**McVay to Resign as WWU President**

John McVay announced this week his plan to resign as Walla Walla University president effective July 1, 2012, so that he can return to the classroom. McVay and his family will continue to reside in College Place, Wash., where he will serve as WWU professor of theology, specializing in New Testament studies. McVay became the university’s 23rd president in 2006. “The opportunity to join the excellent team of professors in the School of Theology is energizing for me,” he says. “I look forward to serving WWU students as teacher, mentor and friend.” Read more at gleaneronline.org HERE.

**UCA Selects New Principal for 2012–2013 Year**

Jay Wintermeyer, Upper Columbia Conference spokesperson, reports that the Upper Columbia Academy board has invited John Winslow (pictured here) to assume the role of principal for the coming school year. Winslow, who previously worked at UCA as vice-principal, currently serves as the principal for Campion Adventist Academy in Loveland, Colo. He will take up his new duties this summer for the 2012–2013 school year, replacing Troy Patzer who plans to begin work as an UCC trust officer. UCA, in Spangle, Wash., is the largest Adventist boarding academy in North America.

**Supreme Court Ruling Protects Church Interests**

Seventh-day Adventist Church legal counselors say a ruling last week by the United States Supreme Court further shields churches from government interference. In a landmark decision announced Jan. 11, the nation’s highest court ruled that government cannot question a religious community’s decisions regarding who should teach in its church-run schools. “For the Adventist Church in the U.S., this means courts will not be second-guessing the hiring and firing of our pastors and teachers,” says Todd McFarland, world church associate general counsel. Some observers,
however, have expressed an opposite concern — that some church employees will have potentially less recourse in work-related disputes brought before a court. Read more from the Adventist News Network HERE.

Pacific Press Dedicates Special Printing
The Pacific Press held a special dedication service recently for one million copies of The Great Hope, just off the press. The Great Hope is an 11-chapter adaptation of The Great Controversy. The one million print run underscores the commitment of Pacific Press to The Great Controversy Project, initiated by Ted Wilson, General Conference president. Wilson has encouraged the church to undertake a worldwide distribution of The Great Controversy. "Ellen White said she wanted to see The Great Controversy distributed more extensively than any of her other books," says Dale Galusha, Pacific Press president. Millions of the books will be printed by other publishing houses and distributed throughout the world field.

NAD Ministries Convention Wraps Up
Many church and ministry leaders from around the Northwest and throughout North American attended the North American Division Ministries Convention this week in Innisbruck, Fla. Initiated by a special prayer conference, the event theme, Tools of the Master, was evident throughout a number of session with speakers such as Jose Rojas, Dan Jackson, Ruthie Jacobsen and others. See a selection of photos from the event on Flickr HERE.
McVay to Resign as WWU President

Following is a public statement from Rosa Jimenez, WWU director of university relations.

After six years at the helm of Walla Walla University, President John McVay today announced his plan to resign effective July 1, 2012, so that he can return to the classroom.

"It has been an honor to serve as president of Walla Walla University," he said. "The work has stretched and blessed both me and my wife, Pam. We are grateful for the partnership of such an able and committed leadership team, as well as the support of the wider community of faculty, staff and students," he said.

McVay and his family will continue to reside in College Place, where he will serve as professor of theology at WWU, specializing in New Testament studies. "The opportunity to join the excellent team of professors in the School of Theology is energizing for me," he said. "I look forward to serving WWU students as teacher, mentor and friend."

McVay became the university’s 23rd president in 2006, when his first task was supervising the institution’s name change from Walla Walla College to Walla Walla University. He led strategic planning efforts for the university, earning a commendation from accrediting organizations, and instituted long-range budget planning processes. He championed renovations for the university’s School of Social Work and Sociology, School of Nursing (both College Place and Portland, Ore., campuses), and Marketing and Enrollment Services offices. Under his guidance, this year the university welcomed its largest freshman class in 17 years and yielded the highest freshman-to-sophomore retention rate in university history.

"John McVay has led Walla Walla University courageously through some challenging years. Because of his leadership, we are in a stronger position to meet the future," says Ginger Ketting-Weller, vice president for academic administration. "His dedication to strengthening our students’ spiritual and academic experience, and to holding high standards for the work of education, has been a blessing. We are delighted that he’s chosen to stay with us in a capacity where he will continue to inspire students and colleagues on a daily basis."

Prior to his years of service at WWU, McVay taught at Pacific Union College (Angwin, Calif.) in the Religion Department and, for a time, served as senior pastor for the Pacific Union College Church. He has served as a pastor in Iowa and Georgia, and was the dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Mich.). He holds a master of divinity degree from Andrews University and a doctorate from the University of Sheffield in England. He is a specialist in the later Pauline Epistles and contributes regularly to professional conferences and publications.

"Walla Walla University has been exceptionally blessed under the capable leadership of Dr. McVay," says Max Torkelsen, II, chairman of the WWU Board of Trustees and president of the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "He is a gifted educator with a unique combination of skills. We are deeply appreciative of his godly influence and steady hand in leading our university. Though I keenly regret his decision to relinquish administrative responsibilities, I am grateful that he will continue to make a valuable contribution in the classroom through teaching and research."

Torkelsen says a presidential search committee will be formed shortly to begin the process of selecting a new president.
Founded in 1892, WWU is a private university affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. More than 1830 undergraduate and graduate students attend the university, which offers more than 100 areas of study on five campuses.
U.S. Supreme Court ruling is First Amendment defense, Adventist legal counselors say

Jan. 13, 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist Church legal counselors say a ruling this week by the United States Supreme Court further shields churches from government interference.

In a landmark decision, the nation’s highest court ruled that government cannot question a religious community’s decisions regarding who should teach in its church-run schools.

The U.S. Supreme Court this week ruled that government cannot question a church’s decisions on who will teach at its faith-based schools. Adventist legal counselors say the ruling further cements church-state separation in the country. [photo: Shutterstock]
The unanimous ruling clarifies the role of the “ministerial exception,” which has previously protected churches in the U.S. from undue government and court interference, said Todd McFarland, an associate general counsel for the Adventist world church’s Office of General Counsel.

While lower courts have applied the ministerial exception for decades, this latest ruling marks the first time the Supreme Court has tackled it.

“For the Adventist Church in the U.S., this means courts will not be second-guessing the hiring and firing of our pastors and teachers,” McFarland said, adding that the decision frees the church to make employment decisions without worrying that a “secular judge and jury” might question their motivation.

“We’re pleased with the outcome,” he said.

The January 11 ruling dismisses the retaliation suit of a Lutheran schoolteacher in Michigan. Commissioned minister and teacher Cheryl Perich was fired after a 2004 narcolepsy diagnosis allegedly left her unable to perform her job. Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church argued that Perich’s illness and ensuing absences strained the school’s limited staff and budget.

Perich, however, claimed the church was violating the Americans with Disabilities Act and threatened to file a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). After the Lutheran Church accused Perich of violating the church’s doctrine of internal conflict resolution, the EEOC sued Hosanna-Tabor for penalizing Perich’s exercise of her rights under the law.

The U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals was convinced, too, after adding up the minutes per day Perich spent on secular and religious duties. They determined Perich spent 45 minutes per day conducting religious activities, such as leading prayer and worship -- not enough to apply the “ministerial exception” to discrimination laws, they ruled.

Applying the exception means courts can’t meddle in a church’s decision to appoint, elect or fire “ministers of the faith,” and, in turn, those ministers can’t sue their churches over most employment disputes.

Adventist Church Associate General Counsel Todd McFarland says church legal counselors are “pleased” with the January 11 ruling. Here, McFarland reviews church policy at the 2010 General Conference World Session. [ANN file photo by Gerry Chudleigh]

The nation’s highest court saw the case differently. Supreme Court justices cited Perich’s ministerial credentials and housing allowance from the church as evidence she acted as a minister of faith. Justices also noted that limiting the ministerial exception to employees “who perform exclusively religious functions” may
be impossible, since even ministers handle financial matters, facilities management and other secular duties.

“The exception should apply to any ‘employee’ who leads a religious organization, conducts worship services or important religious ceremonies or rituals, or serves as a messenger or teacher of its faith,” Justice Samuel Alito Jr. wrote in a concurring opinion with Justice Elena Kagan.

The Adventist Church was among many religious organizations that filed an amicus, or “friend of the court” brief in support of the Lutheran-run church school. The church’s support of Hosanna-Tabor cited the value of religious education in membership retention and outlined the history of the ministerial exception, including its foundation in church-state separation, he said.

The Adventist Church’s Office of General Counsel routinely files amicus briefs in cases where it has invested interest, McFarland said. Previous briefs have supported workplace freedom for Sabbath-observers.

In response to their show of support this week for the Supreme Court’s decision, Adventist legal counselors have fielded questions regarding whether the ruling now gives churches the license to “abuse or mistreat” employees, McFarland said.

“The simple answer is obviously ‘No,’” he said, “but it’s true that there are certain church employees -- not all, and certainly not even a majority -- who now have potentially less protection in the courts.”

But Adventist legal counsels don’t want “a jury of 12 people off the street” deciding what church doctrine is and whether a church employee has complied with it, McFarland said.

In a hypothetical case, a pastor close to retirement and fired for “straying from the faith” could argue age discrimination in court and likely find a sympathetic jury, he said.

“The argument that somehow the court can sort out whether a decision is religiously motivated or not is precisely the type of entanglement that requires a separation of church and state,” McFarland said.

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ANN encourages quality conversation and welcomes your thoughtful comments. All comments must be limited to 500 words and are subject to approval. Comments Policy

*The opinions expressed in ANN Comments are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Adventist News Network® and/or the Seventh-day Adventist® Church.*

Like

Showing 10 comments

we are now one step closer to the second coming of christ
Please, stop using software to translate news like this to spanish. It´s full of gramatical mistakes. I´m sure there are many latin brothers in EEUU that could translate it correctly.

Happy Saturday from Argentina

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La traducción es muy mala desde que se implemento el nuevo formato de la pagina. Parece que solamente usan el traductor de Google para traducir. Este problema minimiza el alcance de la pagina de noticias. Nosotros imprimimos las noticias en el Boletin de nuestra Iglesia local todos los sábado, pero es dificil hacerlo ahora por que muchas veces los textos no tienen sentido.

The translation to spanish is bad. It looks like you use Google's translation engine and just copy-paste to your web site. Most of the times the text in the spanish version does not make any sense. We print the ANN news every Sabbath in our church's bulletin but this is making it difficult. Please try and correct this issue.

Blessings

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I'm wondering if a more appropriate headline for this story would have been:
"Adventists Join Hands With Catholics Across Great Divide."

First, this from the Adventist Review: "The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists welcomed the court’s unanimous decision... this means courts will not be second-guessing the hiring and firing of our pastors and teachers... the church is free to make these decisions without fear that a secular judge and jury will decide it was instead pretext for an improper motive."

Religious liberty for Adventists today, one might conclude, means not defending freedom of individual conscience or the rights of disabled persons or others to be protected from abuses committed in the name of religion but rather the
freedom of religious institutions to "hire and fire" without any "second-guessing" or outside accountability.

Now this from Bishop William E. Lori, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

“[The ruling is] a great day for the First Amendment...This decision makes resoundingly clear the historical and constitutional importance of keeping internal church affairs off limits to the government — because whoever chooses the minister chooses the message.”

By contrast, here is the response of Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, who said the ruling can have all kinds of disastrous effects including barring suits against religious institutions from pastors and teachers who are sexually harassed:

“Blatant discrimination is a social evil we have worked hard to eradicate in the United States. I’m afraid the court’s ruling today will make it harder to combat.”

Five of the nine Supreme Court justices, including three of the four who wrote concurring opinions, are conservative Catholics. Interesting times we live in.

the social security and insurance company of the said church employees the ones liable to provide financial assistance to her not the church that only derives its incomes from the tuition fees of their student and tithe of the faithful church members.

church incomes is not even enough to pay for the needs of the church to keep it functional or to pay for the minimum salary of its active contractual workers and employees, so facing such
problems"paying for the wages of no longer active workers and employees"would cause the church a big financial problem.

that’s why the gov’t has established social services and insurance companies to shield those individuals facing such financial problem due of their unexpected physical injuries that cause them to no longer capable to perform their works and duties as well as loss of their financial income.

Will the new ruling hel in the case involving the dismissal of the professors that teaches evolution in our universities?

The more I read about this case the more incredible it is to me that the religious liberty offices of the General Conference are hailing it as a great victory for freedom of conscience. Garrett Epps writes as follows in the Atlantic Monthly:

"When Perich became sick with narcolepsy, she took leave to try to stabilize her condition. Six months later, when she said her doctor had cleared her to work again, the school told her she had been replaced for the school year and that if she showed up for work she'd be dismissed. She responded that her dismissal might violate the ADA, and that she had spoken with an attorney about her rights under the act. The school then fired her, saying she had violated a Lutheran religious policy of keeping disputes out of the secular courts. Take religion out of the picture, and you've got a pretty open and shut case of discriminatory retaliation, which the statute plainly forbids."

This case has literally nothing to do with the religious liberty of individuals. It is a case that strongly asserts the power of religious institutions--in this case seemingly motivated purely by economic self interests--to exercise coercive power over the lives of their members. These members will no longer have any recourse to the law even in the face of blatantly discriminatory behavior so long as they are deemed "ministers".

Contrary to the GC's declarations in
support of the Lutheran Church's divine right to fire sick ministers for economic reasons without any reference to their merits of their cases, this ruling will by all indications not keep future religious firings out of court. It will in fact greatly increase them. Epp writes, "the chief justice of the United States sounds like a good-hearted waitress at a Southern diner--'Y'all come back now, hear?'" It is precisely the courts that must now decide who is and who is not a "minister" under the exemption. So a great day for power--both the power of the government to make decisions about religious matters and the power of church bureaucracies to hire and fire their own at will. One thing this is not is a glorious day for personal freedom of conscience or for individual human beings such as Perich who by every indication was mistreated by a dehumanizing religious officialdom.

I am sorry to see the Adventist church siding against a women who was quite obviously fired for her illness. This is a complicated issue but clearly gives churches far more power to treat their employees immorally--power they will most certainly use.

The way i see it is that any power given to any human individual has the option of using it immorally. You can't really say that it is wrong for churches to have this power otherwise the secular world would have power over how the church is run. As for the woman of this case If you have an illness that prevents you from doing your job to the minimum required then you really should not go into that field. In her particular case it is essential to stay awake in a class room of kids.

La traducción al español esta fatal. Está traducido palabra por palabra y no hace sentido alguno. Espero hagan los arreglos necesarios para volver al sistema anterior de traductores, que de hecho eran muy buenos y pronto. El dinero y el tiempo ahorrados no valen la pena. PLEASE!!!
Adventists believe that religious liberty is a God-given universal human right, and they work to make the free expression and practice of religion a universal reality. Adventist religious liberty advocates are active in promoting and protecting religious freedom through the church’s department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty. They represent the church’s priorities to national leaders and policy-makers worldwide.

**Areas of representation:**

- United States Government in Washington, D.C.
- United Nations in New York City and Geneva

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