A strong storm completely destroyed Blue Mountain Elementary School Thursday evening, July 9, taking off the roof, and scattering building parts for several hundred yards and in the tops of trees. Principal Rachel Wardecke was alone in the building at the time and crawled out of the wreckage with no serious injuries. After the storm, Blue Mountain Academy Principal Dave Morgan went to look at the damage and discovered an amazing sight: a completely undisturbed picture of Jesus on one partial wall still standing! [MORE] [Photos] [by Kathleen Sutton, courtesy of Columbia Union Visitor]

The North American Division region’s total population of 350 million represents almost every people group on the planet, with approximately 1.2 million Adventists attending 5,400 churches and groups which are led by 3,200 pastors. Key goals, known as the “building blocks,” were developed to provide a missional focus and a foundation for the spreading of the message of hope and wholeness. These initiatives focused on six key areas. New decisions affected areas such as media ministries, publishing and higher education. Read Dan Jackson’s NAD Report, [A Message of Hope and Wholeness].

Special Days

July Focus: Adventist Lifestyle
July 11, Griggs University

August Focus: Spiritual Gifts
Aug. 22, End it Now Emphasis Day

Helpful Special Day Websites and Resources

Special Offerings
July 11, Women’s Ministries

Sample Offertory Readings
(in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French)

Upcoming Events:

July 1-11, 2015 Impact San Antonio: Register

July 2-11, 2015 GC Session, San
Restaurants near the Henry B. González Convention Center in San Antonio "beefed up" their vegetarian menus in anticipation of the 60th Session of the General Conference (GC).

But, the results are mixed, they say. How do they view Adventists and their dietary habits? MORE

Many of the thousands of Seventh-day Adventists flocking to San Antonio from all over the world, bring their children.

That means there are seas of rambunctious children uninterested in sitting through a four-hour-long business meeting concerning the wording of the Church Manual, Fundamental Beliefs and whether voting devices are working. MORE

HaystackTV missed breaking the Guinness World Record for a potluck by just 176 persons. They attempted the world record while at GC Session 2015 in San Antonio, Texas, and needed 1276 to break the record held by a church in Arizona. MORE

Every five years, thousands of Adventists travel from around the world to attend the General Conference (GC) Session. Most people don't

**Adventist World/ NAD Edition**
know that the planning starts ten years in advance of each session, so what does it really take to put on such an event? We will take a behind-the-scenes look at one component of the GC Session, the Exhibition Hall. What does it take to supply three expo halls that cover 325,059 square feet with 385 exhibits for 11 days?

For GC Session archived NAD stories, see NAD News Archives or NewsPoints Archives. Also, enjoy and/or download photos from the continually increasing photostream and albums on NAD Flicker.

Wolcott Named President and CEO of Lodi Health

Seventh-day Adventists host health fairs

Seventh-day Adventists to decide whether women can become clergy

Sabbath Faith Adventist Church growing in faith, friendship

Thousands fill downtown for Seventh-day Adventist conference

What the Grateful Dead Had to Do With the Rise of the Veggie Hot Dog

Religious convention draws thousands to downtown SA

Nearly 70000 to attend Seventh-Day Adventist World Conference

GC Delegates Approve Record 35 New Union Conferences

Will Seventh-day Adventists approve women’s ordination? Oakwood leaders on issue’s frontlines

San Antonio Hosts 65,000 For Seventh-Day Adventist General Conference

Adventist Medical Center renovates
Join the Breath of Life during the 60th General Conference Session for a special worship experience for all people of all ages, featuring special guest Sandi Patty, on Sabbath, July 11th for the 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. services. MORE

REMINDER: Anyone with an Internet connection can keep up-to-date with what is happening at GC Session. Follow NAD social media on Twitter, Facebook (#GCSA15), and view hundreds of photos on the NAD Flickr page. In addition, it is being broadcast straight from the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas to your home or church via Hope Channel Church, Hope Channel app, or Glorystar 124. The broadcast schedule is online.

More GC Session Links: You can learn all about the program, the agenda, get delegate information, and more at the GC Session website. Download the GC Session App to help you navigate the Session exhibits, find a place to eat, locate meeting rooms, access social media, and more. [Photo: Front of the Alamodome where GC meetings are being held. by James Bokovoy]

July 5-11 – This week, please pray for the Arizona Conference, with 75 churches and 19,371 members.

Do you have the courage to ask that God’s will be done, regardless of your personal preferences? Please pray and pray for the 2015 General Conference Session, July 2-11, and all events surrounding the Session including the related local Health Expos, and the Children’s Summer Day Camp for GC2015, and for all individuals involved with the Session, including officers, delegates, invitees, technical staff, and employees of the San Antonio area providing security and services, following the suggestions of the 10 Weeks for Bold Prayers initiatives.

Share This Newsletter
Watch the North American Division Report, as presented to the 60th General Conference Session on July 4th.

Did you know God is more powerful than Satan?

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who
subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom.

Learn more. Watch the 90: second video on Vimeo.

Each topic on the My Way to Jesus website links to a video, an invitation to study the Bible, the Find-a-Church Directory, a link for kids to My Place with Jesus, a place to send prayer requests, and more.

You can easily post the videos and information on your church website. Share the updates from the My Way to Jesus Facebook page. Learn more.
7-10-15 Tornado Destroys Blue Mountain Elementary

by Tamyra Horst

On Thursday, July 9, 2015 at approximately 6:45 p.m., a powerful storm struck Blue Mountain Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School (BME), Hamburg, Pa., taking off the roof, destroying the gym, and knocking down several walls of the 46 year old brick structure. Principal Rachel Wardecke was alone in the building at the time. Shaken, but not seriously injured, Rachel immediately told reporters, “Our school will open again.”

A local newspaper, Reading Eagle, quoted Wardecke as saying, “All of a sudden there was a hole in the roof and I was on the floor. I was covered with ceiling tile and, minutes later, I crawled from the building.”

The Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventist leadership is grateful for God’s protection and that no injuries were reported involving any students or staff. No damage was reported at Blue Mountain Academy, located across the road from BME.

After the storm, Blue Mountain Academy Principal Dave Morgan went to look at the damage and discovered an amazing sight: a completely undisturbed pictures of Jesus on one partial wall still standing! He wrote on his Facebook page, "True story. Today I went up to BME to begin the process of working with them in regards to the 2015-2016 school year. As I carefully entered what remained of the building I was struck by a fascinating reminder of Who truly is in control; Pictures of Jesus around the school remained intact and untouched. Yes, Satan is the author of destruction, death, and mayhem, but in the midst of the storm, we have a savior that conquered sin, defeated Satan, and assures us of victory if we will simply believe. True story!"

BME has been serving families in the Hamburg and surrounding areas since 1954 and is committed to providing students an Adventist Christian education that includes academic excellence, social development and spiritual growth. While it's too early for any specific plans, the school will reopen this fall and continue serving, nurturing and educating children.
The Pennsylvania Conference would like to thank those around the world who are praying for our school, its staff, students, and alumni who are grieving the loss of a beloved school and invite to you continue to pray with us for Rachel and her team as they sift through the damage and make plans for the coming school year.

More photos [by Kathleen Sutton, courtesy of Columbia Union Visitor]
7-8-15 Adventists Visitors a Mixed Blessing to San Antonio Restaurants

by V. Michelle Bernard

Restaurants near the Henry B. González Convention Center in San Antonio "beefed up" their vegetarian menus in anticipation of the 60th Session of the General Conference (GC). But, the results are mixed, they say.

Casa Rio created a special vegetarian menu, including a taco with veggie meat from Loma Linda. Jennifer, a server at the restaurant located on the Riverwalk, says less people are eating the vegetarian options than management had planned.

But she has received positive feedback on the expanded menus as well as the Sabbath meal options that allow people to pre-pay for meals, including a tip.

An employee from the Marriott Riverwalk was disappointed with the amount of business compared to the amount of preparation that went into creating extra vegan and vegetarian options for a menu for the 10-day event.

The Aramark food booth just outside the main entrance of the Alamodome has had better luck with their new vegetarian menu options. During the session, the stall sells Gardenburgers, fruit cups, peanuts, nachos and bottled water. Workers say they estimate they sell between 40 and 200 burgers a day.

Maria Mia Mexican Bistro, a restaurant close to the Marriott Riverwalk, didn’t modify their menu before the convention. However, after the influx of GC session visitors, they noticed more customers making substitutions to menu items, most commonly ordering pork-free black beans.

“We’re seeing more vegetables [ordered] than we’ve ever seen on the Riverwalk,” says server Joey Guerrero. The restaurant then stocked up on extra vegetables and adjusted. “They are leaving very satisfied.” We aren’t seeing a bunch of alcohol sales, but we are selling a bunch of virgin drinks, so the bar is still busy.”
Luciano, an Italian restaurant also located close to the Marriott Riverwalk, had to stop allowing substitutions to items on the menu. The extra preparation time was too much for the staff. Mario Serna, general manager, says he’s working more hours than usual to keep up with the convention crowd.

“Most of [the] preparation and time that we are spending is based on cutting the vegetables.” The top sellers are eggplant and grilled vegetables, he says. The bar has been mostly serving juice.

When asked why he thinks this group has different eating habits, he says he’s not sure. “I don’t know if it is part of the religion or the way they were raised. I haven’t had time to ask anyone.”

Some restaurants, such as Hendricks, are offering both vegan and vegetarian options.

Marriott’s extra vegan and vegetarian options require a lot of extra work.
7-7-15 Summer Day Camp Welcomes 95 Children From Around the World

7-7-15 Summer Day Camp Welcomes 95 Children From Around the World

by Katie Morrison

For the thousands of Seventh-day Adventists flocking to San Antonio from all over the world, many bring their children. That means there are seas of rambunctious children uninterested in sitting through a four-hour-long business meeting concerning the wording of the Church Manual, Fundamental Beliefs and whether voting devices are working. As important as these session agendas are for the future of both these children and the church family, third graders simply cannot be expected to sit in fold-out stadium chairs for eight days straight.

What are they to do?

The Southwestern Union of Seventh-day Adventists is hosting a Summer Day Camp from Monday through Thursday, July 6-9, for ages 10-16. The camp starts at 8:30 a.m. and runs the entire day, ending at 5:00 p.m. Each morning before leaving for that day’s adventure, the 95 kids that signed up have worship given by various youth pastors like James Black and Gary Blanchard.

“We needed to do something for those kids,” said Suzanna Facundo, secretary in the young adult/youth department at the Southwestern Union Conference. “Some of the international kids might not have the opportunity to go to Sea World or a water park like what we have here. We wanted to give them the chance!”

Although a bit pricey when looking at the flat rate ($225 per child, $200 for second child), the price includes four extremely full days of activities as well as a catered meal every day. The schedule for the week tentatively promises excursions to Six Flags, Sea World, Schlitterbahn Water Park, and an Olympic Fun Day.

“We went to Sea World yesterday and the kids had a great time!” Suzanna continued. She related that the conference had been “working on this camp for over a year” and how encouraging it was to see the kids having such a good time.

For more information visit southwesternadventist.org/youth or call 817.295.0476 ext. 433.
--Kathy Morrison is a communication intern at Rocky Mountain Conference; photo by Suzanna Facundo
Eleven hundred people participated in HaystackTV attempt to break the Guinness World Record for potlucks at Sunset Station in San Antonio. [Photo: Steven Norman III]

HaystackTV missed breaking the Guinness World Record for a potluck by just 176 persons. They needed 1276 to break the record held by a church in Arizona.

The haystack-themed potluck was the brainchild of Jeff Tatarchuk and Keith Bowman. They saw around 1100 people bring chips, salsa, beans, tomatoes, olives, and other haystack fixins’ to Sunset Station in San Antonio to help make the world’s largest Haystack Potluck.

Young and old enjoyed haystacks, a popular Adventist meal. Rosendo Vega of Mexico said, “Brother it is good!”

Some one-word descriptions from youth include: “Phenomenal” (Nehemiah, 16), “Heritage” (Konrad, 16), “Awesome” (Caleb, 15), “Delicious” (Jessica, 17), “More!” (Marvie, Bakersfield, CA), “Great!” (David, from Sweden), and “Cool!” (Pace, 16, Nashville, TN)

Sixteen-year-old Kelsey Negre from South Africa thought the haystack potluck was “the most ridiculously fun thing.
Sixteen-year-old Kelsey Negre from South Africa thought the haystack potluck was “the most ridiculously fun thing. It’s fantastic to be here and having this event.” [Photo: Steven Norman III]

While munching on her haystack, Pastor Barbara McCoy, pastor of the Forest Lake Academy Church, “It is awesome to show the church that there is an army of youth who are interested in serving in fun, powerful, and Christ-Centered ways.”

HaystackTV seeks to identify the core values of the youth and show how the Adventist Church shares these same values.

Sponsors of this event are Adventist Christian Fellowship with chapters on 150 public college and university campuses and the NAD Young Adult Life that is I San Antonio sponsoring Impact San Antonio events during the General Conference Session.

Learn more about HaystackTV at:
https://www.facebook.com/thehaystack.tv
http://www.thehaystack.tv/
Wolcott Named President and CEO of Lodi Health

July 9, 2015 (Roseville, Calif.) – Daniel Wolcott has been named president and CEO of Lodi Health, which joined Adventist Health in May, according to Bill Wing, executive vice president/chief operating & strategy officer of the health system. Wolcott will assume his new role in early August, working in conjunction with current president and CEO Joe Harrington to achieve a smooth transition until Harrington’s retirement later this year.

Wolcott comes to Lodi Health from Greeneville, Tennessee where he served as president and CEO of Takoma Regional Hospital. During his time there, Wolcott grew hospital net revenue by more than 40 percent, established a board quality and safety committee and developed a relationship with Debusk College of Medicine for the hospital to be a core rotation site for third-year medical students.

“Daniel’s strong background in community relations will be instrumental in transitioning Lodi Health into the Adventist Health family,” said Wing. “He brings a history of quality and safety as well as financial strength.”

Before working at Takoma Regional Hospital, Wolcott served as vice president and administrator at Florida Hospital Memorial System from 2004 to 2009. While there, he initiated a 30-minute door-to-doctor guarantee in the emergency department, which was a first in Adventist Health System, and achieved more than 95 percent success. He also grew the employed physician group from 24 physicians in 2004 to 45 physicians in 2009.

“The board members and I have been impressed that throughout Daniel's career, he has been involved in the various communities he has worked in, and we look forward to him joining the Lodi community,” said Steven Crabtree, governing board chair of Lodi Health. “He served on the board of the Hospital Alliance of Tennessee and has successfully engaged board members and community leaders to facilitate transitions and build trust.”

Wolcott received an MBA in finance from Georgia State University in 2001 and a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing from Southern Adventist University in 1997. He and his wife, Cynthia, have four children: Peter, Joshua, Seth and Sarah.
Seventh-day Adventists host health fairs

By Patrick Danner

Seventh-day Adventists offer free screenings

July 5, 2015 Updated: July 5, 2015 10:15pm

Photo: Photos By Darren Abate /For The San Antonio Express-News

Nomsa Maphango takes Astrid Guerrero’s blood pressure during the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s InStep for Life Health Expo at La Villita. San Antonians will have three more opportunities for free InStep for Life health screenings this week.

Monica Martinez discovered she has some work to do to get her lung capacity where it ought to be.

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Seventh-day Adventists to decide whether women can become clergy

By Michelle Boorstein

July 5

Tens of thousands of Seventh-day Adventists are meeting this week to face an issue as divisive as any in the Protestant group’s 152-year history: Does the Bible allow women to be ordained as clergy?

The question has special complexity for Adventists, who to this day revere one of their founders who saw visions — a writer named Ellen White — a woman described in documents from her lifetime as “ordained.”

Discussions about what it means to be ordained, what the Bible says about women’s leadership, what to do with women’s spiritual gifts and whether different regions of the 18-million-member faith can disagree culminate in a vote Wednesday. The vote is considered not only the main event of the July 2-11 General Conference, a meeting Adventists have only once every five years, but to some potentially schismatic.

Western Adventists say the ban on female leaders is holding back their ability to function in this culture, while proponents of the status quo say they read scripture as banning women from overseeing men.

Adventists also are expected to reaffirm two of their fundamental beliefs: that the world was created in literally six days, before God rested, and that marriage is between a man and a woman. These votes, which are not expected to be seriously contested, reflect a recent push by Adventist leadership to keep the faith firmly on orthodox grounds, experts said.

The Silver Spring, Md.-based denomination has been resisting efforts to ordain women for decades, a period in which the Adventist center of gravity has shifted from its American roots to a booming, developing and more theologically conservative world.

In 1950, just a third of Adventists were in Africa and Latin American, whereas today it’s more like 80 percent, said Monte Sahlin, a recently retired regional vice president. Just more than 1 million of the 18 million worldwide live in the United States.

The issue is being pushed in the last couple years since North American Adventists have voted for women to be ordained, and the largest U.S. conference, in Southern California, in 2013 elected Sandra E. Roberts to be its president. The faith’s top executive body doesn’t recognize her leadership, and the space for Southeastern Conference “president” is left blank in the official Seventh-day Adventist directory, or yearbook.

Now the Adventists, a group that has long resisted creating extensive doctrine and rules, are looking at whether they can agree to disagree. Adventists have never allowed for diverse practices on a topic as fundamental as this.

Some say the Adventists could be headed for a split, while others believe most members value the faith’s large size and don’t want to start breaking off chunks. The church is largest in Africa, Central America, the Caribbean and in the northern part of South America.

The debate and shifting demographics are hardly unique to Adventists. As denominations including Anglicanism and Methodism have shrunk in the U.S. and Europe and exploded in the global South, values have changed.

In North America, Adventists are dramatically graying, and the ban on female clergy is a barrier for young people. In
many other parts of the world, equalizing gender roles is viewed very negatively, Sahlin said. New Adventists in the Southern Hemisphere are attracted, often from Catholicism, because they like the concept of sectarian separation. They perceive the ordination debate as dangerous, secular feminism, he said.

“All of a sudden the denomination is becoming worldly and part of the culture … people want something more separated from the world,” he said.

On Wednesday, Adventist delegates from 190 countries will be asked whether it is all right for regional bodies “as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry?”

The conference is drawing 60,000 to 70,000 people, said Garrett Caldwell, spokesman for the global church.

Also being voted on — and expected to pass — is an edit to Adventist doctrine that refers in places to a commitment between “partners.” The new language will make clear that same-sex marriage is against Adventist practice and that marriage is between one man and one woman.

There are of course LGBT Adventists, including unofficial supporting organizations. However, Sahlin said, many have left the faith.

Also expected to pass is a revision to another of the 28 “fundamental beliefs,” reaffirming a belief that God created the world in a week.

The issue has come up in some Adventist colleges and universities, as it has at other conservative Christian schools that are trying to balance a commitment to orthodox practice with a desire for an open academic environment.

“The need for clarification comes because some might look at the seven-day account in the Bible and say, ‘Scientifically, this is impossible.’ Or that the word ‘day’ is symbolic,” Caldwell said. “We’re saying, ‘No, we believe that.’ ”

Christians who say women can’t be clergy come at it from different perspectives. Catholics, for example, focus on the story of Jesus and his male apostles. Traditional Protestant groups, including the Southern Baptists and the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, cite scripture calling for women to be students, not teachers or authority figures over men. Many Christian groups that accept women’s leadership either cite sociological reasons or say women who were given spiritual gifts by God should be allowed to use them.

Which is where White comes in. Perhaps the most revered of Adventist founders, White is believed to have had many spiritual visions, and her writings are pored over. While documents say she was “ordained,” there is disagreement about what specifically that meant in her lifetime. A full day at the convention is set aside, Caldwell said, to discuss this issue.

“She was never ordained,” said David Neff, longtime editor of Christianity Today and a former Adventist pastor, “but did all the things ordained people do.”

Clinton Wahlen, associate director of the Adventist Biblical Research Institute, said there is no question White was an “inspired messenger of God” and had credentials as a public speaker and church representative that were as high as any man. But, he said, she never performed a wedding or conducted a baptism — functions clearly reserved for clergy. Wahlen is among those who sees no Biblical basis for women to be ordained clergy.

“There is a clear gender specification that we cannot ignore as a Bible-based church.”

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For God so loved Caitlyn Jenner
The Satanic Temple’s giant statue of a goat-headed god is looking for a home

Honoring the Charleston nine: Today, we mourn. Tomorrow, we organize.

Michelle Boorstein is the Post’s religion reporter, where she reports on the busy marketplace of American religion.
The Sabbath Faith Adventist Church members focus on building themselves as a family and taking care of each other in their effort to become impactful Christians.

Having celebrated their one-year anniversary in April, the congregation has operated on this belief since it was established, and members say the purpose is to become better so they can go out and also make their communities better.

"We try to establish a family atmosphere church," said senior Pastor Mondy Dorsainvil. "Whatever the needs are, we let them know we are in this together."

Dorsainvil and the congregation said this belief system is acted on in several ways.

If someone is in need, financially for example, they may make a charitable offering to support that person; or if they are experiencing family issues, the church offers support for that as well.

And every Saturday after service, there is a family-style dinner for members and guests.

"It's a beautiful thing to be able to come to church and worship, but why should members come to church and go home hungry?" said Dorsainvil. "Jesus fed the people, and it's an obligation — when people come into our presence, we shall build together, and that gives us a chance to talk to one another and get to know one another."

Congregation members said such practices are what they love most about Sabbath Faith.

"There is something special about this church — the love is genuine," said Valerie M. Paul, a member for one year. Paul is a former head of the music department. When she became pregnant, she said others stepped up without hesitation to help her.

"The church wanted me to be OK while they did the work. That showed me that they cared," she said.

Paul is also a part of the women's ministry. She said they meet twice a month for tea parties or dinner at each other's homes and at restaurants. They also have a cell phone group chat, in which they dialogue about different topics.

"You feel the support where you can open up and you have people who are going through similar things," she said. "We have that bond to help us grow in spiritual ways, and as people, we have fun."

Valerie Paul's husband, Herb Paul, agreed.

"[Sabbath Faith] is full of love," he said. "It's a big family." Herb is a part of the men's ministry and said one of their bonding activities is playing basketball.

"It builds camaraderie," he said. "It just reinforces that closeness [when] we spend time with each other outside this place."
Having the opportunity to be mentored in ministry is also something that Herb said has contributed to his growth. He holds a degree in theology and has been able to supplement what he learned in school. He teaches Sabbath school and alternates preaching with the pastor.

“I’ve put into practice what I learned at school,” said Herb, adding that Pastor Dorsainvil is also a “mentor and like a big brother” to him. “If I need someone to talk to, Pastor D is my main man,” he said.

Such support, said Herb Paul, has helped him grow closer to church in general. At his previous church, he’d been discouraged by some events that happened there.

“I went through some things at my previous church and I’m still healing,” he said. “But Pastor Dorsainvil was willing to be patient with me, which is a plus because I’m able to be myself. I’m very comfortable. I’ve finally found a place where I am free to be me.”

Godfrey Petit Frere, a member for six months, shared that his experience at Sabbath Faith has been one of growth. He is the one who briefly took over the music department and helped ease the burden of the previous lead.

“I had to pick up some of the work she was doing,” said Petit Frere. “[And] I have become a better leader at what I do as a musician. I was able to pick up leadership skills.” Petit Frere will leave the music leader role so he can begin his career in management, but said he will use the skills he has learned at the church. “I can definitely take the skills I got and apply them to my job — seeing what works and doesn’t work and trial and error,” he said.

Faith Sabbath also uses outreach efforts to help members grow in other areas of their lives.

At press time, the church was scheduled to host a health fair, at which members could have health screenings done and get information about nutrition and healthy living.

“It’s a need — healthy church, healthy family, healthy life,” said Dorsainvil. “We take care of the spiritual aspect, [but] we also need the other aspect, because people are not just one dimensional — we have members who are saying they need help, they need to learn about about eating properly and going to bed on time and exercise, so we hope to bring all these aspects in the church.”

Dorsainvil added that, beginning this month, they offer money management classes to their Sabbath school.

“We will be teaching members how to budget, how to keep a budget,” he said. “We are praising God but ...we have to understand the value of money and how to spend our money, and we can’t do that if no one is teaching that.”

On the Sunday of the Tribune’s visit, the church began a campaign to raise money to move to a new building. They are limited in the use of their current sanctuary and want to be able to expand services into the neighborhood.

“We are renting and we only have access to the building once a week. We are limited,” said Dorsainvil. “[But] we want to do more for the community, and when we want to be able to move to a location where we can have a soup kitchen and open the doors and do things where a presence in the community actually means something.”

In the meantime, the pastor said, they will continue to make better Christians of the people they are reaching.

“Right now, for the first year, we have been focused on nurturing our members so we can help them be the type of Christians they need to be,” said Dorsainvil. “So when we go back home and in our community, we can still make a difference.”
Thousands fill downtown for Seventh-day Adventist conference - San A...

By Michelle Casady

**News**

**65,000 estimated for city’s largest conference to date**

July 3, 2015 Updated: July 3, 2015 7:32pm

Photo: Photos By Ray Whitehouse /San Antonio Express-News

Attendees of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Session gather at the Alamodome.

Mariachi bands and welcome banners greeted several thousand members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as they filtered into San Antonio International Airport this week for a conference, but efforts to make the visitors feel at home didn’t stop there.

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Thousands fill downtown for Seventh-day Adventist conference - San A...
What the Grateful Dead Had to Do With the Rise of the Veggie Hot Dog

While most of us are busy beach-bumming and barbecue-hopping this weekend, a lucky few (well, around 70,000 per night) will be gathering at Chicago’s Soldier Field for one last long, strange trip with the Grateful Dead. The four living original members of the band—Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Bill Kreutzmann, and Mickey Hart—are reuniting for what they say is the final time, to perform three shows in honor of their 50th anniversary. (Phish’s Trey Anastasio will sit in for the late, great Jerry Garcia, who died in 1995.)

Even those of us who never really got beyond American Beauty (present company included) have some sense of the tailgating scene at a Dead show: lots of hippies in VW vans smoking pot, wearing tie-dye shirts and ponchos, and eating vegetarian food. This go-round, meat-repudiating Deadheads with the munchies will not have to BYO-Tofu or fill up on what’s available at makeshift parking lot stands; the concessionaires inside Soldier Field will be hawking their own veggie dogs and burgers.

For this, Deadheads have Gene Baur to thank. Baur, a vegan, is the president and cofounder of Farm Sanctuary, an animal rescue organization started in 1986. Dead fans may know him better as “the guy with the veggie dog stand.” In the late eighties, Baur and a partner would follow the Dead around for weeks at a time in a VW Westphalia van, selling vegan hot dogs, with a side of anti–factory farming literature, to the hordes of fans that camp out in venue parking lots.

Thirty years later, Farm Sanctuary has developed some more sophisticated outreach tactics—their supporters include Alec Baldwin, Jon Stewart, Ellen DeGeneres, and Ryan Gosling—and vegan food is, as we all know, far more ubiquitous. So when Baur found out that the Dead were reuniting, he called up Soldier Field and, with the help of Bob Weir, petitioned Aramark, the arena’s concession provider, to offer an expanded menu of vegan-friendly options. Aramark agreed.

Read on to hear more from Baur about the virtues of meatless meat, and how he helped put veggie dogs into the hands of Deadheads past and present.

Tell me how you came to sell veggie hot dogs at Grateful Dead shows. Are you a big fan?
I love the Grateful Dead. I never identified as a Deadhead exactly. I certainly enjoyed traveling and being part of the scene. Our van was a pretty well-known location. People would say, “I’ll meet you at the meatless hot dog stand.”

It was a large audience of people who were open-minded and interested in expanding their horizons. And hungry! Vegan food was part of that. It’s questioning the status quo, challenging assumptions. So we started selling veggie dogs. We also did education about factory farming.

Would you travel for long periods of time?
We would go for a couple weeks at the longest. Sometimes it would just be shows in a particular city. We were primarily up and down the East Coast. Once you were there, it was three days just parked in the parking lot. Then we would travel to the next show, sometimes in the middle of the night. I remember some evenings, traveling on country roads in the middle of nowhere, you would have van after van lined up, almost like [gridlock]. And then you’d go to a grocery store at 2:00 a.m. somewhere, and they’d be sold out of bread, or basic things. It was very interesting to be part of this traveling tribe.

Where did you get your supplies?
We bought the hot dogs from the Potomac Adventist bookstore mostly, the Seventh Day Adventist bookstore in
Maryland. They’re a religion that promotes vegetarianism. We would get cases of these things. You could get the industrial size, with forty veggie dogs to a can. We loaded the van with so many veggie dogs one year that we actually broke an axle. We would stock up and then when we came into a town we could buy pita bread and mustard and ketchup and sauerkraut.

So you were depriving Seventh Day Adventists up and down the Eastern seaboard of their veggie dogs! We may have been in some cases, yeah. Usually we’d order in advance. But when we came into a town, we would sometimes clean them out!

How many veggie dogs per day would you say you were eating in the late eighties? Oh gosh! It’s very hard to know. But a lot. I would say there were probably some days where I would have eaten a dozen or more.

That’s insane.
I know, right. Those would have been the rare days. But we were on the road. We had these veggie dogs. We were selling them for twelve, sixteen hours at a time. We started in the mornings and went to well past midnight.

Why did you end up cutting it out? Farm Sanctuary grew and we were at a point where selling the veggie dogs at the Grateful Dead shows was no longer the best way for us to do outreach and fundraising. We started doing more animal rights conferences. We started doing more media. More events. Those shows took a lot of time and energy.

So flash-forward almost thirty years, and suddenly veggie dogs are back in your life! How’d you end up getting them into Soldier Field for the Dead reunion shows? As soon as I heard about the shows, I thought, we need to get vegan food into Soldier Field. And then I just started thinking: How do we get this done? I reached out to some friends who have connections at Aramark, which is the vendor. And at the same time called my friend Leilani Münter, who is a vegan race-car driver and also just happens to be the sister-in-law of Bob Weir. That was a big plus! Two months ago [Aramark] actually sent us a menu of what they were thinking of. It had all kinds of great vegan things on it, veggie dogs, and veggie burgers too.

Is this something you could ever have imagined in 1986? Oh no! In 1986 we had no clue. It’s been something that we just take day by day. Small steps ultimately lead to big steps. But no, we did not have any notion that here in 2015, Soldier Field is going to be selling all kinds of vegan food. That even places like Burger King are looking to expand their vegetarian options around the world. You can go into Walmart or Safeway or Whole Foods and find a variety of plant-based milks instead of cow’s milk, for example. Back in the mid-eighties, it was very different. We have come an awful long way.

Will you be at Soldier Field this weekend? I will not, unfortunately. Tickets were not easy to get, it was sold-out way in advance. It’s very popular, and I didn’t get on it early enough.

You should hit up the Seventh Day Adventist grocery store for a veggie dog this weekend, just for old time’s sake. Or a case of them! Loma Linda Linketts were the brand. I haven’t eaten one in years. As time has gone by, I have tried to eat more whole foods and healthier foods. Now you can go to the mainstream grocery store and get Tofurkey or Field Roast. They make vegan dogs in a way that’s less processed. So I haven’t had a Loma Linda veggie dog in a while . . . which isn’t to say I wouldn’t.

Any parting words? The bottom line is that the way we eat has profound impact on ourselves, on other animals, on the planet. It’s something most people do somewhat mindlessly. Focusing on our food choices, and eating in a way that’s in line with our values and interests, we can feel empowered and make a huge difference. There are wars happening: We
sometimes scratch our head and think, what can I do about that? When it comes to our food systems, and the environmental harms caused, and the animal cruelty involved, and the human health risks, every day each of us can make choices that can make a difference. It can be very empowering! We’re for people living well, and feeling good and healthy. That’s part of the spirit of the Grateful Dead too. Those bumper stickers: “Feel Good.” “No Time To Hate.” You know?

Update: Mere hours after doing this interview, Baur called back to report that his friend Leilani Münter came through with an extra Grateful Dead ticket for him for Sunday night.

So now you’re going! How do you feel?
I feel pretty damn excited. It’s possibly the last Grateful Dead show of all time! It’s an epoch, almost, that this band has represented, a cultural movement that it’s been a critical part of. Farm Sanctuary was part of that movement.

This goes without asking, but are you psyched to eat a veggie dog?
Oh hell yeah! I’m going to get there early. I’ll have a chance to hang around eating all kinds of vegan food.

This interview has been condensed and edited.
Religious convention draws thousands to downtown SA

NEWS

Visitors from 200 countries flock to Seventh-Day Adventist Church convention

Posted July 02, 2015, 6:10 PM Updated July 02, 2015, 6:30 PM

By Myra Arthur

Anchor/Reporter

SAN ANTONIO - Up to 70,000 people are expected to visit the Alamo City from July 2-11 for the Seventh-Day Adventist Church General Convention Session.

The event will draw believers from 200 countries to discuss the business of the church and gather as a faith community.

“I can’t believe it! It looks like an Adventist town,” said Nokutla Dlodlo, from Liverpool, England. “Everywhere you see the banners of the Adventist Church. I really feel at home here.”

"Our great reputation is just going to get even greater with much more knowledge of the wonderful hospitality of San Antonio," Dave Peterson, executive vice president of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce.

Costin Jordache, vice president for communication of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, said San Antonio was chosen to host the convention because of its history, culture and logistics.

“Which are to have a large coliseum type environment where you can seat 70,000 and a convention center very nearby and a whole lot of hotel rooms,” said Jordache.

San Antonio police are providing security for the event and patrolling the River Walk and downtown areas. Traffic officers are also helping direct the increase in traffic.

“I think that this convention will send a message to others that we are the place to come," said Peterson. “The new convention center is going to improve that even more.”

“Walking down, I was thinking 'It's going to be like that in heaven!' Seeing all these lovely faces, all these different people! I think its a taste of what’s to come,” said Dlodlo.

The Alamodome will host the roughly 70,000 attendees for the convention meetings. The convention lasts through July 11.

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Nearly 70,000 to attend Seventh-Day Adventist World Conference

Updated: Thursday, July 2 2015, 07:25 PM CDT

SAN ANTONIO -- Nearly 70,000 visitors will be in San Antonio over the next ten days for the city's largest convention ever.

The Seventh-Day Adventists World Conference started Thursday and runs through July 11th. The convention is mainly at the Convention Center and Alamodome. People from 190 countries will be shopping, eating, and staying at hotels, and the city says it could bring in more than $40 million dollars.

The Downtown area is expected to be very busy this weekend and next weekend, so plan ahead. The airport says you can also expect delays if you are flying out between the 11th and 13th.
The expansion seeks to more efficiently nurture the church’s fast-growing membership.

Posted July 2, 2015

By Andrew McChesney, Adventist Review / ANN

Moving to streamline the church’s work at a time of rapid growth, delegates opened the General Conference session on Thursday by officially approving the addition of an unprecedented 35 new union conferences to the Adventist world church.

The delegates easily approved the administrative units—most of which are located in Africa, Central America, and South America—by holding up yellow cards in a vote in the cavernous Alamodome stadium in San Antonio, Texas.

The vote was needed to officially confirm unions that have been organized since the last General Conference session in 2010 or are slated to be organized in the near future.

“The high number of new unions is unprecedented in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” G. T. Ng, executive secretary of the General Conference, told the Adventist Review earlier. “It is a reflection of the church growing with breakneck speed around the world.”

Most of the new unions came as a result of rapid church growth. The Adventist world church has a membership of 18.5 million, compared to the 16.3 million reported at the 2010 General Conference session.

In order to more efficiently nurture growing membership, it has become necessary to divide existing unions, establishing two new entities instead, church leaders said. Zambia, whose membership passed 1 million in April 2015, is an example of this, and its Zambia Union Conference will split into two unions during a meeting on September 20 to 23.

Other regions have advanced from union mission to union conference, indicating maturity in finance and leadership.

The 35 unions surpass the previous record of 22 unions added in 2010 and 22 unions added in 2005. Only 9 unions were added in 2000.

The new unions were presented to the delegates on the opening morning of the 10-day General Conference session, which runs through July 11. The respective division secretaries introduced the respective union presidents on the Alamodome’s stage.

The majority of the new unions —22— are in the three church divisions in Africa, Rosa Banks, a General Conference undersecretary and liaison to the three African divisions, told delegates.

Among the new unions is the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission, which was formed in 2012 with the intention of strengthening the focus of reaching the Middle East and North Africa.

“By uniting the former Trans Mediterranean Field and the former Middle East Union into a new union directly attached to the General Conference, it has been possible to enhance the efforts to reach the population in this part of the 10/40 window,” said Harald Wollan, associate secretary for the General Conference who serves as liaison to...
the Middle East and North Africa Mission. “Under the able leadership of the current administration, wonderful things are happening in this challenging part of the world.”

Homer Trecartin, president of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission, said it was a challenge to unite pieces of various divisions into the new union, but the result is worth the effort.

“It takes primarily Muslim countries, puts them in one group, and allows us to focus on one part of the world,” he said on the sidelines of the General Conference session.

The Trans-European Division also has a new union in Finland. The constituency in the Finland Union decided to reorganize the church’s work in that country for efficiency sake, transforming from a union conference to a union of churches conference, Wollan said.

“By eliminating administrative entities, it becomes possible to operate with fewer administrative positions, thus getting more pastors out in the field,” he said.

Wollan said the establishment of new unions matters to every church member because it helps the church better fulfill its mission of preparing people for Jesus’ return.

“The church was organized for mission. The more streamlined and efficient the leadership of the church, the better membership care and the more efficient it can become in evangelism,” he said. “We all share a responsibility in witnessing about the soon-coming Savior.”

We reserve the right to approve and disapprove comments accordingly and will not be able to respond to inquiries regarding that. Please keep all comments respectful and courteous to authors and fellow readers.
Will Seventh-day Adventists approve women's ordination? Oakwood leaders on issue's frontlines

They look like grandmothers, not radicals. But in August 2013, when four matronly women knelt in the sanctuary of the Worthington, Ohio, Seventh-day Adventist Church to be ordained as ministers, they joined more than 100 women in North America and 300 worldwide who have been ordained to full credentialed ministry despite traditional denominational bans on women's ordination.

Whether or not female leaders should be ordained has been discussed in the Adventist church around the world for decades. Leaders at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Ala., a historically black college founded in the late 1800s based on a vision by the church's prophet, Ellen White, are among those at the forefront of the discussion. Former Oakwood president Delbert Baker is now general vice-president of the church.

During the General Conference Session, which will be held in San Antonio July 2-11, 2015, delegates will vote on whether or not the 13 geographic divisions of the world church of more than 18 million members will be allowed the latitude to designate women as full pastors according to local acceptance of women in leadership roles.

The recommendation came out of a three-year study undertaken by an elite committee of 106 that includes current Oakwood president Leslie Pollard. Elder Charles Bradford, who was president of the SDA North American Division from 1979 to 1990 and is retired in Huntsville, is among respected leaders of the denomination who are encouraging acceptance of the recommendation for the regional ordination option.

Elder Charles Bradford

'It's time'

Women's ordination? It's time, Bradford told AL.com in his gravelly voice.

"I'm an old preacher, sister," said Bradford, who celebrates his 90th birthday this summer. "I've been involved in discussing this since 1973, and church leaders and theologians can see no biblical reason that would prohibit this. One thing Ellen G. White does say is: 'The secret of unity is the equality of all the believers,' and that's what I've thought about through the years."

Bradford is among six "elder statesmen" of the church who have collaborated on a video, "It's Time," which is posted at AdventistElders.com. The video statements encourage a "yes" vote at GC on the question of: "Is it acceptable for division executive committees, as they deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry?"

Jan Paulsen, former world president warns of "fracture" in the church if the GC delegates do not approve the measure. Unity does not have to mean unanimity, Paulsen said.

"It is good for us to remember that we have never as a church—whether at an Annual Council or a GC Session—come to the conclusion that there is clear, unambiguous inspired counsel that prevents us from ordaining women to ministry," Paulsen writes in his introduction to that video. "By default, like it or not, we are saying: 'Time and culture will define the right action and the right moment.' It is my settled conviction that we must say 'yes' in San Antonio. I fear that serious damage will be done to the global unity of our church if we do not allow those parts of our global family, for whom time and culture have come, the right and authority to grant women equal access with men to the ministry of our church."
First women, then gays?

Against these recommendations, some Adventists believe that extending ordination to women blurs the divine plan for gender roles. That blurring that can lead to dire consequences, according to AdventistsAffirm.org: "eliminating the clear role distinctions between men and women accelerates the breakdown of the family, leads to confusion of identity among children, and may contribute to acceptance of homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle."

That connection has drawn gentle ridicule from some outside the church and clarification from within that predicting a slippery slope from women's ordination to "legitimate" homosexuality is not official church teaching.

Meanwhile some young leaders-to-be are simply getting on with their sense of calling.

Michael Shelton, recently graduated as a theology major from Oakwood University, is looking forward to attending the GC Session as a member of the Oakwood Aeolians, who will be featured musicians.

Shelton said that the question of women's ordination did not come up very often during the weekly conversations of theology and religion students in Oakwood's Theology Forum, of which he was president. The women in the forum, he said, were focused on training as Bible teachers or chaplains – roles in the church that do not require ministerial ordination.

"Women's ordination was not one of those top-of-the-morning discussions for us," Shelton said. "I believe God calls people to ministry from all ages, genders, every background of life, but it's not ordination that solidifies that you're called. Ordination is us praising God, agreeing with God that he has called you, but ordination doesn't take away a calling and it doesn't qualify you as one who is called; you're called before you are ordained."

Women's ordination is among the questions that came up in 2006 when then-SDA president Jan Paulsen visited Oakwood to tape one in series of town hall meetings with college students around the world. A young woman who said she was a religion major asked Paulsen why the church "negates," as she put it, the calling of women to be ordained ministers. Paulsen urged her to listen to God's call for her life, not to the policies of the church.

"Your calling comes from God; don't walk away from that. Complete your education," Paulsen said. "The church will use you. And the church will work its way through the challenges we face, but we have to walk through these as a community."

Elder Bradford and other "senior statesmen" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church explain their support for allowing the local option on women's ordination in this video from AdventistElders.com --
San Antonio Hosts 65,000 For Seventh-Day Adventist General Conference

By Eileen Pace

Visitors begin arriving at San Antonio International Airport for the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Session and 10-day revival

Credit Evelynn Bailey / COSA

The City of San Antonio expects a $40 million dollar boost to the local economy from its largest conference ever.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau is expecting 65,000 international guests for the 10-day Seventh-day Adventist General Conference at the Alamodome.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Conference we actually booked almost ten years ago," the bureau's Cassandra Matej said, adding that this conference, as large as three Alamo Bowls, has to book early because there are just a handful cities in the country with facilities large enough.

“And we’re one of them. And we were competing and the two finalists were Indianapolis and San Antonio,” Matej said.

She said for large conferences, the CVB creates a group resume and liaises with local businesses such as restaurants that may need to increase staffing or extend their hours to accommodate more diners.

“We also are the liaison with other city departments, such as the San Antonio Police Dept. There have been numerous traffic-control discussions and making sure that people can walk from the convention center to the Alamodome. We’ve also engaged with Solid Waste. The fact that a group this size means we want to be prepared for trash,” she said.

VIA has made a special transit pass available to attendees for $28 that allows them unlimited rides throughout the conference.

Matej said more than 200 countries will be represented at the event. She said downtown, the Riverwalk and other venues are expected to be extra crowded for the duration of the conference, which runs through July 11.

Check the VIA bus schedule for the conference: http://www.viainfo.net/Communication/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=2563
Adventist Medical Center renovates

Laura Brown Staff Writer

Ongoing renovations at the Adventist Medical Center in Selma will help the hospital stay cool this summer.

The June 9 installation of 100-ton HVAC chiller on the southwest side of the hospital is part of a $13.3 million renovation project. Visalia’s American Inc. installed the chiller and enclosure that are just one of several components helping to cool the hospital.

Adventist Health expects the project to be completed by the end of August or early September.

The hospital is able to expand services after a $13.3 million investment by Adventist Health. Improvements include a six-bed intensive care unit, seven additional emergency beds, an isolation room, a cardiac catheterization lab and surgery department upgrades.

Preliminary work for the expansion includes the installation of a new emergency generator and Emergency Department process changes to reduce wait times.

“Our emergency visits have more than doubled since 2005 so we’re excited to start preliminary work,” Vice President of AMC Selma Nina Plata said. “We consider it an honor to care for patients from throughout the Valley.”

The ICU and emergency plans have been approved by the state Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. Plata says plans are in development for surgery department upgrades and the new cardiac catheterization lab for heart diagnostic and vascular procedures.

The AMC Selma Foundation Board gave the project another boost when it presented President/CEO Wayne Ferch with a check for $50,000 on June 5. Foundation board members volunteer and raise funds for needed hospital services. The $50,000 will go toward the Emergency Department remodel and expansion.

Adventist Health is a not-for-profit private corporation and its projects differ from many major hospital construction projects in that no public taxes are required.

Adventist Health/Central Valley Network is part of Adventist Health, a faith-based, not-for-profit integrated health care delivery system serving communities in California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. Their 28,600 workforce includes more than 20,500 employees, 4,500 medical staff physicians and 3,600 volunteers. Founded on Seventh-day Adventist health values, Adventist Health provides compassionate care in 19 hospitals, more than 220 clinics (hospital-based, rural health and physician clinics), 14 home care agencies, seven hospice agencies and four joint-venture retirement centers. For details, visit www.AdventistHealth.org/central-valley.