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**Marmite is Available Again Across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific:**
When an earthquake knocked out the only manufacturing plant of Marmite (a traditional vegetarian spread used for making sandwiches and preparing recipes, primarily in Australia, New Zealand, and surrounding areas) it was feared the popular food item might be gone forever. But Marmite is enjoying a second coming.....

**General Conference Budget for 2014 will Total $180 Million, Less than 6 Percent of Total Giving:** Changing financial times are bringing adjustments to the way the General Conference receives and passes along Adventist tithe dollars....

**Adventist Compassion Ministries in the U.S. Reorganized and Expanded:** In the lives of many multi-generational Adventist families, "Ingathering" and "Dorcas" formed a significant component of the Adventist cultural experience. Now that culture of compassion is changing yet again....

**News Briefs January 3, 2014:** La Sierra University's accreditation has been fully renewed without significant changes in University governance policies; comings and goings of women pastors seem to replicate traditional ways of Adventist male clergy; Kenya has ruled against granting Sabbath accommodation for Adventists in secular universities; more....

**Oakwood's "Miracle on 42nd Street":** Guest Tim Allston shares the exciting story of Oakwood University’s foray into the greater world of awareness-building. OU’s two-week stint on a Times Square’s marquee ends Saturday....

**ADRA President Jonathan Duffy Interview, Part 2:** Jeff Boyd continues his conversation (Part 2) with ADRA President Duffy, who notes that, "In our church we tend to struggle between these two theological issues—'I was naked, and you clothed me,' and 'Go and preach the gospel.' To me they're not separate; they are one theology...."

**A Thousand Hills:** SM Chen, Photographer (Poetry and the Arts): "For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:10)....
Eight are Killed When Lightning Strikes an Adventist Church during Worship

By AT News Team, January 2, 2014

Eight people were killed when lightning struck a Seventh-day Adventist church in Lilongwe, Malawi, on Sabbath afternoon (December 28). A ninth person was in intensive care at Kamuzu Central Hospital, according to reports on the Sky News satellite television channel and 40 more were treated and released by Sunday morning. At least one child was among the casualties.

The dead and injured were engaged in a prayer meeting in a church building when the lightning strike occurred, reported the Nyasa Times. "I first heard a loud burst which frightened almost everybody and a few minutes later I just saw a stampede," the newspaper quoted an unidentified eyewitness. A spokesperson for the National Police told the newspaper that the incident was under investigation.

"I am very saddened by this tragic news," the newspaper quoted a member from the Soche Seventh-day Adventist Church in Blantyre. Especially "considering this was also the last Sabbath of the year" which is a time for all-day prayer meetings in many places around the world. "What a sad way to depart."

There are nearly 3,000 Adventist congregations in Malawi with a total of about 600,000 adherents in a nation with a total population of 17 million. The denomination operated nine primary schools with a total enrollment of 3,300 and seven secondary schools with about 1,100 students, according to the most recent Annual Statistical Report. It operates three hospitals and 17 clinics in the country, as well as Malawi Adventist University, a publishing house, radio and television station.
Canadian Volunteer for the Adventist Church is Missing in Rural Belize

By Adventist Today News Team, December 31, 2013

A volunteer from Canada who has been working with an Adventist congregation and school in a rural community in Belize for several years has gone missing. Brian Townsend first came to Valley of Peace area in the small, Central American nation in 2004, according to a school web site. He was one of a number of volunteers who helped with construction of a school and church. He has continued to live in the community for nearly a decade.

On Christmas Eve (December 24), a neighbor saw Townsend’s truck heading out of the village loaded with a mattress and roll of carpet. Christmas morning when the neighbor went to Townsend’s house, the truck was gone and the small cabin had been ransacked. Outside, about 50 feet from the house, “there was blood, there were two machetes in the place where they struggled” reported Juan Arias, a civic leader on the scene soon after. “We are treating this very, very seriously and appealing for assistance,” said Police Inspector Sinquest Martinez. He added that the police have been distributing a description asking people to call if they see the missing truck.

Police have also been working with the Canadian consulate and Kory Townsend, Brian’s adult son, who has flown to Belize from his home in western Canada to help search for his father. Acknowledging that Townsend seemed to make it a point to know everyone, the police officer said, "It is a shock. I knew him."

"He was doing a lot of ... projects," stated Kory Townsend of his father. "He built a school [and] he was doing a vocational school, things like gardening and a wood shop. There are few people who can live a dream or live a goal, and embrace it with the passion he had." The younger Townsend also affirmed his father’s commitment to his Adventist faith. "This was a lifestyle for him. It was not just a project ... he lived here."

"Townsend came to ... build a school and church which now has about 50 members," said Pastor Dennis Slusher, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Belize. "He stayed on after the construction was finished, continuing to work for the betterment of the local community.” Slusher reported that conference officers and staff held a session of prayer for Townsend on Monday (December 30) and hope that he will be found soon.

The village organized a search for Townsend on Sunday (December 29). "We cannot stop until we” find him, said Arias. "He was a nice person and always there to give me advice" added another neighbor, Emil Montgeo, from the back of a pickup truck. "The entire community is going out and looking."

The rural area around the village has heavy vegetation, making the search difficult. The Pathfinder Club from the Orange Walk Adventist Church helped with the search. "Today we came on a rescue mission," said Pastor Gelder Gamboa. "We are a family ... we are a community."

The Belize Disaster and Rescue Response Team has also joined the search. "We are going to try to expand [the search], we are going to try to get other resources” said Loyda Martinez, director of the team. Arrangements have been made for a helicopter search on Thursday (January 2). "We are going to keep searching and remain hopeful" stated Kory Townsend. Adventists across North and Central America have joined in prayer for the missing missionary.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has 85 local churches in Belize with a total membership of about 38,000 or an estimated 45,000 adherents. The population of the country is 326,000 with about 15 percent from Adventist households, one of the highest ratios of any nation in the world. It is a generally peaceful and secure country with a growing economy and a relatively high number of residents from the United States, Canada and Europe.

A major source for this story is a report from Tim Wolfer, a freelance videographer based in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Young Adults from Adventist Families: February Event will Explore Stories of a New Generation

By Adventist Today News Team, December 23

A panel of 20-somethings from with childhood roots in the Adventist movement will share their diverse spiritual journeys on Sabbath, February 15, at 3 p.m. The event will focus on the topic most often requested by Adventist Today readers: Will the next generation be Adventist? How will they change the faith?

The event will be held in the Damazo Amphitheater in the Centennial Complex at Loma Linda University. It is cosponsored by the Adventist Today Foundation and the humanities program of the university's School of Religion. It will be open to any interested individual or group.

The speakers will include Alfredo Lee, Edgar Momplaisir and Pastor Courtney Ray. A young adult ministry professional from the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been invited to respond to the three speakers. There will also be time for questions from the audience. Moderator for the panel will be Ryan Bell, a board member for the AT Foundation and former Adventist pastor currently working as a community organizer.

**Alfredo Lee** was born in Mexico to an Adventist family and immigrated to Los Angeles, California, sharing the immigrant experience of many in his generation of Adventists. He served as a pianist every Sabbath for his father's congregations until he left home for college. He identifies himself as a mystic and a queer man of color, and works for a child advocacy organization in Los Angeles.

**Edgar N. Momplaisir** is a writer and film director from northern California. He was born into an Adventist family in New York City and attended Adventist schools for most of his life. He is expecting to graduate from Pacific Union College in June with a BA degree in Film and Television.

**Pastor Courtney Ray** was first introduced to the Adventist faith as a student in Adventist school. She is associate pastor at the Tamarind Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church in Compton, California. She completed an undergraduate pre-medicine program and later studied in the seminary at Andrews University. She has served as a pastor at Adventist churches in Baltimore, Maryland, and Hanford, California, as well as completing a master's degree in neuroscience and psychology at Loma Linda University.

A recent research summit convened by the denomination's General Conference revealed that more than a third of the people baptized in the Adventist Church over the past 50 years later dropped out. Several surveys have shown that about half of the children raised in Adventist families have disconnected from the Church by their mid-20s. The widely-held idea that the Adventist dropout problem is largely related to recent converts has proved to be a myth. It seems to have a stronger correlation with "second generation" church members.

The AT Foundation has organized this event not only to help Adventists gain a clearer understanding of inter-generational faith dynamics, but also to celebrate 20 years of publication of the independent news source. The first volume of the journal was published in 1993 and with 2013 it completes 20 volumes. It has grown into a multi-media operation with Web, Email and Facebook editions alongside the print magazine and book publishing activities.

More information about the February 15 event will be released on the Adventist Today web site. No pre-registration is required to attend the event. No attendance fee will be charged, although a freewill offering will be collected. Questions can be directed to atoday@atoday.org by Email.
ADRA Awarded a Major Grant by Hong Kong for Relief in the Philippines

By AT News Team, December 26, 2013

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) China country office is one of three non-governmental organizations awarded major grants to support their relief efforts in the Philippines in the wake of the recent typhoon. The grant to ADRA is the largest of the three, totally about three million Hong Kong dollars or about $390,000 in United States dollars.

The other two grants were $160,000 to the CEDAR Fund and $87,000 to Social Workers Across Borders. The project proposals were reviewed and the grants recommended by the Hong Kong Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee. They come in addition to twelve-and-half million Hong Kong dollars in grants made earlier.

"To ensure that the money would be used for the designated purposes, the relief agencies would be asked to submit evaluation reports and audited accounts ... after the relief projects have been completed," a spokesman for the Hong Kong government announced. The announcement was circulated by the official Xinhua news service in China.

"This grant is a clear demonstration of the way that ADRA has developed good working relationships in China," a retired ADRA worker told Adventist Today. "It is not something that gets a lot of attention because neither the Seventh-day Adventist denomination nor the Chinese government are motivated to say a lot about it. Nonetheless, it is a remarkable relationship. I think this is one of the first third-country projects; an Adventist organization receiving funds from the Chinese government to support its work in the Philippines."
Marmite is Available Again Across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific

By AT News Team, January 2, 2014

A distinctive vegetarian food product which is exclusively manufactured by Sanitarium Foods, the large grocery company in Australia owned by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, is again widely available throughout the country and across the Pacific region. "Marmite" is a food spread made from yeast extract, "a sticky, dark brown food paste with a distinctive, powerful flavor which is extremely salty," according to Wikipedia.

Invented in England in the late 19th century, the Adventist company obtained sole rights to distribute the product in New Zealand and Australia in 1908. A factory in Christchurch, New Zealand, manufactures Marmite and it was closed down by an earthquake in March 2012. This led to a shortage of the product dubbed "Marmageddon" by the media in the two nations.

Over the fall production began again and "Marmite returned to Aussie shelves," reported the South Pacific Record. "It's been great to see the interest in Marmite from Australian consumers, and we would like to thank everyone for their loyalty and patience," said Julie Praestin, corporate communication manager for Sanitarium Foods. "We're delighted to be reuniting Australians with their much-loved Marmite and look forward to supplying this product ... for many years to come."

The version of Marmite produced by the Adventist company in New Zealand has a different flavor than the original version produced in the United Kingdom which is a by-product of beer brewing. The Sanitarium Foods recipe includes sugar and caramel as well as different proportions of the basic ingredients than the original, European version. It is described as having a "weaker" or "less tangy" taste. It is much more widely distributed than the British product.

Marmite is popular as a savory spread on toast or crackers and in sandwiches, a vegetarian alternative to beef products. It is often paired with cheeses and Sanitarium Foods recommends including potato chips for a Marmite and Chippie sandwich. It can also be the base for soup, and in Singapore and Malaysia it is popularly added to plain rice as well as cooked with chicken, prawns or crab.

Although it does not require believers to abstain from animal products, the Adventist movement has long promoted a vegetarian diet. Even in the United States and Australia, the majority of church members do not follow an entirely vegetarian diet, but it is a much larger percentage than the general public. Large studies of Adventists conducted by Loma Linda University for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have shown that vegetarians live longer and suffer less negative health outcomes.
General Conference Budget for 2014 will Total $180 Million, Less than 6 Percent of Total Giving

By AT News Team, December 28, 2013
Updated December 31

The General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination released a summary of its 2014 budget yesterday. It totals $180 million and Juan Prestol, GC undertreasurer, stated that it represents a “holding pattern” due to the adjustment in tithe percentages received from North America, a decision that was approved by the denomination’s governing body in 2012.

Prior to the 2012 policy change, the denomination’s North American Division (NAD) contributed eight percent of its tithe to the GC, while the other 12 world divisions each contributed two percent. The 2012 vote reduced the NAD contribution down to six percent to be phased in over several years. NAD’s tithe totals nearly $1 billion, and the 2014 continuing adjustment means about $10 million less in its contribution to the GC budget.

The other world divisions will receive appropriations from the GC in 2014 between $1.3 million and $4.9 million each. This includes a two percent increase over 2013 appropriations. “Every year we have never ceased to give modest increases in appropriations to the divisions and institutions,” Prestol said. “Even in 2008 when we faced the world recession, which we are altogether not out of, the budget of the General Conference represents a modest increase and measured approach to continue with the programs.”

In 2008 another policy change decreased appropriations to the two divisions in Latin America as well as Loma Linda University so that increased funding could go to other regions and institutions. In 2014 the NAD will receive an appropriation for the first time: $279,000 to help administrate the Guam-Micronesia Mission, which until two years ago was part of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

Total giving to the Seventh-day Adventist Church was $3.2 billion in the most recent official report, which reflected activity in 2011. That was nearly 10 percent more than the total from the previous year. This does not include Adventist giving in China and other nations where the law limits pooling of funds and information, as well as the many independent ministries, schismatic mini-denominations and splinter groups.

The GC budget represents less than six percent of the total giving to the denomination and the largest portion of the budget is given back to other units. Operating costs for the GC office in Silver Spring, Maryland, is limited to two percent of world tithe by policy. “We have been running under that cap for decades, making more resources available for world fields,” Prestol noted.

The 2014 budget increases funding for the GC Auditing Service to $12 million to cover audits not previously conducted in certain regions. At the same time GC divisions in many parts of the world will for the first time be charged a portion of the costs of audits, about 20 percent of the cost in organizations with tithe income, such as conferences and missions, and about 80 percent of the cost in institutions. In North America the cost of audits has for many years been split half and half between the division and union conferences with no funding from the GC. Some union conferences have started to pass on a portion of their half to the local conferences in their territory and some local
conferences have passed on a portion of their cost to institutions within the conference.

The budget also includes $16.5 million in subsidies for the five universities that are directly connected to the GC: $7.6 million for Loma Linda University, $5.3 million for Andrews University, $1.3 million for Oakwood University, $1.2 million for the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies and $1.1 million for the Adventist University of Africa.

Also included in the budget provisions are $7.3 million for the Hope Channel television network and Adventist World Radio and $7 million for *Adventist World* magazine and subsidies for other publications based at the GC office. The Ellen G. White Estate was provided a budget of $2.5 million for the year and the Geoscience Research Institute $1.2 million. A total of $1.4 million was set aside toward the costs of the 2015 GC Session.

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Adventist Compassion Ministries in the U.S. Reorganized and Expanded

By AT News Team, December 27, 2013

After a careful evaluation which included surveys of pastors and lay leaders, the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination announced last week a significant reorganization and expansion of the domestic charitable and social action programs sponsored by the denomination in the United States. The study committee that oversaw the assessment considered the possibility of creating a United States country organization for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) as well as the option of merging ADRA and Adventist Community Services (ACS) as was done more than 20 years ago in Canada, Adventist Today has been told by sources that asked for anonymity.

ACS is the largest Adventist social action program meeting domestic needs in the United States. In many nations it consists almost entirely of church-based activities such as the Dorcas Society, although in the U.S. since the 1980s it has largely shifted its operations to other programs. In about two dozen cities, including Dayton (Ohio), Chattanooga (Tennessee), Portland (Oregon) and Denver (Colorado), local ACS agencies have emerged that are managed by professionals while still utilizing thousands of volunteers. The ACS Disaster Response program has also developed contractual arrangements with the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which give it a recognized role among the top disaster relief agencies in the country.

The NAD is the only one of the denomination's world divisions that does not have its own ADRA units simply because ADRA's world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, includes all of the functions that would normally be those of a United States country office. This has resulted in considerable confusion among Adventists as to the roles and relationships between ADRA and ACS. As the ACS program expands and becomes more professionally-led in the rest of the world these same issues will increasingly become a global concern for Adventists.

Last week the NAD announced the merging of some programs within ACS and an expansion of staffing, especially for Disaster Response operations. The Hope for Humanity program is now fully under the management of ACS. This is the annual fund raising campaign for community service that replaced the traditional Harvest Ingathering program in the 1990s and has been a department of its own over the last decade or more.

Sung Kwon will continue as executive director of ACS. Wynelle Stevens will continue as his assistant and provide oversight for the Elder Care program. Kati Britton will transfer from the Hope for Humanity program and work with Kwon as communication assistant for ACS.

Sean Robinson has been appointed director of disaster response, including the Crisis Care and Youth Empowered for Service (YES) programs. He is coming to the NAD staff from the Texas Conference. He will be assisted by two assistants who will remain in place at locations outside of Washington with the NAD reimbursing the conference or union conference that employs them for a portion of their time. These include Charlene Sargent in the Pacific Union Conference and Joe Watts in the Southwestern Union Conference.

Maitland DiPinto will be director of community development. He has been director of the Hope for Humanity program and will continue to oversee the annual campaign, as well as community tutoring and mentoring programs and other community development projects. He will
have Rhonda Whitney as assistant director, who is based in the Upper Columbia Conference with the NAD reimbursing the conference for a portion of her time, and Sandra Brown, who has been the coordinator for tutoring and mentoring projects at the NAD for two decades. Walter Gibson will also continue as a part-time consultant for community development projects.

Several other individuals will continue to be part-time consultants as they have been for some time: Justin and Laura Vibbard for the YES program, Marilyn Renk for the Elder Care program, and Martin Feldbush and Steve Willsey for the Crisis Care program.

ACS had projects or local units in 1,100 communities across the United States with a total population of more than 30 million residents, according to the most recent *Landscape of Giving in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* published in 2005. Services were also provided to 2 million survivors of disasters in the previous year and a total of $3.7 million raised, not including funds used in local church community service activities.

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News Briefs January 3, 2014

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.

La Sierra University accreditation renewed by both regional and denominational accrediting bodies. After more than two years of tension created by a negative media campaign launched by independent groups, the university sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church was commended by the Western Association of Colleges and Schools (WASC) for making recommended changes in governance and by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities (AAA) for progress on issues related to how the topic of evolution is to be taught in biology classes. Although some changes were made in both the university's bylaws and in some class syllabi, in the end the changes were not major and both accrediting groups found the university to be strong both as an academic institution and a faith-based school.

Key Adventist congregation in England replaces one woman on the pastoral staff with another woman. At the Stanborough Park Seventh-day Adventist Church in England, near the headquarters for the denomination in northern Europe, when Pastor Karin Wieczorek returned to her native Sweden in December to take a ministerial assignment there, she was replaced by Pastor Mary Barrett. She has served as a pastor at several churches in England and is married to Pastor Jonathan Barrett.

Adventists in Kenya have lost a lawsuit seeking to keep students from being forced to take classes on the Sabbath. High court judge Isaac Lenaola dismissed a case in late December filed earlier in the year by the denomination against Alliance High School, ruling that if public schools were required to give Adventist students Sabbaths off the schools would be forced to accommodate the religious beliefs of so many different groups that it would disrupt the education process. The denomination had accused 25 public schools in Kenya of violating the rights of Adventist students, alleging the harassment, intimidation and discrimination. The court had previously issued interim orders restraining school administrators and governing boards from preventing Adventist students from going to church from sundown Fridays to sundown Saturdays. Those orders were vacated. Adventist Today has received no information from the denominational leadership in Kenya as students face returning to school next week.

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The Best and the Brightest Are Wrong? Really?

Ervin Taylor December 23, 2013  

My friend Clifford Goldstein entitled his most recent epistle in the Adventist Review, “The Best and the Brightest: How Can They Get It Wrong?”

Cliff begins by making a most amazing statement—amazing even for him. He says that he had “recently discovered something new (new at least to [him]): the best and brightest, the feted experts, the world’s most educated, knowledgeable and informed—they often get it so wrong. And, as a people entrusted with truth, a people called to proclaim truth . . . [Note to reader: In case you are not sure who exactly are the “people entrusted with truth” and “called to proclaim truth” might be, Cliff tells us. We – the Adventists – are the ones entrusted with the truth. At least, that’s what Cliff thinks. But, I interrupted his sentence in the middle. Here is the rest of it] . . . it’s naïve for us [us Adventists] to underestimate the importance, not just of these errors, but of the fact that the best and the brightest make them.”

And what do we Adventists have the truth about and what are the best and brightest, the best educated, knowledgeable, and informed so wrong about? Are they wrong about some important moral or ethical issue? Is it that they are not sufficiently concerned about the poor and marginalized in our society? No, the brightest and best are wrong about something that Cliff ranks as a much greater issue, an issue of cosmic significance.

According to Cliff, we Adventists are the only ones who know the truth about the fourth kingdom mentioned in the Old Testament Book of Daniel 2, 7, and 8. It is Rome. Now what do the “best and brightest, the feted experts, the world’s most educated, knowledgeable and informed” scholars believe? The almost universal view of the Old Testament scholarly community, including most non-fundamentalist Adventist scholars, is that the individual who wrote the Book of Daniel is talking not about Rome, but about a Syrian King by the name of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He is the “little horn.” But, of course, according to Cliff, “the experts, biblical scholars who have spent their lives mastering Old Testament languages, history and exegesis” are absolutely wrong about this.

What else, according to Cliff, are the best and brightest wrong about? What are, as he expresses it, the “world’s greatest scientists, Nobel laureates, undisputed intellectual giants renowned for their knowledge, skills, and vision” also wrong about? It is Cliff’s favorite topic, so I knew he had to include it somewhere in this piece. What these individuals are wrong about is that “life evolved by chance over billions of years.”

What is Cliff’s point? His point is “that, sooner or later, the end-time persecution centering on the “mark of the beast” (Rev 19:20) and the commands of God (Rev. 14:12) will come. And when it does—the world’s best and brightest, the feted experts, the renowned masters, scholars, historians, philosophers, linguists and scientists will unite against Sabbath-keepers.”[Note to Reader: When I first read this sentence, I thought I had misread it. I had to read it several times. I could not believe that even Cliff could hold this position.]

At “The End” of his piece, Cliff invokes one of the favorite verses cited by fundamentalists—almost their most-quoted proof text. It is 1Corinthians 1:20, which is a statement of Paul that “God has made foolish the wisdom of the world.”[I guess Cliff doesn’t care that Paul is talking about the nature of Greek philosophy in his time.] We are assured that “God has made it [the wisdom of the world] foolish, and it remains foolish even when the “wisdom of the world” enters the church, including our own.”

Like much of what my good friend writes, I often personally do not know whether to laugh or cry. Reading this piece for the first time, I wondered what might have happened to make him publish such a blatant, hyper-intellectual broadside. The extreme levels of equal parts of colossal chutzpah and paranoia contained in this relatively short piece are the highest I have ever had read in the large corpus of his writings for and about the Adventist Church. Another Adventist apologist once expressed the view that this kind of opinion is called “sanctified arrogance.”

I must admit that I briefly entertained the thought that this piece was a spoof. Perhaps it was an indication that Cliff had had some type of epiphany. Perhaps reality had come crashing in and he wanted to go out with a bang. Perhaps it got though the editorial process at the Adventist Review by some fluke. Then I came back down to reality.
My current best guess is more likely that this piece reflects the fact that the current ethos being projected by the current General Conference leadership establishment is now both culturally and intellectually retrogressive and triumphalist at the same time. And my friend Cliff has apparently bought into it, hook, line and sinker. This is “Adventist Exceptionalism” raised to new heights. It is the “Remnant Church” concept on steroids. To adapt a comment made by a modern cynical commentator about the human future as applied to the future of our denomination if this ethos becomes dominant: “More than any time in history, Adventism faces a crossroads. One path leads to complete irrelevance, the other to total extinction. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to choose correctly.”

---


2 Woody Allen

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What's in a Date?

by Debbonnaire Kovacs
submitted January 2, 2014

Christians' favorite New Year text is found in Deuteronomy 11:12—“For the eyes of the Lord are on it continually from the beginning of the year to the end.” Of course, Moses counted the beginning from a different spot. The Israelites had two new years, actually. They had lived in Egypt for so many years at this point that they celebrated the Egyptian new year in the fall, and to this day, the day called Jewish New Year is Rosh Hashanah, ten days before Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. Since those ten days are set aside biblically for self-examination before Atonement, this day functions much as the secular New Year on January 1, when we look backwards and assess, and look forward to plan and dream and hope.

God, however, gave the Israelites a different starting point—Passover. “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.” Exodus 12:2, God setting up the Passover season for the first time. Interestingly, there is no self-examination or new resolution involved in this new year—only the preparation of painting the blood of an innocent sacrificial lamb on one’s doorposts. (Something to ponder…)

This (though the people didn’t know it) accorded fairly closely with the new year in Europe, where traditionally the year was felt to begin in the spring—March 25 in Great Britain and various nearby dates in other European countries. Personally, I always thought that made the most sense. The year, of course, is a big circle with no beginning or end—the earth’s jaunt around the sun. It takes 365 ¼ days to do this, so you can choose any spot to call the “beginning” or the “end.” If you look at the year and what happens in it, spring (at least in northern climes) seems most like a new beginning.

The Julian calendar didn’t replace the Gregorian, thus changing New Year to January 1, until anywhere from the 16th to the 18th centuries, depending on how attached to tradition various countries were. To this day, the tradition of the “April Fool” is linked to the concept of some people clinging to celebrating the new year then. That would be me!

What’s in a date? What difference does it make when you celebrate new beginnings? We like them, that’s what. God seems to have created us to like festivals and markers. We mark the day of our births, the day new relationships begin, the day marriages begin, the day new jobs or new resolutions begin. We like (some of us more than others, and I really like them!) concrete places to put down a “memorial stone,” (metaphorically at least) and say, “Thus far God has brought me.” We like to officially put down, give up, burn old mistakes and failures and look ahead to start again with a clean slate.

That would be…every day! And every Sabbath, and every month (new moon, biblically), and every quarter. But, I admit it, especially every new year.

I pray that your new year will be blessed and filled every day by the grace and presence of the One.

And that you’ll know it.
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Great-granddaughter of Enslaved People Goes to Mandela's Funeral

submitted January 2, 2014

An amazing story was shared a few Sabbaths ago in the Oakwood University Church. The story was reported by Paul Huggins for an Alabama news service. You can read the whole story, see more pictures, and find a link to a three-day journal about this trip at:
http://blog.al.com/breaking/2013/12/woman_who_marched_with_mlk_tel.html

Here is a snippet to whet your appetite:

"Jacqueline Galloway-Blake heard the drums beating from Africa. They beckoned her to come home to dance and sing in celebration of the life Nelson Mandela lived. Circumstance, however, showed no favor to allow her to pay respects to the South African civil rights leader who died Dec. 5. For starters, Galloway-Blake's passport had expired, and it normally takes two weeks to have it updated. And with just a day's notice, plane tickets were ranging in price from $3,000 to $7,000. Then a friend from Johannesburg told her all the hotel rooms were booked in her city. The trip looked impossible, but she clung to a promise she had trusted since she marched on Washington, D.C., with Dr. Martin Luther King 50 years ago. " 'When man says it's impossible, that's when God makes it a possibility,' Galloway-Blake said." Keep reading....
HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- Jacqueline Galloway-Blake heard the drums beating from Africa.

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It took just three hours to get her passport fixed, and three days later she was standing next to Mandela's casket after being escorted to the front of the line. Her cost for air travel and hotel was just $2,500, and her hotel was just a mile from where Mandela lay in state in Pretoria's Union Building.

Everything just came together without any extra effort on her part, and the extraordinary way the trip became possible was typical of the adventure Galloway-Blake said she enjoyed.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she looked out over the Atlantic Ocean from her passenger seat and thought about her ancestors coming to America in chains. At the trip's conclusion, the great-granddaughter of a slave rode a Greyhound bus from Nashville to Huntsville and thought of the Nashville college students and other Freedom Riders who dared to challenge Jim Crow laws on a bus trip to Birmingham.

In between, Galloway-Blake got to see the bullet holes in the church walls where Mandela once led anti-apartheid
movements, visit the home where he lived his last days, kiss the soil of her native land, and form new friendships with strangers from around the world. Oh, and then there were the five international television networks that interviewed her, one of which videoed her kissing the ground in the gardens of the executive building.

**Click here to see Jacqueline Galloway-Blake's three-day journal from Nelson Mandela funeral**

In one word, it was "surreal," said Galloway-Blake, a Michigan resident who shared her experience Saturday at Oakwood University Church, where her children once attended. She is in Huntsville to spend the holidays with her son.

"The friendships. The people. Everyone was so open," she said describing the most memorable part of the trip. "They embraced me and invited me to their homes. I was never alone. I had people to eat with. People invited me to different events. Just the comradeship of mankind. It was coming home for me.

"And people from all over were there. It was like the event of the century," she said, noting South African residents invited her to return and a woman she met on a plane wanted her to spend the layover to Nairobi with her.

As a participant in America's civil rights history, Galloway-Blake said there was no way she could just watch Mandela's funeral on television.

"I wanted to sing in the streets and dance in the streets with the people. And God worked a miracle."

Galloway-Blake said she could feel God's presence throughout and noted repeated times God gave her opportunities she didn't expect. For example, while sitting on the curb to rest from bad leg cramps, a police officer told her she couldn't sit there, but then quietly nodded her to join a group of senior citizens being marched by to the front of the line. She was the last person in the group allowed to cut in, and it ended up saving her an hour of painful standing.

The grace and love that Mandela lived by inspired Galloway-Blake to live likewise, she said, and since Mandela was such an important mentor, she felt compelled to pay her respects in person.

"His life was so magnanimous. He was a giant in reconciliation and forgiveness," she said. "That you can spend 27 years unjustly incarcerated and come out without malice. That's such a gigantic lesson for all us to learn.

"He let his life be used for a higher calling and looking beyond the pain, that his people and his family endured. That inspired me to want to be a better person."

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If they timed their Thanksgiving/Black Friday/Christmas/New Year’s Eve activities in New York City’s Times Square precisely, an estimated 986,000 daily visitors will see 10 seconds each hour of Oakwood University’s new marketing awareness campaign flash up on the marquee beneath the famed CBS-TV Eye.

Begun on November 6 and running until January 4, 2014, OU can change its Times Square marquee messages every two weeks.

“Neutron Media, a full-service marketing firm that operates such high-profile outdoor multimedia venues as the Times Square marquee beneath the CBS Eye, had a cancellation and approached us here at Oakwood University, primarily due to our social media victory with The Home Depot ‘Retool your School’ campaign,” explained Miss Denica King, OU assistant marketing director. “At the same time, however, Oakwood University has been working to expand its awareness to its non-traditional audiences. So, for Oakwood and Neutron Media, this created a win-win situation.”

Within its hourly 10 seconds of advertising – totaling four minutes each 24-hour day – OU shares with Times Square viewers its recent endorsements, such as:

“Best Schools” – U.S. News and World Report, 2014; and

“Julliard of the South” – WAAY-TV (ABC).

In its inaugural two-week ad cycle, OU included the testimonial:

“A Life-changing Experience” Rear Admiral Barry Black (ret.) (class of ’70)
…referencing the U.S. Senate’s first-ever Seventh-day Adventist and African American chaplain, who gained international attention for his searing and provocative invocations that opened each Senate session, during its 16-day federal government shutdown in October; Black’s bowtie-wearing, non-partisan baritone eloquence was later parodied on TV’s “Saturday Night Live.”

Noting that this Times Square marquee marks possibly a first-time appearance for either a Seventh-day Adventist, historically Black college or university or Huntsville institution to have been so prominently displayed in this venue, King concluded that, “Oakwood will continue to explore unique opportunities to promote its brand.”

For more pictures, video, and details, go here: http://www.oakwood.edu/news/2158-oakwoods-miracle-on-42nd-street-nycs-times-square-marquee-features-oakwood-university
ADRA President Jonathan Duffy Interview, Part 2

by Jeff Boyd
submitted January 2, 2014

Welcome to Viewpoints: Adventist Perspectives on Peace, Justice and Righteousness. Jonathan Duffy is president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Prior to accepting this position in late 2012, Duffy was the CEO of ADRA Australia. He served as director of Adventist Health for the South Pacific Division of the Adventist Church from 2001 to 2008, and before this he worked in hospital management. Part 1 can be read here.

AToday: How much of ADRA's funding is received from individual Adventists and the Adventist Church?

Duffy: We receive about 8 percent of our funds from church appropriations. We receive around 17 percent of our funds from private cash donations—private donors—and the vast majority of our donors are church donors. Sixty-two percent comes from the U.S. government—project grants and so forth. Thirteen percent of our income comes from donated goods, goods-in-kind.

AToday: Because these funds from the Adventist Church and from Adventist donors could be used to support other ministries, why do you believe ADRA's work is a good use of these funds?

Duffy: I would argue from the point of view that as a church we have a very real responsibility to meet the needs of our neighbors. If you look at Christ, in one of his first speeches (Luke 4), he says, “I'm here to preach good news to the poor, to heal the sick, to bring the good news to those in need.”

Christ's mission when he came to earth was two-fold. One was to actually pay the penalty for our sins and die on the cross. But the other issue was actually to give people a glimpse of what God's true grace is about, what God's healing is about, and what God's kingdom is going to be like. If we're going to be relevant in a broken world, then we have to be present where people are most broken. And we have to be agents of healing, and point them toward the great hope and the ultimate healing that Christ offers.

In the Bible there are 2,103 texts that call us to social responsibility, to reach out to our neighbors, to speak out against issues of injustice. So it's a central theme, and as a church we need to be present there. Israel failed in being that glimpse of showing what God's love is truly about, so you've got to think, “How do we as God's current church rate in that area?”

If you want to look at it from an evangelistic point of view, if you look at Ellen White's quote in The Ministry of Healing, it says Christ's method alone will bring success. He mingled with the people as someone who desired their good. He met their needs. And then he bade them, “Follow me.”
Does ADRA do evangelism? ADRA is a sowing ministry. We're present where people are broken. As a church we have to take that responsibility.

We have a battle between Matthew 25, where it talks about the judgment of the sheep and the goats. “I was hungry, and you fed me. I was naked, and you clothed me.” That points toward the judgment. What was the measure? Did you do these things? Then we struggle with it because we move on to Matthew 28: “Go therefore and preach the gospel to all nations.” In our church we tend to struggle between these two theological issues—“I was naked, and you clothed me” and “Go and preach the gospel.” To me they're not separate; they are one theology. They are the gospel. You heal people physically, and you heal them spiritually.

When God created the world, he created four relationships. The relationship between God and man. The relationship between man and self. The relationship between man and others. The relationship between man and the environment. All brokenness comes from breaking one of those relationships, and all healing comes from a restoration of those relationships.

So if we want complete healing, we have to actually heal across all of those four levels, which includes healing people spiritually. But it also includes healing them of their mental well-being in terms of looking after themselves, the adequacy of their own food, their own hygiene, protection from disease. But also heal the relationships they have one to another. And also look to their responsibility to protecting the environment.

We've got to be across all of those four relationships. That's why, as a church, I believe we need ADRA. Because we can't leave this work for secular agencies and say they can provide food for someone who is hungry. That may be all that they do. That doesn't bring complete healing.

*AToday*: You said that 62% of ADRA International's budget comes from the U.S. government. What risks are associated with using government funds to finance ADRA's projects? What strings are tied to these grants?

*Duffy*: I think the risk is the dependence upon government. In any good business, you don't want to have all your eggs in one basket. For example, for ADRA International, USAID is a significant donor. If for some reason we aren't as successful winning USAID grants, then we suffer as a business because so much of our business is built around it. Really what you want is a diverse funding stream that doesn't make you overly dependent on any one particular sector.

In terms of the moral issues—Does the U.S. government make us do things that we feel are compromised? Do we feel restricted in what we can do because it's USAID funding? No, I don't think the U.S. government asks us to do anything that compromises us as Christians. The U.S. government knows that ADRA is the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. They don't discriminate against us because we're faith-based. In reality, many of the NGOs are faith-based agencies.

We cannot take that money and directly give it to the church to support the operations of the church. So the restriction is that I've got to use the money for the project purpose.
Now in terms of me going there and letting people know that I am the Adventist Development and Relief Agency doing this work with them, there are no restrictions on that. I can put a plaque on a water project to say the Adventist Development and Relief Agency has brought this well to this community, but I would also put a plaque on it to say it was sponsored by the U.S. government through USAID.

But why wouldn't we do this work? Would I prefer to have this work done by a secular NGO or another religious denomination? Or would I prefer than the Adventist Development and Relief Agency is the one bringing that relief to the community? I'd prefer us to get the funding and do the work in the name of our church rather than anybody else.

Does it mean that I should then be running a farming program, and say that if you want to do this with us—we'll train you, give you seeds—if you come to church on Sabbath? No. But if I say, this relief is brought to you by the Adventists, no problem. That's why I say ADRA is a sowing ministry, not a reaping ministry. We don't do the call, as in evangelism, we do the first part of Christ's method. We meet people where their needs are at, we meet their needs, and then the church needs to work in conjunction with us and bring that spiritual dimension.

At today: There were well-publicized storms at ADRA International prior to your appointment as president. How have you gone about steadying the ship? What have you done to establish ADRA’s reputation within the development sector?

Duffy: It comes back to basic management principles of giving people a clear vision, of giving them a clear understanding how their skills and jobs contribute toward achieving that vision. Also affirming them and being grateful to them for the contribution that they make. Most people want to work for an organization that has a clear vision and mission. Most people want to be acknowledged for the contribution that they make toward the agency achieving that vision and mission, and most people want to work for an organization that gives them the opportunity to grow professionally, personally and spiritually.

The success of ADRA doesn't rest with me. The success of ADRA really rests with the individual employees of ADRA. Recruit good people who have a passion, and then share the vision and the mission of the organization with them. You resource them to bring out the best of their skills so that they can make a significant contribution. Affirm them for the contribution that they're making, and give them that opportunity to grow professionally, personally and spiritually. Then you have a happy and effective workforce.

While that all sounds very basic, I think that possibly we have lost sight of that a little bit over time. So it's about getting those issues back, making ADRA very much a desirable place to work. If I can accomplish that, then I think that will bring out the best in people, and ADRA will succeed.

I think that what we've lost were some experienced people who understood that development sector very well. That's not to say we don't have experienced people or talented people, but we have had to recruit to fill some of those positions. We found that we've had more success recruiting younger, talented people. So now our role is to grow those younger people and give
them the experience, help them to become effective professionals.

Our relationships and our reputation I don't think have been tarnished too much. Things happen internally, and sometimes we globalize them, but in reality they are more internal issues.

Internationally, I think church members would feel special to know what high esteem ADRA is actually held within the development sector. It has a very, very good reputation. I'm really proud when I go to meetings and am introduced as being from ADRA, and people come up to me and say, “I worked with ADRA in Nicaragua,” or “I worked with ADRA in Zambia. We've always enjoyed our relationship with ADRA.”

A Thousand Hills

For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. Psalm 50:10

All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time. Psalm 104:27

It is a land the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end. Deuteronomy 11:12.

Photo credit, S M Chen