In this edition of eSketches:
- Bethel baptizes 16 during New Lease on Life Evangelistic Effort
- In Bahamas, Parliament recognizes new Adventist administrative headquarters
- Wilson opens historic South American Division Ministerial Council
- Further definition on tap for Adventist fundamental belief on creation
- Mid-American Adventists respond in wake of Joplin tornado
- Review & Herald Publishing officers re-elected, board size trimmed
- God's timing isn't for us to know, Adventist leaders say
- Updating Adventist property listings is 'ethical issue,' church risk management field rep says
- Southeastern to hold Conference-wide Graduation for Sabbath Keepers
- SEC - Job Announcement - Elementary Education Teaching Positions

- Bethel baptizes 16 during New Lease on Life Evangelistic Effort
By Betty J. Stewart-Fullwood
The Bethel SDA Church in Gainesville, Fla. is the new church home for 16 precious souls. Their baptism is a result of the three-week “New Lease on Life, Family Survival in the 21st Cent... 
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-In Bahamas, Parliament recognizes new Adventist administrative headquarters
By Nigel Coke/ACUM/ANN staff
During a parliament meeting this month, Bahamas' national leader said th... Read full article at http://www.secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=990

- Wilson opens historic South American Division Ministerial Council
  *By Felipe Lemos*
  Four thousand pastors hear emphasis on spiritual preparation. "Are you really united in hope for the return of Jesus?" Seventh-day Advent... Read full article at http://www.secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=989

- Further definition on tap for Adventist fundamental belief on creation
  *By Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN*
  New review committee follows 2010 Session action to 'strengthen' church's interpretation of origins Members of the Seventh-day Adventist... Read full article at http://www.secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=988

- Mid-American Adventists respond in wake of Joplin tornado
  *By ANN staff*
  Church sustains minor damage; one non-attending member unaccounted for The Seventh-day Adventist Church's CommunityServices-Disaster Response for Mid-America is coordinating with federal and local agencies in the wake of a tornado that struck Joplin, Missouri on Sunday... Read full article at http://secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=987

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  *By Mark A. Kellner, Adventist Review*
  162-year-old Adventist publishing house staunching money losses, officials say Read full article at http://www.secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=986

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  *By ANN staff*
  Predictions on Christ's return give false hope, disrepute on Christianity; 'been there, done that'... Read full article at http://www.secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=985

- Updating Adventist property listings is 'ethical issue,' church risk management field rep says
  *By Arin Gencer/ANN*
  Outdated building assessments could mean inadequate funds to restore lost, damaged property .The Seventh-day Adventist Church's risk management and ... Read full article at http://www.secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=984

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- SEC -Job Announcement - Elementary Education Teaching Positions

By Carol Byrd

The Southeastern Conference department of Education is accepting applications for elementary education teaching positions for the 2011 - 2012 school year. All interested and qualified candidates...

Read full article at http://www.secsda.org/sketches/story.cfm?id=981

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Bethel baptizes 16 during New Lease on Life Evangelistic Effort

By: Betty J. Stewart-Fullwood
Date: 05/27/11

The Bethel SDA Church in Gainesville, Fla. is the new church home for 16 precious souls. Their baptism is a result of the three-week “New Lease on Life, Family Survival in the 21st Century” Bible conference that was recently held at Bethel. Randy Robinson, treasurer of the Southern Union was the guest evangelist. “The series sought to teach attendees how to survive everyday challenges,” said Kevin K. Bryan, pastor of Bethel.

Preparation for the event began with a Soul Winning Action Team (SWAT) training on prayer, fasting and tract attack, led by Personal Ministries Leader, John Washington, Sr. Members were divided into groups representing the twelve Biblical tribes and set out each Sabbath armed with door hangers, sets of Bible Studies, fliers and an eight-question community survey.

Night after night the Word of God was presented in a simple and practical way through music, scripture and the preached Word. Intriguing nightly topics included, “Sleeping Through the Siren”, “Strange Man of Mud and Metal”, “Your Day In Court”, “Mr. One Day Late”, and “What’s In A Name?” just to name a few.

Each night also featured a segment entitled “Focus on Finances” which highlighted key action texts to assist listeners in coping with hard economic times in which we are now living. The proven formula for getting out of debt forever was outlined in the 4 “P’s”: Put away credit cards, Prioritize your debt, Pick the smallest one, Pay it off.

On the first Sabbath of the crusade, two attendees gave their hearts to the Lord, followed by three additional ones on the second Sabbath. The final Sabbath saw an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with nine additional baptisms during the Divine Worship Service.

But wait, the Holy Spirit still was not through. At the close of the final service on Saturday night, an appeal was made and six others made their stand...two of which were baptized that night, bringing the total number baptized to 16. In addition, 10 Bible studies were conducted and will by the Grace of God lead to further baptisms.

The series was made possible and successful due to the teamwork and cooperation of the Southern Union Conference, Southeastern Conference, the pastor, Bible workers, and members of Bethel.

Bethel Communications Secretary
In Bahamas, Parliament recognizes new Adventist administrative headquarters

By: Nigel Coke/ACUM/ANN staff
Date: 05/27/11
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During a parliament meeting this month, Bahamas' national leader said the Caribbean island nation welcomes the Seventh-day Adventist Church's emphasis on health, strong families and education.

"Your faith ministry and social outreach programs resonate with significant numbers of our citizens," said Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham, introducing a bill to recognize the church's newly established Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission as a legal entity of the church in the Bahamas.

Parliament unanimously voted to approve the legislation.

Church leaders first created the union mission when they split the former 104-year-old West Indies Union Conference into two administrative regions: the Jamaica Union Conference; and the Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission, which includes the Bahamas, Cayman Islands and the Turks & Caicos Islands and serves some 25,000 church members. The reorganization recognized membership growth in the region.

As well as granting official recognition, passage of the May 9 bill gives church administration in the Bahamas the authority to transact business and fulfill legal obligations, said Leonard Johnson, Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission president.

Speaking in favor of the bill, Parliamentarian Tommy Turnquest said the Adventist church in Bahamas should be proud of its role in the community, specifically its outreach to young people, the Bahama Journal reported.

Parliamentarian Fred Mitchell commended the church's humanitarian work on the island, citing food distribution and home repair projects. "I would like to thank them for it," Mitchell said. Other parliamentarians pointed out the church's high standards of education and outreach programs.

The Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission was inaugurated in January and comprises three conferences, one mission and six primary and secondary schools in the region. It also owns and operates with the Jamaica Union Conference the Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica.
Wilson opens historic South American Division Ministerial Council

By: Felipe Lemos
Date: 05/27/11
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Four thousand pastors hear emphasis on spiritual preparation. "Are you really united in hope for the return of Jesus?" Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson asked some 4,000 pastors in South America yesterday during the opening of an unprecedented Ministerial Council, "United in Hope."

The meeting is a gathering of pastors from eight countries, and it is believed to be the first time any of the Adventist Church's 13 world divisions has brought all its pastors together in a single ministerial training event.

In his address to the pastors, who packed the convention center in the city of Foz do Iguacu, in the southern Brazilian state of Paraná, Wilson cited the recent episode in which an American religious figure predicted Jesus would return May 21. Wilson reminded his audience that Jesus will return on a day determined by God -- as the Bible plainly declares -- but that believers need to be genuinely prepared for that moment.

The president underlined his hope that the world's billions not miss the opportunity to be in heaven and that nothing diverts their focus from this great event. "The Lord Jesus is returning soon and we are looking for the blessed hope," Wilson declared.

Before the leader of nearly 17 million Adventists spoke, Erton Köhler, president of the denomination's South American Division, cited the legacy of his two predecessors, pastors Rui Nagel and John Wolff. He recounted the delivery of five million leaflets promoting the soon-coming return of Jesus Christ in a one-day evangelism outreach effort under Wolff's leadership on March 31, 1979, and the establishment of integrated evangelism when Nagel served as the Division's executive. Köhler also emphasized the need to pursue personal revival and reformation.

"Here we are citizens of heaven. Our [present] identity speaks louder than our origins," he said.

The intention to illustrate unity through diversity among the division's people and pastors was clear from the opening of the event, when representatives greeted those present in six different languages: Portuguese, Spanish, Aymara, Quechua, Guarani and Roma.

A special copy of the Bible, with
nearly 70 supplements, including a full set of 27 Bible studies, was delivered to each of the pastors present. The Pastor's Bible was given as a gift, but was delivered with a sense of responsibility. Pastors were challenged to prepare themselves intensely to preach to the more than 300 million people living in the division's territory. In a moving scene, thousands of pastors placed their hands on the Bible in a pledge of dedication as world church's executive secretary G. T. Ng prayed for their faithfulness to God's Word.

On the opening night, there was also a first-ever census of Adventist pastors from South America. According to sociologist Tadeu de Jesus, all the participants were to complete a questionnaire consisting of 216 questions highlighting the pastor in his personal and professional life. This research will help generate indicators to measure processes and strategic outcomes for Adventist pastors.

At the close of the evening meeting, hundreds of prayer groups that will function throughout the five-day event were formed among the thousands of pastors present. Each group will focus its prayer time on the book "True Revival," which includes selections from Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White's writings.
Further definition on tap for Adventist fundamental belief on creation

By: Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN
Date: 05/27/11
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New review committee follows 2010 Session action to 'strengthen' church's interpretation of origins

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's newly formed Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee are expected to meet in June, the next step in a five-year process to clarify the denomination's biblical understanding of origins.

Last year, delegates of the 59th General Conference Session in Atlanta voted to reaffirm the church's belief in a "literal, recent, six-day creation." The vote formally endorsed a document drafted at the International Faith and Science Conference in 2004 and later that year affirmed by the church's Annual Council business meeting. The move addressed questions from some Adventists regarding interpretation of the denomination's Fundamental Belief Number 6.

The Reaffirmation of Creation statement specifies that the seven days in the Genesis creation account are "literal 24-hour days" and tags creation as "recent," while the existing fundamental belief reads, in part: "In six days the Lord made 'the heaven and the earth' ... and rested on the seventh day of that first week."

Because the Adventist Church cannot hold two official statements on the same belief, Session delegates also voted to grant top church administration what world church General Vice President Artur Stele called a "mandate" to merge the two statements' language and intent into one comprehensive fundamental belief.

The move is also expected to close what some Adventists claim is an interpretative loophole that hypothetically allows theistic evolution to explain the Genesis origins account, said Angel Rodriguez, director of the church's Biblical Research Institute (BRI) and Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee co-chair with Stele.

Theistic evolution posits that evolution is a natural process of creation, overseen by God, and seeks to make the biblical creation story compatible with natural evolution.

"We as the Adventist Church strongly believe that the Lord is our creator. If
you take that away -- it's such a foundational belief -- or even compromise it, then there is an effect on other beliefs," Stele said.

Because theistic evolution stretches each creation day into epochs, many Adventists fear the theory threatens another of the church's core beliefs: observance of the seventh-day Sabbath as a celebration of the creation week.

While amending the church's fundamental beliefs might seem exceptional, it's neither unprecedented nor unsolicited. The preamble to the church's 28 Fundamental Beliefs invites revision as the church's understanding of truth expands.

"We state, 'This is how we understand Scripture,' but we also state that if we find a better expression or better wording -- or if our understanding is broadened -- then we will be open to change," Stele said. "We don't have doctrines like some other denominations -- unmoving, unchangeable.

Why not?

Early Adventist Church leaders were adamant that the emerging church not be corralled by creeds. "Making a creed is setting the stakes, and barring the way to all future advancement," church co-founder James White said during a discussion in 1861. "Suppose the Lord ... should give us some new light that did not harmonize with our creed?"

Ten years later, the then Review and Herald magazine published a list of "Fundamental Principles," drafted by early church leader Uriah Smith. They were printed with a disclaimer that sought to allay any remaining unease: "We have no articles of faith, creed or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them," Smith wrote.

Those core beliefs shifted in number and content over the decades, but were never officially voted by the church until 1980.

Two years before the 1980 GC Session in Dallas, Texas, a few church administrators at church headquarters wrote a preliminary draft of what would become the Fundamental Beliefs. Shortly afterward, scholars and theologians at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, participated in rewriting the beliefs, launching a revision process involving academics, administrators and church members.
Mid-American Adventists respond in wake of Joplin tornado

By: ANN staff  
Date: 05/27/11  
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Church sustains minor damage; one non-attending member unaccounted for

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Community Services-Disaster Response for Mid-America is coordinating with federal and local agencies in the wake of a tornado that struck Joplin, Missouri on Sunday.

The single deadliest twister to hit the United States since 1950 left 117 dead and leveled homes and businesses, including the southwest Missouri city's hospital.

While the Joplin Adventist Church sustained minor roof damage, the structure itself is sound, said Dwight Seek, who pastors the church. His wife, Jenny, said several church members' homes incurred damage, and the church treasurer's home was destroyed.

While all regular members have been accounted for, one non-attending member is missing, Jenny Seek said. "It's possible that she is out of town with family. We are praying she is OK," she said.

"Our hearts go out to our church family and indeed the whole community of Joplin," Thomas Lemon, president of the Mid-America Union, said in a statement. "It is at such times that the church community must become again the hands and feet of Jesus to carry His healing touch to people whose lives have been so devastated," the statement continued.

Dan Jackson, president of the church's North American Division, is expected to visit Joplin this week to encourage and pray with church members.

For updates on the developing situation, including Adventist response efforts, visit www.outlookmag.org.
Review & Herald Publishing officers re-elected, board size trimmed

By: Mark A. Kellner, Adventist Review
Date: 05/27/11
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162-year-old Adventist publishing house staunching money losses, officials say

The Review and Herald Publishing Association, the 162-year-old book and magazine organization owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters, is showing signs of progress in the face of years of financial decline, leaders said at a May 19 constituency session.

The meeting also saw the revision of the group's bylaws, which will now include a Board of Directors with 30 members, down from 44. Also, top officers were re-elected, including President Mark B. Thomas.

The change in the number, RHPA board chairman Delbert Baker said, was to make the board easier to work with and more accountable.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church and a former RHPA president, attended the meetings at the Hagerstown, Maryland headquarters, and said he predicted constituents "will feel a settled confidence in what God has in store for the Review and Herald, and for the publishing work."

While reporting losses of $5.7 million for 2010, RHPA vice president and chief financial officer Graham Barham said the organization showed a small profit of $72,000 through April of 2011, versus a loss of $982,000 in the year-ago period. Product sales were $800,000 in the first three weeks of May 2011, and the firm is bearing down on a $1 million sales month, he added.

"The publishing work will go on," Barham said.

The past few years have been a difficult time for the RHPA, which saw a steep decline in sales, revenues and profits from the previous five years. Those challenges were not unique to Review and Herald; paper-based book sales have declined across a wide variety of markets. In fact, while the RHPA constituency meeting was taking place, Amazon.com, the titanic online seller of books and other media, reported that for every 100 printed books sold, the firm was now selling 105 digital volumes, known as "e-books."

RHPA also found itself in a difficult situation with its line of credit from a local bank, which wanted to call the loan or attach some of the association's real estate holdings. Barham noted, as reported earlier, that the Adventist Church headquarters has agreed to buy 47.5 acres of RHPA-owned land for $11.4 million, with 80 percent of that amount advanced before closing. That infusion allowed RHPA to retire the a total debt of nearly $7.2 million; the balance of monies provided will be invested with the Columbia Union Conference revolving fund, Barham said.

Constituents undid the confidence in the RHPA management team.
Constituents underscored their confidence in the RHAP management team appointed during a 2010 reorganization by electing the group's officers to full five-year terms. RHAP president Mark B. Thomas was unanimously re-elected, as were all four vice presidents: Dwain Edmond, vice president, editorial; John Gay, vice president for graphics; Barham; and marketing vice president Dwight Hall.
God's timing isn't for us to know, Adventist leaders say

By: ANN staff  
Date: 05/27/11  
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Predictions on Christ's return give false hope, disrepute on Christianity; 'been there, done that'
The biblical books of Leviticus, Matthew and Acts warn against predicting the future, but that hasn't stopped another Christian group from predicting the end of the world -- this time a rapture of God's people on May 21, followed by total world destruction in October.

For Seventh-day Adventists, members of a Protestant denomination that formed after an incorrect prediction of the end of the world in 1844, the media attention garnered by Family Radio Worldwide founder Harold Camping and thousands of his followers is an opportunity to refocus on the assurance of the biblical promise of Christ's Second Coming. More so, it's also a chance to accept God's timing, Adventist Church leaders and scholars in North America say.

"God can chose to come this Saturday if he chooses to, that's fine with me, but for a human to predict that and not know for certain if that's the case is foolishness," said Stanley Patterson, associate professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

"If [Camping's followers] understood correctly God's word, they would already know that this man is in violation of what God says," Patterson said.

He and others point to Matthew 24:36, which quotes Jesus saying, "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father."

Patterson said speculating about God's will isn't the job of humans, and doing so capitalizes on the fear people have about the future. Setting a date may give some people hope, he said, but the tragedy is that it's a false hope.

"God has accepted responsibility for the day and the hour and not us," Patterson said. "If our hope becomes so strong that we stop regarding His word, that's a horrible irony. Ultimately, God is going to take care of the things he said he would care for."

Alvin Kibble, a vice president of the Adventist Church's North American Division, says he credits Camping's "Divine invitation," but warns that he sounds similar to what followers of preacher William Miller might have
Updating Adventist property listings is 'ethical issue,' church risk management field rep says

By: Arin Gencer/ANN
Date: 05/27/11
0 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment
Email this story to a friend.

Outdated building assessments could mean inadequate funds to restore lost, damaged property. The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s risk management and insurance organization is on a mission to ensure church-owned properties throughout North America are valued by current standards.

Adventist Risk Management is working with the denomination’s local administrative conferences in the region to update property evaluations so that church and school facilities’ insurance values reflect the actual cost of replacing damaged property, said Gideon Dayak, a risk control consultant with the organization. The alternative could mean not having adequate funds to restore a lost building.

"To go out and insure a group of churches and suggest that the possibility exists that if they have a total loss there may not be enough value there to rebuild a church...to me, is an ethical issue,” said David Rawson, senior field service representative for Adventist Risk Management (ARM). "There was an ethical mandate to get out and get this done."

Rawson and his fellow field representatives in the region are engaged in "a constant process that we've pushed aggressively" to update files, he said, going into the field to evaluate facilities for the details required for a fresh appraisal. He estimated that ARM has completed about half of the project, which began about seven years ago.

Adventist Risk Management's efforts in the North American region follow a multiyear effort to address a similar issue in the world church's East-Central Africa, West-Central Africa, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean and Southern Asia divisions, Rawson said. A decade ago, property lists for those parts of the world were seriously outdated -- not just in terms of property values but also having an accurate list of existing facilities, including the GPS coordinates for each location, he said.

"We'd have two properties on a piece of land sitting next to each other -- one building was obviously ancient and no longer needed to be insured; a brand new building sitting next to it had absolutely no insurance coverage," Rawson said, describing some of the scenarios encountered. "If you don't list the property on your insurance statement of values, and you have a loss, you have no coverage. So it was really important to get that cleaned up."

Dayak -- who conducts property appraisals and safety/risk control analysis -- said he has assessed some 300 North American properties in the past six months. The process involves a close inspection using an established property-insurance standard, and taking photos of the building. Dayak then enters the building’s data into the Marshall & Swift commercial property estimator, which provides replacement costs based on zip code.

"You wouldn't believe the sense of appreciation and relief that they feel to
know that they're valued correctly," Rawson said of the conferences he has worked with.

Since January 2011, ARM has conducted over 25 risk-management and insurance-coverage training seminars for church administrators, including those in North America's Southern Union Conference and South Africa's Zimbabwe Union Conference, said Arthur Blinci, ARM vice president for Marketing and Field Assessment.

Such sessions cover an array of topics, Dayak said, including the best way to care for properties; avoiding potential hazards inside buildings; having and following an emergency evacuation plan; and an inspection that identifies the cost of replacing lost property. The seminars help church administrators better understand their insurance coverage and learn how to report losses on a timely basis when an accident occurs, Blinci added.
Southeastern to hold Conference-wide Graduation for Sabbath Keepers

By: Robert Henley
Date: 05/26/11
0 Comment(s) Read/Add Comment
Email this story to a friend.

Every year scores of committed young people throughout the Southeastern Conference make the decision to not participate in their graduation services because those services are held on Sabbath. In recognition of their commitment to uphold the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to provide them with the opportunity participate in a graduation service, the Southeastern Conference Education Department will conduct a conference-wide graduation service on June 18, 2011. The graduation service, which will be for all high school, college (2 and 4 year) and advance degree graduates, will be held during the Education & Commissioning Program on the first weekend of Southeastern’s camp meeting service.

Individuals that are interested in participating in the service should submit the following information to Carol Byrd, SEC superintendent of education, by June 3, 2011: name of graduate, level of graduation, school graduating from, home church, and phone number. You can email this information to the superintendent by visiting http://www.secsda.org/contactus/contact.cfm?id=7.

For more information about this event contact the SEC Education Department at 352-735-3142. Southeastern’s camp meeting service is held annually at Camp Hawthorne located in Hawthorne, Fl.
The Southeastern Conference department of Education is accepting applications for elementary education teaching positions for the 2011 - 2012 school year. All interested and qualified candidates should submit resumes to Carol Byrd, SEC superintendent of education, by email by visiting http://www.secsda.org/contactus/contact.cfm?id=7. For more information contact the education department at 352-735-3142.