Church Explains Position on Same Sex Marriage Case

The Adventist Review reports that on March 6 the world church filed an amicus brief in the dispute over whether the U.S. Constitution mandates that states recognize same-sex marriages. The brief the church filed was, to use legal parlance, “in support of neither party.” In other words, the church didn’t take a position on the narrow legal issues before the court regarding government and marriage. On first reading, this might surprise some members, especially non-lawyers, given the church’s very clear stance on marriage and sexuality. Is the church retreating from its biblical stance on marriage? Go online to read the answer and explanation from Todd McFarland, world church associate general counsel.

A Fresh Update on Auburn Adventist Academy

Last month, the Washington Conference announced intentions to initiate fresh plans for the positive future of Auburn Adventist Academy (AAA). Constituents were invited to join the conversation on such issues as whether or not the institution should continue its commitment to being a boarding academy. Many members have already given input. Conference leadership issued the first update to the AAA planning process this week, including information about the hired consultant, and a schedule for town hall meetings in several locations. Read the latest information from Washington Conference online and add your comments to the conversation.
Andrews Releases Statement on LGBT Fundraising Flap

Niels-Erik Andreasen, Andrews University president, released a statement this week on the institution’s decision to deny a fundraising request from an unofficial student club. The club was seeking to raise funds for an agency aiding homeless LGBT youth. The university's decision raised a significant amount of social media discussion and a flurry of misinformation. You may have read some of those comments. Read the facts and rationale for the decision from Andrews University online now.

GC Holds Public Campus Ministries Symposium

The first conference on public campus ministries convened March 4–8 at world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Md. Jiwan Moon, director of the newly created office of public campus ministries, proposes to encourage local churches to add this focus to their outreach plans. Youth ministry leaders and church administrators from the 13 world divisions were included in the approximately 50 invited delegates to the meeting. Read more online from the Adventist Review.

Glycemic Index Influences Healthy Food Choices

Much has been written about the importance of keeping blood sugar levels in a healthy range in order to optimize health. The Glycemic Index (GI) is one tool that is used by some clinicians and individuals in order to make food choices to control glucose levels. It measures how a carbohydrate-containing food raises blood glucose. Foods with a high GI are quickly digested and absorbed, causing a "rapid rise in blood sugar," according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "Foods with a low GI are digested and absorbed at a slower rate, and, subsequently, cause a slower rise in blood sugar levels." Healthy foods are in both groups. Read more from Wellsouce online.

Have You Seen This Month's eCommunique?

If you’re an Oregon Conference member, be sure to check out the latest stories and information included in this month’s eCommunique. This newsletter is published digitally each month and available in an easy-to-read format online. Read about the recent Teen Leadership in Training Convention, find out who’s transitioning to or from the conference and discover upcoming events. It’s all online.
so take a look now.

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Looking Ahead

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- 13: Lifestyle for Excellent Health, Eugene, OR
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- 14: Sunnyside Church Spring Musical Program, Portland, OR
- 20–22: Urban Ministries Conference, Auburn, WA
- 23: Nonprofit Leadership Certification, Federal Way, WA
- 27: Oregon Prayer Conference, Rockaway Beach, OR
- 28: Enumclaw Church Homecoming, Enumclaw, WA

More Events Online
InPrint

March

More than 60 percent of those who were in the church as kids have now disconnected in their 20s and 30s. We recognize the problem. We know we *should* do something. Find out how several Oregon churches are addressing this challenge in the March 2015 *Gleaner*.
Why Adventist Church Isn't Taking Side on Same-Sex Marriage Case

Todd McFarland General Conference Associate General Counsel

For religious liberty scholars and advocates there is little doubt that the defining issue of this generation is the conflict of rights between religion and other rights — namely sexual orientation and reproductive rights.

At least in the United States (and other developed countries), it is the conflict of rights that presents the hardest question. Paraphrasing the famous aphorism, when does the right of one group to swing its fist end and another face begin?

On March 6, 2015, the General Conference, along with the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, filed an amicus, or friend of the court, brief in what is potentially one of the defining cases of this struggle — the dispute over whether the U.S. Constitution mandates that states recognize same-sex marriages. The brief the church filed was, to use legal parlance, “in support of neither party.” What that means is that the Adventist Church didn’t take a position on the narrow legal issues before the court regarding government and marriage.

Read related story: "Church Fears Same-Sex Marriage Ruling May Stifle Religious Freedom"

On first reading, this might surprise some church members, especially non-lawyers, given the church’s very clear stance on marriage and sexuality. Could this mean the church is backing away from its biblical stance on marriage?

The answer is an unequivocal “No.” But to understand why the Adventist Church filed this brief at all, let alone in the manner it did, it is necessary to understand what is at issue legally and what is not.

Religious Liberty Implications

The issue currently before the Supreme Court is not directly about religious liberty. The two questions the court will answer are: (1) Must states issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples? and (2) Must states recognize other states’ same-sex marriages? The second question really comes into play only if the answer to the first question is “no.” Neither of these two questions directly impacts churches or people of faith, but are rather about what government must do, not private individuals.

That, of course, is not the end of the story because if states are compelled to recognize same-sex marriages, the religious liberty implications are numerous. For those interested, the brief gives a more complete picture of these upcoming conflicts, but suffice it to say, they go well beyond pastors having to perform gay marriages (which almost certainly they will not be required to do). But how the court decides to resolve the current case, and in particular the language it uses, could have a significant impact on religious liberty, the Seventh-day Adventist church, and its ability to carry out its mission in faithfulness to the Bible.

The reason for this is because the federal government and every state have some form of anti-discrimination laws on the books. Every state and the federal government protect against gender discrimination. Thirty-six states protect against marital status discrimination, and 23 have specific sexual orientation protections. Importantly, though, 34 of these states and the federal law have some sort of religious exemption from these laws.

It is possible, depending on the language the court uses, that the court could wipe out all of these exemptions. In other words, the Supreme Court could say that not only do the states have to recognize same-sex marriage, but...
when it comes to this issue, religious exemptions are unconstitutional. If the court were to say that opposition to gay marriage is motivated by animus or is a form of "invidious discrimination," this would imperil not only all the current religious exemptions but also any future exemptions.

Same-Sex Marriage Is Here to Stay

But wouldn’t the church be better off just opposing any governmental recognition of same-sex marriage? Wouldn’t this be the easiest way to stand up for religious liberty? Shouldn’t the church stand up for traditional marriage and its biblical beliefs in court? The problem with this line of thinking is that it ignores reality, the difference between the church and the state, and how best to protect our interests in the long-term.

The reality is that regardless of what the Supreme Court does, same-sex marriage is here to stay. States have always been free to recognize same-sex marriage if they chose to. Twelve states have recognized same-sex marriage through the legislative process. Similar legislation is pending in others, and there is little question that "marriage equality," as its proponents call it, is gaining much wider acceptance in society. No matter what happens in late June when this decision is handed down, gay marriage, at least in some places, is here to stay. The church is going to have to conduct its mission in a society that has diverged from the church’s views on marriage — without compromising our firmly held beliefs.

This dichotomy, between the church and the state, is neither new nor unknown to the Adventist Church. How much easier would it be for our members if society kept Saturday as a day of worship rather than Sunday? Government has even enshrined this preference in the form of Sunday closing laws and Saturday mail delivery. We have often advocated that government shouldn’t show preference for one religious belief over another. Adventists uniquely understand both in our history and our eschatology that it is entirely inappropriate for any church to advocate that government pass a law simply because that church believes the Bible says so.

Those defending the right of states to only recognize marriages between a man and a woman understand and agree with this principle of separation of church and state. They are not basing their defense of these laws on the Bible or any religious belief. Instead, the states have offered secular reasons for their laws. Without going into detail, these secular reasons center around the ideal setting to raise kids (heterosexual marriage with two biological parents) and the ability of the state to prefer these relationships over same-sex relationships and give only the heterosexual marriages the title and benefits of "marriage." Proponents of traditional marriage often described it as a choice between “child centered” versus "adult centered" views of marriage.

A Biblical View on Marriage

Regardless of the merits of these arguments, and there is a lot of debate surrounding them, the church’s view on marriage is not based upon these secular reasons. Yes we believe that science and reason support what God tells us through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, but we are not dependent on the findings of social science for our Fundamental Beliefs and how we choose to honor God.

It would be rather strange for a church to base its beliefs on social science or secular reasoning. Human reasoning and belief are often subject to change. In many ways, the whole point of religious belief and believing in God is to affirm faith in something larger than human thought.

Social science would also be a rather precarious foundation on which to base one’s belief. It was not that long ago, in 1973, that homosexuality was dropped as being labeled a mental disorder. This change by the American Psychiatric Association had no impact on the church’s views, in part because those beliefs were never based on psychiatry in the first place. This doesn’t make the church anti-science; it simply means our beliefs come from the Bible, not from human beings. To file a document in court even implying that our beliefs are based upon secular reasoning would be not only unwise but disingenuous.
This does not mean that the Adventist Church cannot speak in the public square or must mute its voice in any way when it comes to moral issues, including issues of marriage and sexuality. The church not only has the right but the obligation to speak on this and other moral issues. But we are not a church that seeks to impose God’s laws and order through human laws. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to change individual hearts and bring persons into conformity with God’s will.

For all things there is a season and a time. A fight in the U.S. Supreme Court about how the Fourteenth Amendment should be interpreted is, at its heart, a secular question, not a religious one. While we made our position on marriage known to the Court, this was not the time or forum to give a Bible study on marriage or sexuality. Rather, it was more appropriate for us to speak to what affects us, and that is our right to believe as God instructs us and carry out our mission without governmental interference.

**We reserve the right to approve and disapprove comments accordingly and will not be able to respond to inquiries regarding that. Please keep all comments respectful and courteous to authors and fellow readers.**
Re-Engineering Education

The Seventh-day Adventist secondary education system (for grades 9-12) is at a time of transition.

For generations, Adventist culture favored sending young people off to boarding academies. Many church members lived in wide-spread rural locations. Boarding academies provided common education centers for Adventist young people to learn reading, writing and arithmetic in a faith-based environment.

This picture has changed in recent decades. With society’s growth and changing parental attitudes toward boarding school education, church communities have increasingly established local academic institutions, or day academies, for faith-based high school education. These day academies allow students to live at home during high school years and still obtain an education with an Adventist biblical worldview. Still other families select to pursue a homeschool approach.

Adventist Education’s great strength through the years has been a willingness to respond to changing needs—not just as they were, but as they are and will be.

This is the challenge we face with Auburn Adventist Academy and all of our secondary education schools. How can we help it succeed, educationally, spiritually and financially, at a time when the demand for boarding student options has dramatically decreased?

This discussion on secondary education is just beginning on a number of levels. We hired a respected education consultant to work with our education leaders to rediscover our core mission and values as we create a vision for a new future. As this conversation unfolds, we are inviting our constituents to review and respond to materials that will be frequently updated here.

Let's partner step by step with God to educate the greatest number of young people for life and eternity!

Update #1 - March 9, 2015

A Time of Collecting Ideas & Outlining Proactive Plans
from John Freedman, Washington Conference president

March 9, 2015 - About a month ago, we shared with you how Washington Conference is evaluating how to best manage our secondary education program to help it succeed academically, spiritually and financially. We invited you to share your voice on Adventist Christian Education — and you did! Thank you very much for taking time to send us emails, participate in social media conversations, and call or meet with us in person. We value your feedback and insights.

To recap: Washington Conference Executive Committee voted at the end of January for Auburn Adventist Academy to evaluate whether it is best to remain a boarding school or transition to a day school. They also gave a deadline of December 2015 to define the criteria necessary for a sustainable future and to achieve a balanced budget.

We would like to let you know some of the activities in the last month.

Community Reaction
This topic, as could be expected, ignited passionate conversations in our school community. Parents, alumni, students and members joined social media conversations and sent emails with their viewpoints and ideas. The attendance for Auburn’s annual benefit dinner auction, Hearts of Gold, reached its capacity. Auburn’s donors raised more than $50,000 for student scholarships that evening and surpassed the fundraising goal by $20,000. Praise God!

Additionally, the campus hosted 420 young musicians in grades 5-12 and sponsors for the Washington Conference Music Festival. The community response and turnout was positive and affirming. The Academy is looking forward to hosting prospective students on March 16 for Academy Day. This is a great opportunity for students to see if the school is the “right fit” for them.

**Hired a Consultant**

Washington Conference hired a respected education consultant to help Auburn Adventist Academy navigate through long-term business planning. For years, church members and alumni have asked for Auburn to be run with “good business practices.” We are listening and taking action on this.

Washington Conference is taking proactive steps to position Auburn Adventist Academy for long-term success. Working together with school administration and the Board of Trustees, we are all identifying problems and defining possible solutions “now” before the school gets into a scenario where it is “too late.” Too many academies are closing across North America because of financial problems that have become too big to handle. The goal here is to cast a new vision, re-engineer the school, and develop plans for reinvigorating secondary Adventist Christian Education.

Auburn Adventist Academy has a rich history that is appreciated and celebrated. However, times have changed and AAA cannot continue to operate successfully with 20th century management tools in the 21st century world we live in. We are not shrinking back from this challenge, but are embracing it with prayer, Bible study and active discussion.

**Full Schedule of Meetings**

February held a full schedule of meetings with faculty, Principals’ Council, the Washington Conference Board of Education, the Board of Trustees for the Academy, and a newly formed Growth & Development sub-committee of the Board of Trustees. This new committee is passionately and actively outlining marketing and recruiting plans for Auburn.

**Planning for Town Hall Meetings**

We invite you to attend one of our four town hall sessions in April. Your presence as parents, alumni, donors and friends of Auburn Adventist Academy is highly important.

- **Monday, April 6** at North Cascade Church (Burlington area) from 6:30-8:30 pm
- **Tuesday, April 7** at Washington Conference Office (Federal Way area) from 6:30-8:30 pm
- **Sunday, April 12** at Transformation Life Center (Olympia area) from 10 am to 12 pm
- **Sunday, April 12** at Bremerton Adventist Church (Peninsula area) from 2-4 pm

We again want to express our appreciation for your feedback and the dedicated work of our committees in this process. We appreciate your patience as ideas and suggestions are being evaluated and solidified into possible plans.

We want to actively continue this conversation, yet take appropriate time to not rush any decisions. Your prayers, advice, insight and support through this education re-engineering process are invaluable.
Share Your Thoughts // We welcome your viewpoints and suggestions for Adventist Christian Education!

First & Last Name: * 

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Dear Friends,

In the last 48 hours, there has been a significant amount of social media commentary and coverage regarding a decision by Andrews University to deny a fundraising request by an unofficial student club to raise funds for a Chicago agency that is focused on aiding homeless LGBT youth.

That reporting has included some information that is not correct.

As a result, I want to share, as best I can, some questions and answers that will seek to provide you with some accurate information and context.

I trust it will be helpful as you encounter opinions and reporting on this topic on the web and elsewhere.

Cordially,

Niels-Erik Andreasen, President

Q: Is Andrews University opposed to helping, or fundraising for, LGBT homeless youth?

A: Absolutely not.

It is within the University and Church mission to seek to provide care and compassion wherever and for whoever needs it.

The problem of LGBT homeless youth in particular is a heartbreaking national problem—perhaps as many as 40 percent of the homeless teens on the street at any one time are LGBT. Many of these teens were in Christian families who rejected their child’s orientation and, in the process, their child. A safe place and genuine care must be provided for these homeless LGBT youth.

Q: Did Andrews University offer approval for AULL4One, an unofficial campus club, to raise funds for this purpose and then later retract it?

A: No.

When campus administrators were approached with the idea of having a fundraiser to benefit LGBT homeless youth, those administrators expressed openness to the idea and encouraged the students to explore options, emphasizing to the students that any official fundraising effort would have to be aligned with the University’s mission. So, originally, the University neither “approved” nor “rejected” the proposal. The University merely said: Let’s explore the options. Subsequent to that, a number of conversations happened between students, Campus Ministries and Student Life.

At question in those conversations was not the cause itself, but the perceived mission and advocacy of a proposed agency that was to receive funds from the fundraising activities. In particular, the Church’s religious and moral views
do not allow for the pursuit of intimate LGBT relationships, including marriage, and as a result Andrews University’s policies do not permit the raising of funds to support the work of agencies that advocate behaviors contrary to Adventist beliefs. This is true even though many unapproved agencies do valuable and important work that is within the University’s mission.

As the University was saying “no” to the specific, proposed agency, an administrator suggested an alternative support agency in Chicago that also deals with homeless LGBT teens. That suggestion does not appear to have been pursued by the student who instead proposed an additional unacceptable agency. Shortly thereafter, the student stopped his conversations with administrators, asked for a “written” clarification of the decision not to support his recommended agency, and went to the press/social media.

Q: Why would Andrews University say “no” to helping homeless kids? Isn’t that “unchristian”?

A: Again, Andrews University has no objection to helping LGBT homeless youth. As an Adventist university operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Andrews is called and committed to absolute compassion for those with an LGBT orientation.

Andrews University believes that it is possible to both show Christian care and compassion for all people while also pursuing a life that lifts up biblical values.

As has been true with the national debate on these issues, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Andrews University believe that there is room for respect of differing viewpoints within this discussion and within society.

Unfortunately, Andrews University does not believe that its sincerely held beliefs have been afforded such respect. To “disagree” with another person’s view is seen as callous, uncaring and unchristian. It does not have to be this way. For example, recent proposed legislation in Utah seems to protect the rights of the LGBT community while also respecting and allowing the Mormon Church to operate and practice within its own religious and moral beliefs as it relates to LGBT relationships.

Q: So, how can Andrews University students officially help homeless LGBT youth or engage in fundraising for other worthy causes?

A: Students should engage in serious-minded dialogue about fundraising options with club sponsors or University administrators. Together, students and faculty/staff should explore whether a particular recipient of funds is largely and primarily aligned in support of the University’s mission and its faith commitment. The University recognizes that every single activity of an agency may not be in “alignment”—to expect perfect alignment might never permit any outside fundraising. But it is reasonable for the University to expect primary alignment between its mission and an agency’s activities.

In reference to the specific matter that brought about this attention, the “problem” as the University sees it is that once a decision was made that a student did not like, he stopped conversation about it and went to the press/social media to portray the University in a light that was neither fair nor accurate. What happened to the specific suggestion of an alternative Chicago-based agency that works with homeless LGBT youth and why was that option not explored more fully? These kinds of misunderstandings can be avoided when students and faculty/staff work together in good faith.

Q: What information or statements have you shared with media about this topic?

A: To date, four different online blogs/newspapers have asked for information on this decision, and the following statement has been shared in return:

Andrews University recognizes the special challenges facing LGBT youth and believes that efforts to help them are worthy.
Providing care to LGBT homeless youth is compatible with our institutional mission to demonstrate God’s love to all people, and reflects our denomination’s specific call to exhibit compassion for LGBT persons.

At the same time, Andrews University has declined a student request to officially endorse a fundraising effort to raise money for an organization that may have a perceived LGBT advocacy role.

This decision was made in the context of our student fundraising policy in the Student Handbook, which states that funds may be raised for non-profit organizations "whose mission and practices do not conflict with those of the University."

So, our objection was not to the worthy goal of serving LGBT homeless youth and their transitional housing needs but to the perceived advocacy stance of the proposed organization.

As a result, we can and will support LGBT homeless youth through organizations whose mission and purpose clearly align with the religious mission and purpose of our University and its sponsoring church. We invite our student clubs to find the appropriate organizations and opportunities to do just that.

Click on the following links for more information on the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s positions on homosexuality and same sex unions.

Beyond this statement, Andrews University will have no additional comment at this time.
Jiwan Moon Has a Plan to Retain Adventist Youth

Andrew McChesney News editor, Adventist Review

The first conference on public campus ministries opens at the Adventist world church headquarters.

Posted March 3, 2015

Jiwan Moon is hoping to tweak the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual — and in the process stem an outflow of young people from the church.

Moon will tell a major conference that opens Wednesday about his proposal to add the position of “public campus ministries coordinator” to the Church Manual’s lineup of elders, deacons, and other elected officers at local churches.

Moon, just nine months at the helm of the newly created office of public campus ministries for the Adventist world church, said the coordinators could play a crucial role in encouraging Adventist students on public campuses to remain committed to God.

The coordinators, he said, could engage the students in mission-minded activities that taught self-sacrifice and endowed them with the missionary spirit that Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White has described as akin to the spirit of Jesus.

Jiwan Moon, pictured at Annual Council in October 2014, had a 95 percent youth retention rate at his former church in Canada. Photo: ANN

“Adventist students usually have an identity crisis when they go to public campuses,” Moon said in an interview. “There is a saying, ‘They leave as an Adventist and come back as a non-Adventist.'

“In order for young people to make their Christianity relevant,” he said, “they have to learn to appreciate living the life of self-sacrifice.”

Adventist leaders have good reason to worry. The church is losing more than half of its young people before they reach adulthood, and in some developed countries the figure is closer to 70 percent, according to statistics presented at the church’s Annual Council business meeting last October.

Efforts to reach out to public campuses started about 40 years ago within the North American Division, but the world church only decided to create a full-time position to address the issue last year.

Transforming Students Into Missionaries
In the meantime, several grassroots programs that encourage Adventist students to share Jesus on public campuses are flourishing at churches such as the University Adventist Church in East Lansing, Michigan.

“The impact of campus ministry cannot be underestimated,” said David Shin, who spoke of miracles in his seven years as pastor of the University Adventist Church in East Lansing, Michigan (see sidebar below).

“There is nothing more life-changing in a secular student’s life than the everlasting gospel,” Shin said. “The impact of the countless lives that will be touched as a result of these conversions cannot be quantified — it’s like a wave in the ocean of humanity.”

The proposed *Church Manual* amendment has to be approved by the General Conference session next July. Regardless of the outcome, Moon is laying the groundwork to fulfill his department’s motto to “transform Adventist students into campus missionaries” with the Adventist Church’s first major conference on the issue.

Michigan State University student Elva, holding the cake, celebrating her baptism in February 2014. Classmate Taryn, left, signed Elva up for Bible studies and then studied the Bible with her. Elva’s roommate has since been baptized as well. Photo: David Shin

“We are hoping to build a consensus about not only retaining Adventist young people but also causing them to live a proactive Christian life,” Moon said. “We need to empower them and give them the opportunity to serve.”

The five-day conference, which opened at the world church’s headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, will draft recommendations to the world church on nurturing students from the ages of 16 to about 30. Among the proposals is the creation of public campus ministries positions at all levels of the denomination: divisions, unions, conferences, and local churches. Coordinators at local churches would be able to contact their counterparts at the conference level for resources and other assistance.

A third of the conference’s 50 invited delegates are actively involved in public campus ministries and will share their experiences with the others, a mix of youth ministries leaders and church administrators from the church’s 13 world divisions.

Moon said he hopes that the new public campus ministries leaders will in place throughout the church by the end of the year.

**Teaching Vacation Bible School in Canada**

Moon is well familiar with the challenges that the Adventist Church faces in retaining young people. Before joining the General Conference last year, he established an innovative program called the Reach Out & Care Missionary Movement at the church that he pastored in Canada.

“We had a 95 percent youth retention rate,” he said. “It was a most rewarding experience to see the fruits of my labor.”

Under the ongoing initiative, young people at the Kitchener-Waterloo Adventist Church, located an hour’s drive from Toronto, are expected from the age of 13 to help a struggling church every summer. The students lead a Vacation Bible School at their church, take a few days of missionary training, and then go to a nearby church to teach Vacation Bible School in the mornings, engage in community outreach in the afternoons, and conduct an
evangelistic series in the evenings.

“The youth are strongly encouraged to turn off their cell phones and other electronic devices,” said Dimitar Kolev, youth leader at the Kitchener-Waterloo church (see sidebar below). “We do not listen to secular music and generally attempt to minimize secular influences and spend the week in devoting ourselves to God and availing ourselves for His use.”

He said the program, which started in 2006, changed his own life.

“I myself am a product of this program, and I can attest to the profound impact it has had on my walk with God,” he said.

We reserve the right to approve and disapprove comments accordingly and will not be able to respond to inquiries regarding that. Please keep all comments respectful and courteous to authors and fellow readers.
Food Choices and the Glycemic Index
Managing blood sugar with low-GI foods

Much has been written about the importance of keeping blood sugar levels in a healthy range in order to optimize health. The Glycemic Index (GI) is one tool that is used by some clinicians and individuals in order to make food choices to control glucose levels.

What is the glycemic index?
The Glycemic Index is a measure of how a carbohydrate-containing food raises blood glucose. Every carbohydrate food has a Glycemic Index. But not all carbohydrates affect blood glucose levels in the same way. "Foods with a high GI are quickly digested and absorbed, causing a rapid rise in blood sugar," according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "Foods with a low GI are digested and absorbed at a slower rate, and, subsequently, cause a slower rise in blood sugar levels."

Foods such as oatmeal, sweet potatoes, and carrots tend to have a lower GI. Foods such as white bread or white rice tend to have a higher GI, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Experts caution, however, that the GI of a food does not mean that the food is good or bad from a nutritional standpoint. It is only a measurement related to how it impacts blood sugar levels. Some foods that have a higher GI may also have significant nutritional value, which is important for a balanced diet. Using the GI alone to guide food choices may not be a good idea, as there are many things to consider about the food we eat.

The Glycemic Index and diabetes
Chronic high blood sugar causes a rise in insulin levels and can lead to weight gain. High blood sugar levels also increase the risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and even an increased risk for cancer. Keeping blood glucose in a healthy range is one important step in helping to prevent such illness.

Nutrition experts and emerging research suggest that choosing to eat more low-GI foods and less high-GI foods may benefit a person's glucose and insulin levels. It's one way to help guide your food choices, improve your health, and protect against chronic disease.

Learning more about the Glycemic Index may be of particular interest to people with diabetes, metabolic syndrome, or those who simply want to lower their risk for disease.

Sources:
American Diabetes Association.
Clinical Diabetes.
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
Harvard School of Public Health.