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**Mt. Zion Celebrates 30TH Anniversary**
By Edna Francois
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**Oakwood University grants Tuition Amnesty to former Non-graduates**
By Tim Allston
Citing Old Testament/Biblical directive, HUNTSVILLE, AL – Through its LEAP adult degree completion program, Oakwood University now offers “tuition forgiveness” to former students ...
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Dr. Marlo Hodnett (formerly known as Marlo Murray-Jackson) graduated from Oakwood University in 2000 and continued her education at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, receiving her M.D. degree in 2004. She completed her Internal Medicine residency in Knoxville, Tennessee, and now has her own practice, Abundant Life Medical Care, in Huntsville, Alabama. Dr. Hodnett was recently featured in the March 8, 2011, issue of Ladies Home Journal.

In honor of International Women’s Day on March 8, Ladies Home Journal saluted amazing American women who are helping change lives around the world. The following is quoted from the article “Global Citizens,” by Amanda Wolfe. Since her college years, Dr. Hodnett has traveled the world to volunteer with the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS).

She has helped feed children, build schools, and provide much-needed care to families in Guyana, Madagascar, Malawi, and other countries. “On those first trips I realized that I wanted to go to medical school so that I could dedicate my life to helping these people,” says Dr. Hodnett. She now has a private practice in Alabama, but devotes each Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to providing free treatment to migrant workers and people living in extreme poverty in southern Alabama and Mississippi.
Adventists are victims, helping others in southern U.S. tornadoes wake

By: Adventist Review
Date: 05/06/11
0 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment
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Members and employees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the southern United States were not spared suffering during a day and night of violent tornadoes that swept through six states April 27. The North American Division reported late in the evening on April 30 that two church members in northeastern Alabama and one in Apison, Tennessee are confirmed as fatalities; overall, at least 349 people have been reported as killed in the region, 250 of these in Alabama alone, according to the latest media reports.

"Two members of the Ownbey Chapel Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is located in Ider, Alabama, approximately 33 miles southeast of Chattanooga, and one member of the Apison Seventh-day Adventist Church in southeastern Tennessee were killed during Wednesday's tornado outbreak," a North American Division statement indicated.

Also, one Seventh-day Adventist Church member in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was hospitalized following the tornado's devastation in that city. At least five members of the South Central Conference lost their homes in Tuscaloosa; several more members' homes have been reported damaged there. The tornado, which swept from Tuscaloosa to Birmingham, had an 80-mile track, winds as high as 165 miles-per-hour and was designated an EF-4, the second-highest rating, a report at the Huntsville Times Website indicated.

Church officials in the affected area are working with local and state emergency officials to assess the situation in their local communities and
determining where our assistance will be most needed, but are experiencing
difficulties caused by numerous downed trees blocking roads, limited
electricity, and unreliable phone service.

A tornado destroyed the Piedmont, Alabama, Seventh-day Adventist
Church, 29 miles east of Gadsden, Alabama, the North American Division
said. No injuries were reported, however.

In Huntsville, Alabama, church-owned Oakwood University lost electricity,
along with much of the northern Alabama city, and ended its semester early.
Final exams were canceled and the 2011 graduation is postponed until the
end of May, school officials said. Several members' homes in the Huntsville
area have been damaged or destroyed, reports indicate.

The Anderson Hills neighborhood home of Dr. Leslie Pollard, Oakwood's
president, sustained major damage, OU spokeswoman Michele Solomon
said in a telephone interview. A number of other Oakwood employees and
retirees are also Anderson Hills residents, she said, and many of these
suffered damage. So far, in the Huntsville area, the homes of five other
church members have been reported as lost, with seven others reported as
damaged, the NAD report said. Two members in neighboring Madison,
Alabama, also lost their homes.

The South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists said April 29 they
would postpone the April 30-May 1 Constituency Meeting, originally slated
for the Oakwood campus. Conditions at Oakwood and in Huntsville have
precluded having the session, expected to see 1,500 delegates, at the school,
said South Central Conference president D. C. Edmond. A new date will be
announced following the conference's next executive committee meeting, he
said.

In Guntersville, Alabama, approximately 41 miles southeast of Huntsville,
Pastor Jonathan Arroyo's home was damaged, but his family is safe.

At the same time, eight Southern Adventist University faculty and staff
homes were either damaged or destroyed in the wake of the 20 tornados that
swpt through Southeastern Tennessee Wednesday, April 27. Among the
SAU faculty whose homes were lost is Dr. Jud Lake, Professor of Preaching
to answer current critics of the visionary who was a pioneering co-founder
of the Church. Lake and his family are reported to be unharmed.

"We actually were very very lucky," said Trenton Schwarzer, SAU patrol
officer at Campus Safety. "The worst [damage on campus] was one tree on
Cafeteria Drive that took out one car, and miscellaneous trees on campus."

While students and staff are helping clear trees in nearby neighborhoods,
Southern Adventist University is mobilizing to help displaced faculty and
staff.

"We are working at finding housing for them for tonight. Where there are
transportation issues--cars damaged to the point where they cannot be
driven -- we're working on providing transportation for them. If they need to
move things that are not damaged out of a damaged home...we're going to provide warehouse space on campus," said Bob Young, senior vice president of Academic Administration at Southern.

"Our prayers and condolences are with all those in the Southern Union who have been affected by these storms," said Pastor Gordon Retzer, president of the Southern Union Conference territory. "In this time of turmoil, we can be comforted by God's grace and mercies."

"In response to tornadoes, severe weather, floods and wild fires throughout the United States, Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) teams are assisting individuals, families and communities," said Sung Kwon, ACS national executive director. "ACS DR, in partnership with other voluntary agencies and Federal and state governments, meets the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those affected by providing food, blankets, clothing, and other much needed relief supplies. Adventist churches, schools and mobile distribution units are utilized to collect and distribute donated goods," he added.

On April 30, the North American Division reported the following assistance efforts:

* The Samaritan Center in Ooltewah, TN has partnered with Adventist Community Services Disaster Response in Ooltewah to distribute cardboard boxes, gloves, trash bags, and flashlights;
* Volunteers from Ooltewah Seventh-day Adventist Church made about 100 sack lunches. They worked with The Salvation Army in Bradley County to distribute the food;
* Apison Seventh-day Adventist Church members are providing food to residents of the Apison area, which is three miles from the Southern Adventist University campus;
* A volunteer group from Johnson City, TN came with chainsaws to the Collegegade area and helped Adventists and other community members;
* The First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Huntsville Alabama fed members of their church and community on Saturday, April 30;
* McDonald Road Pathfinders fed emergency workers at Apison Elementary School. This was the staging location for clean-up and recovery efforts there;
* Atlanta Adventist Academy sent a group of students to the Apison area to help with clean-up;
* Southern Adventist University has offered the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency the use of dorm rooms for temporary housing beginning Sunday, May 1;
* The Georgia-Cumberland Conference is working with emergency management officials to establish warehouse operations in Georgia and Tennessee. And, the South Central Conference is working with emergency management officials to establish warehouse operations in Alabama. Locations for both warehouses will be announced when confirmed, officials said.

Church members and friends are encouraged to visit the Adventist Community Services website, for more information about how ACS ministries are making a difference, or to make a donation.
In Inter-America, students set aside books for special day of prayer

By: Libna Stevens/IAD/ANN
Date: 05/06/11
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Thousands of books, notebooks and pencils were put away as Seventh-day Adventist Schools across the denomination’s Inter-American Division canceled their academic programs April for a day of worship and prayer. The day was specially designated to focus on the division’s Constant in Prayer initiative—a prayer effort launched earlier this year, which falls under the Adventist world church’s Revival and Reformation program for a renewed, committed life with Jesus.

More than 1,500 students, teachers, parents, leaders and community leaders gathered for a special prayer program at Central American Adventist University in Alajuela, Costa Rica, one of hundreds of campuses where division church leaders participated.

Students pray at El Progresso Adventist School in Guatemala City on April 26. Adventist schools throughout Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean took a day off from classes to pray as part of the division’s Constant in Prayer initiative, which falls under the denomination’s new Revival and Reformation focus. [photo: Dinorah Rivera]

Putting aside regular class programs and dedicating that time to prayer symbolizes "the high importance we are emphasizing on prayer and the main objective of an Adventist education, which is to establish a closer communion with God," said Gamaliez Florez, Education director for the church in Inter-America.

The initiative was the first such division-wide event and was conducted in the more than 1,000 primary, secondary and university campuses, Florez said. Earlier this month, Adventist schools across Mexico, The Bahamas, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos held prayer vigils, prayer sessions and focused on the importance of prayer.

There are about 173,000 students attending Adventist intuitions in Inter-
America, and slightly more than half of those are Adventist.

Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, spoke on the importance of prayer and the need for spiritual revival through prayer and bible study, as the program was streamed online.

"Prayer is the best medicine to help us with the fear we may have," said Leito, addressing hundreds of school-aged children and young people in Costa Rica. "God does answer prayers. But if you cherish sin in your heart, if you are unwilling to forgive, if you pray selfishly and if you pray without faith, then your prayers may not be answered," he added.

"Our prayers to God are simply an expression of our relationship with God," Leito said.

Schools across Costa Rica and the rest of Central America and the Caribbean celebrated the prayer initiative as students participated in prayer for special requests, prayed for community leaders, sang and marched in their communities.

In Guatemala, students and teachers of El Progreso Adventist school marched for miles and stopped to pray for other schools in their community.

In El Salvador, thousands of students, parents and teachers set out to sing and pray through special programs in public parks with local government leaders and police officers in attendance.

In Honduras' Bahia de Angel Adventist school, in which 90 percent of students are not Adventist, students and teachers participated in prayer sessions, testimony and worship during the day.

In Haiti, more than 500 students and teachers at Adventist University in Diquini, participated in a program which emphasized prayer as a powerful resource. Prayer was offered for parents, teachers, government leaders and education authorities in the country.

In St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, students and teachers prayed in groups and learned about the importance of a prayerful life through several organized prayer stations where local pastors prayed with them.

Leito said he plans to make the initiative an annual event.

The Inter-American Division includes Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and the five northernmost countries in South America.

For more information on the special prayer revival throughout Inter-America, visit praying4revival.org or estamosorando.org.
Unity is Key, Wilson says in Kenya visit

By: Delila Siocha, ECD
Date: 05/06/11
0 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment
Email this story to a friend.

Drawing inspiration from a song by Nairobi Station Pathfinders, Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, continued to spread the message of Revival and Reformation in his keynote sermon delivered on Sabbath, April 23. In his message, Wilson called for leaders to exercise unity and humility as they carried out their work for God's glory.

"Be an encouragement to the people. Bring hope and reconciliation in these times of difficulties and always proclaim God's truth," he urged a 3,000-member congregation at the Nairobi Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the Kenyan capital.

Seventh-day Adventists have a substantial presence in the East African nation, Wilson said: "It is impressive that in Nairobi alone, there are 242 Seventh-day Adventist churches," he said, according to a report in The Standard newspaper.

The church operates several radio and television stations including Hope Channel TV in Kisii, Kisima FM in Nyamira, Wikwayo FM in Kitui and Baraton FM in Eldoret, church media sources confirmed.

Wilson explained to the congregation who Seventh-day Adventists are and why they are here. Urging Adventists to be proud of their name and beliefs, he said, "As Seventh-day Adventists living at the end of time, don't hide the name Seventh-day Adventist. As church members involved in local churches, institutions and organizations, we should use our name."

He used this statement to urge the congregation and leaders to stand for Christ and live up to their name in proclaiming Bible truth, because actions speak louder than words. He called on everyone to pray for revival and to renew their relationship with God and reconnect with the creator through prayer and Bible study.

"To those church members who are frustrated, discouraged or distant from the church or the Lord, take hold of God's hand and renew your relationship with Christ," Wilson said. "I

Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson urges Christians to lead in reconciliation, though not specifically mentioning the nation's 2007 post-election violence, during an April 23 sermon at Nairobi Central Adventist Church. This was Wilson's first trip to Kenya as president of the global denomination. [photos: Edward Onyango]

Wilson visits the Advent Hill Primary School Pathfinder club in Nairobi during his visit to Kenya.
Perrine Conducts ShareHim Crusade

By: Milicent Taylor
Date: 05/06/11

0 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment
Email this story to a friend.

“We are at the cross ladies and gentlemen. Jesus wants your heart. He already knows it, so He gets intimate with you.” So began the “ShareHim” evangelistic meetings at the Perrine Church, held on January 7 through January 30th, 2011. This 15 day experience was a spiritual, energizing, uplifting moment for all who listened to the inspiring words night after night as it elucidated from Tshai Bailey, M.D, personal ministry director at Perrine.

To prepare for the meeting, each member prepared a list of persons they wanted to see saved in God’s kingdom. These names were prayed over and visits were made to encourage them to attend the meetings.

Perrine conducted several activities that fostered friendships with these individuals, which included a 40-day fasting and praying campaign and flyer and pamphlet distribution in neighboring areas of Perrine.

Bailey expounded carefully, night after night, on the love of Jesus. She explained that He is personally involved in our lives and His heart propels towards us daily. He gave His life for us and is ready to cover us with His spotless robe if we only let Him. “How marvelous is God’s love”, said one visitor.

At the end of the campaign, five persons were baptized, each with the firm determination to love Jesus and follow Him all the way. Another evangelistic campaign is planned for April 7 to May 14, 2011, which will be conducted by Antwoyn Mells, pastor of Perrine. For more information about "ShareHim" visit http://www.sharehim.org.
Southeastern Conducts Annual Science Fair

By: T. Trina Bowden
Date: 05/06/11

On April 17, 2011 at the Orlando Science Center, more than 45 kindergarten to eighth grade students competed in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Annual Conference-wide Science Fair. There were five categories based on grade level: Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd, 3rd & 4th, 5th & 6th and 7th & 8th Grades. Each Southeastern school held a science fair locally and sent their first place winners to compete on the conference level.

You could hear the sounds of excitement and butterfly bellies as the students set up their projects and prepared to address the judges. Outside the judging room, parents waited anxiously hoping the door would open so they could catch a glimpse of what was happening inside.

When asked why he sponsors all his students to attend the competition, Edson Jarvis, principal of Mt. Calvary Jr. Academy located in Tampa, Fla. says, “I want to give our students an opportunity to exhibit their talents, see science on a larger scale, experience what other children are doing academically and generate more interest in the field of science.”

When students are allowed to ask a question, design an experiment and interpret results, they understand the role science plays in investigation and invention. Brain research shows that students learn better when they solve real-life problems as opposed to being drilled on bits of information. “By allowing our students to learn and celebrate science together we break barriers and allow students to become champions in science,” said one educator.

After the judging, students had a great time exploring one of America’s top hands-on science centers. Although the exhibits were amazing, there was no doubt the highlight of the day was the awards ceremony. Before the winners were announced, suspense was created with a performance from the “Kaboom! Show.”

As the winners were being announced all eyes were set on the first place prize, which included a trophy and white lab coat with a nameplate that read, “Future Scientist.”

The five first place winners are as follows:
Kindergarten: Dario Scully, from the Perrine SDA School, winning project “Soak it Up”
1st & 2nd Grade: Farrah Murray, from the Mt. Olivet SDA School, winning project “Which Fabric Will Stay the Cleanest?”
3rd & 4th Grade: Szymon Taylor, from the Perrine SDA School winning project “Don’t Cry Over Spilled Oil”
5th & 6th Grade: Jarod McCullough, from the Perrine SDA School, winning project “Hyped Up On Sports Drinks”
7th & 8th Grade: Trevor Dollar, from Miami Union Academy, “CO2 on the Move!”
Documentary film The Adventists wins award for televised film

By: ANN Staff
Date: 05/06/11
0 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment
Email this story to a friend.

The documentary film The Adventists won a Gabriel Award as this year's outstanding nationally released televised film on religion.

The Gabriel Award, established in 1965, is considered one of North America's top media awards for a "values-centered view of society and humanity."

"We released the film to [Public Broadcasting Stations] stations last spring at a time when our country was deeply embroiled in the health care debate as an alternative to the media's focus on health and economics," said Martin Doblmeier, producer of The Adventists.

"The story offered a way to speak about health care in terms of faith -- that health care could be 'sacred work,' that caring for the body was caring for the 'temple of God' and many people resonated with those ideas," Doblmeier said.

The Gabriel Awards are sponsored by the Catholic Academy for Communication Arts Professionals.
Church Chat: How much does the church value Adventist education?  

By: Ansel Oliver/Adventist News Network  
Date: 05/06/11  
2 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment  
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Dr. Ella Simmons is positioning the Seventh-day Adventist world church for the next five years to formally refocus its commitment to education. She believes that as Adventist education goes, so goes the denomination. A church vice president, Simmons is calling for leaders to view education as internal evangelism and support it as such. That could mean changing institutional funding structures or the way education is managed in some world regions.

Simmons is also leading the church's International Board of Education toward developing a worldwide master plan for Adventist education, as well as establishing a research agenda to assess worldwide needs and evaluate outcomes, both spiritual and academic. Doing so could create a better model for providing Adventist education, she says.

Even more, she's hoping for a renewed focus on Jesus and better integration of his life and teachings in every class subject.

Raised a Baptist, Simmons became an Adventist at age 16 following several years of personal Bible study and later attending a public evangelism series that came to her neighborhood.

She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Education from Indiana University, a master's degree in Education from church-owned Andrews University in Michigan, and a doctorate of Education from the University of Louisville in Kentucky.

Much of her research and development projects focused on underrepresented groups, mostly defined by race, socio-economic status and gender.

Simmons has served as provost of the church's La Sierra University in California, vice president of the church's Oakwood University in Alabama and associate dean of the University of Louisville's School of Education.
Simmons was elected a vice president of the Adventist Church in 2005 and serves as the advisor to the Education and Women's Ministries departments.

In a 40-minute interview, Simmons discussed her vision for a worldwide series of formal conversations on Adventist Education, how they should proceed and where they might lead. She also proffered what she thinks might be a more sustainable model for Adventist education in some regions.

Excerpts:

**Adventist News Network:** What do you hope happens as a result of these conversations on Adventist education?

**Dr. Ella Simmons:** I would like for us to come out recognizing that we must be committed to education as internal evangelism as we are to external evangelism. The Lord holds us accountable for both. My ideal would be to engender a new excitement that plays itself out in terms of support and involvement in Adventist education worldwide. There would emerge a renewed understanding of true education as redemption as the future of our church through the salvation of our children, youth and their families.

**ANN:** There are controversies over what is taught in some institutions. Does the need for these formal conversations stem from some concerns about La Sierra University?

**Simmons:** No, this isn't focused on La Sierra or any other specific institution. It's just time in our history, especially at the rates at which [the church is] growing in membership and simultaneously losing young people at alarming rates that we need to reengage ourselves with the foundations of Adventist education and articulate the definitions and expectations to new and grounded members as well. ...We certainly need to make it possible for Adventist education to be viewed, understood and operated as the Lord intended for its nature, aims and outcomes within the realities of our myriad cultural and geographic contexts.

**ANN:** How many formal conferences are you suggesting, and where?

**Simmons:** My ideal would be one giant world convocation, ... but perhaps with the development of the [Biblical Research Institute] conferences we need to go where they go. So whenever we talk about what it means to be an Adventist theologically we also talk about what it means to engage in Adventist education, theologically and practically. We could be talking about 30 or 40 of these meetings worldwide in strategic geographic locations. However, if we aren't able to align with the BRI conferences, we could consider four or five gatherings of representatives from two to four divisions in centralized locations.

**Adventist Education**

| Serves nearly 1.7 million students |
| Three medical schools (United States, Mexico and Argentina) |
| Two law schools (Brazil and Nigeria) |
| 112 total colleges and universities |

**ANN:** You've previously said that the church hasn't quite achieved the "seamless integration" of faith into every class subject the way educators have hoped. Why isn't that happening?

**Simmons:** Maybe we've been too...
Simmons: May we've been too keenly focused on individual elements of our faith as opposed to focusing first on Jesus and allowing those elements of our faith to be defined and directed by the model of his life and God's word. We need to rediscover the essential core elements that make us Adventist as opposed to just Christian or Protestant and then apply those to Adventist education.

ANN: How do you think Adventist education is perceived?

Simmons: In most places in the world Adventist education is highly respected. In some places -- and we might look at North America as one example -- there are some people who have placed more value on public and other private education. But some of that is because we have not been educated or continuously reoriented to the aims and values of Adventist education. And sometimes when people indicate they don't value Adventist education it's not that they have specifics related to lesser quality, it's just that it's so close to them it's taken for granted while the grass on the other side of the road appears greener. Then, yes, unfortunately, there are times when we have not done all that the Lord calls us do in terms of achieving quality -- that is spiritual faithfulness and academic excellence. All of this is reason for us to step back, look at who we are as a people and look at what Adventist education is supposed to be and what it should do.

ANN: Many issues often come down to money. Does this mean the church would have to shift some of its resources?

Simmons: It's more than just money. Our greatest need is for Adventist teachers, but our focus can be on financial resources for this point. It is clear that the resource pool we have at our disposal in the church is a finite amount. It's limited. But yes, there would either need to be an increase in our resource pool, or we would have to make some decisions about what our priorities might be for a given period of time. ... Of course we would need to make some decisions within education to use the funds we already receive in different ways. Perhaps, in some places we could probably do with fewer institutions and put more money into the remaining institutions. If all of our young people were in our schools or many more than are there now, we would receive more and we would probably actually need the number of institutions we have in these locations. In any case there will have to be some decisions about priorities for resource allocation.

ANN: [Adventist Education department Director Dr.] Lisa [Beardsley] has previously said the same thing -- institutions grow but sometimes the market in some places changes and some institutions should scale back operations. It's a sensitive issue and some would rather not talk about it. How do you respond?

Simmons: By the grace of God, and that's not a pat answer, we need to engage in serious prayer. If we're really talking about Revival and Reformation we need to realize how those also apply to organizations as well as to people. Then as we endeavor to revive and enhance our organizations we release them to the Lord and seek His will, I believe He
will make it clear to us to give one up and build another one up. But you know it's human nature to want to hold on to, or not lose ground where we have made progress in times past.

ANN: So could you see the church in North America moving toward the Mormon type of model where there are just a few institutions of higher learning?

Simmons: In a word, "No;" or another word, "Never." I don't think ever in my lifetime and probably not before Jesus comes would enough people be able to give up enough to make that happen.

ANN: Your answer doesn't indicate you're opposed to it. Is it a desirable option?

Simmons: Yes, it could be a desirable option, and I hasten to say, I wouldn't expect just a few institutions, but I could possibly see four or five. Educational leaders are beginning to see that more clearly. It is my understanding that some independent of us here [at the Adventist Church world headquarters] have begun conversations. Lisa and I were part of those conversations in years past, so we're not separating ourselves completely. But there have been some conversations about how, perhaps all the higher education institutions could collaborate, first of all, and then could partner more officially and formally. Then at some point we could reduce to just four or five institutions, even if we retain the remaining campuses for a while and had multiple campuses of those remaining institutions. Ultimately, even with increased enrollment we could close some of our campuses and enhance some others.

ANN: Adventist education can be expensive. Our readers often comment on the expense, as well as the post-education debt many people have. How do you respond?

Simmons: One thing I'd like to come out of these conferences is to find ways to provide Adventist education for all Adventist young people. I really don't know how this could be done at this point. But if the Lord says "all of our children should be taught of the Lord," and if we believe it, then it can happen by various means. Some have observed that reducing tuition does not bring all of our young people into our schools. Yet, I'm just wondering what it might be like if each local church or conference could receive into its coffers funds that are allocated for education in such a way that the conference provides schools and teachers where they are needed and all the members of the churches feel responsibility to all of the children and contributed proportionately.

ANN: Would you be calling for subsidies, then?

Simmons: You see, this is a circle. Of course I would love to see greater subsidies for education. However, in order for that to happen, we the members in each church would need to be faithful in returning a complete, honest tithe along with more generous offerings. Consider the fact that many of our members do not return tithe; think of the resources lost to education and public evangelism.

ANN: Whom do you most want to hear this message?
Simmons: Ideally I would like to see division and union leadership -- noting that unions are often most closely associated with higher education -- and then conferences, which often are most closely associated with elementary and secondary levels. Also, education administrators, teachers, parents and church members who serve as constituents who make decisions about the board and leadership of our institutions must participate. We all need a better understanding of Adventist education and the needs of the church.

ANN: How do you feel about exposing students to a variety of ideas and evidence, even if they might conflict with current official Adventist beliefs?

Simmons: I believe that's biblical. I'm fine with that. However, our responsibility, while exposing them to that which they may encounter when they go out into the world is to keep them focused on God's word. We have a responsibility to say "That's what this theory teaches us, that's what another theory teaches us, but this is what we believe, based on the Bible." When the two lines of thought are not congruent, such as the physical evidences we have in science, my position has been -- as a teacher and a parent and now a grandparent -- evidence might indicate a certain line of thought, but when the Bible indicates something different, we must continue to grow through more research and exploration in search of this truth. As we continue to grow in our understanding of the Bible, we will grow more so in our understanding of science, history and all else.

2 Comment(s) | Add Your Own Comment

NH | May/29/11 09:05:10
I Agree 100% with the previous comment. I could not have put it better myself. It's the TRUTH ANY HOW.

kt | May/28/11 09:05:30
The major problem with the value that the SDA church places on SDA education have many facets. The majority of the problem IMHO is that the church is primarily led and managed by pastors who do not see the need to place the same financial support on education as they do on public evangelism. Also the current structure where congregations are required to send all of their tithes to the conferences and unions should be changed. The local church is also God's storehouse. Each local church should be allowed to keep a tithe of the tithe and forward the 90%. This is especially needed where their is a local SDA school. The idea that a local church should pay up to 80% of a teacher's pay is ridiculous and crippling to the local congregation. The local conferences and the union should find ways to subsidize the local schools such as payment of a higher portion or all of the teacher's salaries. This is possible since the tithes are merged at the conference and union levels. Treat teachers with the same respect that pastors are automatically given; they each have the job of evangelism, education, and leading folk to Christ. Furthermore, in our school, the school has a higher rate of baptismal candidate than our pastor has had in his tenure. So who is a better investment of resources. Requiring state certification of all
teachers may also be a way of valuing our parents' confidence. To some it may seem that certification of the SDA Dept of Education is self-serving and is a way of masking teacher deficiencies. The church could also assume the cost of educating teachers by paying subsidies to students agreeing to teach and or rebating some portion of school loans. Our primary focus as a church seems to be the centers of higher learning; our colleges and universitites; but what good are they if our children are not anchored at the lower levels. Finally by allowing the local congregations to retain a tithe of the tithe, tuition could be provided to each student in each church. Many grandparents are struggling to take care of their grandchildren and they do not have the resources to pay for them to attend SDA schools at what those schools cost now. Many would like for their grands to attend boarding schools, but who can afford $10000s for them to attend per student per year. Something has to be done or we will become a church where an SDA education is only for the rich/elite; especially in NAD. I can't seem to fully understand how it can cost a few dollars per month to attend a SDA church school in some other part of the world while it costs so much to go in NAD. Time to change or God is going to hold us responsible for sending our children on Satan'a grounds-public education. With multiple billions in tithes pouring into the the GC coffers surely there is a way to make a change and if change is of the LORD then we need to do it now while HE leads or HE will remove those who will not follow HIM,

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MT. Zion Celebrates 30TH Anniversary

By: Edna Francois
Date: 05/06/11
1 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment
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Approximately 300 people gathered for the 30th anniversary celebration of the Mt. Zion Church located in Kissimmee, Fla. On March 19, 2011, in attendance were Roy Parham and Tony Taylor both former pastors of Mt. Zion. J. Mair, wife of Cleveland Mair, the first official pastor of Mt. Zion, as well as founding members Ruby Alexander and the Casey’s were all a part of the congregation.

As Parham reminisced of the early days, he shared that all them members of Mt. Zion were able to fit into the car of one of the church’s elders. Today Mt. Zion has a much larger membership.

Awards and gifts of appreciation were given out to long-standing members and officers of Mt. Zion. Among the recipients was Michael Clarke, the longest serving elder and first elder for a total of 18 years.

Worship during the event began on Friday evening with a stirring message from Taylor. This was followed with an urgent plea from Parham to “Stay in the Fire.” Saturday afternoon presented a panel discussion and inspiring concert as we “Looked Back while Moving Forward.” The program moderated by Sandra Chiddick, included Tony Taylor and Maxwell Berkel, current pastor of Mt. Zion, who refocused our sights on our mission: “The gospel to all the world, beginning with our community.”

The weekend activities concluded with a banquet on Sunday. A quick peek into the church’s history shows that Mt. Zion “gave birth” to the Poinciana Church, and more recently, the South Lake Church.

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1 Comment(s) | Add Your Own Comment
Keith McBeth | May/10/11 08:05:55

I am a Retired Pastor, and Kissimmee, Florida is Home to Several Churches proclaiming the LAST DAY EVENTS. I participate in Activities, and Soul Winning in Three, Of Course Time is of the Essence. Mt Zion on Smith Street, Kissimmee Church on Fortune Road, and Celebration in the Florida Hospital Conference Room. WOW! If you desire a Closer walk with JESUS, Spend as much time as you can in one of the Aforementioned Sanctuaries. May these three Church Homes for me and My Family be Blessed with an OutPouring of the Holy Spirit such as never was. Press On Church Members for we are in the Final Days of HIS FINISHED WORK. Maranatha, Keith McBeth.

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Oakwood University grants Tuition Amnesty to former Non-graduates

By: Tim Allston
Date: 05/06/11

Citing Old Testament/Biblical directive, HUNTSVILLE, AL – Through its LEAP adult degree completion program, Oakwood University now offers “tuition forgiveness” to former students from 2005 and before who wish to finish their Oakwood degrees. Citing the Bible’s Deuteronomy 15:1 directive, “At the end of every seven years, you must cancel debts, (New International Version)” LEAP Director, Dr. Rachel Williams-Smith explains that the offering is as easy as the Bible mandates.

"Oakwood students who left the College owing a tuition bill, from 2005 and before, now have the opportunity to return (through our blended online programs) and achieve both of their dreams: finally, their Oakwood degree and the forgiveness of their old college bill!"

In order to receive tuition amnesty, former Oakwood students:
1. Must enroll in and complete one of LEAP’s five adult degree completion programs; and
2. Must keep their new LEAP tuition payments current.

When the graduation requirements are completed, former students will be awarded their Oakwood degrees in either Organizational Management (Business), Psychology, General Studies, Church Leadership or Information Technology.

And at the same time, the former Oakwood College debt will be erased, Dr. Williams-Smith stated, adding: “What many don’t realize is that our LEAP adult degree completion program not only costs less than half of our traditional college, but LEAP’s costs are also in line with – or, often less than – what most public universities charge.”

For more information about LEAP, visit www.OakwoodLEAP.com, or call 256-726-7098.