’s prime minister today commended the Seventh-day Adventist Church for its commitment to education during a ceremony to dedicate a new science and technology center at the denomination’s university in the central African nation.

Anastase Murekezi pledged continued government support of the institution to officials and supporters of Adventist University of Central Africa in Kigali.

Murekezi, who said he was delivering remarks on behalf of President Paul Kagame, said the government wished to continue partnering with the school by providing infrastructure projects and security. The government previously paved a two-kilometer road to the school.

“Communities of faith in Rwanda play an important role in the social sector and the Seventh-day Adventist church is no exception,” Murekezi told the group.

Murekezi said Kagame appreciated AUCA’s long track record in Rwanda. The school was established in 1984 and is one of the oldest private universities in Rwanda.

The ceremony was also attended by Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson, who is on a seven-country tour in the region.

Wilson said Seventh-day Adventists around the world believe in education because of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

“Christ ministered to people physically, mentally, socially and spiritually, and that is why we have educational institutions as one of the four facets of our work,” Wilson told the crowd.

“It is a distinct privilege to be able to offer people an understanding of how to exist in life,” Wilson said, leading up to a nod to Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White. “In fact, we believe coming from a particular writer whom we hold with great respect inspired words, that the foundation of all true education is the knowledge of God.

A member of the country’s Ministry of Education also addressed the group, identifying three areas where the government can collaborate with AUCA: develop teaching staff, intermediary technical skills, and promoting education for women. More than half of AUCA students are female.

There are approximately 4,000 students attending the university. School officials say it has a capacity of 6,000, which is more than three times the number of students who graduated between 1963 and 1994 from the one national university that existed then.

AUCA officials also said they are in preliminary stages of planning a medical school.
Also attending today’s ceremony was Matthew Bediako, former secretary of the Adventist world church and retired minister. He offered closing prayer to conclude the ceremony.

There are more than 580,000 Adventists in Rwanda, according to the Adventist Yearbook.

**Adventists in South Sudan urged to be ambassadors of peace**

**Church President Wilson encourages the 23,000 local believers during a visit**

*February 11, 2015 | Andrew McChesney/Adventist Review | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States*

Seventh-day Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson has encouraged Adventists to be ambassadors of reconciliation and peace in South Sudan, where a yearlong conflict has caused 2 million people to flee their homes and prompted the establishment of a major ADRA program.

Wilson spoke during a two-day visit to the world’s youngest country, which gained independence from Sudan in 2011. He is on a seven-country tour that started in India and Tanzania and will move to Rwanda on Tuesday.

Wilson was welcomed to the country’s capital, Juba, by a jubilant parade of hundreds of Pathfinders and other church members. Women involved with local Women’s Ministries pierced the air with a shrill sound that is used to greet guests. The colorful throng marched from the city center to a compound that houses the local Adventist Church headquarters in temperatures approaching 114 degrees Fahrenheit (45.5 degrees Celsius).

Wilson told the crowd that he had come especially to make sure that they felt like they were part of the Seventh-day Adventist world family.

"We do not want them to feel separated and apart," Wilson said by email. "They are so happy to be part of God’s great family: wonderful, friendly, and faithful people."

Wilson also pointed to 2 Corinthians 5, where Paul says believers are “ambassadors for Christ” and speaks of how God “has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”

“I shared with them their need to be ambassadors of reconciliation and peace in South Sudan to bring peace to the country,” Wilson said.

He made similar remarks in an interview Monday with 94.0 Salvation FM, a radio station owned and operated by the Adventist Church in Juba.
South Sudan has been mired in inter-ethnic conflict since December 2013. The country’s president and his rival reached a power-sharing agreement last month, but the terms have yet to be determined.

Of the 2 million people who have fled their homes over the past year, 1.5 million remain displaced within South Sudan and the rest have sought refuge in neighboring countries, according to UN figures. A senior UN official, Valerie Amos, warned during a visit to Juba on Monday that 2.5 million people urgently need food aid.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency has ongoing health-related work in South Sudan and, because of the conflict, has teamed up with the United Nations to provide emergency food supplies to internally displaced people, said Imad Madanat, vice president for programs at ADRA International.

“The rainy season has made it nearly impossible to access remote villages with food supplies and emergency health care,” Madanat said by email. “The situation in South Sudan is still dire, and we are striving to reach as many internally displaced persons as we can.”

ADRA has 350 employees serving 372,000 people with various programs, including feeding programs, Wilson said. Another 50 employees are to be added soon.

“They are probably the largest ADRA program in the world,” Wilson said after attending a special ADRA meeting on Monday.

It is unclear how many people live in South Sudan, with estimates fluctuating wildly between 8 million and 11 million.

The Adventist Church in South Sudan has 23,000 members worshiping in 59 churches and 166 companies.

At 94.0 Salvation FM, Wilson observed a groundbreaking ceremony for a new media center that will replace a container-like studio used by the radio station.

He also attended the inauguration of smart, new guesthouses at the Adventist compound—decent lodging is difficult to find in the city—and the laying of a cornerstone for a new church that will seat 4,000 people.

**Adventist CIO Lamoreaux asks Church tech experts to ‘imagine the possibilities’**
Annual tech, communication conference started today with online keynote

February 11, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Ansel Oliver/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist Church Chief Information Officer Nancy Lamoreaux opened the denomination’s annual technology conference today by asking how the Church and its members plan to continue embracing technology to spread the gospel.

Her question is one that will be answered over the next few days by experts on implementing emerging technologies for mission and delivery of education.

In a speech that was followed by a panel discussion, Lamoreaux said God had given the Church “a tremendous gift of technology…with the ability to connect globally in ways we are still discovering.”

Lamoreaux delivered her remarks in the keynote address during the Global Adventist Internet Network conference, an annual forum of Adventist technology and communication professionals and enthusiasts.

This year’s GAiN conference is being held online. So far, more than 2,000 people are participating, which is the highest attendance in the forum’s history.

Lamoreaux implored her audience to “imagine the possibilities” of the future. She predicted an “Internet of everything” within five years, saying technology could soon include wireless chargers, 3D bioprinting creating replacement kidneys and other organs, and more than 50 billion devices connected to the Internet.

But the underlying message of her speech, and indeed the conference, is one of making personal contact and changing lives.

Lamoreaux opened with the example of the biblical story of Jesus meeting a Samaritan woman at a well, which, she noted, was Jesus’ longest recorded conversation. The story, from the Gospel of John, tells how the woman became an unlikely disciple after her conversation with Jesus.

“How are we as technology evangelists going to use the ‘Internet of Everything’ to connect, collaborate and change as we meet the ‘woman at the well’?” Lamoreaux concluded.

She previewed other upcoming presentations, including a technology delivery system now being developed by the denomination’s North American Division.

In a panel discussion following the keynote, Ron Vyhmeister, deputy vice chancellor for financial administration at Adventist University of Africa, said the Church in East-Central Africa was also implementing an education delivery system for leaders in the region.
Vyhmeister and DP Harris, vice president for information systems at Loma Linda University in the United States, joined Lamoreaux for the panel discussion.

The trio discussed cell phones, particularly in Kenya, where there are more cell phones than people. Mobile pay through phones in Kenya has become common, Vyhmeister noted. He quoted Microsoft founder Bill Gates who this week commented that the practice has yet to “trickle up” to developed countries.

Participants asked questions via social media channels, with topics ranging from smartphones in church to using the Internet to reach diverse cultural communities.

Harris said smartphones can offer an enhanced church experience by allowing congregants to post sermon notes on social media accounts, but cautioned that the technology should only be used in churches where the practice is not a distraction.

Vyhmeister said the Internet can be used to reach a specific cultural community by pointing them to existing Adventist Church resources. He added that it often helps to first seek out someone from that culture to act as a guide for ministering within the group.

GAiN runs through Sunday, February 15. Presentations and live discussions are held three times each day to accommodate participants in time zones worldwide. To register and participate in this free event, visit gain.adventist.org.

**Adventist IT professionals offer tech advice on security, app development**

Day two of tech conference also promotes geographic info for mission

*February 12, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Ansel Oliver/ANN*

Day two of the Global Adventist Internet Network conference featured the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s top IT professionals dispensing advice and tips on cyber security, app development and the use of geographic software for more effective regional mission.

GAiN this year is being held online and is drawing participants from nearly 70 countries.

David Greene, IT director for the denomination’s North American Division, began with a presentation on best practices for cyber security. He urged Church IT professionals to consistently test their sites for vulnerabilities and update their security methods.

Greene said that 80 percent of website security certificates will be obsolete in two years, and it’s important to re-key certificates regularly. He also urged Church Web developers to acquire
domain names from official registrars certified by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

Greene warned against several new vulnerabilities since last year’s GAiN conference, including encryption problems POODLE and Heartbleed, as well as the software vulnerabilities GHOST and Shellshock. IT employees can test their websites for vulnerabilities with SSL Labs and Shellshocker.net.

“We have a responsibility to have several layers of protection in place against the things we might not know are going on,” Greene told the online audience. “This isn’t about making websites trustworthy, this is about being trustworthy ourselves—worthy of the trust our visitors have in our websites.”

In a follow-up panel discussion, Greene was joined by Josh R. Rosales, IT director for General Conference Treasury SunPlus. Rosales urged IT directors to rethink shared hosting. “Yes it can be more cost effective, but you don’t know who else is being hosted on that server, and you could be subject to adverse reaction as the result of attacks to company websites whose values do not align with yours.”

Rosales and Greene also said organizations should have policies and protocols to warn their users if data has been breached.

Jerry Chase, a pastor in the U.S. state of Ohio and a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist, presented the benefits of using GIS for mission. GIS is an analytical tool that uses software to combine information from databases and spreadsheets to reveal special relations on a map.

Chase cited the example of the coffee company Starbucks, which has effectively used GIS to open strategically-located stores. That move has been instrumental in revitalizing the corporation’s slumping sales and sagging share price. Chase said GIS can similarly help the Church answer as how many Adventists live in a particular area or which areas lack Adventist outreach.

The Church has used GIS in several instances, Chase said. He cited the independent, supporting ministry Adventist Frontier Mission using GIS 15 years ago to locate unreached people groups in Thailand. Because of that research, there is now an Adventist congregation among the Northern Khmer people, as well as an Adventist radio station.

Chase urged church leaders to use GIS in order to make decisions on “valid facts and statistics” instead of “decisions based on hunches anecdotal information.”

The realization of the potential GIS could offer the Church is growing, he said.

“There has been a growing coalition of [Adventist] leaders from IT, Global Mission, and Communications who are working toward a connected, interactive data system to assist leaders in making important mission critical decisions.”

A panel discussion highlighted how Church leaders at the denomination’s headquarters had tasked its Office of Archives, Statistics and Research to examine world regions of membership growth, plateau or decline.
A conference participant in Venezuela said he used GIS to map strategic small group meeting locations.

Participants this week are sending questions to discussion panels on Twitter and Facebook using the hashtag #GAiN15.

Harvey Alférez, professor at the School of Engineering and Technology at Montemorelos University in Mexico, then delivered a presentation on building mobile apps.

Alférez focused on the development of an idea and making sure it helped solve a problem in a different way than existing apps. The developer, he said, should make sure the idea is put to paper in a project management strategy with wireframes.

The building of the app itself can be done. But said he didn't recommend cloud-based tools because of the expense.

Several participants throughout the day asked if a register of Adventist apps existed. Italo Osorio, a senior web manager for the Adventist Church headquarters, said his team would soon work to develop one. That move would help eliminate duplication efforts of local Church members working on their own apps or “reinventing the wheel,” said Daryl Gungadoo, global research and development engineer for Adventist World Radio.

Gungadoo then co-presented with Sven Fockner of Germany’s Stimme der Hoffnung media center on how Bible correspondence schools can offer a greater variety of learning styles.

Gungadoo said there are at least nine ways people learn, such as words, pictures, music, personal interaction and feeling. Bible Correspondence schools have typically offered one or two approaches, mostly based on words. The four primary Adventist Bible correspondence schools—in the U.S., Germany, Australia and Brazil—are being encouraged to offer lessons that cater to all nine learning styles.

“Our plea is to get us all thinking to produce that way,” Gungadoo said. Artificial intelligence technology will soon detect a person’s learning style and match them with the right approach for them, he added.

GAiN runs through Sunday, February 15. Presentations and live discussions are held three times each day to accommodate participants in time zones worldwide. To register and participate in this free event, visit gain.adventist.org, where presentations will also be posted a few weeks after the conference.

Adventist Church to launch distance-learning Web portal
Tech conference also invites Church entities to adopt Web design standards for consistent corporate identity

February 13, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Ansel Oliver/ANN

Leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s North American Division offered a preview of its upcoming Web portal for education and training resources, an initiative that is expected to bolster distance learning for ministers, lay leaders and students.

The initiative, named Adventist Learning Community, will enable Church entities and schools to share courses and certification resources for ministries best practices.

Division representatives previewed the system on the third day of the Global Adventist Internet Network conference. Other presenters today invited Church entities to embrace the Adventist online identity standards and consider multi-site congregations where appropriate.

GAiN is an annual gathering of Adventist technology, communication and ministry professionals who promote the use of emerging technologies to spread the gospel.

“Distance education for ministerial and educational purposes is a paradigm shift for how our Church does business,” said Adam Fenner, ALC director.

Fenner said five Adventist universities in North America currently offer the same course online, along with staff at each school supporting the programing. Combining resources, Fenner said, will enhance how the division delivers distance education.

“The quality of the courses would be much better, both in terms of content and media, and the cost to build and deliver the courses would be significantly less for the Church as a whole,” Fenner said.

Certifications are in the works for Family Ministries, Adult Ministries, Adventist Community Services, Youth Ministries and philanthropy, Fenner said.

The Adventist Learning Community will be available in March at adventistlearningcommunity.com.

In another presentation, Dean Waterman, who serves as a pastor in the U.S. state of Virginia, promoted the model of a multi-site congregation. The concept is one that plants a campus tied to the primary church, jumpstarting the church-planting process. Often, the branch location shares worship services through live-streaming.

Waterman said the model has grown in recent years. Today there are 10,000 multi-site churches of various denominations in the United States, up from 3,000 a decade ago.

Advantages include the sharing of resources and personnel. It also serves as a faster way to plant a strong congregation in a new area—five months instead of five years, Waterman said. Also, a declining church can receive support by joining ministries with a thriving congregation.
“I believe the multi-site model is one of the most effective tools we could look at,” Waterman said.

Church leaders today also said the multi-site model can also offer greater unity and support for evangelism efforts in its various locations.

“By bonding together and sharing the pool of spiritual gifts, these congregations, it seems, would be more effective in reaching the community,” said Garrett Caldwell, the associate Communication department director for public relations at the Adventist Church world headquarters, who joined Waterman on a discussion panel.

Caldwell also joined the next presentation promoting the denomination’s online visual identity standards. In late 2013, the denomination released a corporate Web framework encouraging Church entities and congregations to maintain similar branding.

The identity framework is available for netAdventist, Wordpress, and other systems as HTML / CSS. It is available at framework.adventist.org.

“The identity standard is an extension of our logo. It strengthens our brand,” said Williams Costa Jr., Communication director of the Adventist world church.

The framework’s designers said they created a simple layout that promotes the Church’s values in a way that appeals to people wanting to know more about Adventists. While the framework offers a worldwide identity, it was also designed for local customization.

Today’s final presentation, Jesse Johnson, president of netAserve, talked about StudyTracker, a Bible study system on the netAdventist platform.

StudyTracker works with cards that include a paper USB drive and near field communication, or NFC, to electronically deliver Bible studies. It also offers a smartphone app that handles campaigns and events by offering a scannable QR code to track attendance at meetings.

GAiN runs through Sunday, February 15. Presentations and live discussions are held three times each day to accommodate participants in time zones worldwide. To register and participate in this free event, visit gain.adventist.org, where presentations will also be posted a few weeks after the conference.

**Adventist tech experts promote gamification for education, ministry**
Final day of Church tech conference also highlights IT department on a budget, cryptocurrency

February 15, 2015 | Ansel Oliver/ANN | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Top Seventh-day Adventist technology experts are promoting the concept of game creation for education and evangelism outreach.

Their call came on the final day of the denomination’s Global Adventist Internet Network conference, which also featured presentations on how to operate an information technology department on a budget and an overview of the increasing popularity and uses of virtual currency, such as Bitcoin.

This year’s GAiN conference was held online and drew participation from people in more than 100 countries. That total included more than 3,800 visitors across four languages—English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

Conference organizers also gave attendees a behind-the-scenes look at GAiN’s 2015 production, a glimpse that offered tips on how regional church administrative units can produce a similar online conference.

DP Harris, vice president for information systems at Loma Linda University, started the day off by promoting game creation within the Adventist Church for purposes of education and ministry.

“Our challenge as educators is to create a learning experience that is engaging, challenging and achievable,” Harris said. “Games are now on the forefront of reaching people all over the world.”

Loma Linda University recently hosted a “game-storming” session in which officials invited high school students to create games promoting healthful living. The university, Harris said, is also developing games for continuing education of medical students and physicians at the university hospital.

Harris identified what he said was the difference between “gaming” and “gamification.”

“‘Gaming’ is when it’s designed to be fun and I try to sneak in teaching. ‘Gamfication’ is when it’s designed to teach and I try to sneak in fun,” he said.

Harris warned, however, that games for educational purposes must still have strong elements of fun or risk being ignored.

Indeed, in a panel discussion, Daryl Gungadoo, research and development engineer for Adventist World Radio, said the Church can learn from game-makers’ past mistakes. The popular geography game “Where in the World Is Carmen San Diego?” was purchased by an educational company, which overhauled the game with more overt learning objectives. The re-launch was met with disastrous results.

“The kids smelled education a mile away and lost interest,” Gungadoo said.
Gungadoo, who is involved with the Adventist-sponsored game “Heroes,” said Adventist World Radio is currently making a game that teaches AWR operations and engineering. Players attempt to send programming from the network’s mega station in Guam to countries throughout Asia by bouncing radio signals off the earth’s ionosphere.

Gungadoo said three Adventist universities currently offer at least one class on game development—Andrews University and Southern Adventist University in the United States, and Montemorelos University in Mexico.

The next presenter, Kirk Nugent, IT director for the denomination’s Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, based in South Africa, shared his experience of building and maintaining an IT department on a budget.

"Understand the organization’s strategic plan,” Nugent told participants as his top tip in order to create solutions that help implement a Church administration’s goals. “Partner with the departments, get to know their specific struggles, their desires, their dreams, and help them realize what technology can do to accomplish them.”

Nugent said an Adventist IT director must leverage the equipment and resources he or she has. "In IT we like to paint a bleak picture that we really have nothing, but this is honestly not the case. We need to be open to zero-cost solutions just as much as everyone else,” Nugent said. He went on to tell biblical stories in which God used a little amount of food to feed 5,000 people, or a few soldiers following Gideon to defeat a large army. “Start with what you have and see how God can bless.”

Nugent also recommended identifying successful projects that can contribute to multiple needs. In a panel discussion, Luke Pannekoek, IT manager for the denomination’s South Pacific Division, based in Australia, said the division created a Web-based event registration and management solution for the Youth Ministries department event that has since been used for hundreds of other events.

The duo also highlighted the website Alance, a connection platform for Adventist IT professionals looking for employment or volunteer opportunities.

Gungadoo, the AWR engineer, also delivered a presentation on the cryptocurrency Bitcoin.

Many companies are accepting Bitcoin payments, which has superseded Western Union and pulled even with PayPal in total annual financial transfers.

The Adventist Church, too, should accept Bitcoin donations, Gungadoo said. Several companies offer low or no transaction fee for transfers, he said.

“I’m fascinated by this, and I’m thinking our church organization could gain immensely by adopting this capability,” Garrett Caldwell, the Adventist world church’s associate Communication director for public relations, said in a panel discussion.

Missionaries taking large amounts of money to remote areas wouldn’t have to carry bags of cash, and online transfers could take place in seconds instead of hours or days. One disadvantage, however, could be the currency’s fluctuation, Gungadoo said.
Caldwell summarized the point of Gungadoo’s virtual currency presentation with a line that might also epitomize the goal of the entire conference: “The GAiN conference is an appropriate time to throw as many ideas against the wall as possible and see which ones stick,” he said.

Videos from the five-day conference, including a behind-the-scenes look at how it was produced, will be posted soon on the website gain.adventist.org.

**Appeal Dismissed, Ending Lawsuit Against La Sierra University and Church**

**Judge dismisses claims of three university staff members who resigned in 2011**

*February 16, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States*

A lawsuit brought against La Sierra University, the Pacific Union Conference, and the North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists by three university employees has been dismissed by the plaintiffs prior to their appeal being heard by the California State Court of Appeals.

On March 5, 2014, California Superior Court Judge Edward Webster granted summary judgment in favor of La Sierra University and the other defendants by dismissing the claims of the three university staff members who resigned in 2011.

By the three plaintiffs dismissing their appeal, the case is ended with Judge Webster’s ruling, dismissing the case, becoming final. The plaintiffs were not paid any money to dismiss the appeal.

“We are grateful that this lawsuit has ended and that the Church and La Sierra University can focus all of our attention and resources to the quality education of our students,” said Daniel Jackson, president of the North American Division.

Daniel Jackson, Larry Blackmer, NAD Vice President for Education, and Ricardo Graham, president of the Pacific Union of Seventh-day Adventists, were also named as defendants in the lawsuit.