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where the going is cheapest, and where the most financial aid is available....

**Vegetarians Have Fewer Deaths: Leading Medical Journal Publishes Loma Linda University Research:** Adventist women, in particular, have a great advantage in longevity over their non-Adventist sisters in the United States—and to a considerable extent, so do Adventist men. But scientific studies show that in today's world, US Adventists seem to now be getting cancer almost as readily as the general public....

**News Briefs June 7, 2013:** A group of a half-dozen short stories about interesting developments in the Adventist Church around the world: Several US Adventist hospitals face financial issues, with large sums of money still owed two of the hospitals by government and reimbursement agencies...An Adventist eighth-grader has posted an animated book she has authored, and Adventists in Bermuda have begun a program to reach the many homeless wayfarers on the island....
Pastor Ted Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, will be the speaker for the Revelation of Hope evangelism campaign Friday (June 7) at 7:30 p.m. in the Greenwich Village neighborhood on Manhattan. Wilson began his ministry in New York City in the 1970s based in the Evangelism Center which the denomination then owned near Times Square and earned a PhD at New York University. That building has since been sold to the Church of Scientology. A full-page ad in the Daily News this week described the event as "a no-nonsense, straightforward series of biblical presentations for New Yorkers searching for answers to life's toughest questions." The ad promised that the campaign "deals with the hard questions and provides honest answers." Examples of hard questions included in the ad: "Why do so many innocent people suffer? If God is so good, why is the world so bad? What does the future hold? What's the news behind the news? How will the Middle East Conflict end?"

The newspaper ad and an associated web site also mentioned, "Are we on the verge of Armageddon?" It continued an apocalyptic theme with, "Are we headed for World War III? ... Are we headed for a major financial collapse?" And it touched on more visceral concerns of many local residents; "What's really behind New York's crime and violence? Why are our streets so unsafe?"

"Discover answers which will satisfy your mind, warm your heart, and inspire hope for today, tomorrow and forever," the web site promises. It lists sessions for Saturday night and Sunday night, as well as Tuesday evening (June 11), Wednesday evening (June 12) and the following Friday and Saturday nights (June 14 and 15). It does not say that the series will continue on a similar schedule for another two weeks.
The ad mentions that Wilson "grew up in the Middle East" and that he "grasps the ancient prophecies written in that ancient land centuries ago which speak hope to our day." It states that he has "lived on three continents, but is a New Yorker at heart" and "understands the complexities of life New Yorkers face," as well as having "a genuine concern for people in urban environments and presents hopeful answers from the Bible which meet 21st Century human needs."

The advertising includes radio and television spots and large posters in the subway, according to a news released from the denomination's North American Division (NAD). "Please pray that thousands will respond," an NAD newsletter asked.

Wilson will speak in the Manhattan Adventist Church located at 232 West 11th Street just off Seventh Avenue. The building is an historic facility constructed with funds from John D. Rockefeller for the North Baptist Church in 1881–82. By 1947 the Baptist congregation had dwindled to about 100 members and sold the building to an Adventist group.

This campaign is one of more than 400 such campaigns being conducted by Adventists in the tri-state New York City metropolitan area this year, 160 in June alone. Some 250 to 300 different speakers will be involved, but Wilson's participation demonstrates that he is serious about the strategic emphasis he has brought to the denomination since he was elected president in 2010, "Mission to the Cities." The New York 2013 project also involves 2,000 volunteers trained as Bible workers and 1,500 volunteers helping staff health promotion activities. More than 6,000 teens and young adults have volunteered in compassion projects in the city also.

Wilson describes his first efforts in New York City in the spring of 1971 in an article in the June issue of Adventist World, the official magazine of the denomination's General Conference. He writes about a group of young adults cleaning out the basement of this same facility in Greenwich Village, "well known for its artists and actors, brownstone buildings [and] as a rallying place for the anti-war movement and hippie scene." The group created an Adventist coffeehouse "to reach out to the people of this very diverse community," a place "where people could hang out, listen to music, sing, talk about Christ, and enjoy snacks." The coffeehouse ministry was named The Catacombs.

There are a total of 361 Adventist churches in the New York metro area, including the suburbs in northern New Jersey, southern Connecticut and Long Island. There are nearly 90,000 Adventist adherents, but almost all of them are immigrants participating in
immigrant churches. Only a handful of these local churches focus on the 75 percent of the population who are native-born Americans.

Another complication for evangelism in New York City is the reality that only four percent of the population has a background in evangelical or conservative Protestant groups that use the same version of the Bible and the same hymns as do Adventists. The vast majority of New Yorkers have a religious experience that is quite different from that of the Adventist denomination; 44 percent are not affiliated with any organized religion, 37 percent are Catholics and eight percent are adherents of non-Christian faiths, according to data from the United States Religion Census.

Wilson’s sermons will be streamed live via Hope Church Channel at www.HopeTV.org, through the Hope Channel App and GloryStar Channel 124.

Update Added June 9

"The drenching rains of Tropical Storm Andrea, which deposited two inches of water on the streets of New York ... failed to dampen the enthusiasm of people who attended," wrote Mark Kellner, news editor of the Adventist Review, in a release Sabbath from the Adventist News Network (ANN), the official news service of the denomination. He reported that "more than 500 people gathered," but gave no indication of how many of these were church members. His story quoted two people, both evidently immigrants.

Tatiana Featherstone, a 20–year–old woman originally from Barbados, said she attended in part because her father is an Adventist and invited her. She said the meeting met her expectations: “It was all good.” David Tan, who called himself “a Singaporean retired and living in Thailand,” said Wilson’s message was a “good and clear” introduction to the Book of Revelation.

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“To Make Man Whole,” But it May Cost an Arm and a Leg

Submitted: Jun 6, 2013

By T Joe Willey

"Over the past few decades, we’ve enriched the labs, drug companies, medical device makers, hospital administrators and purveyors of CT scans, MRIs, canes and wheelchairs. Meanwhile, we’ve squeezed the doctors who don’t own their own clinics, don’t work as drug or device consultants or don’t otherwise game a system that is so gameable. And of course, we’ve squeezed everyone outside the system who gets stuck with the bills." — Steven Brill. Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills are Killing Us. Time, March 4, 2013.

When Anna Webster (not her real name) suddenly collapsed on the kitchen floor her husband Jim sitting at the table was startled, put down his newspaper and jumped up to see what had happened. He found Anna lying on the floor struggling to get on her feet. Her speech was slurred and one side of her face drooped. Anna had suffered a stroke.

Jim was a rancher living in southern Oregon and his wife had recently lost her job. Both were faithful Adventists. Over the years they heard marvelous healing stories when the annual offering was taken up for Loma Linda Medical School. So rather than take Anna to the nearby community hospital Jim decided to drive his wife to Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC). Without hesitation Jim made his wife comfortable in the front seat of their pickup and drove hell-bent down Interstate 5 to southern California. They arrived a little over twelve hours later at the emergency room. Anna’s condition worsened rapidly as they neared their destination. She was having difficulty breathing. By this time Jim was panicked. A CT scan showed the lesion in her brain. Specialists from neurology and neurosurgery joined together to treat Anna. Her doctors were concerned about the
life-threatening delay before she got to the hospital, now evidenced by swelling in her brain.

Doctors inserted a long thin tube through an artery and threaded it into Anna’s brain to release a drug in the hopes of busting up the clot. The doctors told Jim that his decision to drive his wife to Loma Linda had placed her at great peril. The care givers applied the latest procedures and diagnostics trying to bring her through to recovery. Sad to say, Anna passed away in intensive care two weeks later. Jim credited the hospital, nurses and doctors with having done all they could to save his wife.

Fortuitously, after Anna had lost her medical insurance when she was laid off, Jim added her to his catastrophic health insurance purchased through the American Farm Bureau Federation. The insurance came from Blue Shield through a plan called a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). This coverage was in the Oregon PPO network. But because Jim had driven to California his out-of-network coverage co-pay costs jumped to fifty percent after the deductible. After Anna’s death Jim faced a staggering bill revealing an assortment of perplexing prices.

The total bill from the hospital was $90,608, which did not include the physician’s fees. Had Jim driven to the Portland Adventist hospital, also a nonprofit institution and a much shorter distance, the bill would have been $17,272. Many of the Portland doctors had been trained at Loma Linda University School of Medicine. Then again had Jim taken Anna to their nearby community hospital in Medford, Oregon the hospital charges would have averaged $41,168 and Anna would have gotten immediate treatment for her stroke. Going on, had Anna been five years older, and covered by Medicare, the Medford Hospital would have been paid $12,909 from the federal treasury to cover the entire amount. Under Medicare at LLUMC the government would have paid an average of $22,070 and at Portland $11,700. Prices vary widely between hospitals for the same procedures. Except when taxpayers pick up the bill through Medicare, payments are deeply discounted compared to private insurance and individuals who pay over the counter. How do you account for these different species of prices in the estuary of healthcare costs? [1]

Every time Anna’s blood was drawn a charge appeared, accompanied by everything else that was done to restore her to health, including drugs, lab charges, wages of the hospital nurses and staff, the use of the intensive care room, monitoring equipment, administration and overhead, etc.
The latest publicly available tax return filled with the Internal Revenue Service in 2011, for LLUMC a tax exempt nonprofit organization, had total revenues around $1.2 billion (including discounts and contracted allowances). After expenses the hospital had an operating profit of $64 million with a five percent profit margin.

According to Time magazine, medical care in this country is big business where in fact the healthcare “market is not a market at all … and patients are powerless buyers in a seller’s market where the only sure thing is the profit of the sellers.” [2]

Americans are spending almost eighteen percent of the gross domestic product on health care? This is fifty percent higher than any other industrial country. These escalating costs are driving up insurance premiums and some say, bedeviling the national economy? [3] Part of the problem is the fact that when people walk into a hospital they want a place that makes them feel good, staffed by well–trained individuals, invested with the latest diagnostic equipment. But that’s only part of the escalating costs. Patients also want to walk out of the hospital with improved health.

On May 8, 2013, for the first time, the federal government released average prices that hospitals charge for the 100 most common inpatient procedures and what the government programs (Medicaid and Medicare) reimburse for the poor and elderly. Consequently, the billing practices across American hospitals are no longer secret. [4] The spreadsheet summarizes economic data from more than 3,300 hospitals involving claims filed within fiscal year 2011. And the massive array of information is arranged in 63,536 rows across 12 columns of information including data showing the average costs for official prices in each hospital and what Medicare generally reimburses (see examples below).

The chart is interesting. It shows that an overall price which the private sector may pay is significantly higher than government reimbursement for the same procedure. Therefore, it is quite likely that the commercial insurers and uninsured individuals subsidize hospital losses against the costing limits imposed by Medicaid and Medicare. The recent Time exposé by Steven Brill who revealed the wildly–irrational billing schemes used by hospitals probably had something to do with the release of this giant spreadsheet by The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the Department of Health and Human Services. [5]

Federal officials explained that “they offered up the data with hopes that its release would administer a market corrective, forcing hospitals to take greater heed of competitors, while arming ordinary people with information they could use to seek a better deal.” [6] The data
supposedly might also spur health insurance carriers to negotiate better deals with hospitals thus driving down costs.

The giant database provoked instant headlines in many major newspapers and from news commentators. Most of the discussion centered around the huge disparities of billing charges, even hospitals that are competitive and close to each other. For example, George Washington University’s average bill for a patient on a ventilator for more than 96 hours, was $251,113 while Providence Hospital five miles to the north and chartered by Abraham Lincoln in 1861 and part of The Catholic University of America, determined that the procedure should be charged at $92,195. [7] In the case of George Washington Medicare paid $51,700 on average (nearly a four hundred percent decrease from the official rates). By comparison Medicare paid Providence Hospital $40,553 (or one hundred twenty seven percent less than the published rates) for the same service. Both are medical teaching hospitals and some of the variations may be due to the nature of the cases the hospital takes on or the amount of unpaid billings reported under charity.

Why is there a difference between the official rates in these hospitals and what Medicare actually reimburses? Before attempting to answer this question the readers of Adventist Today will probably want to know how LLUMC compares with similar institutions that support medical education. By the time we finish this series it should be plain to the reader that LLUMC, a faith–based institution, faces similar market and economic forces like any other hospital.

Getting back into the background of these rates, it is necessary to understand the so-called chargemaster of hospitals from which the prices for each procedure or treatment is determined. This is a master list created over time by the hospitals used in pricing the costs of medical care. According to Brill who wrote the recent disturbing article in Time magazine concerning the rising healthcare costs, the chargemaster was set “in cement a long time ago and just keeps going up almost automatically.” It is a catalog of codes and prices used in the hospital that most people never see or pay.

Keeping it simple; the Charge Description Master (CDM) or chargemaster is technically housed in the hospital computer system. It is a lengthy list of the hospital’s prices for every single procedure performed and for every supply item used in the procedure. The financial system contains many comprehensive elements that are billable to patients or healthcare insurance providers related to different procedures along with a mixture of services and costs. It is also standardized to meet Medicare average billing requirements. Beyond this
simple description the cost reporting in the chargemaster gets complicated. These rates are 
updated frequently and the imposed regulatory requirements from the government are 
extensive. [8] Ultimately, the hospital board is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the 
chargemaster. Brill drew attention to the fact that the chargemaster is generally regarded 
as “fiction” in some quarters and overlooked in American healthcare cost crisis in others.

However, the chargemaster is not exactly “fiction.” The rates retained in the chargemaster 
are the starting point for insurance and managed care negotiations. Insurance companies 
that can bring the most patients to the hospital generally have the most leverage in 
negotiating price. To put it in marketing terms, the hospital depends on patients to create 
revenues and consequently hospitals are willing to negotiate lower prices than the official 
rates found in the chargemaster if they can turn a profit, but rarely dipping below the 
Medicare rates.

Despite large variances in official pricing about 25 to 30 percent of hospitals in the country 
reportedly operate in the red each year. Many more show earning margins below the 
average. The American Hospital Association points out that what a hospital earns is the 
result of a “complicated financial juggling act among its mix of payers.” [9]

With so much variation in these rates the provider prices do not seem to be based on 
anything that can be reasonably determined. That is why the chargemaster drew so much 
attention when Medicare recently published the average prices. Everyone knows that 
insurers are not likely to pay the official prices. It is only the patients that appear at the 
entrance without insurance, the so-called “self pay” patients. These patients are likely to 
bear the brunt of the official price. In the case of LLUMC that only amounts to about five 
percent of the patients. [10] Medicare and MediCal (California's Medicaid program) 
represent 50 percent of LLUMC’s service revenues and insurance and managed care the rest 
at 45 percent. [11] According to the 990 tax report for LLUMC in 2011, the expense 
devoted to community benefit (charity care) totaled $103 million or 9.5 percent of 
expenses. Some of this charity is the result of poorer individuals unable to pay for hospital 
care or insurance deductibles. About half of this charity was also a shortfall in offsetting 
revenues from Medicare.

Below is a plot comparing a diagnosis-related group under “transient ischemia” (DRG 069) 
for LLUMC and six similar hospitals (all six are affiliated with medical schools). You will 
notice that code pricing is different for each hospital. And also you can see the average that 
Medicare reimbursed is fairly uniform between the example hospitals. Medicare reimburses
direct costs, but also allocated expenses such as capital expenses, executive salaries, insurance, differences in regional costs of living and even the cost of educating medical students. [12] Insurers and self-pay patients will negotiate their payments between what Medicare reimburses and the official price in the chargemaster. The national average for this procedure is shown below.

If an uninsured patient has good income or assets that can cover the medical costs the hospital will attempt to bill these patients for the full amount and hound them for payment through bill collectors and courts if they fail to pay their bill.

As insurers raise their demands for cost-savings the hospital may raise its prices in the chargemaster to protect its bottom line. Trend analysis shows that prices are nearly always inflated. Using another procedure, notice the difference between these seven hospitals by comparing the price for a major joint replacement against what Medicare will reimburse. It appears in both examples a “wealthy” patient without insurance would be better off to go to the Mayo Clinic for treatment while avoiding Stanford University Hospital or LLUMC.

As a rule of thumb private insurers in the network also get discounts off the chargemaster by negotiating rates that are typically about 30 to 40 percent above what Medicare reimburses. Consequently the profit margin in the hospital is driven more by private insurers and self-pay patients than government reimbursements (theoretically set at no gains, no losses). Essentially, Medicare reimbursements assume the hospital is a nonprofit entity.

In the next report in this series we will compare revenues and expenses in these seven hospitals and attempt to determine how long-term debt is used to buoy up the revenues and support expansion.

T Joe Willey is the author of the recent Adventist Today article titled "Million-dollar Salaries in Adventist Healthcare" and "Tax-exempt Bonds and Secularization in Adventist Education."

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1. For illustrative purposes the cost structures were taken from the recently release
Medicare database on hospital charges.


4. Until now hospitals did not know what other hospitals were charging. Hospitals avoided researching charges at other institutions to avoid being accused of “anti-trust behavior.”


7. “Rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, our organization serves all persons with joy, care, and respect, giving special attention to persons who are poor and vulnerable.” Taken from the Providence Mission Statement. About seven percent in this hospital is given to community benefits thus fulfilling its tax-exempt requirement as a nonprofit hospital.


10. Unfortunately, many self-pay accounts and insurance co-pays become delinquent. In 2011 this was about $53 million at LLUMC.

11. LLUMC financial data from the 990 tax report to the IRS in 2011.


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California County has Most Prominent Adventist Community in the U.S.

Submitted: Jun 3, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team
California's San Bernardino County has the most prominent Seventh-day Adventist presence of any county in the nation, according to recently released data from the United States Religion Census. It also has one of the highest rates of church growth anywhere in the country.

In 2010, the most recent year for which data is available, there were 58 Adventist churches in the county with a total of 32,831 adherents. Adventists made up 1.6 percent of the total population of the county or four times the national percentage. From the 2000 census to the 2010 census the number of congregations grew from 45 to 58 and the number of adherents grew by 26 percent from 26,152.

There are places in the country where the percentage of Adventists in the population is greater, but those counties have much smaller overall numbers of adherents. In Walla Walla County, Washington, 11 percent of the population consists of Adventists, but that totals only 6,721 in a relatively small, rural area.

In California there is also a county with a larger total number of Adventists. Los Angeles County has a total of 45,000 adherents in 140 congregations, but that constitutes only a half percent of the population of one of the most urban counties in the nation. This is not much different from the national average for the percentage of Adventists in the population at four tenths of one percent.
Orange County in Florida and Montgomery County in Maryland come closest to the overall presence of the Adventist faith in San Bernardino County. In both counties the number of Adventists makes up 1.8 percent of the population, slightly greater than San Bernardino County. But, there are only 21,034 Adventists in Orange County and 17,318 in Montgomery County.

Orange County is the central county in the Orlando metropolitan area and Montgomery County is a suburb of Washington DC. Like San Bernardino County, these counties have a significant presence of Adventist health care and education institutions. Loma Linda University and associated hospitals are located in San Bernardino County. Florida Hospital and the Adventist University of Health Sciences are in Orange County, while Washington Adventist University and two Adventist hospitals are in Montgomery County, as well as the denomination's world headquarters.

Two other counties in the United States with large numbers of Adventists are Dade County, Florida, with nearly 28,000 adherents and Kings County, New York, with more than 26,000 adherents. Dade is the central county in Miami and Kings County is the borough of Brooklyn in New York City. In both cases there are no major Adventist institutions but a very high percentage of immigrants in the Adventist community. In both counties Adventists constitute about one percent of the population.

The U.S. Religion Census is conducted by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB). It measures "adherents," not official membership. Adherents includes children from birth that are not part of the membership data in the Adventist denomination. The data can be accessed online at www.thearda.com.

"Immigration and institutions are two of the biggest drivers of Adventist church growth in North America," Pastor Monte Sahlin, director of research for the denomination's Ohio Conference, told Adventist Today. "There is very likely a similar correlation in many other places around the world. Beyond those two factors, the strongest correlations with growth in Adventist churches are community involvement and a focus on spiritual growth. Where immigration and institutions are restricted to a relatively few places, community involvement and focusing on spiritual growth are much more widespread." He estimated that about one in five local churches is experiencing increase for these reasons.

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How do Adventist Colleges and Universities Compare on the National College Scorecard?

Submitted: Jun 5, 2013

By AT News Team

A total of 11 of the colleges and universities operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States are listed in the "College Scorecard" data base released recently on a White House web site. The data are designed to help young people and their families make decisions about the cost of higher education and were supplied by the Federal Department of Education. Loma Linda University is not listed, evidently because most of its offerings are in professional and graduate programs.

The public data provide an interesting look into Adventist higher education. The average net price for undergraduate students ranges from a low of $16,070 per year at the Adventist University of Health Sciences in Orlando up to a high of $25,389 at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. Seven Adventist schools are described as being in the "medium" range nationwide and four in the "high" range compared to all other accredited institutions.

The "net price" is what students pay after grants and scholarships. It has increased in the most recent two-year period for which data is available in all Adventist schools, according to the web site. The highest increase on record is 41.7 percent at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas; the lowest is 3.4 percent at Southern Adventist University near Chattanooga, Tennessee.
The median borrowing for students, the total of students loans until they graduate or leave
the school, ranges from a high of $27,962 at Andrews University in Berrien Springs,
Michigan, down to almost half that amount; $14,709 at Adventist University of Health
Sciences in Orlando. It is the only Adventist school in the low range nationwide, while four
are in the high range and six in the medium range.

Most Adventist colleges and universities are well below the national loan default rate of 13.4
percent, with only two at a higher rate. Oakwood University is listed with a 19.7 percent rate
and Southwestern Adventist University with a 15.1 percent rate. Five of the Adventist
institutions have loan default rates around four and five percent.

Two of the Adventist institutions have high graduate rates (within six years) in terms of the
national averages; Andrews University at 63.4 percent and Kettering College in Dayton,
Ohio, at 56.7 percent. Six fall into the low range nationally and three in the medium range.
Washington Adventist University in the suburbs of the nation's capital has the lowest
graduation rate among Adventist institutions at 27.3 percent.

The details for each of the 11 schools and further explanation of how the information was
calculated and what it means can be found at:  http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues
/education/higher-education/college-score-card

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Vegetarians Have Fewer Deaths: Leading Medical Journal Publishes Loma Linda University Research

Submitted: Jun 4, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team

Monday (June 3) the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published an article from the Adventist Health Study conducted for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by Loma Linda University (LLU), the health sciences institution in southern California affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. The study found that vegetarians experienced 12 percent fewer deaths over a six-year period than those who ate meat.

Researchers tracked 73,308 Adventist Church members who follow a plant–based diet. Of that total, 5,548 were vegans who ate no animal products; 21,177 were lacto–ovo vegetarians who ate dairy products and eggs; 7,194 were vegetarians who also ate fish; and 4,031 ate meat infrequently. The rest of the study participants ate meat regularly.

The findings confirm the health benefits of eating a vegetarian diet, the article's lead author Dr. Michael Orlich told Bloomberg News. “People should take these kinds of results into account as they’re considering dietary choices,” Orlich said. “Various types of vegetarian diets may be beneficial in reducing the risk of death.” Orlich, who directs the preventive medicine residency in the LLU Medical Center, said the study was aided by studying subjects who have low rates of alcohol and tobacco use.

The Wall Street Journal today pointed out that the study said cancer struck meat–eaters and
vegetarians at similar rates. Also, a vegetarian meal doesn’t automatically make it a healthy one. Deep fried foods contain high amounts of fat, and certain meats are healthier than others.

Researchers pointed out that the health benefits were greater for men than women. It is unclear why women were less affected by a vegetarian diet. Future research will examine gender-specific reactions to certain foods.

The study provided a number of additional findings about the risk of death from certain diseases among vegetarians compared to meat eaters, reported The Press–Enterprise, the daily newspaper in Riverside, near Loma Linda. "For cardiovascular disease, the overall reduction [in deaths] among men and women was 13 percent; and for vegetarian men, the risk of death from heart disease was 29 percent less. Death from diseases other than cardiovascular and cancer were 15 percent lower for male and female vegetarians compared to non–vegetarians."

These findings were "not surprising to me," Orlich told the newspaper. They are "consistent with our prior work." The first Adventist Health Study was begun in 1974. But, "the findings on overall mortality differed from another large–scale, long–term study," The Press–Enterprise reported. It referred to the EPIC project based at Oxford University in England, which "did not find the same lower risk among vegetarians, which may indicate some difference in Adventist vegetarians ... that has yet to be explored."

Despite the fact that this study did not report a significant difference between vegetarians and non–vegetarians on cancer deaths, "according to earlier findings, [vegetarians] have less chance of developing cancer," The Press–Enterprise stated. Orlich said that the researchers have yet to find out why. "Over the next two to three years, we will have a paper focusing on specific cancers, the risk of developing them and dying," he was quoted by the newspaper. "We will find out more."

"The Adventist Health Study represents a major contribution by the Adventist Church to the health of all Americans and around the world," an Adventist public health professional told Adventist Today. "It is funded by American tax money, but the professional expertise and commitment, and the tens of thousands of volunteers who participated were mobilized by the Church." In recent years, Adventists have been noted as one of the longest living people groups ever studied. In 2008, Blue Zones by author Dan Buettner described the health principles of Adventists and their longer, healthier life spans.
This story is based on a news released from the Adventist News Network (ANN), the official news service of the denomination. Ansel Oliver wrote the ANN release and Janet Zimmerman, a reporter at the Riverside newspaper, wrote the coverage that provided the additional details.

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News Briefs June 7, 2013

Submitted: Jun 7, 2013

By AT News Team
Adventist Today regularly provides a summary of stories that we have decided do not require in–depth reporting, but our readers may want to be aware of.

Three Adventist hospitals across the United States found themselves dealing with challenges in their local communities this week. Parkview Adventist Medical Center in Brunswick, Maine, had to lay off 16 employees, five percent of its work force, because the state's Medicaid program owes the hospital $3.1 million and has delayed payment so long the hospital faces cash flow difficulties, according to WMTW Channel 8, the ABC television affiliate in Portland. Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital in the suburbs of Chicago has received a ruling from the State of Illinois recognizing its tax-exempt status and two local government entities now owe a total of $7 million in property taxes collected from the institution in 2008 through 2010. It has been agreed that Will County and the Valley View public school district have four years to return the funds they took from the hospital, despite the fact that it is a nonprofit organization, reported Melissa Sersland, editor of the Adventist Medical Center in Hanford, California, continues to be picketed by Local 701 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters because the contractors doing work for the hospital are paying sub–standard wages, reported The Sentinel daily newspaper.

Sabbath (June 8) is Youth Outreach Day in Bermuda and volunteers will engage in compassion projects in the island nation's capital city of Hamilton from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The focus will be on helping young adults who are homeless, living on the streets, many of whom have substance abuse problems. The Adventist volunteers will serve food, provide
clothing and medical and dental screenings, reported the Royal Gazette on Wednesday. A 19-year-old, Shakir Amory, will share his story about being hit in March 2010 by a drunk driver and his struggle for recovery.

A 13-year-old who graduated this week from the eighth grade at Greater Lansing (Michigan) Adventist School has published an animated E-book, with the help of her 21-year-old cousin. Katrina Elzinga wrote the story some time ago and the cousin helped her recently with the technology. The book is available through the iTunes app store, according to a story this week in The Argus-Press, the Lansing newspaper. Elzinga hopes the book "will inspire more children to read."

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Prayer or Work? What? Both?!

Submitted: Jun 5, 2013
By Debbonnaire Kovacs

Chapter 13 of The Monastery of the Heart begins by stating categorically that prayer and contemplation are no substitute for work.

Well, shucks! ‘Cause, I would so much rather pray and contemplate. . . or daydream. . . than work! Besides, salvation comes by faith alone, right?

Of course it does. One of the great confusions of the past century in Adventism, in my personal opinion, is the tension between working and resting in God. They are both essential! It’s really not that complex. I learned to say with confidence, not “I want to be a writer” but “I am a writer,” when I was in my 20s. I then sat down near a typewriter (remember those?) and folded my hands. . . not! I’m still working hard to be a good writer. Itzhak Perlman still works hard to be a great violinist.

Jesus of Nazareth worked hard at being a good Jew. Not because that would save him! Because it was what he was born to be! Like Eric Liddell, who, when he ran, “could feel [God’s] pleasure,” as Jesus fulfilled his destiny, he could feel God’s pleasure. It was his own.

When you and I are loving, we can feel God’s pleasure. That pleasure becomes our own. If we can just relax in God’s love, accept that God has already saved us, we will find that the fear drains away. . . and the hard work begins. With God. Hard, but not nearly so hard as worrying!
Now that I’ve had my rant, I’ll get on with what Chittister is really saying in this chapter—that work, not just any work but actual physical labor with the hands, is essential to human life and health.

Whatever our motives might be,
to absent ourselves from manual labor
is to participate in the creation
of a servant society
in which we give ourselves
the right not to serve.

No doubt about it, when we go that direction, we are moving in a diametrically opposite direction from the Man we call Lord, who said he had come not to be served but to serve, and pointed out that we, the servants, are not greater than our Master.

Most of us work, no doubt. But many of us, today, have work that is not physical. How much importance do you, personally, place on manual labor? Is it still so important? Or is it only important that we do something productive with our time?

Speaking for myself, the hard work I do in my garden and with my animals keeps me young, strong, and sane. It’s also some of my most prayerful time. How about you?

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One Degree Organic Foods Wins Nexty Award

Submitted: Jun 5, 2013
By Debbonnaire Kovacs

“Sometimes it takes a few simple ideas to start a revolution. For the French, it was liberté, égalité, fraternité. Our grand idea is simplicity itself. Simplicity, sustainability, integrity. This better way is not our own invention. We’ve found it in the rhythms of nature, the wisdom of generations, the virtues of family farmers. We invite you to join us, as we set the table for an amazingly tasteful revolution.”

So begins the Our Story page on the website of One Degree Organic Foods. This company caught the eye of Adventist Today when we learned that they had won the 2012 Nexty Award from New Hope Natural Media and the Sterling-Rice Group for a new product that best represents the future of healthy, organic food. According to http://www.onedegreeorganics.com/one-degree-organic-foods-wins-nexty-award, One Degree won the award because of their complete transparency, pure ingredients, and “veganic” cultivation.

What do these terms mean? It’s the essence of simplicity. Their supply chain is so transparent that by downloading their app you can scan the barcode of any of their products and trace the origin of every ingredient, even to seeing pictures and videos of the farms where your grain was grown and the families that grew it. These ingredients are not only grown organically, they are grown “veganically.”

Even organic farmers may use animal waste as fertilizer, but that waste may contain hormones, antibiotics, and other chemicals which One Degree farmers believe can be harmful to the soil and to the food. So their organic products are grown without any animal products, which they call “veganic” growing.

One Degree’s website is so professional and complete that they look like a major company, but they’re actually pretty small, and they like it that way. One Degree is run by Stan and Kathy Smith of British Columbia, with their daughters, Sondra and Alonna, and Sondra’s husband, Danny Houghton.

Growing up in the country, the Smiths became very familiar with the connection between farmers and the earth, and more than ordinarily aware of the connection between all humans and the earth. As large agribusinesses have moved farther and farther from the original “one degree of separation” between people and their food, supporting huge monocultures, genetic manipulation (not the same as time-honored science of breeding plants and animals for better characteristics), heavy use of chemical pesticides and herbicides, the Smiths decided there must be a better way.

Starting with baking experience, first in a small bakery while they were in college and later with “Canada’s celebrated Silver Hills Bakery,” the Smiths have created a company that lives by the
truth that “there is a natural connection between healthy soil, healthy plants and healthy people. The farther we roam from this idea, the less confident we can be that the food we consume is good for us, and for the larger community.” [http://www.onedegreeorganics.com/our-team]

One Degree Organic Foods is a sister company to Silver Hills Bakery, both of which are for-profit members of Adventist Services International.

More info at:
www.onedegreeorganics.com
www.silverhillsbakery.com
www.veganic.com
University

By David Arrah Dean

In the beginning
God created
Light, Sound, Space, and Energy
Laws, Time, Matter and Gravity
Worlds, Orbs, Nebulas, Galaxies
Life, Creatures, Beings, Humanity
All that is seen and known universally
But did you know God founded the first University?

He stretched out the sky and the heavens scientifically
Measured the waters and dust, experimentally
Weighed mountains and land forming geography
Structured all the earth’s elements classifying geology

He shaped the landscape in the area of geometry
Cultured life from the soil which yielded botany
He quantified organisms in their class of biology
In the laboratory of nature He examines ecology

From nothing He made substance and designed the table for chemistry
Categorized wildlife into kinds originating zoology
Positioned lights in the upper regions and called it astronomy
He engineered orbits and star paths inventing technology

And then He made Adam of atoms and chiseled out his anatomy
Organized all his functions with a unique physiology
Puffed existence into man, the genesis of ontology
And with scholarly genius patented anthropology

Man’s thinking mind can research psychology
Man’s desire for learning can explore philosophy
Man’s need for interaction validates sociology
And his inquiry into divinity gives emergence to theology

But some may conjecture and theorize with futility
They purpose to disprove, remove, and exclude God academically
But these Masters and Doctors haven’t the slightest degree
I accredit them with the most intelligent form of idiocy
I conclude, that there’s a Universal School where tuition is free
Where the Spirit is counsellor and Angels are faculty
Where there is infinite knowledge for one to receive
Where there is no limit to what one can achieve
Where the brain is opened to every branch of study
Where the goal is to build character and not to make money
Where the life is transformed through true higher learning
You can sift through the evidence and you’ll clearly see
That it was God who founded the first University
Discover Your Roots

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the seas and the springs of waters” (Revelation 14:7).

The words, “worship Him who created heaven and earth, the seas and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7), are God’s invitation to us to remember the roots of our identity as described in the first three chapters of Genesis. Some years ago the motion picture “Roots,” based on the historical novel of Alex Haley, depicted one man’s search for his roots in his ancestral West Africa. To search for your own roots, you might go to the Ellis Island website, where you can search for immigrants, mostly from Europe, who entered the United States through this facility. Was your great-great-grandfather a deposed member of European royalty? Or was he a prison escapee with a criminal background?

This search for our roots could be motivated by a desire to discover some kind of personal self-worth of who we are through a connection with someone significant. The truths about our origins, not through the formula of “slime + time” in the murky waters of some prehistoric swamp, but through God’s work of special creation, can powerfully program our identity with the truths of God about our worth and dignity. Just as in our computers there exists on the hard drive a sector called a “root sector,” likewise God, by creating us in His very own image, has programmed us with the roots of His very own identity. Damage that identity with the virus of evolution, and the consequences will ultimately lead to the loss of our identity and purpose, the self-destruction of man, and the consequent judgment of the wrath of God. (See Romans 1:18-32).

This chapter is not a rehearsal of the scientific evidences for special creation versus evolution. Rather, we want to consider the ‘domino effect’ of removing the doctrine of God’s special creation of the cosmos from our core Christian doctrines. Are human beings really better equipped to face and overcome evil, wrong and injustice in this world when the truths of our origins in God are removed or altered? What happens to our thinking about our personal identity when the creature, by challenging the identity of the Creator, thereby also challenges and damages his very own identity as having a divine origin?

Satan’s Identity Theft

Embedded in the doctrine of creation is God’s very own identity. When we doubt His identity, we will also start questioning our own identity. And if you cannot be sure about what your identify is, as defined by God, you may need to discover some other way to “find yourself,”—to get in touch with the “real you” so you will know who you really are. When we start questioning the doctrine of creation, could we possibly be aiding the enemy in his most subtle work of identity theft?
When we do not recognize the value of the divine origins of our own identity, being created in the image of God, we will naturally resort to some kind of God-displacing pursuits, but such activities can never satisfactorily fill the empty places in our hearts, because we were designed by the Creator God for worship, and to worship only one God. A lot of fragmentation of the human personality occurs when we chase after idols, god-replacements, believing that in such we can discover genuine and lasting self-worth and significance. We could embark on a journey, often an expensive one, to discover “who we are,” when God has already declared in His Word “whose we are.”

The Domino-Effect of Evolution on the Christian Worldview

The doctrine of God as the Creator of all things is foundational for everything else in our lives, for the core doctrines of the Christian faith are undergirded by this teaching. The Christian faith is far more than a series of behavioral injunctions and maxims. It is really a way of thinking about all reality in terms of a much larger framework than just what we can see and experience. Our Christian world-view resides in seeing as big a picture of God and His creation as possible.

Among Seventh-day Adventists, this world-view has most effectively been expressed in what we term “the great controversy between Christ and Satan.” This world-view also informs our thinking about God, the creation of the cosmos, the origin of evil, the nature of sin, the offer of salvation, the judgment, the 2nd coming of Christ, and the new earth. Other Christians have had such a worldview in mind, as reflected, for example, in John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, and John Milton’s Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored.

The terms “creation” and “judgment” refer to the two pivotal points of the history of this earth. Everything we see had a beginning, and it was a good beginning because God declared that everything was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Since the entrance of sin, all history moves toward the coming climax of God’s judgment. And through His offer of the gospel, He wants us to be able, not to escape, but to stand in the judgment. When Jesus taught about the resurrection and the coming judgment, was He just kidding? If He did not state the truth about our origins, but lied to us, how can we trust Him for anything else He may want to tell us? If He is not the Creator who formed us in the beginning, how will He have the ability to revive and restore our bodies from dust and death? Where will the blueprint for that restoration come from?

**1. Creation and Judgment are inseparably connected.** The God who commands us to give Him glory is the God we worship as Creator. Here you see the entire timeline of human history, which has a beginning (creation) and an end (the final judgment). In the first angel’s message (Revelation 14:6, 7), God appeals to us to consider the entire span of human history—the span of time from the creation of the world to the judgment at the end of time.

“Worship Him who made heaven and earth. [creation]  
“Give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come” [2nd coming]
These are the beginning and terminal points for human history—

| Creation | Judgment (2nd coming) |

Our Christian worldview rests on this. This world had a beginning, marked by God’s special act of creation. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Psalm 90:3). Furthermore, this world, as we know it and as it is now, saturated with the contamination of out-of-control sin and injustice, is coming to an end. That end will take place with God’s last-day judgment at the second coming of Christ. The doctrine of creation teaches us that in the beginning everything that God created was good. Because of man’s God-replacing attempts, believing the lie “you shall be as gods,” an avalanche of evil has come upon all creation. Outside the Garden of Eden, God pronounced His judgment on sin, and held before our first parents the covenant promise that the Seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, would someday destroy the serpent, Satan (Genesis 3:15). Thus, the plan of salvation would ultimately culminate in a judgment, and humans would only be able to stand in the judgment by receiving the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work.

2. **Our Creator is also Our Judge.** The One who is going to be the judge of the universe is the God who has created everything. His authority for this work of judgment is solidly based on His work as Creator of everything. God has a right to judge because He created everything, and we are thus accountable to Him for our conduct. When Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry spoke about a judgment and a resurrection, was He merely addressing His listeners with concepts with which they were familiar because of their culture? Or, did He point to future historical realities that every human being on earth must face? If there is no judgment and final accountability, what does the future for this world hold? Will it be self-destruction through the consequences of our misconduct? Or, will there come a time, decreed by a loving God, to justly destroy those who destroy the world? (Revelation 11:18, 19).

3. **Standards of Accountability.** If everything in this world is the result of uniformitarianism, blind chance, and natural selection over long periods of time, then can there really be a solid basis for a judgment, a fair tribunal in God’s cosmos? If the survival of the fittest was the mode of operation for long periods of time in the evolutionary scheme, at what point in time was this principle dropped, and a system of accountability for our behaviors instituted? What is the origin of the distinctions between right and wrong behaviors? Are these also the result of evolutionary processes?

4. **How does evolution value a person,** if we are nothing more than highly developed protoplasm? At what point was the superiority of humanity above animals established? Do we highly value people today? Do humankind’s wars and crimes exhibit this high view of humanity? Human cruelty against other humans is certainly an understandable and
acceptable trait in the evolutionary scheme of things if we are merely animals in the continuing process of development. Consider the totalitarian regimes of our age—Communism, Nazism, fascism, racism, terrorism, et cetera, with their promises of betterment for various races, and look at their utter disregard for human rights and values. What is the track record of the history of humanity’s God-displacing and God-substituting activities? Can we point to any wars and conflicts and say that the human race experienced significant improvement by what we learned from these wars? Look at the history of the human race for the past two hundred, or even two thousand years. If evolution is a true and valid explanation for the history of human development, should humankind then not learn from its mistakes? Should there not be some kind of measurable improvement in our conduct? The main thing we have learned is that we don’t learn.

5. **What is the definition for “sin” in the evolutionary scheme of things?** At what point in time did God step in and say “oops”—evolution is not working effectively merely by chance; so it is now time that I step in and establish some standards of accountability before things get out of hand? At what point did a “selfless gene” become part of our genetic makeup? Only the Scriptures make a distinction between the Creator and that which is created. The doctrine of special creation gives us God’s pathology of the sin-disease. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts...and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image make like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things...who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever” ([Romans 1:20, 21, 24, 25](#)). If we want to accept the gift of God’s salvation from sin, we must also accept God’s truths about our sin-disease having its origin in lies about God and His creation.

6. **The role of Jesus Christ in our world-view.** What qualifies Jesus Christ to be Savior? If God is not the One who is, was, and is to come, the One who has existed from all eternity, what gives Him the right to show up on planet earth in the person of His Son Jesus Christ and proclaim that only He has the authority and the power to save us? Who is this Jesus Christ? Is He a created being, or is He the One about whom Scripture says, “For by Him (Jesus Christ) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” ([Colossians 1:16, 17](#)).
7. **Evolution and idolatry.** The teaching of evolution opens the doors to idolatries of various kinds. Idols may not just be objects of silver, gold and stone, but they most seductively masquerade as pet theories and ideologies of our thinking. The three angels’ messages specifically focus on the sin of idolatry and self-salvation as defined by the symbols of both Babylon and the beast experientially. Idolatry is at its core a “do-it-yourself” religion, the attempt to discard faith in a Creator in order that we can be in charge of our own world, not with the accountability of managers to the Owner, but by subtly assuming the prerogatives of ownership which solely belong to the Creator. The point that the Bible repeatedly makes is that we need a God who is greater than we are, not a semi-competent being who at various stages of human history had to step in to correct His previously flawed work.

8. **Prayer and Worship.** When the Bible counsels us to consider the infinite power of God as Creator as a basis for trusting Him when we pray, is this just make-believe? Consider the following Scriptures: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too difficult for You” (Jeremiah 32:17). Is God really worthy of worship? To worship anyone, you have to admire them. When we remove the teaching of God as Creator from our world-view, can we really have a solid basis for our personal admiration of our God?

9. **The trustworthiness of Scripture.** If God did not create the world and everything in it, as the Bible maintains, how much of Scripture is then trustworthy for Christian faith and practice? How much of Scripture is then a reliable revelation of God’s character, acts, and His involvement in the affairs of human history guiding it to an ultimate and just conclusion?

10. **The Second Coming of Jesus.** If we do not believe that we were created and placed here on earth by the hand of a loving God, how can we believe that in the 2nd coming of Christ that the hand of our loving God be able to rescue us in a competent way as this world comes to an end?

When God expresses the exclusiveness of His role as God and Creator in these words, “I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6), is it because He is an insecure Deity afraid of the competition of other gods? Or is it because He is jealously watching over anything that would destroy His people?

Have you ever looked at yourself and wondered, how can I ever be saved to spend eternity with my Creator because it seems like an utter impossibility? Then remember that God specializes in impossibilities and that nothing is too hard for Him. Just acknowledge the impossibility of saving
yourself and trust that God will do the rest as you believe that where He is, He wants you to be also (John 14:3).

Satan’s lie is that worship diminishes us by reducing us to size. God’s truth is that genuine worship lifts us up to discover whose we really are, the dignity of our original identity. One of the covenant benefits of worshiping God as Creator and Savior is the removal of fear: “But now, thus says the Lord who created you...and He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine” (Isaiah 43:1). Our perfect Creator God never intended that the emotions of fear and anger should govern our lives. But if we worship and depend on idols, then our fears and our anger, like that of neighborhood bullies, will be necessary to protect the turf of our idols.

Define your identity, then, not by what you do, but as one radically loved by God in both creation and redemption. This will forever change your expectations of what you think you should get out of worship. Focus on the praise and adoration of God as your personal Creator and Redeemer, and you will then discover that a by-product of such worship will be the realization of your true identity as a son or a daughter of God. Come to worship to bless the Lord, and He in turn will bless you with an unshakeable and solid personal identity of knowing that you are His child forever.

Life Applications

Questions to Ponder

1. What gives God the right to ask for and receive worship?

2. If the worship of anything that we create is idolatry, could that possibly also mean that to trust in our own works as a basis for salvation would be to engage in idolatry?

3. As you look at the nature around you and at God’s wider universe, what gives you the greatest evidence of His care for you personally?

Text to Remember

“Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too difficult for You” (Jeremiah 32:17).

Truths versus Lies
The truths about God as our Creator can help provide solid immunity against Satan’s deceptions, particularly His attempted theft of our identities.

**Satan’s Lies (or half-truths)**

Your presence in this world is the result of mere chance—Make the most of it by doing your own thing!

This life is all there is.

You cannot have a relationship with someone you cannot see.

**God’s Truths**

You are in this world by the design of a loving Creator who not only has designed You, but also has a special purpose for your future.

God has designed you to live forever with Him.

God has custom-designed you to have a close personal relationship with Himself.

*Note: If you are enjoying these chapters and wish to have Dr. Thomsen come to do a seminar at your church or organization, please visit www.streamofhealing.org.*