Lord, when did we fail to help you?
by Carolyn Forrest, Associate Secretary, NAD; Director, Office of Human Relations

Abuse, what is it? It can be defined as to use wrongly or improperly. To hurt or injure by maltreatment; ill-use. Did you know that all around us, people (women, children, elderly and men) are hurting and are in desperate need of help?

Violence against women takes many forms - physical, sexual, psychological and economic. It is not confined to a specific culture, region or country, or to particular groups of women within a society. The roots of violence against women lie in persistent discrimination against women.¹

Every year 3.3 million reports of child abuse are made in the United States. The United States has the worst record in the industrialized nation - losing five children every day due to abuse-related deaths.²

No one knows precisely how many older Americans are being abused, neglected, or exploited. According to the best available estimates, between 1 and 2 million Americans age 65 or older have been injured, exploited, or otherwise mistreated by someone on whom they depended for care or protection.³

The idea that a man could be abused seems unimaginable to many. Yet it is a reality. The statistics of men abused by their wives is difficult to determine, but the Bureau of Justice Statistic Crime Data Brief on “Intimate Partner Violence” (2003), found approximately 15% of domestic violence cases involve men as the victims. This statistic may be even higher because the abuse of men usually goes unreported.⁴

“I was hungry, but you did not give me anything to eat, and I was thirsty, but you did not give me anything to drink. I was a stranger, but you did not welcome me, and I was naked, but you did not give me any clothes to wear. I was sick and in jail, but you did not take care of me. Then the people will ask, Lord, when did we fail to help you when you were hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in jail? The king will say to them, whenever you failed to help any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you failed to do it for me.”
Matthew 25:42-45 Contemporary English Version (See footnotes)

After two hours of presentations from multiple levels of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as well as 90 minutes of discussion, delegates to the Columbia Union Conference Special Constituency Meeting Sunday voted a historic motion — “That the Columbia Union Conference authorize ordination to the gospel ministry without regard to gender.” MORE
Check out “NAD InDepth!” It's a brand new feature starting in NewsPoints this week! Each week it will feature different union magazines, NAD newsletters, and/or video news reports to give you a better understanding of your Division. NAD InDepth will give you access to as much information as if you were receiving a 100-page magazine each week and including the monthly NAD Adventist World in the sidebar, about 650 pages a month - and it's all green and free.

More than 110,000 people are attending evangelism meetings being presented by retired U.S. evangelist John Carter in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Plans are now in place for overflow crowds numbering 10,000 - 20,000 so far, to view the meetings via a screen in an area outside the open-air Sir John Guise Stadium.

Carter is asking for special prayer from everyone to cover this series, for him and the team, the equipment, and the many people attending. The crowd increases by the tens of thousands every night, even while the Olympic games are in session. See what a small portion of a crowd of 110,000 people looks like on the John Carter Facebook page. MORE
The following are positive stories that appeared this week in the news about Seventh-day Adventists in the North American Division territory.

Court backs Adventist in Sabbath work dispute
Catholic Culture
July 31

Community Involvement Focus of Recent Church Groundbreaking
Patch.com
July 26

More hospitals adjust bills for shooting victims unable to pay
Denver Post
July 26

We are looking for stories about the sharing of The Great Hope booklet. If your church has shared it and received responses that indicate a life change, a new philosophy or interest because of the book or having that contact with church members, NAD would like to receive your short story for possible use in a collection of such stories. Have your churches been involved with passing our huge numbers of the books? Have your members been involved and do they have great stories to tell?

Send your very short stories as soon as possible to the NAD Office of Communication. Include a photo and caption information.

What will it take to conduct the NAD Teachers Convention to be held next week in Nashville, Tenn? The convention will provide 28,000 meals, 14,000 hotel room nights, and 550 break out sessions for the expected 6,000 registrants. There will be 15 countries represented.

“The teachers convention is a lot of work but every teacher that teaches in a classroom in the Adventist system makes every effort worth it,” said Larry Blackmer, vice president for Education.

Get connected to Adventist Education through NADAdventist on Vimeo, NADAdventist on Flickr, AdventistEducation on Facebook, and on Twitter

Join with the rest of the Division in Breaking the Silence about any and all types of abuse against women, children, elderly and men through your participation on August 25 (always the fourth Sabbath of August) and by observing Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day in your church.

Remember Prayer Call tonight. Prayer Call night has been changed from the first Thursday of the month to the first Wednesday of every month. Larry Blackmer, vice president for Education, will be on the
line at 10 p.m. EDT, and we'll pray with him for the Teachers' Convention. At 11 p.m. EDT Jim Gilley, president of 3ABN, is coming on to the call when we will pray for 3ABN. We're also praying for ASI, and for all who work at headquarters. Please join the call anytime between 10 p.m. EDT until 5 a.m. EDT Thursday. Check the Prayer Ministries website for teleconference instructions and more information.

**SDA Finder - Organizational Finder.** The North American Division has developed an organizational locator for all the church authorized organizations in the NAD. It is called SDA Finder and is downloadable for the iPhone, iPad and Android mobile devices. Different colored pins denote the different types of organizations. You will also find various contact information as well as website addresses. A few conferences have not signed up to use their organizational information. Please feel free to contact us at app@nad.adventist.org with any questions or concerns.

**REACH: Community Outreach and Evangelism**

What can you do to help victims of domestic violence? The Valdez (Alaska) Adventist church women's ministries department is reaching out to victims of domestic violence through their "Bags of Love" ministry. They provide handmade quilts, toiletries and personal items to mothers and children seeking safety in the local shelter. [MORE]

Learn more about “Bags of Love” and other abuse-related resources at the NAD Women's Ministries website.

**Resources**

“Moved with Compassion,” a resource packet containing a sample sermon for Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day (APED) on August 25, along with PowerPoint presentations, a program packet with a children's story and activities - all in English, Spanish and French - can be downloaded at the NAD Women's Ministries website. Abuse of every kind is prevalent in our churches. Every follower of Christ is called to treat others as we would like to be treated. We must call attention to the problem of abuse and take action against it.

Many resources for the prevention of abuse and for education are available from various ministry areas to assist you in educating and training others how to break the silence against abuse. Find a list with links under the August section of the NAD Calendar of Special Days Resources and Special Websites. Read the article, "enditnow: A Change of Focus," in the August edition of Adventist World.

Departments supporting APED include Education, Children’s Ministries, Disabilities Ministries, Family Ministries, Health Ministries.
Human Relations, Women’s Ministries, and Youth Ministries.

“Unity is not the result of some kind of ‘positive cloning’... God created human beings to be creative, and creativity demands differences.”

“Sometimes in our zeal to call sin by its right name, we call sinners names.” - Ken Denslow, assistant to the president, in NAD Staff Meeting, August 1

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Footnotes to August 1 Newspoints Feature


Delegates fill in their secret ballots.

Columbia Union Constituents Overwhelmingly Affirm Women Pastors Through Ordination

Story by Taashi Rowe; photos by Al Peasley
Published 7/29/12

Silver Spring, Md.—After two hours of presentations from multiple levels of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as well as 90 minutes of discussion, delegates to the Columbia Union Conference Special Constituency Meeting today voted an historic motion—"That the Columbia Union Conference authorize ordination to the gospel ministry without regard to gender."

According to a statement released by the union it means that the union executive committee will no longer deny requests from conferences to ordain proven female ministers to the gospel ministry but that their calling will be fully recognized on par with their male counterparts.

Using secret ballots, delegates from the eight conferences within the union’s Mid-Atlantic United States territory voted 4 to 1 in favor of the motion. The actual vote was 209 in favor and 51 opposed, with nine abstentions.

“This is not a surprise to those of us listening carefully around this union,” said Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, following the vote. “This is not an easy time for the church but it is the time for the church. We are part of the worldwide church and we are united in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I don’t know how God will use this as part of the revival, but I want my sisters, mothers and daughters to stand with me. We want young girls who hear the call to go forward. As I’ve said throughout the last few months, Who are we to silence God's calling? It’s time for us to go forward together.”

The meeting, convened at 10 a.m. with a season of prayer led by Rob Vandeman, union executive secretary: “We pray that what we do today will not displease You and that the church may move on to see more victory, more expansion, more growth and more impact in a world that desperately needs You.”
The presentations reflected counsel from General Conference and North American Division (NAD) officials. Among them was Dan Jackson, NAD president, who reminded attendees that the church is the apple of God's eye. He also cautioned, “What we are doing here today not only will impact us personally and as a union but will also impact our world church. I want to say that our primary accountability is to God.”

In extended remarks, Ted N.C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, appealed to delegates not to move forward with the motion but to wait for a new church study scheduled to be completed in 2014.

“I come to you today because I care about matters of conscience,” he said. “I come to you because I care about the unity of the church at large. There are many grave consequences that will result if you vote positively. I'm not threatening you in any way. I'm just presenting the facts that when an organization makes moves unilaterally, it will lead to fragmentation and collegial disunity. Do not vote the recommended action before you … stay in harmony … and do not branch out independently.”

Three representatives of the union executive committee offered delegates a different appeal. Bill Miller, president of the Potomac Conference and chair of the ad hoc committee tasked with studying this issue, started his presentation of the committee’s report by reiterating that he was a “loyal member of God’s remnant church.” He then recounted the church’s historical struggle with the issue of fully affirming women ministers through ordination.

“The world church at various General Conference Sessions has aptly demonstrated its inability to act decisively,” Miller said. “Gender-based discrimination must not continue. The right time to do the right thing is right now.”

Raj Attiken, president of the Ohio Conference, followed by addressing concerns about unity. “We have to ask ourselves will the action that we are proposing in anyway jeopardize or compromise the unity of the church? Our unity has been primarily based on unity in Christ who is head of the church. He will build the church and that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. As a church we have made a sacred covenant to be united around a common set of beliefs: mission, hope and faith in the Lord.”

Finally Brenda L. Billingy, senior pastor of Allegheny East Conference’s 1,100-member Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md., shared a compelling testimony of how God called her more than 10 years ago. “I found myself as a well-groomed financial aid director hearing a call from God, not knowing what to do with it but fearing God more than man. I knew I had to be obedient to the call and accountable to God,” she said likening her ministry to an educational journey that culminates with graduation. “The cap is God’s calling, anointing and producing, the gown is God’s grace. But no graduation is complete without a diploma,” she concluded.
Just after noon, when Chairman Weigley opened the floor for constituent input, delegates quickly formed three long lines at the microphones. Many agreed that all whom the Holy Spirit has clearly called to ministry should be ordained without regard to gender, however several admitted to being conflicted.

The first speaker, Bonnie Heath, a member of the Allegheny East Conference, said she found Wilson’s counsel touching. “I’ve been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for 26 years,” she said. “I want to make a call for unity … [but] I would like some reassurance that [the world church] hears our pain and our embarrassment that we are treating our people differentially. We are deeply upset and ashamed, and we want to be also given equal say.”

Others were clear that unity trumps all other concerns. Larry Boggess, president of the Mountain View Conference, whose executive committee released a statement opposing the motion, said, “Lest it be misunderstood, I love you, too, even though I disagree with you. If we say we are the body of Christ, then we would act in unity. What we do today will not generate thousands of new members. I’m sorry but that will only happen when the rank and file in the pews go out and do Bible studies. I believe we should adhere to what the General Conference president and 13 division presidents said [in their June 29 appeal].”

Ron Christman, executive secretary of the Pennsylvania Conference agreed. “I support women in ministry but I believe we’ve taken the wrong approach to ordination,” he said. “It will set a precedent for dissent and rebellion that I really don’t like to see.”

Chris Holland, senior pastor of Chesapeake Conference’s Hagerstown (Md.) church, said, “To be in favor of this as a union we are telling the world church that we are smarter, wiser and more spiritually endowed than rest of the world church. That’s why I’m against this.”

However for Joyce Greene, associate treasurer for the New Jersey Conference, the matter was simple. “I feel compelled to say something when I am asked that I should vote for unity over my conscience,” she said responding to the General Conference appeal for unity. “We are not here just to vote yes or no; everyone should vote their conscience.”

Sharon Cress, Potomac Conference’s Women’s Ministries director, agreed. “The General Conference calls for unity in the face of unfairness and this wounds deeply the women who serve this church,” she said. “Some have appealed for unity today to justify continuation of unfairness. I tell you there is no unity today, and there can be no unity as long as we practice unfairness.”

Yuliyan Filipov, senior pastor of the Worthington (Ohio) church, testified that he used to oppose women’s ordination. “For two years I have been praying 7-7-7 for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our church. Are we here to give the Holy Spirit permission to work? It sounds like we’re only asking the Spirit to work for men and not women.”

Jimmy Ferguson, senior pastor of Allegheny East Conference’s [AEC] Dupont Park church in Washington, D.C., said, “Anytime there is a moral imperative, we hear that there will be grave consequences, opposition and spiritual disunity.” He then listed several historical figures who challenged the status quo such as Martin Luther during the Reformation, Martin Luther King Jr. during the fight for civil rights, Ellen G. White, who questioned the church’s duty to people of color, and Jesus Christ, who challenged the status quo of His day. “They also heard that their actions would result in grave consequences, opposition and spiritual disunity. The current policy flies in the face of the priesthood of all believers,” he continued during his allotted two minutes. “If liberalism, culturalism, racism, and secularism have not divided the church, neither will this.”

Oluchi Ukomadu, a member of AEC’s Marantha Adventist Fellowship in Bowie, Md., said she was compelled to stand up and speak after another delegate suggested that only men are chosen by God to head the church. “We are all equal in front of God. He has called us to be equal disciples. Why dampen the spirit of women?” she asked. “We all say that when the Spirit calls, we will answer. I was called to be a lead elder but the discrimination was too much for me to handle. My family was affected by how I was treated.” Noting her Nigerian roots, she then urged her fellow delegates to set an example for the rest of the world church to follow.

Following the vote, Rick Remmers, president of the Chesapeake Conference, commented, “I appreciated greatly the spiritual tone set today and sensed the love and loyalty for our church.”

“I am so proud to be part of an historical day in the Columbia Union,” said Deborah Hill, a member of Allegheny West Conference. “We voted on the right side of history and will work very hard to unify not only our union but to work more closely with the General Conference. God was part of
this decision and this has been a wonderful day for women to move forward in faith and in the Word of the Lord.

When asked how this vote will impact the work in the Potomac Conference where he is president, Bill Miller said, “We already have a motion from our executive committee authorizing us to issue new credentials with one word on it for everybody—ordination.”

COMMENTS POLICY: Thank you for sharing your comments on this story. We have closed the comment section on this page but would like to refer you to the 2012 Special Constituency Comment page if you would like to share your thoughts.

Judy B. Dent
3 days ago

What a mighty God we serve! The Holy Spirit was present in the hearts of His people even before the vote was taken. To God be the Glory!!!

Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson
3 days ago

When a friend of mine expressed concern about the CUC and other unions taking a vote for inclusive ordination, I simply reminded him that if God was in it, the movement would prosper; if not, it would not. If this is of the Lord, it certainly comes at a perfect time, as the world church prays for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Joel said that old and young, male and female would have visions and dream dreams. Will we allow the Holy Spirit to do His will, and not ours?

Charles N Makombe
3 days ago

Why are you rushing this matter before the world has made a decision over this matter. Please which charpers in bible compelled you to make such a bad decision in the very eyes of lord whom you claim believe in him. Your actions are totally unacceptable before the eyes of lord and SAVIOUR, examine the spirit behind yournot decision. Why are you going contrary the advice of general president of the general conference ? Do we now have Jesuits among the remnant church ? If the women are odened does that Them holy ? Why do you want to follow the world ? Are we

Dwayne Turner
3 days ago

Shame on this Union for what they have done! This is out of order! No Scripture or Spirit of Prophecy, if "correctly cited", to back up this action. Yet, it is an issue worth putting the World Church in disarray over? Wow! Sad thing is that you are proud of yourselves, and all dissent is merely confirmation.

Columbia Union..... You don't exist without the existence of the world church! The members of the Columbia Union are not members of the Columbia Union first! They are members of the SDA Church first! The Columbia Union is merely a territory of the North American Division; which is a division of the world church! The world church is the church! Must all the members of the Columbia Union now recognize the ordination of women pastors and exclude the decisions of the World Church? What do you suggest members do who don't recognize your action and decide to stick with the actions of the World Church? Must they pick and choose between the Union and the World Church? Pure chaos you have started!

Memo to the 209 who voted for this motion: Spectrum Magazine and Atoday are the biggest online supporters of the actions you have forged. They are also the number one supporters of the sin of homosexuality being sanitized by the church! Just a little looking into that will more than verify my claims. Perhaps you thought it was funny when one delegate from the Mountain View Conference made the connection between advancing the WO cause and homosexuality. Let me just say.... Declaring gender roles "non-existent" is merely the gateway to ultimately blurring all distinction between men and women. Accomplishing that "blur", you are now standing shoulder-to-shoulder intellectually, with homosexual reasoning.

And please brethren, the references to Martin Luther are killing me! Martin Luther was calling men and women back to the bible; Sola Scriptura! The Bible and the Bible alone! Your cause is
**just the opposite! It is calling men and women AWAY from the bible! Culture and Culture alone!**

To The Representatives Of The GC: Discipline must be meted out to the Columbia Union, otherwise copycat actions will sprout up all over the place. Pacific Union is ready to take the plunge on August 19th, exposing their members to the rebellion Columbia Union just exposed their members too. Conscientious members need to know that discipline takes place on all levels; not just the local church! In fact, on the Union level there is even greater responsibility to foster unity and act in harmony with the world body; as their actions effect a wider territory than local churches and/or conferences.

The Union has spoken and we have heard them! Now the GC must speak!

Ron STout  
3 days ago

GC brethren, on this and many other areas of present truth: solo scriptura: "lead, follow or get out of the way"

Mason Craig  
3 days ago

I am a relatively new member of the Adventist family. My wife is Bonnie Heath. I accompanied my wife to the meeting on Sunday to observe the discussion regarding the affirming women ministers through ordination. I was most startled and disappointed to hear one member recount the number of times that the General Conference considered this issue and each time postponed a decision until a later time.

I attend our local Council meetings where my wife as Mayor sits in utter amazement as do I when our boro is afraid to make a decision without a "study". It seems people who are unwilling to expose themselves to making a decision for fear of the unknown consequences that might result. I have always appreciated the role of women in the world and never have considered them second class citizens in any way. Today as a non voting person in attendance, I was delighted to see LIGHT shed in this meeting and you could FEEL the lifting of the Holy Spirit as people hugged one another as they felt the joy and excitement not as a victory, but the long overdue releasing of the shackles of discrimination.

God Is good!

Darleen Sanford  
3 days ago

In 1965 I advocated for and taught a Black child in a previously all-white Florida school. To deny Christian education to an intelligent, adorable child of a lovely Adventist family based on skin color was wrong. Even the pastor and few opposing members probably knew that. I believe the Seventy-day Adventist Church has Scriptural truth and will usually do the right thing if legally compelled or publicly embarrassed to do otherwise. All my life we have prayed for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and soon return of our Lord while building dams to stop the flow. Do the right thing. Open the floodgates. I want to see Jesus coming in the clouds in my lifetime.

Wesley McDonald  
3 days ago

While the constituency of the Columbia Union voted to ordain women to the gospel ministry, let us remember just what the gospel ministry is supposed to be. The word minister means "one who is sent". Where are these women and men who are ordained going to be sent? Are they being sent into areas where the majority of the people have never heard our message? Are they being sent two by two to raise up new churches in unentered areas? Unfortunately, for more than a century, our ministers, regardless of sex, have been sent to spend the majority of their time preaching every Wednesday night, Friday night, and Sabbath to people who already know the message and to minister to them. Only a small portion of their time is spent in true gospel ministry. The problem in all our constituency sessions is that the lost souls in the world who are dying without ever hearing our message, have no voice in the constituency sessions. No one hears their cries for knowledge and peace. Let us begin to place our focus on what God has called all of us, ordained and unordained, male and female, clergy and laity, to do - go into unentered areas with a message of salvation and raise up new churches of believers and hasten the coming of our Lord.
As a church, we have not been fully faithful to our calling and have become in many cases, the object of our own tithes. Let unite as a church, repent and carry out the true gospel commission. Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Madeline S. Johnston
3 days ago

Thank you for the action and the spirit with which it was taken. I watched the whole thing and was moved by the humility, dedication, courage, fairness, logic, and careful presentation of the issue. Another way to look at it (than those just above): We are in recent months seeing a groundswell of Holy Spirit action that no man can stop, perhaps even in response to our pleadings for Him to bring revival and reformation. And, if that might be the case, we should all beware of obstructing in any way.

Billie Shepherd
3 days ago

I am a woman. I found no where in this article that ordained women in the Bible. It is not Biblical. I am a strong independent woman who has struggled with whether or not women should be 'ordained' by God. They are not. They are being ordained by 'man'. I am disgusted at my church for 'pushing' this issue. This tells me that the next issue will be - Women should be the head of household if they now 'want' it. This also opens the door for 'Gay' pastors to be ordained in our churches! God forBID! I agree totally with Pastor Ted Wilson- our God appointed LEADER!! Should we not listen to him and the GC votes? God forBID if we don't! I am reminded here of the isrealites who did whatever they wanted.... and guess what happens when we do our own will? I believe God is disappointed.

No, we cannot say. EG White was ordained- she was not! God did not ordain women in the Bible, it was men- aka 12 disciples, priests elders, etc. I believe my church has made a grave mistake in this voting of passion and 'feelings'.

Billie Shepherd RN

Ray
3 days ago

The Columbia Union is now a disunion ...no longer exists .....all tithes to Amazing Facts...and the world feild....

Rayleen Hansen
2 days ago

I was born and raised in this church and have worked as a teacher for the church for the past 35 years. I remember the uproar in the 1970s, when I was in college, over women receiving equal pay for equal work. It was sad that Mary Kay Silver, a gifted author and church member, had to sue the church to receive this right for all of us that followed her. (It is interesting that the GC president at that time was Neal Wilson, Ted Wilson's father.) During this time, we were told that to do this would cause the women of the church to become feminists who would destroy the role of the man in a marriage. We were told the church would be split in two and that God would destroy the church because of women selfishly wanting to be paid the same as men. We would told that the church would become bankrupt within a few years because of this.

None of those things happened; instead, I believe God has blessed because the church finally did what was right. It was a shame that the secular government of our country had to order our church to do this. I admire the Union presidents who have the courage to stand for what is right. As a woman, thank you for making me proud of my church and feeling that I do count as a church member and a church employee.

Visitor Staff
2 days ago

Thank you for your comments on this topic. If you would like to post a comment, please click here http://www.columbiaunion.org/article/1093/news/2012-news-archives/july-29-2012-special-constituency/comments-page
Anonymous

Comments are closed on this article.
Court backs Adventist in Sabbath work dispute

_CWN - July 31, 2012_

In a 2-1 decision, a federal appeals court has ruled that a lower court erred in dismissing a suit filed by Kimberly Crider against the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK).

Crider, a Seventh-day Adventist, was hired as one of the university’s programs-abroad coordinators in May 2008. Four days after her hire, she told her supervisor that she would be unable to work between sundown on Friday and sundown on Saturday because of her religious beliefs. After Crider was assigned to work on a Saturday the following month, she proposed different accommodations that were rejected by her supervisor and colleagues. Refusing to work on a Saturday, Crider was fired.

“UTK and the district court imply that it is Crider who has the duty to accommodate UTK’s needs and that ultimately she is the one being unreasonable,” the appeals court ruled. “A Saturday Sabbatarian’s request for every Saturday off of work due to their religious needs is not per se unreasonable … It is debatable whether UTK fulfilled its duty to reasonably accommodate Crider.”

“We stop short of holding that an employee requesting religious accommodation can never be treated differently,” the appeals court added. “The very nature of this type of accommodation requires that, where an employer operates its business on Saturdays, a Saturday Sabbatarian’s accommodation will require another employee to work a Saturday shift.”

Additional sources for this story

Some links will take you to other sites, in a new window.

- Hold the Phone (Inside Higher Ed)
- Full text of ruling (US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit)
An appeal from our founder, Dr. Jeffrey Mirus:

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Show 1 Comments? (Hidden)
More hospitals adjust bills for shooting victims unable to pay

By Erin Udell The Denver Post The Denver Post

After Children's Hospital Colorado officials announced Wednesday that they will forgive unpaid medical bills for Aurora shooting victims, two other local hospitals issued statements regarding adjustments of victims' bills.

Parker Adventist Hospital said Thursday it will adjust patients' bills and cover hospital costs not paid by insurance.

"We feel it is important to support the patients who have suffered as a result of this tragedy," said Morre Dean, Parker Adventist Hospital CEO, in a news release. "We hope that this small gesture can help bring some comfort."

Denver Health also released a statement saying they will continue to treat shooting victims regardless of their ability to pay. For patients who are unable to pay, Denver Health said they discount the hospital bills by 70 percent.

HealthOne, which operates the Medical Center of Aurora and Swedish Medical Center, said Wednesday it would limit or eliminate some charges based on circumstances.

Erin Udell: 303-954-1223, eudell@denverpost.com
Mayor Don Higginson was among eight to wield a shovel at the groundbreaking for the San Diego Central Seventh-day Adventist Church—an undertaking that’s been more than 45 years in the making due to financial restrictions and leadership turnover.

Higginson was joined by local pastors Hwi Kim, Joey Oh and Limuel Liwanag, as well as Victor Vaughn of the local Agape Baptist Church, David Zecha of Benchmark Construction and dignitaries Brian Neal, Verlon Strauss and Tom Staples from the Southeastern California Conference of Riverside’s SDA Church.

“The theme of the dedication focused on community,” said Bonnie Peterson, church clerk and longtime member, of the July 20 event.

Peterson says the church’s members want to be “more involved and present in the community” to help those in need with things like food and clothing supplies or yard work and neighborhood cleanup projects.

With financial assistance from congregation donations and the Conference—an organizing body of churches in one geographical area—construction is slated for completion in six to eight months.

“With the enlarged facility, the church members will offer cooking and nutrition classes, periodic health screenings and tutoring for children …” Peterson said, adding that they will consider other opportunities to best serve the community.

Oh, a pastor for 10 years who has served the San Diego’s Central congregation for seven months, says he most enjoyed the sense of unity among the approximately 100 groundbreaking attendees.

“I enjoyed just watching all the people come together and being so excited about the beginning of this new, big project,” he said.
Community Involvement Focus of Recent Church Groundbreaking - Poway, CA - http://poway.patch.com/articles/san-diego-central-seventh-day-adventist...
Alaska News

CHIP Graduates 31 in Homer Alaska
Valdez Church Creates ‘Bags of Love’ for Domestic Violence Victims

Valdez Church Creates ‘Bags of Love’ for Domestic Violence Victims

The Valdez (Alaska) Church women's ministries department adopted the local community's Advocate for Victims of Domestic Violence Agency and is working with the agency to reach out by providing hand-quilted blankets to children and women who are victims of domestic violence.

In 2010, Jean Gobah, Alaska Conference women's ministries director, met with the agency's director, along with Deb Campbell and Sharon Mills, Valdez Church members. Campbell and Mills had contacted Gobah for help in starting the project. Thanks to contributions from the annual North American Division July women's ministries offering the project got started.

“This is my vision to help out in the community,” Mills says. The women meet once a week to quilt blankets by hand. The blankets, called "It's My Very Own," and other personal items fill "Bags of Love" given to mothers and children seeking safety in the local shelter.

In addition, "Bags of Care," complete with toiletries and personal items, are given to the women.

“Bags of Comfort,” is a joint effort with Alaska Adventist Community Services and the Alaska Conference women's ministries departments, providing fleece, no-stitch blankets to victims of community disasters, like fires or floods, which force them to leave their homes.

Items made by the Valdez women are also sent to the neighboring community of Cordova, Alaska. A Valdez radio station contacted women after hearing about their efforts, and is planning to provide ads requesting donations for the project.

Jean Francis-Gobah, Alaska women's ministries director