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Glendale City Church Remembers the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

By Todd Leonard: On April 18, the Glendale City Church hosted a Day of Remembrance, a collaborative worship gathering to commemorate those who died in the Armenian genocide. [link]
How will your congregation mark Memorial Day?: A Liturgy for Adventist Peace Sabbath, May 23

"The Adventist Peace Fellowship has designated May 23, 2015, as the first annual Adventist Peace Sabbath. May 23 is the Sabbath before Memorial Day in the U.S. calendar.... In view of the Adventist tradition's official stance of conscientious objection in times of war, and in view of the sacrifices and heroism of countless noncombatants and pacifists throughout history (including many Adventists), we are urging all Adventist churches to treat this day as an occasion not for glorification of military victories or military service but rather for somber remembrance of the terrible loss of human lives in war, including both combatants and innocent civilians." (link)

Adventists and the Death Penalty: Why Are We Silent?
By Herbert Bodenmann: “All Adventists in every region of the world have cultural and religious imprints. Swiss Adventists have a very different background than American Adventists, including in regards to the death penalty. But it is hard for me to accept that our church publishes statements on many minor issues or matters of lesser importance yet none about this very central issue: the sanctity of life and efforts to end the death penalty world wide.” (link)

AU to hold Social Justice Summit: Race and Justice in America
Andrews University recently hosted a four-day event, which looked at issues of race and justice in Adventism, in Christianity, and in broader U.S. society. (link)

Peacemaking through Medical Care
By Ante Jeroncic: “On March 12, 2015, students and professors gathered in Newbold auditorium at Andrews University to hear how doctors in western Galilee are using medicine to build trust and promote peace between Israel and Syria.” (link)

Andrews University Holds Forum On Racially Divided Conferences
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Professor Zane Yi Challenges Loma Linda Community to Connect
Healthcare with Human Rights

“In a chapel talk addressed to the entire Loma Linda University community, Dr. Zane Yi, assistant professor of theological studies in the School of Religion at LLU, challenged Adventist medical students and healthcare providers to use their skills to engage with urgent matters of human rights and social justice.” (link)
By Jeff Boyd April 30, 2015

UK Adventists and WWI Tribunals

Victor Hulbert, communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland, has posted a short article about the role of tribunals for WWI recruits. Hulbert explains:

Approximately 130 Seventh-day Adventist young men were conscripted between 1916 and 1918, some serving in Non-combatant corps, others spending time in prisons or work centres across the country. A generally pacifist religion, Adventists held strongly to the principles of the 10 commandments, including the 6th, “Thou shalt not kill”. They were believers in civil and religious liberty but could be described as ‘conscientious co-operators’ rather than absolute objectors to the country’s conduct in war.

Hulbert shares that “The tribunals generally respected their refusal to bear arms – but that was the only exemption.”

William George Chappell worked selling Christian literature. He was called to a tribunal in Brynmawr, South Wales on 25 March 1916. In his notice of appeal he stated that “as I am a Seventh-day Adventist [I] am opposed to war.” Noting Bible verses that supported a pacifist stance he stated that he felt it more important for him to ‘go preach the Gospel’ than to be involved in the war.

The tribunal disagreed stating that his work was ‘not of national importance’ and only exempting him from combatant service.

Read the entire article at Everyday Lives in War.


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Post navigation

← APF Listed in Best Practices for Adventist Ministry
Seventh-day Adventists and the WWI tribunals

February 26, 2015

Contributed by Victor Hulbert, Communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK & Ireland.

John Benefield was both a baker and a Conscientious Objector. Working in an essential industry he was exempt from the armed service as his skills were needed at home.

Nevertheless, every few months he had to attend a tribunal in order to re-establish his status. This took place in a court house 13 miles from his home in Bournemouth. As losses mounted the Tribunal became more strict, constantly looking for any loop hole they could to dispatch even essential workers to the front. His granddaughter, Elizabeth Yap, recalls that, “My grandfather attended 13 of these tribunals during the course of the war, leaving his wife and six children at home to pray for a good result.”

That prayer was fervent! Had the decision gone against him he would have been taken straight from the court house into the army with no chance to say goodbye to his family. Elizabeth recalls,

On the last occasion, as he was walking back home, he met my grandmother, who had walked 6 miles to meet him. He asked her why she was there, given she did not know the results of the Tribunal. Grandmother told him that she had been praying about the court case and God had told her grandfather would be freed and so, with no idea how long it would be before he was released, she decided to go and meet him.

Adventists and Conscription

John was one of the fortunate ones. Approximately 130 Seventh-day Adventist young men were conscripted between 1916 and 1918, some serving in Non-combatant corps, others spending time in prisons or work centres across the country. A generally pacifist religion, Adventists held strongly to the principles of the 10 commandments, including the 6th, “Thou shalt not kill”. They were believers in civil and religious liberty but could be described as ‘conscientious co-operators’ rather than absolute objectors to the country’s conduct in war.
As such, they should have been treated with respect. Lloyd George, Secretary for War, stated in the House of Commons on 26 July 1916. "Of those who object to the shedding of blood, the traditional policy of the country is to respect this view." Sadly that was not always the case.

When Military Conscription was introduced in January 1916, the Headquarters office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church issued certificates to every Seventh-day Adventist likely to be brought before a tribunal. The status of Adventist ministers came into question when F L Chapman was summoned to appear before the Police Court in Exeter, on 24 May 1917. He had failed to report for military service. Chapman was working as a minister, though not yet ordained. Witnesses testified that Chapman was a minister of religion and the Bench exempted him from military service. This was a test case for Adventists but also benefited ministers of other denominations. Soon afterwards the church registered the names of all their ministers at the War office.

Others were not so fortunate. The tribunals generally respected their refusal to bear arms – but that was the only exemption. William George Chappell worked selling Christian literature. He was called to a tribunal in Brynmawr, South Wales on 25 March 1916. In his notice of appeal he stated that "as I am a Seventh-day Adventist [I] am opposed to war." Noting Bible verses that supported a pacifist stance he stated that he felt it more important for him to ‘go preach the Gospel’ than to be involved in the war.

The tribunal disagreed stating that his work was ‘not of national importance’ and only exempting him from combatant service.

Many like Chappell were enlisted in the non-combatant corps and served both in the UK and in France. Arthur Ernest Sanders gained the same minimal exemption at a Watford tribunal on 25 February 1918. He spend the rest of the war serving in army kitchens. Others, unwilling to provide even that service, spent time in prison, 17 of them in Dartmoor.
Positive Benefits of Tribunals

Tribunals occasionally had positive benefits. A group of 14 Adventists had been successfully serving in an NCC in France for a period of 18 months. With a change of commander came problems, particularly with their request to not work on Sabbath (Saturday) in accordance with the 4th commandment. In November 1917 they were court martialled and imprisoned in Le Havre. There they were beaten, manacled, given the dreaded ‘crucifixion’ punishment, some of them coming within an inch of their lives. Their story is told elsewhere, but after intervention, they were moved back to England, spending Christmas in Wormwood Scubs prison – and event that the daughter of one of them, Alfred Bird, describes as being "a delight compared with the treatment meted out to them in France."

She states that following a hearing by the Central Tribunal, and an understanding of the injustice they received, the men were released from the Army into civilian life undertaking work of national importance. According to historian, Dr Brian Phillips, that tribunal made a difference. He writes, "From that time Seventh-day Adventists in Britain have generally been allowed a choice of occupation of national importance in time of War."

One of those fourteen, H W Lowe, became a leader of the Adventist church and in 1937 was called to the war office to meet with a lawyer. Listening to his harrowing account and discussing Biblical values with him, the lawyer recommended that Adventist young men should be exempted from army service in favour of work of national importance. In WWII they still faced the tribunals, but this time with a much more favourable outcome.

Victor Hulbert (Communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK & Ireland) is the great nephew of WWI Conscientious Objector, Willie Till. Victor tells the story in a moving documentary film, ‘A Matter of Conscience’.
The Adventist Peace Fellowship was recently covered in *Best Practices for Adventist Ministry*, an email service provided by the Ministerial Department of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The email said:

The Adventist Peace Fellowship is a 501c3 non-profit organization and independent lay ministry founded in 2001 that seeks to raise consciousness about the centrality of peacemaking and social justice to the beliefs and heritage of Adventists. We provide a wide array of resources for Adventist peacemakers, including a certification program for churches committed to working on peace and justice issues as a central part of their identity and mission. Five Seventh-day Adventist churches spread across the United States have passed resolutions to be known as Adventist peace churches, and one church, *Glendale City*, has already completed certification. One additional Adventist church located in a region of Papua New Guinea marked by constant violent tribal skirmishes has expressed a strong interest in becoming a peace church that models principles of nonviolent peacemaking and reconciliation.

The blurb linked to a longer article posted on the Ministerial Department website. The information can also be found on Facebook.

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**Post navigation**

← Glendale City Church Remembers the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide (by Todd Leonard)  
UK Adventists and WWI Tribunals →
Ministry Partners

Adventist Peace Fellowship

By Ronald Osborn

The Adventist Peace Fellowship is a 501c3 non-profit organization and independent lay ministry founded in 2001 that seeks to raise consciousness about the centrality of peacemaking and social justice to the beliefs and heritage of Adventists. We provide a wide array of resources for Adventist peacemakers, including a certification program for churches committed to working on peace and justice issues as a central part of their identity and mission. Five Seventh-day Adventist churches spread across the United States have passed resolutions to be known as Adventist peace churches, and one church, Glendale City, has already completed certification. One additional Adventist church located in a region of Papua New Guinea marked by constant violent tribal skirmishes has expressed a strong interest in becoming a peace church that models principles of nonviolent peacemaking and reconciliation.

The APF has designated May 23 – the Sabbath before Memorial Day – as the first annual Adventist Peace Sabbath. We are warmly inviting all Adventist congregations to join our growing Adventist peace church network, and to focus in their May 23 worship services on the good news of the Prince of Peace. We are aware that this is a time of year when some congregations in the United States devote part of their service to honoring those who have served in the military, and we are sensitive to the experiences of Adventists with friends and loved ones who are enlisted in the armed forces – particularly those who have lost family members in theaters of war. We are no less sensitive to the sacrifices and heroism of countless individuals throughout history – including many Adventists – who have fought for peace using methods of peace as principled pacifists and conscientious objectors.

In view of the Adventist church's official stance of conscientious objection, in view of the international character of many of our congregations today, and in remembrance of the lives and witnesses of Adventist noncombatants (who in some parts of the world have experienced severe persecution, torture, and even death for refusing to take up arms), we are urging all Adventist pastors to treat this day not as an occasion for patriotic flag-waving or celebration of the institution of the military but rather as a time for deeper reflection on the terrible loss of human lives in war, including both combatants and innocent civilians. May 23 is a Sabbath when Adventists can together bear a more creative witness in our worship life and in our liturgies to the reality of God's kingdom which transcends every nation, government, empire, principality, and power.

To assist pastors and other church leaders as they wrestle with the meaning of Christ's life and example in a world of violence and war, we are happy to share an Adventist Peace liturgy, Let Us Be Peacemakers. This worship guide includes Scripture readings, hymns, and prayers focused on themes of peace and justice. It can be freely adopted, adapted, and shared by Adventist pastors for use on Peace Sabbath, May 23, or on any other appropriate occasion in the life of your community. We hope that it is circulated as widely as possible.

Ronald Osborn is an Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the Peace and Justice Studies Program at Wellesley College. A graduate of Atlantic Union College and an active member of Boston Temple.
Seventh-day Adventist Church, he is a co-founder and the current executive director of the Adventist Peace Fellowship.
Glendale City Church Remembers the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide (by Todd Leonard)

By APF

April 24, 2015

(The following article was submitted by Todd Leonard, pastor of Glendale City Church, the first Adventist church to become a fully certified Adventist Peace Church.)
In April 1915, an edict went out from the government of the waning Ottoman empire for the removal and execution from what is now Turkey of every Armenian, man, woman and child. Over the next ten years, approximately 1.5 million Armenians were killed by gun, sword, drowning, crucifixion, immolation and more. Raphael Lemkin, a polish lawyer who spent his life working to prevent and punish those responsible for mass killings, coined the term “genocide” to describe what was done to the Armenian people.

On April 24, 2015, the nation of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora pause to grieve this atrocity, to give thanks for those who came to their defense during this time of terror and to protest governments, including Turkey and the United States, who still will not acknowledge this event for what it is: a holocaust upon the Armenian people.

The Glendale City Seventh-day Adventist Church is located in a city adjacent to Los Angeles whose population is made up of over 100,000 people of Armenian descent, almost half of Glendale’s citizenry. For the past 35 years, the church has hosted an Armenian-speaking worship service on its campus each Sabbath in addition to having a number of Armenian-descent members who worship in its English-speaking worship.

On April 18, this congregation hosted a Day of Remembrance, a collaborative worship gathering hosted by the English- and Armenian-speaking congregations. Dr. Hovik Saraffian, the pastor of the Armenian congregation and a voice for Armenian Adventists around the world, presented the history of the genocide, called for Turkey’s repentance and expressed confidence that God’s righteousness would ultimately be triumphant over all evils in our world. The 40-voice Armenian Society of Los Angeles Chorus provided traditional Armenian songs that celebrated the heritage of the Armenian people, lamented the atrocities of a century ago, grieved God’s apparent absence during this awful time and, at the same time, celebrated God’s work in courageous men and women who stood up to do the work of God in the face of monstrous violence.

Over 100 guests of Armenian descent attended the Day of Remembrance. Afterwards, you could hear people sharing the stories of their ancestors, how their parents made it to an orphanage or how their grandparents were able to escape to a neighboring country. One guest told me how her mother was being taken by boat with dozens of others into the Black Sea to be drowned. Just before she was thrown overboard, she was pulled aside because the executioners thought she must not be Armenian because of her blonde hair and blue eyes.

For those in attendance who were not of Armenian descent, it was an eye-opening experience to be immersed in the story of the genocide. Because the events that began in 1915 have never been formally acknowledged by the United States, many Americans grew up, myself included, never having a history lesson about what happened. Many people expressed their gratitude at the opportunity to learn of this history and experience the sorrow of their Armenian neighbors.

Hosting this gathering is part of Glendale City Church’s commitment to be an Adventist Peace Church working to follow Christ’s call to bring peace into our city through community service, ecumenical relationship-building and gatherings that highlight the need for and celebrate those who do the work of peacemaking locally and around the world.

The Day of Remembrance service can be viewed in its entirety online at www.CityChurch-Online.org.
How will your congregation mark Memorial Day?: A Liturgy for Adventist Peace Sabbath, May 23
APF Listed in Best Practices for Adventist Ministry
How will your congregation mark Memorial Day?: A Liturgy for Adventist Peace Sabbath, May 23

By APF

April 9, 2015

The Adventist Peace Fellowship has designated May 23, 2015 as the first annual Adventist Peace Sabbath. May 23 is the Sabbath before Memorial Day in the U.S. calendar and so an occasion when some churches in the United States devote part of their service to honoring those who have served in the military. In view of the Adventist tradition’s official stance of conscientious objection in times of war, and in view of the sacrifices and heroism of countless noncombatants and pacifists throughout history (including many Adventists), we are urging all Adventist churches to treat this day as an occasion not for glorification of military victories or military service but rather for somber remembrance of the terrible loss of human lives in war, including both combatants and innocent civilians.

We are also urging all Adventist churches to draw inspiration from the five Adventist congregations that have already passed resolutions to be known as official Adventist Peace Churches. May 23 is a Sabbath when Adventists can bear creative witness in our worship life to the good news of Christ’s peace. We are very happy to share with all pastors and churches an Adventist Peace liturgy, “Let Us Be Peacemakers”, (created by APF members Yi Shen Ma and Maury Jackson with input from Nicholas Zork) that includes Scripture readings, hymns, and prayers focused on themes of peace and justice. The liturgy is already formatted for printing as a PDF document and can be downloaded here:

https://adventistpeace.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/adventistpeacesabbathservice.pdf

Post navigation

← Adventists and the Death Penalty: Why Are We Silent?  Glendale City Church Remembers the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide (by Todd Leonard) →
On March 3, 2015, – the Thursday before Easter – I read an article in the news service of the Reformed Churches in Switzerland reporting that nearly 400 Church leaders in the United States, including Catholic and Protestant theologians, evangelical leaders and faith-based social justice advocates, have launched a call to end the death penalty. The introduction to their open letter, an initiative of the organization Faith in Public Life (FPL), states: “All who reverence the sanctity of human life, created in the image of God, must never remain silent when firing squads, lethal injections, electric chairs and other instruments of death are viewed as morally acceptable.”

I searched the names of the signatories in the statement hoping to find a representative of the Adventist Church among them. I reasoned that Human Rights issues are very dear to the Adventist Church since we are also defenders of Religious Liberty – for us a central Human Right. I also thought that “created in the image of God” is a core theological theme of our church and much more important than the question of the chronological details of creation that are about to be adjusted in the fundamental beliefs at San Antonio 2015. “Created in the image of God”...
God" is for me one of the central religious concepts and the basis for protecting the human dignity for all persons. Confident that I would find an Adventist among the signatories, I searched the list of more than 400 names. But there was not a single Adventist voice among them!

All Adventists in every region of the world have cultural and religious imprints. Swiss Adventists have a very different background than American Adventists, including in regards to the death penalty. But it is hard for me to accept that our church publishes statements on many minor issues or matters of lesser importance yet none about this very central issue: the sanctity of life and efforts to end the death penalty world wide. When will the Adventist Church not only launch a worldwide campaign to end violence against women – which is very important – but also an initiative to abolish the death penalty as an inhuman act? Some of our pioneers fought for the abolishment of slavery in the US although it was not abolished in the Bible. Abolitionism was a position that was not supported by all Christians. It seems to me that the moral questions are quite similar in regards to the death penalty.

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is promoting as a long-term objective the worldwide abolishment of the death penalty by 2025. I appeal to the North American Adventist Church to sign the call of the 400 in the US. And I also appeal to the worldwide Adventist Church leadership to take a “pro life” stand and fight for the abolishment of death penalty.

(Editors note: The Adventist Peace Fellowship has an official position supporting efforts to “Abolish the death penalty as a cruel and inhumane form of state violence”, which can be found on the “Campaigns” page of our website under the heading of “Peacemaking and Reconciliation”. APF Director Ronald Osborn has asked that his signature be added to the FPL’s letter on behalf of the Adventist Peace Fellowship.)

About these ads

Post navigation

← AU to hold Social Justice Summit: Race and Justice in America
How will your congregation mark Memorial Day?: A Liturgy for Adventist Peace Sabbath, May 23 →
AU to hold Social Justice Summit: Race and Justice in America

By APF

March 27, 2015

51 YEARS LATER, STILL FIGHTING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS...

Regardless of your background, issues related to RACE & JUSTICE in America impacts you!


“The fate of millions of people—indeed the future of the black community itself—may depend on the willingness of those who care about racial justice to re-examine their basic assumptions about the role of the criminal justice system in our society.”

— Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

ARE YOU WILLING TO CARE?

Andrews University

Peacemaking through Medical Care

On March 12, 2015, students and professors gathered in Newbold auditorium at Andrews University to hear how doctors in western Galilee are using medicine to build trust and promote peace between Israel and Syria. Dr. Arie Eisenman and Dr. Ohad Ronen shared how the Galilee Medical Center has begun to care for Syrians who have been wounded in the ongoing Syrian Civil War. Injured Syrians who are brought to the border are transported by the Israeli government to the Galilee Medical Center. While at the hospital, no questions are asked: anyone who is injured is treated, whether they are a member of ISIS or a civilian. Dr. Ronen described the surprise of many of these patients – who typically view Israel as the enemy – when they wake up and find themselves being treated in an Israeli hospital. While only wounded individuals were originally being brought to Israel for care, the word has spread and some noncritical patients are coming to the border for help, such as pregnant women who cannot acquire adequate medical care within Syria. Dr. Ronen hopes that providing for the medical needs of these Syrian patients will build trust between Syria and Israel, with those who have been cared for in Israel returning to share their positive experiences with family and friends once they have recovered. As someone who is working towards a career in medicine, it was inspiring to hear how even doctors that don’t devote their careers entirely to humanitarian work can have opportunities placed in their path to help people in need and even promote peace in a world full of upheaval.

Sumiko Weir, Andrews University
Andrews University Holds Forum On Racially Divided Conferences

By Jeff Boyd

March 12, 2015

On March 7, 2015, the Andrews University APF Chapter, along with a number of other student organizations, sponsored an event which looked at the state and regional conference structure within the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

After a review of the NAD’s organizational structure, panelists with ties to Andrews University answered a number of relevant questions. A video of the event can be viewed on YouTube—A Forum On State and Regional Conferences.

After the panel was completed, the student organizers read a statement that they are sending to NAD leaders. It reads:

A request from the Andrews University Adventist Peace Fellowship Chapter (AUAPF), in collaboration with the officers of the Andrews University Student Association (AUSA) and Black Student Christian Forum (BSCF);

To the Executive Committee of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists:

In light of the national conversations surrounding race and race relations over the past year, we have become increasingly concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the administrative separation of our church conferences along racial lines in the North American Division.

We understand that there are many strong and diverse opinions on this issue. Even within our own group, there are opinions as to whether restructuring should even be sought; and opinions regarding how restructuring could be appropriately accomplished.

However, one thing on which we all agree is that the present structure seems peculiar. Without explanation, we worry about how it looks to the outside world. We worry about how it looks to us.

Therefore, we request that the North American Division do one or both of the following:

1. Form a Commission tasked with developing a strategy that culminates in the restructuring of our conferences by the year 2020;

2. Release an official public statement, to be passed at the North American Division Year-end Meeting in the fall of 2015, clearly explaining why we maintain the current organizational structure.

This request is presented with the hope of reconciliation, in a spirit of deep regard for the sensitivity of this subject, profound respect for church order, and earnest desire for the advancement of God’s Kingdom through this unique Adventist movement.

The statement is also available online here.
March 7 Request

A request from the Andrews University Adventist Peace Fellowship Chapter (AUAPF), in collaboration with the officers of the Andrews University Student Association (AUSA) and Black Student Christian Forum (BSCF);

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This request is presented with the hope of reconciliation, in a spirit of deep regard for the sensitivity of this subject, profound respect for church order, and earnest desire for the advancement of God's Kingdom through this unique Adventist movement.

This request is supported by the officers of the Andrews Ministerial Association (AMA), African Student Association (ASA), Andrews University Religious Liberty Association (AURLA), AULL4One (A41), Caribbean Nations Club (CNC), J. N. Andrews Honors Program, Korean American Student Association (KASA), Phi Alpha Theta, Pre-Law Society, and Saving Oppressed Servants (SOS).

To show your support as an individual, share this request any way you can. The request was first posted to the Andrews University Student Association Facebook page and can be easily be shared from there. If you would like to add your support as a group or an organization, please contact APF Representative Łukasz Kryzwon at krzywori@andrews.edu.

This request was jointly crafted by the officers of AUAPF, AUSA, and BSCF, and is hosted here for easy access.

This request was originally presented at “A Forum on State and Regional Conferences” on March 7, 2015, an event organized by AUAPF, AUSA, and BSCF. A full video of the forum can be seen below.

For a thorough history of Regional Conferences, we recommend alumnus Michael Nixon’s post on Compass Magazine.
Professor Zane Yi challenges Loma Linda community to connect healthcare with human rights

By APF  March 12, 2015

In a chapel talk addressed to the entire Loma Linda University community, Dr. Zane Yi, assistant professor of theological studies in the School of Religion at LLU, challenged Adventist medical students and healthcare providers to use their skills to engage with urgent matters of human rights and social justice. Citing the work of the Adventist Peace Fellowship, Yi invited his listeners to boldly envision the meaning of medical missions in an age of massive and growing social and economic disparities.

“Can you imagine what it might look like in the world if Loma Linda University graduates went out into the world not just as skilled practitioners of their craft but as passionate advocates and champions of justice in healthcare?”

Professor Yi’s talk begins at the 19 minute mark of this video. His comments about the APF begin at approximately minute 33.

Broadcast live streaming video on Ustream

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Post navigation

← Adventists and Muslims Resolve Land Dispute in Ghana
Andrews University Holds Forum On Racially Divided Conferences →