**NEWS**

**Vegan Diet Correlates with Lower Rates of Cancer in New Research at Loma Linda University:** Vegetarianism, both lacto-ovo and vegan, is shown to offer significant safeguards against development of various cancers, according to a new, still-ongoing study of thousands of Adventists....

**Union Conference in Norway takes Steps toward Ordination of Women in Ministry:** The president of the Norwegian Union says he is "starting to lose patience in this matter" of discrimination against women as ordained ministers, and places the world church on notice that his union will remain at the forefront of those calling for change to accommodate local needs....

**Rape Charges against Adventist Pastor in Zimbabwe Dismissed by Trial Judge:** Contradictory testimony in a prosecutor's case against Basil M. Green has led to a directed acquittal of the Adventist pastor....

**Adventist Students at Fiji National University Take Exams on Saturday Night:** In a negotiated settlement with the local university, Adventist students have been allowed to sit for final exams after Sabbath hours, honoring their principled decision to spend the holy hours in non-secular pursuits....

**OPINION**
**Advent Three—Joy!** When the angels appeared to the shepherds and announced that the Savior was to be found in a feed rack, how did they respond? What would we have thought had we been there with them? Would we have stumbled about from stable to stable until we found him? What color would have been the candle we used? Devotional Blogger Debonnaire Kovacs considers the answers....

**Hispanic Congregations and the Second Generation:** Studies demonstrate that second-generation Hispanic Adventists show a disturbing tendency to turn away from the beliefs of their parents. Why is this happening?...

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**Pastor Nick Zork on Worship: Part 1: What Does Worship Do?** Is following Jesus a matter only of "correct thinking," or does it also embody "correct doing"? Enlightenment writers have tended to separate belief from action; the author says the Bible embodies both. First of three articles, reprinted from *Best Practices for Adventist Worship*....(available only to *Adventist Today* subscribers)

**Former Transplant Patients at Loma Linda University Medical Center and Children's Hospital hope to inspire others as Float Riders at 2013 Rose Parade:** The blessings that come from real-life organ donations will be emphasized in a Rose Parade float on New Years Day, sponsored by Loma Linda University....(available only to *Adventist Today* subscribers)

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The publication in which this article will appear is a peer-reviewed science journal sponsored by the American Association for Cancer Research. The authors of the article include Drs. Yessenia Tantamango-Bartley, Karen Jaceldo-Siegl, Joseph Fan and Gary Fraser, faculty members at LLU.
Union Conference in Norway takes Steps toward Ordination of Women in Ministry

Submitted: Dec 11, 2012
By AT News Team

“I am starting to lose patience in this matter,” Pastor Reidar Kvinge, president of the Norwegian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, stated in an interview about the study of ordination being coordinated by the General Conference (GC). He thinks that women clergy are important for the denomination’s development in Europe, states an article reporting the interview in *New Adventist*, a publication in the Norwegian language.

This is yet another union conference joining those in North America and Europe to take a stand on the need to end gender discrimination in ordination. At a board meeting in late September, the Norwegian Union Conference made “a policy decision” along those lines, the union president stated.

“I do not want to lead a protest movement,” Kvinge said, but “I’m not happy with the situation.” He would like to see the schedule for the ongoing study on ordination speeded up. He thinks there must be room in the Adventist Church for different practices on ordination in different regions of the world. “I want unity but not uniformity. We may well have diverse practices in different parts of the world without this dividing us as Seventh-day Adventists.”

He cautioned that although the union conference governing body has approved extending ordination to women in ministry, that does not mean the Norwegian union will do it immediately. But he warned that “if we do not get approval to ordain women pastors, we will easily be in the same situation as the three unions that have already adopted ordination of female pastors.” It is not clear that at the time of the interview the Netherlands union had taken the steps that *Adventist Today* reported recently—which would make it the fourth such union.

The Norwegian union board voted the following: “Based on our understanding of the Word of God as expressed in the Adventist Church’s 28 fundamental beliefs (especially numbers 7, 12, 14 and 17), we consider it morally and ethically correct to recognize women’s and men’s service as Adventist pastors alike.” In the same action a decision was made to issue the Commissioned Minister credential to those holding ministerial credentials in the meantime.

Although there is some ambiguity with the language differences—probably intentional ambiguity to some degree—it appears that the Adventist Church in Norway has essentially put the GC on notice that unless some opening is provided, it will go ahead with removing gender discrimination in ordination after the 2015 GC Session. This is essentially the same position taken by the Adventist Church in the Netherlands, although a union conference officer in the Netherlands later told *Adventist Today* that they might move ahead sooner with ordination of
women in the gospel ministry.

There are 4,600 members of the Adventist Church in Norway out of population of about five million. The Norwegian union includes 62 local churches in three conferences. It operates a junior college and there is a health center and two homes for the aged affiliated with the denomination.
Rape Charges against Adventist Pastor in Zimbabwe Dismissed by Trial Judge

Submitted: Dec 12, 2012
By AT News Team

Pastor Basil M. Green was acquitted of rape charges last Friday (December 7) in a criminal court in Harare, Zimbabwe. He had been accused in late September by a 21-year-old woman who worked in the family home.

After the presentation of the case against Green by the public prosecutors, his attorney moved for immediate dismissal because the case was not proven. Magistrate Clever Tsikwa immediately ordered the acquittal, according to the Harare newspaper *News Day*.

The witnesses presented by the state gave contradictory testimony, the newspaper reported. Public Prosecutor Tracy Mundannga admitted that his case was weak. The report mentions nothing about physical evidence of rape.

Green took the stand in his defense and told the court that young woman was upset with him because he had reprimanded her and her boyfriend for their “wayward behavior.” His daughter testified that on the day of the alleged rape the young woman told her about a new lover, a man from Ghana who had proposed to her, and her plans to end the relationship with her boyfriend. The woman said that she had “caught herself a big fish,” the pastor’s daughter testified.

The Zimbabwe Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has about 725,000 members in a total population of 12.6 million in the country. There are more than 3,500 Adventist congregations and the membership has grown at an annual rate of seven percent over the last decade. In addition to Solusi University near the city of Bulawayo, the denomination operates nine secondary schools. There are ten community health centers and clinics sponsored by the Adventist Church.
Adventist Students at Fiji National University Take Exams on Saturday Night

Submitted: Dec 13, 2012
By AT News Team

At least 30 Seventh-day Adventist students at the National University in the South Pacific nation of Fiji will graduate today (Friday, December 14) despite the fact that exams were scheduled on Sabbath last week. An unusual Saturday night exam was scheduled after negotiations between university administration and Adventist Church administrators, reported the Fiji Times.

The Adventist students sat for the exams from 9 p.m. to past midnight on Saturday rather than give in the principle of not taking exams or attending classes on the Sabbath. Pastor Joe Talemaitoga, who serves as chaplain for Adventist students attending institutions of higher education in the island nation, had first discussed the problem with the university administration “weeks before the exam,” stated the newspaper.

Talemaitoga requested that the exams be re-scheduled, but “the answer from FNU was a no,” Pastor Wame Sausau, executive secretary of the Fiji Mission, told the newspaper. “That … put our Adventist students under immense pressure.”

Ashwini Prasad, a senior public relations officer for the university, told the Fiji Times that a written request from the students had been received “only hours before the scheduled exams were to start.” Last minute negotiations resulted in the Saturday night exam period. Otherwise the students could not graduate with their classmates.

Prasad said that through the day on Sabbath, FNU staff supervised the students while they prayed and rested in order to insure that they did not have early access to the exams. Talemaitoga was also on campus with the students.

The Fiji Mission has 153 local churches with a total membership of 23,200 out of a population of 844,000, but the national census provides an estimate of about 50,000 adherents or six percent of the population. The Adventist Church in Fiji operates Suva Adventist College and Navesau Adventist High School.
Traditionally, the third candle of the Advent wreath, instead of being blue or purple as the others are, is pink or red. It is also known as the Shepherd candle, reflecting the joy the shepherds felt after their initial fear and confusion. Try to imagine what it might have been like. It's difficult to divest the story of all the meanings our life and experience have given it, but let's try.

We are on a quiet hill near Bethlehem. It's our turn to stay up with the sheep. They, woolly and warm, have long since settled down in fluffy, greasy-smelling bundles to sleep. The highest ranking sheep are on the inside of the bunch if it's a chilly night, while the lower ranking ones huddle on the outskirts, sometimes shoving inward for more warmth.

We humans huddle, too, in cloaks spun and woven of the wool of these very animals. But we have a fire, too, and in the firelight our faces are strange and shadowed. Perhaps someone is singing or playing a pipe or harp quietly. Perhaps another brings up the prophecies of Messiah and the friendly but hot discussion/debate dear to Jewish (and Adventist) hearts has begun.

Suddenly an alien being flashes into existence right next to us, and our hearts just about stop. Gasps, cries, and grabbing of rods creates a moment of chaos that disturbs the sheep, whose heads pop up nervously. But the being says, "Don't be afraid. I'm bringing you amazing news!" And we can tell, just by the look on the strange, shining face, that he is nearly bursting with excitement himself as he proceeds to announce that Messiah is here! Now! In Bethlehem! In a . . . what??

We look blankly at each other. Did he say in a feed rack? Seriously?

Then, just as our nerves are thinking about beginning to settle, there's a flash that makes our eyes see purple splotches for an hour afterward, and we hear singing such as we have never heard before. Nor will again, in this life.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HEAVENLY HEIGHTS!
PEACE TO ALL MEN AND WOMEN ON EARTH WHO PLEASE HIM!!

It's just about deafening. It's terrifying, and exciting, and joyful, and . . . then it's gone. We blink, and try to catch our breath, and turn to each other. "Did you--? Was it a dream? I-I--" We are incoherent. "You saw it too? And heard it?"

Well, let's go see!!
Stumbling over each other, still half-blind and half-deaf, maybe remembering to leave someone with the sheep and maybe not, we tumble down the hill toward the sleeping village. How could anybody still be asleep? We stumble even more when we reach the streets, which are half-full of travelers who never did find places to stay, and who don't appreciate being stepped on in their sleep. But, still incoherent, we just say, "Oh, sorry! Excuse me! He's here! Messiah's here! Didn't you hear the angels?"

We check every barn, stable, and cave that could possibly house animals. Perhaps we hear a baby's cries and see a couple of women bustling in and out with buckets and blankets. Then . . . here we are. Clumsy, embarrassed, we feel like intruders on a very intimate family scene, but the man lets us in, and the young mother smiles tiredly, and . . . there he is. Impossibly tiny, wrinkly, snuggled into linen wrappings, and only interested in his dinner.

Messiah? Really??
Hispanic Congregations and the Second Generation

An important part of the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is the expanding number of immigrant churches, especially Hispanic congregations. Most of these function in the Spanish language and they provide significant support for newly-arrived migrants from Latin America. They also have serious difficulty holding on to the second generation—the young adults who came to “el Norte” as small children or were born here. They grow up with a different cultural experience than that of their parents and very high percentages leave the church as they establish families of their own.

An excellent ethnographic study of this reality was done by Ken R. Crane and has been published as *Latino Churches: Faith, Family and Ethnicity in the Second Generation*. (2003, New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing) Crane is an Adventist with a PhD in sociology from Michigan State University. He did his field work in an Adventist church as well as a Pentecostal group and a Catholic parish. His study provides useful insights for anyone seeking to understand what is going on with the changes in American religion.

Crane tells the stories of a number of young people to give the volume texture and accessibility. He also describes the larger picture, summarizing data from several sources along with his own work. He points out that the short-term impact of the growing immigrant sector “has been that some denominations like Seventh-day Adventists and Assemblies of God, which had been moving toward less tension with the world, find themselves in a ‘sectarian drift.’ The second generation however is moving in a less conservative direction. Surveys of Latino Adventist youth show that they depart significantly from their first generation counterparts on a number of fronts.”

Summarizing the research on second generation Hispanic young adults in the Adventist Church, Crane writes: “They are less aggressive evangelistically, less strident about certain defining doctrines, more open to seeing women in the pulpit, and more likely to be engaging in such activities as dancing (still a taboo among Anglo Adventists). In other words, the sectarian posture of immigrant Latino Adventists is not being reproduced in the second generation.”

There is also a strong sense of loyalty to the Adventist faith even among recent converts. Migrants find other Adventist families and connect, even if they were not yet baptized in their country of origin. Hispanic churches have good attendance at youth meetings on Friday night or Sabbath afternoon.

Crane’s stories and information paint a picture of a very dynamic set of realities as second generation immigrants get education and move toward what are likely to be middle class lives. It is difficult to predict where things will be in these Hispanic congregations 25 years from now or
50 years from now. I do know that there are patterns for this kind of thing. My great grandfather immigrated to the United States from Sweden in 1881. During the decades around the turn of the 20th century there were scores of Adventist churches planted among Swedish immigrants, functioning in the Swedish language. In fact, the denomination operated a Swedish seminary in Iowa for a period of time. Today there are no Adventist churches in North America operating in the Swedish language. The Swedish immigrant church has become completely assimilated.

Some say that because parts of the United States were once Spanish colonies and some entire states once were part of Mexico, there will always be a Spanish-speaking segment of the population. That makes sense to me, but that does not change the fact that immigrant communities are dynamic. There is an ongoing process of change in Latino churches. Don’t be fooled by your own stereotypes and assumptions.
Pastor Nick Zork on Worship; Part 1: What Does Worship Do?

Submitted: Dec 12, 2012
By Nicholas Zork

Many of you may already receive the email updates of various Best Practices newsletters put out by the North American Division. Here is their roundup:


Recently, Best Practices for Adventist Worship ran a series by Pastor Nicholas Zork with some new and interesting questions to ask about worship. AT has obtained permission to reprint them here. This is the first.
You may share comments below, or on their facebook page listed above, or both.

What Does Worship Do?
By Nicholas Zork

There is a major assumption that has shaped Christian understandings of worship in the West since the Enlightenment (although its roots reach much further back). And this assumption is evident in Christian perspectives across the theological spectrum. The teachings of the Hebrew prophets, Paul, and Jesus emphasize the importance of ethical, embodied, practices—practices intended to restore justice, bring healing, and enable transformation. But Enlightenment philosophers marginalized Christianity—and religion in general. They perceived Christianity not as a collection of practices that shape what we do but a list of beliefs that shape what we think. As a result, daily life—our embodied practices—became viewed as a political and economic reality; and religious life—our worship and prayer—became understood, in contrast, as a fully inward, spiritual, and conceptual phenomenon. In the West, Christians from the classically liberal to the fundamentalist have largely embraced this assumption. Despite significant theological disagreements, most Christians now seem to presume that the essence of the Christian faith is not correct practice but correct thinking. And worship, within this shared paradigm, is seen as an event whose primary purpose is to communicate this correct thinking.
The problem with focusing on belief is not that it leads to an emphasis on doctrine. As Adventists, we should emphasize correct doctrine. Doctrine is vitally important. In all three Synoptic Gospels, Jesus asks Peter, "But who do you say that I am?" It matters how he and we answer that question. And it matters how we interpret the rest of God's written Word through the lens of the Living Word—Jesus Christ. The primary problem with the assumption that following Jesus is essentially a matter of correct thinking is the false implication that following Jesus is somehow separate from our social, economic, and political practices. The suggestion that following Jesus should have economic and political ramifications involves more than a call to resist the consumerist excesses of Christmas or seek justice when we vote in elections. Truly following Jesus has practical, economic and political implications for our lives and worship that are much more local, daily and challenging.

Because of our Enlightenment assumptions about Christianity and Christian worship, we tend to approach worship planning with a central and often unspoken question in mind: what will our worship practices mean? More specifically, how will our songs, prayers, sermons, and other actions change the way worshipers think? Such questions of meaning are essential but ultimately insufficient. They fail to fully address the Biblical priority of an embodied faith that tangibly impacts our world. What if we were to add a series of questions along a related but often ignored trajectory: what will our worship practices do? More specifically, what type of participants, community and world will our songs, prayers, sermons, and other actions help create?

In forthcoming issues of Best Practices for Adventist Worship, we will consider this question more closely. For now, I want to pose some potentially provocative and, I think, troubling questions along the lines of what our worship practices do.

In addition to assessing the meaning of our liturgical words, songs, symbols, and actions, consider asking the following questions:

1) What type of hierarchy is created by the worship planning process? Is it equitable? Who is included and excluded in making decisions? How does the planning process distribute authority and, in this way, create certain power structures in the Body of Christ? How is worship planning a political act, and how do these worship politics square with the Biblical model of cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender equality? In increasingly diverse worshiping communities, what if we asked not merely whose voices are present in the worship gathering but also whose voices are present in worship planning—present in the exercise of authority?

2) In addition to the theological content of a song's lyrics, what type economic structures and society are propped up and created by our continued use of music by major music publishers? Does purchasing and singing contemporary worship songs by prominent, wealthy Christian songwriters result in increasing the gap between rich and poor? What if instead of singing only songs by established Australian or Nashville publishers, we supported and encouraged gifted, struggling, local musicians? Is our congregation's worship supporting or subverting the arts community around us? Might local
engagement not also engender music that is more incarnationally relevant and theologically resonant with Adventist theology and mission?

3) Rather than merely asking what our worship symbols and actions mean what if we asked what type of participation they afford? Is our worship accessible to people with disabilities? Can children participate or only observe and occupy themselves with their parents' mobile phones? Do we select musical keys to sing in that are, in fact, singable for the congregation, for men only, for women also, or just for the leader? And who is privileged and excluded as a result? Our worship practices do not merely communicate what we think about God, our church, community and world; our practices are involved in the process of creating a church, community and world that are either more or less reflective of the just God we serve. The eschatological vision of worship in Revelation 7:9 is a gathering of "every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." If we are by grace to begin living into this reality in our present worship, we must be willing to consider the ways our worship practices divide us. True, Christ-centered unity will come not only through common confessions of faith but through a willingness to live and worship in a way that embraces, includes, values and creates equality in a world often divided by culture, ethnicity, gender, and social status.

What worship practices do you think need to be theologically assessed on the basis of what they do?
Former Transplant Patients at Loma Linda University Medical Center and Children’s Hospital hope to inspire others as Float Riders at 2013 Rose Parade

Submitted: Dec 12, 2012

Ernesto Bravo Chavez (left); Leilah Dowsari and her baby, Gabriel

By Herbert Atienza, Media Relations

LOMA LINDA, CA – Dec. 6, 2012 – Two former organ transplant patients at Loma Linda University Medical Center and Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital will bring hope to others as riders of the inspiring Donate Life float at the 2013 Rose Parade on New Year’s Day.

Ernesto Bravo Chavez, 12, of Palm Springs, received a kidney transplant when he was five years old. He has since become very close to the family of his donor, Gabriel Barajas, of Los Angeles, an Iraq veteran who was part of the Special Forces Team that captured then-Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Leilah Dowsari, 26, of Loma Linda, made international news in 1986 as “Baby Eve,” the first female newborn to receive a heart transplant. Two more heart transplants in the quarter-century since her historic procedure, she now has a baby of her own, Gabriel, born in 2011.

The two will join 30 other Donate Life float riders from across the U.S., whose journeys of courage will undoubtedly inspire the nation and the world. Since 2004, the Donate Life Rose Parade Float has served as a memorial to organ and tissue donors and a platform for donor families, living donors, and transplant recipients to inspire the world to save and heal those in need through the gift of life.

Loma Linda University Medical Center and Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital have been strong supporters of the organ transplantation cause and have regularly sponsored riders for
the Donate Life float over the years. Chavez is a sponsored rider of Loma Linda University Medical Center Transplantation Institute, while Dowsari is sponsored by the Order of St. Lazarus.

Ernesto Bravo Chavez was three years old when he started becoming sick, leading him to start dialysis and be listed for a kidney transplant. After months of staying at Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital, he received a kidney transplant from Gabriel Barajas, whose life had been cut short by an accident on the highway. Barajas’ portrait will also be featured in a floragraph that will adorn the float.

“My donor, Gabriel Barajas, is a hero to me,” Chavez said. “Besides being a soldier, he gave me a second chance to live; without my hero, I would not be a normal kid.”

Leilah Dowsari was the first newborn ever listed on the national waiting list. She received a heart from 10-day-old infant, on her 17th day of life, in a groundbreaking procedure performed at Loma Linda University Medical Center.

That heart, and two others after it over the years, made it possible for her to live and, now, have a baby of her own.

“I’ve always been optimistic,” she said. She aspires to be a photographer and has been interested in a career in nursing. She also desires to thank the families of her donors in person.