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NEWS

After debate, Annual Council Votes Statement on Church Polity
Following three hours of respectful study and discussion, leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist world church voted to approve a “Statement on Church Polity, Procedures and Resolution of Disagreements in the Light of Recent Union Actions on Ministerial Ordination” on October 16, during the Annual Council of world church leaders held in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. The vote was 264 in favour and 25 opposed.

The move comes after three local unions – the North German Union in the Euro-Africa Division, and the Columbia Union and Pacific Union in the North American Division – separately voted this year to permit ordination “without respect to gender,” something the Adventist Church as a whole has twice rejected in votes at the movement’s General Conference Sessions, which are held every five years.

The voted statement expresses disapproval of the independent actions of the unions, appeals for all Church units “to consider thoughtfully the impact and implications of decisions” made independently of the world community, and affirms the role of women in the Church’s life and ministry. The document also points toward continuing studies on the theology of ordination, the results of which are expected to be ready in 2014, ahead of the following year’s 60th General Conference Session. No sanctions are applied, or suggested, in the document.

“This statement deals with Church structure and procedures. It does not address the question of ministerial ordination practices per se,” the statement said. “The central issue is one of Church polity – how the Church defines its organization, governance and operations.”

“Decisions to pursue a course of action not in harmony with the 1990 and 1995 General Conference Session decisions (with respect to ministerial ordination) represent not only an expression of dissent but also a demonstration of self-determination in a matter previously decided by the collective Church,” the statement said. “The General Conference Executive Committee regards these actions as serious mistakes.”

The statement text continues, “The world Church cannot legitimize practices that clearly contradict the intent of General Conference Session actions. … Accordingly, the world Church does not recognize actions authorizing or implementing ministerial ordination without regard to gender.”

But the statement is also clear in stating the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s position on women: “The General Conference Executive Committee specifically
affirms the important roles that women fill in the life of the Church. Their
giftedness and commitment is a blessing to the whole Church and a necessary part
of its work in mission.”

The measure passed on a secret, paper ballot after the day's discussion, which began
with comments from Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson, Seventh-day Adventist world church
president. Wilson expressed the hope that the world church's units would continue
"focusing on the mission of the Church, uniting in Christ, even though we will face
some differences and disagreements."

Wilson was followed by noted evangelist and retired General Conference vice
president Pastor Mark Finley, who spoke about the question of how the early church
made decisions and worked in unity. He referenced three incidents in the book of
Acts.

"The essence of unity is not uniform action; it is respecting one another enough to
listen carefully, respond thoughtfully and decide together," Finley said.
"Insurmountable difficulties were resolved as early church leaders met together,
prayed and surrendered their personal opinions to the decision of the larger
corporate body."
During an extended comment period, Pastor Daniel Jackson, North American
Division president, sought to reassure world church leaders that the division
supported the Church's mission, despite the polity question discussed in the
statement.

"We want to make it abundantly clear that the NAD without any hesitation
expresses our unity with the world church," Jackson said. "We are not just an
adjunct to the world church; we are brothers and sisters with every person in this
room."

A pastor in the NAD’s Atlantic Union Conference, Dedrick Blue, told his fellow
delegates that "the process deals with the mechanism, but the effect is just as
important as the process. What we are grappling with here is the effect of our
decision as a world body,” adding, “Don't get involved with process to neglect
justice and mercy.”

While he voted in favour of the statement, North Pacific Union Conference
president Pastor Max Torkelson II said he hoped younger Adventists wouldn’t get
the wrong message from the action. He spoke with a reporter following the meeting.

“I’m concerned that, particularly our younger church members have less patience”
to wait for the world church to act, he said. “And we’re asking them, we have been
asking them, for years, to be patient, and now again we’re asking them to be patient.
I admire them to the degree that they are, but I’m wondering how long we can
presume that they will be patient. I’m afraid that we may disappoint them.”
Following the vote and before prayers by Adventist university leaders from three continents, Wilson said he appreciated delegates’ careful approach to the matter.

“Thank you for your confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring unity to God's Church,” Wilson said. “We're not at the end of the road, we still have a journey to complete, but by God's grace, let's do it together.”

Source: Adventist News Network

**Church’s View on Gays, Lesbians Adjusted to Emphasize ‘Compassion’**

*Oct. 17, 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, Edwin Manuel Garcia/ANN*

The Seventh-day Adventist Church on Wednesday reaffirmed its stance against homosexual activity and same-sex marriage, but also softened the denomination’s position statement to offer compassion toward gays and lesbians.

The half-page policy statement on homosexuality was approved overwhelmingly by a hand vote of more than 200 pastors, lay people and other denominational workers attending the final Executive Committee business session of the 2012 Annual Council at the denomination’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

Church leaders said the original position statement drafted in 1999 was clear and based on biblical teachings. They chose to update the document to relay the message that the church doesn’t accept homosexual practice but must recognize the need to minister with compassion to gays, said Vice President Pardon Mwansa, who chaired the policy committee that recommended the change.

“We felt we needed to close this statement with a phrase that shows that the church is willing to show a Christ-like compassionate spirit to those who practice homosexuality,” Mwansa told attendees who represented church leaders in six continents.

The statement – which does not define compassion nor explain how the church should treat homosexuals – also was re-edited to show in a stronger stance than before that the church intends to remain faithful to scripture.

The final sentence of the three-paragraph document now reads: “As His disciples, Seventh-day Adventists endeavour to follow the Lord’s instruction and example, living a life of Christ-like compassion and faithfulness.”

None of the delegates in the auditorium spoke on the issue before voting. But a more controversial agenda item, the revised position statement dealing with same-sex marriage, prompted a more passionate response, sometimes focused on
the issue itself, and at other times on the grammatical nuances involved in the group-editing of a controversial paper.

The committee leaders said they elected to revise the same-sex union statement to reflect societal trends, such as acknowledging that some governments have given legal standing to same-sex unions.

“The institutions of marriage and family are under attack,” declared Willie Oliver, policy committee member and co-director of Family Ministries for the global church, quoting from a line that is now part of the new statement.

The statement also deleted the word “disorder” – calling it outdated – and replaced it with “disturbance” to describe homosexuality. That line in the five-paragraph document now reads: “Homosexuality is a manifestation of the disturbance and brokenness in human inclinations and relations caused by the entrance of sin into the world.”

And like the statement on homosexuality, the statement on same-sex marriage attempts to extend compassion.

The previous version stated: “We hold that all people, no matter what their sexual orientation, are children of God.” The new version says, “We hold that all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, are loved by God.”

One delegate from Europe attempted to amend the statement to delete the line about homosexuality being a “disturbance,” suggesting the church be more sensitive.

His proposal was rejected by North American Division lay member Gina Brown, and eventually the entire body. “Though many of us have family members who are homosexual, we understand the thought process, we still embrace them, we still love them, we still care for them,” Brown said. “However, as a church, we must take a stand for what is right.”

Ekkehardt Mueller, deputy director of the Biblical Research Institute, praised the committee for including a phrase in the line that was proposed for amendment that links homosexuality to the “entrance of sin” into the world.

“We feel that this is necessary in this context, especially since homosexuals today would deny any notion of sin and would say ‘this is how we are created, God has created us this way, and therefore we have the right and duty to this lifestyle,’ so I would be opposed to the amendment,” Mueller said.

The theme of homosexuality, and transgender issues, prompted one delegate, the president of the British Union Conference, to ask church leaders for guidance with a situation his region recently experienced.
“We have had a brother who two weeks ago came back to church as a sister. Legally, in British Law, he is now sister, he has had the operations. I have never encountered anything like this in my ministry,” Ian Sweeney said in an address to the policy committee members. “We would need some help on that one.” Sweeney didn’t get the answer he was probably hoping for, but it became obvious the church will grapple with the issue again in the future.

“We have received requests from other parts of the world field about situations in their church. The church manual does not have a lot to say – in fact, very little to say – on this subject, so these are subjects that we’re having to address now in the church body,” replied Adventist Church Vice President Ben Schoun, vice chairman of the policy committee.

“Perhaps the committee will bring forth suggestions or guidance,” Schoun said.

Source: Adventist News Network

EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 8 – October 27

“Courageous Honour Begins at Home” at Bowmanville Church

Join us for an eight-week sermon series on Courageous Living Sabbath, September 8 to Sabbath, October 27, 11:00 a.m.

Sabbath school classes for adults and children begin at 9:30 a.m.
Bowmanville Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2850 Hwy #2 at Lambs Rd.
Bowmanville.

October 6 – 27, 2012

Living With Hope Evangelistic Series

Please join us as Evangelist Joseph Amankwah hosts the Living with Hope evangelistic series at Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church located at 65 Grand Marshall Drive, Scarborough, ON, M1B 5N6 (Morningside and Sheppard). The series will be every night at 7:00 p.m. except Mondays and Thursdays. Bring family members and friends and receive spiritual solutions to your everyday problems, as we share hope for these last days.

October 19-November 3
“Voice of Hope” at Latter Rain Church

Latter Rain presents Voice of Hope October 19 – November 3 at 7:15 p.m. with international singer, evangelist and motivational speaker, Claude “Beulah Land” Edwards and Pastor Kenneth Campbell.
Special features: Health, Security, Finance, Family and Education.
Bring your friends and family and come and receive a blessing.
Location: 7 Elinor Ave. Scarborough, ON M1R 3H1; tel.: 416-285-9734.

October 20 - 28

Mamon Wilson Health & Wellness Training Program at Shiloh Church

What: Mamon Wilson' Health & Wellness Training Program
Where: Shiloh Adventist Church (1090 Bellamy Rd N. (at Ellesmere), Scarborough M2N 2H2)
When: October 20 & 27, Sabbath divine hour and from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Oct. 21 & 28, Sunday from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Oct. 22 – 25, Monday-Thursday from 6:00 - 9:00 pm
How: Register directly through the website: www.LifestyleWellness.ca or contact Thyra at 416-499-5458 for more info.

October 26 & 27

“Reading and Understanding Ellen G. White's Writings” at the Immanuel

You are invited to hear Dr. Merlin Burt, director, Ellen G. White Estate, Andrews University, present "Reading and Understanding Ellen G. White's Writings” at the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church, 418 Drewry Avenue, North York.

Presentation times:
Friday, October 26 at 7:15 p.m.
Sabbath, October 27: 11:00 a.m.
Sabbath Afternoon (two-part seminar): 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

A light lunch will be served to those attending the afternoon sessions.

November 2-3

Breath of Life (BOL) Reunion Weekend
Join current BOL Speaker/Director Dr. Carlton Byrd, along with former speakers/directors of the BOL Telecast, Elders Walter Arties, C.D. Brooks, and Walter Pearson Jr., for the BOL Reunion Weekend on November 2-3, in Huntsville, Ala. at the Oakwood University (OU) Church. Be blessed with powerful preaching from these speakers, along with inspirational music from the OU Aeolians, BOL Quartet, and the Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy Choir. MORE (or 256-837-1255).

November 2-4

Kanisa’s Retreat at Camp Frenda

The Kanisa Fellowship’s Youth Department a.k.a. “KANISA KREW” would cordially like to invite its members, their friends, and the extended Adventist family (between the ages 13-35) to its 4th Youth & Young Adult Survivor Retreat at Camp Frenda from November 2-4, 2012.

Please note registration is on a first paid, first registered basis.
Also registrants who are parents are welcome to bring their child if 4 years or younger (please note there is limited space for children).

Registration Fee: $110
Bus/Transportation Fee: $25

November 3-10

Philadelphia’s 20th Anniversary Celebration

You are cordially invited to join us at Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 65 Grand Marshall Drive, Scarborough, ON, M1B 5N6 (Morningside and Sheppard) as we celebrate our 20th Anniversary. The theme for the week is Journeying with Jesus by Faith. The anniversary event will be on Saturday November 3 (all day); Sunday, November 4, 7:00 p.m.; Wednesday, November 7, 7:00 p.m.; Friday, November 9, 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, November 10 (all day). The event will feature former pastors, tributes, a walk down memory lane, fellowship, speeches and the grand climax on November 10 at 4:30 p.m.

November 3

Health Ministry Day at Immanuel Church

The Immanuel Church, 418 Drewry Avenue, North York, is pleased to extend an invitation to the GTA church community to its annual Health Ministry Day on November 3, 2012. Dr. Paulette Higgins, All Dunamis Chiropractic and Wellness Centre, will the guest speaker at the 11:00 a.m. Worship service and at the 5:00 p.m.
A seminar. How to strengthen our immune system will be one of the topics of discussion. Please join us.

**November 9 - 11**

*Training for Leaders in Children’s, Health, Men’s, Women’s and Youth Ministries - Ottawa (Ottawa Churches)*

Early registration until November 1: $15 includes lunch and materials! If you are involved now, or will be involved in 2013, in any of the previously named ministries, please get in touch with your conference representative to obtain details about this and other training events. Email loliveira@adventistontario.org.

**November 16 – 18**

*Training for Leaders in Children’s, Health, Men’s, Women’s and Youth Ministries - Toronto (Downsview and Mt Zion Churches)*

Guest speaker: Pastor Ern Brake. He will look at ministry in the postmodern context. Special guest is Candy DeVore.

Early registration until November 1: $15 includes lunch and materials! If you are involved now, or will be involved in 2013, in any of the previously named ministries, please get in touch with your conference representative to obtain details about this and other training events. Email loliveira@adventistontario.org.

**November 18**

*Kingsway College 2012 Fun(d) Dinner*

You are cordially invited to the Kingsway College 2012 Fun(d) Dinner on Sunday, November 18, 2012, located at the King Fitness Complex, 1200 Leland Road, Oshawa. Come and enjoy an evening with entertainment, dinner and a silent auction to benefit the Kingsway College Worthy Student Fund.

To reserve free tickets, call 905-433-1144 x211 or e-mail at funddinner@kingswaycollege.on.ca. Seating is limited.

**OTHER ADVERTISEMENTS & JOB OPPORTUNITY**

*Crawford Adventist Academy (CAA)*

French teacher (Grades 8 to 12) on a temporary assignment is needed at Crawford Adventist Academy in Toronto. Should be able to use the Accelerated Integrated
Method (AIM). Applicant must be a committed Seventh-day Adventist and legally able to work in Canada.

Successful candidates for the above position will have the following:
- A passion for teaching, and a love for students.
- Commitment to Adventist education by example.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Experience in teaching students of varying abilities.
- Excellent administrative and classroom management skills.
- A commitment to offering an academic program with high expectations yet be able to address the needs of all students.

A current resume, along with three referees, can be emailed to Janice Maitland, Superintendent of Education, at jmaitland@adventistontario.org.

Crawford Adventist Academy (CAA)

A full-time JK-12 instrumental music teacher is needed for the 2012-2013 school year. Applicant must be a committed Seventh-day Adventist, be legally able to work in Canada, and hold or be eligible for denominational and/or provincial certification. Master’s degree preferred. Composing skills will be an asset. CAA is a JK-12 school located in Toronto.

The successful candidate must be able to:
- Develop and maintain a strong music program.
- Motivate students to excellence.
- Have experience in teaching students of varying abilities and ethnic backgrounds.
- Demonstrate excellent administrative and classroom management skills.

The candidate must also have:
- Experience in working with ensembles (woodwinds, brass, quintets, jazz band, etc.).
- A passion for teaching, and a love for students.
- Commitment to Adventist education by example.
- A commitment to offering an academic program with high expectations.

A current resume, along with three referees, can be emailed to Janice Maitland, Superintendent of Education, at jmaitland@adventistontario.org.

Peel Adventist School

We are looking for a principal who wants to lead students to Jesus, who is committed to helping students experience their best academically and socially, and
are able to implement multiple strategies of instruction and assessment. Peel Adventist School, one of three schools in the Toronto Adventist District School Board (TADSB), is a 68-student, 6-teacher school located in Caledon, Ontario.

Successful candidates for any of the above positions will have the following:

- Denominational and/or provincial certification.
- Administrators’ certificate preferred.
- A commitment to offering an academic program with high expectations yet be able to address the needs of all students.
- A firm commitment as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- The ability to work effectively with staff.
- A thorough knowledge of their discipline(s).
- Documented ability to work legally in Canada.
- Music experience an asset.

An updated resume, along with three letters of reference, can be emailed to Janice Maitland, superintendent of education, at jmaitland@adventistontario.org.
ADCOM/PreC/GCDO12AC/12AC to PKM

127-12G SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST POSITION STATEMENT
ON HOMOSEXUALITY

VOTED, To adopt the Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on Homosexuality, to read as follows:

Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on Homosexuality

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that every human being is valuable in the sight of God, and we seek to minister to all men and women in the spirit of Jesus. We also believe that by God’s grace and through the encouragement of the community of faith, an individual may live in harmony with the principles of God’s Word.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a woman. This was the design established by God at creation. The Scriptures declare: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen 2:24, NIV). Throughout Scripture this heterosexual pattern is affirmed. The Bible makes no accommodation for homosexual activity or relationships. Sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden (Lev 18:5-23, 26; Lev 20:7-21; Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9-11). Jesus Christ reaffirmed the divine creation intent: “Haven’t you read,’ he replied, ‘that at the beginning the Creator “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?” So they are no longer two, but one’” (Matt 19:4-6, NIV). For these reasons Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to homosexual practices and relationships.

Jesus affirmed the dignity of all human beings and reached out compassionately to persons and families suffering the consequences of sin. He offered caring ministry and words of solace to struggling people, while differentiating His love for sinners from His clear teaching about sinful practices. As His disciples, Seventh-day Adventists endeavor to follow the Lord’s instruction and example, living a life of Christ-like compassion and faithfulness.
VOTED, To adopt the document Seventh-day Adventist Response to Same-Sex Unions—A Reaffirmation of Christian Marriage, to reads as follows:

Seventh-day Adventist Response to Same-Sex Unions/Marriages—A Reaffirmation of Christian Marriage

Over the past several decades the Seventh-day Adventist Church has felt it necessary to clearly state in various ways its position in regards to marriage, the family, and human sexuality. These subjects are at the heart of many pressing issues facing society. That which for centuries has been considered to be basic Christian morality in the marriage setting is now increasingly called into question, not only in secular society but within Christian churches themselves.

The institutions of marriage and family are under attack and facing growing centrifugal forces that are tearing them apart. An increasing number of nations are not only debating the topic of “same-sex unions,” but some have already passed various pieces of legislation, thus making it a world issue. The public discussion has engendered strong emotions. In light of these developments, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is clearly restating its position.

We reaffirm, without hesitation, our long-standing position as expressed in the Church’s Fundamental Beliefs: “Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.”¹ Though “sin has perverted God’s ideals for marriage and family,” “the family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred of any human relationship,” and thus “families need to experience renewal and reformation in their relationships” (An Affirmation of Family, 1990).² God instituted “marriage, a covenant-based union of two genders [male and female] physically, emotionally, and spiritually, spoken of in Scripture as ‘one flesh.’”³ “The monogamous union in marriage of a man and a woman is . . . the only morally appropriate locus of genital or related intimate sexual expression.” “Any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of the heavenly ideal” (An Affirmation of Marriage, 1996).⁴

Homosexuality is a manifestation of the disturbance and brokenness in human inclinations and relations caused by the entrance of sin into the world. While everyone is subject to fallen human nature, “we also believe that by God’s grace and through the encouragement of the community of faith, an individual may live in harmony with the principles of God’s Word” (Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on Homosexuality, 2012).⁵

We hold that all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, are loved by God. We do not condone singling out any group for scorn and derision, let alone abuse. Still, God’s Word that transcends time and culture does not permit a homosexual lifestyle. The Bible’s opposition to same-sex unions/marriage is anchored in God’s plan at creation for marriage (Gen 1:26-28; 2:20-24), in divine legislation (Lev 18:22; 20:13; 1 Cor 6:9-11), and in Jesus’ explicit
confirmation of a permanent, monogamous, and heterosexual marriage relationship
(Matt 19:4-6).

1 Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An exposition of the fundamental beliefs of the
Seventh-day Adventist Church, Doctrine 23 on ‘Marriage and the Family.”
2 Public Statement, An Affirmation of Family, released July 5, 1990, at the General
Conference Session, Indianapolis, Indiana.
3 Statement voted by the General Conference Administrative Committee on April 23,
1996.
4 Statement voted by the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive
Committee, October 17, 2012.