Senate Chaplain Barry Black is receiving media attention as a result of his publicized prayers for the U.S. Congress during the government shutdown. Listen to a five-minute radio interview that was broadcast on Washington, D.C. WTOP-FM radio this morning, where he held fast to his "pastoral mode" in quoting Scripture and sharing a request to join him in prayer for our country. MORE

More than 3,000 people from across central Georgia crowded into a gymnasium in Milledgeville, Ga., population 19,401 (2012) for opening night of "I Still Have Hope" evangelism series. Professional football player Michael Vick joined pastors of Milledgeville and Dublin, Ga., on opening night, to speak about hope and the second coming of Jesus. The 23-member church had been preparing for the last three or four years. Billboards were put up across the city, a website was posted, and more than 4,000 tracts were distributed. More: October, 2013 Southern Tidings, p. 15

The newly opened, award-winning, $16 million Tom and Vi Zapara School of Business now houses La Sierra University's (LSU) business program, with more than 400 students enrolled. The grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony held Sept. 26, took place in front of the Zapara school, with university leaders and dignitaries seated at the top of the main entrance steps, including the building's primary benefactors, Tom and Vi Zapara and School of Business Dean John Thomas. LSU's School of Business' Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), organized in 1991, won six national or international SIFE trophies by 1994 and two World Cups in 2002 and 2007. MORE

Gary Thurber, Rocky Mountain Conference president, has accepted a call to become Executive Secretary of the Lake Union, where he will replace Rodney Grove who recently retired. Thurber is returning to the Lake Union territory where he served as president of the Indiana Conference prior to his service in the Rocky Mountain Conference where he has served as president since July, 2009.

Annual Council News:
Membership Nears 18 Million, Secretary Highlights Regions of Growth, Decline
Consistent, expressive faith called for in Annual Council messages
Creative outreach projects highlighted at Council on Evangelism ...
Management expert Hamel exhorts Adventist leaders to encourage 'radicals'
Creation movie central to church identity is key to 2014 evangelism

Special Days
October Focus: Adventist Heritage
Oct. 19, Spirit of Prophecy Sabbath
Oct. 26, Pathfinder Sabbath
Oct. 26, GC Creation Sabbath

Offerings
Sample Offertory Readings

What's a "Building Block?"
Women in Ministry
Watch: "Women in Ministry"
Extending the potential and practice of women clergy
Annual Council delegates review suggested changes to 28 Fundamental Beliefs
Annual Council again holds class: Working Policy 201
Ten years on, Adventist Church’s Hope Channel claims global victories
Adventist treasurer makes case for inclusion of young adults
First phase of comprehensive health ministry will promote future work
ANN Video Annual Council updates

Last Thursday and Friday I attended the LEAD Conference which was held here at the General Conference Office. It was very stimulating and challenging. Dr. Gary Hamel, considered to be one of the world’s foremost experts on business and strategy, presented an insightful lecture on change within any organization. He challenged participants to decide whether they were more interested in Redemption, Renewal, and Reconciliation than they were in policies, programs, and procedures.

Adventists in the News
Adventist HealthCare tries White Oak move again
Southwestern’s business department unveils innovative Information Wall
Adventist Health breaks ground on birth center
Portland Adventist Community Services Recognizes John Korb
McHendry: Discovering Broomfield’s Seventh-day Adventist Church

Does your church or conference need more youth leaders? If a church has many or not enough youth, and would like to build the youth program and to become more youth-friendly, but has no budget for a full time youth minister, the Certified Lay Youth Pastor (CLYP) was designed to help. According to Barna Group Research, only one out of 20 churches has a youth pastor. Young people need and are looking for a leader. There are potential leaders out there and within four to nine months, your church could have trained volunteers who will be able to draw the youth of your church and community to Jesus. CLYP requires that each participant be approved by their pastor. It provides online training, a practicum, and requires a final project - all described on their CLYP website.
October is Spirit of Prophecy Month at www.adventistbookcenter.com, and you can get 25% off on all titles by Ellen G. White (priced at $5 or above). Browse Ellen G. White books.

Did you know you are awesomely created? (Get the full-screen video)

Fundamental Beliefs video #7 from My Way to Jesus: "Did you know you are awesomely created?"

Share on your own website: Just go to www.vimeo.com/channels/didyouknow for the entire series and click on the "Share" button in the upper right corner of a specific video for the embed code, to share on social media or email to a friend.

REACH: Alignment within our church

Encouraging our pastors – Anyone who has ever received encouragement would never underestimate its value. Someone once said, "An encouraging word makes all the difference in carrying a burden." We can support our pastors and their families by taking up the work God has called us to individually. Several ways of encouraging and appreciating our pastors are described in the October issue of Mid-America Union's Outlook magazine, pp 6-8. The entire month of October is designated as Pastor Appreciation Month. Use it to develop your own spiritual gift of encouragement, and keep developing it all year long.

MORE

NAD NewsPoints- Barry Black interview, 3,000 hear M. Vick, LSU business school, Annual Council news, lay youth pastor training, sale on SOP Books...
WASHINGTON - Americans hoping for an end to the gridlock that's caused a partial government shutdown have an option aside from protesting and rallying in front of the Capitol, according to U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black.

They can pray.

"I think the most important thing that voters can do, quite frankly, is to join me in prayer," Black said during an interview Wednesday with WTOP. "There's a Bible verse in James 5:16 that says, 'The effectual, fervent prayers of the righteous avail much.' And so I believe that it is time for citizens to pray."

Black, a native of Baltimore and retired Navy rear admiral, has garnered attention recently for his prayers at the start of Senate sessions -- supplications which have included a plea to "save us from the madness."

The Washington Post notes Black's spotlight has stretched even to "Saturday Night Live," where cast member Kenan Thompson parodied his prayers.
When asked Wednesday if he had started to lose faith with members of Congress, Black responded with one of many biblical references he sprinkled throughout the interview and was adamant that he still has hope.

"I'm confident that God's purposes will prevail," Black said, "and no matter what happens, in everything he is working for the good of those who love him, says Romans 8:28, and I certainly do love him."

He also said the U.S. government isn't alone in dealing with what many see as dysfunction.

"Dysfunction is par for the course in a sinful world, so it's not something that surprises me," he said. "But in spite of the dysfunction, somehow, this great nation has managed to navigate through some rather treacherous waters, and I'm trusting God that it will do it again."

Not every statement Black made to WTOP referenced his biblical worldview, however.

When asked whether he was tough as a Navy admiral, the chaplain responded with a deadpan cinematic shout-out.

"Well, sometimes you have to be tough, as it says in the movie 'The Godfather."

Hear Black's entire interview with WTOP and see him in action below.
Hope: the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best.

Today, more and more people are finding themselves without hope. Instead, they are living with fear and concern, not only about the future, but the here and now. Jobs that were once considered stable are now questionable. The children are no longer safe from harm in the nation’s schools. Wars, terrorism, natural disasters, and deadly diseases take the lives of millions each year.

But, there is Good News! Help is available, not the kind the world has wherein it wishes for the best, but one that is based on the promises of God and the knowledge of His soon return. This is the hope.
that John T. Boston, newly appointed pastor, and the members of Ebenezer Church in Milledgeville, Georgia, and First Church of Dublin in Dublin, Georgia, want to share in their communities through the “I Still Have Hope” evangelistic crusade.

“There are so many messages out there that have very little to do with that hope. People are talking about getting better jobs and better houses. Those things are vitally important as we live and occupy time on Earth, but the hope that burns in my heart and the heart of my churches is that Christ is going to soon come, very soon come, and that’s what we want to share with the world,” said Boston. “We want to share the second advent of Christ. We want to share that the world will not always be as bad as it is, because it’s worse than it has ever been, and it’s not getting better.”

On opening night, more than 3,000 people from across central Georgia packed the Walter B. William gymnasium in Milledgeville to not only hear the message of hope from Boston, but to hear professional football player Michael Vick speak.

With a focus on showing people that change is possible, Ebenezer members brought Vick in to share his personal, life-altering testimony.

“He came to express that he did have hope. A lot of people thought that when he was incarcerated that there was just going to be a contract out there waiting on him; that wasn’t the case. He needed somebody to come along aside him, and let him know, ‘you’re going to make it through this,’” adds Boston. “That translates into the hope that people need to know they can have in Christ...another chance, another opportunity, even though they have, by their own choices, messed up, derailed, or gotten off track in life. Christ has the ability to take you and use you in another area.”

Boston preached for about 20 minutes on the second coming of Christ and the state of the dead. Followed by Vick’s message about second chances and redemption, two themes attached to Vick since the dog-fighting allegations in 2007.

“I’m a guy that has been given a second chance in life,” said Vick, who spoke for eight minutes. “I know what that second chance is like.”

Vick — about believing in yourself, being around people who believed in him, and taking advantage of first chances — said, “Believe in yourself, listen to your parents, listen to the people who care about you, and don’t ever stop believing in yourself.”

The small, 23-member church prepared untiringly for the week-long crusade. “We have been preparing for a crusade for the last three to four years. We’ve been fasting, praying, and doing prayer walks in the community we picked. We prayed with the people who are in need of prayer, and consoled those who needed consolation,” said Malcolm May, Ebenezer head elder. “So we’ve been preparing, not knowing what the outcome of the event was going to be.”

Two billboards were put up across the city, more than 4,000 tracks were passed out, and a website istillhavehope.com was set up for attendees to register for free tickets. Those who registered for the event were given the option to receive free Bible studies, and members of the church in pairs or family groups were responsible for conducting the studies.

Boston’s philosophy is to start with these large events, take those that respond to the appeal, bring them to the church, and use the evangelistic meeting to get them ready for baptism. “I Still Have Hope” evangelistic crusade yielded 62 baptized souls for the Lord in the cities of Milledgeville and Dublin.

Ebenezer and First Church of Dublin are taking their cities by storm, sharing the truth, and giving great hope to those in their community. They are doing it with one goal and question in mind, “How can we be guiltless when the Lord comes and ask us what did you do for Milledgeville and Dublin?”
Jill Richards, a graduate business student at La Sierra University is sometimes asked by schoolmates, ‘are you going to ‘the building?’ Do you have classes in there?’

Richards, who is pursuing a Master of Business Administration in finance degree can happily answer ‘yes.’ She is among more than 400 students enrolled this fall in La Sierra’s business program based in the newly opened, award-winning, $16 million Tom and Vi Zapara School of Business. She and classmate Sherani Johnson, a second-year MBA student were among approximately 600 people who attended the highly anticipated grand opening celebration Sept. 26 of the Zapara School of Business. The festive occasion included talks by California State Senator Richard Roth and his wife, Cindy Roth, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce.

The grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony took place in front of the Zapara school, with university leaders and dignitaries seated at the top of the main entrance steps, including the building’s primary benefactors, Tom and Vi Zapara and School of Business Dean John Thomas. Audience members were seated on a patio area paved with historical markers, inaugural bricks and legacy bricks contributed by donors, many of who attended the grand opening. Following welcoming comments from La Sierra’s Vice President for Student Life Yami Bazan, and Provost Steve Pawluk, Ricardo Graham, chairman of La Sierra’s Board of Trustees launched the ceremony with words of appreciation for the business school and its rise within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

“The school’s previous building was bursting at the seams. This impressive new building, and the faith-based learning that will take place inside it, establishes La Sierra University as the leading institution for business education in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church,” said Graham. “Our commitment is that students who study here will develop a strong foundation based on the values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, then build on that foundation with a vision to create the ground-breaking ideas that will shape tomorrow’s economy.”

Thomas, in his address noted that business education within the Adventist system, as in other Christian denominations, has historically been viewed with skepticism, and in fact played “a limited role in La Sierra’s early history,” he said. “Business …has too often been viewed as corrupted by dishonesty, cheating, and narrow self-interest,” said Thomas. “Fortunately, when La Sierra alums Tom and Vi Zapara entered the world of business in the early 1950s, they did not share the skepticism about business embraced by so many of their fellow Adventists. They saw business as a way to participate in God’s creative work in the world, as a way of doing good, of discovering and embodying excellence.”

Continued Thomas, “The motto of the Zapara School of Business is simple -- ‘Create Value. Make a difference.’ We seek to put creativity —human creativity that mirrors and embodies and cooperates with God’s—on center stage. …Ongoing innovation, driven by entrepreneurial risk-taking in the social, cultural, and economic spheres, has dramatically enhanced the lives of people across our planet. We want our students to join in this amazing creative process.”

The Zaparas are Seventh-day Adventist philanthropists and former La Sierra students who contributed $5 million in seed funding for the new business building. Violet Zapara graduated from La Sierra in 1947 and her husband attended in 1950. The couple founded Zee Medical Inc. in 1952, an occupational first aid, safety and training products company that grew to serve more than 400,000 manufacturing plants, construction firms, restaurants, hotels and other organizations in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. The Zaparas sold the company 30 years later to McKesson Corporation.

Just before the ceremonial cutting of the large red ribbon stretched across the main glass doors of the business school, Tom Zapara asked to make a few comments. He said he and his wife became connected with the business school 13 years ago through their friendship with Thomas. They were highly impressed with the accomplishments of the school’s SIFE team and listened to Thomas’s dream for a larger school in which he could grow the program. “We’re proud to do it [donation] and we thank you for giving us this opportunity,” Zapara said. “Without Johnny this building would never have happened. He kept sharing that dream with me.”

He noted that he met his wife, Violet, during the one year he studied at La Sierra and motioned to his grandchildren and great grandchildren in attendance. “The best thing that ever happened to me at this university is that I met Vi,” said Zapara. “We just love this place, La Sierra.”
To the students Zapara said, “Wherever you are, always give more than what’s expected, do more than what’s expected. You will be outstanding and a witness to God.”

In her talk, Cindy Roth noted the chamber’s involvement from the university’s inception in 1922, when the chamber supported the decision of the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to create a school on a former Mexican land grant known as Rancho La Sierra. She also cited her predecessor Art Pick, a beloved Riverside community leader and former chambers of commerce president who mentored Roth and was a member of La Sierra’s board of trustees.

“The chamber has been so proud of the hard work and accomplishments” of La Sierra’s Students In Free Enterprise team, now known as Enactus, Roth said. “I still have my Kellogg’s Corn Flakes box,” she said, holding up the cereal box that bears a photo of one of La Sierra’s World Cup winning SIFE teams. The team, organized in 1991 and based in the business school, won six national or international SIFE trophies by 1994 and two World Cups in 2002 and 2007. “You guys, you gotta’ bring it home again,” Roth said.

In the business world, La Sierra students “will raise the bar even higher, and that will mean great things for this business community. La Sierra is going to put Riverside on the map,” she said.

Roth’s husband, Richard Roth spoke next. He cited the differences in business practices between fallen Tyco International chief executive Dennis Kozlowski, convicted in 2005 of stealing more than $150 million from his company, and Whole Foods Market co-CEO John Mackey who earns $1 a year and whose company is widely known for its ethical and sustainable business practices. Mackey co-authored the book, “Conscious Capitalism, Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business,” which challenges business leaders to aim for a higher purpose and work “for the good of both business and society as a whole.”

“For over 25 years the School of Business has been educating students, not only in business, but in ethics and service,” Roth said. “Ethics in business as in all walks of life is a living testament to who we are. The Zapara School of Business is where business and ethics join together [to create] leaders who are unafraid to answer Mackey’s call. They will continue to serve as the moral compass for the region, the state and the world.”

Roth concluded by presenting Thomas and university President Randal Wisbey with a state resolution commemorating the opening of the new business school.

La Sierra business student Jessica Hunzelman also gave a talk titled “Hope.” She remembered her introduction to the campus and its business school in 2008 and said she is particularly excited about the new building’s startup garages, incubators where students can grow their ideas into new businesses. “They show how much this school believes in us,” Hunzelman said, by allowing students to take risks and dreams and turn them into realities. “Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for giving us the chance to do great things,” she said.

Wisbey, who lead the ribbon cutting ceremony, thanked the university’s donors and Thomas for his vision for the new building. “I thank you for the dream, for not letting it go,” and for the relationships and connections Thomas has formed that have brought many people to the school, Wisbey said. He expressed gratitude to the Zaparas, “for their extraordinary commitment to their alma mater. Tom and Vi Zapara are wonderful examples of the visionary leaders La Sierra seeks to develop,” Wisbey said.

Anil Punjabi, a physician and friend of Thomas’s was among the crowd that attended the ceremony. “Johnny is a guy with a passion and a dream that made this happen,” Punjabi said. “He’s a great model for young people, a great mentor.” He described the new building as “inspirational” and said, “a building is only as good as the people who inhabit it.”

Richards, the MBA finance student, views the 60,200-square-foot new business school building, prominently situated near the campus entrance, as a landmark structure that can serve as an attraction for potential students. Her classmate concurred.

“I think it’s pretty cool, it’s great. You can see it from pretty much anywhere,” said Johnson. She elected to enroll in La Sierra’s business program through the influence of business school Dean John Thomas, a friend of her father’s.

“It’s humbling to know we got to be part of the university and to see this come to fruition,” said Wayne Herling, an alum of the business school and one of the new building’s donors. His son, Jared Herling graduated from the business school in 2009.

“It’s a dream come true for Johnny Thomas, whom I have a lot of respect for,” Herling said. “In the Adventist world different schools are known for different areas of expertise and obviously La Sierra is going to be the business school in the Adventist system.” La Sierra’s students will be successful in business, he continued, “and more importantly will succeed in life with God’s blessing and give back.”

For a photo album from the Zapara School of Business grand opening, go to https://www.facebook.com/LaSierraU.
Executive Secretary G. T. Ng, right, delivers his annual statistical report to Annual Council. In addition to reporting that the denomination now has nearly 18 million members, he also highlighted which regions are the fastest growing, the fastest declining, and why. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Ng and team identify numerous world stats, trends in annual report

October 13, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Edwin Manuel Garcia

The Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to enjoy dramatic growth in Southern Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa, which has pushed worldwide membership to nearly 18 million.

The growth includes more than 1.1 million baptisms last year, with the largest number of converts worshiping in the East-Central Africa Division.

“One on any given day, 3,052 people join the church. Every hour 127 people are baptized. Every minute, two individuals are baptized, and we praise God for that,” G. T. Ng, executive secretary of the Adventist world church, told church leaders during his report at the 2013 Annual Council in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

Ng’s report heavily emphasized statistics based on trends that emerged several years ago: Nations in the northern hemisphere are experiencing slow growth, yet the Adventist population is booming in much of the southern hemisphere.

Some 6.6 million members live in Africa, 5.8 million are in Latin America, and 3.4 million are in Asia.

In addition to reporting on church membership at the division level, Ng also identified the top 10 unions that are growing, plateauing and declining within those divisions.

The fastest growing unions from 2003 to 2012 were in India, Bangladesh, Zambia, Uganda, south Central America, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Pakistan.

The top plateauing unions – defined as having membership growth rate of less than 12 percent in a 10-year period – included Southern Germany, Poland, Japan, Hungary, Switzerland, New Zealand, Austria, Portugal and Australia. Three unions in North America also made the plateauing list: Pacific, Lake and North Pacific unions.

While North America is considered slow growing, it still provides the single-largest amount of tithe, at $933 million. The next-closest tithe-producing division is South America, with more than $500 million.

The 15 fastest declining unions are in Euro-Asia, Trans-European and Inter-European divisions – not surprising given the population loss in the Eastern European nations setback by a major economic crisis and high unemployment in and around the former Soviet Union.

“There’s been a huge exodus of Seventh-day Adventist membership… to other countries,” Ng said.

One of the brightest spots in rising membership in 2012 occurred in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, which reported the fastest growth rate, at 7 percent.
Southern Asia-Pacific President Alberto C. Gulfan Jr. told ANN that most of the growth is occurring in the Philippines, which is undergoing a neighborhood-based evangelism campaign that is being credited for some of the 80,000 baptisms since 2011.

The care-group ministry program, called Integrated Evangelism Lifestyle, consists of an Adventist family praying for a family in their neighborhood, and inviting the family to a weekly study of health principles, family life matters and, later, Bible study.

“It’s catching fire,” Gulfan said. “We are seeing that in South Philippines, where the growth is fastest and largest. It’s because they have strongly implemented the program of the Integrated Evangelism Lifestyle.”

On the other end of the growth spectrum was the South Pacific Division, which reported a membership decline of about 5 percent. Division President Barry Oliver said the loss was expected because a comprehensive audit removed many members from church records. “The growth rate suffered simply because we caught up on all the statistics to make them more accurate.”

While in the global church structure, Australia is considered a slow-growth region, Adventism, it turns out, is the fastest growing denomination in the country, according to the government’s census.

Oliver said he expects membership to grow as a result “Beyond,” an Australian-produced DVD series designed for secular individuals.

Ng’s report also included updates from entities under the Secretariat, including Adventist Mission; Archives, Statistics and Research; Adventist Volunteers; and the Office of Global Membership Software, which is in the process of implementing a universal, Internet-based system to report church membership in a consistent manner around the world.

The director of the office, Sherri Ingram-Hudgins, said that tens of thousands of churches submit membership statistics and transfers in many different ways: Some church workers still produce documents for their conference in handwriting, fax, email and traditional mail.

Eventually, she said, all churches will be equipped and workers trained to use a consistent web-based platform called Adventist Church Management System, which will streamline the reporting and recording process.

“When they report their baptisms and transfers,” Ingram-Hudgins said, “the information to will flow seamlessly to the parent organization, the conferences or the missions.”

--See more of G. T. Ng's statistical slides in the ANN Flickr Account.
Consistent, expressive faith called for in Annual Council messages

Seventh-day Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson delivers the Sabbath sermon at the denomination's world headquarters on October 12 during the opening weekend of Annual Council. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

1888 Message recalled; Wilson emphasizes communication of Gospel

October 12, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Mark A. Kellner

One hundred and twenty-five years after the Seventh-day Adventist Church began its focus on righteousness by faith, global leaders of the 17-million member movement gathered to hear calls for consistent, expressive faith in the merits of Jesus.

The weekend commenced on October 11 with an evening program that celebrated the 1888 General Conference session and its focus on Christ’s righteousness.

“Jesus has become my sufficiency,” declared Ganoune Diop, an Adventist theologian and scholar who serves as the church’s liaison to the United Nations. Raised in the West African nation of Senegal, Diop contrasted the faith of his childhood with his adult Christian belief in a Lord who died to redeem broken and sinful humanity.

Shawn Brace, a young adult pastor from Maine gave a brief but powerful testimony of being raised in an Adventist home where parents consistently focused on the righteousness of Christ. “When we fall in love with Jesus, obedience becomes a delight,” Brace said. “This is the message we are hungry for.” He said young adults are not looking for “dancing bears” and other “trappings” to attract them to the church; rather, they want the “authentic message” of trusting in the salvation offered by Jesus.

Artur Stele, a general vice-president of the church and head of its Biblical Research Institute, focused on the Old Testament narrative of Mephibosheth, the son of King David’s friend, Jonathan, to draw parallels with the mercy and grace extended to broken human beings through Jesus.

And Lael Caesar, an associate editor of Adventist Review and Adventist World magazines, used the Luke 17 story of Jesus healing ten lepers to underline that it is God who does the work of salvation and healing in human lives: “Can you imagine a more powerful message on salvation than a story of cleansing from leprosy—by faith? What did these guys do to cleanse themselves? “As they went along, they were cleansed.” What can you do to cleanse yourself? Remember the lepers and let go of the burden and anxiety and stress. Take Jesus at His word: “As they went along, they were cleansed.”

The balance of the Friday evening meeting was devoted to reports of evangelism from the eastern United States and the NY13 effort covering New York City and neighboring areas in New Jersey and Connecticut. Church leaders reported a total of nearly 4,100 baptisms and 31 new congregations established as results of the year-long campaign. Bible worker Heidi Santiago inspired the 400 audience members with her reports of direct personal work among the people of Manhattan. She credits the work of the Holy Spirit for the dozens of Bible studies now underway in an urban area believed by many to be one of the most difficult in North America to penetrate with the Adventist message.

On Saturday morning, October 12, the church leaders and delegates turned to worship, prayer and reflection. Following a Sabbath school lesson presented by Washington Adventist University professor Gaspar Colon and Personal Ministries department associate May-Ellen Colon, worshippers prayed for Southern Africa-Indian Ocean division president Paul Ratsara and his family as they mourn the passing of Paul’s wife, Denise Ratsara, who succumbed to cancer this week. Inter-America Division president Israel Leito, whose son, Deutly, is...
hospitalized in Miami with a serious illness, is also absent from this year’s Annual Council of the Executive Committee.

Speaking to a capacity crowd of more than 450 in the General Conference auditorium, General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson emphasized a call to “communicate God’s truth in love and illuminate the earth with God’s glory.”

He noted the pressures of the age that tempt Christians to abandon Bible teaching.

“There are those in the church and outside the church who wish to change the very beliefs we have held sacred and change the character of the Seventh-day Adventist Church itself – people who want to turn the grace of God into something vile thus denying Jesus Himself, even though they pretend to lift up His name,” Wilson warned. “As we communicate truth to those who do not know Christ, we must guard against the world entering the church, [and] neutralizing its mission.”

Wilson pointed to changing social attitudes toward homosexuality as an illustration of the abandonment of Biblical teaching: “The acquiescence to homosexuality that is pervading so many societies today is nothing more than the old immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah that is in complete opposition to God’s Holy Word and, according to the Bible, will result in not receiving eternal life for those who reject God’s loving and saving efforts to turn them away from sinful behavior.”

Wilson also urged Adventists to examine the integrity of their witness: “Are we communicating to the world a different message than we intend by how we personally use the Internet, by what we watch on television, by what we wear, by how we use our time, by what kind of music we listen to or by our worship style?”

Wilson appealed to members and leaders to adopt thoughtful, reflective elements in worship: “Recognizing the world is full of various cultures, let’s worship in simplicity and in truth using the Word of God and aligning ourselves with the culture of heaven.”

As members and leaders of the world church paired off two-by-two for prayer, Wilson challenged his hearers to rededicate themselves to Christian service and proclamation: “As we come to the end of time, realizing the devil is making every effort to confuse our message and mission, let us rest firmly on God’s Word and promises to make us truly His messengers.”

The Friday evening and Sabbath morning worship services are initial events of the General Conference’s 2013 Annual Council. Items of church business will be discussed, including mission strategy, urban evangelism, health ministry, and financial priorities for the coming year.
Creative outreach projects highlighted at Council on Evangelism & Witness

Mike Ryan, an Adventist world church vice president, chairs the Council on Evangelism and Witness, which is presented each year at Annual Council for the past decade. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Health food store ministering to hundreds; safety conversations with neighbors

October 13, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN

Top regional leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist world church heard examples of authentic Christianity this morning during the Council on Evangelism and Witness report to Annual Council.

“People everywhere are looking for someone who represents integrity in their Christian experience,” said Rick McEdward, director of the Adventist world church’s Global Mission Study Centers. Church leaders should take the New Testament model of Christian witness, in which actions march in lockstep with words, as a cue, he said.

McEdward and Jerry Page, secretary of the Adventist world church’s Ministerial Association, introduced Irene Tarigan and Arlaine Djim, Indonesian professionals who quit stable, high-paying jobs to launch the Chinese Ministry Center in Jakarta, a center of influence impacting the city’s growing Chinese population. The center includes a health food store—proceeds from which pay the rent—a lecture hall, and space for worship and prayer.

Tarigan and Djim first raised awareness of the center by hosting a health seminar and teaching the principles of a healthy diet and regular exercise. Since then, the center has steadily gained a reputation for supporting late-stage cancer patients whose doctors have given up on them, they said. The ministry recently outgrew the original center and now includes several satellite centers, each working with 60 to 100 people. Three out of four centers have spawned Adventist congregations that each see an average of 50 visitors every week.

In Melbourne, Australia, church members are distributing nine-volt batteries to their neighbors to activate smoke detectors. A conversation about safety in case of fire often segues into a discussion of God’s desire to protect them not only physically, but also spiritually.

The church’s Trans-European Division is intensifying efforts to fund innovative outreach projects, said division President Bertil Wiklander. In London, the “Sabbath sofa” project gives Adventist young people a unique way to share the church’s belief in the seventh-day Sabbath. When passers-by take a break on a sofa strategically placed on a busy sidewalk, it’s an opportunity to talk about how Sabbath rest can bring balance to people’s lives and help them avoid burnout.

A report from leaders from the Japan Union Conference indicated that the region continues to face the challenges of growing secularism and an aging population. At one Adventist church in Tokyo, the youngest member is 62 years old. But a bright spot is a comprehensive urban evangelism project called Tokyo ’13 that leaders say is reenergizing the church in Japan.

In Australia, the new “Beyond” series is preparing audiences for public evangelism by first meeting needs and offering friendship. The 14-part documentary series uses storytelling to engage audiences from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds and address universal topics such as the search for hope and meaning. The series comes with a toolkit to guide personal evangelism.

“In the hands of a loving Christian, “Beyond” is mightily powerful in introducing the gospel in a contemporary context,” said Joanne Davies, an Adventist businesswoman who introduced the project.
Mike Ryan, an Adventist world church general vice president who chairs the Council on Evangelism and Witness, urged delegates to put special focus on the Middle East and China—two regions that he said pose “tremendous opportunities” but are still only home to a small percentage of Christians.

Political and religious sensitivities challenge outreach in both regions, but church leaders are working with local members to find new ways to contextualize the church’s message of hope and truly meet local needs.

Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson echoed Ryan, asking delegates to make outreach to China and the Middle East a matter of prayer. “Take home this great burden,” Wilson said. “Think about it, pray about it and then let’s do something.”

Delegates also heard an update on the Adventist world church’s Revival and Reformation initiative this morning. A production team from world church headquarters is headed for Northwest Africa this week to shoot reenactments of biblical stories, including the New Testament story of the Pentecost.

Andre Brink, associate director of the Adventist world church’s Communication department, said he hopes the stories will help modern Adventists better relate to timeless biblical principles.

“When there were problems, church members in the New Testament would come together and pray in a united way, and this would lead to growth in the church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,” Brink said. “We are hoping this example inspires today’s church members to go back to the methods of the Bible.”
Management expert Hamel exhorts Adventist leaders to encourage innovation

Gary Hamel speaks to Adventist Church leaders on Friday, October 11. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

World’s leading business thinker among those presenting at GC’s LEAD sessions

October 12, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Mark A. Kellner/Adventist Review and Ansel Oliver/ANN

One of Silicon Valley’s brightest minds challenged 400 world leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to create a climate of innovation at every level of the denomination.

"I think aspiration is the best insurance against irrelevance," management thinker Gary Hamel declared in a keynote address to the Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) training program, which preceded the October 11 opening of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists’ Annual Council. "No organization ever outperforms its own aspirations."

Hamel, cited by The Wall Street Journal as the world’s most influential business thinker, encouraged leaders to be aware of changing climates in their constituencies. Overall, he said, society is changing the way it views and interacts with institutions such as the church, sometimes rendering those institutions less effective: “Every successful organization is successful until it’s not,” adding, “as human beings, we are all susceptible to denial.”

The LEAD program is part of an effort to introduce Seventh-day Adventist Church decision-makers worldwide to current innovations and best practices in leadership.

Hamel is a founder of Strategos, an international management consulting firm. His books include “What Matters Now,” a guide to building organizations that thrive amid uncertainty and shifting priorities.

He urged Adventist leaders to facilitate experimentation and change within the organization’s ranks: “The pace for change is ultimately the question of how much experimentation is going on inside that organization,” Hamel said. “The job of every leader is make sure that change always seems more exciting than standing back.”

Hamel reminded his audience that while divinely-given truths are eternal, the structures of organizations to communicate those truths can and should adapt to the times: “We don't' worship tradition, we worship a risen Lord,” he said.

Drawing from his consulting experience at the epicenter of America’s high technology industry, the famed “Silicon Valley” area between San Jose and San Francisco, California, he noted that Google strives to have 5,000 experiments aimed at improving the firm’s computer search technology every year, with the expectation that a significant number will yield results for the firm.

“Basically every large corporation has an innovation lab in the Silicon Valley, he said. "Maybe the [Seventh-day Adventist] Church needs an innovation lab, too.”

Hamel said that while the church is committed to redemption, renewal and reconciliation, there are times when established programs, policies or practices obscure the core message.
"The only way you would really know you are committed is if you were willing to sacrifice some of those habits, some of those structures, to those commitments," he said.

G. T. Ng, executive secretary of the Adventist world church, said Hamel's earlier presentations to the Secretariat department sparked the invitation to address the leadership at this year's Council. Ng said the church can learn much from Hamel's message.

"The church at different levels could do more to overcome the inertia to change in terms of methodologies, to maximize the use of technology, to keep pace with a fast changing world," Ng said. "We probably could do better in empowering the rank and file for mission by removing or reducing red tape. In [Secretariat] we have already taken steps in that direction. The South Pacific Division's example of downsizing in order to allocate more money for mission is a good example."

The LEAD conference began Thursday evening with major presentations that featured research on the church's health message.

Fred Hardinge, an associate director of the world church’s Health Ministries department, addressed scientific evidence underlining the Adventist health message. After citing numerous studies backing up the various point, he noted that merely presenting health education is not sufficient.

"This message is not to be separated from the gospel message. Some of the health promoting effects of the health message have been confirmed by science, but today's most skillful and perceptive scientist cannot bring the dead to life," Hardinge said. "Jesus is the only life giver, and He is the only health giver."

Kathleen Kuntaraf, also an associate Health Ministries director, discussed how Seventh-day Adventist health principles can help fight against non-communicable diseases. "God truly cares for us and gave us this wholistic packaged prescription for our own good," she said. "However, the struggle between making good and bad choices for our health is a continuous one."

And Peter Landless, who recently assumed leadership of the Health Ministries department, noted the end-time importance of sharing health education with the world at large: "The world is facing unprecedented challenges both in the developed countries and in the emerging economies by the issues of obesity, type II diabetes, hypertension, tobacco-related diseases and coronary artery disease. We are called not only to practice temperance in our lives, live the health advantage that has been so generously given to us but also to share it with a broken and dying world."

Following Hamel’s Friday morning message, hypothetical and actual case studies of leadership situations were presented to the church leaders. A drama team of students from Washington Adventist University presented a skit pitting the arguments of “Dr. Evan Keel Church” against those from member “Youneeda Change,” asking the audience to decide how best to implement change.

Two other case studies, though hypothetical, also reflected challenges many administrators face. One centered on an Adventist hospital that was once a local leader, but had fallen on hard times, and the other concerned a dynamic pastor who, when elevated to a leadership position, was unable to gain cooperation and began to “steamroll” his positions through. In each of these instances, audience questions were designed to guide leaders into a greater understanding of how to deal with, and improve, such situations.
Creation movie central to church identity is key to 2014 evangelism

Annual Council delegates watch the movie "Creation: The Earth is a Witness" on Tuesday, October 15. The film is available on DVD and will be used as a key evangelism resource next year. [photo: Brandan Roberts]

Wilson calls film ‘magnificent tool’ for witnessing to thousands

October 15, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Edwin Manuel Garcia/ANN

Hundreds of church officials settled into the plush burgundy theater-style seats. Conversations faded into silence. As the overhead lights dimmed, all eyes were fixed upon the huge movie screen, assembled for the occasion. Suddenly, the hushed room was pierced by the shriek of a howling wind projected through the surrounding speakers. Then an image of Moses appeared to the booming rhythms of symphonic sounds, until the prophet dissolved and the scene gave way to clouds rolling over a mountain range.

The setting of the presentation may have well resembled a movie theater, but in fact, it was the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And the 27-minute, professionally produced film that the General Conference Executive Committee premiered in the auditorium Tuesday, called “Creation: The Earth Is a Witness,” will be one of the denomination’s key evangelism efforts for 2014.

“This incredible project is going to be a blessing to every single church around the world that is able to show it,” President Ted N. C. Wilson told the gathering of 350 pastors and other Annual Council delegates who watched the movie, which shows a day-by-day account of the Earth’s beginnings, filmed and edited with the cinematic quality of a major motion picture.

Wilson added: “This, I believe, is going to be a magnificent tool to bring thousands of people to the foot of the cross.”

In addition to reaching non-believers, the four-years-in-the-making movie by Adventist filmmaker Henry Stober can also send a message to a few vocal critics inside the church who have questioned the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief in a literal, six-day creation.

The film was initially a project Stober was preparing for his local congregation in Nürnberg, Germany. He studied photography for a year in Canada, and then traveled to five continents because he wanted to present God’s love and unique creative power.

More than 70,000 people have viewed the film in nine countries.

“I never realized it was going to be worldwide,” Stober, 46, said after the General Conference premiere.

The movie was introduced by Williams Costa Jr., director of the denomination’s Communication department, which has championed the project.

Quoting from Genesis 1:1, Costa said, “We need to proclaim to the world this prophetic truth,” and later added, “I don’t know why many people of faith have difficulty believing that the world was created in six days.”

“Creation,” opens with music to a scene shot in Iceland, in which Moses shows his scroll to his son, Gershom, while teaching him about the creation. A narrator, meanwhile, reads from Hebrews 11, explaining the meaning of faith.

The next scenes focus on each creation day using powerful images of nature that play out while the male narrator reads from Genesis
1:1-2:3.

In day one, the movie shows darkness and a bubbling body of water, and displays lights in bright yellow and orange filtering into the clouds, which turn to an orange and brown tone, to show the creation of light. In day two, to the sound of water drops, the camera soars through and above white clouds, and captures lighting to illustrate the creation of sky.

The dramatic footage continues into day three, at Brazil’s enormous Iguazu Falls, and also includes close-ups of vivid green vegetation and colorful flowers sprouting into full blossom using time-lapse videography.

The fourth day portrays footage of stars, constellations and planets, showing the magnitude of the solar system. On day five, to the narrator announcing, “Let the water teem with living creatures,” the film captures underwater sea life, including a shark and brightly colored fish, and later sea lions and exotic birds. On the sixth day, the film shows an impressive collection of wild animals and insects and finally, an image of hands molding dirt to form a human body.

At the end of the film, Moses and his son are kneeling before an altar, while the narrator reads the command to keep the Sabbath day holy. Then the screen fills with shots of waterfalls, clouds and sunlight emerging over snow-capped mountains, followed by the logo, “Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Church officials believe the movie, available on DVD, will captivate viewers and compel them to learn more about the denomination’s strong ties to other Bible-based beliefs.

Vice President Ben Schoun made a direct appeal to the delegates, most of whom are officers of the 13 divisions and presidents of unions from every region of the globe.

“We encourage you, we invite you, we challenge you, to be a part of this. Make the creation project a meaningful one in your territory,” Schoun said.

--For more information about the church’s emphasis on creation, visit www.creationsabbath.net.
Annual Council delegates review suggested rewording to 28 Fundamental Beliefs

Artur Stele is a general vice president and chair of the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee. [ANN file photo]

Clearer, updated language would be up for vote at 2015 Session; no more ‘fruitage,’ just ‘fruit’

October 15, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN

Annual Council delegates today approved the next step in a five-year process to better articulate the church’s core beliefs, using clearer—and frequently more inclusive—language.

Adventist theologians led delegates through a reading of an edited draft of all 28 Fundamental Beliefs prepared by the church’s Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee. The group was appointed in 2011 to follow up on a decision during the 2010 General Conference Session to strengthen the church’s interpretation of origins.

It came as no surprise, then, that Fundamental Belief Number 6 received the most red ink. One proposed edit to the church’s belief on Creation replaces “In six days, the Lord made” with “In a recent, six-day creation, the Lord made.” Another suggested change specifies that creation took place within the span of “six literal days.”

The word “literal” closes what some Adventists have claimed is an interpretive loophole that hypothetically allows theistic evolution to explain the Genesis origins account.

The edited draft also replaces the document’s citation of the first verse of Genesis, which states “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth” with a passage from Exodus 20, which says God created “the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them...”

The change allows for differing understandings of whether the creation of the “cosmos,” or universe, was coincident with the six-day creation of life on earth. Some creationist Adventist theologians believe Genesis 1:1 may refer to creation in a broader sense (see Job 38:7), whereas Exodus 20:11, the draft states, “seems to restrict the creative act to what took place during the six days of creation.”

“The suggested version doesn’t bring anything new to the belief. It just states with a firmer voice, or a more clear voice, what we have always believed,” said Artur Stele, an Adventist world church vice president and co-chair of the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee.

Overall, the draft proposes changes—most of which are minor and editorial in nature—to 18 of the church’s 28 Fundamental Beliefs.

Stele provided additional background on the new gender-neutral language that shows up consistently throughout the draft document. “Man and “mankind” now read “human” and “humanity.”

“We wanted to determine whether the suggestion was biblical or just reflecting the spirit of the day,” Stele said. After a close study of Hebrew usage in the Old Testament, “you cannot conclude words such as “man” only refer to the masculine gender.”

Even in the New Testament, Stele said, inclusivity is the clear biblical intent. The original Greek word “man” was always gender-neutral until the modern era. “It means human being,” he said.

The draft also underscores the church’s belief on Marriage and Family, suggesting that the phrase “a man and a woman” replace the current...
word “partners” to ensure that the church’s definition of marriage cannot apply to same-sex unions. The new version “removes any ambiguity,” church leaders said, that could be “misused” by Adventists supporting gay, lesbian or transgender marriages. Changes to Fundamental Belief Number 23 also include removing the word “disciplinarian” when urging parents to emulate Christ’s relationship with humanity when raising their children.

The draft also does away with outdated English vocabulary and usage. “Which” frequently becomes “that” and “gracious” is now used to describe God, instead of “beneficent.” Another change replaces the archaic word “fruitage” with “fruit.”

Stele assured delegates that the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee only included proposed changes that met several criteria. The only included suggestions that survived editorial scrutiny were ones that “deepen” the statement, refrain from “elaborations of ideas already present” or present key ideas currently missing. The committee also welcomed editorial suggestions meant to clarify or condense the beliefs. Members rejected any suggestions that they felt “primarily promoted a personal agenda,” he said.

Adventist world church General Vice President Ben Schoun, who chaired the presentation, reminded delegates that the draft is “not the final copy” and urged them not to spend the afternoon debating semantics. He then invited delegates to lead discussions in their respective church divisions and submit further edits to the Fundamental Beliefs by June 1, 2014.

The Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee will prepare a second draft of the document for the 2014 Annual Council, Schoun said. Ultimately, delegates will vote whether to add the second draft to the agenda of the 2015 General Conference Session, where a final vote would occur.
Annual Council again holds class: Working Policy 201

Adventist world church Executive Secretary G. T. Ng quizzes the “class” during Annual Council on October 14. Top church executives held a “Working Policy 201” lecture to reinforce principles of governance in the denomination.

Sequel presents professors Ng, Doukmetzian, Cooper; homework given

October 14, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Edwin Manuel Garcia/ANN

How do you explain some of the most mundane yet significant aspects of denominational policy and make it interesting for hundreds of church administrators who have come from around the world for the 2013 General Conference Annual Council?

You transform the 650-seat auditorium into a pretend college lecture hall, give pop quizzes, hand out apples and books as prizes – and ask an organist to play Pomp and Circumstance at the end of the 90-minute class.

In a sequel to the popular inaugural course last year, church officials Monday afternoon taught GCWP201 – General Conference Working Policy 201: Foundational Concepts in Church Organization and Governance.

A central purpose of the session was to help church leaders understand that the meetings they help oversee need to be in harmony with governance documents.

After the course, Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson took to the microphone to express the importance of the class: “What was presented today is surprisingly violated in many parts of the world,” he said. “I want you to take very special note of what has been presented. Make sure that we’re following in the right pathway of understanding what the Working Policy is all about.”

Much of the course, hosted by “chancellor” G. T. Ng, the animated executive secretary of the Adventist world church, and his “professors,” – Karnik Doukmetzian, the general counsel, and Lowell Cooper, a vice president – focused on a single passage contained in the 900-page Working Policy book, also known as the “family code of conduct.”

They were tasked with reviewing and explaining basic and advanced concepts, some of them as simple as the denomination’s organizational structure: Local churches report to conferences and missions, which report to unions, which in turn report to the General Conference.

Among the more complex: Understanding that the denomination has both corporate and ecclesiastical structure. For example, the corporate entity holds property and has fiduciary responsibility to the members, while the ecclesiastical entity is the non-profit arm that is held together by the Working Policy and Church Manual.

The hardcover, black-bound Working Policy book is designed to protect the organization from autocratic and erratic leadership, reactive decision-making, and widely differing patterns of action. The Church Manual, on the other hand, is the operational guide for local churches.

Doukmetzian shared how the church is structured from a legal standpoint. He explained how most of the denomination’s activities are accomplished through the church’s unincorporated entities, which includes unions and conferences. Yet, sometimes the denomination faces challenges – such as when an individual owns a church property, and that person dies, and surviving family members make legal claims to the land. “We’ve gotten into some difficulties,” Doukmetzian acknowledged.
Cooper went over the eight key elements of Working Policy Section B: Membership basis of organization; conferred status; representative and constituency-based; authority rooted in God; distributed to whole; committee system; shared administration, not presidential; unity of entities; and separate but not independent organizations.

He also stated the common mistakes when church institutions veer from their constitutions, bylaws and operating policies, such as when an executive committee finds that it did not address amendments on time.

“The point in all of this, brothers and sisters,” Cooper said, “is to make sure that we who bear the privileges and responsibilities of leadership in the church need somehow to demonstrate competency in this most essential function of organizational life, enabling membership to have its voice.”

He added: “The most important human resource in the church is trust, and those of us in leadership can act in ways that build trust.”

At the end of the class, Secretary Ng distributed evaluation forms and report cards. Every student present received an A+. The homework was to become more familiar with the church’s governance documents.
Ten years on, Adventist Church’s Hope Channel claims global victories

Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson, left, prays during a presentation by Hope Channel staff, who announced the opening of Hope Channel Philippines. [photo: Brandan Roberts]

New Philippines channel launched during Annual Council report

October 14, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Mark A. Kellner, Adventist Review

Devir Magaad uses his own strength to operate a pedicab—a tricycle with a large seat for passengers and cargo—through the streets of Cagayan de Oro City, capital of the southern province of Mindanao in the Republic of the Philippines. For that arduous work, he makes perhaps US$5 per day.

Although Magaad is not yet a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he was so inspired by the Adventist message and the potential for Christian television via a new Hope Channel Philippines, that he’s committed to donate 50 Philippine pesos, about $1.16, weekly to help the outreach grow.

“I’m here to willingly give my donation,” Magaad says to a camera filming his visit to a Seventh-day Adventist Church office. “I feel so happy to help the Lord’s work.”

That spirit, augmented by the commitment of millions around the globe, has propelled Hope Channel, a General Conference-owned network now consisting of 15 different satellite and broadcast operations spanning the globe and using a dozen or more languages. Delegates to the 2013 Annual Council heard a report celebrating the tenth anniversary of Hope Channel’s launch, which took place at the 2013 yearly business meeting, and witnessed the formal launch of the Philippines’ station.

Brad Thorp, Hope Channel president, recalled “a history of miracles” in the course of developing the network. In the past few years, Germany adjusted its broadcast standards to allow “single point-of-view” religious stations to operate in the nation, something that hadn’t been possible in more than six decades. Thorp noted that Hope Channel Germany was the first such station licensed by the government there. A similar license was approved in Bulgaria, and an application is pending in Russia, he added.

In 2009, Thorp recalled, the DirecTV satellite network, America’s largest, gave Hope Channel access to its 20.2 million U.S. subscribers. Such an opportunity might cost as much as $20 million, Thorp noted, but was given to Hope Channel without charge.

Along the way, Hope has added service for the Middle East and North Africa regions, India and China, Thorp said. The organization now has 65,000 hours of programming available for broadcast.

And such programs are bringing results, he added, quoting Erton Köhler, South American Division president: “Every week, thousands of people come into Adventist churches because of the Hope Channel.”

But it was the story of the Philippines opening which likely had the most emotional impact on the Annual Council audience. The three Seventh-day Adventist Church unions in the country, along with the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, headquartered near Manila, have established three media centers to serve production needs. However, licenses and related costs had to be met, a total, division president Alberto C. Gulfan Jr. said, of 520 million Philippine pesos, or approximately US$13 million. Broadcast licenses have already been obtained for five of the nation’s largest cities, and 36 more applications are due to be filed, Thorp added.

Thus was born a campaign to get 100,000 of the Philippine’s 1 million Seventh-day Adventists to pledge 20 pesos, about 46-cents U.S., every Sabbath for the next five years. It is to this campaign that pedicab driver Magaad is donating.
“When I first saw that [video] clip,” Thorpe said, “I wept. This is the vision of taking the gospel to the cities.”

Of the new Philippine broadcast venture, Thorp predicted it would “touch many in their homes, since many will not hear the gospel any other way.”

Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson said, “Hope Channel is part of fulfilling the illumination of the world. I commend the Southern Asia-Pacific Division’s officers” for the accomplishment. In a prayer dedicating the new channel, Wilson added, “May there be thousands of people in heaven because of this station.”
Adventist treasurer makes case for inclusion of young adults

Adventist world church Treasurer Robert E. Lemon calls for more inclusion of young adults in more financial decision-making in the denomination during his report to Annual Council on October 14. [photo: Brandan Roberts]

‘Leave young people a seat at the table of decision-making,’ Lemon says

The generosity of church members led by God’s spirit, not appropriations, will finish the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And young lay people, more often than senior administrators, will ignite that work.

Robert E. Lemon acknowledged that his prediction might seem out of character—even “meddlesome”—in the context of a financial report to Annual Council delegates, but the Adventist world church treasurer is convinced that it’s time for a sea change in how the church is funded and directed.

First, he wants to see more grassroots financial support for projects. “Our church has a history of thinking that if a project is worthwhile, it must have millions and millions of dollars of funding behind it, but the work isn’t going to be finished by the money in the [church]’s bank account,” Lemon said.

One case in point is the Great Controversy Project, he said. The book distribution project received less funding from the General Conference budget than Adventist world church headquarters spent on travel expenses for delegates to attend Annual Council. But members worldwide who supported the project shared more than 140 million copies of the book, which was authored by church co-founder Ellen G. White.

Going forward, Lemon said he and other church financial leaders would like to see more projects that empower lay people to take similar initiative.

“When God’s children get excited about something, they take money out of their pockets,” Lemon said.

Meanwhile, church financial leaders will continue to concentrate funding in areas with little or no Adventist presence. In Pakistan, $300,000 will fund a shelter for at-risk girls. In Myanmar, $400,000 will pay to reopen the Yangon Adventist International School. Another $500,000 will go toward building a center of influence and a vegetarian restaurant in Brunei, where an Adventist presence is not yet established.

Delegates also approved a proposal to send $570,000 to the MORE Project, which publishes books and pamphlets contextualized for other religious audiences. Another $4 million will step up production at the media center in the church’s Middle East North Africa Union. Currently, the media center produces programming in Arabic, but local leaders are eager to expand to other languages.

Lemon also made a strong case for including more young people and women in ministry during today’s Treasury report.

It was no coincidence, then, when he asked delegates to approve a proposal to use the mission offering collected at the 2015 General Conference Session to fund outreach and evangelism projects overseen by Adventist young people ages 25 and under. Projects would receive approval from a new committee comprised of 75 percent young people, Lemon said.

“It’s time that we tell our young people that we not only trust them to do the work, but we also trust them to make decisions as to how to spend the money of the church,” Lemon said.
“It’s interesting how our perception of youth has changed,” Lemon said, noting that a study of early church history reveals that most of the church’s founders were teenagers or 20-somethings. “Young people” when the church was established 150 years ago were not the late 30- and 40-somethings who are labeled “young” administrators today, Lemon said.

He urged delegates to take advantage of upcoming opportunities to “leave young people a seat at the table of decision-making.” In early 2014, each of the church’s 13 divisions will select delegates to the 2015 General Conference Session.

“We have the young people. We have the women, who constitute a majority of our church. We have the funds, although most of it is still in our own pockets. And we have the blessings of the Lord. This work is going to be finished. The question is, are we going to be a part of it? Or are we just going to have to move out of the way?” Lemon asked delegates.

“We are one church, one family, and we have a work to finish,” he said.

Lemon also reported on tithe and offerings for 2012. Tithe returned in the North American Division for 2012 was up about 1 percent from 2011 and totaled US$933 million. Tithe from divisions outside of North America increased 4.4 percent for a total of close to $1.4 billion. In the church’s South American Division alone, members returned nearly $530 million in tithe.

Mission offerings from outside North America similarly rose, reaching about $60 million, a 6 percent increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, mission offerings from North America dipped 2.6 percent, but still totaled nearly $23 million.
First phase of comprehensive health ministry will promote future work

Health Ministries director Dr. Peter Landless helps introduce a presidential initiative to refocus the Adventist Church's outreach on comprehensive health evangelism. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Blended focus is urging local churches to offer ‘gift of health’ to community

October 14, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Ansel Oliver/ANN

The Seventh-day Adventist Church announced the first phase of a comprehensive approach to health outreach, one that for the next year and a half will involve promoting health evangelism to local church members and administrators.

In the coming years, top leaders hope local congregations will offer programs as a “gift of health” to their communities.

“What would happen if 70,000 Seventh-day Adventist churches opened their doors to … teach wellness,” said Mark Finley, assistant to the world church president for evangelism. “This will broaden the base for an evangelistic approach that goes beyond preaching – addressing spiritual, mental and physical modalities,” he said.

Finley introduced the initiative to some 350 delegates today at Annual Council, which is the yearly meeting of the denomination’s Executive Committee at the church’s world headquarters.

For the next two years, a renewed approach on health outreach will be promoted through church media to help prepare members and leaders for the upcoming plans and implementation of projects. “This is a conscious attempt to broaden the understanding and base of local church members and leadership,” Finley said.

The second phase of the comprehensive health ministry approach will begin in mid 2015, offering resources and ideas for local congregations to deliver as health outreach initiatives.

Health Ministries director Dr. Peter Landless said next year’s summit in Geneva would offer training for comprehensive health ministry initiatives. Leaders also said each of the denomination’s 13 world divisions would have training programs for the upcoming outreach approach using health.

The renewed approach to health outreach comes after months of planning to combine many health and ministerial initiatives. Leaders emphasized that the focus is not solely an initiative of the Health Ministries department, but a blending of all ministries.

“Comprehensive health evangelism involves all kinds of gifts, all kinds of ministries, and God will use us together in this thrust in the coming days,” said Jerry Page, secretary of the denomination’s Ministerial Association.
Adventist HealthCare's second attempt to relocate Washington Adventist Hospital to White Oak will cost $339 million, downsized from a previous $398 million plan blocked by regulators last year for being too costly.

The new Washington Adventist Hospital, if approved this time, would hold 201 beds instead of the 249 first proposed. The downsizing mostly came via a decision to keep the hospital's psychiatric unit at the current Takoma Park campus, which executives see as too cramped for a modern, full-service hospital but still a viable site for an array of less-intense medical services.

Adventist disclosed the size and cost of its hospital in a detailed application Friday for a "certificate of need" from the Maryland Health Care Commission, which must decide if the move fits with state health planning standards and whether Adventist can afford it.

In a statement, hospital executives note that the new facility would have 11 fewer beds than the existing hospital. They said that's the result of "the national growth of outpatient services and emphasis on keeping the area's growing and aging population healthy."

Officials had previously said the new hospital would not follow the previous plan's unusual financing arrangement.

I'm still waiting for a copy of the full application, which will be chock full of great details such as volume and financial projections for the new hospital, more on their financing plans and the exact design of the facility as planned. I'll update when I get it.

Ben Fischer covers health care and law.
Southwestern's business department unveils innovative Information Wall

Contributors to the Information Wall prepare to cut the ribbon Sept. 12 in Pechero Hall on the Southwestern Adventist University campus. From left are director of plant services Dale Hainey, business professor Daniel Worku, project builder Dale Reins, business professors Chanda Reins and Judy Foll Miles, department chair Dr. Fred Harder, business professor Aaron Moses and ITS director Charles Lewis. (Courtesy Darcy Force)

For some it represents an obstacle to be conquered; to others it's a barrier. And many investors know it as the name of a street that could lead to wealth or poverty.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held Sept. 12 at the Department of Business Administration at Southwestern Adventist University to unveil an innovative, real-time business news wall located outside the department offices in Pechero Hall.

Called the Information Wall, it features four LCD screens with a ticker script across the top and clocks representing four different markets in the world. The screens show world news in real time, the Dow Jones average and NASDAQ, as well as the New York Stock Exchange, allowing students to keep track of stocks in real time.

Southwestern Adventist University IT systems director Charles Lewis explains the features of the wall to attendees at the Sept. 12 ribbon cutting ceremony. The wall features four LCD screens showing world news in real time, the Dow Jones average, NASDAQ, and the New York Stock Exchange. (Courtesy Darcy Force)

“We teach out of textbooks but even a brand new book is quickly outdated,” business department chair Dr. Fred Harder said. “With this wall we help bring the business world to life in our classes.”

Two classes, one in investments and one in fund management, are already using the wall for assignments, Harder said.

At the ceremony, students received the wall with a wave of excitement. “I think it's really beneficial to our school. A lot of our students are actually wondering what stocks they should invest in,” said Jasmin Galloway, junior international business major. “Now that the wall is up, they’ll be able to check and investigate themselves.”

Another student agreed.”I think it's the nicest looking thing on campus so far,” shared Christian Santizo, junior accounting major. “I also like the practicality of it. I could actually use this.”

Southwestern Business Department professors and friends contributed to the project, including Jeanine and Dick Dilts, Virginia and Fred Harder, Larry and Judith Foll Miles, Shawna and Aaron Moses, Chanda Reins, Daniel Worku, Dan Zacharias and the late Joyce Zacharias. They were recognized at the ribbon cutting ceremony.
Adventist Health breaks ground on birth center

OCTOBER 11, 2013 1:00 PM • BY JOSEPH LUIZ

HANFORD — Adventist Health Central Valley Network’s new Family Birth Center took a new step toward completion on Thursday.

The organization held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new 49,000-square-foot, $40 million facility at its new location adjacent to Adventist Medical Center. Construction is set to begin within the coming weeks, with the center expected to open for business in 2015.

“This is a historic day for the city and for Adventist Health,” Adventist Health Central Valley Network CEO Wayne Ferch said at the ceremony. “We see this as a continuation of our legacy. This is only possible through the support of the community.”

The new center will be able to serve more women with 34 private beds. The facility will also include two operating rooms and six neonatal intensive care beds. The operating rooms can be used for C-sections. About 2,000 babies are born every year in Hanford, or about six babies per day.

The center will replace the one at Central Valley General Hospital, which has been handling births in Hanford for many years. The old hospital building will soon be out of compliance with tougher earthquake standards required for in-patient treatment facilities.

Hanford Mayor Lou Martinez spoke at the ceremony about how the birth center would benefit Hanford and draw more jobs and doctors to the area. The center is projected to create about 600 construction jobs alone.

“This is going to benefit the whole community and enhance the services that are already being offered,” he said. “It’s going to help our economy and get more people involved in Kings County. I think it will have a positive impact for years to come.”

Families with children who were born at Central Valley were given the chance to start the groundbreaking, followed by Adventist administration and city leaders.

Hanford resident Sheri Tos spoke about her excitement for the new center and her hopes for it as work is scheduled to begin.

“The birth center will be more than just a part of the hospital — it will provide many important experiences to families,” she said. “It will show other counties how dedicated we are to babies and families.”
Tos gave birth to twins at Central Valley in 2012. She said the experience was a positive one and expressed how talented the staff was.

“They touched our lives and went beyond the call of duty,” she said. “Our family was taken care of both physically and emotionally. The experience was such a gift.”

Adventist nurse Christine Leach brought her granddaughter Callie out for the event. She said her granddaughter and her own children were born at Central Valley. Although she will miss working there, she’s looking forward to the new center.

“I’m really excited for it,” she said. “It’s nice to have a newer, more modern facility.”

Leach said the current birth center is old, which sometimes makes it hard to keep patients comfortable. She believes the new center will be more convenient to use for both employees and patients.

“A birthing center is a great place to work,” she said. “I love interacting with the patients. I’m really curious to see how it will all pan out.”

The reporter can be reached at 583-2429 and at jluiz@hanfordsentinel.com. Follow him on Twitter @JosephL_HS.
Portland Adventist Community Services Recognizes John Korb

By: Adventist Health

October 10, 2013 – The governing board of Portland Adventist Community Services (PACS), has awarded John Korb, CFRE, the 2013 Barbara Nelson Award signifying his outstanding leadership and support of PACS for the past 23 years.

Korb, Executive Director of the Adventist Health Foundation in Portland, has a personal passion to improve the lives of those less fortunate. “The selfless work that John has been involved with as a volunteer at PACS clearly demonstrates the emotional, physical and spiritual healing ministry of Jesus Christ,” said Tom Russell, President and CEO Adventist Medical Center.

Through his volunteer leadership, Korb helped PACS develop one of Portland's largest food pantries, which distributes more than 1 million pounds of food each year. He also helped create a primary health clinic, which was originally run by Barbara Nelson, for whom the award is named. Today the clinic in partnership with Adventist Medical Center, serves more than 1,400 uninsured patients annually. While serving as board chairman of the non-profit, Korb also helped create a thrift store featuring affordable quality clothing and household items. The proceeds help support the mission of the northeast Portland organization.

Korb has helped PACS establish an endowment fund that now exceeds $200,000. “I am humbled by this award and am blessed to have been given the opportunity to serve my community and work hand in hand with hundreds of other volunteers,” said Korb.
In my quest to check out the church scene in Broomfield, I might have come upon one of the best-kept church secrets in my years of writing this column. In doing some research, I discovered there is a Seventh-day Adventist Church in Broomfield that I knew nothing about. When I drove by the address of The Journey Adventist Church, I discovered why I knew nothing about the church. The Journey on Saturdays is using the campus of the Good News Community Church, 5511 W. 136th Ave.

Seventh-day Adventists believe the first day of the week is Sunday, which means Saturday is the Sabbath. I found the website for The Journey and went to its service Saturday morning. Bible Study begins at 10 a.m., worship begins at 11:15 a.m. and book study is at 2 p.m. Saturdays.

When I showed up at around 11 a.m., I was greeted by a few friendly folks who offered me a cup of coffee and answered a few questions. They also introduced me to Pastor Mark Matthews, and he welcomed me with a warm smile and a firm handshake. I have been at the location on Sundays for Good News services, but the seating arrangement for The Journey was completely different. Gone were the standard rows of seats, and in their place were small tables. On those tables were bowls of popcorn. The atmosphere is casual and the setting resembles a night club (without the alcohol) more than a church, but as I was about to find out, The Journey takes its worship of God and Jesus Christ very seriously.

Matthews explained that Elder Will Dickerson was preaching the message, but Matthews was certainly an important part of the service. He plays guitar and is lead singer for "Praise at the Journey." He was joined on stage by his wife, Lise, (also the church administrator), as well as David (bassist) and Yvonne (vocals) Turner.

I quickly discovered the church's band is very good. The music is contemporary, but it is "low key" compared to contemporary music at many other churches these days. Halfway through the worship set, they took a break and invited the 30 or so folks in attendance to greet each other and have some of the snacks being served in the foyer. Once we regrouped in the sanctuary, there were more songs. They worshiped with their music for almost an hour, and I was sorry to see that portion of the service come to an end.

Next up was Elder Dickerson, and he amazed me when he began his message titled "Amen: Do you Believe?" with a capella singing that displayed his fantastic voice. That was followed by a message based on 1 Kings 18 and John 11 and 17. When the service was over, just about everyone thanked me for coming and encouraged me to return. I promised I would, and I will.

There are a number of beliefs that make the Seventh-day Adventist Church different than many conventional Christian denominations. One of those is the belief about death. This is from the official site of the Seventh-day Adventist world church: "For followers of Christ, death holds no fear. Remember, Jesus defeated death on Calvary and has given us freedom from death. Cemeteries, then, are filled with followers of God who are in the 'peaceful pause before the resurrection.' Yes, they are dead, but that death holds no power over their future. Jesus is coming to take them (and those of us who are still living) home. Death is almost like a wintery promise of spring." Many
Christian denominations believe the soul enters heaven immediately following death here on earth, and not after a "peaceful pause."

The Adventists adhere to certain dietary habits, many of which came from the Old Testament. They are expected not to eat pork or any seafood that has claws (such as lobster). It was explained to me, however, that these are not "rules" but suggestions for living a healthier life.

If you are curious about other beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, you can check them out at adventist.org/beliefs. The Journey's website, which also contains a great deal of information about the local church and the denomination, is thejourney2grace.com, The church's email address is info@thejourney2grace.com and the phone number is 720-545-5541.

I should point out that this is not a new church of the Adventist denomination. Their group of about 30 to 35 people have been worshiping for a number of years at different locations in the Denver area. They have been worshiping at Good News for about four years now.

The church soon will be not so hidden. A 3-by-10-foot banner will soon be hung to let people know of the church's existence. I know there is some controversy surrounding some of the beliefs of this denomination, but Saturday morning I found myself with a wonderful group of believers in Christ who made me feel welcome and loved. And when we get right down to it, isn't that what the church of Jesus Christ is all about?

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