Why Isn’t the Adventist Church Endorsing Ben Carson?

Although Ben Carson is a longtime member of Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., the Seventh-day Adventist Church will not support him or any other candidates. Walter Carson, Esq., Columbia Union Conference general counsel, shares more about why the church must take this stance.—V. Michelle Bernard

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Mountain View Conference Schools Start Growth Initiative

There is an extra buzz of activity in Mountain View Conference schools thanks to an innovative school growth and marketing initiative. The conference administrative team, including the executive committee and board of education, have hired Teresa Kelchner, president of Christian Education Matters, to provide one year of consulting services to the conference’s eight schools.—Cheryl Jacko

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Williamsburg Member Celebrates 100th Birthday

Last Sabbath Potomac Conference’s Williamsburg church in Virginia celebrated member Violet Sweeney’s 100th birthday with “Vi’s Birthday Blowout,” a luncheon. More than 100 church members and friends from around the United States and...
Jamaica helped her celebrate.

**Adventists Celebrate I Love to Listen Day**

This Sabbath, May 16, join Seventh-day Adventist members on five continents in observance of the 10th annual I Love to Listen Day. Marva Shand McIntosh, a member of Allegheny East Conference's Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md., created the day.—*Beth Michaels*

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email: Webview: Why Isn’t the Adventist Church Endorsing Ben Carson?

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Why Isn’t the Seventh-day Adventist Church Endorsing Ben Carson for President?

Michelle Bernard

Why Isn’t the Seventh-day Adventist Church Endorsing Ben Carson for President?

Story by V. Michelle Bernard

Ben Carson, a longtime member of Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., is becoming a familiar face on the national news since recently declaring his candidacy for president of the United States.

Although Carson is a longtime Seventh-day Adventist, the church will not support or oppose him or any other candidates. Walter Carson, Esq., Columbia Union Conference general counsel, shares more about why the church must take this stance:

“The [Adventist] Church is an advocate of church-state separation and, because of the strength of that advocacy, the church traditionally has never endorsed a political candidate,” says Carson. “The concern is that it is like a slippery slope, that once you enter the political realm, it can get very complicated and difficult to maintain your principles of church and state separation.”

Endorsing a candidate could also cause the church to lose its not-for-profit status, which could lead to losing its tax-exempt status, says Carson.

“Ben Carson is a political candidate who happens to be a Seventh-day Adventist,” adds Walter Carson. “He is entitled to his own opinions, take his own positions and, conceivably, he might take a position that would either be awkward for the church or be contrary to the beliefs and convictions of some church members.”

What Does the Adventist Church Believe?

Walter Carson adds that it is better for the church to take the high road and articulate beliefs and let church members, based on that guidance, make their own decisions on how they should vote.

As the campaign continues, Carson’s faith and the church’s beliefs may also come under the media spotlight. Click here to read more about the background and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Feature photo: Ben Carson is one of the speakers during Steve King and Citizen United’s Freedom Summit in Des Moines, Iowa. 1/24/2015 Photo by Clay Masters, iprimages
Who is the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Michelle Bernard

Who is the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

GENERAL FACTS:

-The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been an official denomination since 1863.

-The Seventh-day Adventist Church has more than 18 million members worshipping in more than 71,000 churches around the world, including 1.2 million members in North America.

-In 2011, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was recognized as the fastest-growing Christian denomination in North America, according to USA Today.

ELLEN G. WHITE and the SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH:

- Ellen G. White was a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who helped shape the mission and vision of the church.

- Adventists do not regard her as a saint, nor do they view her writings as an addition to the Bible. Her prophetic claims are tested and proved by the Bible.

- She is the most translated American author.

- Her total literary output is approximately 100,000 pages. More than 100 books have been published from her writings.

- She wrote books on numerous topics, including spirituality, parenting, social issues, health, and financial counsel. All of her works point the reader to God and the Bible.

- Her most translated book, Steps to Christ, is a how-to guide on being a Christian that has been translated into more than 165 languages.

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

GENERAL FACTS:

- The Adventist Church has the largest Protestant integrated network of hospitals and clinics worldwide, with 172 hospitals and sanitariums, 238 clinics and dispensaries, and 169 lodging facilities, including nursing homes, retirement centers, orphanages, and children’s homes (as of December 2011).

- In 2011, Adventist hospitals and clinics provided healthcare assistance to 17 million people worldwide.
- The lifestyle of Seventh-day Adventists has been featured in *National Geographic*, *CNN*, *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, and *The Blue Zones*, a New York *Times* best-seller book that describes the lifestyles of the world’s longest living people.

- One of the most significant contributions that Seventh-day Adventists have made to the effectiveness of a healthy lifestyle can be found in the publications based on the Adventist Health Studies. Begun in 1958, these studies have covered topics such as diet, air pollution, religion, and health and have gained the sponsorship of the National Cancer Institute/National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the World Cancer Research Fund.

- In addition to being one of the largest and most comprehensive studies on diet and longevity, the *Adventist Health Study-2*, which surveyed the lifestyle of 96,000 Adventists, is also one of the largest dietary studies of African-Americans and sheds light on why this group has more cases of cancer and heart disease than other ethnic groups in America.

**EDUCATION:**

- The Adventist Church has the world’s second largest integrated network of schools, with more than 7,800 schools worldwide enrolling more than 1.6 million students.

- Since the first Adventist school formed in the 1850s, Adventists have believed that education should be redemptive in nature, with the purpose of restoring human beings to the image of God, our Creator. *Adventist education* also includes mental, physical, social, and spiritual health; intellectual growth; and service to humanity.

**HEALTH OUTREACH:**

- The Adventist Church focuses on a “ministry of healing,” which encompasses catering to the spiritual, physical, mental, and social needs of people around the world.

- The church held the *Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle at the World Health Organization* headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. More than 750 people from 95 countries attended to learn more information about how to provide improved health and spiritual care for the global community.

- Seventh-day Adventists established a master’s degree program throughout the continent of Africa that equips pastors with comprehensive health courses. They learn not only the anatomy of health, but also practical applications of the Adventist lifestyle.

- The church developed the "Breathe-Free" program, a smoking cessation program that has helped hundreds of thousands of people worldwide quit smoking. It is the official smoking cessation program of China and Taiwan.

**FAMILY OUTREACH:**

- The Adventist Church helps nurture marriages and families because strong marriages lead to strong families, and strong families lead to strong churches.

- The church has programs and ministries to help enhance communication, problem-solving, and relationship skills.

**YOUTH OUTREACH:**
Outreach programs include the Adventurer Club (for ages 6-9) and Pathfinder Club (for ages 10-15). These programs offer specialized weekly activities to promote psychological and spiritual development through camping, marching, community projects, vocational training, and arts and crafts.

Youth Outreach also provides an opportunity for more than 100 young adults from all over the world to volunteer in a major city every year for what is known as “One Year in Mission.”

HUMANITARIAN / COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA):

ADRA is the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

ADRA provides emergency relief and development assistance to more than 120 countries. The agency strives to protect the vulnerable, support families, promote health, provide food and water, establish livelihoods, and respond to emergencies.

In 2012, ADRA improved the lives of nearly 20 million people around the world.

ADRA has also participated in international initiatives such as World Water Day. ADRA started the Beyond the 5 campaign, which raised the awareness of water inequality throughout the world.

Religious Liberty:

The church’s Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty advocates for the religious freedom of all people. It advocates for religious freedoms on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., in the United Nations in New York City, and in other international bodies.

Since 1893, the Adventist Church has sponsored what is now known as the International Religious Liberty Association, a nonsectarian organization and the largest forum dedicated solely to freedom of conscience. It is the oldest religious freedom organization in the United States. This association includes involvement from Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Baptist, Mormon, and many other faith groups working together for universal religious freedom.

Every year, this department holds an annual religious liberty dinner. Members of Congress and White House officials are invited to this leading event to promote religious liberty in Washington, D.C. Past keynote speakers have included Hillary Clinton, John McCain, John Kerry, and Senate Chaplain Barry Black.

Adventist Community Services:

Adventist Community Services is a nonprofit humanitarian agency that services North America, Guam, and Micronesia.

Adventist Community Services has six defined ministries, including community development, elder care, disaster response, tutoring and mentoring, crisis care, and the YES! (Youth Empowered to Serve) network.

This outreach helps churches, schools, and individuals create, operate, and manage service-based programs in their own community through a Nonprofit Leadership Certification Program, which focuses on leadership, management, and social dimensions of evangelism.

THE SABBATH
The Sabbath is God’s gift to us, a time for rest and restoration of our connection to God and others. It reminds us of God’s creation and Jesus’ Grace.

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God’s unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance and a foretaste of our eternal future in God’s kingdom. The Sabbath is God’s perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God’s creative and redemptive acts.

CREATION: THE BIBLE’S WORLDVIEW

The Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms its belief in the biblical account of creation in contrast to an evolutionary explanation for the origin of living organisms and the relationship of humans to other life forms. Seventh-day Adventists note with great interest the increasing discussion of intelligent design in nature and the evidence that supports this view. In the light of considerable public interest in this topic the Church takes this opportunity to express its confidence in the biblical record.

Belief in creation is foundational for Seventh-day Adventist understanding concerning much more than the question of origins. The purposes and mission of God described in the Bible, human responsibility for stewardship of the environment, the institution of marriage and the sacred meaning of the Sabbath all find their meaning in the doctrine of creation.

Seventh-day Adventists recognize that the biblical record of creation does not answer all questions that can be asked concerning origins. Our comprehension of such mysteries is limited. We anticipate that continued study of both the Bible and nature will deepen our understanding of God’s power and strengthen our faith in His Word and the creation account it contains.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that all people, regardless of race, gender, age, creed, and sexual orientation, are children of God, whom he loves equally.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms the traditional, Biblical belief of marriage.

As a Christian community we are called to reflect and spread this love to all of His children and we seek to minister to all men and women in the spirit of Jesus. We do not condone singling out any group for scorn and derision, let alone abuse.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has been given a mandate by both God and its constituency to serve one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the world. The Church appreciates the role of its Regional Conferences, which have been a valued and integral part of our North American Division governance structure since
1944,

The historical establishment and current role and function of Regional Seventh-day Adventist Conferences are structurally essential, mission effective, and relevant in reaching the diverse populations and urban centers within our territory.

We as a Church, are deeply committed to continuing our mission focus and evangelistic unity as we seek to fulfill God’s commission within our territory.

Throughout our territory we will continue to seek ways and means to further racial cooperation, understanding, and growth.
Michelle Bernard

There is an extra buzz of activity in Mountain View Conference schools thanks to an innovative school growth and marketing initiative.

Story by Cheryl Jacko

The conference administrative team, including the executive committee and board of education, have hired Teresa Kelchner, president of Christian Education Matters, to provide one year of consulting services for the conference’s eight schools.

Kelchner, a specialist in helping Christian schools flourish, is working with each school to develop an individualized action plan for improving school quality, stability and enrollment. Members and leaders clearly see the evangelistic potential of well-run Adventist schools and are excited about the possibilities this innovative program offers.

Feature photo: Teresa Kelchner (back row, second from left) meets with Mountain View Conference teachers and staff.
Happy 100th Birthday to Violet Sweeney!

The Williamsburg Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated the big day with "Vi's Birthday Blowout," a luncheon with more than 100 church members and friends from around the US and Jamaica.

Here is what Violet had to say about her milestone birthday: "It is a blessing for God to keep me here to this day. In just three days I will be 100 years young! I don’t take this blessing for granted. God has been exceedingly good to me. I had nothing to do with being on earth for a century with a sound mind and body. But not one day has gone by without me giving my heavenly Father praise and honor. I have no profound statement to make; I will only say that I have lived my life serving God. I have cared for and raised many children as if they were my own. I have treated others with respect and dignity. I have no regrets. o God be the glory for all things He has done for me. The voices of a million angels cannot express my gratitude. I hold it all to Thee. I closing I would like to thank Joe and Annie and my church family for making this my special day. Blessings to all.”
Adventists Celebrate “I Love to Listen Day”

Michelle Bernard

This Sabbath, May 16, join Seventh-day Adventist members on five continents in the observance of the 10th annual I Love to Listen Day.

Story by Beth Michaels

The day, created by Marva Shand McIntosh, a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md., is not a day of silence. “It is a day to create awareness of the importance of listening, to learn about listening and to share listening as a gift to others and ourselves,” she says. “It is the day to deepen a vital intelligence.” The theme for this year is “Yes Listening Matters.” For more information, visit http://ilovetolisten.com. Report your listening stories on Twitter using #YesListeningMatters.
Kathmandu is gripped by fear and uncertainty after the latest tragedy.

Posted May 12, 2015

Updated at 12:30 p.m.

By Andrew McChesney, news editor, Adventist Review

The leader of the Adventist Church in Nepal said overwhelming fear gripped the capital, Kathmandu, after a major earthquake struck on Tuesday, two weeks after another earthquake killed more than 8,000.

Umesh Pokharel, president of the Nepal Section, part of the Southern Asia Division, asked for Adventist believers worldwide to pray for the country.

“This earthquake has caused more damage, and the church in Nepal needs your special prayers and support,” Pokharel told the Adventist Review. “Starting tomorrow, the Nepal Section needs to move to reach victims and address their needs.”

He added: “We are nearing the end of Earth’s history. Jesus is coming soon, and we need to be close to God and seek His will.”

Pokharel described a mood of uncertainty and fear in the capital on Tuesday night. Many people were choosing not to cook food and instead eat dry food as they listened to the news and called loved ones.

“People are so afraid and all are sleeping in temporary shelters,” he said.

Electricity was out, and communication networks were buckling under the load of phone calls, he said.

The 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck as Pokharel was meeting in his office with other local church leaders to review their relief efforts from the last earthquake.

“We were evaluating the relief work and planning the next phase,” he said. ‘Suddenly the earthquake hit, and somehow we got out of the building.

Pokharel has led the Adventist Church in Nepal in distributing hundreds of tents, sacks of rice, boxes of instant noodles, and other aid to Adventist believers and their neighbors since the April 25 earthquake, which had a 7.8 magnitude.

Read “ADRA, GlobalMedic Raise Medical Tents in Nepal”

Pokharel and his colleagues joined thousands of Kathmandu residents in fleeing into the streets when the earthquake struck at around 12:35 p.m. local time Tuesday.

The earthquake killed at least 37 people and injured more than 1,000, Nepalese authorities said. Another 17 people were reported killed in neighboring India.

“We are taking shelter outside,” Pokharel said. “This earthquake has caused so much damage.”
Pokharel sent photos of people milling around crumbled buildings in Kathmandu on Tuesday afternoon. One photo showed a bus that crashed as a result of the earthquake. Twenty-four people were injured, four critically, Pokharel said.

All shops have been closed, and the government has announced that schools would not open until the end of May, Pokharel said.

Meanwhile, anxiety was running deep in the city, he said. Many people who had come to Kathmandu for various reasons after the last earthquake were now trying to leave. Pokharel said he also was feeling pressure to go.

“My parents live in another city near the Indian boarder and are asking us to go there,” he said. “But I cannot do that because we need to take care of our members and be with them at this time of need.”

- People are staying outdoors for fear of more earthquakes.
-
People speaking near their tents in a Kathmandu neighborhood late Tuesday. (All photos: Umesh Pokharel)
People crowding around a bus that crashed because of the earthquake. Twenty-four people were injured.

- People are staying outdoors for fear of more earthquakes.
People speaking near their tents in a Kathmandu neighborhood late Tuesday. (All photos: Umesh Pokharel)

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Learning at the Laundry: A Smart Marketing Plan

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND—

Every Thursday evening, some local college students gather in Silver Spring, Maryland, to help children from lower-income and immigrant families work on their math homework and practice their English.

But they’re not meeting at school or the local library. The students are being tutored while surrounded by the swish of washing machines and whirring sounds of dryers at the local coin laundry.

The program was devised by business students at Washington Adventist University, after the owner of Rainbow Coin Laundry had come to the WAU business department for help. Business was so bad, he’d considered closing down.

“We said, ‘OK, let’s give it a face-lift, let’s redesign his logo,’ and the ideas just started coming,” said Kimberly Pichot, WAU Business Department chairwoman. “As we were brainstorming, one student said, ‘You know, there are a lot of immigrant children hanging around. Why don’t we add tutoring?’ ”

So they did, and now business is picking up, especially on Thursdays. Parents do their laundry while about two dozen children sit at tables with their tutors near the laundry entrance.

“We try to make sure they understand their homework, because sometimes their parents aren’t able to help,” said Heather Alas, one of the volunteers. “The parents are always very grateful, very friendly towards us because they understand that bringing their kids here is going to help them excel.”

An asset to area

The program has become a community asset. It started with five kids. Now about 20 children, ranging from pre-kindergarten to fourth grade, regularly attend the weekly event.

Christine Sumampouw, one of the WAU business students working with laundry owner Nok Kim, said the tutoring program was conceived as a way to build customer loyalty.

“He’s really friendly with his customers,” she said. “So we figured, 'Why don’t we try something that he can give to the community?' ”

The approach is working, and the business owner said he could see the difference. “Slowly, slowly, but [now I have] more business,” he said.

This project is part of an international entrepreneurial program called Enactus. Founded in the United States 40 years ago, it has spread to more than 1,700 campuses in 36 countries.

“They want to give students experience before they graduate,” Pichot explained. “So we collaborate with the community and with businesses. We find things that our students can do to enhance the community.”

As part of that process, Pichot holds a small-business symposium at the start of each school year. “We invite any business to come in,” she said. "It's a free workshop. And so from that symposium, we self-select. We see who wants to work with whom. And throughout the year, we help other business with accounting, with taxes, with marketing, cost analysis — a variety of things."

Assistance for other businesses
In addition to Rainbow Laundry, this year her students have worked with a restaurant and a tax service, and sports trainers who wanted to expand a dance club.

While they help business owners, Pichot said, the students get valuable, hands-on experience.

“The depth of their learning is a world apart from just that dry classroom environment where they walk away with a few concepts,” she said. “They volunteer long hours.”

Sumampouw, who is graduating this year, has volunteered 1,000 hours, more than any other student in the group. She said the program was an eye-opener for her.

“When I first started, I really didn’t think anything of it,” she admitted. “I just wanted to get involved in something. But I happen to really like it. Actually, now I can say I love working with small businesses.”

For the students, helping small businesses succeed is more than a college project. They say they feel empowered to help their community, now and in the future.
The youth at Potomac Conference’s Washington Ghanaian church in Burtonsville, Md., were pleasantly surprised when they hugged a stranger and, in return, he gave them an offering. When they explained that the hugs were free, the stranger insisted he gave the offering because he was very touched by their gesture.

Story by Margaret Attey

The youth came up with the idea to give away hugs during their time at the Global Youth Week of Prayer this spring at Spencerville Adventist Academy in Spencerville, Md. They were just one of 14 groups of more than 200 youth who attended. Earlier during the morning, youth preacher Reginald Osardu challenged the youth to “Be the Sermon.” He told them that living in a way that honors God is worth more than any words they could speak. He encouraged them to let the Holy Spirit lead them to be fruitful in preparing people for Jesus’ return.

Youth from the three metropolitan Ghanaian churches of Maryland—Washington Ghanaian, Woodbridge Ghanaian in Woodbrige, Va.; and First NOVA Ghanaian in Alexandria, Va.—attended the Global Youth Week of Prayer. They then spread out in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., to share their love through hugs and singing, and by distributing hygiene kits, food and pillows. Their visits included nursing homes, homeless shelters, and healthcare and hospice facilities
500 Volunteers Sought for Free Clinic in Spokane

Adventist News

Your Best Pathway to Health is raising $100,000 to cover organization costs.

Posted May 14, 2015

By Kathy Marson, communication administrative assistant, Upper Columbia Conference

Organizers are seeking volunteers and donors for a free clinic in the U.S. state of Washington in August, just four months after a similar event provided more than $20 million in free care to more than 6,000 people in San Antonio, Texas.

The Your Best Pathway to Health clinic will be held on Aug. 3 and 4 at the Spokane Interstate Fairgrounds in the city of Spokane.

More than 500 volunteers are needed, including those with skills in dental, eye care, massage, chiropractic, hydrotherapy, chaplaincy, child-care, and organizing, said Cindy Williams, health ministries coordinator for the Upper Columbia Conference, who is helping organize the event.

Barbers and beauticians are also needed, as are volunteers for security, hospitality, and meal preparation.

Volunteers can sign up at the website pathwaytohealthvolunteer.org.

About $30,000 of the clinic's cost of $100,000 has been raised, with the funds being earmarked for medical and dental supplies, meals, office supplies and other setup costs, Williams said. "But the rest will need to be raised before August," she said.

It remains unclear how many people will be treated, but the number is expected to be lower than in San Antonio's Alamodome stadium, where 1,700 volunteers worked for three days.

Williams volunteered in the eye care section of the San Antonio clinic.

"I have never been a part of something this jaw-dropping," she said.

At the Alamodome, every patient received care and was then offered other services such as a haircut, hydrotherapy, and massage. Then they went through chaplaincy services and lifestyle counseling. Each patient chose a church location to pick up their lab results or their eyeglasses.

Similar follow-up for the Spokane clinic will be offered at local churches.

The free clinics are the brainchild of Lela Lewis, a medical doctor and the president of Your Best Pathway to Health, a service of Adventist Laymen’s Services and Industries. The first two free clinics treated about 3,000 people over three days in San Francisco and Oakland, California, in April 2014. Your Best Pathway to Health has received formal requests hold the clinic in six more cities after Spokane.

A version of this article appeared in the North Pacific Gleaner.
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