Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters
June 21, 2011

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Inter-America continues region-wide community prayer focus

June 10 day of prayer held in thousands of homes

21 Jun 2011, Miami, Florida, United States
Libna Stevens/IAD

Thousands of Seventh-day Adventist families across Inter-America earlier this month opened their homes to pray for families, neighbors, friends and community leaders during a territory-wide spiritual revival activity.
The June 10 initiative was the fourth major focus of the church's "Constant in Prayer" revival program, launched earlier this year, which stresses the need for constant prayer for a renewed committed life with Jesus.

With more than a 3.4 million membership in some 10,000 churches and congregations in the territory, top leaders planned the activity to strengthen church families and to reach out to their neighbors.

"The simple plan was to mobilize thousands of church members to open their homes to pray and speak of the power of God through prayer," said Roberto Herrera, Revival and Reformation coordinator for the church in Inter-America.

"It was a joy to visit seven homes during the activity," said Herrera who traveled to San Pedro de Macoris, in the Dominican Republic. Herrera was among nearly two dozen leaders who traveled to different church regions in Inter-America to participate in initiative.

"It is very clear that the greatest need our members have is spiritual nourishment and any congregation that wants to fulfill this need should go beyond the walls of the church building," Herrera said.

In South Veracruz, in Mexico, Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, spoke to dozens of church ministers and leaders before visiting several homes in the City of Minatitlan.

"We want the church to be known for a people who is in constant in prayer," Leito said. "We trust in our God and we want the Adventist homes to be known as prayer centers, centers that can offer comfort."

In North Colombia, more than 15,000 homes joined to pray, fellowship, and worship during the activity, said Gustavo Perez, Family Ministries director for the church in North Colombia.

"I am so glad for this initiative," said Sandra Espinel, a church member who opened her home to neighbors and friends. "Prayer is the foundation where we can strengthen our families."

Homes like Espinel's represent a potential for small groups which can be formed and expand in an already growing ministry throughout the territory, said Melchor Ferreyra, Personal Ministries director in charge of small group ministry for the church in Inter-America.

In El Salvador, more than 25,000 Adventist homes participated in the prayer initiative focused on families.

In Grenada, Justice Clare Henry, an Adventist high court judge for the eastern Caribbean, joined in the home of members to pray for neighbors and community leaders.

Honduras also had over 2,000 homes throughout the Central American country inviting their neighbors to pray and share bible truths with them.

In Guatemala, more than 10,000 homes became houses of prayer throughout the country. The activity was part of the initiative that has leaders thankful for the spiritual revival.

Hundreds of churches held worship services focused on prayer and special baptisms took place throughout the territory on June 11.

It's all connected, said Leito, who hopes that more community involvement and more evangelism activities...
come out through the prayer initiative. Top leaders are already setting the first weekend in June of 2012 to encourage Adventist families to open their homes as prayer centers.

The church in Inter-America will continue its emphasis on prayer and additionally focus on studying the Bible and the writings of church co-founder Ellen G. White.

The new emphasis will be called "Heeding the Word" and will be launched on July 23 during a special live program from El Salvador.

To find out more about Inter-America's Constant in Prayer initiative, visit www.praying4revival.org and www.estamosorando.org

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**Adventist humanitarian agency aiding in Ivory Coast's postelection recovery**

*ADRA distributes food, hygiene kits*

21 Jun 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Christina Zaiback, ADRA International/ANN staff

As Ivory Coast emerges from months of political unrest following last November's disputed presidential elections, the Seventh-day Adventist church's humanitarian agency is aiding citizens of the West-Central African nation.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency is assisting Nigerians fleeing recent attacks in Ivory Coast and is developing an emergency health and hygiene project in the country.

United Nation investigators estimate months of postelection conflict cost the lives of 3,000 Ivoirians, but now, poor access to basic health and hygiene care could threaten thousands more. Already, dozens of cholera cases have been reported in the nation's capital, Abidjan.

ADRA's project will target a district of Abidjan most affected by clashes between Ivory Coast's Republic Forces and armed groups loyal to the country's former president. The agency is expected to distribute 4,000 hygiene kits provided by the World Health Organization. ADRA will also refurbish a community health center that incurred extensive damage and looting during fighting and equip it with four months of medical supplies.

ADRA is also expected to expand the capacity of three community-based women's organizations that work to raise awareness of health and hygiene issues in Ivory Coast.

Meanwhile, the agency is also responding to the needs of thousands of Nigerian refugees fleeing Ivory Coast. Neighboring countries have turned away the refugees, forcing many Nigerians to travel across Ghana, Togo and Benin on their way to Nigeria without the necessary food or clothing for the journey. ADRA is expected to provide 400 of the most vulnerable families with a two-week supply of food. Top priority is given to families with children as prime beneficiaries, the agency said.

Many of the exiles, although ethnically Nigerian, have never stepped foot in Nigeria and face challenges assimilating into new communities and adapting to unfamiliar languages.
Since the beginning of April, thousands of Nigerian refugees arrived in the country by the busload. ADRA continues to assess the situation and will likely expand its relief efforts as needs arise.

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**Future of Adventist distance learning optimistic as Griggs expands**

*Move to Andrews, online courses on tap, new dean says*

15 Jun 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist academic administrators are optimistic about the future of Griggs University. The church's distance learning institution is set to move to church-run Andrews University next month, the final step of a two-year transfer of oversight.

The move is expected to provide increased collaboration among Adventist educational institutions and lend Griggs the opportunity to benefit from the faculty base and increased resources for curriculum development at Andrews, church leaders said.

World church Vice President Ella Simmons said the move would bring "fundamental" changes to Griggs, providing "valuable support and opportunities" for the institution.

"Both [Griggs and Andrews] will grow from this alliance; their capacity to provide education from a distance will increase in substantive ways," Simmons said.

Currently, veteran Adventist educator and academic administrator Alayne Thorpe is serving as interim president of Griggs University. Once Griggs University relocates to the Berrien Springs, Michigan campus, Thorpe will continue to helm the institution in her capacity as recently appointed dean of Distance Education for Andrews University.

"We see this merger with Andrews as a prime opportunity to expand the mission -- not only of Griggs, but of Andrews -- to make Adventist education available to students everywhere," Thorpe said, citing plans to expand the institution's online programs and collaborations.

The move from world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, to what is currently the church's Lake Union Conference building adjacent to Andrews' entrance is expected by mid-July, Thorpe said. Andrews recently purchased the conference building in preparation for the relocation, a June press release from the university said. Later, Lake Union administration will move to a site more suited to their staff and the building...
will be renamed.

The church's top administrative body voted to transfer Griggs' oversight last October after the distance education commission established in 2009 found that the Griggs' limited resources could not handle the church's distance education needs. Shortly thereafter, Andrews' board accepted the transfer of both Griggs University and Griggs International Academy.

"Griggs needed an academic home with resources, such as a talented faculty and versatile library facilities," Thorpe said. "These were just not available to us in the General Conference headquarters building."

Currently, 4,500 students are enrolled in Griggs, with enrollment highest in the institution's MBA program. About 1,000 Griggs students are enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12, and 2,000 more are taking college courses.

Thorpe said Griggs anticipates significant enrollment growth in grades 9 through 12, thanks to a new commitment to distance learning technologies and the expansion of a partnership with Job Corps, a federal program to equip high school dropouts with education and career training.

While many students have traditionally turned to Griggs when a scheduling conflict means they need to complete a college course independently, the institution wants to increase awareness of its grade school courses, too, Thorpe said.

"In too many places, there's a huge chasm between higher education and K-12. It shouldn't be like that," Thorpe said. By offering dual enrollment -- in which students earn college credits while still in high school -- Griggs can serve as a "vital link" between higher education and grade school, she said.

An added benefit? Young people are already comfortable with the online learning technologies Griggs is seeking to embrace, Thorpe said.

With the expansion of its online distance learning offerings, Thorpe said Griggs is also recognizing an increase in nontraditional Adventist students -- some choose not to attend Adventist schools, and others postpone college education to work so they don't incur "the kind of educational debt facing some of our young people," she said.

"The more courses we offer online, the more affordable we can make them and the better we're able to reach that market," she said.

A credit hour at a typical Adventist university runs between $400 and $700; a comparable online course from Griggs can cost half as much due to decreased overhead, Thorpe said.

Still, online students enjoy many of the benefits of traditional classroom study, she said. New distance learning technologies equip students with access to libraries, advisors and professors.

Attending classes via video conferencing is another possibility as Griggs' online programs expand, she said.
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