NAD Votes to Allow Commissioned Ministers as Conference Presidents

Just three weeks after their request for a world church policy variance was turned down during Annual Council meetings, North American Division (NAD) leaders voted Oct. 31 to reaffirm the division's unique policy allowing ordained or commissioned ministers to serve as presidents of local conferences and missions. The action, voted by nearly a 3 to 1 margin, broadens the opportunities for non-ordained leaders, including women, to be elected to the top position in any of the division's 58 conferences. The newly affirmed NAD policy, however, places the division at variance with the constitutional template throughout the world church which states conference leadership can only be held by an ordained pastor. In a related action, NAD committee members approved full participation in the world church's recently launched study of the theology of ordination. Read more from the Adventist News Network HERE.

Positive Life Radio Bucks Financial Trends with Solid Support

Despite hard financial times, Positive Life Radio listeners from all over the urban and rural areas of the Upper Columbia Conference called in during the 2011 Sharathon to share their stories and financial support of $617,000. By the end of Sharathon, KGTS, in College Place, Wash., was at $191,000, KPLW, Wenatchee, Wash., raised $105,000, Yakima netted $90,000, Spokane's KEEH had $227,000, and the webcast brought in $4,000 in promised funds. Kevin Krueger, afternoon host and network general manager, loves hearing the stories shared during these annual events. "It is absolutely incredible to talk with listeners who call in to make a pledge, and hear how God is using Positive Life Radio in their life," he says. "Hearing their stories has changed my life."

NAD Issues Caution on Church and School Related Travel to Mexico

Because of escalating violence throughout Mexico, the North American Division, in consultation with the General Conference International Crisis Committee, does not recommend that churches, schools and other organizations travel to Mexico until there is a significant reduction in the violence. Groups and individuals are therefore urged to avoid all nonessential travel to Mexico. If a trip becomes necessary, leaders must review and abide by the U.S. State Department travel warnings, which include travel restrictions and security precautions for specific areas of the country and obtain all necessary organizational approvals before committing to any trip. More information from the government is available online HERE.

Looking Ahead

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GLEANER Blogs

- Cheri Corder
- Cindy's Garden Blog
- Dear Counselor
- Let's Talk
- Mike Jones
- Monthly Archival Photo
- Tip Sheet
Welcome to Wapato
The Upper Columbia Conference celebrated with local Hispanic members in Wapato, Wash., during the organization ceremony of the Wapato Spanish Church on Oct. 15. The church, which originally formed as a small company several years ago, now has more than 30 members and is quickly growing.

Conversion Stories Happen All Around the Northwest
Luci and Galen Kelm were baptized one year ago, and are now members of the Rogue River (Ore.) Church. Since retiring in Rogue River in 2003, their faithful attendance of mass at the local Catholic Church included a regular drive past the Adventist Church. They had attended some health seminars, including a Coronary Health Improvement Program (CHIP). One Sunday as they drove by, they noticed a banner advertising a prophecy seminar. They also received a brochure in the mail and decided to attend. Read the rest of their story at the Oregon Conference website, in a report from David Allen, vice president for administration HERE.

U.S. Churches are Contributing Less to World Outreach
A new report shows tithing to U.S. Protestant churches as a percentage of income is at its lowest level in at least 41 years. It also reveals churches are keeping a greater share of those donations for their own needs. Parishioners gave about 2.38 percent of their income to their churches, according to "The State of Church Giving through 2009," a new report being released Oct. 14 by Empty Tomb Inc., a Christian research agency in Champaign, Ill. Just over two percent of income went toward congregational finances, such as operating costs and building expenses. Only 0.34 percent of parishioner income went to what Empty Tomb calls "benevolences," such as charities and seminary training beyond the four walls of the church. Those are new lows, at least going back to the first report in 1968. Read more from the Adventist Review HERE.
North American Adventists reaffirm commissioned ministers as conference, mission presidents

Following Annual Council actions, division also votes to join theology of ordination study

1 Nov 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Adventist Review staff

North American Division President Dan Jackson and Secretary Alex Bryant chair a discussion on a variance of policy regarding commissioned ministers, Monday, October 31. The division has previously asked the General Conference if commissioned ministers could serve as conference presidents. The request was denied. (photos by Ansel Oliver)

In a carefully balanced pair of actions, Seventh-day Adventist leaders in North America voted October 31 to fully participate in the world church’s recently launched study of the theology of ordination while also reaffirming the division’s unique policy of allowing ordained or commissioned ministers to serve as presidents of local conferences and missions.

The latter action, voted by nearly a 3 to 1 margin, broadens the opportunities for non-ordained leaders to be elected to the top position in any of the 58 conferences that make up the 1.1-million member church region.

The pair of votes came three weeks after the North American Division’s request for a variance in the world church’s model constitution to allow for broader leadership opportunities was turned down by the church’s Executive Committee at its Annual Council. The model document states that conference leadership can only be held by an ordained pastor; the NAD policy, while valid within its territory, places the region at variance with the constitutional template.

NAD president Daniel Jackson put the day’s discussion in the context of church unity. "The church is the apple of God’s eye," Jackson said, referencing Scripture. "People around the world are interested in what happens here. But at moments of change there is some pain. No reformation occurs without pain. If there is some difference at the end of the day, how do we demonstrate that we are part of the body of Christ?"

Jackson also sketched several options available to the church leaders and delegates gathered in the world church headquarters auditorium. The Executive Committee’s rejection could simply be noted; the NAD’s policy, voted in 2010, could be discussed and rescinded; or delegates could reaffirm the policy they voted one year earlier.

More than two-dozen speeches from the floor followed in the next two hours, most urging the body to reaffirm the 2010 action to broaden leadership opportunities by allowing “commissioned” ministers who had not been ordained to hold top leadership positions in conferences. Though Jackson had clarified that the topic of the ordination of women to ministry was not the point of the discussion, numerous speakers spoke in favor of ordaining women, while others asked how the proposed NAD action would be viewed by leaders and members in other world territories.

Ron Clouzet, director of NAD’s Evangelism Institute and a professor of Christian Ministry and Pastoral Theology at Andrews University, urged delegates to act on the basis of Bible teaching. Church “governance should follow theology,” Clouzet said. “I firmly believe in the ordination of women. Once we have settled the issue of theology, [the rest] will be chicken feed.”

Michigan Conference president Jay Gallimore said he concurred with Clouzet’s main point, but also urged caution: “Unless we can find, unless we can produce the Biblical understanding to move on this, collectively and together, we’re never going to convince either the world church or our own churches,” he told delegates. “We’re a biblical church, we’re a Bible church ... I hope all of us have an open mind to say ‘Lord, teach me what is right.’"

“We need this to carry the work forward and we wish to send the message that women are needed,” said Gina Brown, dean, of the School of Health Professions, Science and Wellness at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland. “Let God’s work be done.”

“We are structured to allow for differences,” urged Arnold Trujillo, vice president of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, one of the largest of the nine regional units of the North American

Division. "We were not designed to be a monolithic organization, but one where dynamic tension is allowed to exist. We need freedom to be different, without compromising our mission. We sing in harmony, not in unison."

Just before noon, a motion to reaffirm the 2010 action was put to a secret ballot vote and passed by a margin of 162-61.

Speakers on both sides of the discussion praised Jackson’s sensitive handling of the difficult issue as well as the prayerful and civil way the discussion unfolded.

The delegates also discussed and unanimously voted the request by the October Annual Council that each division participate in a multi-year process to study the theology of ordination by establishing a Biblical Research Committee in each territory for that purpose.

According to the protocol voted by the world church’s Executive Committee, reports from each region will be integrated into a comprehensive report to the 2014 Annual Council meeting. That gathering will then determine whether to recommend any changes to the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas -- the 20th anniversary of the historic debate and vote on women’s ordination held at the 1995 Session in Utrecht, the Netherlands.
6 years ago at the General Conference in St. Louis, after being elected the first VP of the world Seventh-day Adventist Church, Elder Ella Simmons said, "I believe I hear bells tolling in the courts of heaven announcing a transition in Christ for God's church today." I too can sense that the bells in heaven is tolling in the courts of heaven because of this historic vote. God hears, and answers the prayers of his people. This is the start of something new, not just for the NAD, but even for the world Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Daniel Masela | November 1, 2011 12:40 PM | Reply

Thank you for maintaining civility on both sides of the issue. We do not need church leadership or anyone else to act like what happened in 1888. "Let each be fully convinced in his or her own mind." This will take time as well as ALL the gifts of the Spirit, especially Patience!

Dennis Hollingsead | November 1, 2011 5:17 PM | Reply

The Bible states that in God’s eyes His children are neither slave nor free, male nor female, etc. It’s about time the World Church of Seventh-day Adventists started looking at all its members as equal in God’s eyes.

Yvonne Michael | November 1, 2011 9:38 PM | Reply

Is there some way to get a transcript or video of the discussion. I appreciate the summary but would like to hear more of the points presented. At the same time, I wonder how we can work as one and receive the power of God’s Spirit if our decisions are not in line with the world church. I pray a congregational spirit does not guide us.

S. Gilmore | November 2, 2011 6:19 AM | Reply

This is an issue that won’t go away - Israel wanted a king, even if it wasn't God's will. He let them have a king.

Today's church wants a Queen - God will let them have their way, even though it's not able to be pointed to Scripturally.

Think about it | November 2, 2011 12:32 PM | Reply

Is the church here following the guidance of the Holy Spirit? It would have been wonderful to hear more of the Spirit's guidance. As a bible church, the faithful witness in Revelation says "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Are the churches clearly hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit? You know God’s work is so easy if the church can allow God to lead it His way, because it is managed by the Holy Spirit. At Pi Hahiroth at the Red Sea, it was very clear when the church was being pursued by Pharaoh that the Angel and the Cloud moved backwards to protect God's people. God's people and His church are only safe, if His people can clearly state that they are convinced that they have spent enough time to both study and pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, it appears that there is shortage of qualified ordained ministers? If this is correct, what is the problem? Can it be identified? And does God have a solution for us? So where will this lead the church 50-100 years from now? Apostacy by many? These are disturbing questions that call for the church to deal with on a very serious level. If ordination is a business of the Holy Spirit and the church is saying we no longer need it, then where are we going?

TOM | November 2, 2011 1:27 PM | Reply

When Pastor Doug Batchelor preached against the ordination of women as either pastors or elders, the executive committee of the Southeastern California Conference, though not even his
employing conference, censured him for promoting a position contrary to that of the world church. 
(While the world church does not ordain women to pastoral ministry, it does allow for their ordination as local church elders.) http://www.scribd.com/doc/29820169/Southeastern-California-Conference-Responds-to-Doug-Batchelor

Yet, with this vote the NAD-- with vocal encouragement from the SECC president-- has openly defied a recent GC Annual Council decision. I guess my question is this: if an individual deserves reprimand, in part, for his “failure to respect colleagues and church authority,” what is the appropriate response to an entire division’s inappropriate actions? Would it not be only consistent for the other world divisions to censure the NAD for its disregard of an officially voted world church decision?

As both a member and employee of the church in North America I am inexpressibly saddened by the course our assembled representatives have taken in this matter.

Kameron | November 2, 2011 10:40 PM | Reply

I agree with you. It does not sound like the discussion was centered around "what would Jesus do" or "What is the spirit leading us to do".

It does sound like spiritual Israel (today) is too asking for things that are not from the mouth of God and I thought that that was what we as a Church wanted. We must be careful and mindful of persons with a want for a "superior position" in the Church to influence God's people, we ought to be very careful not to "feed the flock" to Satan himself, for GOD will require their blood from us all.

Let us be careful not to follow the same path that other denominations seem to be following for the so called "good of the people". Listen to the voice of GOD and not man!!! no matter how loud and influential they may be.

Victoria | November 2, 2011 10:51 PM | Reply

Where did the consideration for the light through the rest of the world church go? I hope ANN goes world-wide even as it posts decisions of every division accordingly! Why so much of NAD coverage and so little of all others? Please NAD, hold some decisions to yourselves as you also liase with the 'other' brethren.

Pr Tuvako, Robert | November 3, 2011 1:46 AM | Reply

Today, feminism is taking a big step in the world, and while every body is trying to be "politically correct" nobody is asking himself what is the will of God. If God wanted women to lead his church, i think He would had clearer said it by the mouth of His messenger (Sister White)

People are more occupied by things that are not even related to their salvation. If there is a leadership problem in the church, is it giving POSITIONS to women that will come to solve the matter? I am not phalocrate, but at the same time, what i think is that, we are trying to answer to a spiritual problem by a social act. Women in leadership? I don't care, but is it the will of God? The question need to be answer...

Christian | November 3, 2011 7:15 AM | Reply

Let us remember brethren that it has been prophesied that America will lead the world in apostacy. "[America] ..... is fast fulfilling the cup of its iniquity.......Then the commandment of men will be clothed with sacred garments, and will be pronounced holy." The steps that lead to a complete disregard of the commandments of God begin with the changes or a diluting of all other matters that God has clearly ordained to be followed in line with the guidance of the Holy Spirit’s leading. A disregard of the "ordained" to lead the church and a substitution by the "non-ordained" is a progression of a disregard of God’s standards to suit our lukewarmness among God’s people. Even the ordination process itself has now been flawed and is no longer as it used to be. Is it any wonder then that it is now being set aside as a standard in the choice of our leadership? God’s people are taking steps that will bite them in the end. God’s people cannot bring changes that God will not respond to. He will surely speak to us…. on this matter. He will not keep silent. He will not allow His church to be dragged down to standards that He has not ordained. Very soon Elijah’s will be sent and a cleansing and sifting is to be seen among us. Are we seeing a repeat of the problems that lead us to Glacia View?

JAMES | November 3, 2011 12:55 PM | Reply
Dear James,

When EGW says "America", she is referring to the government, not to the SDA church. And please, remember ordination as it is practiced in our church in simply unbiblical. God does not "ordain" anyone, but chooses leaders, both men and women, to guide His church.

Juan Fidel | November 3, 2011 2:42 PM | Reply

Dear Think About It,

Are you implying that conference presidents are kings? In that case, I understand why you do not want women in leadership. Your comment leaves clear that you do not really understand what leadership is about according to the Bible.

Juan Fidel | November 3, 2011 2:45 PM | Reply

I am ashamed to call Pastor Doug Batchelor a member of my church. Many of the things he presents as "proof" cannot be defended with the Bible, male ordination being just one example of them.

Juan Fidel | November 3, 2011 2:47 PM | Reply

If God's voice really speaks about special blessings based on gender, then either (1) the God I learned to love does not exist (and what is written throughout the Bible is an outright lie), or (2) we are getting something wrong (i.e., reading poorly) when we approach the topic. I am quite confident option #1 does not apply.

Juan Fidel | November 3, 2011 2:52 PM | Reply

I am deeply sorry, SDA ordained pastors around the world, but Jesus ONLY ordained MALE JEWISH FISHERMEN and TAX COLLECTORS. I understand you are all MALE, but are you also JEWISH and FISHERMEN or TAX COLLECTORS? Well, I thought you weren't. Then you are following in Jesus' footsteps (please take note of the irony).

Juan Fidel | November 3, 2011 3:02 PM | Reply

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Please restrict your comments to 500 words or less. For more information, please see the ANN Comments Policy.

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North American Adventists reaffirm commissioned ministers as conferenc...
Travel Warning
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of Consular Affairs

Mexico
April 22, 2011

The Department of State has issued this Travel Warning to inform U.S. citizens traveling to and living in Mexico about the security situation in Mexico. This Travel Warning supersedes the Travel Warning for Mexico dated September 10, 2010 to consolidate and update information about the security situation and to advise the public of additional restrictions on the travel of U.S. government personnel.

Millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day for study, tourism or business and at least one million U.S. citizens who live in Mexico. The Mexican government makes a considerable effort to protect U.S. citizens and other visitors to major tourist destinations. Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes. Nevertheless, crime and violence are serious problems and can occur anywhere. While most victims of violence are Mexican citizens associated with criminal activity, the security situation poses serious risks for U.S. citizens as well.

It is imperative that you understand the risks involved in travel to Mexico and how best to avoid dangerous situations. Common-sense precautions such as visiting only legitimate business and tourist areas during daylight hours, and avoiding areas where criminal activity might occur, can help ensure that travel to Mexico is safe and enjoyable.

General Conditions

Since 2006, the Mexican government has engaged in an extensive effort to combat transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). The TCOs, meanwhile, have been engaged in a vicious struggle to control drug trafficking routes and other criminal activity. According to Government of Mexico figures, 34,612 people have been killed in narcotics-related violence in Mexico since December 2006. More than 15,000 narcotics-related homicides occurred in 2010, an increase of almost two-thirds compared to 2009. Most of those killed in narcotics-related violence since 2006 have been members of TCOs. However, innocent persons have also been killed as have Mexican law enforcement and military personnel.

There is no evidence that U.S. tourists have been targeted by criminal elements due to their citizenship. Nonetheless, while in Mexico you should be aware of your surroundings at all times and exercise particular caution in unfamiliar areas. Bystanders, including U.S. citizens, have been injured or killed in violent incidents in various parts of the country, especially, but not exclusively in the northern border region, demonstrating the heightened risk of violence throughout Mexico. TCOs, meanwhile, engage in a wide-range of criminal activities that can directly impact U.S.
citizens, including kidnapping, armed car-jacking, and extortion that can directly impact U.S. citizens. The number of U.S. citizens reported to the Department of State as murdered in Mexico increased from 35 in 2007 to 111 in 2010.

The Mexican government has deployed federal police and military personnel throughout the country as part of its efforts to combat the TCOs. U.S. citizens traveling on Mexican roads and highways may encounter government checkpoints, which are often staffed by military personnel. You are advised to cooperate with personnel at government checkpoints and mobile military patrols. TCOs have erected their own unauthorized checkpoints, and killed or abducted motorists who have failed to stop at them.

Violence along Mexican roads and highways is a particular concern in the northern border region. As a result, effective July 15, 2010, the U.S. Mission in Mexico imposed restrictions on U.S. government employees’ travel. U.S. government employees and their families are not permitted to drive from the U.S.-Mexico border to or from the interior of Mexico or Central America. Travel by vehicle is permitted between Hermosillo and Nogales.

While violent incidents have occurred at all hours of the day and night on both modern toll ("cuotas") highways and on secondary roads, they have occurred most frequently at night and on isolated roads. To reduce risk, you are strongly urged to travel only during daylight hours throughout Mexico, to avoid isolated roads, and to use toll roads whenever possible. For more information on road safety and crime along Mexico's roadways, see the Department of State's Country Specific Information.

Due to ongoing violence and persistent security concerns, you are urged to defer non-essential travel to the states of Tamaulipas and Michoacán, and to parts of the states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Sinaloa, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi and Jalisco. Details on these locations, and other areas in which travelers should exercise caution, are below.

**Violence along the U.S. - Mexico Border**

You should be especially aware of safety and security concerns when visiting the northern border states of Northern Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas. Much of the country’s narcotics-related violence has occurred in the border region. More than a third of all U.S. citizens killed in Mexico in 2010 whose deaths were reported to the U.S. government were killed in the border cities of Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana. Narcotics-related homicide rates in the border states of Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas have increased dramatically in the past two years.

Carjacking and highway robbery are serious problems in many parts of the border region and U.S. citizens have been murdered in such incidents. Most victims who complied with carjackers at these checkpoints have reported that they were not physically harmed. Incidents have occurred during the day and at night, and carjackers have used a variety of techniques, including bumping moving vehicles to force them to stop and running vehicles off the road at high speed. There are some indications that criminals have particularly targeted newer and larger vehicles with U.S. license plates, especially dark-colored SUVs. However, victims' vehicles have included those with both Mexican and American registration and vary in type from late model SUVs and pick-up trucks to old sedans.

If you make frequent visits to border cities, you should vary your route and park in well-lighted, guarded and paid parking lots. Exercise caution when entering or exiting vehicles.
Large firefights between rival TCOs or TCOs and Mexican authorities have taken place in towns and cities in many parts of Mexico, especially in the border region. Firefights have occurred in broad daylight on streets and in other public venues, such as restaurants and clubs. During some of these incidents, U.S. citizens have been trapped and temporarily prevented from leaving the area. The location and timing of future armed engagements cannot be predicted. You are urged to defer travel to those areas mentioned in this Travel Warning and to exercise extreme caution when traveling throughout the northern border region.

**Northern Baja California:** Targeted TCO assassinations continue to take place in Northern Baja California, including the city of Tijuana. You should exercise caution in this area, particularly at night. In late 2010, turf battles between criminal groups proliferated and resulted in numerous assassinations in areas of Tijuana frequented by U.S. citizens. Shooting incidents, in which innocent bystanders have been injured, have occurred during daylight hours throughout the city. In one such incident, an American citizen was shot and seriously wounded.

**Nogales and Northern Sonora:** You are advised to exercise caution in the city of Nogales. Northern Sonora is a key region in the international drug and human trafficking trades, and can be extremely dangerous for travelers. The U.S. Consulate requires that armored vehicles are used for official travel in the consular district of Nogales, including certain areas within the city of Nogales. The region west of Nogales, east of Sonoyta, and from Caborca north, including the towns of Saric, Tubutama and Altar, and the eastern edge of Sonora bordering Chihuahua, are known centers of illegal activity. You should defer non-essential travel to these areas.

You are advised to exercise caution when visiting the coastal town of Puerto Peñasco. In the past year there have been multiple incidents of TCO-related violence, including the shooting of the city’s police chief. U.S. citizens visiting Puerto Peñasco are urged to cross the border at Lukeville, AZ, to limit driving through Mexico and to limit travel to main roads during daylight hours.

**Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua:** The situation in the state of Chihuahua, specifically Ciudad Juarez, is of special concern. Ciudad Juarez has the highest murder rate in Mexico. Mexican authorities report that more than 3,100 people were killed in Ciudad Juarez in 2010. Three persons associated with the Consulate General were murdered in March, 2010. You should defer non-essential travel to Ciudad Juarez and to the Guadalupe Bravo area southeast of Ciudad Juarez. U.S. citizens should also defer non-essential travel to the northwest quarter of the state of Chihuahua. From the United States, these areas are often reached through the Columbus, NM, and Fabens and Fort Hancock, TX, ports-of-entry. In both areas, U.S. citizens have been victims of narcotics-related violence. There have been incidents of narcotics-related violence in the vicinity of the Copper Canyon in Chihuahua.

**Durango, Coahuila and Zacatecas:** Between 2006 and 2010, the number of narcotics-related murders in the State of Durango increased dramatically. Several areas in the state have seen sharp increases in violence and remain volatile and unpredictable. U.S. government employees are restricted from traveling to the cities of Durango and Gomez Palacio. You should defer non-essential travel to these cities.

The State of Coahuila has also experienced an increase in violent crimes and narcotics-related murders. U.S. government employees are restricted from traveling to the area known as "La Laguna", including the city of Torreon, and the city of Saltillo within the state. You should defer non-essential travel to this area, as well as to the cities of Piedras Negras and Ciudad Acuña due to frequent incidents of TCO-related violence.
The northwestern portion of the state of Zacatecas has become notably dangerous and insecure. Robberies and carjackings are occurring with increased frequency and both local authorities and residents have reported a surge in observed TCO activity. This area is remote, and local authorities are unable to regularly patrol it or quickly respond to incidents that occur there. The Consulate General in Monterrey restricts travel for U.S. government employees to the city of Fresnillo and the area extending northwest from Fresnillo along Highway 45 (Fresnillo-Sombrete) between Highways 44 and 49. In addition, highway 49 northwards from Fresnillo through Durango and in to Chihuahua is isolated and should be considered dangerous. You should defer non-essential travel to these areas.

**Monterrey and Nuevo Leon:** The level of violence and insecurity in Monterrey remains elevated. Local police and private patrols do not have the capacity to deter criminal elements or respond effectively to security incidents. As a result of a Department of State assessment of the overall security situation, on September 10, 2010, the Consulate General in Monterrey became a partially unaccompanied post with no minor dependents of U.S. government employees permitted.

TCOs continue to use stolen cars and trucks to create roadblocks or "blockades" on major thoroughfares, preventing the military or police from responding to criminal activity in Monterrey and the surrounding areas. Travelers on the highways between Monterrey and the United States (notably through Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros/Reynosa) have been targeted for robbery that has resulted in violence. They have also been caught in incidents of gunfire between criminals and Mexican law enforcement. In 2010, TCOs kidnapped guests out of reputable hotels in the downtown Monterrey area, blocking off adjoining streets to prevent law enforcement response. TCOs have also regularly attacked local government facilities, prisons and police stations, and engaged in public shootouts with the military and between themselves. Pedestrians and innocent bystanders have been killed in these incidents.

The number of kidnappings and disappearances in Monterrey, and increasingly throughout Monterrey's consular district, is of particular concern. Both the local and expatriate communities have been victimized and local law enforcement has provided little to no response. In addition, police have been implicated in some of these incidents. Travelers and residents are strongly advised to lower their profile and avoid displaying any evidence of wealth that might draw attention.

**Tamaulipas:** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Tamaulipas. In an effort to prevent the military or police from responding to criminal activity, TCOs have set up roadblocks or "blockades" in various parts of Nuevo Laredo in which armed gunmen carjack and rob unsuspecting drivers. These blockades occur without warning and at all times, day and night. The Consulate General prohibits employees from entering the entertainment zone in Nuevo Laredo known as "Boys Town" because of concerns about violent crime in that area. U.S. government employees are currently restricted from travelling on the highway between Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey, as well as on Mexican Highway 2 towards Reynosa or Ciudad Acuña due to security concerns.

Be aware of the risks posed by armed robbery and carjacking on state highways throughout Tamaulipas. In January 2011, a U.S. citizen was murdered in what appears to have been a failed carjacking attempt. While no highway routes through Tamaulipas are considered safe, many of the crimes reported to the U.S. Consulate General in Matamoros took place along the Matamoros-Tampico highway, particularly around San Fernando and the area north of Tampico.

**Crime and Violence in Other Parts of Mexico**
While security concerns are particularly acute in the northern border region, you should be aware of situations that could affect your safety in other parts of Mexico.

**Sinaloa and Southern Sonora:** One of Mexico's most powerful TCOs is based in the state of Sinaloa. Since 2006, more homicides have occurred in the state's capital city of Culiacan than in any other city in Mexico, with the exception of Ciudad Juarez. You should defer non-essential travel to Culiacan and exercise extreme caution when visiting the rest of the state. Travel off the toll roads in remote areas of Sinaloa is especially dangerous and should be avoided.

In the last year, the city of Mazatlan has experienced a level of violence, primarily confrontations between TCOs, not seen before. In 2010 there were over 300 narcotics-related murders within the city, compared to fewer than 100 in 2009. You are encouraged to visit Mazatlan during daylight hours and limit the time you spend outside tourist centers. Exercise caution during late night and early morning hours when most violent crimes occur.

Highway robbery and carjacking are ongoing security concerns for travelers on the Mexican toll road Highway 15 in Sonora and on Maxipista Benito Juarez in Sinaloa. These highways are known to be particularly dangerous at night when roadside robberies occur. When traveling in Sinaloa, U.S. government employees are required to use armored vehicles and may only travel in daylight hours.

**San Luis Potosi:** In February 2011, one U.S. government employee was killed and another wounded when they were attacked in their U.S. government vehicle on Highway 57 near Santa Maria del Rio. The incident remains under investigation. Cartel violence and highway lawlessness have increased throughout the state and are a continuing security concern. All official U.S. government employees and their families have been advised to defer travel on the entire stretch of highway 57D in San Luis Potosi as well as travel in the state east of highway 57D towards Tamaulipas. You should defer non-essential travel in these areas.

**Nayarit and Jalisco:** Official U.S. government employees are prohibited from traveling to Colotlan, Jalisco, and Yahualica, Jalisco, both near the Zacatecas border, because of an increasingly volatile security situation. Concerns include roadblocks placed by individuals posing as police or military personnel and recent gun battles between rival TCOs involving automatic weapons. You should defer non-essential travel to these cities. In addition, the border areas between Jalisco state and the states of Zacatecas and Michoacán, as well as in or near the cities of Tepic and Xalisco, Nayarit have been sites of violence and crime involving TCOs. You should exercise extreme caution when traveling in these areas.

**Michoacán:** You should defer non-essential travel to the State of Michoacán, which is home to another of Mexico's most dangerous TCOs, "La Familia". Attacks on government officials and law enforcement and military personnel, and other incidents of TCO-related violence, have occurred throughout Michoacan, including in and around the capital of Morelia and in the vicinity of the world famous butterfly sanctuaries in the eastern part of the State.

**Guerrero and Morelos:** You should exercise extreme caution when traveling in the northwestern part of the state of Guerrero, which has a strong TCO presence. Do not take the dangerous, isolated road through Ciudad Altamirano to the beach resorts of Ixtapa and Zihuatanejo and exercise caution traveling on the coastal road between Acapulco and Ixtapa due to the risk of roadblocks and carjackings. Numerous incidents of narcotics-related violence have occurred in the city of Cuernavaca, in the State of Morelos, a popular destination for American language students.
Downtown Acapulco and surrounding areas have seen a significant increase in narcotics-related violence in the last year. Incidents have included daylight gunfights and murders of law enforcement personnel and some have resulted in the deaths of innocent bystanders. Due to the unpredictable nature of this violence, you should exercise extreme caution when visiting downtown Acapulco. To reduce risks, tourists should not visit the downtown area at night and should remain in clearly identifiable tourist areas. In general, the popular tourist area of Diamante just south of the city has not been affected by the increasing violence.

Further Information

You are encouraged to review the U.S. Embassy’s Mexico Security Update. The update contains information about recent security incidents in Mexico that could affect the safety of the traveling public.

For more detailed information on staying safe in Mexico, please see the State Department’s Country Specific Information for Mexico. Information on security and travel to popular tourist destinations is also provided in the publication: Spring Break in Mexico - Know Before You Go!

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the State Department’s internet web site, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). U.S. citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to enroll with the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at travel.state.gov. For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, please contact the U.S. Embassy or the closest U.S. Consulate. The numbers provided below for the Embassy and Consulates are available around the clock. The U.S. Embassy is located in Mexico City at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000; telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000; telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000. You may also contact the Embassy by e-mail at ACSMexicoCity@state.gov.

Consulates (with consular districts):

- **Hermosillo** (Sinaloa and the southern part of the state of Sonora): Avenida Monterrey 141, telephone (011)(52)(662) 289-3500.
- **Matamoros** (the southern part of Tamaulipas with the exception of the city of Tampico): Avenida Primera 2002, telephone (011)(52)(868) 812-4402.
- **Merida** (Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo): Calle 60 no. 338-K x 29 y 31, Col. Alcala Martin, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico 97050, telephone (011)(52)(999) 942-5700 or 202-250-3711 (U.S. number).
- **Nogales** (the northern part of Sonora): Calle San Jose, Nogales, Sonora, telephone
(011)(52)(631) 311-8150.

- **Tijuana** (Baja California Norte and Baja California Sur): Paseo de Las Culturas and Camino al Aeropuerto in Mesa de Otay, telephone (011)(52)(664) 977-2000.

All other Mexican states, and the Federal District of Mexico City, are part of the Embassy's consular district.

**Consular Agencies:**

- **Cancún**: Blvd. Kukulcan Km 13 ZH Torre La Europea, Despacho 301 Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico C.P. 77500; telephone (011)(52)(998) 883-0272.
- **Ciudad Acuña**: Closed until further notice.
- **Coyote**: Plaza Villa Mar en el Centro, Plaza Principal, (Parque Juárez between Melgar and 5th ave.) 2nd floor, locales #8 and 9, telephone (011)(52)(987) 872-4574 or, 202-459-4661 (a U.S. number).
- **Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo**: Hotel Fontan, Blvd. Ixtapa, telephone (011)(52)(755) 553-2100.
- **Mazatlán**: Playa Gaviotas #202, Zona Dorada, telephone (011)(52)(669) 916-5889.
- **Piedras Negras**: Abasolo #211, Zona Centro, Piedras Negras, Coah., Tel. (011)(52)(878) 782-5586.
- **Puerto Vallarta**: Paradise Plaza, Paseo de los Cocoteros #1, Local #4, Interior #17, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, telephone (011)(52)(322) 222-0069.
- **San Miguel de Allende**: Centro Comercial La Luciernaga, Libramiento Manuel Zavala (Pepe KBZON), telephone (011)(52)(415) 152-2357 or (011)(52)(415) 152-0068.
The Power of Two

By Dave Allen

While we were reporting to the Southern Oregon members in the Grants Pass Church, it struck me that two of these new members were sitting right there in the congregation, attending their first town hall meeting and they were, in fact, ‘2’ of 952! That night I connected with Galen and Lucille Kelm, two new members in ministry, faces and names to the ‘2’ in the statistic I had reported.

Luci and Galen were baptized by Pastor John Witcombe on October 23, 2010 and became members of the Rogue River Seventh-day Adventist Church. Since retiring in Rogue River in 2003, their faithful attendance of mass at the local Catholic church would include a drive past the Adventist Church. They had attended some health seminars, including a Coronary Health Improvement Program (CHIP). One Sunday as they drove by, they noticed a banner advertising a prophecy seminar. They also received a brochure in the mail and decided to attend.

Two other members in ministry have been close friends to Galen and Luci in this process. Calvin and Virginia Smith have spent a lifetime in church service on different continents of the world, including a number of years as department directors at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. They retired in Southern Oregon and continue to be members in ministry in our Conference. They have spent many hours with the Kelms in Bible study.

Luci and Galen testify, “We love the faithfulness of our Adventist family; they are so warm and loving, and represent Christ in a very positive manner. We have learned so much about Christ’s life and leading a healthy lifestyle. We feel this has helped us to continue to spread the word of God and praise God’s glory, along with being a good example of His teachings. We eagerly are waiting for the second coming of Christ to take us home with Him! Alleluia, Alleluia, Amen!”

There is something special in the way Jesus sent out His disciples two by two (Luke 10). This is what God is doing in the Oregon Conference as two members in ministry, with their pastor and church family, are empowered by Him to reach two new members in ministry for Him.

I was privileged to meet these two couples again at Camp Meeting 2011 where Galen and Luci testified to the larger church family about the power of ‘2’ in 952!
The Adventist Review shares the following world news from Religion News Service as a service to readers. Opinions expressed in these reports do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Review or the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

-- Editors

Report Says Tithing, Church Spending Hit Record Low

BY PIET LEVY ©2011 Religion News Service

ithing to U.S. Protestant churches as a percentage of income is at its lowest level in at least 41 years, according to a new report, and churches are keeping a greater share of those donations for their own needs.

Parishioners gave about 2.38 percent of their income to their church, according to "The State of Church Giving through 2009," a new report being released Friday (Oct. 14) by Empty Tomb inc., a Christian research agency in Champaign, Ill.

Just over 2 percent of income went toward congregational finances, such as operating costs and building expenses. Only 0.34 percent of parishioner income went to what Empty Tomb calls "benevolences," such as charities and seminary training beyond the four walls of the church.

Those are new lows, at least going back to the first report in 1968.

The Empty Tomb report is based on data from mainline Protestant and evangelical churches; similar data was not available for Roman Catholic churches.

At first glance, the lagging economy would appear to be a primary culprit. Edith H. Falk, chair of Chicago-based Giving USA Foundation, indicated this summer that the biggest drops in more than 40 years occurred in 2008 and 2009, as the recession took its greatest toll.

The Empty Tomb report also pinpointed 2008 as the greatest year-to-year drop since the first report was compiled in 1968. But Sylvia Ronsvalle, Empty Tomb's executive vice president and the report's co-author, said previous research identifies no clear pattern that shows donations dropped during past recessions.

In other words, the recession is only partly to blame, if at all.

"What we did find is giving tends not to decline in recession years, though it might in fact have declined in years around recessions," she said.

This is the second consecutive year that Ronsvalle's report has shown a drop in total contributions and tithing. More alarming, she said, is an ongoing decline in benevolence spending.

This year's report represents the fourth consecutive annual decline in benevolences. Put another way, American churches are spending more on themselves and less on beyond-the-church charities.

If the percentage of income for benevolences in 2009 had been at the 1968 level, 0.66 percent, U.S. churches would have seen an additional $3.1 billion in benevolence spending.

"Churches on the whole are continuing to spend more on current members and less on the larger mission of the church and cutting back on missionaries," said Ronsvalle.

She cited 16 impoverished nations -- 10 of them primarily Christian -- that have seen little to no progress in improving child mortality rates. If churches were more generous, she says, that might not be the case.
“These babies do not have to be dying, and yet nobody is mobilized at a scale that would achieve that solution,” Ronsvalle said. “Contempt for death isn’t the way to expect a Christian to live their life. We ought to be sacrificing, we ought to do everything in our power to make sure everyone that wants a Bible can have one.”

Ronsvalle even goes so far as to suggest “if a church is turning inward and valuing the happiness of its members” over service to others, “it is moving on a spectrum toward pagan values.”

The bottom line: U.S. churches seem to be more concerned with their own needs and their own desires over the needs of others.

“That’s an offensive question even to raise, but if we are moving in that direction we need to see it now,” she said. “These are alarming trends that need to be evaluated.”

The Salvation Army has been one of the lucky charities to actually increase its contributions by 5 percent in the U.S. over the last fiscal year, said Maj. George Hood, a top spokesman for The Salvation Army’s national headquarters in Alexandria, Va. Still, tithing to the Salvation Army’s own congregations has been flat or slightly declining in recent years.

“We all have to be concerned anytime there’s a decline in charitable giving,” Hood said. “People are not being served at the same level that they have been.”
My seven siblings and I have what we call our “favorite” argument.

We call it that for two reasons – one, it’s our favorite argument, and two, it’s about who was our dad’s favorite.

Nancy says it was her because she was the firstborn, and everyone knows the firstborn is the favorite.

Gale says it was her because the kid you love the most is the one who’s having trouble, and since she claims to have had more trouble in her life than the rest of us have had, she feels she’s obviously been the favorite.

Diana argues that Daddy’s nick name for her proves that she was the favorite. Why would you call your daughter “Pie Face” unless she was your favorite??

Curly (Darrell) was the firstborn son…

Nick was the one who really got into Daddy’s logging and trucking and heavy equipment…

Russ was the one that followed Dad’s lead with accounting…

Debby was the baby, and everyone knows the baby is the favorite…

I am actually the seventh in the line-up, showing up in between Russ and Debby, and I like to remind my siblings that seven is the perfect number. This doesn’t seem to have convinced my siblings of anything, but I think it’s pretty compelling. On top of that, my dad once bought me a MOTORCYCLE. Granted, it was just a little Honda 90 (that I named Zelda), but this argument usually gets to my brothers, because he didn’t ever buy them motorcycles of any kind or even let them buy their own. (If you knew my brothers, you’d understand the wisdom here.)

Once, just for some variety, we argued about who was mother’s favorite, which she found highly entertaining. We’re a rather boisterous group when we’re all together like that, and the stories and laughter occupied us for a couple of hours. The next time we all got together, Diana and Gale had T-shirts for each of which said “Mom likes me best” and a sweatshirt for my mother that said “Mom”. Yes, we took pictures!

“I had spent my life knowing I was Daddy’s favorite,” reveals Nancy. “At his funeral, I realized each one of us knew we were his favorite.”

As I think about it, my (fairly cranky) grandmother had observed the phenomenon long before we recognized it. “I’ve never, in my entire life, seen EIGHT ‘only’ children!” I heard her complain one day. “You’re all SPOILED ROTTEN!” I don’t think she meant it as a compliment, but I rather liked the idea. Eight favorites! I’m cool with that!

And as a parent, I get it. I only have two kids, but each one is my favorite. They are VERY different from each other, but I love each one as fully as if he/she were the only one. It doesn’t take both of them having the same great need at the very same time to get my attention – it just takes ONE of them having a need, whether it’s simple or complex, a delight to meet, or soul stretching. Ever since the day they were born, I have known that if it ever actually came down to it, I would give up my
very life for either one of them, no thought needed. I wouldn’t say, “Well, if both of them would benefit…” No! Only one of them would need me to do it.

I have a little tiny glimpse, then, of how it is that the following thought from Ellen White can be possible: “The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.” *Steps to Christ, page 100*

Pretty cool to think about, isn’t it? I’m God’s favorite!

And so are you.

**Questions:** With God’s love so abundantly clear in Scripture, all around us in nature, in our hymns, in countless devotional writings, in His amazing work and presence in each life… Why do so many people struggle with feeling and believing that God doesn’t really love them? Have you struggled over this? Do you “get it” now? What is the best way to help people with this? What has helped (or hindered) you?

This entry was posted on Tuesday, November 1st, 2011 at 12:37 pm and is filed under Cheri Corder. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](http://gleanerblog.mcmds.com/cheri-corder/2011/11/our-favorite-argument) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

**One Response to “Our Favorite Argument”**

1. **Diana** says:
   November 2, 2011 at 9:23 pm

   Very well done my sweet Sister. When I grow up I want to be just like you! It was great being an only among seven others; never lonely!!

[Leave a Reply](#)

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

**Submit Comment**

Nelle

Re-written by Cindy R. Chamberlin, as adapted from Paul Kengor’s work. Permission granted via Dr. Kengor.

“You can be too big for God to use, but you cannot be too small,” an annotation from Nelle’s Bible.

On a brisk February evening in Dixon in 1922, shortly after his eleventh birthday, Dutch strolled home returning from a basketball game at the nearby YMCA. His mother, Nelle, was out on a sewing job trying to earn a few dollars. Dutch expected to come back to an empty house. Instead, he was shaken by the sight of his father sprawled out in the snow on the front porch, passed out, flat on his back, freezing, too inebriated to make it to the door. “He was drunk,” his son later remembered, “dead to the world.” The boy leaned over and smelled the whiskey escaping through his dad’s long snores. His hair was soaked with melted snow, matted unevenly against the side of his reddened face.¹

**Dark Demon**

Jack’s arms were stretched out, recalled his son, “as if he were crucified — as indeed he was.” He had been taken by the “dark demon in the bottle.” Dutch stood over his father for a minute or two, not sure how to react. He wanted to simply let himself in the door, go to bed, and pretend his dad wasn’t there. Instead, Dutch grabbed a fistful of the old man’s overcoat and heaved him toward the door. He dragged him into the house and to the bedroom, out of the way of the weather’s harm and the neighbors’ fixed attention. It was a sad moment for father and son.¹

“They were awful poor,” a neighbor reflected years later. Another friend recalled her family sent so many charity food plates over that her father built a hinge next to the family’s kitchen window so food could easily be left inside. Dutch’s father, Jack, a nominal Catholic, alcoholic and unsuccessful salesman, moved his family from town to town, job to job, and rental to rental. Dutch’s family never owned a home and had to sublease the houses they stayed in just to make rent.¹ They could afford few decorated Christmas trees, but undaunted, Nelle decorated a table or created a cardboard fireplace out of a packing box with ribbon and crepe paper.²

**Bleak Life**

Despite the face of alcoholism by Dutch’s father, extreme poverty, and frugal living, Nelle stayed forever optimistic and cheery, accepting her hardships as God’s unerring plan, and throwing herself fully into helping the “poor and helpless.” Dutch’s most vivid, earliest memory of his mother was of her taking a covered dish to someone needier than they.
“If there ever was such a thing as a saint on earth, it was Nelle,” said friends later. Nelle visited the sick in hospitals, bravely walked into tuberculosis (TB) wards, comforted mentally ill in institutions, and gave weekly Bible studies to jail inmates. Nelle’s flair as an “elocutionist” — notably in her “dramatic readings” of Scripture — made her a favorite among prisoners.

As a prodigious newspaper reader, Nelle followed international events closely out of personal interest and with a sense of Christian obligation. Doing some work for Russian believers, in the summer of 1924, she helped raise money to erect a chapel for the Russian church in New York City — a symbolic act showing solidarity for Russian believers.

Frugal Life

There is no doubt if she had the education, today she would have been ordained.1 Sources claim Nelle lead her church virtually single-handed, writing bulletins, preparing Sunday programs, prodding the congregation ... Nelle’s True Blue Sunday school class was the largest (even more popular than the pastor’s) and her church was described by one historian as, “the voice of democracy and individualism in the religious sphere.”

Blessed with an engaging voice and the confidence of a natural performer — Nelle was renowned in Dixon for her recitations both outside the church and within, self-written stories and poems frequently published locally, and for acting in plays. Dutch, always in tow, absorbed his lifelong love for drama and language skills from the time at his mother’s church.1

Did Nelle ever wonder if her prayers escaped the ceiling? In her frugal life, was her dedication for good in vain? Her heavenward petitions lost?

Nelle’s prayers and good deeds came to fruition decades later, echoing in the voice of the 40th president of the United States of America, Dutch — a.k.a Ronald Wilson Reagan. President Reagan, habitually and unapologetically declared his mother’s God. He projected Nelle’s youthful optimism, exuded her cheerfulness, captured her love for theater, and championed her good deeds.

Tear Down this Wall

Reagan’s words at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin, Germany, on June 12, 1987, “Mr. Gorbachev tear down this wall,” effectively toppled the Berlin Wall and ended the cold war. But these were not accidental words; these were straight from the pew at his mothers’ church. Common recurring threads within his speeches, freedom and opportunity were non-other than Nelle’s winsome optimism peeking out. In his two presidential terms, Reagan was unapologetic for his Christian beliefs and often referenced “God’s unerring divine plan,” in the face of obstacles— a pattern learned in childhood.

Nellanomics
When random requests arrived at the White House that he could fulfill, historians say he did so. Once, an elderly gentleman wrote to him and asked him for a rocking chair, it was the formative Dutch, who took the oval pen and ordered it delivered to the needy address. Nelle’s charities showed themselves in the president’s small kindnesses: He chose to stay at the White House for Christmases rather than return to his beloved ranch so his secret servicemen could be near their families. His most lifelong treasured Christmas gift was a letter describing how his brother brought Christmas to a needy family.

Trickle-down Reaganomics brought about the longest peacetime economic stability in U.S. history, surpassed only by a short time in the 1990s. But in reality these were “Nellanomics,” the trickle down of one godly woman who inculcated a young boy and formed a president in the process.

Nelle did not live to see her son become leader of the free world. However, she always credited her son’s ascent in Hollywood and his financial success to her tithing. As president, Reagan advocated and paid a regular tithe, quoting his mother’s scrupulous training to give 10 percent. During his youth he “tithed” to his brother’s college tuition because the boy had no other way to go. Reagan quoted Nelle’s belief, “The Lord [would] make her 90 percent twice as big if she [made sure He got] his tenth.” (Leviticus) He said she believed being faithful would grant her a tremendous spiritual and earthly blessing in return.

Sources:


6 Ronald Reagan’s Democrat to Republican, p. 68

This entry was posted on Thursday, October 13th, 2011 at 10:15 am and is filed under Cindy's Garden Blog. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

One Response to “Nelle”


I really liked this.