In Egypt, church's Nile Union Academy reopens

In wake of revolution, Adventists report new solidarity with community members

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Later exonerated by Chinese government; continued translation, philanthropic work

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18 Feb 2011, Stanborough Park, Watford, England
Victor Hulbert/BUC/ANN staff

Following weeks of national protest and the recent departure of Egypt's president, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Nile Union Academy reopened Monday, February 21.

Karin Edwards (left) celebrates with Egyptians outside the Adventist Church in Heliopolis, Cairo after the resignation of former national President Hosni Mubarak. Edwards, wife of the Adventist Church's president in Egypt, is leading a stress management course for community members recovering from weeks of unrest. [photo courtesy Egypt Field]

The academy is one of two church-run schools that suspended classes last month due to ongoing political unrest.
in the country.

Alex and Kate Podbrezsky, both teachers at the academy, are reportedly on their way back to the country after an evacuation of non-essential expatriate staff and faculty at the school, local church leaders said.

Egypt Field president for the Adventist Church, Llewellyn Edwards and his wife Karin, both of whom stayed in Egypt during the revolution, said the event has strengthened ties between the country's small Adventist community and its neighbors.

Edwards, who stood outside the Adventist Church he pastors in Heliopolis on the evening former President Hosni Mubarak resigned, said many of his Muslim neighbors approached him, reminding him "this victory was for Christians as well" and "assuring us of their friendship."

The couple prayed together in the church, then joined the crowds, they said. "We stood in awe at what we were experiencing ... the jubilant deafening noise, flags waving, people leaning out of car windows, standing on top of cars and monuments, shaking hands an congratulating everyone around them," Karin said.

"It was surreal," she added.

As Egyptians shape the future of their country, the Edwards are soliciting prayers for a peaceful transition of government that results in freedom for all of Egypt's citizens.

"There are many forces -- internal and external, hidden and open -- who would seek to manipulate the future of Egypt," Edwards said. "Now is the time for prayer for God to ... bring about the freedom that would bless the good people of this country," he added.

In addition to prayers, the Adventist Church in Egypt is also offering practical support for community members who may be affected by the recent turmoil. The church is running a stress management course led by Karin at the church's Healthy Life Center.

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**Remembrance: Lin, 93, was jailed in China for his faith**

Later exonerated by Chinese government; continued translation, philanthropic work

22 Feb 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Bettina Krause/IRLA/ANN

Though he was later exonerated, Seventh-day Adventist Church administrator David Lin was jailed for his faith for 17 years in China under Chairman Mao Zedong's regime.
Lin, who died February 10 at age 93, was serving in Shanghai as secretary of the Adventist Church's China Division when the country was swept by momentous political and social changes under Chairman Mao. When the assets of the Adventist Church in China were frozen, Lin turned to other employment, while in his spare time translating the Adventist book Desire of Ages from English to Chinese.

Lin and his family's commitment to practicing their faith continued to attract the attention of authorities. He was arrested in 1958 on charges of "counter-revolution activities," and in 1960 he was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment.

After serving his term, Lin went on to pastor one of the largest Adventist congregations in Shanghai. He retired in Loma Linda, California, United States where he continued his translation and philanthropic work. In 1991, Lin was fully exonerated by the Chinese government of all charges of wrongdoing.

Lin later wrote about his incarceration, forced labor and separation from his wife and five children without bitterness, saying: "In retrospect, I praise God for His providential care in making all things work out for the good of all those concerned."

John Graz, secretary-general of the International Religious Liberty Association, called Lin a "giant of moral courage, whose life stands as a testament to the endurance of faith."

"In the story of David Lin's life, I hear echoes of the stories of hundreds and thousands of men and women around the globe today who are harassed, jailed, and sometimes put to death, simply because they have chosen the path of faithfulness," Graz said.

Adventist world church President Ted N.C. Wilson spoke of Lin as a "valiant servant of the Lord who stood courageously for God's church during very difficult times."

"On behalf of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist family, we offer our deep sympathy to members of Pastor David Lin's family," said Wilson. "Through God's leading, may we learn from David Lin's stalwart example of proclaiming the three angels' messages as we face the future challenges to our faith in God and His Word. What a blessed hope we have in Jesus as we look forward to seeing Pastor Lin at Christ's soon return."
In Cambodia, ADRA delivers water to refugees following border skirmish

Agency follows immediate response with well drilling, water filter distribution

22 Feb 2011, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
ADRA Cambodia/ANN staff

Refugees at the Tmei Commune benefited from an ADRA water distribution effort this month. The agency later drilled three wells near the camp to provide for the health and hygiene needs of some 2,500 families displaced by border clashes between Cambodia and Thailand. [photo courtesy ADRA Cambodia]

The humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church drilled wells and distributed more than 1,000 water filters to aid some 2,500 families displaced by recent border skirmishes between Cambodia and Thailand.

An estimated 30,000 people fled the region after clashes erupted earlier this month over a disputed 11th Century temple, killing at least 10 and wounding 89. The situation remains tense, but a truce brokered by the United Nations last week led local officials to speculate most refugees will return home shortly.

Both southeast Asian nations agreed today to allow Indonesian observers into the disputed area to avoid further violence, reports indicate.

From its regional headquarters about 60 miles from the disputed area, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency in Cambodia followed its initial distribution of bottled water by addressing longterm needs.

ADRA Cambodia drilled three wells near the Tmei Commune for refugees from the Preah Vihear province in northern Cambodia. The wells provided sufficient water for the health and hygiene needs of the entire camp, local ADRA officials said. The effort also included the distribution of thousands of water filters refugees can take with them when they return to their communities.

Since 2002, ADRA Cambodia has overseen a water, sanitation and agriculture project in the country.

ADRA Cambodia coordinated with the Preah Vihear governor's office, non-governmental agencies, ADRA International and ADRA Asia in the effort. Cambodian Adventist Church members volunteered to assist ADRA staff in the distribution, ADRA Cambodia said.
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