Origins Weekend Draws Nearly 1,000 to Gladstone

According to Gary McLain, Oregon Conference communication director, more than 900 registered guests crowded into the Holden Convention Center in Gladstone, Ore., April 1 and 2, for Origins — an provocative seminar dealing with issues of science and creation. The four-part series began Friday evening, and continued throughout Saturday with themes such as Biblical and Philosophical Issues, Life and Ancestry, and Geological Issues and Time. The entire event contained 18 20-minute sessions and four 40-minute question and answer periods. Presenters included some of the most respected scholars and research scientists in geology, paleontology, biology, genetics and theology. Read more HERE.

Prest Accepts Idaho Presidency

Don Klinger, Idaho Conference vice president for administration, confirms David Prest Jr. has accepted the invitation of the conference executive committee to become the new conference president. Prest, who currently directs ministerial and trust service departments for the Montana Conference, has not yet announced a date for his transition to Idaho. He acknowledges his family will miss their friends and colleagues in Montana. "It had been a privilege to serve the Lord and His people during the past ten years in the Montana Conference," says Prest. "My family and I have been truly blessed. As we begin a new chapter in the story of the Idaho Conference, I ask for your prayers and support as we move forward together in Jesus Christ." The conference constituency session is scheduled for May 22. Delegates to the session will also address the replacement of Harold Dixon, who plans to retire as vice president for finance.

KROH Radio Tower Hoisted into Place

Despite muddy and snowy conditions, Glenn Gately, KROH project coordinator, reports the tower was finally lifted into position Wednesday, April 6, and antennas mounted. This is major step forward for the project which will serve Port Townsend, Wash., and beyond. Gately sends special thanks to Bill Putney, chief engineer with KPTZ; Bud Brewer, surveyor and owner of American Land Science; and Jay Ketchum, who donated his boom truck to raise the tower.

ADRA Board Approves Restructuring Plan

Adventist Development and Relief Agency directors voted April 6 to accept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looking Ahead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: Ore. Ministry Fest South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21: June Ad/Article Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–24: WWU Homecoming Weekend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30: OAMC Concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-May 1: ASI Northwest Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Mother’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: July Ad/Article Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30: Memorial Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–18: Idaho Camp Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–18: Mont. Camp Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–18: UCC Camp Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16: Aug. Ad/Article Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–25: Wash. Camp Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: Father’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Independence Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–16: Ore. Gladstone Camp Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: Sept. Ad/Article Deadline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the organization’s leadership report on a February reorganization in which 17 full-time employees were terminated. The eight-hour board of directors meeting included Ted N. C. Wilson, world church president and ADRA board member. The 37-member ADRA board includes 12 of the world church’s 13 division presidents, and other Adventist leaders with experience in overseas development projects. Additional staff reductions are not expected in the immediate future. The ADRA board established a committee to study the strategic mission of the agency. Most of the agency’s revenue comes from United States government contracts, such as the United States Agency for International Development. Only about 10 percent of ADRA’s income is received from donations of private income. Read the full story from the Adventist News Network HERE.

La Sierra Granted Additional Year to Prove Creation Compliance
Mark Kellner of the Adventist Review reports La Sierra University has received an extension of its denominational accreditation until Dec. 31, 2012. This action during the biennial Adventist Accreditation Association board meeting held April 4 in Silver Spring, Md., allows the university “to act upon its commitments and implement changes and enhancements” involving the teaching of origins. The board’s decision is in response to nearly two years of controversy regarding the university’s teaching philosophy on issues of origins, evolution and creation. The extension allows time for remedial change. Larry Becker, LSU spokesperson, says “The board, administration and faculty are already working together to ensure that we provide the outstanding Adventist education desired by our students, our constituents, and our church.” Read more from the Adventist News Network HERE.

José Rojas Series Begins on Hope Channel This Weekend
The Breakthrough series presented by José Rojas during 2010 in Tacoma, Wash., will be featured on the Hope Church Channel beginning Friday, April 8 at 5 p.m. and again at 8 p.m. It will be available live on the Hope Church Channel website HERE. Those who miss the live presentation can access the archived programs on the NPUC website HERE. The Spanish-language version of this series will also run at the same times on the Esperanza Channel HERE. It is also archived on the NPUC website HERE.

Sign Up for It Is Written’s New Daily One-Minute Devotional
“Every Word” is the brand new Daily Devotional, a 1-minute video by John Bradshaw, It Is Written speaker/director, available via computer or mobile phone. Sign up or watch now.

Grow Your Church through Adventist Single Adult Ministries Webinar
Join AdventSource for a free webinar with Andrea D. Hicks. This live webinar will help you create exciting and meaningful ministries for the single adults in your church and community. Discover how a vibrant Adventist single adult ministry program can become the foundation for significant church growth. This webinar includes a live question and answer session. Register now for this exciting webinar, scheduled for April 12, 5 p.m. (Pacific). Register on AdventSource's website HERE.
Origins Weekend Draws Nearly 1,000 to Gladstone

Gary McLain, Oregon Conference communication director reports the recent Origins event was a great success. His statement follows.

Some of the best scholars and research scientist in the area of Geology, Paleontology, Biology, Genetics, and Theology discussed some of the Adventist Biblical challenges of Origins. This event took place at the Holden Convention Center in Gladstone, Ore. April 1 & 2 with over 900 registered to attend. The four part series, which started Friday night, included topics such as Biblical & Philosophical Issues; Life & Ancestry; and Geological Issues & Time. The whole event had eighteen 20-minute sessions where the speakers presented multiple times and four 40-minute question and answer times. It was like drinking from a fire hydrant and well worth attending. As one attendee said “Wow, how could one believe that we were not created?”

James Gibson is a historical biologist and director of Geoscience Research Institute who started off the summit with Why We Should Care About Creation and Science. Arthur Chadwick is professor of geology and biology at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, and also director of the Earth History Research Center. One of his talks was on Radiosotope Dating. Ronny Nalin is a professor of geology at La Sierra University and a research scientist at Geoscience Research Institute. Nalin took on the topic in one of his sessions on how long has life on planet Earth been around? Ekkehardt Mueller, is Biblical Research Institute associate director. In one session he spoke on Creation in the Old Testament and in another session Creation in the New Testament. Timothy Standish was born in Sydney, Australia and grew up in the Far East. He has been an educator and currently holds a research position at the Geoscience Research Institute. Dr Standish, in one of his talks, talked to the questions - How good are the examples that have been found and do they really support Darwin’s theory of gradual evolution over eons? Leonard Brand is Loma Linda University professor of biology and paleontology for the university’s Department of Earth and Biological Sciences. In Brand’s session titled Time and the Fossil Record he explains that there is geological evidence that support a short time since creation.
ADRA board studies agency’s reorganization

February cutbacks dropped 17 full-time positions

6 Apr 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Mark A. Kelner, Adventist Review

Directors of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency voted April 6 to receive the Seventh-day Adventist Church-owned charity’s leadership report on a February reorganization in which 17 full-time employees were terminated.

The February action sparked comment across ADRA’s far-flung international operation and its in-building staff, as well as with some church leaders and lay members. On March 23, ADRA board’s top leaders Chairman Geoffrey Mbwana and Vice Chair Elia Simmons -- both vice presidents of the denomination -- indicated the directors would review the recent reorganization at the April 6 meeting.

"After much prayer and deliberation about the future of ADRA and its ministry, the board of directors voted to receive ADRA President Rudi Maier's report on the recent changes and will continue to move forward and work with management in the development of the strategic mission of ADRA," a statement released by the agency said in part.

In the statement, Mbwana said ADRA’s "administration and the board do not anticipate any further staff reductions in the foreseeable future."

He added, "The board of directors takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that the Agency operates with utmost transparency and integrity in all matters. As ADRA moves forward, we want to provide the staff all the necessary resources to help meet the needs of the millions of vulnerable women, children, and men around the world whom we serve."

The report was received during an eight-hour board of directors meeting in which Adventist Church president and ADRA board member Ted N. C. Wilson participated. The 37-member ADRA board includes 12 of the world church’s 13 division presidents, and other Adventist leaders with experience in overseas development projects.

Presentation of the report took 90 minutes, with the remaining time devoted to a discussion of the report and other board matters, Mbwana said. A financial report was due to be presented, Mbwana said after the meeting, but time did not permit it. ADRA spokesman John Torres said the agency would release an audited financial statement in June 2011.

The board meeting was followed by a session between Mbwana and Simmons with approximately 40 ADRA employees. The meeting, which was closed to reporters, saw the staffers wearing large, yellow buttons reading "I am ADRA. Committed to our agency."

In speaking with reporters from Adventist Review and Adventist News Network, Simmons noted that the board established two committees: one is a working committee to "consider the defining elements of ADRA" and the other a standing committee to oversee the group’s bylaws.

Mbwana said new bylaws committee was deemed “appropriate” by the board since ADRA is "a dynamic organization."

ANN World News Bulletin is a review of news issued by the Communication department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters and released as part of the service of Adventist News Network. For reproduction requirements, click here. The opinions expressed by Commentary authors and sources in ANN news stories do not necessarily reflect those of Adventist News Network© and/or the Seventh-day Adventist© Church.
La Sierra University granted window to show its faithfulness to Adventist Church's belief on origins

Adventist Accrediting Association grants limited extension; review in 2012

5 Apr 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Mark A. Kellner, Adventist Review

La Sierra University (LSU), a Seventh-day Adventist Church-owned school in Riverside, California, will have a year to demonstrate its faithfulness to church teachings on creation, at which time its current accreditation by the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) will be reviewed.

The school's denominational accreditation has been extended to December 31 of next year, with re-accreditation subject to an on-site review by an AAA panel in the second quarter of 2012, and AAA board action in October 2012.

The unusual action follows two years of controversy that has rolled the southeastern California campus and generated extensive comment by Adventist leaders and members across North America and the world church.

The La Sierra decision, during which a wide range of options were debated, came among several actions taken at the regular biennial AAA board meeting held at the General Conference's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, on April 4.

"Although La Sierra University has deviated from the philosophy and objectives of Seventh-day Adventist education," the voted action reads, "it is moved that the university be granted an extension of accreditation to December 31, 2012 in order for the university to act upon its commitments and implement changes and enhancements" involving the teaching of origins at the school. The action extending the university's current term of accreditation did not address the prospect of a new term, up to five years in length.

Accrediting executives' rationale

"This was a challenging and complex decision," said Lisa M. Beardsley, director of the General Conference Education department. "The AAA board took into consideration the report of the AAA team that visited the campus in November 2010, and events that have transpired since, such as the actions of the institutional board, the finding of its special subcommittee, and the open letter published in March by the university. After careful and prayerful consideration, the board expressed its will as a body by means of a written ballot so that all views could be honored."

Ella Simmons, a general vice president of the world church and member of the AAA board, said, "Given the recent acknowledgment made by the La Sierra University board and administration, this action seeks to create a bridge for the university to meet its stated commitments and the accrediting requirements to give priority to the standards of Seventh-day Adventist education in harmony with the Church's official beliefs."

"The AAA Board has attempted to find a balance between punitive and redemptive help to the university in support of the LSU Board's recent statements," added Larry Blackmer, vice president for Education of the North American Division and another AAA board member.

Membership in the Adventist Accrediting Association board includes the director and associate directors of the General Conference Education department; General Conference vice presidential advisers for education; directors of education from each of the church's 13 world divisions; one representative each from a college/university board chair; a college/university president; an academic vice president or dean; a registrar or admissions officer; a finance officer; an academic department chair of education; a union conference education director; and a local conference education director. Also included are three individuals with international Adventist educational experience; two education specialists not employed by the church; and the General Conference officers -- specifically the president, secretary and treasurer.

What lies ahead

In order to retain AAA accreditation, the school administration and board of trustees will, among other steps, have to demonstrate that it is honoring its commitments to "continue to endorse the official Seventh-day Adventist Church statement on creation"; "resource and nurture faculty in an atmosphere in which official Seventh-day Adventist Church positions on creation and origins are taught and honored"; so that the Church's creation position "is presented in instructional contexts" and also is "presented as the church's position on origins."

The university will also have to show it is fulfilling its pledge to develop "specific goals" to assist "LSU students of other faiths to find meaning in and an understanding of Seventh-day Adventist values and official beliefs, including those regarding creation and human origins." According to one of the examples set forth
in the voted action, "decisions regarding faculty appointments and development [must be] aligned with board and university commitments to ensure the acceptance and teaching of official Seventh-day Adventist beliefs regarding creation and origins within instructional and co-curricular contexts."

The AAA is also requiring that LSU's "board governance structure and function are enhanced to provide fuller participation in its fiduciary responsibility for the university," again, in keeping with a commitment the school has made.

**Decision was a surprise**

Following a protracted discussion that lengthened a scheduled three-hour meeting into four hours, the AAA board voted to extend the school's current church-based accreditation, but did not offer the full new term La Sierra had anticipated. On February 8, La Sierra announced a AAA site visit team’s recommendation “that in their opinion, and subject to AAA approval, La Sierra University should receive the maximum accreditation possible under AAA guidelines.” The school has since removed that statement from its website.

The accreditation issue -- which includes denominational recognition by the church and qualifies a school for certain appropriations from denominational funds -- arose following a two-year controversy over La Sierra's teachings on human origins. Beginning in 2009, critics, including some church leaders, laypersons and LSU students claimed that the school taught the theory of evolution to biology students as the explanation for the origin of life.

Seventh-day Adventists believe "God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made 'the heaven and the earth' and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week," as noted in the church's **Fundamental Beliefs**.

**La Sierra responds**

In a statement to Adventist Review, La Sierra spokesman Larry Becker said, "Although La Sierra University has taken affirmative steps toward resolution of the controversy regarding how creation and evolution are taught in its classes, the AAA Board believed that it is necessary for more time to transpire in order for the university board, faculty, and administration to demonstrate its determination to put in place the steps that the faculty and administration have agreed with the board to implement."

The LSU statement continued: "University administration appreciates the extension of its current full accreditation as a Seventh-day Adventist university through December 31, 2012. The AAA Board has outlined a specific process moving forward, and we recognize the need for these steps. We look forward to the AAA visit to our campus next year. The board, administration and faculty are already working together to ensure that we provide the outstanding Adventist education desired by our students, our constituents, and our Church."

La Sierra President Randal R. Wisbey and Ricardo Graham, Pacific Union Conference president and La Sierra trustee board chairman, admitted La Sierra's shortcomings on the subject in a March 9 open letter.

"We found that only 50 percent of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that our Adventist view of creation was presented, and only 40 percent agreed or strongly agreed that our Adventist view was supported," Wisbey and Graham wrote. "This is not acceptable, and we apologize," they added.

Further, "Instruction at the university, while being strong in many areas, has not adequately presented the denomination's position on the subject of creation," according to the document.

And, "there is some evidence that students have not always been respected for their belief in the Biblical creation position," the March 9 La Sierra statement said.

According to the AAA's accreditation handbook, "Accreditation of an institution by AAA signifies that the institution has a purpose appropriate to service the educational needs of those in its constituency and has the resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish the institution's goals."

**School's history**

Founded in 1922 as a Seventh-day Adventist academy, La Sierra grew over the years and became a full-fledged college in 1946. In 1967, it merged with Loma Linda University and became that school's liberal arts wing, reorganizing as an independent institution in 1990.

In 2010, the school reported 2,098 students had registered at the start of the current school year. Last year's registration of 440 freshman surpassed 2009's freshman class of 348 by 26.4 percent, La Sierra said in a statement.