

April 22, 1993

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TRAGIC CONCLUSION TO WACO STANDOFF: Monday, April 19 the 51-day standoff between Branch Davidians and federal agents concluded tragically when the compound burned to the ground, resulting in the death of all but nine of those inside. Our hearts go out to the family members of those who died in the fire, as well as to the families of the ATF agents who died February 28.

Although the Church was initially and inaccurately linked to the cult by media reports, in many parts of the world that perception appears to have diminished significantly. During the past few weeks we have been working diligently with reporters and members of the media to make it clear that we have no affiliation with this or any other cult. Thanks to your help, these efforts have been largely successful. By referring inquiries you have received to our official spokespersons, we have been able to “speak with one voice,” providing consistent and accurate information. This has helped to clear up many of the early misperceptions.

At present, few national or international reports are making any direct linkage to the Church. However, as family members and survivors begin to talk to the media, as survivors face legal action, and when a made-for-television movie on this story is released next month, that may change. As the story shifts from “hard news” to “feature-oriented,” we anticipate that reporters will be seeking additional background information. For this, they will likely turn to:

- ! former cult members,
- ! survivors of the Waco tragedy,
- ! friends and family members of Waco victims,
- ! and perhaps, Seventh-day Adventist pastors or church members.

If you receive any such media inquiries, please refer them to your Division Public Information Office.

(In North America, the toll-free number is 1-800-522-8877. You may share this telephone number with all communication directors, pastors, and school principals in your conference or union, and ask them to relay it to church members through announcements and bulletin notices, etc. Church pastors and members are also welcome to call this

number for additional information or to share concerns. In fact, we encourage you to call and share local developments or perspectives related to this situation. This will help us address specific regional issues and will equip us to respond better to your needs.)

Again, thank you for your support. Please continue to pray for the Communication Team as well as for the families of the Waco victims.

OFFICIAL CHURCH STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE WACO TRAGEDY: The following statement is being provided FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. It is not intended for proactive distribution to the media, but only to keep you informed of our position.

SILVER SPRING, MD—Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has no affiliation with the Branch Davidians or any other cult, our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones in the Waco, Texas, tragedy. As compassionate, peace-loving people, our prayers are with these families.

The Adventist Church provides an array of services and programs which focus on Christ's caring model of meeting the needs of those around Him. These services and programs include:

- ! a worldwide network of hospitals, clinics and mobile health screening vans;
- ! an international disaster relief agency to help victims of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes and other disaster;
- ! the world's largest Protestant school system.

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church has more than 7 million members with mission outreach in more than 200 countries. Our parochial school system includes 78 accredited universities and colleges and nearly 6,000 accredited elementary and secondary schools. The Adventist Church is a major and highly respected contributor to health care in the United States and around the world. We operate 472 hospitals and clinics in addition to 88 retirement homes.