Columbia Union Executive Committee Honors Peggy Lee

The Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee honored Peggy Louise Stevens Lee, secretary/treasurer of the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF), today at their quarterly meeting. Lee is departing her position after 35 years of yeoman service, including helping grow the fund from $3 million to $168 million (as of December 31, 2014).—Grace Virtue

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VIDEO: Leaders Highlight Evangelism at First
Union Hispanic Festival

It was an event many months, even years, in the making, but finally a dream came true when nearly 2,300 attended the Columbia Union Conference’s first Hispanic Lay Evangelism Festival, February 20-22, at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, Md. “Livangelism 2015” provided an avenue for union, conference and local church leaders to offer evangelistic training to members from more than 200 Hispanic churches. Attendees also got an opportunity to network and re-experience a sense of God’s call to action in this generation.—Vanessa Leiva

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Washington Adventist University’s Bible Translation Institute to Release New Russian Translation of Bible

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In 2010 Mikhail M. Kulakov took over his recently deceased father’s project to translate the Bible into the modern Russian language. And, this week, 23 years after it began, the completed project is finally at press.—V. Michelle Bernard

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Allegheny East Members Bike for Christian Education

The Allegheny East Conference (AEC) school system is on their way to long-term sustainability because of a new fundraising bike-a-thon, say leaders. iRideAEC, a conference-wide initiative, stemmed from the vision of Jackson Doggette, AEC general counsel and director of Philanthropy and Trust Services.—LaTasha Hewitt

Charleston Members Share Life-Altering Health Knowledge in Church
In 2006 Basil Bennett, a Charleston (W.Va.) church member, underwent coronary bypass surgery. To help his health, he gave up eggs and ate only lean meat. But, in spite of his new “healthy” diet, he continued gaining weight, had high cholesterol and blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat and medication-induced neuropathy. He believed he wouldn’t be around for long, he shares. But, Basil and his wife, Becky, got a health makeover thanks to information they learned and are now sharing with their community.—Kathy Pepper

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Read the entire March Visitor online here!

More Adventist News

Columbia Union Hosts First Prayer Rally for “Living With Hope” Initiative

Glen Burnie Church to Host Health Fair

Kettering College Receives Best Value School Award for Second Consecutive Year

Philippines Approves New Seventh-day Adventist Medical School

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Columbia Union Executive Committee Honors Peggy Lee

Michelle Bernard

Columbia Union Executive Committee Honors Peggy Lee

Story by Grace Virtue and V. Michelle Bernard

The Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee honored Peggy Louise Stevens Lee, secretary/treasurer of the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF), today at their quarterly meeting. Lee is departing her position after 35 years of yeoman service, including helping grow the fund from $3 million to $168 million (as of December 31, 2014). Lee also guided the fund through a complex registration process in 1993, and helped plan the first North American Division-wide meeting of revolving fund personnel in 2006.

“What has happened there [CURF] is a result of the vision that God gave to this lady and the team she put together to make it happen,” said Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president. “Praise God for what he has done through Peggy Lee.”

Rob Vandeman, Columbia Union executive secretary, shared that through her work and desire to bless the church, she has helped conferences to build church schools, and renovate, build and buy churches. “We’ve all been blessed through her careful stewardship of the dollars that people have put into the CURF program,” he added.

Lee doesn’t take credit for CURF’s success. “I have been so blessed throughout my life. I lost a son at 17 years of age in an automobile accident, my husband died 20 years ago from brain cancer, but I have two wonderful daughters and two great grandchildren,” she added.

“I want to give credit to the CURF staff, we have a fabulous staff that can do just fine without me, and things will progress I’m sure also.” One of my greatest blessings is that the Columbia Union has allowed me to work as an old, old lady. I’m thankful that they’ve allowed me to work this long.”

Lee started her career with the union in 1949 as a secretary in the education department. She left in 1952 but returned in 1980 as secretary to Don Russell, then union treasurer. Russell also put her in charge of CURF. Lee became treasurer and assistant secretary in 1992, and secretary/treasurer in January 1997, when Russell retired. In 1993 she led the effort to have the fund registered as a security. Administrators say she accomplished spectacular growth through her management ability.

Read more in the April Visitor!
Michelle Bernard

It was an event many months, even years, in the making, but finally a dream came true when nearly 2,300 attended the Columbia Union Conference’s first Hispanic Lay Evangelism Festival, February 20-22, at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, Md. “Livangelism 2015” provided an avenue for union, conference and local church leaders to offer evangelistic training to members from more than 200 Hispanic churches. Attendees also got an opportunity to network and re-experience a sense of God’s call to action in this generation.

“We longed and prayed for our planned festival to be more than just an event, but a new Pentecost,” says Rubén Ramos, union vice president for the Multilingual Ministries and organizer for the event. Read the full story here.
Leaders Highlight Evangelism at First Union Hispanic Festival

Michelle Bernard

Leaders Highlight Evangelism at First Union Hispanic Festival
Story by Vanessa Leiva, Photos by David Leiva

It was an event many months, even years, in the making, but finally a dream came true when nearly 2,300 attended the Columbia Union Conference’s first Hispanic Lay Evangelism Festival, February 20-22, at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, Md. “Livangelism 2015” provided an avenue for union, conference and local church leaders to offer evangelistic training to members from more than 200 Hispanic churches. Attendees also got an opportunity to network and re-experience a sense of God’s call to action in this generation.

“We longed and prayed for our planned festival to be more than just an event, but a new Pentecost,” says Rubén Ramos, union vice president for the Multilingual Ministries and organizer for the event.

Living a Movement

The festival centered on four evangelistic initiatives that reminded the delegates that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is more than just a body of believers—it is a movement, with a call to lead others to Christ. The four initiatives were: 1) for every disciple to pray and work to bring five friends to Christ; 2) for each member to proclaim Jesus Christ and start 500 new small groups; 3) for all delegates and leaders to commit themselves to planting 15 new churches by the end of 2015; and 4) for church leaders to focus all ministries and activities on meeting the needs of the community.

José Cortés Sr., president of the New Jersey Conference, started the event by inviting all attendees to cultivate an environment in their churches that opens the door to all who seek Christ, free from any prejudice and baggage. Dave Weigely, Columbia Union president, invited the delegates to “become passionate about being fishers of men” and bring at least one friend to Christ this year. Speakers also challenged members to turn their homes into places of worship. As a result, more than 800 delegates pledged to start small groups.

Lighting up Lives

Many attendees reported surpassing their goals of baptisms and plans to expand to new frontiers. This inspired 51 churches to commit to plant a new church in an area with little or no Adventist presence, passing the original festival goal of 15.

As the powerful weekend came to a close, Ramos reminded attendees that all of their commitments and plans will not be possible without the Holy Spirit’s work in them. “I’m thankful to God for what He has done and pray that this experience will be multiplied and will overflow into every home in our union territory!” he states.

Feature Image Caption: Melecio Benjamin Villalpando Garcia and his wife Gloria Elena Mallorca Kremer(back)
getting baptized as new members of the recently established Landmark church in Potomac Conference.
Photograph by David Leiva
Washington Adventist University’s Bible Translation Institute to Release New Russian Translation of Bible

Michelle Bernard

_In 2010 Mikhail M. Kulakov took over his recently deceased father’s project to translate the Bible into the modern Russian language. And, this week, 23 years after it began, the completed project is finally at press._

**Story by V. Michelle Bernard**

Kulakov, the director and editor-in-chief of the Bible Translation Institute based at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., says he is looking forward to seeing ordinary Russian people gain strength, hope, joy and a sense of God’s closeness in the Lord’s Prayer, the Psalms and Isaiah in their mother tongue.

While growing up, Kulakov used a Russian Bible translated in 1875. “I loved the translation which we had access to, (growing up) but I did not realize that there is greater richness and depth of meaning in those passages … that have became much clearer to me with a mastery of the biblical languages and through the creation of this more accurate translation,” he adds.

The institute led the project, but also worked with Russian Orthodox scholars. Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran and Russian Orthodox websites have already posted portions of the project on their websites.

During the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee meetings held this week, Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, prayed for the distribution of the Bible and that the knowledge of His second coming will be made known to many people as a result of this work.

The New Testament can be purchased at Adventist Book Centers across the United States, on Amazon and at russianbible.org.
Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Store Changes Name

Michelle Bernard

Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Store Changes Name
Story by Potomac Conference Staff

The Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Store is changing its name to “LivingWell.” The change comes after an 18-month process of talking with customers, Seventh-day Adventist church members and Adventist pastors. The store will roll out the new name March 16, though the rebranding work will continue for several months.

“We hope to be able to serve even more people in even better ways,” says Kermit Netteburg, general manager. “Helping people to live better physically, emotionally and spiritually is the focus of our mission. Our new name helps us focus on that like a laser.”

The store also started several new initiatives to make certain the spiritual side of the mission increases because of the name change. “We have started Bible study groups at the store, and people love them. One woman drives two hours each day in order to be part of the group,” says Kathleen Burton, operations manager. The store is also giving away free Adventist literature to paying customers.

With 13,000 customer transactions each month and 20,000 people who receive regular emails from the store, there are many options to expand the mission. About 70 percent of those people are not Adventists, making the mission potential huge.

Netteburg worries that some people may feel the store is abandoning its Adventist roots because the Adventist name isn’t in the store. “We won’t ever change our Adventist DNA. But, our research showed we had people who hadn’t come into the store because they thought the store was only for Adventists.”

“We want to be a ‘mission field’ store, as well as one that serves Adventist members,” Netteburg adds.

The store is located in the Cherry Hill Shopping Center in Silver Spring, Md., next door to Target. The store is open regular mall hours, except on Friday after Sundown and Sabbath.
Allegheny East Conference Members Bike for Christian Education

Michelle Bernard

**Allegheny East Conference Members Bike for Christian Education**
*Story by LaTasha Hewitt*

The Allegheny East Conference (AEC) school system is on their way to long-term sustainability because of a new fundraising bike-a-thon, say leaders. iRideAEC, a conference-wide initiative, stemmed from the vision of Jackson Doggette, AEC general counsel and director of Philanthropy and Trust Services. “I raised money to help fight leukemia by joining a bike-a-thon. As director of philanthropy, I thought this is something I can do to help give our Allegheny East Conference children a Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. I hope every member, young and old, contributes something in this effort,” says Doggette.

September 27-October 11 Doggette and his riding team will cover nearly 900 miles, spanning five states and the District of Columbia. He will stop at each of the 11 schools in the AEC territory to raise money for Adventist education. He hopes to raise $1 million to assist AEC members collectively and individually.

Although the bike-a-thon begins in September, the fundraising began March 1. Members are encouraged to volunteer at and attend one of the six community days across the conference territory.

For more information visit irideaec.org.
Charleston Members Share Life-Altering Health Knowledge in Church

Michelle Bernard

In 2006 Basil Bennett, a Charleston (W.Va.) church member, underwent coronary bypass surgery. To help his health, he gave up eggs and ate only lean meat. But, in spite of his new “healthy” diet, he continued gaining weight, had high cholesterol and blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat and medication-induced neuropathy. He believed he wouldn’t to be around for long, he shares.

Story by Kathy Pepper

When his wife, Becky, suggested enrolling at the Wildwood Lifestyle Center (Ga.), which promotes a plant-based diet and exercise, Basil was not enthusiastic. However, several months later, they started a 25-day, life-changing experience.

Along with his known health issues, lab results showed Basil as borderline diabetic. Wildwood doctors and staff developed plans to improve the couple’s health. The Bennetts also attended health classes, exercised and learned how to cook healthy vegan meals.

Twenty-five days later, Becky was off four medications and the problem that caused the need for medication was gone. Basil’s diabetes, cholesterol and blood pressure were under control. His neuropathy improved and he stopped taking two of his medications. They both also lost 20 pounds.

After returning home, they emptied their cupboards and changed their lifestyle. They now maintain a satisfying vegan diet, and Basil still exercises regularly, shares Becky. They are continuing to lose weight.

Their experience inspired Becky to offer vegan cooking classes at her church. She wants to share what she learned, and has already taught four classes at the Charleston church, she shares. She enjoys artistically taking something everyone thinks will not be good and making it tasty. And, the attendees love the delicious recipes, say church leaders.

Member Tammy Bibbee echoed the sentiments of many when she said, “I really appreciate their willingness to share their knowledge, their time and their money to give people healthier options.”
Members from the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Allegheny East Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists gathered at Miracle Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church at a prayer rally for our upcoming evangelism initiative in the Baltimore/DC area in April. http://hopeinprophecy.org/poh-columbia/about

Please continue praying for this effort!
Glen Burnie West: Seventh-day Adventists offer free health fair on Sunday

The Glen Burnie Seventh-day Adventist Church is opening its doors at 508 Aquahart Road from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, but religion won’t be the number one topic.

The church will be talking about health. "We do believe that our body is the temple of God and we need to take care of our bodies," said Joan Franklin, one of the event’s organizers.

The church has two medical doctors in the congregation: The Hospital for Sick Children pediatrician Dr. Robert Blake and Johns Hopkins resident Dr. Jonathon Thorpe will be on hand to answer general health questions.

The free health fair also will include blood pressure and body fat percentage screenings, a personal trainer to answer fitness questions, and an opportunity to learn your health age. Franklin explained they have a computer software program that plugs in information from general health questions such as how much sleep you get each day, how much water you drink each day, etc. that will calculate a person's health age. "It could be younger than you actually are, or older than you are," said Franklin, depending on how healthy your daily life is.

Church members will prepare samples of simple and healthy-plant based foods for a tasting table, said Franklin. She said that the recipes will be easy and contain ingredients readily available at local grocery stores. Recipes for all of the samples will be handed out.

AmeriGroup Insurance is sending its Ameribus to the event. In addition to offering health screenings, the bus is equipped with large screen television monitors that will be used to demonstrate how the popular Wii games get people moving. Each guest also will get a free gift from the church and a relaxing shoulder massage.

Another congregation member who is a school teacher is planning free health-themed craft and game activities for young children. "It will keep them entertained while mom and dad are looking around," said Franklin.

Franklin, who is the health minister for the Brooklyn Park Seventh-day Adventist Church said that the Brooklyn Park and Glen Burnie churches will be officially merging on June 1 and will begin co-worshiping this month at the Glen Burnie church.

•Weekly Bible study begins at 9:45 a.m. each Saturday followed by a church service at 11 a.m.

For details, visit http://www.glenburniechurch.org or the church's Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/glenburniechurch.

'Oklahoma'

Middle school students at Monsignor Slade Catholic School will present "Oklahoma" at 7 p.m. Friday and 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday in the school auditorium, 120 Dorsey Road.

Tickets cost $10; a limited number will be available at the door, unless the performances sell out.

For details, call the school at 410-766-7130.

St. Patrick's dinner

The Ferndale United Methodist Men will serve its 21st annual St Patrick's Day dinner, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Saturday in the
church fellowship hall, 117 Ferndale Road.

The menu includes corned beef, ham, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, beverage and dessert.

Admission is $8 for adults and $4 for children. Tickets may be purchased at the door. Carry out will be sold.

For details, call 410-761-2880 or 410-647-2016.

Bus trip
Kettering College Receives Best Value School Award for Second Consecutive Year

Michelle Bernard

Kettering College has been selected out of nearly 8,000 postsecondary schools as the recipient of a Best Value School award for the second consecutive year. The award is issued by University Research & Review, a company dedicated to improving the process of how a student selects a postsecondary school.

Story by Jessica Beans

Kettering College, located in Kettering, Ohio, has been awarded the University Research & Review 2015 best Value School designation for the second consecutive year.

Nate Brandstater, Kettering College, president says, “This second successive year of national recognition is strong affirmation of the value of a Kettering College education. Our faculty and staff work tirelessly to deliver a top-notch experience for our students. Receiving the Best Value School Award for the second year is fitting recognition for their effort.”

The committee that reviewed more than 100 nominees out of the thousands of eligible schools is made up of former university presidents, CEO’s, provosts and professors. Schools cannot pay to receive the award; it has to be earned through the nomination and committee evaluation process. Kettering College was chosen by the committee because it passed rigorous standards including a combination of cost, accreditation, variety and quality of school programs, and student satisfaction with the institution.

Joseph Schmoke, Founder and CEO of University Research & Review stated, “Kettering College continues to merit recognition for the value and satisfaction they bring to their students.”

Kettering College will retain the Best Value School designation for one additional year. Award recipients must re-qualify every year.
The College of Medicine at Adventist University of the Philippines will be the denomination's sixth medical school.

**College of Medicine slated to open in August as denomination’s sixth medical school**

March 05, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Ansel Oliver/ANN

The Philippines has granted approval for an Adventist medical school to begin classes in August, making it the first Adventist medical school in Asia and the denomination’s sixth medical school worldwide.

The Commission on Higher Education of the Philippines in December approved the opening of the Adventist University of the Philippines’ College of Medicine, located on campus in Silang in the province of Cavite.

The program has also met requirements set by the International Board of Education of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a Church leader said.

The institution, slated to begin with as many as 35 students, was designed to serve the denomination’s Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Adventist leaders said.

“We’re very excited. They have worked very hard for this day, a dream of more than 30 years,” said Dr. Peter Landless, Health Ministries director for the Adventist world church.

“This creates an opportunity for the entire Southern Asia-Pacific Division to benefit from this school,” Landless added.

The College of Medicine will use Batangas Medical Center as its main teaching hospital for its volume and variety of patients. The college will also partner with Adventist Medical Center—Manila.

“AUPCOM envisions to train and graduate physicians who are service-oriented, effectively witnessing for God and promoting the worldwide mission of the Adventist Church as medical missionary-minded doctors wherever they may be,” said Dr. Doris Mendoza, the founding dean of the medical school.

AUP President Dr. Francisco D. Gayoba, president of AUP, said, “Opening the doctor of medicine program was a journey of faith.”

AUP has been partnering with Loma Linda University School of Medicine, an Adventist university in the United States, for advising on student admissions, curriculum development and faculty development.

“Over the past 100 years, Loma Linda has refined a process to select mission-focused graduates who have carried out the healing ministry of Christ and the commission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and their mentoring of AUP and our other new medical schools has been vital,” said Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Education director for the Adventist world church.

The denomination opened its fifth medical school in Peru in 2012. Other Adventist medical schools are located at Loma Linda University in the United States, Montemorelos University in Mexico, River Plate Adventist University in
Argentina, and Babcock University in Nigeria.

A seventh Adventist medical school is currently being planned for the denomination’s East-Central Africa Division, Beardsley-Hardy said.

“To carry out our mission, especially in the underserved parts of the world, we need many more physicians who speak the language of patients and are culturally competent, in addition to being excellent clinicians,” she said.

—additional reporting by Max Cadalig and Teresa Costello

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Seventh-day Adventist Church Adopts Stance on Vaccines

Michelle Bernard

*The Seventh-day Adventist Church has issued an official statement on vaccines, saying it “encourages responsible immunization” and has no faith-based reason to discourage believers from participating in immunization programs.*

*Story by Andrew McChesney, news editor, Adventist Review*

The full statement, titled, “Immunization,” says:

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church places strong emphasis on health and well-being. The Adventist health emphasis is based on biblical revelation, the inspired writing of E.G. White (co-founder of the church), and on peer-reviewed scientific literature. As such, we encourage responsible immunization/vaccination, and have no religious or faith-based reason not to encourage our adherents to responsibly participate in protective and preventive immunization programs. We value the health and safety of the population, which includes the maintenance of ‘herd immunity.’

“We are not the conscience of the individual church member, and recognize individual choices. These are exercised by the individual. The choice not to be immunized is not and should not be seen as the dogma nor the doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Read the statement on the church’s website
Immunization

March 02, 2015

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Solar Field to Shave $30,000 Annually From Highland View Academy’s Electric Bill

Web Editor

Solar Field to Shave $30,000 Annually From HVA’s Electric Bill
Story by Lori Zerne, Artwork by John Zerne

Highland View Academy has signed a 20-year contract with SolarCity, the largest provider of solar energy in the United States. SolarCity will install a 1.06 kilowatt solar field covering three acres on HVA’s campus. The solar panels will provide 100 percent of the electricity used by HVA and the Highland View church, as well as 66 percent of the electricity used by the nearby Mt. Aetna Camp and Retreat Center.

HVA’s campus uses 1.2 million kilowatts of electricity annually. With the reduced per kilowatt hour rate guaranteed for 20 years by SolarCity, the academy will save approximately $30,000 each year. Because SolarCity will cover the equipment and installation, there are no upfront costs for HVA.

In addition, SolarCity will donate $100,000 to HVA’s STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) program. The company will also provide the STEM program with a solar energy curriculum, allowing students to use the solar field and its data to engage in hands-on learning about photovoltaics.

Principal Mick Hutchinson notes that upgrading to solar energy helps the school embrace 21st century technology. He says, “SolarCity allows us to embrace the best of cutting-edge technology as a STEM high school, developing our environmental conscience while reducing costs and harvesting the natural power of the sun.”
Vegetarian Diet Cuts Risk of Certain Cancer, Adventist Study Finds

Michelle Bernard

Researchers at Loma Linda University Health say vegetarians are 22 percent less likely to develop colorectal cancers.

Story by Andrew McChesney News editor, Adventist Review

A vegetarian diet may reduce your risk of certain kinds of cancer by 22 percent, according to a new analysis from the Adventist Health Study-2.

Researchers at Loma Linda University Health found that eating a plant-based diet offers significant protection against cancers of the colon and rectum, the second-leading cause of cancer death in the United States after lung cancer.

The findings, published online in the Journal of the American Medical Association Internal Medicine this week, are the first to emerge from the university’s multimillion-dollar Adventist Health Study-2 investigation that links diet to specific forms of cancer.

“The balance of scientific evidence seems to implicate red meat and processed meat as being linked to a higher risk of colorectal cancer, whereas a diet rich in fiber — not fiber supplements — is linked with lower risk,” the study’s lead researcher, Dr. Michael Orlich, said Tuesday. “The vegans, lacto-ovo vegetarians, and pescovegetarians in our study all avoid red and processed meat and eat an increased amount of a variety of whole plant foods.”

The study, which tracked the food questionnaires and medical records of 77,659 Seventh-day Adventists over seven years, determined that vegetarians are 22 percent less likely to develop colorectal cancers than non-vegetarians.

Of those vegetarians, vegans were 16 percent less at risk of cancer, and lacto-ovo vegetarians, who eat milk and...
eggs, were 18 percent less at risk, although results for these groups did not achieve statistical significance.

The least at risk of the vegetarian groups were the pescovegetarians, or vegetarians who eat fish. They were 43 percent less likely to develop cancer.

Dr. Gary Fraser, principal investigator for Adventist Health Studies-2 and a co-author of this week’s report, cautioned against interpreting the results as a message to eat more fish.

“The main message is to avoid all meats, as the main result was that all vegetarians as a group did better than the non-vegetarians,” Fraser said in an e-mail interview. “Thus from this paper alone what one can really say is that replacing meats with vegetables, nuts, legumes, and fruits will most likely decrease risk of colorectal cancer.”

Orlich, an assistant professor of preventive medicine at Loma Linda University, said it was premature to conclude that the pescovegetarians’ impressive results were due to fish consumption.

“The differences between the pescovegetarians and other vegetarian groups may be due partly — or possibly entirely — to chance variation,” he told the Adventist Review. “Their diets also differ in other ways beside fish consumption. We will do follow-up analyses examining the specific associations of meat and fish with colorectal cancer, adjusting for the consumption of other foods.”

Non-vegetarians comprised half the participants in the study, and they were defined as eating meat at least weekly. Researchers, who identified 380 cases of colon cancer and 110 cases of rectal cancer among participants, said the non-vegetarians ate less meat than the average American.

The study underscores that advanced medical screening procedures such as the colonoscopy have saved many lives but it is even better to prevent cancer, potentially through diet.

The colorectal cancer report is part of Loma Linda University Health’s ongoing Adventist Health Studies, initiated in 1958 and among the world’s longest running research about health and longevity. Its previous findings have connected the Adventist diet to lower rates of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

“There’s a history going back to the 1950s of studies on Seventh-day Adventists, and most have found that they’re healthy, long-lived populations, so it’s interesting to probe and see why,” Orlich told The Wall Street Journal in discussing the latest cancer findings.

The Adventist Health Studies are also often discussed at healthcare seminars and conferences. CNN International television devoted a segment of its “Vital Signs with Dr. Sanjay Gupta” program to the research in February.

Read the report “CNN Features Adventists on Show About Healthy Living”

The Adventist Health Study-2 started in 2002 with funding from the National Cancer Institute, a U.S. government agency. In 2011, the National Cancer Institute awarded it a $5.5 million five-year grant to continue the research.

Feature photo via wonderlane.
Visitor Hosts Chat About Session Vote

Michelle Bernard

Visitor Hosts Chat About Session Vote

Should the Seventh-day Adventist world church allow divisions to choose whether or not women should be ordained in their territories? The Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee publicly voiced support at their November meeting. Join our Visitor Facebook chat, March 25, at noon, with Tara VinCross, director of the REACH Columbia Union School of Evangelism in Philadelphia, and other church leaders across the North American Division to discuss what a “yes” vote means for our church.
Washington Adventist University Hosts Race and Justice Summit on March 26

Takoma Park, MD (March 11, 2015) A Race and Justice Summit will be held on Thursday, March 26 at 6 p.m. on the campus of Washington Adventist University (WAU). The summit is open to the public, and will take place in the Richards Hall Chapel. The summit will be hosted by the university’s Center for Metropolitan Ministry and Center for Law and Public Policy.

“Race and social justice are all too often discussed in this country without ever reaching a conclusion about things we can all do to actually help improve race relations,” said John Gavin, chair of WAU’s Social Work Department and Director of the Center for Metropolitan Ministry.

“This summit is intended to facilitate a frank discussion that, we hope, will result in some concrete take-aways so that a clear roadmap can be developed to help guide individuals toward the time when racial profiling and social injustices cease to exist,” states Joan Francis, chair of the History and Political Studies Department and Director of the Center for Law & Public Policy.

Aisha N. Braveboy, who has served as chair of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus and as a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, will kick off the summit. A panel discussion will follow, along with open and honest conversations about the issues surrounding racial profiling and social injustices.

Washington Adventist University is located at 7600 Flower Avenue (near the intersection with Carroll Avenue) in Takoma Park, Maryland. Richards Hall is located between Morrison Hall and the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church. The campus is Metro-accessible, with both a bus stop and Bikeshare station on campus. There is also plenty of free parking available both in front of and behind the building (off Greenwood Avenue).

For more information, contact John Gavin at jgavin@wau.edu.

# # #

Washington Adventist University is Montgomery County’s only four-year private college. Part of the Seventh-day Adventist system of higher education, Washington Adventist University has been educating college students since 1904 on a 19-acre campus in suburban Takoma Park, close to the nation’s capital. Approximately 1,100 students of all faiths participate in the university’s eight graduate and 32 undergraduate programs. The 2014 edition of U.S. News & World Report ranked Washington Adventist University among the best regional colleges in the north.

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Why Adventist Church Isn't Taking Side on Same-Sex Marriage Case

Todd McFarland General Conference Associate General Counsel

For religious liberty scholars and advocates there is little doubt that the defining issue of this generation is the conflict of rights between religion and other rights — namely sexual orientation and reproductive rights.

At least in the United States (and other developed countries), it is the conflict of rights that presents the hardest question. Paraphrasing the famous aphorism, when does the right of one group to swing its fist end and another face begin?

On March 6, 2015, the General Conference, along with the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, filed an amicus, or friend of the court, brief in what is potentially one of the defining cases of this struggle — the dispute over whether the U.S. Constitution mandates that states recognize same-sex marriages. The brief the church filed was, to use legal parlance, “in support of neither party.” What that means is that the Adventist Church didn’t take a position on the narrow legal issues before the court regarding government and marriage.

Read related story: "Church Fears Same-Sex Marriage Ruling May Stifle Religious Freedom"

On first reading, this might surprise some church members, especially non-lawyers, given the church’s very clear stance on marriage and sexuality. Could this mean the church is backing away from its biblical stance on marriage?

The answer is an unequivocal “No.” But to understand why the Adventist Church filed this brief at all, let alone in the manner it did, it is necessary to understand what is at issue legally and what is not.

Religious Liberty Implications

The issue currently before the Supreme Court is not directly about religious liberty. The two questions the court will answer are: (1) Must states issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples? and (2) Must states recognize other states’ same-sex marriages? The second question really comes into play only if the answer to the first question is “no.” Neither of these two questions directly impacts churches or people of faith, but are rather about what government must do, not private individuals.

That, of course, is not the end of the story because if states are compelled to recognize same-sex marriages, the religious liberty implications are numerous. For those interested, the brief gives a more complete picture of these upcoming conflicts, but suffice it to say, they go well beyond pastors having to perform gay marriages (which almost certainly they will not be required to do). But how the court decides to resolve the current case, and in particular the language it uses, could have a significant impact on religious liberty, the Seventh-day Adventist church, and its ability to carry out its mission in faithfulness to the Bible.

The reason for this is because the federal government and every state have some form of anti-discrimination laws on the books. Every state and the federal government protect against gender discrimination. Thirty-six states protect against marital status discrimination, and 23 have specific sexual orientation protections. Importantly, though, 34 of these states and the federal law have some sort of religious exemption from these laws.

It is possible, depending on the language the court uses, that the court could wipe out all of these exemptions. In other words, the Supreme Court could say that not only do the states have to recognize same-sex marriage, but when it comes to this issue, religious exemptions are unconstitutional. If the court were to say that opposition to gay
marriage is motivated by animus or is a form of “invidious discrimination,” this would imperil not only all the current religious exemptions but also any future exemptions.

**Same-Sex Marriage Is Here to Stay**

But wouldn’t the church be better off just opposing any governmental recognition of same-sex marriage? Wouldn’t this be the easiest way to stand up for religious liberty? Shouldn’t the church stand up for traditional marriage and its biblical beliefs in court? The problem with this line of thinking is that it ignores reality, the difference between the church and the state, and how best to protect our interests in the long-term.

The reality is that regardless of what the Supreme Court does, same-sex marriage is here to stay. States have always been free to recognize same-sex marriage if they chose to. Twelve states have recognized same-sex marriage through the legislative process. Similar legislation is pending in others, and there is little question that “marriage equality,” as its proponents call it, is gaining much wider acceptance in society. No matter what happens in late June when this decision is handed down, gay marriage, at least in some places, is here to stay. The church is going to have to conduct its mission in a society that has diverged from the church’s views on marriage — without compromising our firmly held beliefs.

This dichotomy, between the church and the state, is neither new nor unknown to the Adventist Church. How much easier would it be for our members if society kept Saturday as a day of worship rather than Sunday? Government has even enshrined this preference in the form of Sunday closing laws and Saturday mail delivery. We have often advocated that government shouldn’t show preference for one religious belief over another. Adventists uniquely understand both in our history and our eschatology that it is entirely inappropriate for any church to advocate that government pass a law simply because that church believes the Bible says so.

Those defending the right of states to only recognize marriages between a man and a woman understand and agree with this principle of separation of church and state. They are not basing their defense of these laws on the Bible or any religious belief. Instead, the states have offered secular reasons for their laws. Without going into detail, these secular reasons center around the ideal setting to raise kids (heterosexual marriage with two biological parents) and the ability of the state to prefer these relationships over same-sex relationships and give only the heterosexual marriages the title and benefits of “marriage.” Proponents of traditional marriage often described it as a choice between “child centered” versus “adult centered” views of marriage.

**A Biblical View on Marriage**

Regardless of the merits of these arguments, and there is a lot of debate surrounding them, the church’s view on marriage is not based upon these secular reasons. Yes we believe that science and reason support what God tells us through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, but we are not dependent on the findings of social science for our Fundamental Beliefs and how we choose to honor God.

It would be rather strange for a church to base its beliefs on social science or secular reasoning. Human reasoning and belief are often subject to change. In many ways, the whole point of religious belief and believing in God is to affirm faith in something larger than human thought.

Social science would also be a rather precarious foundation on which to base one’s belief. It was not that long ago, in 1973, that homosexuality was dropped as being labeled a mental disorder. This change by the American Psychiatric Association had no impact on the church’s views, in part because those beliefs were never based on psychiatry in the first place. This doesn't make the church anti-science; it simply means our beliefs come from the Bible, not from human beings. To file a document in court even implying that our beliefs are based upon secular reasoning would be not only unwise but disingenuous.

This does not mean that the Adventist Church cannot speak in the public square or must mute its voice in any way
when it comes to moral issues, including issues of marriage and sexuality. The church not only has the right but the obligation to speak on this and other moral issues. But we are not a church that seeks to impose God's laws and order through human laws. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to change individual hearts and bring persons into conformity with God's will.

For all things there is a season and a time. A fight in the U.S. Supreme Court about how the Fourteenth Amendment should be interpreted is, at its heart, a secular question, not a religious one. While we made our position on marriage known to the Court, this was not the time or forum to give a Bible study on marriage or sexuality. Rather, it was more appropriate for us to speak to what affects us, and that is our right to believe as God instructs us and carry out our mission without governmental interference.

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