This week's email is sponsored by Marriage Conversion University. Watch their free training today.

Adventist Posthumously Awarded

The Anti-Defamation League has announced it will issue a posthumous Jan Karski Courage to Care award to an Adventist man credited for saving over 1,000 Jewish men, women, and children, Allied pilots, and political opponents of the Nazis during World War II. John Weidner, who died in 1994, founded Dutch-Paris, which became the largest and most successful underground network rescuing people being persecuted for their faith or race. Weidner’s experiences were featured in the book *Flee the Captor*, first published in 1966 and still available through sources such as Amazon. Read more about Weidner in the Adventist Review and at Wikipedia.

WWU Hosts Academy Music Festival

Northwest academy students experienced the joy and satisfaction of performing with a large musical group during the annual Music Festival, held Jan. 23–25 at Walla Walla University (WWU). Every year, the WWU music department hosts the annual festival for academy musicians, alternating between choir/orchestra and band. This year’s gathering emphasized choir and orchestra. Students had several days of intense practice before taking part in the University Church’s Sabbath worship service and performing in an afternoon concert at the church. Kraig Scott, who directs the choir, says the goal of the festival is “to allow serious young musicians from all across the Northwest to experience the joy of bringing great music to life.” Read more at GleanerNow.com.
Adventists Speak Out for Zero Tolerance

Today, Feb. 6, is International Day of Zero Tolerance to female genital mutilation. Seventh-day Adventists are joining other faith groups to encourage an end to the practice. Often referred to as female circumcision, the procedure, while banned by the United Nations, is common in nearly 30 countries in Africa and Asia. The church has developed an official position on this concern available online. “Our church should continue to seek loving ways to discourage this practice as well as to educate of its dangers,” said Dr. Peter Landless, health ministries director for the world church. Read more from Adventist News Network.

Want to Get Your Film Screened?

Submissions are now being accepted for the 2014 SONscreen Film Festival. Now in it's 12th year, the festival's theme is "Celebrating Creativity," and will be held March 20–22 at Southern Adventist University, in Collegedale, Tenn. This year's categories include Drama, Documentary, Animation, Public Service Announcement and High School. This year also includes a new category, "Seventh-day Adventists: United for Mission," sponsored by the General Conference. While the festival is designed to encourage and showcase the work of students, professionals are also welcome to enter. Learn more about entering and attending the festival at SONscreen.com.
The Truth About Death

Ever been faced with explaining what happens when someone dies? What do other religions believe about death? The video covers the many conflicting views on the topic ending with a clear Bible study on the state of the dead. Amazing Facts Ministries of Canada has recently produced this video and it's a great resource. Watch the video now at GleanerNow.com.

Who is your brother?

Does that only include people of our own faith? What about other Christians? Or Muslims? In a blog post on The Huffington Post, Dwayne Leslie, General Conference director of legislative affairs, explains why the Adventist Church has filed a “friend of the court” brief in a case involving the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) vs Abercrombie & Fitch. The church is concerned by a recent lower-court decision in this case that makes it harder for potential employees to get religious exceptions when applying for jobs. Read the full article at The Huffington Post.

Currently at GleanerNow

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- PAA’s Land Development Begins
- Fall Creek Opens Event Center
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Looking Ahead
February

- **11**: Eight Weeks to Wellness, Castle Rock, WA
- **14**: Islam and Christianity in the Bible
- **15**: Derrol Sawyer Concert, Startup, WA
- **15**: Valentine's Weekend Concert, Portland, OR
- **21**: Concerts at Shoreline Church, Shoreline, WA

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**February**

Across the Northwest, Adventist church members gather each week for worship, even in prison. This month, the Gleaner features church members who organize services each week for inmates in local prisons and how lives have been changed through prison ministries. Read the February issue online.

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“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?” (Prov. 24:11, 12).

In a time when standing up for justice could have meant the loss of your own life, one man did what was right, despite the consequences. He was a man whose moral principles and courage were guided by his love for God and humanity. His English name was John Henry Weidner [Johan Hendrik Weidner].

Weidner used to share with his wife, Naomi, a story of his childhood in Europe. As a little boy of about 8 or 9, he decided one day to run away from home. He didn’t really have a good reason, for he came from a loving family made up of his pastor father, his mother, two sisters, and a younger brother.

On his journey “away” he encountered a drunken person who scared him into rethinking his plans. As he trudged home, his family caught sight of him making his way back. Unbeknownst to him, he was about to be taught a serious lesson. In the time that he was gone, the family packed away his room. When Weidner returned and discovered his bed and belongings were no more, he was told that because he had decided to leave home his parents assumed that he didn’t want to be with them anymore and wanted to respect his wishes. After pleadings of remorse, young Weidner was accepted back into the family home, but told that with his room gone, he needed to sleep in the hayloft in the barn.

Weidner recalled that he dutifully went to bed in the hayloft that night and was terrified. It was dark, he could hear mice roaming around, and, worst of all, he was alone. Just when he thought he could stand it no more, he heard the creaking of footsteps climbing the loft. It was his father. He came to spend the night with his boy so that he wouldn’t have to face his punishment alone.

One can think that in that small but mighty lesson taught to Weidner by a loving father lay the roots for the acts of courage, altruism, and love that he freely participated in during the frightening years of the Nazi occupation of France that were to come.

Standing for Principle

Weidner was born into a Seventh-day Adventist home in Belgium in 1912. He was the eldest of four children born to Dutch parents. “Even when we were quite young, my parents always encouraged us, my sisters and me, to read the Bible and to believe that love was the aim of our lives,” he said.1 Because his father was a minister, the family was transferred frequently for new pastoral assignments.

While Weidner was living in Switzerland as a boy, the law mandated that all children attend school every day of the week, including Sabbath. Weidner’s father went to the authorities to explain the family’s religious convictions. He was rebuffed and told that if his children didn’t attend school, he would have to go to jail one day a week. “For seven years, I see my father going every week in jail because of his religious convictions. As a little boy, that impressed me, the idea that if you believe in something that is right, you have to be able to accept the consequences of it. That also helped me [make] a decision during the war: I wanted to help,” said Weidner.2

Weidner attended what is now Salève Adventist University in Collonges, France, just across the Swiss border from Geneva. His father taught Greek and Latin at the school. Growing up in Collonges had great advantages for Weidner in the work that he would one day undertake. As a kid, he climbed the mountains surrounding the campus and learned the ins and outs of the surrounding countryside and border crossing into
Switzerland. That knowledge would later prove to be extremely useful.

After his time at Collonges, Weidner went on to study business and law at the universities of Geneva and Paris. Following his schooling, he entered into the textile business and became quite successful at it, setting up shop initially in Paris before branching out to other cities in France. At one point he counted among his clients the international fashion house of Christian Dior.

The Changing Landscape
By 1940, when Germany invaded France, Weidner had established his base in Lyon. It was there that he came to help organize the Dutch-Paris underground network that eventually assisted about 800 Jews, 100 Allied aviators, and many others who were escaping the tyranny and murder of Nazi oppression. Dutch-Paris eventually involved a network of more than 300 agents who essentially made up an underground escape line from the Netherlands through Belgium and France into either Switzerland (by way of the border crossing near Collonges), or through Andorra to Spain via a more dangerous path through the Pyrenees mountains.

Roger Fasnacht was a young campus administrator at the Adventist campus in Collonges during the time. The campus served as a pivotal point for Weidner’s Dutch-Paris operations and the moving of refugees into Switzerland. Fasnacht says: “Jean Weidner* was a great friend. Through his resistance network he sent us Jews and students we helped cross the border. We were a solid team with Jean Zurcher, Jean Lavanchy, Raymond Meyer, Frederic Charpiot, and Dr. Paul Toureille. Sometimes we received refugees at home, but there were two or three rooms in the Sources building [on the campus] to house them and we brought them at dawn under the bridge near the Archamp’s station to bring them to Switzerland.”

During this dark period of world history, the Adventist Church in France was in crisis. In June 1940 the citizens of Paris were fleeing in droves in advance of the quickly approaching Nazi onslaught. The Franco-Belgian Union Conference was based in Paris, but packed up its offices to move its operations to the south, where it was widely believed the Nazis would not go. Weidner’s sister Gabrielle was secretary to Oscar Meyer, president of the Franco-Belgian Union, and John was part of the relocation efforts.

As the war progressed and the church in France became increasingly cut off from the rest of the world, it didn’t take long for John to respond to the atrocities and injustice facing Jews and other resisters of the Nazi regime. In 1939, a year before Germany invaded France, there were 300,000 Jews living in France. But by 1940, another 40,000-50,000 Jewish refugees had arrived in the country from Belgium and Holland alone.

As an Adventist, Weidner’s faith moved to a difficult and courageous choice. Sadly, the response of some Adventists across Europe during this time period was not what it should have been, and the plight of the Jews and other oppressed persons often met with indifference. But for Weidner this was not an option. Mere sympathy alone was not an option. Action was necessary, and he chose not to ignore what he felt to be the correct call.

“When the war started, I thought as a human being, well, that’s a question: how to help people. I thought I had a way to help them. If a Jewish person could reach Switzerland or Spain, he was safe. Those countries were neutral. The big question was how to reach Switzerland from Holland. Everywhere there was Gestapo, the SS, the soldiers of Hitler. The borders were closed. The border between France and Switzerland was heavily guarded, because the Nazis knew that Jewish people tried to reach Switzerland. But I knew the
“In setting up an escape route, I tried to avoid the roads to find a passage from one side of the mountain to the other side, down the cliff. There, with the help of friends, we could watch during the night and then reach the border. We could avoid the guards, cut the barbed wire, and go into Switzerland. Not me alone. Along the escape line from Holland to Belgium to France to Switzerland, there were around 12 people at the end working with us.”

Counting the Cost
To call participating in rescue work “difficult” is a huge understatement. Weidner said, “It was very dangerous to help Jews and it was not easy because it was so difficult to travel from one place to another. We had to find safe places along the way where people could sleep for one night or two and also ways to feed them. Then there were other problems: Where could we get false papers? Where could we find money to pay for papers and food? Where would we find people to help us? Could we trust the people we found? A good friend in Switzerland, W. A. Visser ’t Hooft, who would become secretary general of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, knew about our work, and he not only encouraged us, but he helped us, providing money and other kinds of assistance to us as we continued our underground work. In addition, we were able to get money, through Switzerland, from the Dutch government-in-exile in London.”

Through Weidner’s work with the Dutch-Paris network, many Jews and Allied aviators were saved from certain death.

Weidner’s rescue efforts were not without serious ramifications. At one point, Weidner was at the top of the Gestapo’s most-wanted list. He was arrested and tortured on two separate occasions and said to be interrogated by the infamous Klaus Barbie in Lyon. Somehow, he always managed to escape, often in the most harrowing circumstances. In fact, Weidner’s last escape was the day before he was slated for execution.

During his incarceration in Toulouse, Weidner befriended a compassionate guard who noticed he had a Bible with him. Eventually the guard warned him of his impending fate, and Weidner was able to convince him to help him escape by providing tools to pick his cell lock and giving him a time frame in which he could slip out undetected. Jumping three stories to the street below, he landed without breaking a bone, and ran for his life to the safety of a Dutch-Paris associate’s house. From there, Weidner was able to continue his secret mission at the time, which was to be a trip to London to brief Allied commanders about Dutch-Paris’s work with Allied soldiers and refugees.

The rug was eventually pulled out from under the Dutch-Paris network, leading to a disastrous outcome that held great personal loss for Weidner. An operative named Suzie Kraay was apprehended by the Gestapo en route from Paris. Her assignment was to assist downed Allied airmen and to take food to them. In a small café in the train station she was approached by the French Gestapo. While going to headquarters for questioning, she committed a serious blunder.

Dutch-Paris operatives were never to carry contact information of any kind on any member of the organization. This measure was designed to protect all involved in case of arrest. Kraay, however, had a small notebook filled with exactly this type of precious information. To this day, it is not clearly understood why. In the process of her arrest, this crucial piece was discovered. Kraay was then interrogated and tortured...
into finally divulging all she knew.

As a result of this grave turn of events, nearly 150 out of 300 members of Dutch-Paris were arrested. Many of them were sent to concentration camps and never heard from again. Among them was Gabrielle, Weidner’s sister. The Nazis actually arrested her at the Paris Seventh-day Adventist Church during Sabbath morning services. Paul Meyer, brother of the Franco-Belgian Union president, was also arrested and deported. Gabrielle Weidner died in the Ravensbruck concentration camp, days after the Russians liberated it. Meyer died in Dachau.

His Enduring Legacy
After the war ended, Weidner worked for the Dutch government (he had been made an officer in the Dutch army during the occupation), tracking down Nazi collaborators and bringing them to justice. However, after several years of being involved in this difficult work, Weidner decided to make a fresh start in America, and settled in southern California in the mid-1950s. It was there that he met his wife, Naomi, a nurse working at the time at White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles.

In time Weidner embarked on a second career and started a chain of successful health food stores, known in the Los Angeles suburbs as Weidner Natural Foods. He and Naomi lived in Monterey Park, California, where he was active for many years in community and local church affairs.

Weidner’s wartime rescue efforts did not go unrecognized. For his courage he was awarded the United States Medal of Freedom, made a member of the Order of the British Empire, the Dutch Order of Orange Nassau, and given the Dutch Medal of Resistance. The French government awarded him the Croix de guerre and Medaille de la Resistance, and the Legion d’honneur. The government of Belgium also made him an officer of the Order of King Leopold. In addition, the government of Israel honored him as one of the Righteous Among the Nations at the country’s national Holocaust Memorial in Yad Vashem. Weidner has a tree planted in his name there. He also participated in the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1993 as one of seven persons selected to light candles recognizing rescuers.

In the United States Weidner quietly went about his new life in southern California with little being said about his wartime record for many years. Bert Beach, a personal friend of John Weidner, says, “In his early years in the United States, he did not play up his war activities hardly at all.”

Weidner’s biographer, Herbert Ford, author of Flee the Captor, was instrumental in telling his story to the larger public. The book was published in 1966 after extensive interviews with Weidner. Ford was the public relations director of the Southern California Conference at the time and says, “I first learned about John’s story when I received a telephone call from Haskell Lazere, executive director of the Southern California office of the American Jewish Congress. He said there was to be a big celebration in West Hollywood in which a number of Gentiles would be honored for their World War II-time work in saving Jews from the Nazi program of extermination. It was the first I knew of John or of his rescue of Jews in World War II.”

Weidner visited Ford’s church to speak of his experiences soon after, and Ford was inspired to author the book, a process that involved spending more than 100 hours together talking about all of Weidner’s experiences in his rescue work. The book was well received around the country, and was updated in 1994. Weidner’s story has been researched and documented by other authors over the years.
“During our lives, each of us faces a choice: to think only about yourself, to get as much as you can for yourself, or to think about others, to serve, to be helpful to those who are in need. I believe that it is very important to develop your brains, your knowledge, but it is more important to develop your heart, to have a heart open to the suffering of others. As for myself, I am just an ordinary person, just someone who wants to help his neighbor. That is the aim of God for me: to think about others, to be unselfish. I am nothing exceptional. If I have one hero, it is God who has helped me to fulfill my mission, to fulfill my duties, to do what I have to do. But for myself, I am just a simple person. During the war, I did what I think everyone should have done.”

John Weidner passed away in 1994 in southern California. His passing was commemorated with a memorial service attended by key leaders from the Adventist Church, the Jewish community, representatives of local government, individuals he rescued, and their families.

To have done what he did in living a life of courage and love in the face of horrific circumstances is something not many of us can comprehend. Yet his legacy serves to inspire us to do what we should in a world where similar injustice still occurs. Weidner did as Jesus would have done.

“And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:21).

*French spelling


3 Testimony from Roger Fasnacht, 2007.

4 Kurt Ganter, Weidner Foundation president, from address given at the Phi Alpha Theta induction ceremony, Atlantic Union College, March 26, 2008.


Wilona Karimabadi markets and edits KidsView, Adventist Review’s magazine for children. She is eagerly looking forward to interviewing John Weidner in heaven.
Johan Hendrik Weidner

Johan Hendrik Weidner (French: Jean Henri - English: John Henry) (October 22, 1912, Brussels, Belgium - May 21, 1994, Monterey Park, California, United States) was a highly decorated Dutch hero of World War II.

Contents

1 Early life
2 Activities during World War II
3 Arrests
4 After the war
5 Recognition
6 Sources
7 External links
8 References

Early life

Johan Hendrik Weidner Jr. was born in Brussels to Dutch parents. Although his birth name was Johan Hendrik, he used to call himself Jean and later in the U.S. John. He was the eldest of four children, and grew up in Switzerland, near the French border at Collonges-sous-Salève - a village in the French department of Haute-Savoie, where his father taught Latin and Greek at the Seventh-day Adventist Church seminary.

Following his education at French public schools, he attended basic courses at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in Collonges-sous-Salève. His father Johan Hendrik Weidner Sr. who studied at the University of Geneva, and had been a minister for the Seventh-day Adventists in Brussels and Switzerland, hoped Jean would follow in his footsteps. To his father's regret, he decided to go into business, and in 1935 he established a textile import/export business in Paris, France.

Around this time he went to Geneva to attend sessions of the League of Nations, and saw firsthand how ineffective that body was in preventing the outbreak of war in 1939.

Activities during World War II

At the outbreak of World War II Jean was living in Paris. With the subsequent German occupation of France he fled with several others from Paris to Lyon in the unoccupied part of France. Because he had to abandon his Parisian business, he began a new business in Lyon. In 1941, Jean founded "Dutch-Paris", an underground network of which the location of his Lyonnaise textile business soon became its headquarters. In order to get passes to go in and out of the Swiss frontier zone, he set up a second textile shop in Annecy at the end of 1942.

Dutch-Paris became one of the largest and most successful underground networks for people persecuted for faith or race, Allied pilots, and persons of great Dutch importance to help them escape via Switzerland and Spain. This escape route was also used for smuggling documents. In Holland this message line was also known as the "The Swiss Way".

In its heyday, 300 people were part of this underground network, of which about 150 people were arrested. 40 people were slain or died from the effects of captivity, including his sister who helped to coordinate escapes from Paris. The escape route has greatly contributed to the French Resistance, and is responsible for the rescue of more than 1,080 people, including 800 Dutch Jews and more than 112 downed Allied pilots. Jean was one of the most sought after underground leaders of France, for whom the Gestapo at one time offered a reward of five million francs for his arrest.

Arrests
In February 1944, a young female courier was arrested by the French police and extradited to the Gestapo. Against all rules, she had a notebook with her containing names and addresses of Dutch-Paris members. She was brutally interrogated by a guard that held her head under cold water until she nearly drowned. Under torture she revealed many names of key members of the underground network. As a result, a large number of Dutch-Paris members were arrested.

The name of Jean's sister Gabrielle Weidner was among the names listed in the notepad. She was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned at the Fresnes prison in Paris, because it was hoped for that her comrades would try to free her. In Fresnes she was treated well, but when this ploy did not work, she was shipped to the concentration camp Ravensbrück in Germany. She later died of the effects of malnutrition, only a few days after liberation by the Russians.

During the occupation, Jean was arrested by both French gendarmerie and French Milice, including the Swiss border police. The French gendarmerie beat him up brutally, but they had to release him later due to lack of evidence. In another arrest by the Milice in Toulouse he was tortured, but he managed to escape before they could transfer him to the Gestapo. The Gestapo were never able to get a hold of him.[1]

After the war

In November 1944, after the Liberation of France Jean was invited to London by Queen Wilhelmina, to come to tell her about the "Dutch-Paris" escape route, and the situation of Dutch civilians in France and Belgium. In the same year he was made a Captain in the Dutch Armed Forces, after which he could be in charge of the Dutch Security Service based in Paris. His service was in charge of vetting all the Dutch citizens in France and Belgium to look for any that collaborated with the Germans.

The Bureau of National Security, the Department of Justice, and the Dutch Embassy in Paris all claimed authority for Netherlands Security Service. Therefore it has never became entirely clear under whose direction he fell.

In mid 1946, Jean was suddenly dismissed by the Dutch government, arguing that they needed a professional policeman on the post. After his work with the security he picked up the threads of normal life again, and returned to his import/export textile business. In 1955 he emigrated to the United States, eventually settling in California where from 1958 he and his wife Naomi operated a chain of health food stores.

Recognition

Jean's determination, strength and courage has led many ordinary people to overcome their fear and to stand up against injustice. His faith as a Seventh-day Adventist had made him to do "the right thing". Although it is true that he was the "heartbeat" of an extensive underground movement, you cannot dissociate his efforts from the efforts of ordinary people participating in dangerous actions, which have been just as important for the organisation as a whole.

For his War efforts, Jean was awarded the United States Medal of Freedom with Gold Palm, made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire, an Officer in the Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau. The French Government honored him with the Croix de Guerre and Médaille de la Résistance and the Légion d'honneur. The Belgian Government made him an Officer of the Order of Leopold.

At the 1993 opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. he was one of seven persons chosen to light candles recognizing the rescuers. The government of Israel honored Jean as part of the gentiles designated as Righteous Among the Nations at Israel's national Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem where a grove of trees was planted in his name on the Hill of Remembrance along the Avenue of the Righteous.

- Medal of Freedom with gold palm
- Croix de Guerre 1940 1945
- Officers of the Order of Orange-Nassau
Sources

- How to Flee the Gestapo - Searching for the Dutch-Paris Escape Line - PhD M. Koreman
- The Weidner Foundation

External links

- Documentary "Way to Freedom" by Dick Verkijk (1967)
- "Flee the Captor" by Herbert Ford
- "Running from Death" by Wilona Karimabadi
- US Holocaust Memorial Encyclopedia
- Gabrielle Weidner

References

1. ^ Although many other sources claim that Johan Weidner was captured by the Gestapo, no documentary evidence has ever been found to support this.

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Music Program Provides Avenue for Beauty and Expression

Northwest academy students experienced the joy and satisfaction of performing with a large musical group during January’s Choir/Orchestra Music Festival. Every year, the Walla Walla University (WWU) Music Department hosts the annual festival for academy musicians, alternating between choir/orchestra and band.

Students arrive midweek on campus and have several days of intense practice before taking part in the University Church’s Sabbath worship service and performing in an afternoon concert at the church.

Kraig Scott, who directs the choir, says the goal of the festival is “to allow serious young musicians from all across the Northwest to experience the joy of bringing great music to life.”

For many of these students, their time at WWU may be the first of many experiences in bringing great music to life. Those who become WWU students, whether they major in music or not, have many opportunities to express their musical talents.

With more than 50 musical performances scheduled this year, two new ensembles and several off-campus tours planned, the Music Department is thriving. The orchestra has a near-record number of members, reflecting the enthusiasm of student musicians for the department’s expansion to a full symphony orchestra from a string orchestra about five years ago.

The department has also established a harp ensemble. The ensemble, under the direction of Chelsea Spence, performed on campus for the first time as part of the annual PRISM concert last April. In June, the four-member ensemble performed its first full concert. The department also established a flute choir in 2013.

A complete schedule of music events through June is available at music.wallawalla.edu.

“The combination of students majoring in music with those who seriously maintain their musical skills while majoring in another discipline results in a vibrant creative environment,” says Karin Thompson, Music Department chair. “Our goal, as expressed in our mission statement, is for students to ‘be inspired and stimulated to further enrich the lives of others’ because of what they gained from studying music at Walla Walla University.”

Coming in the March 2014 issue

Rosa Jimenez

WWU university relations director
Female Genital Mutilation

Introduction

As part of their mission to the entire world, Seventh-day Adventists have a firm commitment to provide health care that preserves and restores human wholeness. By wholeness we mean the harmonious development of the physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions of a person's life, unified through a loving relationship with God and expressed in generous service to others. Because Adventists believe that each human being is created in God's image as a unified person, rather than as a duality of body and soul, we believe in a ministry of grace that affects all aspects of human life, including physical and emotional well-being.

Ministry to the entire person leads Seventh-day Adventists to be concerned about the widespread practice of female genital mutilation.[1] Often referred to as "female circumcision" or, more recently, "female genital cutting," such practices currently affect scores of millions of living women and girls, with additional millions of girls disfigured annually. These estimates do not account for the young girls who die as a result of the more radical forms of genital mutilation. These practices range from excision of the clitoral prepuce to complete removal of the vulva with closure of the vaginal opening. Our central concern, expressed in this statement of principles, is for all forms of female genital injury that lead to physical dysfunction or emotional trauma. Moreover, such procedures are often done with unclean instruments, without anesthesia, on forcibly held young girls between the ages of four and twelve. Hemorrhage, shock, infection, incontinence, damage to surrounding organs, and massive scarring are frequent results. In addition to this physical devastation, genital mutilation is also emotionally traumatic.

Women who have been subjected to genital mutilation are also often afflicted with a variety of long-term gynecological health problems, including fistulas, chronic infections, and problems with menstruation. Upon entering marriage, intercourse is usually a painful, traumatic event, often necessitating reopening of the scarified vaginal opening. Childbirth may also be impeded due to rigid scarring of the tissues. At times, maternal and fetal deaths also result.

In the cultures where female genital mutilation is prevalent, the practice is considered justified for a variety of reasons. It is believed, for example, that such mutilation will preserve virginity in unmarried women, assist in controlling their sexual drive, strengthen sexual faithfulness for married women, and increase sexual pleasure for their husbands. It is also believed that removal of all or part of female genitalia improves cleanliness, is cosmetically desirable, and makes childbirth safer for the infant. Because of these beliefs, women who have not undergone such procedures may be considered unsuited for marriage. Despite evidence against such reasons, and despite the efforts of numerous human-rights organizations, the practice of female genital mutilation continues in a variety of cultures, with a prevalence exceeding 90 percent in some countries.

In some cultures, female genital mutilation is defended as a form of religious practice. While Seventh-day Adventists strongly advocate protection of religious liberty, Adventists believe that the right to practice one's religion does not vindicate harming another person. Thus, appeals to religious liberty do not justify female genital mutilation.

Biblical principles

The Adventist Church's opposition to female genital mutilation is based on the following biblical principles:

1. Preservation of life and health. The Bible presents the goodness of God's creation, including the creation of human beings (Gen 1:31; Ps 139:13, 14). God is the Source and Sustainer of human life (Job 33:4; Ps 36:9; John 1:3, 4; Acts 17:25, 28). God calls for the preservation of human life and holds humanity accountable for its destruction (Gen 9:5, 6; Ex 20:13; Deut 24:16; Jer 7:3-34). The human body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit," and followers of God are urged to care for and preserve their bodies, including the Creator's gift of sexuality, as a spiritual responsibility (1 Cor 6:15-19). Because female genital mutilation is harmful to health, threatening to life, and injurious to sexual function, it is incompatible with the will of God.

2. Blessing of marital intimacy. Scripture celebrates the divinely ordained gift of sexual intimacy within marriage (Eccl 9:9; Prov 5:18, 19; Song of Sol 4:16-5:1; Heb 13:4). The practice of female genital mutilation should be renounced because it threatens the Creator's design for the experience of joyful sexuality by married couples.

3. Healthful procreation. For married couples, the gift of sexual union may be further blessed by the birth of children (Ps 113:9; 127:3-5;
128:3; Prov 31:28). The fact that successful childbirth is threatened by female genital mutilation is additional grounds for opposition to this practice.

4. **Protection of vulnerable persons.** Scripture prescribes that special efforts be made to care for those who are most vulnerable (Deut 10:17-19; Ps 82:3, 4; Ps 24:11, 12; Isa 1:16, 17; Luke 1:52-54). Jesus taught that children should be loved and protected (Mark 10:13-16; Matt 18:4-6). The genital mutilation of young girls violates the biblical mandate to safeguard children and protect them from harm and abuse.

5. **Compassionate care.** Love for the neighbor prompts Christians to provide compassionate care to those who have been injured (Luke 10:25-37; Isa 61:1). Christians are called to care with compassion for those who have experienced physical and emotional trauma caused by female genital mutilation.

6. **Sharing truth.** Christians are called to overcome error by expressing the truth in a loving manner (Ps 15:2, 3; Eph 4:25). The fundamental truth of the gospel is intended to liberate people from all types of bondage to falsehood (John 8:31-36). Thus, Christians should join in sharing accurate information about the harm of female genital mutilation and the beliefs that underlie this practice.

7. **Respect for cultures.** Christians should be sensitive to and respectful of cultural differences (1 Cor 9:19-23; Rom 12:1, 2). At the same time, we believe that God's principles transcend cultural traditions (Dan 1:8, 9; 3:17, 18; Matt 15:3; Acts 5:27-29). The fundamental principles of Scripture provide a basis for the transformation of cultural practices. While we acknowledge that female genital mutilation is firmly entrenched in many cultures, we find this practice to be incompatible with divinely revealed principles.

**Conclusion**

Because female genital mutilation threatens physical, emotional, and relational health, Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to this practice. The Church calls on its health care professionals, educational and medical institutions, and all members along with people of good will to cooperate in efforts to eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation. Through education and loving presentation of the gospel, it is our hope and our intention that those threatened by this practice will find protection and wholeness and that those who have been subjected to this practice will find solace and compassionate care.

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"Currently, the different types of female genital mutilation known to be practiced are classified as follows: Type I Excision of the prepuce, with or without excision of part or all of the clitoris Type II Excision of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora Type III Excision of part or all of the external genitalia and stitching/narrowing of vaginal opening (infibulation) Type IV Unclassified: includes pricking, piercing or incising of the clitoris and/or labia; cauterization by burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissue; scraping of tissues surrounding the vaginal orifice [angurya cuts] or cutting of the vagina [gishiri cuts]; introduction of corrosive substances or herbs into the vaginato cause bleeding or for the purposes of tightening or narrowing it; and any other procedure that falls under the definition of female genital mutilation given above." This classification is taken from Female Genital Mutilation: A Joint WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA Statement. Published by World Health Organization, Geneva, 1997.

This document was adopted by the General Conference Christian View of Human Life Committee in April, 2000, and was referred to those Church departments and institutions which will find the material useful.

**Our beliefs**

Seventh-day Adventist beliefs are meant to permeate your whole life. Growing out of scriptures that paint a compelling portrait of God, you are invited to explore, experience and know the One who desires to make us whole.
A Masai girl holds a protest sign during the anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) run in Kilgoris, Kenya, in 2007. At least 2 million girls every year are at risk of undergoing FGM. The cut, which is generally done without anesthesia, may have lifelong health consequences. [photo: AP]

February 6 is International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM/C

February 04, 2014 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Ansel Oliver/ANN

February 6 is International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation, and Seventh-day Adventists are among the many faith groups, NGOs and organizations working to end the practice.

FGM/C, often referred to as Female Circumcision, is practiced in nearly 30 countries in Africa and Asia. Young girls are subjected to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to their genital organs for non-medical reasons, often as part of a coming-of-age cultural tradition or ceremony.

FGM/C is sometimes viewed as a status symbol and some practitioners say it controls sexuality and promotes chastity. Its effects often include infection, chronic pain and infertility. The United Nations banned the practice in 2012. The World Health Organization estimates that 140 million women are victims.

Many people, especially in Western countries, are not aware of FGM/C and are often shocked to learn about it. Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to the practice, according to a document adopted by the Adventist Church’s Christian View of Human Life Committee in 2000.

“Our Church should continue to seek loving ways to discourage this practice as well as to educate of its dangers,” said Dr. Peter Landless, Health Ministries director for the Adventist world church. “It is our desire that young women may grow in the natural way God created them.”

Landless urged respect for culture and sensitivity for those who are victims of the procedure.

“It is very important that we do not inadvertently add insult to the injury of this mutilating procedure by inferring such patients are irreversibly shamed,” Landless said. “Such an attitude or approach may give them the feeling that they are less than normal people. Plus, there are millions of women affected and one needs to be concerned lest the issue becomes a face off of cultures, rather than a compassionate concern for the well-being of women and their status in their society.”

Heather-Dawn Small, Women’s Ministries director for the Adventist world church, said her department at the world headquarters and its affiliates in local communities are continuing to bring awareness to the problem in order to end it.

“We’re doing what we can to help and heal our sisters who have suffered FGM/C through setting up homes for the victims, reaching out to communities where the practice is perpetrated on young girls to help stop this practice through education.”

One country where the Adventist Church has worked to combat FGM is Kenya. The Kajiado Rescue Centre is a girls rescue home and education facility that celebrates adolescence with an alternative rite. “It is seen as a blessing by many families in many villages,” said Denise Hochstrasser, Women’s Ministries director for the Adventist Church’s Inter-European Division, which helps sponsor the project.

Already, Kenya’s government has worked to eradicate FGM/C. In 2001 the Children’s Act criminalized the subjection of children to FGM/C, and the new Constitution, which was approved in 2010, offers clauses meant to protect children from any cultural practice that is
harmful to their health.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency has also worked in Kenya with anti-FGM/C projects over the years. One recent project helped educate more than 2,500 people about the issue by young girls performing songs and skits about the issue to their families and government officials. Also, the initiative trained 189 trainers to work with community leaders in bringing awareness to the issue. The program also helped support those who formerly performed FGM/C with other income generating activities.

This year, ADRA is implementing a program called the Girl Child Empowerment Program in Kenya’s western province of Nyanza. The project will offer a 10-week skills course that includes healthy relationships and the dangers of FGM/C.

“Being a part of the church’s efforts in this global initiative to bring awareness to this issue is just one of the many ways in which ADRA is committed to empowering women and girls around the world,” said Jason Brooks, an ADRA senior program manager.

Also, in Germany last year, the Berlin Adventist Hospital opened the Desert Flower Center, an FGM/C reconstruction surgical center in partnership with supermodel Waris Dirie, one of the world’s most prominent advocates against FGM.

“As always, the Adventist Church seeks to restore the image of the Creator and to avoid adding grief and pain to those in suffering,” said Landless, the church’s Health Ministries director.
Our Brother's Keeper

Dwayne Leslie

Americans are given extremely wide latitude in terms of how they are able to worship and express their beliefs (or whether to worship at all). While not exclusively an American phenomenon, it is fair to say that the United States does better than most other countries around the world in the area of religious freedom.

That's why cases like *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Abercrombie & Fitch*, filed after a young Muslim woman was denied a sales position in 2008 because her head covering did not comply with the retailer's "look" policy -- despite having scored high enough during her interview to have been hired both overall and on "look" -- are extraordinarily disturbing.

After a federal district court provided a summary judgment in favor of the EEOC and Samantha Elauf in 2011, the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit recently reversed that decision, placing an unfairly high burden on applicants who need religious accommodation from a prospective employer in the process.

Because one of the tenets of our church is to actively protect religious liberty not only for our members, but also for other Christians and non-Christians alike, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists today filed an amicus, or "friend of the court," brief in support of the EEOC's petition for rehearing. The brief has been joined by several other religious and public policy organizations committed to the protection of religious freedom, including some that are rarely on the same side of an issue, such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association of Evangelicals.

Key facts of this case are not in dispute:

1. In 2008, Ms. Elauf interviewed for a sales position at an Abercrombie & Fitch store in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and wore a hijab during the interview.

2. The store manager with whom she interviewed (and had hiring authority) scored Ms. Elauf high enough both "overall" and on "look" to meet the store's hiring criteria.

3. While the store manager never asked Ms. Elauf about her head covering, she later testified that she assumed the young woman was Muslim and dressed as she did for religious reasons.

4. Because the store manager was unfamiliar with Abercrombie & Fitch's policy on head coverings, she consulted with her manager. This person also was unfamiliar with the policy and elevated the query to her own manager.

5. This manager's manager responded that headwear did indeed violate store policy and that Ms. Elauf's score should be changed so that she was ineligible to be hired.

At the trial court level, the EEOC and Ms. Elauf's argument that Abercrombie & Fitch had engaged in religious discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prevailed, and Ms. Elauf was awarded $20,000 in the damages-only jury trial. The Tenth Circuit's recent decision has now overturned this verdict.

For a variety of reasons, the Adventist Church et al., takes strong exception to the Tenth Circuit's ruling.

First, despite a number of relevant precedents, the court has placed the burden on an applicant to proactively ask for accommodation for her or his religious beliefs. Yet, in this and virtually any other potentially similar future case, how could the applicant possibly know of the employer's specific dress code? Our position (and one we believe is fully supported by Title VII) is that for applicants who meet a company's hiring standards but for whom the company has any reason to believe that a religious accommodation may be needed, it is incumbent upon the employer to raise this issue, not the individual. Under the Tenth Circuit's new standard, employers would be able to insulate themselves from the duty to accommodate via willful ignorance.
Second, this standard has a negative impact not just in "groom & garb" cases, but also on scheduling. Many national employers have implemented an online application process that inquires about availability. These employers often make adverse decisions regarding applicants based upon their unavailability, for example, on a Saturday (during which Jews, Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists would decline to work for religious reasons) yet provide no means by which to apprise the employer of the religious nature of a limited schedule, or to ask for a religious accommodation in the online application.

Finally, we believe that the Tenth Circuit failed to consider the wide-ranging impact of their decision. As the large number of organizations supporting this amicus brief demonstrates, there is tremendous concern well beyond the Muslim community about the weakening of Title VII that will take place if this ruling is to stand.

History shows that extreme vigilance is required where matters of religious liberty are concerned. When one established right is weakened or worse, it's that much easier to erode additional rights. That is why cases like EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch -- despite the fact that no members of our own faith are involved -- motivate the Adventist Church to action... and why we are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with so many other people of faith and public policy organizations to advocate for a just outcome in this important case.

After all, are we not, as the Scriptures admonish, our brother's (and sister's) keeper?

Follow Dwayne Leslie on Twitter: www.twitter.com/IRLA_USA

FOLLOW RELIGION
After being closed for one year, Pend Oreille Valley Adventist School (POVAS), located in Oldtown, Idaho, has rebounded and opened its doors again this school year. It boasts of an enrollment of 13 students in grades one through eight and is administered by head teacher Angela Fleck and her assistant, Debbie Nichols.

The supportive school board has helped to remodel the upstairs classrooms, provide additional computers, rejuvenate the landscaping and play area, and upgrade the school driveway. An active home and school committee is in place. Volunteers have stepped up to help in the areas of: custodial, classroom aide, PE teacher, craft teachers, math tutoring and technology setup.

The Haystack Shack, an annual fundraiser at the Pend Oreille County Fair, was headed this year by retired teachers Richard and Lorraine Wilson and their helpers. A record number of people attended the November Fall Festival, which raised $1,200 to help the school gym meet its occupancy code requirements. Other sources of income for the school include Newport (Wash.) Adventist Community Services and the POVAS school store.

The school held its Christmas program, called The Christmas Story, on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, to a full crowd at the Newport Church. The costumed students participated in singing a variety of Christmas songs interspersed with Biblical narration. They also performed "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night" on handbells — a new experience for most of them. Volunteers Ginger Brockman and Charlene Furman helped with the music.

Folks are excited that Adventist Christian education is again live and well in the Newport area.

**Earl Brockman**

retired teacher
Adventist Health Welcomes New Leaders

gleanernow.com/news/2014/02/adventist-health-welcomes-new-leaders

New Corporate President

Scott Reiner, Adventist Health executive vice president and COO, has been appointed president to succeed Robert G. Carmen, who announced his intent to retire in September. Upon the vote of the board of directors, Reiner became president-elect as of Dec. 16, with immediate transitioning of executive responsibilities. The transition is to be completed by March 31.

Reiner has spent a significant number of years within Adventist Health. He started his leadership as the CEO of Glendale Adventist Medical Center (GAMC), a 515-bed facility in Southern California. After seven years of service at GAMC, Reiner assumed the role of senior vice president of Adventist Health in 2006. He chaired the boards of nine hospitals and also oversaw business development, innovations and philanthropy from the corporate office. In 2010, Reiner was named the executive vice president and COO, responsible for the day-to-day operations of Adventist Health. The role included visioning, architecting, implementing and sourcing leaders needed to operationalize Adventist Health’s strategy.

Reiner holds a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Pacific Union College in Angwin, Calif., and a master’s degree in health administration from California State University, Northridge.

New President at Tillamook

David Butler has been named president and CEO of Tillamook (Ore.) Regional Medical Center (TRMC). Butler will assume his responsibility for TRMC and its multiple physician clinics and urgent care centers along the Oregon coast on Feb. 3.

Butler has more than 25 years of experience leading large and rural-sized health care facilities. He has most recently served as CEO for North Canyon Medical Center, a critical-access hospital in Gooding, Idaho.

Prior to his Idaho position, Butler was president/CEO of Jellico Community Hospital in Jellico, Tenn. He holds a bachelor’s degree in long-term healthcare administration, Associate of Science in nursing and Master of Business Administration from Southern Adventist University (Collegedale, Tenn.).

+ Read more from Intersections

+ Read more from February 2014
A property lease and development means visible progress toward a new school building for Portland Adventist Academy (PAA).

A busy construction site is leaving a mark on the east side of PAA’s 25-acre property. Builders Jerry Erwin and Associates are constructing a 50-bed skilled nursing facility to face east toward Adventist Medical Center. The building plan is on schedule for completion this summer.

The property lease of the skilled nursing facility will help to fund PAA’s new school building. The facility construction is visible progress toward a future PAA.

Coming in the March 2014 issue

Liesl Vistaunet

PAA Gleaner correspondent
Fall Creek Opens Event Center

gleanernow.com/node/7839

The Event Center at Fall Creek, operated by the Fall Creek Church, opened on Sabbath, Nov. 30, 2013, to serve East Lane County communities in rural Oregon.

Sponsored, built and operated by the 85-member congregation of the Fall Creek Church, the 4,000-square-foot building is commissioned as a venue for uplifting concerts and programs, family activities, community events, ministerial retreats, and evangelism.

The building was designed under the guidance of former Fall Creek Church member Ronna Hayden, a professional interior designer, and built by Cedric R. Hayden, current Fall Creek Church member and deacon, a dentist and general contractor. David McCoy, district pastor, provided constant encouragement and support during the seven-year project. The center reflects the architecture of the adjacent 109-year-old Adventist Sanctuary, which was historically, in the early 1900s, known as the Fall Creek Unity Methodist Church. Both structures stand on the beautiful six-acre church campus adjacent to scenic Fall Creek, site of many baptisms.

Prior to the opening exercises, former Lowell Mayor Warren Weathers toured the building, and stated, "It will be a fine addition to the community."

Faye Stewart, Lane County commissioner, also toured the facility during the Christmas season and said, "The building is a beauty and will be a gem of an addition to our community."

Head elder and current scheduler Randy Meyer engaged the Weimar Quintet for the first concert in the Event Center and has confirmed a number of events to be held in the near future. The event schedule and other news can be seen on the Fall Creek SDA Facebook page.

Coming in the March 2014 issue

Cedric Hayden

Fall Creek Church member
Living God's Mission

gleanernow.com/news/2014/02/living-gods-mission

Ever felt fearful in sharing your faith? The disciples did.

The disciples were locked away in a room, trembling in fear, after the death of Jesus. Mary Magdalene came to the fearful team with the reviving news, “I have seen the Lord!”

Jesus then appeared to the fearful disciples and greeted them twice with “peace be to you” and said, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21). This mission continues today. Jesus offers us, just like the disciples, a double measure of peace and confidence as we share our faith.

Every local congregation and every Christian is sent into the world to fulfill a definite responsibility.

Our responsibility is to be worldwide witnesses to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to make disciples for the kingdom (Matt. 28:19, 20). We are to proclaim the soon return of Jesus Christ and to invite our friends to accept God’s invitation for abundant and eternal life.

Our responsibility is to “let your light shine” by loving our neighbors through generous acts of kindness and compassion (Matt. 5:16). Acts of mercy help make the gospel more credible as people see and understand how a Savior’s love transforms sinners into people who love God and humankind (Luke 10:25–37).

Jesus gave us, in His life, a model of living with purpose. His mission was to win salvation for all mankind, to set us free from bondage to sin, and, in the process, to reveal the true heart of God and give us hope for an eternal future.

Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. What is God calling you to do to further His mission? Are you faithfully using your time, talents and spiritual gifts to forward God’s mission? We are never more like Jesus and we are never happier than when we dedicate ourselves to accomplish God’s mission!

Together, let us be living examples of God’s mission.

John Freedman

Washington Conference president
Soongago Youth Rally 2014

“There is nothing like walking in the front door and coming home,” says David Yeagley, Washington Conference youth director. “Our goal with youth rally this year is to show a new picture of Jesus, a new perspective on the church, so teenagers see that they are welcome to come home to Jesus and that there is a place in God’s house for them.” Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

David Yeagley, Washington Conference youth director, warms up the crowd of 350 teenagers with a quote quiz: “Is It Leviticus or Taylor Swift?” Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

The youth rally musicians lead teenagers in music sets about worshipping God. Selections included "Blessed Be Your Name," "Our God is Greater," and "How Great is Our God." Teenagers had their cell phones out to capture video music clips! Credit: Todd Gessele

Dan Jackson, North American Division president, is here to talk with teenagers about their place in the home of Jesus. “I’m never discouraged [about the church’s future] when I interact with youth,” says Jackson who goes on to share a series of stories, examples, Bible verses and invitations. Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

“You need to be part of God’s house,” says Dan Jackson, NAD president to Washington youth. “The home needs to be expanded; the fellowship needs to be increased.” Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

Dan Jackson, NAD president, explains on how youth can be a part of God’s house: be a minister, mediate God’s grace and tell the world about Jesus. “Every one of us accepts a responsibility to minister when we accept Jesus into our lives,” Jackson says. Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

The teenagers from through western Washington participated in five afternoon breakout sessions including a Bible study, mass choir, community building exercises, a prayer room and a Q&A session with Dan Jackson. Here, youth participate in a Bible study led by Pastor Mika Devoux. Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

A key question in an afternoon Q&A: How can we as young adults fulfill the Gospel Commission? “Every day when you wake up,” responds Dan Jackson, “commit yourself to God and pray for God to bring you to the right people. This is how the Gospel Commission will be fulfilled.” Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

For His Glory, a popular singing group in western Washington, share musical number at Youth Rally 2014. Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

A group of teenagers participate in a mass choir and sing "Our God is Awesome." Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

“The church is in good hands,” says Dan Jackson, NAD president, during his afternoon presentation. “I see this when I look at you. Don’t live your life without God’s word. When it comes to making decisions, look to the Bible.” Credit: Heidi Baumgartner

Dan Jackson closes his presentation with an appeal for young people to be ministers for God in their lives. The teenagers come forward to the cross to make a commitment to find a home in Jesus and finish the Youth Rally by singing, “Jesus at the Center of it All.” Credit: Todd Gessele

Picture a worship setting with a room full of teenagers. Are they checked in? Checked out?

Come look inside the Soongago Youth Rally hosted each year by Washington Conference!

This is a time of worship, interaction, Bible study, spiritual growth training, and faith sharing. It is designed for teenagers to grow in their spiritual walk and start a new year on the right note.

Soongago, a Greek working meaning "a coming together," is illustrated by the disciples coming together in the upper room when the Holy Spirit fell on them. Washington Conference calls its youth rallies "Soongago" because youth come from different schools and walks of life to be filled with the Holy Spirit.