Corder to Step in as NPUC Association Treasurer

Jon Corder, Oregon Conference vice president for finance since 2008, is the new North Pacific Union Association treasurer. He replaces Robert Hastings, who recently became the Arizona Conference treasurer. Corder expects to transition to the NPUC role by April 1. Corder brings a master’s of business administration and three decades of church financial experience to this new responsibility. His wife, Cheri, currently works with the Oregon Conference as a member ministries associate director. The Corders have two adult children. “We welcome Jon to this new role,” says Mark Remboldt, NPUC vice president for finance. "He brings a careful attention to detail and a passion for the mission of our church. I am excited he will be joining our team.” Read more HERE.

AUC and WAU Vote Memorandum of Understanding

The Trustees of Washington Adventist University today voted a Memorandum of Understanding with Atlantic Union College. This MOU calls for the two institutions to work toward an agreement to establish a branch campus of WAU at AUC in South Lancaster, Mass. WAU would lease the facilities of AUC, and become the sole provider of higher education at the New England location. All provisions are dependent upon approval from the required accrediting and regulatory agencies. This move follows a recent decision by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to discontinue AUC’s accreditation July 31, 2011, for financial reasons. Read more HERE.

Boonstra Speaks Out: Westboro Baptist Church vs. Religious Liberty

Many throughout our country have been dismayed by the actions of the Westboro Baptist Church, and its apparent victory in a recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court. The decision allows this tiny congregation to continue its public demonstrations at military funerals. How should Seventh-day Adventists relate to this decision? How does it affect our own mission? Read Shawn Boonstra’s statement in the Adventist Review on this topic HERE.

Looking Ahead

March
24: May Ad/Article Deadline

April
1–3: Wash. Impact Your World Retreat
3–5: WWU University Days
7: UCA Academy Days
9: Ore. Ministry Fest South
21: June Ad/Article Deadline
21–24: WWU Homecoming Weekend
30: OAMC Concert

May
19: July Ad/Article Deadline

GLEANER Blogs

- Cindy's Garden Blog
- Monthly Archival Photo
- Let's Talk
- Tip Sheet

YouTube Webinar
Chip Dizard, who has more than 10 years of Web and video experience working with churches and other ministries, is hosting weekly FREE webinars during March for those interested in setting up and using their unique YouTube channel. These webinars are viewable on demand for just one week beginning each Tuesday at 9 p.m. (Pacific). Each is approximately 15 minutes long and requires online registration. The webinar currently available is “Getting Subscribers and Promoting Your Ministry.” The webinar will be available March 15 and will feature “YouTube Channel Design and Social Media Integration.” Register online HERE.

Noted Adventist Theologian Dies
Hans K. LaRondelle, a noted Seventh-day Adventist theologian and scholar who read his way into the Adventist faith, died March 7 in Sarasota, Fla. He was 81 years old. LaRondelle, who was honored last year with the publication of a book of essays noting his scholarship. He taught at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Mich., for 25 years, retiring in 1991 with the title of professor emeritus. Although born into a Roman-Catholic family, he received his education in Protestant schools from the age of eight. At the age of 20, he came to believe the Adventist message by studying The Great Controversy by Ellen G. White. Read more from the Adventist Review HERE.

Put Your Church in the News
An excellent example of how a worldwide news item about the Adventist Church can become a local news story for your community or regional media is a story this week from ArkansasOnline.com, a service of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Read the story HERE.

Baptist Bookstores Back Off Warning Labels
Southern Baptist LifeWay bookstores have quietly suspended a four-year program that warned customers to read with “discernment” books by several emergent authors whose books “could be considered inconsistent with historical evangelical theology.” Some authors of the marked books, including popular authors Rob Bell, Donald Miller, Brian McLaren and William Young, were happy with the decision to terminate the program. Young, who wrote the New York Times best-seller The Shack, said he initially laughed off the program, but still thought that LifeWay made “a good move” in ending it. Read more from the Adventist Review and Religious News Service HERE.

Sponsor a Child to Summer Camp

Current Issue
March
Adventist church leaders are calling members to a new experience of revival and reformation. Read a personal message from Dan Jackson, North American Division president, in the March GLEANER.
It's not too early to plan your support for a unique part of Northwest evangelism: sending children to summer camp. Registration will open soon. You can help sponsor one or more children to your conference camp. Alaska has three options: Camp Tukoskoya, June 26–July 11; Camp Polaris, July 19–25; and Camp Lorraine, July 31–Aug. 7. Idaho's Camp Ida-Haven operates from June 26–Aug. 7. Montana's Camp Paxon will operate June 26–July 3. Oregon's Big Lake Youth Camp will run from June 26–Aug. 14. Upper Columbia's Camp MiVoden has youth camps scheduled from June 19–July 17. Washington's Sunset Lake Camp will run from June 26–Aug. 14. Each camp has a variety of activities to interest the most adventuresome young person. Find out more at each conference camp website.
Corder Replaces Hastings at NPUC

Jon Corder, Oregon Conference vice president for finance since 2008, is the new North Pacific Union Association treasurer. He replaces Robert Hastings, who recently became the Arizona Conference treasurer. Corder expects to transition to this new role by April 1.

Corder has been active in church financial leadership for several decades. He served Pacific Union College in Angwin, Calif., for nearly a decade in such roles as assistant chief accountant, director of student finance and controller. In 1987, he moved his family to Spokane, Wash., to begin work at the Upper Columbia Conference, where he was under-treasurer until 1997. Following two years as the Upper Columbia Academy vice-principal for finance, Corder resumed work at the UCC as vice-president for finance, a position he held for nearly nine years.

Corder brings not only his Master of Business Administration expertise to this new NPUC role, but also more than three decades of church financial experience. His wife, Cheri, currently works with the Oregon Conference as member ministries associate director. The Corders have two adult children.

"We welcome Jon to this new role," says Mark Remboldt, NPUC vice president for finance. "He brings a careful attention to detail and a passion for the mission of our church. I am personally excited he will be joining our team."
Washington Adventist University and Atlantic Union College Vote Memorandum of Understanding

Statement

March 9, 2011

Takoma Park, MD — The Trustees of Washington Adventist University (WAU) today voted a Memorandum of Understanding with Atlantic Union College (AUC). This MOU calls for the two institutions to work toward an agreement to establish a branch campus of Washington Adventist University at Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. WAU would lease the facilities of AUC, and become the sole provider of higher education at the New England location. All provisions are dependent upon approval from the required accrediting and regulatory agencies.

(Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University; Dave Weigley, chair of the Washington Adventist University Board of Trustees; Don King, chair of the Atlantic Union College Board of Trustees; and Norman Wendth, president of Atlantic Union College sign the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of their institutions.)

This move follows a recent decision by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to discontinue AUC’s accreditation July 31, 2011, for financial reasons.

"We’re grateful that our enrollment growth and financial position enables us to continue to provide accredited higher education to the community and constituents that Atlantic Union College serves,” said Weymouth Spence, EdD, president of WAU. “Our desire is to build upon the rich heritage they’ve established with a focus on the future.”

Norman Wendth, PhD, president of AUC, added, “I have believed for many years that to unite Atlantic Union College with Washington Adventist University would create a truly impressive educational institution. I am deeply pleased that we can respond to AUC’s accreditation challenge in such a historically significant way.”

The expansion positions WAU to serve the educational needs of students in 15 states in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern United States and the island of Bermuda.

Officials from both entities will now work together to complete a formal and binding agreement. This process will address key questions about governance, academic programs, and services in order to facilitate a smooth transition for both current and future students. WAU will then develop a business plan and seek approval from their governing boards, as well as state, regional, and church accrediting agencies.

WAU will provide updates as they become available via email and at www.wau.edu and www.auc.edu. Inquiries should be directed to William Jackson, vice president for Marketing and Recruiting at WAU at (301) 891-4475 or wjackson@wau.edu.

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About Washington Adventist University

Founded in 1904, Washington Adventist University, a liberal arts institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is headquartered in Takoma Park, Md. The university offers eight graduate and 32 undergraduate programs for 1,300 students of all faiths. The mission is to produce graduates who bring competence and moral leadership to their communities by creating a culture of excellence designed to engage minds and transform lives.

About Atlantic Union College

Founded in 1882, Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Mass., is the oldest campus in the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide educational system. Spring enrollment is 444 students in bachelor’s, master’s, associate and certificate programs, and the Adult Degree Program. Its specialized mission is to produce service-centered professionals who have the skills needed to help create healthy communities.
SHAWN BOONSTRA

It's hard to describe the conflicting emotions I felt when I saw the headline: Justices Rule for Protesters at Military Funerals.¹ If I'm honest, my first reaction was very human: disappointment. As a Christian, I've been dreadfully embarrassed by the religious sideshow that is Reverend Phelps. No matter how you parse the words of the Bible, it's hard to conceive of Jesus – who wept at Lazarus' tomb – picketing a funeral as a publicity stunt. He simply never cashed in on human misery.

The day news hit, I happened to have a little time to reflect on the case leisurely and ask myself some hard questions. Why, exactly, did I feel disappointed? Did I want the Supreme Court to bring its iron fist down on the folks at Westboro Baptist Church (WBC)? If I'm perfectly honest, I'd have to say yes. It was hard to watch such hard-hearted vitriol get the green light from the highest court in the land. When I hear WBC protestors express themselves on the public airwaves, my brain reflexively screams: would you PLEASE shut up?? You're making all of us look bad!

Almost anyone with a Christian background can recognize the not-so-subtle distortions in the Westboro Baptist Church's version of the gospel. Their tone is unChristlike, their antics seem self-serving, and their caricature of God's loving character is grotesque. As they try to publicly humiliate grieving families, waving the banner of Jesus, the more combative part of our nature wants them silenced. We'd love to stop cringing over the evening news, imagining our non-Christian friends and coworkers watching the same shameful theatrics and mentally filing us all together under "c" for "crazy."

It's easy to convince ourselves that God Himself would be ecstatic if the Supreme Court silenced the WBC, because at long last the religious kooks have been kept from sullying His reputation. But Solomon says otherwise about God's attitude: Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles. Proverbs 24:17 NKJV

I honestly believe that a little soul-searching is in order at the Westboro Baptist Church. Somehow, they've missed the big picture when it comes to Jesus. They'd likely feel embarrassed if they could watch their protests through the eyes of angels. But how would my feelings about them stack up among heaven's spectators?²

It's one thing to want God's work to move forward, and for God's real character to be revealed to the world. But when I catch myself hoping to watch WBC fall flat on its face, perhaps I need to do a little soul-searching, too. God pleads with lost sinners and sheds tears over them³, and my life is supposed to reflect His character. While I'm not pleased that the Reverend Phelps may feel emboldened to step up his efforts, I need to ask myself whether or not I would have gloated – even a little – if the decision had been different.

I need to have faith that God's plan to vindicate His character will play out in the end. He doesn't need to enlist the Supreme Court to do it for Him. In fact, that's the point of the Great Controversy: God knows that the devil will ultimately come after those who want to publicly humiliate grieving families. Others will cringe that wacky fringe groups have been emboldened. But among Christians, Adventists should have the broadest understanding of why the Supreme Court's decision was a good one.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we bring a unique perspective to the inevitable debate over the Court's decision. Christians at large will be divided over what happened. Some will rejoice that they have been given a more secure opportunity to publicly decry the sins of their neighbors. Others will cringe that wacky fringe groups have been emboldened. But among Christians, Adventists should have the broadest understanding of why the Supreme Court's decision was a good one.

We shouldn't overlook the fact that many of us want the WBC to go away because we feel it is not representative of genuine Christianity. It is a fringe group—in an oddity. But the moment is coming when those who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus”⁴ will also be considered a fringe group, at odds with the broader aims of the last-day religious world. In the early days of the New Testament church, Jesus warned His disciples that “the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.”⁵ The apostles were a fringe group, albeit the right one, and those who wanted them gone sincerely thought it was in God's best interests to get rid of them.
The ongoing embarrassment of the WBC is the price we pay for the freedom to proclaim our distinctive last-day message. It's a hedge against the erosion of our religious liberty, as distasteful as their public stunts might be. And the longer that hedge exists, the better we can accomplish our task as a church.

The devil has mastered his art over thousands of years. He knows precisely which causes to adopt in order to cast God's kingdom in the worst possible light. Those who have little appetite for their Creator, because they have a distorted picture of Him, will find further cause for ridicule and unbelief in the actions of misguided Christians. But he only wins if believers fall silent because we fear being tarred with the same brush. By stirring wrong attitudes among some Christians in an effort to embarrass God's cause, Satan has (perhaps unwittingly) helped establish the legal boundaries that protect and enable it.

Was the Court's decision a good one? It was. And I don't suppose the Justices fully appreciate what they have done in behalf of God's work as they grudgingly give WBC the constitutional right to badger the public. When the books of heaven are made available to us, we may discover that God Himself overruled our human instincts in that courtroom. But be warned; the hedge is a temporary reprieve, and it will eventually come down. So "work the works of Him who sent [Jesus] while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."6

1 NYT: March 2, 2011
2 1 Corinthians 4:9
3 See Ezekiel 18:31, 32, for example.
4 Revelation 12:17
5 John 16:2
6 John 9:4

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Shawn Boonstra, former speaker/director of It Is Written, writes from Southern California.
Hans LaRondelle, Noted Adventist Theologian and Scholar, Dies at 81
Honored with book of essays; was converted by reading Great Controversy

BY MARK A. KELNER, News Editor

Hans K. LaRondelle, a noted Seventh-day Adventist theologian and scholar who read his way into the Adventist faith, died March 7 in Sarasota, Florida. He was 81 years old.

LaRondelle, who was honored in February 2010 with the publication of a book of essays noting his scholarship, taught at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, for 25 years, retiring in 1991 with the title of professor emeritus.

“We have lost a wonderful friend and colleague,” said Denis Fortin, dean of the Seminary, in an e-mail message to the faculty. Stanley Patterson, another seminary professor, noted the impact LaRondelle’s teaching made: “God used him to change my life,” Patterson wrote. LaRondelle’s “words and manner remain fresh to me after the passing of 32 years. [He was a] true soldier of the cross.”

That expression of faith and reliance on Scripture was not limited to the classroom, however. LaRondelle authored dozens of articles and ten books, as well as chapters in many others. His articles appeared in Adventist Review, Signs of the Times and other church-related publications.

“His great contribution was that he had a thorough knowledge of the Scripture in the context of the Protestant tradition,” said Nikolaus Satelmajer, former editor of Ministry magazine, where LaRondelle was a longtime and frequent contributor. “He could communicate his work to the everyday church member; he was not detached from their understanding of scripture,” Satelmajer added.

Hans Karl LaRondelle was born in the Netherlands in 1929. Although born into a Roman Catholic family, he received education in Protestant schools from the age of eight, and, a spiritual seeker at age 20, came to believe the Seventh-day Adventist message by studying “The Great Controversy” by Ellen G. White.

At that moment, LaRondelle’s life focus changed: he dropped his law studies at the Leyden State University and embarked on a theological course at Utrecht State University. Later, he continued his studies at the Reformed Free University in Amsterdam, receiving a doctor of theology degree in systematic theology in 1971 under the instruction of noted theologian G. C. Berkouwer.


LaRondelle served as a pastor, evangelist, youth leader and teacher for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Netherlands for 14 years, from 1953-1966, before coming to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary for his long teaching career. Hundreds of Adventist pastors who completed their studies in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s sat under his teaching.

“During his long career as theologian, professor and writer, Dr. LaRondelle taught us important lessons about the doctrine of justification and about the spiritual connection between the people Israel and the Christian church,” said...
Niels-Erik Andreasen, Andrews University president. “His teachings were always Biblical and uplifting, and what is more he presented them with a charming smile on the lips. We will miss him.”

Adventist Review managing editor Steven Chavez, a former LaRondelle student, said “he was one of the church’s premier theologians, and he was always in demand as a speaker and author. LaRondelle wasn’t afraid to tackle the tough topics that the church grappled with in those days, including the concept of perfection and perfectionism.”

Jiri Moskala, another Seminary colleague, said LaRondelle “was one of the best systematic theologians in our church. He developed very good theological system for all our doctrines, which stressed so much the Christ-centeredness of all doctrines, and especially the preaching of the prophecy.”

Moskala, along with Daniel Heinz of Freidensau Adventist University and retired Andrews professor Peter M. van Bemmelen, who is also LaRondelle’s brother-in-law, co-edited “Christ, Salvation, and the Eschaton: Essays in Honor of Hans K. LaRondelle,” published in 2009.

“I am so glad it was finished and given to him in February” of 2010, Moskala said. “He was enthusiastic about that great honor.”

His wife, Barbara LaRondelle, a son and a daughter survive. No funeral was held, but a memorial service is planned for late March.

-- with information from Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventists continue to grow

By Frank Lockwood

Saturday, March 5, 2011

LITTLE ROCK — At a time when most other denominations are losing members, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is growing rapidly.

During the past half-century, its U.S. membership has more than tripled, from 311,539 in 1959 to 1,043,606 in 2009.

Worldwide, there are now an estimated 16 million Adventists.

G. Alexander Bryant, secretary of the church’s North American Division, headquartered in Silver Spring, Md., says evangelism has sparked substantial gains in the United States and around the globe.

“One of the distinctive [beliefs] that we have is the conviction that Jesus Christ is coming soon and that the world as we know it will not continue,” Bryant said. “So that gives us some sense of urgency.”

Ryan Long, pastor of Bonnerdale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hot Spring County, agrees.

“We want to see people in the kingdom of heaven when Jesus comes again, so we put a lot of time and effort and energy into making that a reality,” Long said.

The word Adventist refers to the Second Coming (or Advent) of Jesus Christ.

The roots of Adventism lie in the mid-19th century.

A Baptist preacher from New York named William Miller, attempting to decipher biblical prophecies, declared that the Second Coming would occur at some point in 1843 or 1844 - and thousands believed him.

When the deadline passed without incident, many of Miller’s followers abandoned the movement. But others who lived through “The Great Disappointment” remained convinced that the Second Advent was imminent.

They kept searching the Scriptures for signs of the end times.

Eventually, some of these Adventists rejected Sunday worship, viewing it as unbiblical.

Instead, they hallowed the Seventh Day - the Jewish Sabbath - from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday.

Viewing other Christian denominations as apostate, Seventhday Adventists consider themselves the Lord’s faithful end-time remnant.

In 1863, the modern Seventhday Adventist Church was created in Battle Creek, Mich. Initially, it claimed 125 congregations and 3,500 members.

The denomination’s current statement of fundamental beliefs highlights the importance of honoring the Sabbath and keeping it holy: “The fourth commandment of God’s unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath.”
By the 1880s, Seventh-day Adventists were settling in Arkansas - and running afoul of state laws that prohibited work on Sundays.

Pike County Adventist Allen Meeks was indicted by a grand jury for planting potatoes on a Sunday in March 1885.

Others were indicted for plowing their fields, hoeing their gardens or painting houses on Sundays.

The arrests and persecutions continued until 1887, when the Arkansas Legislature exempted Seventh-day worshippers from the Sunday law.

All these years later, sunset Friday to sunset Saturday remains “a sacred time,” Bryant says.

The Seventh-day Adventist presence in Arkansas is small but growing. The state had 6,669 Adventists in 2000. That figure climbed to 7,595 in 2010.

Like many other Christian religions, Adventists teach that the Bible is God’s divinely inspired “infallible revelation” to humanity.

But Adventists also revere the writings of Ellen G. White, a woman they view as a latter-day prophetess, who lived from 1827 to 1915 and wrote extensively about Adventism. “As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction and correction,” the statement of fundamental beliefs declares.

White urged Adventists to give up coffee, tea, tobacco, alcohol and meat - particularly meats (such as pork and shellfish) which were condemned in the Old Testament.

Today, many Adventists are vegetarians.

“We feel we have a responsibility and obligation to take care of our bodies, the temple of God, as best we can,” Bryant said. “We have a very strong emphasis on health and living a healthy life, diet, exercise [and] rest.”

Adventists also have an extensive private school network and a medical system with hospitals across the United States and around the world.

By feeding the homeless, caring for the sick and ministering to the poor, Adventists look for “ways to help other people to see the love of Christ,” Bryant said.

Adventists teach tithing - the concept that 10 percent of one’s income belongs to God and should be given to his kingdom.

The church doesn’t believe that humanity can save itself or that good works are the key to obtaining eternal life.

“We believe in salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus,” said Pastor Pat Fortner of Little Rock’s Seventh-day Adventist Church, another church experiencing growth.

While Adventists believe in a final judgment, they don’t teach that sinners will burn in hell for all eternity. “God will destroy the wicked, not torment them forever. That’s a big difference,” says Phillip French, a head elder at Little Rock congregation.

Pastor Gary Ford of the Springdale Adventist Fellowship says his 400-member congregation is “one of the more growing [Adventist] churches in the region.”

Adventists’ focus on Scriptures is a key to their spiritual vitality.

“Many churches water down their teachings from the Bible,” Ford said. “And if they don’t follow the Bible, they begin to decline because they don’t have a lot of assurance to give people.”

“Religion and church is not supposed to be one of many distractions. It’s supposed to be a help in life with the issues you face, strength and an encouragement, and that should come from God’s Word,” Ford said.
Adventist teaching, combined with Adventist social services, attract newcomers. Many of them are immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries.

“I think if you have a consistent, coordinated effort to reach out and touch the lives of people, your church will grow,” Ford said.

Religion, Pages 12 on 03/05/2011
Southern Baptist bookstores have quietly suspended a four-year program that warned customers to read with "discernment" books by several up-and-coming authors whose books "could be considered inconsistent with historical evangelical theology."

Chris Rodgers, the director of product standards and customer relations for Nashville-based LifeWay, said the warnings were discontinued because they were "irrelevant to our customers."

"There was little to no interest in it," Rodgers said. "No one asked about the authors."

The program flagged the writings of several emergent authors with labels which advised readers to exercise caution and "extra discernment" when reading particular books.

The label read: "Read With Discernment. This book may contain thoughts, ideas, or concepts that could be considered inconsistent with historical evangelical theology. Therefore we encourage you to read it with extra discernment."

The program recently came under attack in a blog post from Christian musician Shaun Groves, who was upset that LifeWay was willing to warn customers about a book but still continued to sell it.

LifeWay, the official publisher and book store of the Southern Baptist Convention, downplayed the program and the decision to end it, saying the labels were not warnings but rather an attempt to provide customers with more information.

“They were not warnings; there is no way at all you could read those as warnings,” Rodgers said. “The program has been called controversial, (but) the only real controversy was the Groves blog.”

But some authors of the marked books, including popular authors Rob Bell, Donald Miller, Brian McLaren and William Young, were happy with the decision to terminate the program.

McLaren, a sometimes controversial emergent author whose books were flagged, said a decision to censor writings by another Christian went against the Baptist tradition of personal conscience.

“I think it is concerning when, especially a Baptist bookstore acts as if a central organization can make decisions on which books are accepted and rejected,” McLaren said. “Yes, I am very pleased (to see it ended).”

Young, who wrote the New York Times best-seller "The Shack," said he initially laughed off the program, but still thought that LifeWay made “a good move” in ending it.