Oakwood University has broken ground for a new, $3 million, 7,000 sq. ft, media center as part of its $9.3 million capital campaign as a "game changer." They will produce their own talk shows, their own dreams, dramas, editorials and religious newscasts. It is slated to be ready for use in the 2014-2015 school year. MORE

A large-scale study on Walnuts and Healthy Aging (WAHA), is being conducted by Dr. Sabate, international award winning researcher at Loma Linda University Health, who hopes to determine links between walnut consumption and brain, eye, and cognitive functions. This research project is currently looking for volunteer participants. Last year, Dr. Joan Sabate was presented with the 2013 "Golden Nut" Award during the 31st World Nut and Dried Fruit Congress in Singapore for his lifelong work determining the health benefits of nuts. MORE

Hy-Vee at Midday: Going Vegetarian
Seventh-day Adventist student may miss HS graduation
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ANN Video Annual Council Update - Oct 15, 2013
Clearer, updated language would be up for vote at 2015 Session; no more 'fruitage,' just 'fruit'
Creation movie central to church identity is key to 2014 evangelism

Loma Linda, Worthington, and Morning Star Products support mission projects when you turn in the part of the label that contains the UPC code. These projects are all part of the Kellogg's Labels Program, which has been in existence for many years, but newer church members may not be aware of it.
Each label is worth five cents, and if everyone contributes, that adds up fast. Usually, they are donated through the children's divisions and/or by a church school. MORE

The Association of Adventist Women (AAW) will hold its 31st annual conference on the Oakwood University campus in Huntsville, Ala., October 31- November 2. Founded in 1982, AAW has sought to address the needs of Adventist women in the areas of professional growth and church leadership. AAW provides news for and about Adventist women in its online newsletter, honors the accomplishments of Adventist women through its Woman of the Year program, provides stimulating discussion at its annual conferences, and promotes and fosters the full use of women’s gifts in the mission of the Adventist church. Interested parties may register for the conference online right up to October 31st. Learn more and register at www.aaw.cc under "Annual conference."

"Welcome Home" Sabbath is November 23.
Thanksgiving time brings family, friends and visitors together at churches. Be ready to reconnect. Reconnecting Ministries (RM) has been part of the North American Division since 1993, and is now part of the NAD Ministerial team. To find the latest on RM go to www.nadministerial.org or "like" the NAD Ministerial Department on Facebook.

Use the Pathfinder Quick Start Guide if you are interested in starting or revitalizing a Pathfinder Club in your church. Since October 26 is Pathfinder Sabbath, this is an excellent time to be reminded of the value the Pathfinder Club brings to Adventist children and youth. MORE
Spanish version: Director Del Club de Conquistadores - Una Gruia Rapida. More Pathfinder leadership resources.

Fundamental Beliefs video #8 from My Way to Jesus: "Did you know there is an ongoing battle between good and evil?"

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.

Did you know there is an ongoing battle between good and evil?
REACH: Community Outreach and Evangelism

A Model Church

Last year the 100-member Grandview, Texas church realized that their new members were usually from other Adventist churches. They set out to be missionaries to those who have never heard the gospel. Now, each week, they open a “total choice” food bank and fed about 65 families a month last year. That figure has increased to about 150 a month this year. They also started a place for former prison inmates to transition back into the outside. One would not ordinarily think of a car show fundraiser, but this year, the church expected over 100 vehicles at the show, with proceeds supporting the food bank. In addition, they had a blood donation and pressure station, live music, a chaplain’s area, and food for sale. There’s more. They give holiday food boxes at Thanksgiving and Christmas, plus they open a gift store full of toys similar to the food bank, and hold a Christmas show for the kids - 175 of them last year, and they hope to double that this year. MORE [Photo by Jessica Lozano]
On Wednesday, October 7, 2013, 12 noon, Oakwood University officials will break ground for its newest addition: a 7,000 sq. ft. $3M Media Center, as part of its $9.3M capital campaign as a “game changer,” according to President Dr. Leslie N. Pollard.

“Oakwood University Media Center will be a game changer for us. We will produce our own products – our own talk shows, our own dreams, our own dramas, our own editorials and religious newscasts – and market them on our own terms, in our own voice,” he explained in his annual presidential address at the university’s First Chapel/opening convocation program, August 22, to the entire Oakwood campus, perhaps Alabama’s only K-18 community.

Oakwood University’s First Couple, Drs. Leslie and Prudence Pollard, made the capital campaign’s first contribution, in April 2013; thus, Media Center conference room 330 will be named in their honor, due to their $10,000 donation.

“The Media Center will be set between Ford Hall and the newly renovated Cunningham Hall, on the campus mall,” stated Miss Kisha R. Norris, Executive Director of Advancement & Development. Not only will it be a learning environment for our communications students,
but we plan to begin telling ‘our Oakwood story’ by forming Oakwood University Broadcasting Network (OUBN), she continued.

“The Oakwood story of God-ordained ministry is something that needs to be spread to the corners of the Earth. We believe that this is the first step in blanketing the gospel message to places that others cannot reach.”

This nine-month construction project, she concluded, should have this facility ready for use for the 2014-2015 academic year.
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists® : 10-14-13 Loma Linda University Health researcher continues to unlock health benefits of nuts

10-14-13 Loma Linda University Health researcher continues to unlock health benefits of nuts

Dr. Joan Sabate, principal investigator of the Walnuts and Healthy Aging (WAHA) study, wants to find the links between nut consumption and the brain. Dr. Sabate, chairman of the Department of Nutrition at Loma Linda University School of Public Health, has spent the last two decades studying the health benefits of nuts.

Last year, Dr. Joan Sabate was presented with the 2013 “Golden Nut” Award during the 31st World Nut and Dried Fruit Congress in Singapore for his lifelong work determining the health benefits of nuts.

To say that the Loma Linda University Health researcher is a fan of nuts would be an understatement.

In 1993, he sent tremors through the world of health and nutrition with his seminal paper, published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine, concluding that eating walnuts provides protection against heart disease. This finding went against then-conventional wisdom that the fats found in nuts were harmful.

Two decades later, Dr. Sabate, 58, is still at it. He is now presiding over a large-scale study, called the Walnuts and Healthy Aging (WAHA) Study, that hopes to determine links between walnut consumption and brain, eye, and cognitive functions. This research project is currently looking for volunteer participants.

“In the ‘80s and early ‘90s, nuts had a very bad reputation, because they’re very high in fat and heart specialists were telling everyone to avoid them,” he said. “Now, we have found with no doubt that eating walnuts lower cholesterol beyond the effect of the diet recommended for lowering cholesterol. This contributed to the paradigm shift in the thinking that all fats are bad.”

The findings were met with mixed reactions from those in the scientific community because of the prevailing attitude. But most naysayers have since come around, as follow-up studies over the years affirmed that the unsaturated fats in nuts have healthful benefits.

Dr. Sabate, a native of Barcelona, Spain, came to Loma Linda University on a Fulbright scholarship 29 years ago after completing his medical studies in his native country. An internal medicine specialist, he said he was attracted to further his education at Loma Linda University because, even then, they had established prominent work on preventive medicine.

With wife, Carmen Llorca, and a baby in tow, Dr. Sabate focused on studying nutrition at Loma Linda, and later accepted an offer of employment at the school, where he now heads the Department of Nutrition at the Loma Linda University School of Public Health. The couple has three children, now all adults.

Dr. Sabate said his interest in nuts was inspired by another study out of Loma Linda University, the famed Adventist Health Study 1, which, among other findings, determined that nuts and whole grains appeared to have protective benefits to health.

While some members of the scientific community may not have been as receptive of his early findings, Dr. Sabate said he’s proud of what his efforts have achieved.

“I think it helped shape the psyche of the American public that you don’t always have to take away from the plate for it to be healthy, but you can also add to it,” he said.
He’s also excited about what the new study may find, in light of growing numbers of people who are becoming seniors.

“It’s worth studying because as our population ages, the percentage of people who develop memory and cognitive issues is increasing,” he said. “We want to move to a different direction now. After studying nuts and heart disease, we thought we would study nuts and the brain.”

Participants are still being sought for the WAHA study. For more information, visit www.WAHASTUDY.org or call 909-558-4300 ext. 47170 or 1-877-558-6248 (1-877-LLUMC4U). To be eligible, you must be between the ages of 63 and 79, in reasonably good health, and able to come to Loma Linda University once every two months.

Loma Linda University Health is also one of the sponsors of the upcoming 2013 Live Well, Age Well Summit, set for 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 14, at the National Orange Show Events Center in San Bernardino, Calif.

Herbert Atienza Media Relations Specialist Loma Linda University Health

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**About Loma Linda University Health (LLUH)**

Loma Linda University Health includes Loma Linda University's eight professional schools, Loma Linda University Medical Center's six hospitals and more than 900 faculty physicians located in the Inland Empire of Southern California. Established in 1905, LLUH is a global leader in education, research and clinical care. It offers over 100 academic programs and provides quality health care to 40,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatients each year. A Seventh-day Adventist organization, LLUH is a faith-based health system with a mission "to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ."
Hy-Vee at Midday: Going Vegetarian | KCRG-TV9 | Cedar Rapids, Iowa News, Sports, and Weather | Health News

October is Vegetarian Awareness Month

The recent Adventist Health Study – 2 adds clarity to the health benefits of a vegetarian lifestyle, such as reduced weight, lower blood pressure, and reduced incidence of cancer. Even just one veggie-full, meatless meal per week is a smart choice for your healthy lifestyle.

Today your Hy-Vee dietitian shows you how pairing dried beans, a vegetarian staple, with seasonal produce gives you satisfying comfort food that’s perfect for this time of year. Available dry or canned, beans are packed with budget-friendly protein, fiber and smart carbohydrates that keep you feeling full for hours. With a few convenient short-cuts, you can make filling, satisfying and healthy vegetarian meals weeknight quick!

Squash and Black Bean Soft Shell Tacos Enjoy the color and texture of this spicy vegetarian dish that’s perfect for autumn! Your Hy-Vee dietitian shows you a few shortcuts – frozen, cubed butternut squash and canned black beans – to make the assembly of this dish weeknight quick.

All you need: 2 tbsp Hy-Vee Grand Selections olive oil1 tbsp sriracha
sauce
tbsp lime juice
3 cups ½-inch cubes butternut squash
1 large red bell pepper, seeded & cut into strips
12 (6-inch) Hy-Vee flour tortillas
2 (15-ounce) cans no-salt-added Hy-Vee black beans, rinsed and drained
2/3 cup Hy-Vee salsa
2 tbsp hot pepper jelly
2 tbsp Hy-Vee peach preserves
¾ cup crumbled queso fresco cheese OR diced avocado
Chopped fresh cilantro for garnish

All you do:
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees Farenheit.
2. In a 13x9-inch baking dish, combine olive oil, sriracha and lime juice. Add squash cubes and bell pepper strips; toss to coat. Roast 30-35 minutes or until fork-tender and slightly browned, stirring after 15 minutes.
3. In a medium skillet over medium heat, toast tortillas for 30-60 seconds per side or just until lightly browned in spots. Fold in half and cool.
4. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, combine beans and salsa. Heat, covered, in the microwave on HIGH for 2 minutes.
5. In a small microwave-safe bowl, combine hot pepper jelly and peach preserves. Microwave on HIGH for about 15 seconds or until melted. Stir.
6. To assemble tacos: Spoon ¼ cup black bean mixture, ¼ cup squash mixture and 1 tbsp cheese into each tortilla. Drizzle with melted hot pepper & peach spreads, if desired. Garnish with cilantro. Serves 6 (2 tacos each)

Nutrition facts per serving: 390 calories, 12gm fat, 4.5 gm saturated fat, 0 gm trans fat, 10 mg cholesterol, 800 mg sodium, 59gm carbohydrate, 12 gm fiber, 5 gm sugar, 13gm protein. Daily values: 170% vitamin A, 70% vitamin C, 25% calcium, 20% iron. Source: Hy-Vee Seasons, Fall 2013

Most Popular
Seventh-day Adventist student may miss HS graduation

A Cuba High School senior, on track to be the valedictorian, learned she likely won’t be able to attend her own graduation.

She says it’s all because of her religious beliefs.

Liberty Thompson is a star student. She's on the track and field team, the cross country team, and she's already completed nine college courses.

She's also a devout Seventh-day Adventist.

Cuba High School's graduation has been scheduled for a Saturday in May. But Saturday is a day of rest for Adventists.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not onto your own understanding," Thompson read from her favorite Bible verse on Wednesday.

For Thompson, words can be a light on a dark horizon.

"In all your ways acknowledge him," she reads from Proverbs.

These words come with a promise.

"And he will make your path straight," she reads.

It's that promise Thompson says guides her strong Seventh Day Adventist faith.

"Instead of going to church like everybody else does on Sunday, we go on Saturday," said Thompson.

Saturday church means Thompson misses basketball games, track meets, and dances. But Saturday's are just too important.

"That's my little private time with God," said Thompson.

But this school year another important event will fall on a Saturday in May: Cuba High School's graduation.

Thompson's father Dwight says graduations have long fallen on Fridays until last school year. Last year, Cuba Schools changed high school graduation to a Saturday.

"For her not to be able to walk with her classmates is a tremendous disappointment," said Dwight Thompson.

Dwight is fighting alongside his daughter to get the district's calendar changed.

He asked for a spot on Wednesday night's board meeting agenda, so Liberty could ask the district to change graduation to a Friday.

But that never happened. Liberty was never put on the agenda.

"We have a right," said Dwight Thompson. "This is our school. These are our kids."

Dwight Thompson argued openly with board president Christine Montoya on Wednesday. Montoya says the state board of education told the district its calendar is no longer changeable.

"Date's already set. We don't want it to change. You can't do anything about it," said Liberty Thompson.

A major bump in Liberty's straight and narrow path, but she says it changes very little.

"Do you see yourself giving up?" asked KOB Eyewitness News 4 reporter Caleb James.
"Not any time soon," she said.

Dad Dwight presented the board with a petition signed by dozens of students at Cuba High urging the district to change graduation.

He says after Wednesday and the snub of the agenda he plans to make a civil rights complaint with the State of New Mexico.

KOB welcomes a lively and courteous discussion as long as you follow the rules of conduct set forth in our Terms of Use. Comments are not pre-screened before they post. You agree that anything you post may be used, along with your name and profile picture, in accordance with our Privacy Policy and the license you have granted pursuant to our Terms of Use.
A prominent health system CEO implored the Washington region's employers to not drop their company health plans in response to the Affordable Care Act, predicting disastrous consequences for the industry if they do.

So far, most companies aren't taking that step. But enough have to raise the alarm for William "Bill" Robertson, CEO of Gaithersburg-based Adventist HealthCare, which operates two Montgomery County hospitals and network of affiliated services.

"Each one of you has a huge role in making sure that the health care system stays viable," Robertson said, addressing an event hosted by Bisnow on Wednesday, later adding: "If we as employers cease to create the employer-sponsored health plan coverage, it will have a horrific impact on the health care delivery system of the United States."

As he correctly noted, hospitals are supposed to benefit from the law's attempts to get more patients insured. But the two primary ways of accomplishing that, Medicaid expansion and the insurance exchanges, are supposed to add to the insurance rolls — not replace the group plans already enjoyed by many workers (which Moody's believes is already happening.)

"So the unintended consequences of your behavior has a direct impact on Children's National Medical Center and my own organization and health care writ large," Robertson said, referring to his co-panelist, Children's National CEO Dr. Kurt Newman.

Some policy experts want to decouple employment and insurance. But in practice, relatively high-paying, company-sponsored commercial plans cross subsidize losses elsewhere on the hospital's books. And that stream evaporates if companies turn their workers loose.

While Maryland's unique all-payer system standardizes inpatient rates regardless of payment source, outpatient services — and all services in D.C. and Virginia in the country — depend on...
commercial plans playing a role.

To sum up, Robertson said: "So we're all in this together, whether we think it or not. So we're just watching you to see, what are you going to do?"

Ben Fischer covers health care and law.
With the latest blizzard that came through the area most people realized the real importance of being prepared and having a plan. That is the message that Pennington County Emergency Management and Adventist Community Services Disaster Response are trying to reiterate.

An Introduction to Disaster Preparedness Class took place Tuesday night in Rapid City, to tell the public they need to be aware and have a plan. Instructor Phyllis Alexander says people think they are prepared until a storm lasts more than eight hours.

Dakota Conference Director for Adventist Community Services Disaster Response Phyllis Alexander says, "Now we're talking about this snowstorm, then there's flooding like we had, tornadoes, you do have a very small warning, so this is what I really stress, is be ready. Have things in two different places ... emergency kit at home and also at your usual place of work."

For more safety tips you can go to rcpcem.com.

Tessa Thomas
Weekend festivities to honor Adventists' 140 years in Napa

With its 14 original members, the Napa congregation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church gathered for the first time in October 1873, carting warm water in from a local dairy in order to perform its first baptisms.

One hundred and forty years later, the church remains “a significant piece of Napa history,” according to Pastor Marvin Wray, who is preparing for this weekend’s homecoming celebration to commemorate the anniversary.

“The establishment of the Napa congregation was a milestone for the community.”

Festivities get underway Friday evening at 7 p.m. with featured speaker Dr. Jan Paulsen, the former president of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church. The program will include music from the church’s youth and video testimonials, Wray said. Everyone is welcome to attend. A vegetarian fellowship meal will be held at the school gymnasium following Saturday morning’s services at the church, which begin at 11 a.m.

The church is located at 1105 G St. in Napa. The gym is at church’s school on Pine Street.

Not far from that Seventh-day Adventist school was the downtown Napa home of William P. Hammond, the site of the first gathering on Oct. 10, 1873. That service was officiated by J.N. Loughborough, who is credited with founding the Napa Seventh-day Adventist Church congregation.

For about a year that congregation met within a tent pitched at what is now Fuller Park.

“However, it wasn’t long before they built their first church,” Ethan Jones, a church member since 1950, said. “That 1874 building still stands at Church, Wilson and Second streets.

“One of my earliest and most startling memories is of a member having a heart attack during worship and then being passed over heads to get him out of the church and to medical help. We were tucked in pretty tight.”

The churchgoer recovered, according to Jones’ wife of 67 years, Fredi, but it was quite a scene. “The church could be quite noisy when the fire department had to go out on a call,” she said. “It was just across the street from the old church.”

Eventually the congregation outgrew the 1874 church. In the early 1950s, church officials made plans for a new site at G Street in Napa. They hired a contractor to complete the heavy construction work, but the majority of the labor was performed by churchgoers, congregation
members said.

“I mixed concrete in what is now the parking lot all day every Sunday plus Tuesdays and Thursdays for two to three hours after work.” Ethan Jones said. “We were given evening meals on-site as thanks for our volunteering.”

Jones said the design committee dedicated itself to getting every detail right in the new church, including several trips to find the proper look for the rose-tinted glass that remains at the church today.

“The church organ is the old wooden pipe organ from the former downtown Napa Fox theater,” Fredi Jones said. “(Church member) Dr. Kittle had bought the organ for the church. At first, not all of the old wooden pipes fit in the church. So he stored them in his basement until the whole set could be installed.

Wray said a lot of upgrades have been made to the church since, especially with its technology, but the church, “still has its sense of history.”

Wray, who arrived in Napa in 1999, called the local Seventh-day Adventist congregation the “most loving I’ve had the pleasure of serving.

“In fact, I think our motto should be, ‘We are the happiest church on Earth.’”

**Seventh-Day Adventist anniversary**

The 140th anniversary celebration for the Napa Seventh-Day Adventist church will be held on Friday from 7 to 8 p.m. and Saturday beginning at 11 a.m. For information, call the church office at 707-252-2444.
Ministry of deacons, deaconesses now under care of Ministerial Association

Adventist Church Undersecretary Myron Iseminger introduced several suggested policy adjustments at Annual Council on October 16. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Indian Ocean, Botswana regions become self-supporting; reorganization for church territories in Kenya and Tanzania, too

October 16, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN

Attention dwindled in the auditorium of Seventh-day Adventist world church headquarters on the final day of Annual Council, as some delegates bid farewell to colleagues and others considered the logistics of wedging hefty agenda binders and a week’s worth of handouts into already bulging carry-ons.

But, as Undersecretary Myron Iseminger reminded them, there was still unfinished business.

One item, introduced by Jonas Arrais, associate secretary for Elders and Ministerial Training, asked delegates to officially place deacons and deaconesses under the care of the Adventist world church’s Ministerial Association.

Arrais explained that there are fewer than 30,000 pastors to oversee the Adventist world church’s 140,000 congregations. The church’s 250,000 elders are often recognized—rightfully so—as surrogate pastors, he said, but the work of the church’s 700,000 deacons and deaconesses often goes unacknowledged and unsupported.

“When Jesus came to earth, he came to serve. The ministry of Jesus as a servant is the model for the ministry of deacons and deaconesses,” Arrais said. “They have a deep spirit of service. We need to recognize, we need to value, the work of these volunteers.”

Delegates approved the request unanimously.

Afterward, Andrews University President Niels-Erik Andreasen introduced a new Bible commentary to be published by the university’s press in 2015. The commentary is a companion to the previously released Andrews Study Bible, Andreasen said. It was edited by former Biblical Research Institute Director Angel Manual Rodriguez and written by an international, diverse team of Adventist Bible scholars.

The one-volume commentary offers an alternative to the seven-volume Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary set, which costs more than $400. Andreasen said the new commentary will deepen readers’ understanding of biblical themes, going section-by-section rather than verse-by-verse. Verses, he explained, were not added to the Bible until later, making thematic study of the Scriptures essential.

Delegates each received a printed sample of selected portions of the commentary. The project is funded by Adventist world church headquarters and Andrews University.

Several agenda items in, Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson took to the microphone to draw attention to the “distinction” between church and institutional structure. Some church entities, he said, are now using the title “Vice President for Finance” instead of the traditional “treasurer.” Similarly, he said, some church administrators now favor “Vice President for Administration” over “secretary.”

“This is not as it should be. Please use the correct nomenclature,” Wilson said, pausing after each word for emphasis. “When you use the other nomenclature, you are setting up a presidential system. Within the church, we report to the Executive Committee, not the president.
We work in consultation.”

Shortly after noon today, Pardon Mwansa, a Seventh-day Adventist world church vice president chairing the business session, asked delegates to approve several reorganization requests from local church administrative units.

The Indian Ocean Union Mission and Botswana Union Mission will each become union conferences, a move that recognizes self-sufficiency in leadership and finances.

“It hasn’t been easy to gain union conference status in some parts of the world,” Mwansa said. “This is a huge accomplishment. Congratulations and blessings.”

Delegates also approved the reorganization of the Kenya Union Mission into two union conferences—the East Kenya Union Conference and West Kenya Union Conference. Similarly, the Tanzania Union Mission will split into the North Tanzania Union Conference and the South Tanzania Union Mission.

Delegates also voted to grant union mission status to the North East Congo Attached Territory. All reorganizations will go into effect by December 31, allowing the newly created administrative units to send delegates to the 2015 General Conference Session.

Undersecretary Iseminger offered a few final words today, asking delegates to leave their bulky agendas behind to be recycled, unless, he jokingly added, they needed “reading material” on the flight home. Annual Council delegates were offered a paperless agenda for the first time this year, but many opted for the traditional binder.

At the 2014 Spring Meeting, delegates will receive electronic copies of the agenda by default, Iseminger said.

Earlier this week, Annual Council delegates also voted to receive a statement from the recent International Urban Mission Conference, in which the church pledged to make significant efforts to reach large cities, particularly those without a Seventh-day Adventist presence. The statement calls for a “twice-yearly reporting and assessment system that informs the church about urban mission objectives, activities and progress.”

Delegates this week also celebrated the success of The Great Controversy Project, an initiative to distribute copies of the book “The Great Controversy” authored by Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White. More than 142 million copies have been distributed since the initiative launched in 2011.

Many people have joined the Adventist Church through the initiative, including Marcelo Pereira dos Santos, and his family, from Brazil. “We understand that this is only the beginning of a new life,” said dos Santos, who addressed delegates from the stage. “I hope my life and testimony will be useful to many brothers and sisters who have not yet realized the infinite love of God.”

—additional reporting by Mark A. Kellner
Landmark survey reveals in-depth beliefs, perceptions of Adventist members

David Trim, director of the Office of Archives, Statistics and Research presents the findings of the most in-depth research the denomination has conducted on its members. He delivered the findings to Annual Council delegates on Tuesday, October 15. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Global research offers ‘snapshot’; Sabbath School teachers highly ranked

October 17, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: Edwin Manuel Garcia/ANN

The most extensive research ever conducted on the attitudes, beliefs, experiences and spiritual practices of Seventh-day Adventists reinforced some long-held assumptions about worshippers’ positive affirmation of the denomination, yet revealed an emerging trend toward secularization that is worrisome for some church leaders.

Among the most significant findings, based on tens of thousands of surveys from around the world:

- Sabbath School teachers were ranked higher than pastors and elders when church members were asked to state who was friendlier, warmer, more caring and had a positive effect on their spiritual lives.
- About three-fourths of Adventists strongly embrace the prophetic ministry of church co-founder Ellen G. White.
- Only about one in three families conduct daily worship.
- Almost half of college students and recent college graduates said they would accept practicing homosexuals as church members in good and regular standing.
- About 9 in 10 people who left the Adventist church were never contacted by their pastor after they stopped attending.

The findings, released this week to delegates at the 2013 General Conference Annual Council at church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, were commissioned by the Office of Archives, Statistics and Research two and a half years ago.

The research was based on five separate projects. It consisted of 41,000 interviews or questionnaires around the world; involved 4,260 pastors; nearly 26,000 church members; 1,200 college students and recent graduates; and 900 former Adventists. Research teams from Adventist universities on several contents were involved in the unprecedented effort.

“In terms of both the breadth and depth,” said David Trim, director of the church’s research office, “this is the best snapshot we’ve ever had of the worldwide church.”

Before presenting the findings to hundreds of church administrators, Trim warned the audience to not be quick to judge. “Data is what it is,” Trim said. “What it means, is something else.”

The findings debunked longheld assumptions about the denomination’s gender makeup: The church is 57 percent female, and 43 percent male – quite a ways off from the belief that 65 percent of worshipers were female and 35 percent were male.

The findings also showed a church that is young – 54 percent of the members worldwide are between the ages of 16 and 40 – which has two disadvantages, according to Trim. For one, young members may be called too quickly into denominational administrative leadership positions without the proper experience. In addition, older leaders may need training to learn how to understand and work effectively with the younger generation.

Only 10 percent of church members globally are older than 60, and the largest proportion of aging congregants are in North America,
Europe and Japan. In contrast, Trim said, “Our church in Latin America and Africa in particular is an extremely youthful church.”

The findings contained several bright spots, Trim said, including a statistic that shows that 53 percent of respondents stated that the Sabbath School adult Bible study guide helped “very much” to develop their religious life.

The study guide, perhaps not surprisingly, is least popular with worshipers is in North America, parts of Europe, and in and around Australia. “As someone who is both from Australia and Europe, and married to an American,” Trim said jokingly, “I will accept the blame for all those things. We are very cynical people in America, Australia and Europe.”

Another “success story,” Trim said, was that 92 percent of Adventists have an overwhelming conviction that the Seventh-day Sabbath is the true Sabbath, and only 3 percent disagree (that particular survey’s margin of error was 3 percent, which could perhaps mean zero disagreement).

The findings also pointed to several areas deemed problematic, such as people leaving the church unnoticed, and the seeping influence of secular values, Trim said.

Interestingly, the vast majority of inactive and former members are not rejecting the message and mission of the church.

“They are moving with the strong dynamics of contemporary society away from established forms of religious activity,” Trim said. “The fabric of most Adventist local churches is not sufficient to stem this tide.” He then told the delegates, “Brothers and sisters, I think this is a real challenge to us.”

While only 9 percent of Adventists were contacted by their pastor after they stopped attending church, a larger number of former members said they had been visited by elders or other church members. However, the findings show that 4 out of 10 Adventists slipped out of the church without ever being contacted by anyone.

The fact that members lapse unnoticed is a “tragedy,” Trim said.

From 2000 to 2012, more than 13.6 million people joined the church, mostly through baptism. But during the same time, 5.9 million Adventists were lost (and that doesn’t include those who died). That’s a loss rate of nearly 43.4 per 100 new converts. “That is too high,” Trim said.

Approximately 90 percent of respondents strongly agreed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God’s true last-day church with a message to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ. When asked if they expect the world to end within the next 20 years, just 22 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 45 percent strongly disagreed, Trim said. “It’s not that people don’t believe that Jesus is coming, but there does seem to be some kind of skepticism about him coming soon.”

The research concluded that secularization is no longer limited to America, Europe and Australia. “It’s a globalized society,” Trim said. “People are watching the same television programs, reading the same apps and websites on their phones and computers, and secularization is a problem.”

Following the presentation, Vice President Benjamin Schoun acknowledged that challenges indeed lie ahead.

“We have much to learn and we probably need to incorporate these results into our strategic planning,” he stated, “because it is a very sobering picture in some cases, even though we have our strengths as well.”
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...
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.”

Ste le 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.
**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 “The 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...
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.”

The movie is the highlight of a multi-faceted approach to teach creationism around the world. Other components of the educational initiative include the book, “Beyond Imagination,” Bible studies, tracts, a Sabbath School curriculum, Hope Channel programming, and dozens of articles in the Adventist Review, among other efforts.

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.creatiionsabbath.net.
A Model Church

The Grandview, Texas, church is filled with humble members who yearn to serve others.
The Grandview, Texas, church is motivated for mission work. Though they’re small, only 100 members, they make a big impact. A few years ago, Grandview realized that they only got new members from other Seventh-day Adventist churches. Right then, the church set out to change that through community service. They want to be missionaries to those who have never heard the gospel.

“Our mission, to ‘feed, seed, and lead,’ begins with meeting the needs of the community,” says Jonathan Armstrong, pastor. “We build relationships with people, then teach them about the gospel.”

**Total Choice Food Bank**

Each week, the church opens a “total choice” food bank. In a total choice food bank, food is set up like a grocery store. Visitors take as much as they want, and no ID or proof of income is required. 

“We actually have to encourage people to take more food, rather than ask them to take less,” says Armstrong.

Last year, the food bank fed about 65 families a month. This year, they feed about 150 families a month, including pets. Some volunteers donate vegetables from their garden.

“The food bank is such a blessing,” says Marcia Dyche, food bank director. “When you see people truly hungry, it changes you.”

Grandview purchases food from the Tarrant Area Food Bank. They bought $5,500 worth of food for $330. They’re one of three food banks in North Texas that operate with total choice.

“The volunteers and I say ‘I’m here to be blessed,’ not ‘I’m here to bless you,’” says Armstrong. “We pray and talk to people. Those that come to our church from the food bank are there based on friendship.”

**Prison Ministry**

When a prisoner is released, it’s hard for that person to get started. Former prisoners rely heavily on family and friends. Parole officers refer these people to the Grandview church for help. Volunteers feed, clothe, and love families of former prisoners.

“We just want to help make the transition as easy as possible,” says Armstrong.

“We have a mandate to live like Christ,” says Dyche, “And Christ took care of people. At the end of the day, we’re all family, and that’s how we treat people.”

**Car Show Fundraiser**

Grandview holds an annual car show, and all proceeds support the food bank. This year, it will be held on September 15 at Beaumont Ranch in Grandview. Car owners pay $25 to enter their vehicle.

The church expects over 100 vehicles. Carter Blood Care will set up a donation booth and blood pressure station. There will be live music, a chaplain’s area, and vegetarian tacos and hot dogs for sale.

“We want it to be a day to relax,” says Rich Schram, car-show coordinator. “Car owners tell me it’s awesome to not worry about drunk people at a show.”

“People come for cars, but find other resources, as well,” says Armstrong. “We give them Steps to Christ, and offer fellowship.”

**Christmas Gift Ministry**

Grandview gives holiday food boxes at Thanksgiving and Christmas. In addition, they open a gift store. It’s similar to the food bank, but rather than food, it offers toys.

The sanctuary displays $6,000 worth of toys. Parents can have three per child. Church members wrap the gift, and parents sign it.

In the fellowship hall, children decorate stockings and cupcakes, watch and learn gymnastics with Southwestern Adventist Univer-
Itasca Mobile Food Service

On June 27 in Itasca, south of Grandview, the Grandview church hosted a mobile food pantry. Volunteers fed about 500 people in two hours.

“There’s not much community service in that area,” says Armstrong, “but it’s targeted as high need. Many people can’t afford to feed their family.”

Grandview worked with the Second Missionary Baptist church in Itasca.

“Pastor Armstrong and I had trouble finding a church to work with,” said Dyche. “Then I looked over an open field and saw a tiny church with cars out front.”

Inside, church members were feeding children. It was part of a lunch program for students who usually eat at school. When Grandview asked to work with the Baptist church, the Baptist church was thrilled.

Six months before, the church decided to host a food outreach. They were too small to do it alone, and prayed that someone would offer to help. Now, they hope to make this a monthly event.
“God takes those who are willing, smallest and most humble, and He does amazing things,” says Dyche.

A Church of New Believers

In everything, Grandview’s first goal is service, and then church members bring people to the Lord through friendship.

“My mission is to create a church of people that have never met the Lord before,” says Armstrong. “We don’t want people to feel unwelcome simply because they don’t own a nice shirt and tie. We encourage people to come as they are.”

Church members do their part to make visitors feel welcome, whether it’s through conversation or helping the sermon run smoothly.

“Our church has a different feel than any other church I’ve been to,” says Annette Hoerner, soundboard director at Grandview. “The church members are very welcoming. They don’t care what a person looks like.”

Armstrong tries to use everyday words in his sermons. He considers that not everyone has been around Seventh-day Adventist terminology.

“I don’t ‘dumb down’ the doctrines,” says Armstrong, “But I try to speak in a way that everyone can understand. I also try to make my sermons interactive so people stay engaged and interested.”

All in all, the Grandview church has a heart for service, and is blessed with the capability to serve. Whether “feeding, seeding, or leading,” they are a small church that makes a big difference.