NPUC President Attends Arctic Camp Meeting

Max Torkelsen, North Pacific Union Conference president, was the featured speaker for the Western Arctic Camp Meeting, conducted in Dillingham and Togiak, Alaska. The meetings started in Dillingham on Friday evening, March 18. The next morning, Sabbath School and church service started earlier than usual and were followed by a quick lunch. A group of 16 then boarded three bush planes and flew to the village of Togiak on the edge of the Bering Sea for a community singspiration and church service. By 6 p.m., the group was back in the air for the return trip to Dillingham to enjoy an evening of music and a message by Torkelsen. Read more in the May GLEANER. View a gallery of photos of the Arctic camp meeting weekend HERE.

USA Today Article Highlights Adventist Growth

The March 18 edition of USA Today reports “Adventists’ back-to-basics faith is the fastest growing U.S. church.” G. Alexander Bryant, secretary of the North American Division, states the growth can be attributed to “public evangelism led out by the pastors and members across the division.” The National Council of Churches released their 2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches last month citing membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (in North American Division territory) has experienced a 4.31 percent growth since 2008. Read the full USA Today story HERE.

ASI Northwest Convention Begins April 28

ASI members across the Northwest and beyond are making plans to attend the annual regional convention. It will be held April 28–May 1 at the Coeur d’Alene Resort in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Steve Wohlberg and Duane McKey will be the featured speakers. As always, exhibits from mission-oriented businesses and outreach programs will be on hand. Hotel rooms are going fast. Additional information is available online HERE or by calling the North Pacific Union Conference office at 360-857-7000.

Register for May Creation Series

Looking Ahead

March
24: May Ad/Article Deadline

April
1–2: Ore. Origins Conference
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
28-May 1: ASI Northwest Convention

May
19: July Ad/Article Deadline

GLEANER Blogs

- Cindy’s Garden Blog
- Monthly Archival Photo
- Let’s Talk
- Tip Sheet
Resources are now available for the May 4–8 series In the Beginning: Making Sense of the Creation-Evolution Debate. This five-night program is presented each evening at 7:30 p.m. (Pacific) on the Hope Channel as a lead-in for the Net 2011 Prophecies Decoded event with Ron Clouzet, scheduled for Sept. 30–Oct. 29. Early birds who register before April 1 may receive access to all available meeting support materials, and a free gift. For more information or to order resources, go to the event website HERE. Or call 855-NET-2011.

Should GC Sessions Be Downsized?
As church leaders look beyond the 2015 General Conference session to the event in 2020, they are discussing whether a downsized session is on the horizon. According to a report by the Adventist News Network, as Adventist membership has grown, so have session venues. Today, a potential host city must boast a covered stadium able to seat the estimated 70,000 who attend peak weekend meetings. The site must also offer adjacent convention centers and nearby accommodations for upward of 6,000 delegates and session support staff. The format of the church’s largest business meeting can be reexamined only during a vote taken at the session itself. While no such proposal exists, church administrators have “talked informally” about what shape future sessions might take, says Lowell Cooper, a world church general vice president. Read more from the Adventist Review HERE.

All Things Are Possible
Corey was addicted to alcohol. His wife, Stephanie, lost a baby boy at 22 weeks. They were miserable and discouraged. Then Jim Anderson, Wenatchee Valley View (Wash.) Church pastor, knocked on their door and invited them to begin Bible studies. During their search for truth, Lee Venden came to town with a revival seminar. Every element of this dramatic turn-around led them to study toward baptism, along with their daughter Corinna. They were baptized on Christmas Day. And, Corey and Stephanie are expecting a new baby boy, free of alcohol, tobacco, and hurt and pain caused by sin. Read more from the Upper Columbia Conference website HERE and in the April GLEANER.

A Life of Worldwide Influence
After a 97-year life during which he influenced change worldwide, Dr. J. Wayne McFarland died on March 14, in Loma Linda, Calif. He was co-creator with Elman Folkenberg of the widely-used and highly effective “Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking,” which helped millions stop smoking. “The five-day plan was enormously successful, it met a real felt need,” says Dr. Allan Handysides, Health Ministries director for the Adventist Church. Read more from the Adventist New Network website HERE.
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Adventists' back-to-basics faith is fastest growing U.S. church

Updated 3/17/2011 5:36:48 PM | G. Jeffrey MacDonald, Religion News Service

Rest on the Sabbath. Heed Old Testament dietary codes. And be ready for Jesus to return at any moment.

If these practices sound quaint or antiquated, think again. They're hallmarks of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the fastest-growing Christian denomination in North America.

Newly released data show Seventh-day Adventism growing by 2.5% in North America, a rapid clip for this part of the world, where Southern Baptists and mainline denominations, as well as other church groups are declining. Adventists are even growing 75% faster than Mormons (1.4 percent), who prioritize numeric growth.

For observers outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the growth rate in North America is perplexing.

"You've got a denomination that is basically going back to basics ... saying, 'What did God mean by all these rules and regulations and how can we fit in to be what God wants us to be?','" said Daniel Shaw, an expert on Christian missionary outreach at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "That's just totally contrary to anything that's happening in American culture. So I'm saying, 'Whoa! That's very interesting.' And I can't answer it."

Seventh-day Adventists are asking a different question: Why isn't the church growing much faster on these shores, which is home to just 1.1 million of the world's 16 million Adventists? Despite its North American roots, the church is growing more than twice as fast overseas.

"We don't feel that we're growing very much, and that is a source of concern, especially for North America," said Ron Clouzet, director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich. Hispanic Adventists are "the one group that is growing very well," he added. "If we didn't have that group, we would look even more dismal."

With Saturday worship services and vegetarian lifestyles, Seventh-day Adventism owns a distinctive niche outside the Christian mainstream. But being different is turning out to be more of an asset than a liability.

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movement sprang up in New Hampshire, Seventh-day Adventism has had an urgent mission to bring the gospel — with a distinctive emphasis on Christ's imminent second coming — to the ends of the earth. Adventists find the essence of their mission in Revelation 14:12, where the end of the age "calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus."

The church's traditional, global focus is now bearing fruit in new ways. Newly arrived immigrants in the United States often come from parts of Latin America or Africa where Seventh-day Adventism has long-established churches, schools and hospitals. Those who migrate from Brazil to Massachusetts, or from Mexico to Texas, are apt to find familiarity in a local Adventist church led by a pastor who knows their culture and speaks their native language, said Edwin Hernandez, a research fellow at the Center for the Study of Latino Religion at the University of Notre Dame.

Immigrants aren't the only ones embracing Seventh-day Adventism. Many in the general public have noticed Adventists tend to be superstars of good health and longevity; research shows they tend to live 10 years longer than the average American. With strong track records for success in health and education, Adventists find they get a hearing among skeptics who share those priorities.

Publicized research on Adventists' health "has helped bring some objective evaluation of Adventism... particularly all up and down the West Coast," said G. Alexander Bryant, executive secretary for the denomination's people about our lifestyle."

Some newcomers to Adventism also appreciate the church's clarity about what's expected of Christ's followers. Diana Syth of Kent, Wash. attended many types of Protestant churches for years. But she said she "never got the information I needed to know about what it meant to be a Christian" until she and her husband learned of Seventh-day Adventism from a sibling six years ago.

"My (adult) son has seen a change in us," Syth said. "He sees a new calmness in us. There's hope where there wasn't hope before."

Adventists are also reaping the rewards of their extra efforts in evangelism. Responding to a national initiative, more than 80% of the 6,000 Adventist churches in North America staged weeks-long outreach events in hotels and other settings in 2009.

Bryant said in an ordinary year, one-third to one-half of Adventist congregations put on
growth rates would hover around 1.7% — still high enough to top the rates of other large denominations in North America.

Creativity seems to be paying dividends, too. The church has seen some of its strongest gains come in non-religious regions such as the Pacific Northwest. In Washington, for instance, the denomination has established "Christian cafes," where people can relax and ask questions without feeling the pressures of church.

"You're not necessarily inviting them to church," Bryant said. "You're just sitting around, talking with people, building relationships — and slowly talking to them about Christ."

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Adventist Church Leaders
Ponder Session Format
A downsized GC session might be in the church’s future

BY ELIZABETH LECHLEITNER, ANN

Just months after the Seventh-day Adventist world church’s largest business meeting, General Conference session planners are already mapping out the global denomination’s 2020 convention.

Planning for the event typically begins 10 years out, meaning the location for the 2015 session was announced in 2006 after a host city selection process, including a search for venues, proposal reviews, bidding cities, and site visits.

Adventist Church administration won’t vote on the location for the 2020 General Conference session until October, but some at world church headquarters are discussing whether a downsized session is on the church’s horizon.

As Adventist Church membership has grown, so have session venues. Today, a potential host city must boast a covered stadium able to seat the estimated 70,000 who attend peak weekend meetings, said Sheri Clemmer, associate meeting planner for the world church. The site must also offer adjacent convention centers and nearby accommodations for upward of 6,000 delegates and session support staff, she said.

Session traffic typically wanes on weekdays. Daily business meetings—where key decisions are actually made—are often sparsely attended, except by session delegates and a few faithful spectators. Instead, guests often crowd the exhibitor’s hall or participate in the many activities held alongside session.

Pardon Mwansa, a world church general vice president who chairs the church’s Session Planning Committee, said some church officials are questioning the continued need for “camp meeting-style” sessions—as much spiritual retreats as business meetings.

“'We don’t need a crowd to elect leaders. We don’t need a crowd to change policy,” Mwansa said.

Others have asked whether a downsized session might open cities outside of the United States to hosting duties. Of the 59 sessions since the Adventist Church was established in 1863, only three
were held elsewhere, said Mwansa, who serves as a world church general vice president.

The format of the church’s largest business meeting can be reexamined only during a vote taken at the session itself. While no such proposal exists, church administrators have “talked informally” about what shape future sessions might take, said Lowell Cooper, also a world church general vice president.

“As the church grows, the potential for [the session] to become an even more complex and costly event increases, forcing us to consider what it is we need to achieve at session, and what is optional,” Cooper said.

Whether that discussion will lead to more sessions being held outside North America is debatable, church leaders said.

Church administrators who attended the 1995 session in Utrecht, the Netherlands, remember long train rides and less-than-ideal facilities.

“Some delegates—and that includes me; I was a union president that year—were traveling for at least two and a half hours every day one way to get from our hotel to the convention center,” said Mwansa. “We had to start off as early as 5:30 a.m.”

An early morning might not seem insurmountable, but factor in jet lag, Mwansa said, and delegates tasked with making some of the church’s arguably toughest and most pivotal decisions can become exhausted.

“The key factor is how best to facilitate the business of the church,” he said, suggesting that a rested body and clear mind might help.

Also central in determining where the session is held is its budget. Getting audiovisual equipment, support staff, and delegates to the location is expensive, said Verland Erntson, controller for the world church’s Accounting Department.

In 1995 the world church spent $5.8 million footing the bill for the session in Utrecht, not including airfare for support staff. Five years later, the session in Toronto, Canada, cost more than $1 million less. Even last year’s session venue in Atlanta, Georgia—which totaled $5.5 million—cost less than Utrecht. “That surprises me,” Erntson said.

Downsizing the session just to accommodate overseas host cities is an idea with “little traction” so far, Cooper said.

In 2005 then-world church president Jan Paulsen asked regional church presidents to choose a venue other than world church headquarters to host Annual Council, one of the church’s biannual business meetings. “Even for that smaller meeting, most of them preferred to come here—they were used to it, and it was convenient,” Mwansa said.

While holding session outside North America might serve as a symbolic recognition of church growth elsewhere, recent spikes in membership are already acknowledged in practice, Mwansa said.
The church’s representative system “shifts in a powerful way the decisions and the future of the church by virtue of the fact that those delegates exercise their regional mind-sets,” he said.

Regardless of where the session is held, the global scope of the event is not lost, nor are the voices of membership worldwide drowned out, church leaders agree. Delegate selection criteria for the session gives no advantage to the region hosting the event, Cooper said.

The local pride that comes with hosting a session is, at least for now, reserved for residents of San Antonio, Texas. Their city will host the church’s next session in 2015. And, for 2025?
Town Hall Meetings Herald Constituency Session

The Upper Columbia Conference held six town hall meetings across the Inland Northwest during February and March in preparation for the upcoming conference constituency session June 19 at Upper Columbia Academy.

At each town hall meeting, Bob Folkenberg Jr., UCC president, reviewed progress in the five focus areas outlined by local church delegates during the last constituency session in 2007. Folkenberg also shared the conference vision, which emphasizes a grass-roots evangelism approach and places valuable resources at the local church level to assist with this effort.

In addition to Folkenberg’s report, Randy Terry, UCC vice president of finance, shared a financial report and Doug Johnson, UCC vice president of administration, presented a membership report and recommendations for the coming consistency session.

The next UCC constituency session, which is the primary business session for the Adventist Church in the region, will be held at Upper Columbia Academy June 19 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Jay Winterneyer, Upper Columbia Conference communication director

Sharing Their New Life at Wenatchee Valley View

For 12 years Corey struggled with alcohol and wanted to quit. One morning he woke up on the floor, crying out to God and asking Him to take away his addiction forever.

Corey’s wife, Stephanie, had been going through a different pain. Two years earlier, halfway through her pregnancy she learned the baby had a rare disease and was stillborn. Not knowing what to do or who to talk to, she blamed herself miserably.

A few days after Corey asked God to remove his addiction, Marcus Harden, local Bible worker coordinator, and Jim Anderson, Wenatchee Valley View, (Wash.) Church pastor, arrived at their home. Corey and Stephanie agreed to Bible studies. Stephanie was skeptical, and during the first two weeks of studies Corey was drinking.

“I came home one day and decided to dump out the beer,” says Corey. “When I dumped the beer, I felt a relief. There was no craving, sickness or withdrawal.”

“Corey was a changed man instantly,” says Stephanie. “After seeing Corey’s results, I knew God was real! So I asked God to help me with smoking. The following morning my kids, Corrina and Jordan, were happy to stomp on my nasty habit.”

Corey and Stephanie both had times when the devil tried to stir up arguments, but God helped similar to the verse in Mark 10:27 which says: “With men it is impossible but with God all things are possible.”

Corey and Stephanie, with their daughter, Corrina, were baptized on Christmas Day. Corrina felt God changing her life, as she watched her parents go through rough times and find God. “Knowing that God is real,” says Corrina, “makes me thankful God is in my life.”

Corey and Stephanie feel blessed God has led them into a life with Him. “God has so changed me; I cannot help but speak about him,” says Corey.

Jim Anderson, pastor, baptizes Stephanie while her husband, Corey, watches.
Remembrance: McFarland helped millions quit smoking with five-day plan

Smoking cessation program swept nation in 1960s

18 Mar 2011, Loma Linda, California, United States
Ansel Oliver/ANN

Dr. J. Wayne McFarland, a Seventh-day Adventist health advocate who co-authored the Five Day Plan to Stop Smoking, which drew millions to seminars in the 1960s, died March 14 at a retirement facility in Loma Linda, California. He was 97.

McFarland and co-author Elman J. Folkenberg released the smoking cessation program at a time when smoking was prescribed for breathing problems.

The duo offered their first smoking cessation seminar in Taunton, Massachusetts in 1960, later releasing the 1962 book Five Day Plan to Stop Smoking for pastors and health experts to offer the program in communities across the United States.

McFarland, a physician, and Folkenberg, a pastor, would encourage seminar participants to repeat the phrase in unison and throughout the day, "I choose not to smoke," Time magazine reported in 1963.

The Time article also noted the seminar included a strong spiritual component, similar to support methods of Alcoholics Anonymous. Participants were also given specific dietary instructions to accompany the plan and matched with a buddy to monitor each other’s progress.

"The five-day plan was enormously successful, it met a real felt need," said Dr. Allan Handysides, Health Ministries director for the Adventist Church.

J. Wayne McFarland was born in Brawley, California on August 11, 1913 and graduated from Madison College, in Nashville, Tennessee. He earned a medical degree from Loma Linda University in 1939 before serving a fellowship in physical medicine and rehabilitation at the Mayo Clinic, in Rochester, Minnesota.

He practiced and taught in Philadelphia, first at Temple University Hospital and later at Jefferson University Hospital. He worked for the Adventist Church’s headquarters in the 1940s and 50s, editing Life and Health magazine, and helped to establish what is now Adventist-Laymen’s Services and Industries, a lay supporting organization of the denomination.

Later, while serving as an associate director for the Adventist Church Health Ministries department from 1970 to 1980, McFarland would team up with Adventist evangelists to offer a practical health message to accompany a series’ spiritual outreach, something he did in six continents over his career.

After retirement he continued traveling the world, offering smoking cessation support in Russia and serving as a special consultant on health education to the Shenyang Municipality of China.

McFarland received numerous awards from municipalities and universities, including a medallion of merit as a special consultant on health education to the Shenyang Municipality of China.

McFarland’s seminar partner Folkenberg died in 1986. His nephew, Robert Folkenberg would later serve as the denomination’s president, from 1990 to 1999.

McFarland’s wife Dolly preceded him in death in 2008. He is survived by two daughters, three grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

--additional reporting by Don A. Roth
Dr. McFarland is an outstanding example of the best Medical Evangelists that Loma Linda Univ. School of Medicine has produced. He followed the Lord's guidance and stepped in to create and improve the delivery of health care and health promotion when tobacco was still a commonly accepted practice. He is recognized by the global SDA Church as a champion in healthy lifestyles, specifically a pioneer in tobacco dependence treatment. In fact in 1963-64, McFarland became a friend of the US Surgeon General, Dr. Luther Terry, who was a smoker at the time. Dr. McFarland encouraged his friend repeatedly to stop smoking and gave him advice and shared his program with him. They traveled together to promote the 1964 SG report on tobacco and eventually delivered the first stop smoking program at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland.

He was recognized by the SDA Church at a dinner program in his honor in conjunction with the "World Conference on Tobacco or Health" session in Washington DC, 2006. The Loma Linda University School of Medicine selected him as an honored Alumnus in 1990 and selected him as the Alumnus of the Year in the Centennial Celebration for the School of Medicine in 2010. His last photographs were taken the week before he died on March 7, 2011 where he was again recognized for his leadership during the LLUSM Alumni Association Banquet. He was witty, active and vibrant until the day he suddenly died. A great example of the "Blue Zone" of the effects of the healthy lifestyle of the Loma Linda SDA community.

He inspired many people to be creative and design evidence-based programs to meet the unmet needs and health crises of their era. My first efforts to help people stop smoking was by teaching a 5 Day Plan to stop smoking at the Galveston SDA church just weeks after graduating from LLUSM. Dr. McFarland inspired my training at LLUSM to continue to think about what it is so difficult to stop smoking and now 50% of my career is devoted to tobacco dependence. His legacy lives on in all of us who continue to help tobacco-addicted victims break free from the power of "Big Tobacco’s" influence.

With tremendous admiration for this giant of a man,
Linda Hyder Ferry, MD, MPH

I grew up in Portland Maine Received the message when I was 29. This was 1969. being a smoker I got right in the five 5 plan and have been holding stop smoking plans ever since. without this info where would I have been i wonder.
My wife did it five time till she realized she left out part of the plan she didn't turn it over to God when she did she never had a craving since 30 years.
thank you Dr. McFarland and those who brought it to her.

Your brother in Christ
alex Bourgious

Remembrance: McFarland helped millions quit smoking with five-day plan... http://news.adventist.org/2011/03/remembrance-mcfarland.html
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