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Arminianism and Adventist Symposium held at the Seminary

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[WORLD CHURCH NEWS]



Leslie N. Pollard, Ph.D., is Oakwood University's new president.

Pollard named Oakwood University's 13th president

On Nov. 1, the Oakwood University Board of Trustees named Leslie N. Pollard, Ph.D., the 13th president of Oakwood University. University provost Mervyn Warren, Ph.D., has served as interim president since August 1.

During the past couple of months, the Presidential Search Committee worked diligently with the Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting Firm to meticulously review 24 confirmed applications that were under consideration since the search team officially began its work. The committee was comprised of representatives from Oakwood's Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff and students. It hosted four separate campus forums the week prior to the selection of Pollard to allow students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni and members of the local community to pose questions directly to the final three candidates.

The Board met with the final three candidates on the afternoon of Nov. 1 in the Cooper Complex Board Room on Oakwood's campus, as part of the concluding session for its regularly scheduled fall meeting. Ted N.C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church and interim chair of the Oakwood University Board of Trustees, made the official announcement as the Board concluded its fall session.

Pollard was one of three final candidates for the presidential seat, vacated in July when former president Delbert W. Baker, Ph.D., resigned the position to serve as one of nine general vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church. Pollard assumes his new position as the 13th president of Oakwood University on Jan. 3, 2011.

Pollard's commitment to excellence is seen in his drive for education. He earned a B.A. degree from Oakwood University and a M.Div. degree from the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He earned the D.Min. degree in Preaching and Worship from Claremont School of Theology. Seeking higher-level fiscal and administrative development, Pollard earned an M.B.A. degree in Organization Management from La Sierra University School of Business. To culminate his academic pursuits, Pollard graduated from Andrews University with the Ph.D. degree in New Testament Language and Literature, with specialization in apocalyptic literature.

Pollard's 32 years of leadership reflect local, national and international service. He has served as a senior pastor, a youth pastor, a university chaplain, a healthcare program administrator and an educational administrator at Loma Linda University. As a clergyman, Pollard functioned as an evangelist, professor, ministerial educator and leadership development facilitator to the General Conference family. He regularly leads denominational and non-denominational leadership and mission conferences all over the world.

Pollard's orientation to fiscal lead-

ership emerges from his experience as senior pastor of major congregations, from administering university budgets and grants, and from his graduate business education. Pollard views chief-executive leadership as a team-based collaboration between executive team members. For him, servant leadership accomplishes both the missional and financial goals of the organization, through the careful placement of committed people, the diligent monitoring of organizational processes, and the implementation of data-driven initiatives and strategies. Leadership development of his colleagues is an active passion, and Pollard's commitment to racial, cultural and gender inclusiveness has been internationally received and affirmed.

Pollard, 54, remains a prolific writer, speaker and engaged scholar, on the subjects of leadership, cultural competence and mission. He has been married to the former Prudence LaBeach for 31 years. They are the parents of two daughters, who are graduates of Oakwood University.

Michele Solomon, director of public relations, Oakwood University (adapted from a Nov. 1, 2010 press release)

Arminianism and Adventist Symposium held at the Seminary

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a comparatively unique doctrine of salvation, but where did those beliefs come from? To explore the answer to that question, the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary hosted an Arminianism and Adventism Symposium October 14-16.

Theologians from all around the world converged at Andrews to trace the development of Protestant soteriological theology (the theology of salvation), recognize the 400th anniversary of the Remonstrance of 1610 and present their papers. The symposium



IMC/Darren Heslop

Andrews University faculty in costume portrayed major theologians at the Opening Reception and Opening Remarks portion of the Symposium. Stan Patterson, associate professor and chair of Christian ministry, portrayed Jacobus Arminius; John Calvin was portrayed by Skip Bell, professor of Christian ministry and director of the D.Min. program; Walt Williams, associate professor of Christian ministry, dressed as Martin Luther; Peter van Bemmelen, professor emeritus, appeared as John Wesley; and Jo Ann Davidson, professor of theology, portrayed Ellen G. White.

was particularly important, according to Gary Land, retired professor and plenary speaker, because, “It attempts to place Adventism within a theological context. Although there have been exceptions, Adventist scholars have tended to examine their denomination in isolation from the larger Christian community. A conference such as this helps us explore those connections between our specific religious traditions and the wider church of which it is a part.”

The symposium began with a selection of Renaissance-era music, performed by a sextet dressed in period costumes. During the opening reception, Andrews University faculty in costumes portraying major theologians mingled in the crowd. Stan Patterson, associate professor and chair of Christian ministry, portrayed Jacobus Arminius; John Calvin was portrayed by Skip Bell, professor of Christian ministry and director of the D.Min. program; Walt Williams, associate professor of Christian ministry, dressed as Martin Luther; Peter van Bemmelen, professor emeritus, appeared as John Wesley; and Jo Ann Davidson, professor of theology, portrayed Ellen G. White. The symposium began with opening remarks and a presentation of the underlying rationale.

Denis Fortin, dean and professor of theology at the Theological Seminary, welcomed participants to the weekend,

and the presentation of papers began. Denis Fortin presented his paper, “The Place of Seventh-day Adventism in the Calvinist-Arminian Debate: Historical and Theological Perspectives on The Remonstrance.” Fortin traced the history of Arminianism, and outlined its basic beliefs. Arminianism is at its core a rejection of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. In 1610, a group of Dutch theologians published a statement known as the “Remonstrance,” in which they denounced the teachings of Arminius as heretical. Following the Remonstrance, those dissatisfied with the Calvinist theory of predestination came to rally around the teachings of Jacob Arminius and became known as “Arminians. Early Seventh-day Adventism grew out of the context of eighteenth-century Methodism, which championed Arminian thought.

Fortin identified five elements of Arminius’s position that resonate with Adventism, as outlined by Land. “First, both Arminians and Adventists believe that the individual needs to believe in Christ in order to be saved. Second, Arminius found repugnant the idea that God would predestine some people to eternal damnation before they came into existence. Third, human beings have freedom of the will. Fourth, God’s creation is good, something that is incompatible with the Calvinistic

understanding that nearly everyone is predestined to damnation. Finally, sin is cause of damnation, a fact that again does not fit with Calvinistic supralapsarianism.”

Thirty-one speakers presented their papers at the conference in a variety of breakout sessions and discussions. The nine plenary speakers were: Denis Fortin, dean of the Seminary; Hans K. LaRondelle, professor emeritus; George Knight, professor emeritus; Roger Olson, professor of theology at the George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University; Barry Callen, professor emeritus of Christian Studies at Anderson University; Keith Stanglin, assistant professor of Historical Theology at Harding University; Woodrow Whidden, professor at the Seminary of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies; Gary Land, professor emeritus and assistant dean of graduate programs for the College of Arts & Sciences; and Angel Rodriguez, director in the Biblical Research Institute.

The plenary speakers presented papers on topics ranging from LaRondelle’s “Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives on Predestination,” to Whidden’s “Investigative Judgment and Assurance of Salvation” and Keith Stanglin’s “Assurance of Salvation: An Arminian Account.” Additional papers presented focused upon themes and history interacting with Arminianism such as Jacques Doukhan’s “Fate or Destiny: The Issue of Predestination and Free Will in Hebrew and Jewish Thought.”

Land closed the symposium with his reflections, which reviewed the basic thoughts and ideas presented in each of the plenary papers. “Whatever our theological positions, they are part of conversations and debates that have long predated us,” said Land. “It behooves us to know that history and have it inform our participation in contemporary theological discussion both within our church and with those of other Christian traditions.”

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