Adventist Review Announces it Will Open its Pages to the Ordination Debate:
After long allowing the independent Adventist-oriented press to enjoy a near-monopoly on coverage of issues in ordination, the Adventist Review has announced that it too will enter the debate....

Redlands Adventist Church Embroiled in Local Environmental Controversy:
Redwood trees in Redlands, California, have a few local members seeing red, after they were informed that they had mistakenly destroyed several redwoods on nextdoor county land and might be liable for damages and fines....

Kingly Power: Is it Finding a Place in the Adventist Church?: Many are voicing increasing fears that the Adventist Church is becoming too power-intensive at the top, demanding compliance from lower levels in a manner unprecedented in the church's history. This article is normally available only to subscribers, but because of its vital importance, will be available for a limited time to all recipients....

California Enacts Workplace Religious Liberty Protections Advocated by Adventists: As prospects wane for a national workplace religious liberty protection act, California joins New York and Oregon in enacting one of its own—to the delight of Adventist religious-liberty advocates....

New York City Outreach Project to Launch Sept. 21-23: Adventism has grown phenomenally in many—if not most—under-urbanized sectors of the world, but despite encouragement by Ellen White in her final years, has yet to catch on strongly in most large cities. A strategic outreach project to reach these cities launches publically this weekend in New York City....

How Adventist Fundamentalists Want Biology to be Taught: What would happen if
universities began presenting creationist literalism as a foundational scientific hypothesis in science programs? Blogger Ervin Taylor has a Doonsbury moment....

**Fully Possessed = Truly Transformed:** Student Missionary/Blogger Katelyn Pauls reflects on her need for the Holy Spirit to direct her in sanctified living—above and beyond her initial commitment to the Lord....

**Lessons from the Creek:** Devotional writer Debbonnaire Kovacs meditates on the seasons of our lives—as revealed in the life of a creek where she and her Pomeranian take refreshing strolls....

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**Eat Local Challenge is on at Andrews University:** Jogging and cycling long distances may be good for the human body, but fruits and vegetables forced to spend too much time on the road can take a nutritional beating. In a quest for better health at Andrews University, Dining Services is focusing on serving only locally grown fare for a special meal next week....

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Adventist Review Announces it Will Open its Pages to the Ordination Debate

Submitted: Sep 15, 2012
By AT News Team

Bill Knott, editor of the Adventist Review, announced in an editorial published in the current issue (dated September 13) that the leading journal of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination will “in coming weeks” publish “articles … interviews, letters, features and editorials” about “the appropriateness of ordaining women to gospel ministry and the process to follow in making that decision.” This is surprising because since the early 1990s, the magazine has published nothing on the topic.

“The church is founded, not on unanimity—and certainly not on uniformity—but on the covenant created by divinely given love and goodwill,” the editor asserted. He cited a quote he has remembered for 35 years from a college professor; “If two people are always agreeing, one of them is not necessary.” And he referenced Matthew 18, stating that “Jesus also expects at least some disagreements among us,” His followers.

Knott cited the fact that in the early history of the denomination his periodical often published materials that disagreed with each other, a practice more carefully controlled in recent decades. “This journal, now 163 years old, was the vital bulletin board of ideas and visions around which the first generation of Sabbathkeeping Adventists gathered to learn how to talk and live with each other.”

This is an unexpected development to all the observers that Adventist Today has contacted. Many are dubious about how open and balanced the materials may be. After all, the journal is published by the General Conference and the GC president is chairman of its board. “It is unlikely that this decision was made entirely independently by the editor,” a veteran church administrator told Adventist Today.

Despite the surprise and skepticism, advocates of removing gender discrimination in ordination welcomed the announcement. Every Bible study conducted by Adventists on this topic at the level of quality that the Adventist Review typically publishes has resulted in agreement that Scripture does not prohibit extending ordination to qualified women.

Knott’s editorial is careful not to wish for too much. “I’m praying that what we read and ponder here in the days ahead will improve the quality of our conversation and our respect for those who disagree with us,” the piece ends. He does not say if he also prays for a solution that would permit the denomination to bring closure to the ordination debate and move beyond it.
Redlands Adventist Church Embroiled in Local Environmental Controversy

Submitted: Sep 17, 2012
By AT News Team

Updated September 27

How difficult community involvement can be for a congregation is illustrated in the local conflict that the Redlands Seventh-day Adventist Church has become embroiled in. The church had two trees removed near the edge of property where a new annex is being constructed, redwoods that belong to the municipal government and are over 80 years old, according to the Redlands Daily Facts.

City officials responded very negatively when they found out about it. On September 6 a special meeting at city hall was convened to discuss the situation. It included “city manager N. Enrique Martinez, Quality of Life director Fred Cardenas, city attorney Dan McHugh, director of community development Oscar Orci, the city’s parks and field coordinator Erik Reeves, city code enforcement officer Robert Montaghami and public information officer Carl Baker,” the newspaper reported. A week later at a community forum Martinez was questioned by “passionate” residents as to what the city planned to do about it.

“I take it very, very seriously,” the city manager told the newspaper. “I can’t speak for the City Council, but the City Council has gone record since I’ve been here about how important the urban forest is to the city. It’s not just important for oxygen, but for economic development and beauty.” Cardenas said “quite a few ordinances were violated.” The newspaper reported that the replacement cost of the trees is estimated to be $27,000.

Pastor Zach Thorp has taken responsibility for the removal of the trees without getting permission from the municipality. “He said … the trees posed a safety hazard to traffic, because branches blocked the stop sign; pedestrians, because drivers could not see people waiting to cross [the street]; and churchgoers and passersby, because the tree was dying and, especially during and after storms, limbs could fall,” according to the newspaper.

The pastor is quoted, “We certainly value the trees in Redlands, and we’re wanting to put five large trees in there to landscape that boulevard, and give them adequate water so they can (be healthy), obviously at our cost. We’ll maintain the trees on a regular basis.” Evidently the plan violates a city code that requires 40 feet between trees, which means there is only room for two trees in the space in question.

The city government is deciding whether or not to pursue criminal or civil penalties, according to the newspaper. The next City Council session is scheduled for September 18 and Martinez has indicated that a full report will be made on the issue.

The pastor “has been cooperatives by all accounts, and stressed that he never meant to hurt anyone,” the newspaper reported. It quoted his apology, “we’re sorrowful for any sorrow that it’s caused anyone. We obviously want to be great neighbors.” The newspaper did not report on any neighbors who support the removal of the trees, although history indicates that there likely are some, perhaps even a majority.
Update

At a meeting of the city council on September 18, the pastor apologized to the neighbors and municipal representatives for the removal of the trees and assured them that the church would replace the trees. Sources have told Adventist Today that the company that did the removal failed to alert the pastor to the restrictions involved.

Sources familiar with the congregation and the town told Adventist Today that the Redlands Church is known to be a community church. Out of the 244 active members, 146 or nearly 60 percent live in the City of Redlands. This is a very different situation than most Adventist churches as shown in national surveys. In most Adventist congregations, the majority of the members do not live in the community where the church building is located.

In fact, the purpose of the current construction project is to create space for meeting community needs as well as for church activities, a source told Adventist Today. A large part of the new building is dedicated to rooms for the community to utilize for concerts, programs and social events.
Kingly power: Is It Finding a Place in the Adventist Church

Submitted: Aug 31, 2012
By Stanley E. Patterson

Current happenings in the North American Division are unexpectedly shining a new light on realities hammered out during the passionate process of redefining the organizational structure of the church at the General Conference Session of 1901. The present issue is parity between men and women who serve a pastoral role in the leadership of the church, but the context in which that challenge is being played out is the governance structure of the church.

The North American Division (NAD) was recently corrected by General Conference legal counsel, who reported that the division could not develop policy related to the role of women in church leadership if such policy differed from General Conference policy. Since the division is an extension of the General Conference and has no separate constituency, it has no latitude to authorize such differentiation.

But what about the next rung down on the organizational ladder: the union conferences? Since unions do have a legitimate constituency, would it be reasonable to assume that an action taken by vote of their constituency would have the right to alter policy and practice related to the place and authority of women who lead as pastors?

The answer is not as simple as one might be tempted to assume. Over the years, the latitude available for differentiated action on the part of the union conferences and local conferences has become increasingly restricted. A review of the model Constitution and Bylaws from 1980 to the present will reveal a gradual tightening of the restrictions placed upon union conferences and local conferences by mandating certain elements of the model constitution that must be implemented in order to comply with General Conference policy and procedure. Copies of the model document published in editions of the Constitution and Bylaws and the General Conference Working Policy after 1995 include required bold face type to identify the portions of the model that must be incorporated into the constitutions and bylaws of local conferences and union conferences. It should be noted that it appears that mandate has not been uniformly incorporated across the North American Division.

The prologue regarding implementation of the model Constitution and Bylaws of 1980 referenced as C 70 05: “This model is to be followed as nearly as possible by union conferences.” In 1985 it was recorded as follows: “Model Union Conference Constitution and Bylaws for use as guidelines to be followed as closely as possible pending final consideration by the 1987 Annual Council.” The trend becomes clear by 1995, when the same item reads:

“This model constitution shall be followed by all union conferences. The model bylaws may be modified, with the approval of the next higher organization. Those sections of the model bylaws that appear in bold print are essential to the unity of the Church worldwide, and shall be included in the bylaws as adopted by each union conference. Other sections of the model bylaws may be modified … provided they continue to be in full harmony with the provisions of this model. Amendments to the model Union Conference Constitution and Bylaws shall be made by action of the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at any Annual Council of that Committee.”

The 2010 edition reflects some changes but reads essentially the same as what is put forth in the
The model constitution that once was presented as guidance and recommendation has morphed into a document that carries significant mandate from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which serves as the determining agent in regard to whether a policy initiative by a union conference or a local conference is in agreement or not. This assumes that the boldfaced items in the model constitution are supported by a vote of the delegates at a General Conference session and not simply the work of a committee at the General Conference office, apart from a session vote authorizing the mandates.

The question that remains unanswered is how the governance process will play out if a union conference receives (or is given) a mandate by its constituency that requires women to be placed on an equal footing with men when it comes to denominational opportunities and formal affirmations in the pastoral leadership role. What parameters are intended in the policy that grants authority solely to the union conferences to authorize ordination of pastors?

Since there is no formal prohibition against ordaining women to gospel ministry, then what existing policy at the General Conference would be referenced as reflecting the voice of the people (General Conference in session) regarding the ordination of women? Certainly we have guidelines for ordination, but do those guidelines explicitly prohibit the ecclesiastical affirmation of women? Or do they simply describe the process of ordination? Maybe legal experts will be able to uncover restrictive ordination policies that I have failed to discover, but I find no policy that is being defied by those seeking to establish parity for male and female pastors.

But regardless of the posture of either organization, it must be admitted that the Seventh-day Adventist system was designed to support an upward flow of authority from the people to the leaders who serve the church at the various organizational levels. We must be reminded that such leaders exercise authority loaned in trust by the people—our leaders do not own authority.

Policies were developed not by proactive legislation, but rather by recognition of what was generally or commonly practiced by the people. The Church Manual emerged in such a fashion, and though it sometimes seems like a patchwork quilt of ecclesial policy, it has the honor of representing the voice of the people rather than expert clerics. What we see emerging in terms of practice at the local conference and union conference levels will certainly be viewed by some as rebellion and a move toward disunity. Careful reflection regarding how our systems of ecclesiology emerged, however, will reveal an exercise of authority by the people that is legitimized through the representative process of the local and union conferences and ultimately at the General Conference Session. It starts at the bottom and is processed upward.

Accountability

Let’s take a look at who answers to whom in our beloved church. First, let me express a caution. We are culturally conditioned to think in terms of top-down hierarchy when it comes to accountability. We naturally assume that we are accountable to those above us, but this assumption doesn’t apply to the church. Take a moment and recall the words of the Master spoken on Thursday evening before his death on Friday: “He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves” (Luke 22:26, NKJV). This excerpt is part of a larger discussion in the Gospels that challenges the top-down hierarchical model (Matt. 18:1-5; 20:25-28; Mark 10:43-44; John 13:12-17) that we intuitively draw on when considering accountability. Jesus turned it upside down, and so did the delegates to the 1901 General Conference session. Those who are loaned authority for their term of service by the people
should be honored by those over whom they are given authority (Heb. 13:17), but it remains the God-given responsibility of the corporate body of believers to delegate the authority by which each level of the organization functions.

The intuitive assumption is that the “lower” organizations are accountable to the higher organization. This assumption is intuitive but wrong. Accountability in the Seventh-day Adventist system always takes us back to the people, for it is the church members who hold the divine gift of authority, and it is to them that all levels of the church ultimately answer. All positional authority is granted by the people on a basis that is limited by both time and scope—whether the position is General Conference president or local pastor.

The Consolidation Tendency
The tendency of human organizations is to move from a model of distributed authority toward a consolidation of authority—from authority exercised by many to authority exercised by a few (or, in extreme cases, one). Consider Israel’s persistence in pressing for a king (Judges 8; 1 Samuel 9), wherein God proclaims himself to be rejected in the process. Consider the dramatic consolidation of the radically distributed authority in the New Testament church as it raced toward a papal system that proclaimed the people to be the subjects of authority rather than the possessors of it. Multiple examples of this tendency can be cited throughout biblical history. God distributes authority; people tend to consolidate it.

What about our church? If you review the background leading up to the reorganization of the church in 1901, it will show that the reorganization was a solution designed in reaction to a process of consolidation of power that resulted in what Ellen White referred to repeatedly as “kingly authority.” The following quote was penned in 1903, and it provides a sense of time during which the leadership behavior problem was maturing:

“In the work of God no kingly authority is to be exercised by any human being, or by two or three. The representatives of the Conference, as it has been carried with authority for the last 20 years, shall be no longer justified in saying, ‘The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we.’ The men in positions of trust have not been carrying the work wisely.”

Except As We Shall Forget
It has been a little over a hundred years since our ecclesial ancestors struggled with the issues of organization and leadership and came up with the church structure and the leadership guidelines that define our representative system of church governance. Up until that time, the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church seems to have unfolded in response to practical needs. At first our spiritual forbears resisted organization; then in the mid-19th century they recognized a need for more order as our numbers and the complexity of the body increased. Finally, late in the 19th century, the church discovered that careful organization was absolutely essential.

The move to organize was not prompted solely by the issue of complexity brought on by growing churches and mission expansion; it was also a response to the leadership behavior of church officials at the highest levels. As far back as the time of the Greek philosopher Plato, humans have recognized the predictable and progressive change in leadership behavior that edged toward authoritarian and dictatorial patterns. In his discussion of rulership and tyranny, Plato wrote, “When he [tyrant] first appears above ground he is a protector.” The move from protector to tyrant is a common transition in human leadership behavior—one to which the church has no automatic immunity. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 both describe Lucifer’s journey of
selfascendancy in similar terms but with tragic results.

Ellen White was engaged with the issue of leadership, authority, and power issues much of the time after her return from Australia in September 1900 until her death in 1915. Many Leadership reveal her positions on leadership and organizational behavior in reaction to what was happening during this period. Here is an example of the tone of her counsel:

“No man has been made a master, to rule the mind and conscience of a fellow-being. Let us be very careful how we deal with God’s blood-bought heritage. To no man has been appointed the work of being a ruler over his fellow men. Every man is to bear his own burden. He may speak words of encouragement, faith, and hope to his fellow-workers; he may help them to bear their special burdens … .”6

There are many such comments in her writings, to be found in context in the manuscripts of her work. She was clearly engaged in turning the church away from both behavior and policies that consolidated authority in one or a few, rather than distributing governance and leadership authority broadly throughout the body of Christ.

Reorganization
Ellen White was also engaged vigorously in the preparation and conduct of the General Conference Session of 1901. She was present in spite of her poor health and made the following statement in a closed meeting just prior to the session, which was quoted by A.T. Jones:

“But when we see that message after message given by God has been received and accepted, yet no change has been made, we know that new power must be brought into the regular lines. The management of the regular lines must be entirely changed, newly organized.”7

She was frustrated by the fact that organizational and leadership behavior issues had been addressed by her to church leaders for more than a decade but with no change realized. Consequently, the issue of change in this arena became part of the work of the 1901 General Conference Session.

The trend leading up to the 1901 Session was a move away from the distributed model and toward a hierarchical model in both leadership behavior and organization. Authority was progressively collecting at the top, to the end that both members and church employees were
being made subject to the authority of those residing “above” them. The 1901 Session made a radical shift away from the hierarchical model, wherein power and authority flows down to those who are subject thereto, and instead focused upon the freedom and inherent capacity of the individual member and employee.

Again E.G. White speaks in favor of the distributed model: “Each is to have an individual experience in being taught by the Great Teacher, and individual communion with God.”8

**Figure 1: SDA Authority Structure**

Representative Model
The delegates to the session and those immediately following 1901 brought forth a model of organization that tipped the hierarchy of power on its head. Instead of authority being vested in ecclesiastical leaders, it was laid upon those at the base—the members of the church. Authority flowed up through a process of delegation (see Figure 1). It was loaned to leaders at the various levels on a limited basis. No leader owned authority, but rather functioned as a steward of authority until the end of his/her term—and only within the organizational and geographical scope of the defined assignment.

The 1901 reorganization began a process that placed a barrier between each level of the church. This severely limited the personal authority of leaders beyond their immediate placement. The General Conference was limited in its authority over union conferences. Unions were designed as semiautonomous entities with limited ability to dictate to local conferences, and up until 1980 they were held accountable at their sessions by a constituency that included every ordained pastor in the union conference as a voting delegate. Conferences in turn had boundaries that limited their authority in the local churches. Leaders at each level, including the local church, answered to a representative constituency.

Again Ellen White affirms this model: “It has been a necessity to organize union conferences, that the General Conference shall not exercise dictation over all the separate conferences. The power vested in the Conference is not to be centered in one man, or two men, or six men; there is to be a council of men over the separate divisions.”9

This model is in stark contrast to the papal and the episcopal models, wherein authority is vested in an individual clergyman (papal) or group of clergymen (episcopal), who exercise it downward to a submissive constituency. The Seventh-day Adventist hierarchy of power was displaced in 1901 by a hierarchy of order that served the organizational needs of the church without consolidating power in any one individual. In so doing, the 1901 Session turned back the process that 1800 years before had led the early church down the path toward papacy.

**The Representative System Today**
God gave us an exceptional system of organization. It is the result of committed, God-fearing people who struggled with issues of organization and leadership in honest, open debate and produced a model that is “smarter” than any one of us. It’s a system that takes us back beyond the kings of Israel to a time wherein each son and daughter of God related directly to him as ruler. Gideon referenced this relationship with God in his answer to the elders of Israel when they requested that he become king: “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you” (Judges 8:23, NKJV). Each person carried the responsibility of service before God. So it is that the 1901 reorganization challenged the concept of kingly power and
1903 GC Session Challenge
Proponents of the centralized model of authority challenged the newly adopted representative model at the 1903 General Conference Session. The delegates defended the idea that it was the people’s church and held to the distributed model of governance and rejected what was referred by some as “kingly authority.”10 It should not be ignored, however, that the tendency to control rather than to trust the voice of the body remains a temptation that has an insidious and persistent pull upon those called to lead. Remember Plato’s tyrant; he started out as a protector! We must ask ourselves and, yes, even assess our organization to determine whether controlling behavior is impacting the church in a systemic manner. Are we still honoring the spirit of the 1901 reorganization? There is evidence that the church is functionally moving toward an episcopal model as the representative structure crumbles from lack of maintenance.

Much will be revealed in the coming months relative to how the organized church will respond to the initiative by some union conferences in North America to take constituent action to address parity between male and female pastors regarding formal acts of affirmation. Is such action a legitimate move by the people to address issues that impact their sense of corporate and individual integrity? Or is such action a challenge to the General Conference, which is commissioned to implement the collective voice of the people on a global scale, and thus assure unity and in some sense ecclesiastic uniformity? Looking from the bottom up, it seems to make sense to move forward to address a problem with action affirmed by the constituency. Looking down from the top, it is understandable that anxieties might rise as the certainty of uniform beliefs and corporate behavior becomes less certain.

In the process of solving this problem, the church must renew its commitment to its root structure, wherein authority flows up from the people. In the end we must honor that collective voice, which over the years has grown faint. The denomination must refresh the concept of representative governance and build trust between the organized church and the body of believers by implementing concrete efforts to hear and value the collective voice of the body. The Master intentionally called his disciples friends rather than servants, and in that spirit the organized church must establish a relationship with the people they serve. God’s church is after all, the people’s church.

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1 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, NAD Constitution, Bylaws and Working Policy (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1980), C 70 05.
3 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Constitution, Bylaws and Working Policy (Silver Spring, Maryland: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), pp. 165-166.
10 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, General Conference Bulletin, in General Conference Session (Oakland, California: GC Secretariat, 1903), pp. 149-166.
California Enacts Workplace Religious Liberty Protections Advocated by Adventists

Submitted: Sep 18, 2012
By Adventist News Network

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has long lobbied for increased legal protection against religious discrimination by employers. A new state law in California offers more protection for church members whose jobs are jeopardized by Sabbath observance, according to religious liberty specialists.

AB 1964 was signed into law last week by Governor Jerry Brown and goes into effect on January 1, 2013. It clarifies an employer’s responsibility to accommodate the religious beliefs and practices of employees under the state’s Fair Employment and Housing Act. Religious dress and grooming – such as turbans, hijabs and beards – now fall under protections granted by the legislation.

The new law also prevents employers from keeping visibly religious employees in back offices or basements. No longer will it be legal to segregate a worker from public view because their appearance did not fit a corporate image, California Assemblywoman Mariko Amada-Avis, author of the bill, said in a news release from her district office.

The lawmaker said the bill responds to changing demographics in California. Growing Sikh and Muslim communities in the state and nationwide have contributed to a recent uptick in workplace discrimination cases, the news release said. For Adventist supporters, the bill also extends rights to employees whose religious expression, while perhaps less tangible, is no less important.

The bill sends a clear signal to companies regarding their obligations to religious employees, said Alan J. Reinach, director of the Church State Council, a religious liberty organization of the Adventist Church in California. “Hopefully, fewer Californians will lose their jobs, and Seventh-day Adventists will be more secure in their right to keep holy the Sabbath day,” Reinach said.

Enactment of the new law makes California the third state in the nation to legislate workplace religious rights. Previously, New York and Oregon passed laws with similar provisions.

Adventist religious liberty advocates have worked for years with an interfaith coalition to secure a workplace religious freedom act at the national level, but waning Congressional interest and disagreement over the scope of such legislation has tempered enthusiasm. Wayne Leslie, director of Legislative Affairs for the General Conference, says the new California law signals a grassroots approach to finding traction for workplace religious liberty protections. This is a big step forward for all people of faith, Leslie said. "I commend them for pushing for this to get it done in California, and I’m hopeful that this will happen in other states," he added.

Written by Elizabeth Lechleitner, ANN staff writer.
New York City Outreach Project to Launch September 21-23

Submitted: Sep 20, 2012
By AT News Team

New York 13 begins this coming weekend with events in three languages that will be uplinked by satellite across North America. The outreach project that will continue for more than a year in the largest metropolitan area in the United States, the first year of a strategy voted by the General Conference executive committee at the 2011 Annual Council which refocuses the denomination’s missional activity on cities.

The inaugural events will highlight prayer, health and pre-evangelism plans. Friday, September 21, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. (Eastern Time), Pastor Carlton Byrd, director of the Breath of Life television ministry will kick off the prayer emphasis. Sabbath morning, September 22, Pastor Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference will speak. Sabbath afternoon, Pastor Robert Costa from the New Jersey Conference, will speak in Spanish, and from 6 p.m. on Pastor Abraham Jules from the Southern New England Conference will continue in English. All of these events will be uplinked from the North Bronx Church, 3743 Bronxwood Avenue (NY 10469).

Sunday, September 23, a five kilometer run and walk is scheduled, Let’s Move Day 2012. There will be five age groups—experienced runners over 55, adults 36 through 55, young adults 18 through 35, teens 13 through 17 and juniors 10 through 12. Those who register for $15 will receive an official T-shirt, participation medal and access to support services.

Adventists throughout North America and parts of Latin America will be able to view these live events on the Hope Channel. Anyone around the world who has access to the Web can also access the activities through the Hope Channel websites. The Spanish-language channel related to the Hope Channel, Esperanza TV, will carry Spanish versions of the events and the Atlantic Union Conference is providing access in French through Atlantic Union Adventist Media (AUAM) TV.

The New York 13 project is intended to provide more than just meetings. Efforts have already been launched to impact the health of the city and meet a wide range of human needs in local communities. July 13-22 a total of 87 volunteers were provided with 80 hours of training as community health workers. The training was coordinated by Leroy Daley, health ministry director for the Northeastern Conference and included presentations and workshops on hypertension, cancer, diabetes, weight management, massage, mental health, natural remedies and alternative medicine. The volunteers will be conducting prevention seminars in more than 30 neighborhoods.

A Leadership Development Symposium scheduled for October 11-13 will provide training in urban ministry and community impact. Presentations and workshops will be provided by Katia Reinert, health ministries director for the North American Division (NAD); Sung Kwon, director of Adventist Community Services; Gaspar Colon, director of the center for metropolitan ministry at Washington Adventist University (WAU); Zdravko Plantak, chairman of the religion department at WAU; Lilya Wagner, director of the Philanthropic Service for Institutions; Ivan Warden, associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate and former professor of urban ministry at the theological seminary at Andrews University; Gary Krause, director of Adventist Mission for the General Conference; and May-Ellen Colon, director of Adventist Community Services
International. This event will be located at the Hilton Stamford Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut.

Information and resources are available at a website established specifically for this project, [www.ny13.org](http://www.ny13.org). This includes a form that independent ministries, as well as denominational institutions and organizations can use to offer their resources to the overall project.

*The information in this story was provided by the NAD NewsPoints.*
How Adventist Fundamentalists Want Biology to be Taught

Submitted: Sep 16, 2012
By Ervin Taylor

Warning: The theme for this blog was inspired by a Doonesbury cartoon.

Scene: A high school teacher is lecturing to a biology class.

Teacher: “So the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence massively supports a theory of evolution that rationally explains everything we know about biology. However, as students at a faith-based school, you need to be informed about a theory supported by somewhere between 1 and 2% of the scientific evidence.”

Teacher continues: “The alternative theory goes something like this. About 6,000 years ago, the ‘heavens and the earth and all life upon it were created in six days. Unfortunately, things didn’t work out so well. There was a talking snake and a tree and well . . . anyway, a worldwide flood drowned everything on earth except the family of a 600-year old man who was charged with saving animals. So this man took 2 of everything including microbes, but forgot the dinosaurs .and put them all in this boat. Then . . . “

Student: “Sir?”

Teacher: “Yes?”

Student: “Could you please stop. I’d like to go to a good university.”
Recently, I’ve been reading through *The Desire of Ages*. I stumbled across a part in chapter 17 last night that struck me. This chapter is about Nicodemus and his secret night meeting with Jesus. I really like the part where Jesus used the analogy of the wind. He told Nicodemus that even though we see the leaves and branches moving, we can’t actually see the wind. Ellen White says the same is true of the work of the Spirit on someone’s heart. She wrote, “When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life” (DA, pg. 173). We can’t see the Spirit of God, but we can see a changed life.

This started the gears turning in my head. I have accepted Jesus and believe that He has saved me. But does God’s Spirit live in my heart? Has my life been changed? I know that I want Him to possess my heart. But do I realize the consequences that will follow that decision? Do I really want my life to be transformed?

It seems like an obvious answer. Of course I want God to change my life. But sometimes I forget about all of the “little sins” that would have to be removed from my life as well. Do I really want to give God control over the types of books I read or the movies I watch? Do I want to let Him decide how I spend my free time? These seem like minuscule details but all of these would have to be addressed before my life would be fully transformed.

I’ve heard a story before that compares my heart to a house. When Jesus comes over, He wants to see everything. Not just the nice rooms that I’ve cleaned especially for Him. He wants to see that closet in the back where all of my dirty laundry has been shoved to be washed later. He wants to see where I’ve hidden all of my contrary thoughts and actions under the bed. He offers to clean my house for me, but Jesus doesn’t do a surface job. He cleans every nook and cranny, in the closet and under the bed. I know I can’t clean the house alone, but if I want Jesus’ help, He wants access to all of my heart.

So now that I’ve let Him into my heart, it’s time for us to get busy. Those books that do nothing but entertain me, shelved. Those movies that really don’t have any value, thrown out. Instead I hope to focus on God and the words He has for me in the Bible. I want to spend my time doing things that will benefit me and others eternally. Forget these things that only entertain momentarily. In the end, they are the biggest waste of my time here on earth!

I want the Spirit of God to fully possess my heart. I know it will be painful at first. It’s not easy to give up those things that I want and have grown accustomed to. However, I know that I want to be truly transformed, from the inside out. In order for that to happen, I need to make some changes. I want to be a true child of God, one whose Father lives in her nice, clean heart.
Lessons from the Creek

Submitted: Sep 20, 2012
By Debbonnaire Kovacs

I was walking with my little Pomeranian along my creek a few days ago. Well--I was walking, she was dashing and splashing. I was surprised at how low the water level still is after all the rain we've had lately, and reflected that the drought had been so long and so hot that it would take a while to catch up. But then, it usually does dry up, or mostly dry up, during the summer months, and it always recovers eventually.

I always try to take our early morning walks in a prayerful mode, so it was a natural step to contemplate that I, too, "dry up" periodically. When I do, I generally panic, thinking that something is terribly wrong with me, I must not love God enough, or my fellow humans enough. Or maybe I don't healthfully love myself enough! Maybe there's something I'm supposed to be doing to care for my soul that would prevent this awful feeling of dryness, unproductiveness, isolation--give it what name you will.

I eyed the little brown stream, contentedly bubbling along (and the little blonde dog dashing about, sniffing glorious sniffs and making great waves and general delightful muddiness.) As Kentucky poet Wendell Berry says, the wild things don't "tax their lives with forethought of grief." The creek doesn't even notice that it's dry sometimes, let alone worry about it. If it could think, it would no doubt accept that it's a natural cycle, to be waited patiently through. Maybe even enjoyed. Kind of a vacation from wateriness.

It could be.

And I could accept the dry spell, trust that it's temporary, rejoice in the rest and rejoice also in the rain when it comes back. Splash in the storms and the puddles, explore the edges of my banks where the boundaries change daily, play with the puppies and the mud puppies.

I could. . .
Eat Local Challenge is on at Andrews University

Submitted: Sep 20, 2012
By Andrews University Media Relations

Berrien Springs, Mich.—Can we feed hundreds an entire vegetarian meal made of only locally sourced food? At Andrews University’s Dining Services, the answer is yes, we can. On Tuesday, Sept. 25, from 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m., Dining Services will take part in Bon Appétit Management Company’s “Eat Local Challenge” by serving up lunch made entirely from ingredients sourced within 150 miles of Berrien Springs, Mich., with a vast majority of the ingredients sourced from the Andrews University Farm. The Eat Local Challenge is open to the public. Regular lunch prices apply, $7.75 (plus tax) for all you-care-to-eat.

The local farms and suppliers sourced for the “Eat Local Challenge” include: Andrews University Farm (Berrien Springs, Mich.); Leduc Blueberries (Paw Paw, Mich.); Michigan Sugar Company (Bay City, Mich.); Total Health Inc. (Buchanan, Mich.); Todd Griener Farms (Hart, Mich.); Windmill Island (Holland, Mich.); Guggisberg (Middlebury, Ind.); Rosewood Acres (Lansing, Mich.); Windmill Island (Holland, Mich.); Zeeland Foods (Zeeland, Mich.); Country Life (Paw Paw, Mich.); Carlson-Arbogast Farms (Lansing, Mich.) and Dave Pagel Farm (Berrien Springs, Mich.). Additionally, the breads were all locally baked by Apple Valley Bakery (Berrien Springs, Mich.).

This is the first year Gil Bell, owner of Total Health Inc., in Buchanan, has supplied produce for the event. “Eating local actually helps produce a much higher quality nutrient value in our food. The produce doesn’t have to travel across the county, losing nutrients with age, or be sprayed with preservatives in order to extend shelf life.”

This marks the third year Andrews University’s Dining Services, which serves an all-vegetarian menu, has participated in the Eat Local Challenge. It is just one way Dining Services is accepting Andrews University President Niels-Erik Andreasen’s challenge to make Andrews the healthiest university in the United States. “Eating local has become a mainstream of our culture. It’s more popular than it used to be. But having an opportunity to eat a locally sourced meal is a different story,” says Jonathan Mark Daniels, general manager of Dining Services at Andrews University. “We want everyone to come and experience not just a component piece of a meal that is local, but an entire meal. We are taking ‘eating local’ from a conversation to a reality.”

One of the new locally sourced foods for this year is organic tofu from Rosewood Acres in Lansing, Mich. “Our student body loves tofu. They’ll choose it over, or along with, their eggs—scrambled eggs and tofu, or adding tofu to their omelets,” says Linda Briengar, executive chef at Dining Services. “Another great local source is our own Andrews Farm. They are providing things such as eggplant, butternut squash, yellow squash, carnival squash, acorn squash, basil, cilantro, parsley and sage. Andrews Farm is also providing us with what I’m calling ‘heirloom peppers,’ which includes four different kinds of peppers: pika, pueblo, Cheyenne and jalapeño.”

Bon Appétit Management, the onsite restaurant company that manages Andrews University’s Office of Dining Services, has over 400 Bon Appétit restaurants and cafés across the country participating in the Eat Local Challenge. As part of their partnerships with college and corporate campuses, Bon Appétit works to educate communities about the value of low-carbon diets and local purchasing, and the connection between food and climate change. Bon Appétit has been managing Andrews University Dining Services since June 2010.
Founded in 1874, Andrews University is the flagship institution of higher education for the Seventh-day Adventist church, located one-half mile east of the U.S. 31 Bypass in Berrien Springs, Mich.

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